



Keeping Healthy and safe

Making soap

Making soap with the children is a great way to help them understand how to keep themselves healthy and use good hygiene practices.

Learning aims

- Understand how to keep themselves healthy (PD)
- Use good hygiene practices (PSE)
- Shape and measure (MD)
- Make choices (PSE)
- Be independent (PSE)
- Develop fine motor skills (PD)
- Communication and language skills (CL)

Resources

- Cornflour
- Shampoo (neutral PH/baby shampoo)
- Food colouring
- Measuring cups or spoons
- Bowls
- Spoons

Activity outline

In a small group, explain to the children that you are going to make soap. Ask them what they use soap for, and ask them to think about why we wash our hands. Then follow these instructions to make the soap!

- Help the children to measure out ingredients into their bowls - 2 parts cornflour to 1 part shampoo
- Ask the children to choose which colour they would like to make their soap and support them to add a small amount of food colouring to the cornflour/shampoo mix
- Encourage the children to stir all the ingredients and then model how to manipulate the ingredients together to make a dough
- Encourage the children to smell the dough and talk about what they like or dislike about the smell

- Throughout the activity, use words such as clean, germs, wash, etc and reiterate the importance of handwashing routines, checking children's understanding of when they should wash their hands e.g. after going to the toilet and before eating.

After the activity encourage the children to wash their hands with their soap and talk about what it feels like

Special considerations

Check for allergies before introducing children to the activity. Make adjustments to the recipe to allow all children to join in.

Learning about seasonal clothing

Autumn activity

A changing season is a great opportunity to talk to children about the clothing needed to keep them warmer/cooler.



Learning aims

- Understanding the world - learning about the seasons
- Language and communication - using a range of vocabulary.

Resources

- A box or a bag to store the clothes
- A selection of children's clothing from the changing seasons:
 - Wellies
 - Sandals
 - Scarves, gloves, mittens
 - Vests
 - Woolly socks and cotton ankle socks
 - Summer cap
 - Winter hat.

Activity outline

- Talk to your children about the changing weather and how it feels
- Have them think back to a different season e.g. playing outdoors in the warmth after putting on sun cream
- Talk about the types of clothes they wore e.g. sun hats, woolly hats

- Ask your children how the weather made them feel e.g. the warm sunshine may have made them happy
- Discuss the current weather and ask your children to talk about what they are wearing
- Bring out your box/bag of clothes and ask the children to sort them into clothes you can wear on a hot day and clothes you can wear on a cool day
- Move on to talk about ways to keep warm in the cold weather such as taking part in physical activity.

Capture the colours of autumn

October is the perfect time of year to explore the colours of autumn with trees of vibrant shades present at every turn. Encourage children to comment and ask questions about aspects of their natural world with this activity.



Learning Aims:

- Notice detailed features of objects in the environment
- Comment and ask questions about aspects of the natural world
- Enjoy sensory experiences, exploring a range of natural materials
- Gain an interest in and use words to describe colour.

Resources:

- Strips of card
- Double-sided sticky tape
- Carrier bags (to collect leaves and other natural objects)
- Paint matching colour cards (from DIY store in autumn colours – green, brown, yellow, orange and red)
- Camera.

Activity Outline:

- Give each child a strip of card with double-sided sticky tape on one side
- Take the children outside for a nature walk and use the paint matching colour cards to find natural resources e.g. leaves of the same colour or shade
- The children should stick the natural resources on the piece of card to make their own natural paint card
- Encourage the children to look closely at the colours and describe them. Model language for them e.g. dark, light, pastel, vibrant
- Encourage the children to touch, smell, walk through, lie in and throw the leaves to get them interacting with the autumnal environment

- Ask the children open-ended questions about what they are experiencing e.g. what they can smell, if the colours of the trees compare to other seasons etc.
- Encourage the children to use the natural resources to make pictures e.g. with sticks, feathers, pebbles, leaves etc. Take photos of these to create an autumnal display at your setting.

If you are unable to take the children for a walk, ask staff and parents to collect items and bring them into your setting. Place the items in your outside area and create your own 'autumn leaf walk'. Alternatively, scatter the items onto a large plastic mat or sheet inside.

Celebrate Diwali



Diwali is a festival for Hindus, Jains and Sikhs, celebrating the victory of good over evil and light over darkness. Celebrate with our different activities!

Learning Aims

- Understanding the world around them
- Maths – patterns and shapes
- Communication and language
- Playing with others
- Expressive art and design.

