

Play & Learn Outdoors


able
canopies
& outdoor projects

Issue 2.9

June 2023

Fun Ideas to Expand a Safe Learning Environment for Your School

Outside Drama Lessons

Page 8

Solihull College Leads the Way...

Page 4

Tips for SUMMER OUTSIDE LEARNING

Page 6

What to Look out for in Timber Canopies

Page 7

How to Protect Children from the Summer Sun

Page 9

WELCOME TO THE JUNE EDITION OF PLAY & LEARN OUTDOORS

Summer is finally in full swing and the end of the school year is just around the corner.

So you may be at the stage where you are tying up loose ends, looking for ideas for the year ahead, or looking to complete projects in the coming weeks.

If its the latter of the two, we may just have you covered. In this months edition of P&LO, you will discover a selection of outdoor play and learning tips which you can put into action either in the coming

weeks, or in the new school year in September.

If you are looking to order a canopy soon, you'll be pleased to discover that we still have some summer installation slots so be sure to get in contact to secure your preferred dates.

When you get a chance, take a break, sit back, relax with your favorite drink and have a flick through this edition of P&LO. Hopefully you'll be able to take some ideas back to the classroom.

If you enjoy reading P&LO, why not pass a copy or two onto your colleagues to also enjoy? If they would like to receive their own copies, email us at: marketing@ablecanopies.co.uk and we'll add them to the list.

Enjoy the summer and we'll be back in early autumn for more ideas and inspiration.

Best Wishes
Tracy Meakins
Managing Director

CONTENTS

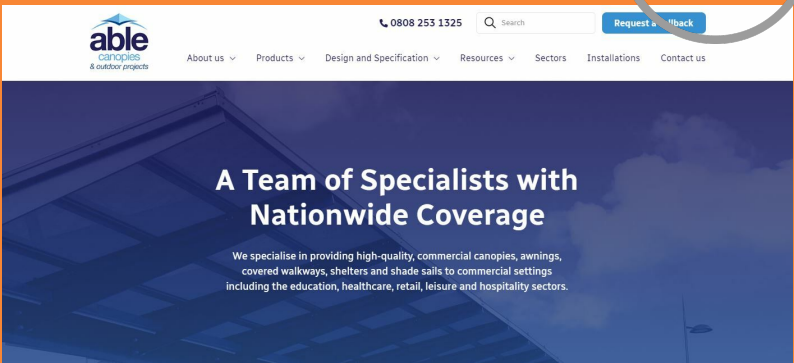
Page 2	We Have a Brand-New Website
Page 3	How Outside Drama Lessons Can Help Mental Well-Being
Page 4 - 5	Solihull Sixth Form College Leads the Way with Outdoor Studying Facilities
Page 6	Tips for Summer Outside Learning
Page 7	Four Important Features to Look out for in Timber Canopies
Page 8	How Outside Drama Lessons Can Help Student Mental Well-Being
Page 9	How to Protect Children from the Summer Sun
Page 10 - 11	A Selection of Canopies Installed in the Last Three Months

We Have a Brand-New Website

It's been a long time in the making and we are very proud and excited to announce that our brand-new website is now up and running.

The new website has been designed with you, our customers in mind to make it user-friendly so its easy to navigate, search and find products as well as various resources and installations local to you.

It has a fresh, new appearance making it much more modern and visual, and we really hope you like it. You can view it at our usual web address:
www.ablecanopies.co.uk



TIPS FOR INVOLVING PARENTS IN FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Your school fundraising events are often essential in securing additional benefits for the children at school. You might be fundraising for play equipment, a school canopy, or a chicken coop and chickens, for example. You may also wish to fundraise for various charities throughout the year. These might be regular charity events, such as red nose day or fundraising for a local charity.

Whatever your fundraising plans this year, having the support of parents is pivotal in making your fundraising a success. In this article, we share our tips for involving parents in fundraising events.

1. Make Sure Parents feel Involved in Planning

Offer lots of chances for parents to join in with fundraising activities. They might not wish to sign up straight away. Keep meeting times and dates advertised for all parents to join when they are available. If parents have been helpful in previous events you can send them a direct message inviting them to help fundraise again, this can be a nice touch.

