

Play & Learn Outdoors

from the canopy experts

able
canopies
& outdoor projects

Issue 3.0

September 2023

Fun Ideas to Expand a Safe Learning Environment for Your School

**Turning
Trash into
Cash**

Page 3

**Take Reading
Outside This
Autumn**

Page 4

INCORPORATING

**LEAVES INTO
LESSONS**

Page 8

**How to
Attract
Sponsors for
Autumn
Events**

**Plus, so much more including lots of
inspiration for your outside area.**

Page 10

WELCOME TO THE SEPTEMBER EDITION OF PLAY & LEARN OUTDOORS

The new school year has just began, everyone is refreshed and ready for the new term and to top it off, the summer is still hanging in there, treating us to some gorgeous late summer days.

You may have spent some of the summer prepping for the year ahead however, if you didn't, I don't blame you, you deserved that rest! We're here to help you out with your lessons plans, providing you with ideas that you can incorporate into your pupils projects.

In this months edition of P&LO, you will find plenty of outdoor play ideas, inspiration for your outside space and fundraising tips. We've also reintroduced our popular 'Dates for Your Diary' content to add

a little extra fun to the school day.

If you are looking to order a canopy, we still have installation slots left for the October half term, but also remember that we have extensive experience installing canopies during term time too.

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 autumn and we'll be back in the winter for more ideas and inspiration.

Best Wishes

Tracy Meakins

Managing Director



CONTENTS

Page 3	Turning Trash into Cash
Page 4	How Outside Reading Can Enhance the Experience
Page 5	We've Reduced our Carbon Footprint
Page 6-7	Case Study: Essex School Outdoor Play & Learning Area
Page 8	Incorporating Leaves into Lessons
Page 9	Employee Spotlight: Rachel Batchelor
Page 10	How to Attract Sponsors for Autumn Events
Page 11	Protect Your Outside Equipment from UV Rays
Page 12	Tips for Involving Parents in Fundraising Events
Page 13	Dates for Your Diary
Page 14-15	A Selection of Canopies Installed in the Last Three Months

TURNING TRASH INTO CASH



At Able Canopies, we are very eco-conscious and are often looking for ways we can recycle more and waste less. So, when we discovered that our local Lions Club have an **ink cartridge recycling scheme**, we jumped straight on it.

Clacton on Sea Lions Club collect used computer ink cartridges which are then sent to East Anglian Children's Hospice for recycling, to raise cash so they can continue with all the fantastic care they provide for children with life-threatening conditions.

Each ink cartridge they recycle can raise from £5 - £25 depending on the type of cartridge which is a fantastic amount of money. **Within the last 12 months, they have recycled 810 ink cartridges which is x810 ink cartridges that have been saved from landfill and have raised between £4,050 and £20,250 for East Anglian Children's Hospice.** The difference that money can make for the charity is amazing.

So, my reason for sharing this with you is although you may not be local and therefore are unable to donate to this scheme, **there may be a charity or organisation near you that would love to**

recycle your old ink cartridges.

I love these type of schemes as they are a double whammy – they raise funds for charities whilst also reducing waste; there's no reason not to sign up to one.

We have also started recycling our crisp packets

with Tendring Primary Recycle Scheme who accept a huge variety of different items which they recycle via the TerraCycle scheme. The funds raised go towards the running of the recycling scheme and the

school's current projects.

Being an office, I'm sure you can imagine the number of crisp packets we get through in a day, let alone a week. We therefore look forward to saving all those crisp packets from going to waste and helping the school raise those much needed funds.

The TerraCycle website has a great feature which allows to you discover the 'drop off' points local to you so you can easily recycle your waste. Find your local drop off site here:

www.terracycle.com/en-GB/about-terracycle/drop_off_locations



HOW OUTSIDE READING CAN ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE



Reading outside is a great way to make more of the experience of reading. You can enjoy the changing seasons and the weather while reading. Being outside can enhance children's memory and adds a fun element to reading time.

Here are some ideas for enjoying reading outside.

Reading Picnic

Your pupils could use the time in cooking lessons to bake some simple cakes to eat outside whilst

reading. Scones or small cakes make a great option, or you could make some savoury pasties or samosas for example. These can be packed up in a cool bag and taken outside to share among the class while enjoying their favourite books.