Resources

- Ingredients for making the sweets
- Ingredients for salt dough
- Paint and glitter
- Chalk.

Activity Outlines

- **Storytelling:** Tell the story of Diwali and Rama and Sita, and how good defeats evil to get the good princess back from the evil Demon King. Stories can be found on YouTube and supporting the children to find these will also develop their IT skills and further understanding of the world around them
- **Make sweets:** Make Diwali sweets and treats for the children to have in their Diwali celebration. Ask the parents for any recipes they use at home as these will always be much better than those found online - however if you have no Hindus, Jains and Sikhs in your nursery, then have a search on the internet

- **Make a clay lamp:** During the festival, windows are opened so that the Hindu goddess of wealth, Lakshmi, can enter. It is believed that she cannot enter a house which is not lit up, so every household burns special Diwali clay lamps (diyas) to light the way for the goddess, which is why the holiday is also known as the Festival of Lights. Make a clay lamp with the children for them to take home and celebrate Diwali with their family. Decorate the clay with colourful paint and glitter. You can do this with salt dough and a simple recipe is below
- **Draw patterns:** A Rangoli is a colourful design made on the floor near the door to the house and Hindus draw bright Rangoli patterns to encourage the goddess Lakshmi to enter their homes. Draw some colourful circular patterns on the ground outside with the children, talk about the patterns they make, the colours they use and how they look from above. Take pictures for the children to remember - pop them in their learning journeys along with photos of the sweets they make and then share this with the children and their parents.

Salt dough recipe:

You will need half a cup of water, half a cup of salt and one cup of flour. Combine the ingredients together into a dough, mould into a bowl for your candle, then cook in the microwave for 2 minutes. Once it has cooled then decorate.

Working with Babies

For your babies and toddlers make a sensory area with lots of fairy lights and other light features, turn off the lights (or turn down if children become unsettled) and have calm, relaxing time. Play some quiet relaxing music for your children, and you could add scented oils such as lavender to help (check children's allergies prior to this).

Learning about vegetables-

Healthy eating

Vegetables come in all shapes, sizes, textures, smells, tastes and colours - which presents a whole range of exciting learning opportunities for children at your setting.



The learning aims of the following activity ideas include:

Knowledge and understanding

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Mathematics
- Literacy.

Plan a visit to your local market or allotment

- Take the children to your local market to look at the range of vegetables on offer
- Buy a selection of vegetables to take back to the setting for further exploration and tasting
- Alternatively ask parents if they have an allotment or contact your local allotment society to arrange a visit to your nearest allotments
- Talk to the children about their favourite vegetables.

Vegetable station

- Create a vegetable station (on a table top or tuff tray) and fill the space with a range of vegetables for children to explore
- Add chopping boards and knives so the children can cut up the vegetables and explore them fully
- Look at how vegetables look when they are chopped, grated or mashed.

Vegetable book

- Take photographs of your vegetables and stick the photos on to card to create your own vegetable book
- Use the book to promote discussion about the different vegetables children taste at meals and snack times.

Grow your own vegetables

You do not need a lot of garden space to grow vegetables!

- Vegetables that can be grown successfully in pots and containers include; carrots, potatoes, spring onions, radishes, onions and runner beans
- There is lots of free support for how to grow your own vegetables online, check out the [Royal Horticultural website for more advice](#)
- You can start off by making a plan of what vegetables the children would like to grow, where they can be grown and what is needed to look after them.

Cook vegetable soup

- Finish your week by cooking a tasty vegetable soup
- Encourage the children to choose their favourite vegetables to go in to the soup
- Share your recipe with parents so they can try the soup at home
- For easy soup recipes see the [BBC good food website.](#)

Working with babies

Create a vegetable treasure basket so babies can explore the different vegetables through their senses.

Homemade soup- Healthy eating



Expand children's communication and language, literacy and understanding the world knowledge with our home-made soup activity.

Resources

Traditionally soups were made using regional and seasonal food products, but now the world is your oyster! Your ingredients will depend on exactly which type of soup you want to make, but here is a list of resources you will need:

- Weighing scales
- Knives and peelers (you will have to decide on the help and supervision levels here)
- Pan, water, spoon
- Stock cubes and the ingredients you have decided upon
- Blender? Again you will have to decide on the safety aspect and whether you want a broth or blended soup
- Bread
- Bowls and spoons for eating your soup!