2. Give plenty of Notice for Fundraising Events

Perhaps you wish to hold an event to raise money for charity.



This might involve a sponsored activity like a sponsored walk or sponsored reading challenge. It can take a little bit of time for parents to get in contact with friends, family, and neighbours to see if they would like to sponsor their child so make sure the sponsorship cards are given out in plenty of time.

3. Get Parents Involved in the Event

Try to choose activities that you think parents might enjoy. So for next years Easter fair, perhaps set up a family Easter egg hunt. You could set up a crafting station outside, even under your school canopy so parents can craft with their children for a small donation, without having to purchase all the supplies and deal with the mess. Make sure you've got a photo place so families can share pictures of them enjoying the event.

4. Thank Parents for the Help and Support

Make sure you thank parents for their help and support after the event. Try to reach parents in as many ways as possible including a Facebook post straight after the event and to the school pages as well. Ask your headteacher for parents to be thanked in the newsletter.

Final Word: Tips for Involving Parents in Fundraising Events

Parents are often keen to help with fundraising activities for your school but require time to get involved and to feel part of the process. Ensuring everyone knows what is expected of them is also a great idea. Good luck with your future fundraising events.



DOWNLOAD your FREE A-Z fundraising Pack here:
www.ablecanopies.co.uk/guides/





SOLIHULL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE LEADS THE WAY WITH OUTDOOR STUDYING FACILITIES

Sixth-form colleges often find themselves with students looking for a quiet place to study or socialise on their free periods. Offering multiple designated areas for them to do so will avoid congestion in areas you'd rather not have congestion, and also provide them with the option (and freedom) to study in different areas that suits them.

Sometimes it's nice for students to take studying outside for some fresh air which can liven them up a little, making them more motivated. A change of scenery is also great, and offering a dry and sheltered place where students can learn outside is a great way to encourage them to get the books out during their free periods.

And that's exactly what Solihull Sixth Form College have done. The further education college in West Midlands which was founded in 1974, have had a total of three student study canopies installed on their grounds within the last 3 years.

In August 2021, we supplied and installed a 12m x 6m Welford Dome Free Standing Canopy (pictured above) at the college which is part of the Summit Learning Trust to provide shade and shelter outside so their students can study and dine outside throughout the whole year.

We then returned back to site in August 2022 to fulfil their second canopy order which was also for a 12m x 6m Welford Dome Free Standing Canopy (pictured below) and was situated adjacent to the existing canopy we installed the previous year.



Then in April 2023, we were back again to install their third canopy (pictured below) in the same size and colour which was Basalt Grey (RAL 7012). The college now has ample shade and shelter with plenty of seating underneath which the students can enjoy all year round, no matter if it's raining, or if the summer sun is beating down on them.



The Welford Dome Free Standing Canopy protects from over 98% of the sun's harmful UV rays making the area underneath, shaded and cooler on those hot summer days.

"Super project management from concept to completion . Very good pre/post project support & communication. Totally recommend Able Canopies."

"Excellent service by all the engineers and the office/projects team. Thank you."

- Mark Guttridge, Facilities Manager

TIPS FOR SUMMER OUTSIDE LEARNING

The summer is a great time for outside learning, and can provide health benefits including physical and mental wellbeing. It is definitely a teaching option worth exploring for your class. Here are some tips to incorporate summer outside learning into your school day.

Make Sure The Children Are Prepared

Let parents know that you plan to regularly take teaching outside and ask parents to ensure children come in prepared with sunhats, sunglasses, plenty of drinks, and suncream when required. You might have to remind parents regularly. A school canopy is a great way to add a shaded outside area for hot days too.

Try Starting the Day Outside

Often teachers leave outside learning for later in the school day, but actually, early morning is a good time to learn outside. Beginning the

day outside in the fresh air, with work that can be repetitive, like literacy, spelling, or maths, can be a great way to add extra interest. Enjoying a class story or reading books outside for half an hour is another option.