Reading Out Loud

Outside is the ideal place to share your class storybook. You can ask the children to take turns to read from the text. A school canopy will enable you to all get outside to enjoy the lesson whatever the weather. If it is raining the canopy will offer shade and if it is a bright sunny day, the canopy will protect the children from the sun's UV rays.

Re-enactment

Re-enacting favourite books or the class text is a great way to explore characters and what is happening in the story. You could focus on evidence and reasoning and ask children to act out what they think might happen when you get to a certain part of the story.

Treasure Hunt

In early years you could print and cut out scenes from a story. This

would be ideal for fairy tales like Goldilocks and the Three Bears. You could hide these scenes around the playground and playing field and ask the children to find them in teams. They can then work to put together the story and demonstrate story sequencing.

Spelling Tests

You could print out large letters on paper and ask your pupils to work together to spell out words and practice their spelling. This is an ideal activity under your school canopy as it will keep the paper dry but would also work well on a sunny day when the playground or school field is dry.

Alternatively, the children could take their wipe boards outside to practice their spelling.

Conclusion

Reading is such an important aspect of education and taking your class outside to read can enhance the activity. How do you make the most of reading outside with your pupils?



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





WE'VE REDUCED OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

The environmental report for our previous financial year of 2022-2023 has been published and the results are fantastic. **We have reduced our carbon footprint by 4.20 tonnes** compared to the previous financial year and **we have off-set our carbon footprint by 32.20 tonnes in total for the whole year.**

These are impressive numbers, especially as we had a fantastic year for supplying and installing commercial canopies to schools, hospitals, shops and commercial buildings across the UK. The figures are doubly impressive as office-based administration organisations generally have a carbon footprint of between 2 and 5 tonnes per employee, and we are at the lower end of those figures.

Office Waste:

A figure that I found particularly impressive is that **100% off our waste has been diverted from landfill**, with 42.37% of it being

recycled and the rest sent to an energy recovery facility or to produce Refuse Derived Fuel. This is where the waste is turned into energy to power homes and businesses, achieving virtually zero landfill. These are fantastic numbers and does wonders for the planet.

Tree Planting:

Something that has helped us achieve such a good carbon footprint is our tree planting Initiative. **Since 2021, we have been planting two trees per school canopy order** and in the last financial year, we planted a whopping 224 trees. To find out more about our tree planting initiative visit:

www.ablecanopies.co.uk/trees

Moving on:

Going forward, we will continue to do what we can to reduce our carbon footprint further to continue securing our ISO14001 certification and do our bit to look after this

wonderful planet we live on.

We have also recently become aware of a scheme that our local Lions Club are running where they collect used printer ink cartridges to send to East Anglian Children's Hospice for recycling. The hospice then receives a donation per ink cartridge for £5-£25 per cartridge depending on the type.

We have been saving our ink cartridges, in hope that we would find a recycling scheme, so we therefore had a box of around 30 cartridges that we donated to them. Not only were these saved from going to landfill, but the hospice would have **received between £150 to £900** for this box alone. We will continue to recycle our ink cartridges this way and urge you to see if you can find a similar scheme local to you.

What does your organisation do to keep your carbon emissions down? Have any of the above inspired you?

DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE ECO-FRIENDLY ACTIVITY PACK

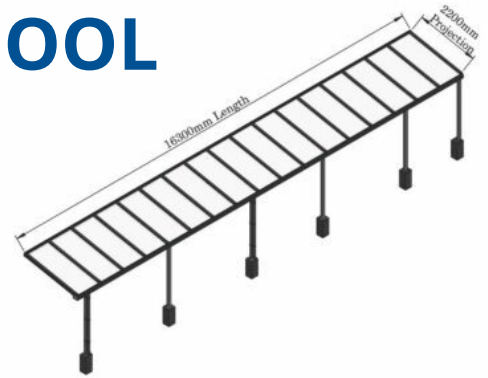
The Eco-Friendly Activity Pack is great tool for your lessons as it features a selection of worksheets that are ready to use with your pupils, as well as information regarding the importance of trees, pollination and recycling along with interesting eco-friendly facts.

