

Find a suitable outdoor space for a playground.

Make a careful plan of the space.

**Design the playground** for a particular age group.



Remember playground safety – think about sight lines and where children are likely to run.

Your design should provide:

- challenge
- developing physical skills
- imaginative play
- quiet “thinking” play
- discovery and experimentation.



**What would your playground cost?**

## Childcare and early years : Playground design

### Description

This topic focuses on the nature of play and the considerations that need to be borne in mind for good playground design. The topic lends itself to cross curricular work and linking with the enterprise agenda.

### Resources

*measuring devices, large sheets of paper – squares are helpful to aid design, calculators.*

### Activity 1: Designing a playground

This topic provides one overall activity, **Designing a playground**, which will take place over a number of lessons. Ask the pupils to work in groups of three or four. The first step is to find a suitable outdoor space to use for a playground. There is likely to be a section of the hard covered space around the school. The space is measured and key features relevant to the design recorded – is there wall space that could be used? do regularly used pathways cross the space? what is the surface like? is there any shade?

Next the pupils prepare a careful outline plan of the space. Each group need to decide the age group for the intended playground before selecting the items they would like to incorporate in their design. *Sovereign* produce an illustrated hard copy catalogue and also at <http://www.sovereignplayequipment.co.uk/> a well structured website which give both relevant dimensional information and prices. Other websites may also include such information. Pupils will need to decide what emphasis they want to give to the different aspects of play and how the equipment they choose fits in with this. Individual items have space requirements specified. Pupils can make scaled templates for the space requirements and experiment with different layouts in the space. You may want to work with your class on the topic **Painting the playground** and include some of their designs for playground markings. Throughout they will need to be working with scaled models of area measures.

They may need to reconsider the choices they have made to produce an attractive workable layout that meets safety needs. These include sight lines for supervisors, buffer zones between different types of play, considering the needs of children with disabilities and thinking about the directions in which children are likely to be running,

Finally, pupils cost their designs. You may want them to include at this stage the need for special surfacing for safety. Any equipment that includes the possibility of falling from 600mm or more should have a safety surface. Suitable cover for 10m<sup>2</sup> costs about £150. If the costings are include as a variable at the design stage, the use of a spreadsheet will be productive.

The work can be drawn together by each group presenting and defending their design solution to the class.

### The mathematics

Designing a playground involves the pupils in measurement and scaling with a particular focus on area measure. They will need to interpret numerical data provided in a variety of formats and visualise 3-D constructions from 2-D images and numerical information. They will exercise planning and reporting skills.