

## SLIDE 1

ETI has published a report entitled Pre-school and Foundation Stage: Delivering the Curriculum Outdoors.

Leaders and staff recognise the benefits of outdoor learning for all children helping them understand and manage their emotions as well as improving their well-being and concentration.

## SLIDE 2

The key successes observed by inspectors include:

- creative responses to COVID-19 guidance to provide safe, secure and well-planned outdoor areas to enhance children's learning;
- children's enjoyment of, and engagement in, their outdoor learning, re-connecting with friends and playing together;
- opportunities for children to play energetically; develop their language and communication skills; make confident choices and decisions about their learning;
- additional funding from the Department of Education and the Education Authority which are being used well to improve the quality and effectiveness of outdoor learning environments.

## SLIDE 3

Some challenges identified by leaders include:

- bad weather where there is no covered area or the lack of all-weather clothing for the children; the reduction of outdoor space due to zoned play areas and reduced time for play due to additional cleaning;
- a lack of specific staff training on how to progress learning outdoors and inconsistent approaches to monitoring and evaluation;
- limited planning and opportunities, in most settings, for developing the Arts outdoors and for storytelling and singing.

## SLIDE 4

- There is an increased understanding of the importance and value of outdoor play across all phases within the early years' sector.
- In light of the pandemic, the leadership and staff in all settings are responding with commitment and flexibility to creative and repurposed outdoor learning environments.
- Leaders are increasingly working to create a culture in which *'the development of outdoor learning environments is in response to the positive impact on the children's learning experiences and not just as a response to COVID-19.'*
- The next step for all settings is to monitor and evaluate the quality of the outdoor provision and the impact on the children's learning, health and well-being.