



The Outdoor Classroom

A planning guide for your pre-school or school

1	Project ideas and a site plan	This is your first opportunity to get the students involved. Brainstorm project ideas (eg butterfly garden, seating, aquatic study area, etc) and list in order of priority. Don't forget to incorporate loads of shade into your site plan - we want kids to catch the nature bug, not a nasty case of sunburn. Your 0800 Sunshade team can provide a design plan that maps out the amount of shade you will receive at various times of the day and year. As part of your research visit as many other centres / schools as you can to gather ideas from their projects - takes heaps of photos for reference. With limited funding available, getting it right the first time is important.
2	Short and long-term goals	Prioritise your goals. Don't try to accomplish all of your projects in the first six months, or even the first year. Consider developing your outdoor classroom in phases.
3	Schedule	Develop a project schedule with realistic deadlines for each task.
4	Budget	Put together budget estimates before beginning construction of your projects and be sure to include maintenance costs. At 0800 Sunshade we provide comprehensive proposals that include all costs upfront, so there are no nasty surprises.
5	Donations/grants	Identify funding sources including in-kind donations of goods and services, monetary donations, and grant opportunities.
6	Work plan	<p>Establish "work days" for student, parents and community volunteers. Always include students in the development of the outdoor classroom site—this provides excellent hands-on activities and learning opportunities for the students in addition to creating a sense of ownership.</p> <p>Have a maintenance plan! Many outdoor classroom sites have met their demise during the summer when they were neglected. Divvy maintenance up between classes - the younger classes might be charged with regular watering for example.</p>
7	Activities	Identify hands-on, educational activities that will be utilised in your outdoor classroom. Schedule teacher workshops to brainstorm and share a variety of activities that can be used in your outdoor classroom.
8	Publicity	Publicise your outdoor classroom through the local press, school newsletters, bulletin boards, signs, etc. The more people who know about your project, the more support you will be able to garner.
9	Photographs	Keep a scrapbook with before and after photos, and photos of students and volunteers working in the outdoor classroom. These photos will be helpful for grant applications and press releases in addition to tracking your progress.