

Outdoor Shade Audit Tool Activity



A shade audit is an objective process for measuring shade at an outdoor site, and assessing if changes are needed. The purpose of a shade audit is to help identify sources of shade, where and when shade is available, and how outdoor areas are used.

How do I conduct a shade audit?

At lunch on a sunny day, go outside and walk around your grounds paying attention to areas that are shaded from the sun. Examples include under trees, playground structures, next to buildings or other shade structures such as awnings or sails. This is a fun activity to involve your children!

How do I measure the amount of shade at my childcare centre?

Grab a piece of paper and draw your space outdoors. The measurements don't need to be perfect and can be done in a number of ways. You can use a measuring tape or roughly pace it out.

1 Estimate the **total area** and **shade area** for use during the lunch hour on outdoor property (fields, outdoor classrooms, gardens, etc.).

Total Area =
Shade Available =

2 Estimate the approximate percent of this shade area that is typically used by children and staff.

% of Shade Area Used (total shade area/total area) =

3 Check all that apply:

- We have many large, shady trees
- We have few large, shady trees
- We have permanent and/or portable shade structures
- Our buildings provide useful shaded areas

Shade Improvements

If there are spots that aren't shaded well and you are in a position to make changes or have some funding, there are lots of great resources available. Here are some tips to create a space with lots of shade.

- 1 Relocate outdoor furniture or play structures to make better use of existing shade.
- 2 Purchase shade sails or portable structures, such as umbrellas.
- 3 Plant trees and shrubs to provide shade and enhance aesthetic appeal.
- 4 Create more smaller play zones in order to get the shade closer to the play areas.
- 5 Assess shade zones during Critical Protection Period. Place shade to the south and west exposed areas of the play spaces.



A shade sail at Djavad Mowafaghian Child Care Centre, strategically located over a play area. A healthy blend of trees and shrubs provide pockets of shade and add visual interest.



Plants and decorative elements adorn the outdoor space of Woodward's YMCA Child Care Centre, creating a shady and welcoming space for children engaged in active play



Large umbrellas with blankets can create improvised shade for infants



Whether grown on fences, trellises, pergolas or tunnels, vines can create a naturalized, shady play setting

Activity Idea: The "Shadow Rule"

Have discussions about sun safety using light and shadows as an example.

Teaching objectives:

1. Demonstrate how shadow length can indicate the time of day when the sun's rays are more harmful.
2. Discuss sun safety superpowers:
 - Shade
 - Be SUPER-protected when shadows are shorter

Materials: Sidewalk chalk

Optional: String, tape, scissors, butcher paper, markers/crayons, flashlight, tall object (e.g., a cup or building blocks) and camera (if desired)

Take children outside on a sunny day, divide them into pairs and have them find their shadows. Ask one child to stand still while another traces their partner's shadow using chalk or on paper with crayons/markers. Then, ask children to switch roles.

Discuss with children what their shadows look like. Talk to them about the shadow rule: when your shadows are long (during the early and late parts of the day), the sun is not as intense. But, when your shadow is shorter than you are tall, the sun can burn, so seek shade and cover up!

Activity Idea: Decorate a Hat

Kids love to decorate, and this activity is a fun way to get children excited about wearing a hat outdoors. It helps them take ownership of it; this way, they are more likely to wear it. You can do the same activity with a shirt!

Teaching objectives:

1. Create sun safe hats.
2. Discuss sun safety superpower of protective hats.

Materials:

- Hat
- Craft materials (markers, paint, glitter, fabric strips, or fabric pens)

Ask children to bring a wide-brimmed hat from home (preferably a big sun hat that shades the face, ears and neck). Have them decorate the hat with fabric paint, markers, glitter, buttons and other craft materials.

Engage children in a discussion about the importance of sun protection.



Tall ornamental grass can create rich, sensory-friendly shade settings for children to play and hide.

Additional Resources

PLAYGROUND GRANTS & FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Province of British Columbia Funding Opportunities: gov.bc.ca/gov/content/funding

Various opportunities, such as grants, bursaries and loans, available for individuals, local governments and community groups.

Canada Healthy Communities Initiative:

communityfoundations.ca/initiatives/canada-healthy-communities-initiative/

Provides funding to a broad range of organizations, including local governments, charities, Indigenous communities and nonprofits, for projects, programming and services that help communities create safe and vibrant public spaces, improve mobility options and provide innovative digital solutions to connect people and improve health.

Canada Post Community Foundation:

canadapost-postescanada.ca/cpc/en/our-company/giving-back-to-our-communities/canada-post-community-foundation.page

Grants of up to \$50,000 are available through this foundation for projects that benefit children. Deadlines usually occur in early spring and decisions go out by August or September. To be eligible for this grant, you must be a registered charity, community group or school.

Tree Canada: treecanada.ca/plant-with-us/apply-for-a-grant/

Greening Community grants available annually.

The May and Stanley Smith Trust: admitrustllc.com/may-and-stanley-smith-charitable-trust/

These tax-exempt grants are available to non-profits in British Columbia as well the Western United States.

Random Acts of Play Grants: canadadrymotts.ca/values/lets-play/

These grants offer pieces of equipment to playgrounds and play areas designed for children.

The GoodLife Kids Foundation: goodlifekids.com/grant-program/overview/

This organization offers grants of different sizes for community products and initiatives aimed at benefiting children with special needs. Past recipients have used the funds for playground projects.

BC Accessibility Grants Program:

rickhansen.com/Our-Work/Grant-Programs/BC-Accessibility-Grants-Program

These grants offer up to \$20,000 for making British Columbian facilities accessible. Your play area must already have a Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) rating. If you are a for-profit organization, you must be able to match the fund amount. All successful applicants must use the funds within one year to make material improvements to improve access for people with disabilities. This grant is not available for new construction projects.

RELATED SHADE RESOURCES

Cancer Council New South Wales (2009). *Shade for early childhood services.*

cancercouncil.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/information-sheet_shade_early_childhood_services.pdf

Waterloo Region Shade Work Group (n.d.). *Shade audit information guide + tool: A guide for creating shady outdoor spaces:*

regionofwaterloo.ca/en/healthand-wellness/resources/Documents/ShadeAudit_GuideTool.pdf

Grounds For Play (2018). *Shade planning for early childhood centers.*

medium.com/groundsforplay/shade-planning-for-early-childhood-centers-8939aaae270c