Activity outline

- Begin by asking the children about their favourite soup or food
- You could also use this as a chance to talk about healthy eating and why we can't make soup from sweets (or anything else that they children might suggest)
- Research soup recipes with the most favourite ingredients you have talked about
- Risk assess the activity, including the supervision of the children whilst you are handling hot food/pans etc and also be mindful of allergies and intolerances.

Extension ideas

- Perhaps you could try your own recipe using the most favourite foods/types of soup discussed?
- Make pasta sauces in a similar way
- Ask parents to share their favourite recipes with you
- Share any successful recipes with parents to try at home.

Working with babies?

It is especially important to work in partnership with parents when babies are weaning. Do you have a weaning coordinator who can discuss weaning and risk assessments for weaning with parents? Some parents may ask for your advice on how to wean their baby or want to follow the baby led weaning approach. Do you have appropriate information to share with and support parents?

Edible gardening project

Encourage your nursery children, and their families, to take part in the healthy outdoor activities that gardening provides, by planning your own edible gardening project.



Learning Aims

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language
- Understanding the World
- Maths
- Literacy.

Resources

- Dependent on what you are going to plant
- Visit a local gardening centre with the children to choose the seeds you need for your planting project
- If you don't have a garden space, ask parents to donate garden tubs and containers. Be creative with planters e.g. an old welly boot makes a good pot container for plants
- Trowels
- Watering can.
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Edible garden ideas

Herbs

Many herbs such as Chives, Mint, Coriander, Dill, Basil and Parsley can be planted directly into the ground or in containers indoors during the spring. These are particularly good for a nursery activity as they make great sensory herb bags and can be added to various dishes during cookery.

Lettuce

Salad leaves can be grown at almost any time of year, but the spring and summer are great seasons for making salad. They can be ready in just a few weeks depending on the variety, Lettuce is easy and safe for children to make a simple salad with.

Broad beans

Sow: March - May

Harvest: May - September

Great for maths development activities as children love to guess how many beans are going to be inside each pod.

Strawberry plants

Sow: March - April

Harvest: July - August

Strawberries are so sweet and versatile. You can extend this activity by making recipes, adding them to smoothies, fruit salad, cake or enjoying them on their own.



Tomatoes

Sow: March - April

Harvest: August - October

Tomatoes are packed with vitamins and minerals so are super healthy. You can extend this activity by making recipes, they can be added to pizzas, wraps and sauces or enjoyed on their own.

Marigolds

Sow: March - May

Bloom: July - September

Another one great for maths development as each Marigold flower head has lots of petals for counting and the flowers are edible!

Nasturtiums

Sow: March - May

Bloom: July - September

Nasturtiums attract bees and other helpful insects and the petals are edible, an interesting resource for children. To extend this activity why not hold your own garden party by inviting parents and families in to share your celebrations?

Extension activity:

Go out into your community to support gardening projects. Visit your local care home and help tidy up the garden and take some of your home grown plants to share.

Messy mud painting!

Get messy with mud painting, allowing children to use their senses and explore the world around them.

Learning aims

This activity particularly supports the Characteristics of Effective Learning focusing on:

- Playing and Exploring - finding out and exploring
- Showing curiosity about objects, events and people
- Using senses to explore the world around them
- Engaging in open-ended activity.

Resources

- Mud (from garden or make by mixing 50/50 play sand and potting compost)
- Powder paint (or ready mix)
- Washing powder (this helps the mud to stick together and easier for washing out of clothes and off hands)
- Water
- Recycled pots and pans
- Large pieces of strong cardboard – old boxes are ideal (try your local appliance shop or bike shop for really large boxes!)
- Different size DIY brushes and sticks.

Activity Outline

- Mix ingredients together – there is no real quantity so enjoy experimenting
- Make different coloured mud
- Use the brushes, sticks and mud paint to mark make on the large pieces of cardboard
- You can use your hands, fingers, feet and toes too!

Working with Babies

Babies can enjoy this activity too. Tape the cardboard to the floor or a tough tray. Take the babies clothes off leaving just their nappy on. Sit them on the cardboard and give them a couple of pots of mud paint, some sticks and small chunky brushes. Encourage them to explore the mud paint and make marks.

Considerations

Babies should be supervised when doing this activity. Ensure you have completed a risk assessment and have washing facilities available near by e.g. bucket/bowl of soapy water.

