

25 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR OUTDOOR SPACE

by Jim Greenman, author of *Caring Spaces, Learning Places*

- 1) Reconsider your use of space: Are you using your space effectively? What more could you do? Think of your space as an outdoor classroom and an environmental yard.
- 2) Improve your outdoor storage: The more convenient storage outside, the more loose parts. Add storage areas, sheds, benches, cages, boxes
- 3) Organize your outdoor storage: If you can't find it or get to it, you can't use it. Add shelves, hooks, crates, bins, sacks
- 4) Loose parts: Add trikes, wagons, wheelbarrows, balls, bags, jump ropes, buckets, shovels, sifters, bicycle tires, tubes, tubs, etc.
- 5) Increase your use of water: Add hoses, water tables, tubs, sprinklers, gutters, spray bottles, ice
- 6) Wrap your space: wrap a climber with a parachute or tarp
- 7) Improve your landscape: add trees, shrubs, berms, round boulders, drift wood, plants
- 8) Improve your outdoor art: add easels, chalk, big paint brushes
- 9) Natural materials: Take advantage of leaves, pods, driftwood, melon size stones, add a sand or mud pit
- 10) Create a Construction Zone: Add cartons, blocks, crates planks, sawhorses, rope, duct tape, poles with pulleys and clotheslines
- 11) Take-out science: magnifying glasses, measuring tape, jars, rain gauges, chemicals (food coloring, baking soda, paint)
- 12) Develop a pathway: Use pavers, wood rounds, stone, buried tires and posts, slats
- 13) Ornamental fences: picket or rail to define space, to climb, to trail your hands on
- 14) More loose parts: add fabric, dress up clothes, back packs, sacks wood pieces, wheels

- 15) Sites for drama: create a lean-to, a playhouse, a grotto, a platform
- 16) Garden plots or planters: Create multiple small plots or use planters
- 17) Birds and animals: bird feeders, bird baths, a rabbit area, a butterfly garden
- 18) Create skeletal structures: simple benches, ladder-like frames, hurdle-like structures
- 19) Use other outdoor space: your sidewalk, small patches in front or on the side, parks
- 20) Improve playground safety: Use the Consumer Product Safety Commission Guidelines
- 21) Picnic tables and benches: child size and adult size
- 22) Throwing area: create a safe area to throw beanbags, balls, stones
- 23) A jumping platform: create places to jump from 24 to 36 inches high
- 24) Create a multi-age family area or time on the playground
- 25) Create places to balance: beams, logs, stumps