Transcript: Grounds for Learning - Water

Narrator: Water, a wonderful play resource that falls out of the sky and creates endless opportunities for play. Provide the opportunity for water play and you’ll find children naturally experimenting, engineering, measuring and problem-solving. You’ll witness team-work, creativity, physical exertion and a lot of fun.

The wonderful thing about water play is that you don’t need any specialist equipment or installations, in fact the construction and creation of water play opportunities from simple materials is a large part of the fun. Materials such as hoses, buckets, barrels and guttering are cheap and flexible resources. Sand and water are also a great combination.

Think creatively about the things children can use to make play even more fun, like brushes for writing and drawing with water on tarmac or food dye for puddles.

Water play shouldn’t be wasteful; in fact it can be managed in a way that helps children to recognise how precious it is. If you have an outside tap then make sure that the supply can be turned off so that the water is only available for a short time during play. Setting up water play at a distance from a tap will require water to be moved by hand so children will tend to be more active and will learn naturally not to spill it. And think about how you could use rainwater, collecting it in containers and making use of puddles and temporary rivulets that form in drains or natural channels.

Two of the greatest perceived challenges to water play are safety and children getting soaked, but these challenges can be managed and overcome. Involving everyone is important, agree ground rules with pupils and get parents on board. Simple steps such as emptying containers at the end of each day can minimise risks and using waterproofs where appropriate can keep children warm and dry.