Try A Variety of Lessons Outside

Don't just rely on teaching outside for science and natural history. Artwork is ideal for outside lessons; the outdoor space will provide lots of scope for art projects. French lessons can be a great option for summer outside learning to provide greater space for children to move around and practice conversations in French. By setting up some role-play options you can incorporate drama lessons too.

Establish a Meeting Area

If you are moving about your outside space, make sure you start

and end in an established meeting area. This could be the benches under your canopy or some rugs on the ground. You can use a whistle to indicate when everyone should return. This way, if you have something to share or everyone has spread out further you can get everyone back together again. The children will be able to explore with the greater freedom that outside learning can offer but have clear expectations for when the session has ended.

Conclusion

Summer outside learning is a lovely way to enjoy nature and all the benefits this brings to both physical and mental wellbeing. You can make the most of outdoor learning by embracing a wide range of ways to teach outside. Clear expectations of the students will help your outside learning go well and allow the children to learn well outside in



4 IMPORTANT FEATURES TO LOOK OUT FOR IN TIMBER CANOPIES

Timber canopies have become very popular within the world of shade and shelter and if you choose a good quality timber canopy, you will notice they offer many benefits. A timber canopy construction is great for aesthetics and fits in perfectly with modern and traditional buildings making it a great all-rounder.

Here's four important features that you should look out for when choosing a timber canopy in order to make sure it is of the highest quality so that it will last for many years to come.

1. Material and Finish

Check to see what the final feel of the timber will be like – will it be rough? Ask for timber which has been planed to a smooth finish or choose a glu-laminated canopy which has a very smooth finish with no risk of splinters.

2. Framework Fixings

Some timber canopy suppliers will fix the canopy together with unsightly fixing which ruin the final appearance of the canopy. Ask what fixings will be used to join the framework together. Ask for images if possible. For the best-looking canopy, use a supplier who can offer invisible fixings – these are internal fixings which are created using specially designed timber mullions.

Able Canopies' timber canopies

feature steel post feet which prevent the timber posts being in contact with the ground, ensuring the posts remain damage free and also dramatically reducing the risk of the timber rotting.

3. Protection from Rotting

Timber is very susceptible to rot and weathering and so it is vitally important to choose a product which is treated and protected from water ingress. Rotting is most likely to start from the ground up, as water can soak up from the ground into the posts, a further measure to ensure rotting is prevented as much as possible is to choose a timber product which has extra protection at ground level. As mentioned above, all Able Canopies timber canopies have a steel connection to the ground which means no timber touches the floor, helping prevent water ingress through the bottom of the posts and also creating an attractive finish to the canopy.

4. Sustainable Sourcing

The world's forests are vitally important to us all, providing us with renewable raw materials and energy, maintaining biodiversity and protecting land and water resources. With many of the world's forests under threat, it is a good idea to choose a supplier who uses timber from a sustainable source – ideally choose a supplier who received their timber from source which has a recognised forestry certification such as PEFC.

Timber Canopies from the Canopy Experts

Able Canopies supply and install a superb range of sustainable, commercial timber canopies which are constructed from the highest quality glu-laminated timber. We have five standard canopies and three standard shelters to choose from however, we can also design bespoke timber canopies to suit your requirements.





HOW OUTSIDE DRAMA LESSONS CAN HELP STUDENT MENTAL WELL-BEING

Drama and outside play are great not just for mental health, but also for your students to learn about themselves. Combining the two can be great fun, especially in the last term. So here are some ideas on how outside summer drama can help with your students mental well-being.

Explores Emotions and Communications

One of the biggest challenges for children is finding a way that they can communicate with others. It can often mean that children can get frustrated in social situations and this can lead to conflict and upset. However, drama can be a great way to learn about different communication techniques and explore emotions.

It is often found that drama can also be a good way for some children to learn more about themselves and explore their personalities. It's a good option for those who are also shy to find ways to feel appreciated for their contributions.

