

## INSIGHT | OUTDOOR SUPERVISION

# Choreographing the Yard

*Outdoor play is where most supervision findings sit. A practical framework for positioning, scanning, and zone coverage.*

McArthur Early Childhood Education | The Practitioner's Guide to the NQF | Edition 02

Standing where it feels comfortable is not the same as standing where supervision is strongest. In a busy outdoor yard, the difference between the two is often where findings live. Supervision is not anchored — it moves as the risk moves, and it requires a shared understanding of who is covering what.

## Positioning is the most practical part of active supervision

Where an educator stands changes what they can see, hear, and respond to. A good position gives sight lines, keeps exits in view, keeps high-risk experiences close, and allows rapid response. The right position may need to change several times during a single routine.

## What a casual educator should ask on arriving at an unfamiliar yard

1. Where are the blind spots — behind plants, structures, storage sheds?
2. Where are the exits and gates?
3. Which areas are closed if staffing changes?
4. Where do you want me to stand first?

### THE BLIND-SPOT CHALLENGE

Every yard has them. Behind the climbing frame, around the corner of the storage shed, on the far side of the sandpit. Name them. Map them. Assign them to someone. Cover them with a routine — not a hope.

## Supervision as choreography, not vigilance

In outdoor play, active supervision looks like a team moving with children — one educator near the gate, another scanning the climbing area and sandpit, a third moving with the group. When children shift, the team shifts. When a child moves toward the boundary, the nearest educator moves with them.

- Assign zones, not just presence.
- Name the gate holder explicitly at every outdoor session.
- Rotate scanning and counting at fixed intervals.
- Count after every transition — indoor to outdoor, outdoor to indoor, before and after toileting.

## The reframe

Active supervision in the yard is not vigilance — a single person trying to see everything. It is choreography — practised, distributed across the team, and visible to a stranger walking into the yard. Services that train it as choreography out-perform services that train it as a checklist.

---

This article is part of The Practitioner's Guide to the NQF — M<sup>c</sup>Arthur's editorial series for the early childhood education sector. For the full whitepaper and webinar replay, visit [www.mcarthur.com.au/insights](http://www.mcarthur.com.au/insights).