

# 7Cs - CHARACTER

## Assessing your space

### A PROCESS OF CHANGE FOR OUTDOOR SPACES

Managing change in your outdoor space can be a complex process. Follow a tried and tested approach to ensure that your decision-making is sound:

1. Where are we now?
  - This means examining and analysing the effectiveness of current fixtures, features and resources as well as how the space is used and managed.
2. Where do we want to be?
  - What are your aspirations for the space? What do you want children to be able to DO outdoors? Why do you want to achieve this? How will it improve outcomes for your children?
3. How will we get there?
  - What steps will you need to take to meet your aspirations? Who can help? How will you fund it? Will staff need training? Are your plans realistic and sustainable?
4. Making the changes.
  - Implement your ideas, regularly reviewing progress and checking that you are still on track to meet your aspirations.

### 1. WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Work with your colleagues to discuss and record your thoughts about the character of your space:

- What does it **feel** like outdoors?
- If we had to describe our outdoor space in one short sentence, what would we say?
- What works well outdoors? What evidence is there for this?
- What works less well? What evidence is there for this?
- What **characterises** our space? Is it 'modern', 'organic', 'modular' or 're-use'?

Use some of the ideas from Alison Clark's book, [The Mosaic Approach](#), to engage children in the planning and decision making process. For example, establish children's thoughts on the questions above with the use of familiar props such as a teddy bear to 'tour' the space, asking questions about how it feels, where 'teddy' likes to play, what 'teddy' likes to do outdoors.

### 2. WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

Write a brief statement that sets out your vision for outdoor play, focusing on what you want children to be able to **DO** outdoors, not what you want them to **HAVE**.

- What will **characterise** your space?
- How will it improve outcomes for children?

*This download is linked to the 7Cs article on Character, first published in Nursery World on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2014.*

*For more information about the 7Cs approach to designing and resourcing your outdoor space, download Outside Criteria's illustrated [7Cs information guide](#).*