

Outdoor Learning Experience (Birth to 2 years)

<p>Learning experience: Sensory Integration - I Can Feel with My hands and Feet</p>	<p>Shared by: D K Gowri</p>
<p>Environment: A shady patch of grassy area that allows mats to be spread out. It would be great if the place chosen is nearby plants and trees offering an authentic outdoor ambience. This place should be within the walking vicinity of the school for easy commute.</p>	<p>Estimated time: 15 to 20 minutes (less or more depending on the tolerance and quality active engagement of infant)</p>
<p>Children’s prior experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile infant competent walking on flat indoor surfaces. Infant could also be scooting, crawling, or cruising on flat indoor flooring for this activity. This experience is also suitable for infants who resist textural contact with grass. 	<p>Suitable for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 – 17 months old (mobile infant)
<p>What children will experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The infants will come into contact with grass and gain the tactile experience, for familiarity and confidence. 	<p>EYDF Pillars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Developing Child • The Intentional Programme • The Professional Educarer
<p>What you will need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picnic mats to fit 3 infants • See through PVC (medium thickness) plastic sheet • A basket containing the following textural materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teddy bear - Texture book for infants - Flannel hand puppet 	<p>Benefit - Risk Assessment:</p> <p><u>Benefit:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counteract the movement with their body, especially their core to work on balance, due to the natural resistance that grass surfaces provide for infants who are still mastering their gait, balance and steadiness. • Explore/progress to having feet bare to promote sensory integration. • Engage the sensory system to trigger neural connections, which is conducive for complex cognitive development.

Risk:

- Some infants resist the scratchy textures of grass. The Infant Cognition Center at Yale University states that their instincts lead infants to demonstrate an aversion towards coming into contact with grass that may protect them from dangerous toxins or thorns. This is a natural survival instinct.
- It is very important that the grass is free of animal droppings or chemicals.

Management:

- Ensure that the chosen site is free of animal droppings.
- Avoid the newly manured areas, treated grass for a minimum of 4 weeks.
- Observe child's skin for any signs of potential reaction, intolerance or allergy.
- Engage parents' approval and participation.

How to make it happen

Preparation:

- Place the basket with the textural items on the picnic mat for easy access to the items.
- Lay out the picnic mat and the plastic mat next to each other in a chosen spot (shady location).

Procedure:

Suggestion 1:

1. Bring the infants to the mats.
2. Start with a straw or jute picnic mat.
3. Let infants to get mobile based in their comfort, confidence and pace.
4. Allow infants who are ready and keen to move directly to the grass to do so.
5. Allow infant to move towards the basket of textural materials, if infant is motivated.
6. Otherwise, encourage infant to explore what interests him or her.
7. Accompany encouragement with descriptive words.

Suggestion 2:

1. Allow infant who is still developing confidence to come into contact with grass to move towards the see-through PVC sheet.
2. The PVC sheet would provide infant with a visual texture without the actual tactile experience.
3. A thin sheet would also permit a somewhat 'superficial' evenness that would not overload the infant who needs more time to ease in with textures that grass provide.
4. Infant could be supported with other familiar textured materials such as flannel on this area.