

## Language and Communication Friendly Outdoor Play Ideas – Speech and Language Therapy South Glasgow

Children are spending more and more time in outdoor play areas. With a bit of ingenuity and imagination activities outdoors can provide great speech, language and communication opportunities.

### The Physical space

First of all think of your outside space as if it's a classroom/playroom. Clearly label areas e.g outdoor kitchen, quiet corner, climbing frame. Make use of visuals such as choice boards and picture instructions so that children know what their choices are. Without clear demarcation of areas and choice of activities children may just roam and not spend time at an area. A good idea is to have a visual sequence of getting ready to go outside e.g going to the toilet, changing shoes, putting on jacket, lining up. It doesn't matter if you don't have a big space, it's amazing what you can fit in. What's important is that it looks inviting, there's a choice of activities and it sparks imagination.



Think about the activities you already have in your outdoor play area. How can you adapt them to make them more language and communication friendly?

**Outdoor kitchen** – children love pretending to cook, but what if you gave them outdoor recipes to follow, this would support their attention to task, following instructions, vocabulary development, concept development and working together with a partner.

### Mud Pie Recipe

You will need:

- 3 cups of mud 
- 2 cups of water 
- 2 handfuls of twigs 
- 2 green leaves 

What to do:

- 1) Place twigs at bottom of bowl
- 2) Mix water and mud in a bowl until soft
- 3) Pour mud over twigs
- 4) Place 2 green leaves on top.



### Mud Soup Recipe

You will need:

- 2 cups of mud 
- 4 cups of water 
- 2 handfuls of leaves 
- 1 flower 

What to do:

- 1) Put mud and water in a bowl
- 2) Stir with bug stick
- 3) Add leaves and grass and mix
- 4) Put flower on top.

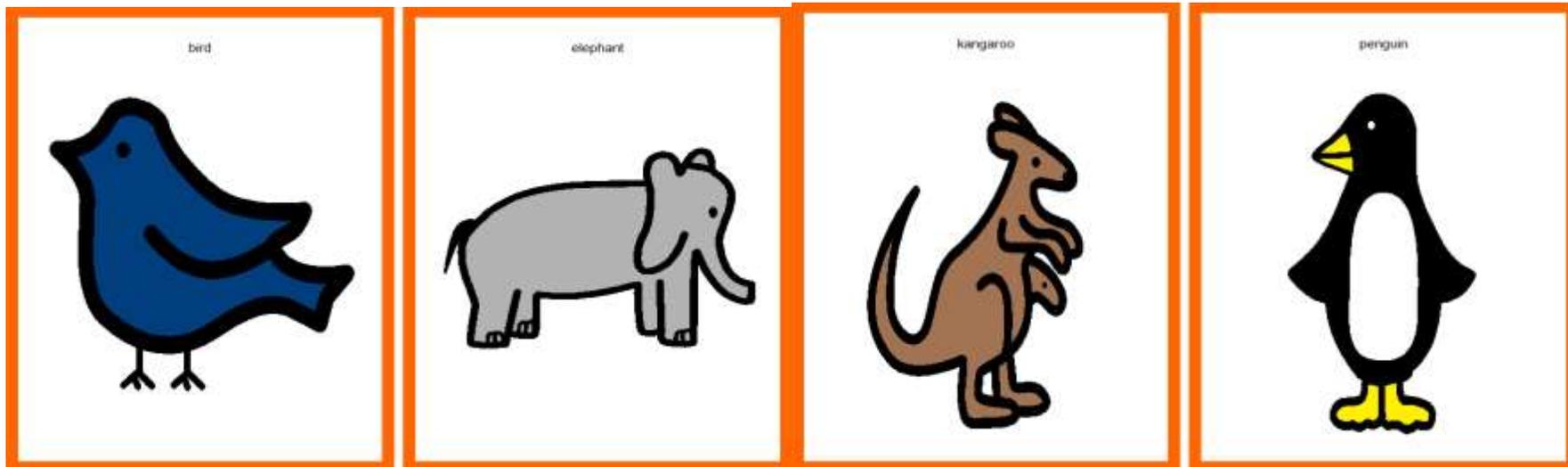


**Bikes and scooters:** Instead of children just riding about anywhere in the area, use paint or cones to create a road, use road signs for following directions, put in a zebra crossing. How about making a car/cycle wash? You could have a visual choice board for types of vehicles – scooter, car, bike, tricycle. Think of all the language learning there would be with these activities.