Improves Confidence

Both playing outside and drama can help improve confidence. Confidence is intricately linked to success. Those who are confident will be able to better perform in exams and coursework, and they will also be able to contribute better in the classroom, especially during group exercises or when you're asking for solutions from the class.

Confidence can also be good for work in later life. They'll be able to take on tasks that are outside of their comfort zone, making them a more valued team member.

Health

Drama is a form of exercise and being outside is known to be good for health. Spending more time outside allows children to benefit from the fresh air. And because they're outside, they're more likely to be active and happy, helping them to reduce unhealthy habits.

This can be very important.

Improves Mood

Playing outside and drama can be great ways to improve the mood of those partaking in the activity. And students should notice the effects as they are doing the activity. They should also notice an improvement in their mood after taking part in outside drama lessons.

One of the problems is that children might become frustrated if they aren't participating and feel like they're isolated. So it is important to always have smaller groups, where children can participate significantly throughout the lesson.

Conclusion

For children, outdoor playtime and drama are excellent combinations that can help them explore their feelings and be more active. Finding ways to build drama and outside time into your school lesson plan.



HOW TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM THE SUMMER SUN

It can get really hot during the summer school term, and both pupils and teachers can find the heat uncomfortable. Children must be protected from the sun's harmful UV rays. Excessive sun exposure can also make children feel unwell, and school attendance must stay high. Here are some options for protecting children from summer weather.

Sun Cream and Hats

Ask parents to send their children in with a cap that offers protection from the sun. Children can also bring in sunglasses. They should also have sun cream applied before school and bring their sun cream into school to reapply should they need to. Whatever your sun protection policy, you should make it clear to parents and send letters and emails, etc.

School Canopies

School canopies are a great way to protect children when they play outside by offering a shaded area away from the sun's rays. A

canopy can also keep children cooler without the sun shining directly on them, creating a more ideal location for outside lessons.

It is advised that children should stay in the shade between 11am and 4pm, so having plenty of space for children to play under a canopy is ideal for helping them stay out of the sun.

They can also be treated so they don't fade in the sun and remain in good condition. They can offer protection against rain and wind too.

Reduce Down Activity

Make sure there are quite shady places for children to relax and cool down on hot days. It is worth remembering that playtime is during the hottest time of the day and you need to make sure that the pupils aren't getting too hot. You could set up cool-down rooms where children can sit and read or play puzzles. Make sure there's plenty of water available.

Stay Hydrated

Encourage pupils to drink plenty of water throughout the day. Squash can be handed out to help with hydration on very hot days. Staying hydrated will prevent the children from getting ill from heat exhaustion and related conditions.

Conclusion

Children must be kept safe during the summer term. Ask parents to make sure children are ready for school in the summer months with suitable clothing, including sun hats, etc. They should also have sun cream applied before school and bring their sun cream with them as well. They should also have plenty of drinks.

While at school, it is the school's responsibility to make sure the pupils don't overheat, and that they have places to play in the shade, stay hydrated and enjoy the summer term.

Here's a selection of the canopies we have installed since the last edition of P&LO





Able Canopies: The Canopy Experts



Canopies &
Covered
Walkways

Cycle &
Waiting
Shelters

Shade Sails
& Tensile
Structures



Awnings &
Playground
Accessories

External
Works:
Surfacing,
Fencing etc.

Able Canopies are the canopy experts. We provide safe and stylish weather protection that transforms outside spaces.

- Every year we complete hundreds of successful school canopy installations across the UK
- These canopies provide schools with effective shelter & areas for outdoor learning and dining
- We also work with universities and the retail, leisure & hospitality sectors to effectively transform outside space
- Our team of canopy experts work with schools, architects & contractors to ensure on time, on budget, project completion
- To ensure consistent high quality we control the design, manufacture & installation process of our canopies

***"Very good service.
Installation was quick
and problem free. Site
left clean and tidy."***

- Christ the King RC Primary
School, Lancashire

(pictured above)

Installed April 2023

If you would like a canopy, shelter or shade sail quotation, contact us today:

Call: 0800 389 9072 | **Email:** sales@ablecanopies.co.uk



able
canopies
& outdoor projects