

Outdoor Classrooms: Putting STEAM into Action

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Learning Targets

1. I understand why an outdoor learning space can be an effective addition to a school.
2. I can identify barriers and provide bridges to overcome potential obstacles.
3. I can create an action plan to include outdoor learning.



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WHY outdoor learning?

Benefits include:

- Encourage active lifestyle
- Appreciate nature
- Develop social skills
- Encourage independence
- Understanding of risks
- Develop reflective and inquisitive thinking

Possible Barriers:

- Lack belief in value of outdoor learning
- Perceived potential vs. actual use
- Philosophy-reality conflict
- Risk-averse culture
- Funding/materials

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Let's get started!

Some essential questions to ask your team during the initial planning phase include why, when, who and how.

- **Why should we utilize outdoor learning?**
What are the benefits?
- **When will you start?**
Set a timeline to guide the creation and implementation of your outdoor learning space.
- **Who should be involved in the planning?**
School staff, administration, parents, community outreach, etc.
- **How can we leverage our resources?**
What resources can you tap into? PTO, school board, donations, community, grants, parents, etc.

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Imbed STEAM into your outdoor classroom by including focus areas:
 architecture/engineering, sensory tables, large group space, small group space, outdoor kitchen, sensory garden, native plants, flower chalkboards, etc.

Tips
 Use MELs, themes, "parking lot", Google.
 You can do a little bit at a time. Make a big picture but use short term attainable goals. What can be done in 2019?

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For example:
 Architecture
 Tables & Chairs
 Chalkboards

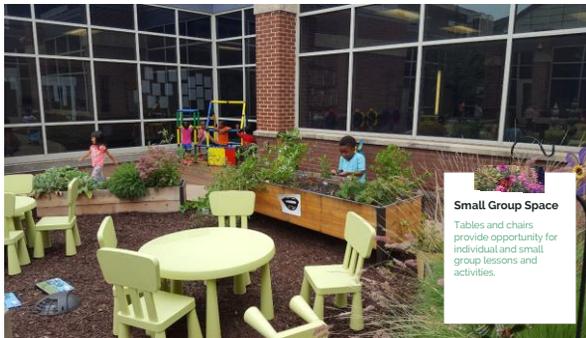
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Sensory Tables and Gardens



"Children learn as they play. Most importantly, in play children learn how to learn." --O. Fred Donaldson

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Small Group Space
 Tables and chairs provide opportunity for individual and small group lessons and activities.

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Discovery Based Learning



STEAM learning is inquiry based, guided by student interest, and developed through skilled questioning.

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Garden Tools make it easy for students to help.



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Structures and Procedures

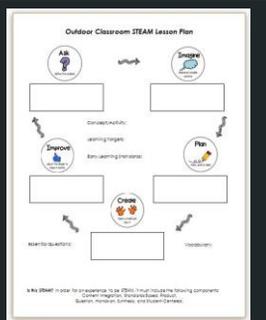
- Monthly Shared Duties
 - Lessons
 - Supplies
 - Set up/Clean up
 - Regular Checks
- Lesson Plan Template
- Volunteers for weeding and watering (with student help)
- Daily/Weekly Class Schedule



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Lesson Plans

- Content Integration
- Standards Based
- Product
- Question
- Hands-on
- Synthesis
- Student-Centered
- Engineering Design Process
 - Ask, Imagine, Plan, Create, Improve... and repeat.



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What's next?

Vision Board...

What will you do by April to start the process of making your outdoor learning vision happen?



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In Conclusion

Remember to be aware of benefits, and barriers and then take action!

- **What are the benefits?**
What does your classroom/program have to gain?
- **What are potential barriers to implementation?**
What is your plan to address these barriers and build bridges?
- **What do you plan to do next?**
Make a list of what you would like to accomplish and plan a deadline?
Take one step at a time. It doesn't need to happen all at once.

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“Too often we give children **answers to remember** rather than **problems to solve.**”
-Roger Lewin

Questions?

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