

Outdoor Classroom

Learning at its finest!

Benefits of Outdoor Classroom:

- * Enhances Investigation
- * Increases Complex Thought
- * Hands on Experiences
- * Prompts Creativity and Discovery
- * Builds confidence
- * Monitored Risk
- * More opportunity for socialization
- * Increased Cognition and healthy brain growth
- * Builds connection to Nature
- * Opportunity for choice
- * Meaningful connection, excitement and growth.

Heritage

From Little Seeds Grow Mighty Trees.

Our Outdoor Environment is ready - with opportunities for learning, exploring, and growing!



Outdoor Garden



Science Exploration and Mud Pit

Children at Heritage School of Discovery share the large play area. The outdoor space. Teachers interact and monitor children as they move from one area to another, making sure they facilitate children's learning and provide appropriate supervision. This type of environment gives children the freedom necessary to choose activities of their interest. By allowing children to choose, they develop purposeful, interesting and enjoyable learning experiences. The result: Happy and excited children in a harmonious environment. With the extension of time outdoors, our students will develop increasingly complex thought and enhanced abilities to investigate situations, hypothesize solutions and solve problems.

Environment:

Trees – Picnic Benches –
Sandbox – Mud Kitchen –
Garden Beds- Chickens —
Art – Building Blocks – And
more!

Activities:

Painting – Coloring – Chalk –
Pretend Play – Games –
Books – Bugs – Gardening –
Water Exploration – Digging
– Measuring – Temperature
– Shadows – Balancing –
And more!

LEARNING OUTDOORS

A substantial body of research indicates that an outdoor learning and play environment with diverse natural elements advances and enriches all the domains relevant to the development, health, and wellbeing of young children. As we increase the amount of outdoor learning so will the benefits. Outdoor learning is made up of the following key elements: Child engagement, Space, Natural materials, Time and Adult Support (Teacher-child interactions).

Engagement- Our outdoor environment provides hands-on experiences, physical activity, social-emotional growth opportunities through peer interaction, and multi-faceted approaches to cognitive development that connects our students to nature and expands learning outcomes.

Space- In an affective and well-designed natural outdoor environment where children spend allotted time utilizing loose parts, children can play with information and concepts. This play is the most serious work they can do. Children must be able to experience things for themselves, process information in a way that is right for them and develop their own solutions. The outdoor classroom provides continuity and predictability so that children know where to find the materials needed to carry out their work. Within this outdoor space, Heritage students will be able to spread out, without the concern of impeding on other children's experiences.

Natural Materials- Natural loose parts such as plants, sticks, stumps, logs, sand, and water can be anything children want them to be and are ever changing. Exploring with materials provided by nature has the added value of helping children learn to care about the world around them. Essentially through constant manipulation of natural materials, children are developing skills and values that result in better stewardship of the earth and its natural resources.

Time- Amongst early childhood programs there is a consistent expectation to artificially divide time into easily manageable blocks. Through the outdoor classroom, there are more opportunities to extend learning for children resulting in engagement and creativity. An important concept for young children's deep engagement is the opportunity to get lost in their play. They do not have to dwell about what their next task will be, who will be interrupting them or how quickly will they need to be done and to move on. It is vital that children can follow through with their tasks uninterrupted and complete them, to increase cognitive and healthy brain growth. Large blocks of time allow children to go deeper in their exploratory processes resulting in creative problem-solving and original ideas.

Adult Support (Teacher-child Interactions)- The role of the teacher in supporting children’s learning in the outdoor classroom is crucial. Too much teacher direction can negatively impact the creativity process of a child before it develops. Teacher’s view of the children’s creative capacities and respect for their experiences inform how they support imaginative play. There are many supportive roles our teachers take with children ranging from observing from a respectful distance to being fully immersed in the child’s play. Within the outdoor classroom, our teachers will make themselves more available and be nearby the children and participate, as it seems necessary.

Heritage desires to provide a stimulating and engaging outdoor learning environment to the community and our preschool students. Through this environment, both teachers and students will gain meaningful learning experiences that fully embrace developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood development.