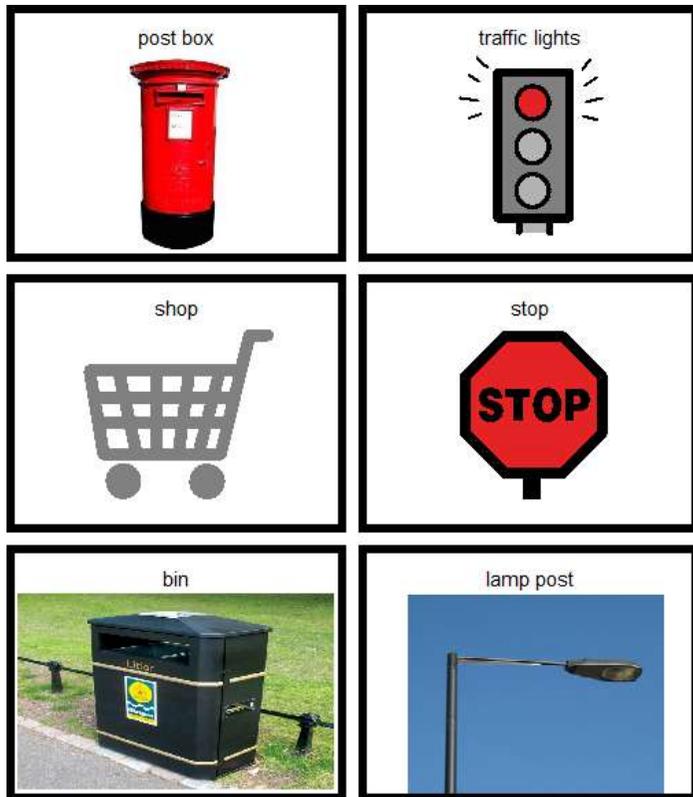


**Create an obstacle course** – use visuals to show children what they need to do at each obstacle. This is a great activity for learning about concepts and prepositions (e.g. through, over, under, around).

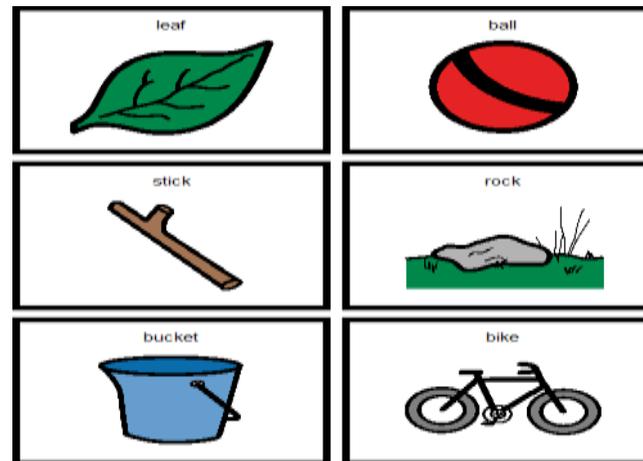
**Pretend to be different animals** – great activity for outside. Show a picture of an animal and ask the children to move like that animal. Great for learning animal names and learning verbs such as swim, hop, leap, slither, flap. Children will learn to focus on the adult giving the instruction, listen for ‘stop’ along with watching for ‘stop’ sign when it is time for a different instruction. Visuals will support all children to be able to engage.



**Walking bingo** – have a visual of what the children have to look out for as you go on your walk. Use photos of items you know the children will pass by such as local shops, park, postbox, street signs. This will get the children paying attention to their environment and learning the names of items around them. Tick the items off as the children spot them. Once you come back using the visual will help support the children to tell others what they saw. Take more photos while you are out of anything interesting the children spot – you can then add this photo to a walking bingo for another day.