Download and print your free copy now:
www.ablecanopies.co.uk/guides/



CASE STUDY: COURTYARD CANOPY AT RUSH GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Client: London Borough of Barking & Dagenham
Product: The Coniston Wall Mounted Canopy
Size: 16.3m x 2.2m
Frame Colour: Hipca White
Installation Date: June 2023



Brief

Having worked with the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham before on a number of projects, they contacted us again regarding their most recent project at Rush Green Primary School.

The school which is located in Dagenham were having works completed which included a single storey extension, internal alterations, and refurbishment. As part of the works, they required a wall mounted canopy in their quad courtyard area to provide shade and shelter all year round.

Proposal

As requested, we provided an estimate for a Coniston Wall Mounted Canopy with a length of 16.3 metres and a projection of 2.2 metres. Because the Coniston is mounted to a wall, it requires a suitable wall to fix to; the building at Rush Green Primary School was a block construction which was

covered with render, which is one of the many ideal wall constructions for the Coniston's requirements.

In the case where a wall may not have a suitable construction for a wall mounted canopy, we can supply the Coniston as a free-standing canopy with rear posts. Alternatively, we also have a number of free standing canopies that are similar in appearance to the Coniston which are the Grange Free Standing Canopy and for those with lower budgets, the Grange Junior Free Standing Canopy.

Solution

Upon comparing our canopy quotation to two other companies, an order was placed for our Coniston Wall Mounted Canopy in May 2023.

At the pre-site stage, there was a number of points to be discussed outside of the usual specifics which were:

Foundations:

Unless otherwise stated, foundations are included in all our canopy quotations. The flooring in at Rush Green Primary School featured raised decking, so we needed to investigate the area underneath the decking to check it was suitable for our foundations and they were.

Access and Obstructions:

The quad area features a pond which could have made an obstruction however, it was agreed that the pond would be covered over with strong boards so we could work over it.

The canopy was installed at the start of June 2023 as scheduled with no problems along the way.

If you have a similar project in mind, contact us today to request a free estimate or discuss a bespoke canopy with us.





Above: Before canopy installation. Below: After canopy installation.



INCORPORATING LEAVES INTO LESSONS

It is that time of year again when the leaves start to fall off the trees. Autumn can be a very colourful season, especially for children as the outdoors can become a big adventure. Outdoor crafts have been proven to be very beneficial to children as they have a chance to improve skills that are important in development like creativity, confidence, and imagination. One way to help children explore the outdoors in autumn is to use leaves in their art projects. Leaves in Autumn are all different colours, sizes and textures which makes them an excellent material to make art with. Collecting them can be a lot of fun as you can go anywhere to collect your leaves for art like a forest, where you will find all different coloured leaves.

Here are a few activities that children can do with leaves.

Painting with Autumn Leaves

Why not make a beautiful masterpiece by using leaves as stencils? Lay a few leaves out on a piece of paper or card and hold them in place with blue-tac. Then get the children to choose a range of coloured paint which they can use to paint around the leaves using them as a stencil. Any media can be used to create different designs and textures like a sponge or a paintbrush. Or you could ask the children to paint the leaves and decorate them, so you have some coloured

leaves that can be used as artwork. The important thing is that the children get the freedom to be able to make artwork so that they have a chance to practice their creative skills.

Crafting an autumn leaf suncatcher

Another idea is to make an autumn leaf suncatcher for windows so that your pupils can use their creativity while making it, and be proud to show off on the window. You'll need tissue paper in colours like yellow, orange, red and brown as well as some sticky back plastic and some leaves to decorate the front of the window catcher. Cut the plastic into any kind of leaf shape the children want, and whilst doing that, ask them to cut or tear up the tissue paper and stick to the sticky side of the plastic to create a collage. When they've covered the surface, get a second sheet of sticky back plastic to stick over the tissue paper. They may like to make a border for the leaves, which can be made out of any paper or card you have laying around. Finally, stick the leaves in the window and watch the lovely autumn sunlight come shining through.

Leaf Rubbing

When collecting leaves you will see many different shapes, sizes, colours, and textures. One way to see the textures is to do leaf rubbing where a child would put a leaf under a piece of paper and rub a crayon on



top of the paper that the leaf is under. And if the children fancy it, they could make multiple rubbing and make a collage with them. This could be done underneath a school canopy as they are still able to incorporate the outdoors in their work whilst being sheltered from the weather.