Bug Hotel



Creating a bug hotel provides wonderful opportunities to get up close to a range of bugs and watch how they move and interact with their environment.

Resources

Materials you could use:

- Pallets, logs or wooden crates to create the overall structure
- Dead wood
- Bricks
- Hollow bamboo canes
- Wooden blocks with holes drilled into them
- Drainpipe
- Roof tiles
- Logs
- Straw
- Hay
- Dry leaves
- Bark
- Plants
- Herbs.



Activity Outline

Nursery gardens could be home to a wide range of living creatures. By providing the right habitats we can greatly increase the number of beneficial insects in the garden. This activity is also a great way to recycle materials that you might otherwise have thrown away.

1. Find a suitable space for your habitat

- A cool, damp place in semi shade, by a hedge or under a tree is ideal
- Placing it near to other natural features will make it easier for small creatures to find
- Choose a level surface that will provide a firm base.

2. Stack your pallets, crates or logs on top or beside each other and ensure they are secure

3. Create your hotel sections however you like using the materials you have found by placing them inside the spaces created.

Children will love spending time exploring the bug hotel looking for insects. Encourage them to take photographs as it changes over time. If the children do find an insect that they want to show their friends, ensure they put it back in the bug hotel afterwards.

If a bug hotel is too big a project, or you would like to introduce the idea slowly, then start with a mini bug home that you can attach to your fence. Something as simple as a section of drainpipe with hollow bamboo canes placed inside can be effective.

Make a mud kitchen

A mud kitchen offers boundless opportunities for open-ended play and children can use all kinds of materials to enhance their ideas.



A mud kitchen provides an area for children to freely explore and investigate mud, and use it in their imaginative play.

Resources

Mud kitchens do not have to include expensive resources. We recommend having the following basics:

- Pans and pots
- Utensils such as spoons, mashers, sieves, ladles, forks, spatulas
- Kettle
- Bowls, plates and cups
- Weighing scales
- Measuring jugs
- Muffin and cake tins
- Cake cases
- Mud (of course!)
- Water.

You can change these on a regular basis to make this a more engaging area. You can also enhance the area by adding the following:

- Flowers and buds
- Pebbles, stones, gravel, sand
- Pine cones, acorns, conkers
- Seed pods and seeds
- Herbs and spices
- Powder paint

- Leaves
- Twigs, sticks and bark chippings
- Mortar and pestle.

Activity outline

- You can create a simple mud kitchen using some old crates or pallets, or utilise an old role play area you no longer need
- Mud kitchens should not look clean and tidy - they should look well used and loved
- Children should be able to freely access these and use their imagination, practice their skills in other areas of learning, e.g. maths, literacy and physical development
- One way of encouraging mark making and literacy in the mud area is to provide menu boards with chalks so the children can write the “specials” up for the day
- Why not add in a recipe book for the children to utilise and add to? Take photos of the children’s creations then talk about what they used and the method they adopted to make it. This is their recipe. Other children can then follow their ideas and the book will keep growing. Obviously we suggest laminating this to keep it wipe-clean
- A 'mud kitchen in a box' is a good alternative for pack away settings or those with limited outdoor area space. Why not have resources in a box and take them to the local woods or park to play?

Personal story sacks

Creating personal story sacks with children in your setting will support children's personal, social and emotional development as well as developing key literacy skills.

Aims

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Developing a sense of self
- Communication and language development
- Responding to familiar objects
- Physical development
- Handling and manipulating objects
- Literacy development
- Understanding the world
- Gaining a sense of own immediate family and relations.

Resources

- Camera
- A small cloth sack
- Photographs of individual children
- Photo book or card and ties
- Glue
- Scissors
- Items from home that parents are happy to share.

Activity Outline

To create personal story sacks for individual children:

Ask families for photographs of people / places that are important to the child and items that represent their life story e.g. clothing, pictures of favourite toys, holiday snaps, souvenirs from visits to special places

- Take photographs of the child taking part in activities in and around the setting
- Put the photographs into a photo book or stick them onto card and secure the pages together
- Add these items to individual cloth bags, the child can then use this to 'tell' their story.

Next Steps

Create story bags from visits outside of the setting:

- Collect items from your visit to act as prompts for re-telling the story of the day
- Put all the visit prompts in a cloth sack and use them to share what happened e.g. what you saw, touched, tasted etc
- Store these in your story corner so children can access them independently or take them home to share with their families.

