

Timeline:

The project is planned to start in the first week of September, with biweekly meetings on Wednesday and Thursday mornings, summing to over 3 hours.

Budget:

The current plan is outlined below.

Rectangular Raised Beds	3x £100	£300
Soil	40x £3/25L	£120
Water Run	1x £120	£320
Waterproofs	10x £30	£300
Wellies	10x £18	£180
Teepee	3x £140	£420
	Total	£1640

Impact:

From my own personal experiences and from those close to me I find that, many of us who grew up in big cities are not used to being in the outdoors and can be made uncomfortable by anything to do with bugs, mud, and nature in general.

Our aim is to change that by focusing on very young children; it is to lay strong foundations on familiarising themselves with being in nature, to explore, engage and enjoy the outdoors and embrace a healthier lifestyle.

Taking into consideration the age group we work with, we believe that the most effective way is to introduce sensory experiences first, such as touching mud, smelling and handling herbs, observing bugs and birds, water play, having access to a mud kitchen, being given the opportunity to interact with friends and observe the changes that come with the different seasons.

We are planning to have raised beds/ planters at a level that is easy for children to work with and out of the way of running/walking traffic. We want to plant strawberries, peas, tomatoes and climbing beans and to be able to allow children to play with natural materials, to have access to soil, sand, stones, pebbles, bark, and pinecones.

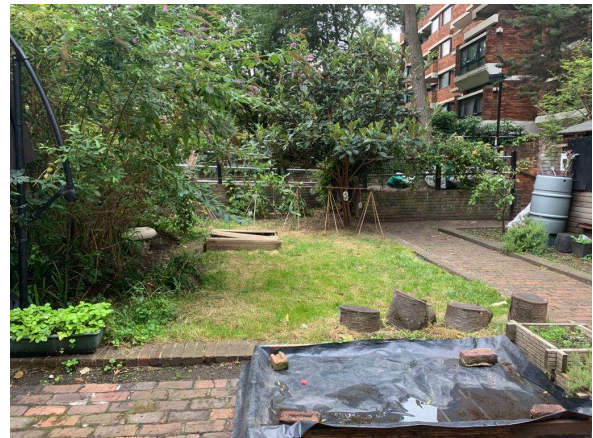
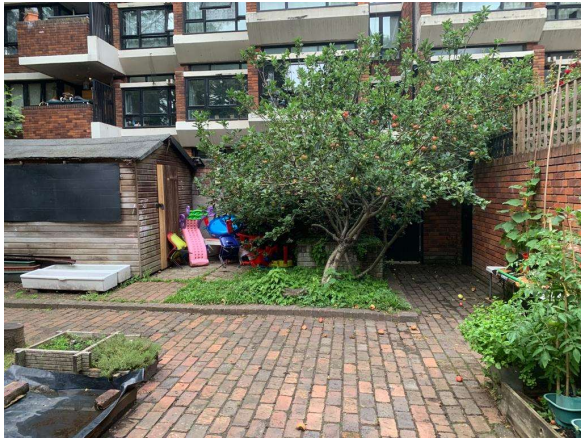
We want the children to learn through play by providing opportunities to explore without limitations by introducing open resources where they can use their creativity and come up with new ideas by connecting with their surroundings in positive ways, and also to increase learning by trying out possibilities, revising hypotheses and discovering the next question...

We want to apply a holistic approach to children's learning and encourage the development of a broader set of skills that underpin learning for life, such as attention, self-control, spatial understanding, motivation/confidence, problem-solving and reflection.

Location:

The project will be taking place in an approximately 100 square metre garden in Lillington and Longmoore Gardens. The garden is mostly used by a few local residents and childminders. Other green spaces on the estate include an allotment and sensory garden.

Photos of the current garden:



Main Goals:

- Foster a Positive Connection with Nature: Create a nurturing environment where young children can comfortably engage with nature, develop an appreciation for the outdoors, and overcome any discomfort related to bugs, mud, and natural elements.
- Provide Sensory Learning Experiences: Introduce sensory experiences like touching mud, handling herbs, observing bugs and birds, and engaging in water play to stimulate children's senses and facilitate their exploration of the natural world.

- **Encourage Play-Based Learning:** Design the garden with open-ended resources that allow children to play creatively, connect with their surroundings, and come up with new ideas. Emphasize learning through play to support children's holistic development and curiosity.
- **Enhance Practical Gardening Skills:** Implement raised beds and planters at child-friendly heights to enable easy access and involvement in gardening activities. Cultivate simple herbs and fruits to teach children about planting, nurturing, and harvesting their own food.
- **Promote Life Skills and Wellbeing:** Focus on the development of a range of life skills, including attention, self-control, spatial understanding, motivation/confidence, problem-solving, and reflection. Encourage a healthier lifestyle and instill values of sustainability and environmental awareness.

The garden will be for children aged 0-8 years. At least twenty children will benefit from this garden's development. There are already gardening tools and a shed that will be kept for the new garden, and there is water access and a water butt.

Childminders have permission from the estate's Residents' Association to use and improve this garden.

Activities on Offer:

Examples of activities we plan to offer include:

- **Bug Hunts and Nature Observation:** Organize bug hunts or nature scavenger hunts where children can explore the garden, observe bugs, birds, and other critters, and learn about the natural environment.
- **Planting and Gardening:** Engage children in planting and nurturing vegetables like strawberries, peas, tomatoes, and climbing beans in the raised beds or planters. Teach them about gardening techniques, caring for plants, and the importance of growing their own food.
- **Nature Art and Craft:** Encourage children to create art using natural materials like leaves, flowers, and pinecones. Provide art supplies and let their creativity blossom in the garden setting.
- **Seasonal Explorations:** Organize activities related to the changing seasons, such as leaf collages in autumn, snow painting in winter, flower crown making in spring, and nature-inspired crafts in summer.
- **Garden Yoga and Mindfulness:** Introduce simple yoga poses or mindfulness exercises tailored to children to help them connect with nature and practice relaxation techniques.
- **Outdoor Music and Dance:** Set up an area for children to explore making music with natural materials like sticks and stones or have a space for dancing and movement activities.