Leaf Art

Whilst collecting the leaves the children could make pictures by arranging the leaves into shapes and patterns like making a fish or a balloon, even a favourite toy or book or film character of theirs. They could then take a picture of their super autumn creation, so they are able to show off their creations.

Symmetrical Leaf Art

Another activity, if you cut the leaf in half and stick it on a piece of plain white paper they can try and draw the other side of the leaf that has been cut off and practice their symmetry skills.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: RACHEL BATCHELOR

It's that time again when we introduce you to another staff member in our employee spotlight feature. This time we sat down with Rachel, our Projects Department Manager and discussed all things Able Canopies and her take on dealing with stress.

"I have been part of the Able team for 16 years; I began working here after leaving college when I was 18 years old, and I still love it. I joined the team as an office junior and have worked my way up through the company, growing myself as the company has grown. I initially worked in the Sales and Pricing departments, then moved into the Projects department as an assistant, and in 2018, I was promoted to Projects Department Manager. My most recent achievement is successfully completing an IOSH Course which I am very proud of.

If you've worked with Able Canopies on a project before, you would have worked with me, maybe without knowing it. As the Project Department Manager, I oversee all our canopy and shelter orders and help to ensure everything is ordered correctly, on time and

that the jobs run smoothly. I also manage the on-site installation teams, making sure they have the information they need to install our products and I help to resolve any on site issues should they arise.

When it comes to motivating myself, I start each day as a new day, if there was stress or any problems the day before, you have to move on and keep positive. Also, I love lists! I make a lot of lists for what I need to do each day to ensure my work is prioritised on a daily basis. We are a great team here at Able, a family, and my colleagues definitely help motivate me in my job and I'd like to think I help motivate them too. Outside of work, I find that my husband, friends, and family motivate me. Seeing other people's successes helps me to know I can do anything I put my mind to.

My favourite part of my job has to be seeing the end result of all our projects, I love it. When I spend a lot of time putting a job together, seeing the end result and how fantastic the project looks, gives me a lot of pleasure and pride.



There's two particular projects I'm working on at the moment that I'm excited about and can't wait to see the end result. One is a Coniston Wall Mounted Canopy that wraps around four walls with four valley sections and I can't wait to see what it looks like once installed. The Coniston is so versatile, and I think it's going to look amazing. The second is a large span Tarnhow timber canopy with side fills on all four sides and some doors – I love a Tarnhow, it is probably my favourite product that we offer. I think it will look fantastic once installed and I can't wait to see it.

To finish on a fun note, my hidden secret talent is that I can wiggle my ears and my nose, and something that most people don't know about it is that I got married in June and it was the most amazing day of my life!"



HOW TO ATTRACT SPONSORS FOR AN AUTUMN EVENT

When planning an autumn event like a Halloween dress-up party or a harvest festival, you will want to maximise the funds you raise. You might want to purchase computer equipment, sports equipment, or a school canopy, or have something else in mind. One way to increase the funds you raise is to get sponsors for your fundraising event.

Decide What to Offer Sponsors

You will need to plan what you would like to offer sponsors. This might be an advert at your event, such as a film night. You could advertise business on the big screen in rotation while everyone is finding their seats and buying their snacks and drinks. You can increase funds by charging admittance and for food and drink on the night.

You might want to host a Halloween fayre and offer to advertise local businesses in the program or on a board at the

event as a sponsor of the event. This would also work well with a quiz night where you could advertise local businesses on the answer sheet. Increase the funds you make by charging teams to play the quiz, then offer prizes donated by the sponsors.

Decide What You Can Offer

Before you contact local businesses, consider how you can benefit them and why they should sponsor your event. Contact businesses that will have an audience with the parents at your school such as activity centres, party businesses, local sports centres, etc.

Contact Local Business

Contact local businesses either by letter, email, or phone to see if they are willing to sponsor an event. Have a clear set of criteria for those that wish to sponsor your event. If you have different-sized adverts, then stick to the pricing you plan for sponsorship so it is fair across all

local businesses. If you are happy to accept donations as sponsorship, which you can use as prizes, decide what you will and won't accept. You might want to have a minimum gift donation, for example.

