



# Creative Play

WHAT MAKES CHILDREN SO SPECIAL? IS IT THEIR NATURAL CURIOSITY, VIVID IMAGINATIONS, PLAYFULNESS OR PERHAPS THEIR ABILITY TO SOAK UP NEW LEARNING EXPERIENCES LIKE SPONGES?

Everyone would agree that childhood is precious and that it passes all too quickly, but what can we do to enrich their play experiences? Children learn best through interactive and fun “play” – by being given the opportunities to explore and experiment in a safe environment.

One successful small family business is now creating magical outdoor play areas that are exciting and stimulating: Squirrel Design Tree Houses – with an already established reputation for designing and building breathtaking tree houses, huts, cabins and hideaways - has branched out into unique outdoor play spaces.

One such project, for a day nursery school in Gloucestershire, started with an extensive brief to create two separate play areas for children between 3 months and 5 years. The objectives were firstly, to create features that

answered the early learning goals such as communication, physical, creative, language and literacy development, and secondly, to design an eye-catching and practical structure within two very awkward spaces.

The two new outdoor play areas are brimming with imaginative details: sensory panels for the younger children such as giant marbles set into a wooden frame, shaped mirrors and a big “scary” spider on an outsized rope web. For the older children, there’s a charming play den and shaded areas with thatched roofs and spy holes – the children can even drive their imaginary car or sail their sea-bound ship, looking out across the landscape through the windscreen and porthole cut into the beautiful larch fence.

The children themselves are actively encouraged to get involved in the projects: their own colourful drawings can be transposed onto clear tiles



and incorporated into the design, and for the Gloucestershire day nursery project, photographs of their timber being cut at the sawmill are being included in the school project.

Dan, Partner of the day nursery in Gloucestershire says:

“The children (and staff) adore their lovely new play areas and literally can’t wait to go outside to play....very positive feedback from parents who are clearly delighted with the thoughtfulness of the design and high quality of the finish...we have been very impressed with your approach and service, which was professional, creative, positive, attentive and personable...it has been a pleasure to work with you...you should feel very good about creating such a rich and exciting outdoor play environment.”

David and Sarah Trotter, owners of Squirrel Design Tree Houses, are passionate about their work, and their skills in designing and constructing this wonderful range of projects proves that they have a real understanding of how to help keep childhood special.

They would be happy to discuss any ideas or questions that you might have on 01454 238967. Alternatively you can contact them on enquiries@squirreldesign.co.uk or look at their website [www.squirreldesign.co.uk](http://www.squirreldesign.co.uk).

