

A Practitioner's Guide to OUTDOOR PLAY BASED LEARNING SHELTER

Help! How do we build a shelter?



One of the most frequently asked questions in outdoor ELC is, what happens when it rains?

The perfect solution to any Scottish weather is to get the children motivated and build yourselves a shelter. Formal arrangements for venues and shelter for emergencies and adverse weather can form part of your Care Inspectorate contingency, for now, let's concentrate on building nooks and crannies to hide, spaces to play, read, eat and rest and of course, take shelter from the rain and get cozy!

Need a demo?

The team at Baltic Street Adventure Playground have created a video to help you take those first steps https://youtu.be/DO8hUM3_tw8

Other Popular Techniques

Pallet & Tarp

This is one of the most effective, simple and low-cost ways of creating shelter on your site. Its temporary structure means it can be built and come down very quickly (very little in outdoor ELC is built to last and this can be a bonus!).

Practitioner's Guide Series
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Simple & low cost

Pallet & Tarp

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Also, it can move position and evolve as the children create and test the shelter's abilities.

As part of the learning process children might ask, which way should the door be? What will stop the wind from blowing in? What do we need to do to make the rain run away and not in pour in and on top of us?

£ Super low cost/free using upcycled equipment

Bell Tent Tarp

These provide temporary large area cover, perfect for eating and heating areas. Some are treated with agents to prevent fungal growth. Some have waterproofing agent that is effective for up a few months.

Some cotton versions can, when new, let some water through and leak around the seams. After the canvas has been wet once this should no longer happen because of the cotton expanding.

Choosing the location for this shelter will help the shelter last longer. Manufacturers have lots of hints and tips for positioning and maintaining your tent.

£ Medium Cost



All Wood Structures

Home-made wooden structures are a slightly more advanced version of the pallet and tarp option. As this is an all pallet/timber structure it can be an exciting opportunity when it comes to design and build. Friendly grandparents and community members can provide resources, tools, pallets and labour! Don't be shy in asking for help.

£ Low Cost

Pre-Built Structures and Huts

For those with a bigger budget looking for a longer-term solution there are a range of pre-built hobbit huts and sheds. Check with your local council for any permissions or warrants. These can be basic with no power or heat, or with full facilities .

All Wood Structures



Homemade

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All Wood Structures



Prebuilt

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Useful Links

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/out-play-practical-guidance-creating-outdoor-play-experiences-children/pages/9/>

<https://creativestarlearning.co.uk/t/shelter/>

<https://www.ltl.org.uk/resources/waterproof-shelter-challenge/>