Special considerations:

For children with English as an additional language (EAL) you can ask the parents to record the child's story in the language/s they speak as well as English, so the child can hear their story in both languages.

Make a project story book



Create a project story book with this activity and invite parents to your setting to share the children's work.

Learning aims

Creating stories about projects children have been involved in supports their learning and development, and they are able to re-visit the experience and make links to other areas of learning such as:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Creativity
- Communication and language
- Understanding the world
- Personal, social, physical and emotional development.

Resources

Resources for your project story book:

- Camera
- Printer and paper for printing photographs
- Large floor paper or A3 sheets of card secured with treasure tags
- Glue
- Pens and pencils for drawing .

Activity outline

Begin by choosing your project, which could be a specific outing or activity that children are taking part in. You can use any project, activity, outing or experience in your setting to create your project story book, but as an example we have chosen a bird feeder activity. Prepare the resources for the activity and explain to the children that you are going to make a story book all about what you are doing, Ask for a volunteer to take photos.

Making the bird feeders

- Mix lard with bird seed and add any extra ingredients such as sultanas and mealworms as an extra treat
- Mould the mixture into a round ball shape
- Pull the ball apart in the centre and lie a length of string inside, ensuring there is enough outside the ball to hang it up
- Close the ball back and up and press it together making sure the string is surrounded by the mixture.

Creating your project story book

Photograph each stage of the creative process to create your story book. For this example you may wish to take photographs of:

- Your garden or outside space before the project begins
- The birds that you are hoping to attract
- The ingredients you are using
- The children involved
- The stages of the process, including any preparation (buying the ingredients), making the mixture, adding the string and deciding on where to hang the bird feeders
- The new bird feeders hung up and any visiting birds that come to the feeders.

Once the activity is complete and the children have printed off their photographs, sit with them and use the photographs to create a timeline of events to organise the story book. Talk about the events and create a short narrative for each photograph by scribing the children's words. Support children to write some key words if they are able to. Ask children to decorate the individual pages with bird drawings and decide together on the title of the book, authors, illustrators etc.

On International Literacy Day (September 8th) invite parents in to your setting to share your project books with them. Ask the children use the book to tell the story of what happened to the parents and other children. You can also encourage home learning by sharing the bird feeder recipe with parents so they can make bird feeders at home, and adding the project book into your lending library so children can take the book home to share with parents.

Working with Babies

Make your own family books by asking parents for photographs of family members, holidays, their home and any pets. Ensure the completed books accessible to babies in your book area.

Make your own story props

Use our story props activity to think about how you enhance stories for all children in your setting.

Learning Aims



- For children and adults to discuss their favourite stories and make props to help make story time an enjoyable learning experience for all children
- To support children's development in communication and language, literacy and expressive arts and design.

Resources

A good selection of general open ended craft items such as:

- Paper and card
- Coloured pencils, crayons, felt tips or paints
- Glue and paint
- Sponges, brushes and other printing items
- Wooden spoons, paper plates, socks, pegs, lolly sticks (to make masks and puppets)
- Sticks and natural resources.

Activity Outline

- Begin by asking the children to choose their favourite book (or use a specific book in your planning)
- Talk to the children about their favourite part in the book and the characters
- Help children to decide what they would like to make e.g. a spoon, plate or sock puppet of a fox or crocodile
- Talk to the children about their props and encourage them to re-tell/make up stories.

Extension Ideas

Exploring books in more detail is a fabulous opportunity to link into all areas of learning and really key into the interests of the children.

- Allow the children to choose their own craft items
- Create a collage or display e.g. potions (connected to the George's Marvellous Medicine book). You could make a potion, an ingredients list and then a display with the packets and names of the things that you used. Photographs can be added to show the children's learning along with speech bubble to record what they children have said.

Working with Babies

Use bath mitts and other props when singing to the babies and younger children. Why not involve parents in making a book or collage/display with photos of their family/home and your setting/their key person?

Celebrate maths through play

Have fun with maths through play with our range of different activities and ideas.

Learning aims

- Mathematical development
- Working together
- Communication and language.

Resources

Activity 1:

- Egg boxes
- Baskets or buckets for collecting autumn items in.

Activity 2:

- Card
- Glue
- Pens
- Laminator
- String and hole punch.

Activity 3:

- Tuff spot tray
- Coloured water
- Petals and bark
- Baking soda and effervescent tablets
- Pipettes, funnels, beakers, cylinders and jugs.

