



Creating the perfect outdoor play space

Your outdoor play space should entice children to learn and grow through exploration, unstructured play and social collaboration. If you are starting a new build, refurbishing a specific area or redesigning your entire outdoor space, the following how-to guide will help you on your journey.

Providing children with challenging, adventurous, 'risky' opportunities is a valuable and enriching aspect of outdoor play. Children can learn to navigate their environment and learn how to assess risks and contemplate consequences.

When designing a play space, it is vital to include a variety of play areas, that is, choices for all children regardless of age, ability, needs and interests. These may include the following design elements:

Active Space – Including both fixed and movable equipment, for example, slides, climbing structures such as rock walls or scramble nets and balancing items such as natural boulders. A variety of heights and access points creates more choices and challenges and help children develop their core and upper body strength, balance, and gross and fine motor muscle development.

Open Space – Provides opportunities for running, jumping, rolling, ball play and organised games.

Quiet Space – Not all children want to be active. Providing a quiet space such as a cubby or fort facilitates calmness, solitude and time out. A place to read a book alone, or with a friend, is important.

Social Space – Children are naturally social beings and areas such as a platform or stage can be transformed

by the addition of loose parts or props, enhancing imagination and social opportunities. Our gazebos, pergolas or hatches make for a great stage or platform.

Creative Space – Facilitating open ended, unstructured opportunities to be creative is invaluable. A range of materials, resources and loose parts encourages children to create, design and construct. They use their imagination and cognitive abilities to invent and engineer, mastering their own creations. This type of learning reinforces independence and develops a sense of accomplishment.

Exploration Space – Providing sand pits, digging patches, sensory gardens, frog ponds, magnifying glasses, binoculars, all provoke children's curiosity and encourage exploration. If we can stimulate curiosity we are encouraging a child's innate passion for life-long learning.



Little Village ELC

"Little Village ELC is a boutique 59-place childcare centre located in Western Sydney. Not knowing where or how to start, calls to various suppliers began to try and coordinate the mammoth task of designing our outdoor space.

We had a vision for our space and after contacting Aarons Outdoor we quickly realised they were a full service construction company who specialised in childcare centres. The team came on board and turned what was initially an overwhelming task into a well coordinated and seamless project. They consulted us at every stage, took our vision on board and offered suggestions to improve on what we had. We worked with their in house Landscape Architect and they delivered an outdoor space that took our breath away".

Lena Barbouts, Centre Owner, Little Village ELC

Nature Space – Interacting with nature is crucial in today's hectic over-scheduled lifestyles. Being amongst nature provides wellness benefits, both mentally and physically for everyone.

We want to teach our children to be stewards of their natural world. Learning about bushes, bees and bugs in a natural bush setting or a purpose built nature-like environment teaches children about the value of their environment and inspires them to protect it.

Beyond design – inspections and maintenance
Once you have created your exciting new play space you will need to have a comprehensive post installation playground inspection prior to use which we can provide. This verifies compliance with the relevant

Australian Standards and checks for general safety and operational issues. By inspecting and properly maintaining a play space, educators can manage potential hazards to children and preserve the condition of the play space.

The types and frequency of inspections are detailed in AS 4685.0:2017 Playground equipment and surfacing and range from daily, quarterly or annually.

Specialising in playspace construction for the Early Education sector means we understand the NQF framework and the Australian Standard playground and surfacing requirements and we can work with you to offer a complete service ensuring you are compliant in all aspects of your new outdoor space.

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