You could also do an outdoor scavenger hunt – give the children a visual list of objects they need to collect. They can communicate as a team, deciding who has to go and look for each item. Put in some tricky items e.g. water – they need to discuss how they will collect and carry the water.

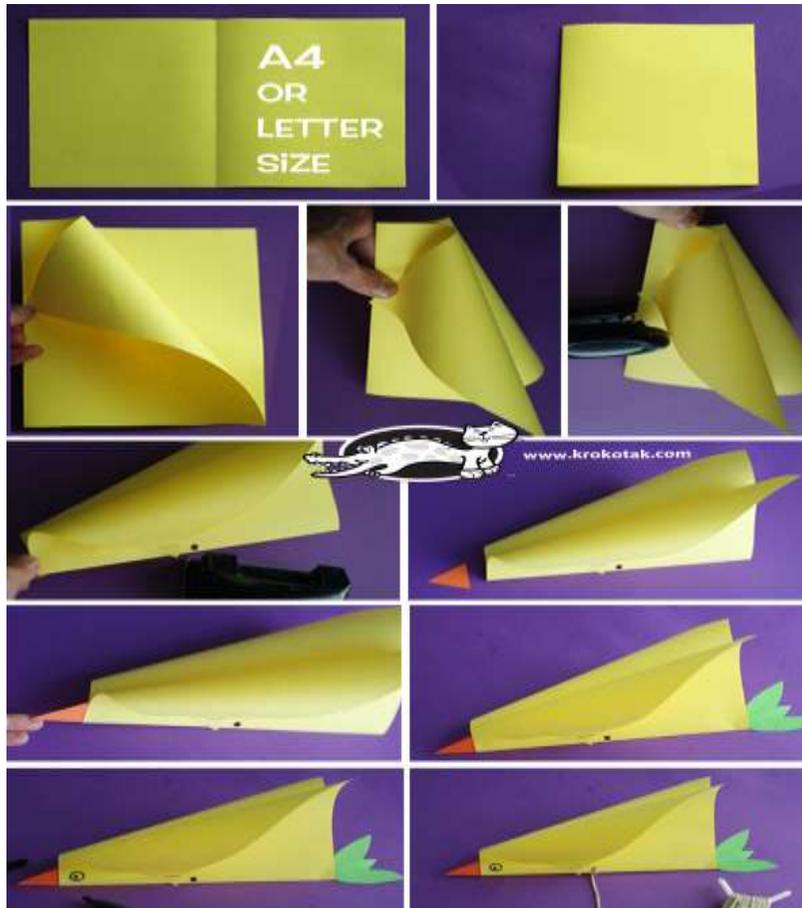


Or you could make it a listening bingo walk – can you hear a bird, a siren, someone laughing, footsteps. Lots of vocabulary to learn.

**Craft activities inside for play outside** – have the children make some microphones and musical instruments, then hold a concert outside. You could have karaoke – use a visual choice board for songs/rhymes, gives roles of singer, dancer, and musician. Create a performance stage, an area for the audience. Clearly label these areas and use the words to name the areas e.g. ‘Musician, dancers and singers go to the stage.’



**Make simple kites and then test them outside** – talk about how high, fast, far they go. A great activity for measuring and producing a graph of the results. Activities like this will develop children’s knowledge of words used in maths e.g higher than, more than, less than, further, lighter, the same as.



**These are just a few ideas. Once you have decided on what you will introduce to your outdoor area then think about the vocabulary you want to focus on for the activity to support children to learn the words they need to talk about what they are doing. Be sure to make lots of use of visuals to make the activities accessible to all.**

**Talk with your link Speech and Language Therapist if you need some support in planning activities to make them language and communication friendly.**

**We’d love to see what ideas you come up with. Please share with us on our twitter page [@NHSGGC\\_SouthSLT](https://twitter.com/NHSGGC_SouthSLT)**