Offer Stalls at an Exhibition

If you have an autumn art exhibition or an autumn fayre, you might want to offer local businesses a stand at your event in return for sponsorship. It can be a nice way for local businesses to connect with the parents at their local stalls. This could work particularly well if you host a craft fayre and invite local craft businesses to sponsor and hold a stall at your event.

Conclusion

Here are four great tips to help you get sponsors for your autumn fundraising event at your school. How can you raise more funds and connect your school with the wider community?

HOW TO PROTECT OUTSIDE EQUIPMENT FROM UV RAYS



During the school year, you will want to ensure your equipment is protected from UV rays. The sun's UV rays can cause damage to school equipment such as discolouration, warping, or even cracking, depending on the type of equipment. Some equipment can even become too hot and unsafe to use even in the autumn sun.

You'll need to find a way to protect your school equipment from the sun's UV rays. This will increase its longevity and enable children to use it year-round.

Here are some helpful tips to achieve this.

School Canopy

A school canopy is a great way to protect equipment from UV rays. It will protect the equipment from getting too hot and make it safer for children to use. School children will also be protected from UV rays under the canopy.

You can leave your equipment underneath the canopy with no need to move it indoors at night, making it an ideal cost-effective solution for protecting both equipment and your school children from UV rays. A canopy will protect your equipment, making it last longer.

Covers

You could store equipment under cover while not in use to protect it from UV rays. This could be quite time-consuming for outdoor equipment that is used regularly. However, it might be useful if you have items used sparingly.

This will be a cheaper option, but many covers start to deteriorate over time. They can collect water which can become unhygienic if left for a while. Items that are covered can become dirty and it can look very cluttered.

Shed

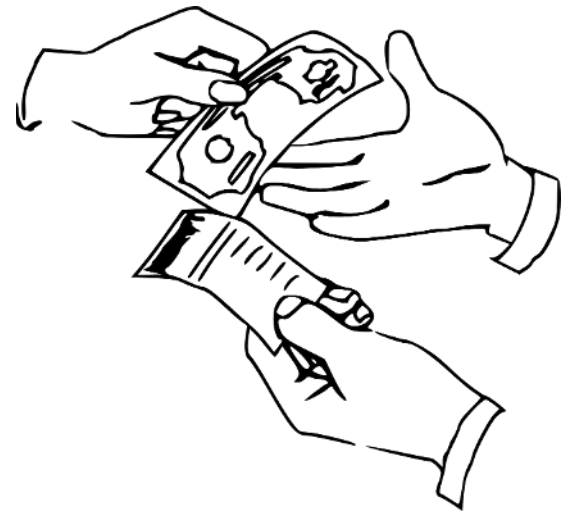
Many schools keep their equipment in sheds outside. This is a reasonably affordable option, that will mean equipment is tidied away. Sheds do still cost too much and they don't last forever.

You have the problem that some equipment will have to be regularly put out and put away again which can be frustrating for frequently used equipment. And it will still be under the sun's UV rays when outside, and the children will be too. So they will need their sun protection like hats and sunscreen.

Conclusion

By protecting your outdoor equipment from UV rays you can help prolong its life. You'll end up reducing the risk of it fading, warping or cracking and instead looking good and being functional for longer.

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 your Easter fayre 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, 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 fundraising events this year.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Don't miss out, make a note of these dates in your diary pronto!

There seems to be an awareness day or week for most things these days and it's easy to miss the ones that might be useful and provide the opportunity for a different teaching and learning experience.

Whilst we have some of the obvious days coming up such as Halloween and Bonfire Night, here's a few that you might not already know about, which you could incorporate into your lessons.



OCTOBER 2023

4th

World Animal Day



5th

World Teachers Day



16th

World Food Day



17th

Eradication of Poverty Day



NOVEMBER 2023

12th

Diwali



13th

World Kindness Day



20th

World Children's Day



28th

Giving Tuesday



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

"Guys were great - quick, efficient and friendly!"

- Harold Wood Primary School,
Essex

(Pictured above)

Installed June 2023

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

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

The logo for Able Canopies features a stylized blue roof icon above the word "able" in a bold, lowercase sans-serif font. Below "able" is the word "canopies" in a smaller, lowercase sans-serif font, and at the bottom is the tagline "& outdoor projects" in an even smaller, lowercase sans-serif font.

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