Activity Outline

Activity 1 – scavenger hunt for numbered items

Use your egg box to write or draw autumn items - e.g. two petals, three leaves - on the top of each egg box section. Encourage the children to explore outside, find and count the items, and pop them in the box in the appropriate section. For younger children don't add the additional level of the counting.

Activity 2 – making number lines for outside

Draw numbers on pieces of card, laminate them and punch holes at the

top to make them weather proof. Then ask the children to count out different items for each number and stick them on to the card with glue – e.g. one leaf, two sticks. Once all the displays are ready and items have dried, ask the children to thread them in order onto the string and display outside. You may choose to attach them on a fence or display them differently, but whatever form you choose allow the children to pick the numbers up, move them around and reorder them.

Activity 3 – Potions lab

Set up a tuff spot tray with a variety of different liquids or colours and measuring items, and allow children to explore and investigate - such as adding different amounts of water to the cylinders, then add the baking soda and effervescent tablets to the water. What do the children think will happen? What about adding bark or petals? Ask the children to predict and estimate.

Working with Babies

For your babies and toddlers mathematical development is all about sensory play, exploring different materials and understanding items are still there when they are hiding. So for your babies think about lots of sensory play, treasure baskets and hide and seek games!

Cooking up a storm!

Cook up a storm and develop key maths skills with this yummy activity!



Learning Aims

- Mathematical development including measurement
- Beginning to introduce and use money
- Development of IT skills and knowledge if ordering online
- Literacy development
- Physical development.

Resources

- Recipes
- Cooking equipment
- Ingredients.

Activity Outline

- Introduce the children to the recipe books or recipes online and discuss what they would like to cook. Look at the index or contents page in the book and talk through how this works. Refer to page numbers and see if children can find the correct page, or let them navigate the website and pick out the recipe
- Consider savoury and sweet, what the difference is and what kind of things they could choose under each
- Decide on the final recipe and either order the ingredients online or go to a shop and buy the ingredients together with the children
- Start the activity by working out which cooking equipment they will need – this promotes problem solving
- Work through the recipe talking through the steps and processes, so children can see the order
- Allow all children to have a go at making their own mixture
- Cook the mixture (if required) talking to the children about how long to cook for and how they will measure this to make sure that it cooks properly

- Talk about the differences before and after cooking
- Enjoy the results (yum!)
- Provide tools for children to extend this activity into their play either indoors or outdoors
- Extend this activity into the home by sending home the recipes and the suggested learning that goes along with this.

Measuring with modelling!



This problem solving through junk modelling activity provides opportunities for children to plan and use different methods to problem solve.

What you will need:

- Large junk modelling equipment, e.g. cardboard boxes, cardboard tubes, plastic milk bottles
- Tape, string, glue etc.
- Broom sticks, milk crates, sheets
- Large paper e.g. roll of lining paper
- Pens, mark making equipment
- Camera
- Clipboards.

Activity outline:

- Introduce the activity to the children. They are going to plan and make a house for the three bears / a rocket ship / a new superhero hideout / a new pirate ship for Jake / a palace for Elsa (you should choose the aim based on your own children's current interests)
- Talk to children about how architects plan their buildings by drawing out the details first
- Start by drawing out their plans on the lining roll. What will it look like? What will they need to build it? How tall will it need to be? How wide will it need to be? Tell the children the plans will be used to make the building so they need to show all the detail
- Bring all of the materials the children will need together and plan how the structure will be made. What will we need to do first?
- Start the structure and encourage the children to work through the plan and problem solve as they go along, e.g. how can we attach the tubes to the boxes? How can we make it tall enough?

- Develop the children's team work and help them to work together to develop the structure
- Once you have completed it, check if it is wide enough and tall enough for the original intention and decorate it
- Take photos of the whole process from start to finish. The children can make a scrapbook of the processes, sequence them correctly and show their creation to their family.

Working with babies?

You can support the babies and toddlers to make smaller scale junk models and talk through how to make them tall, short, big, small. With the younger children the focus should be more on their motor skills and how they think things through for themselves with your support.

Interactive number line

Make your own interactive number line that the children can use to develop their counting skills! Using open-ended resources will help to show the children that you can count anything.



Learning aims

- Have fun with numbers
- Learn to count using one to one correspondence.

Resources

You won't need all of these, but here are some resource ideas:

- Selection of materials such as pebbles, wooden discs, shells, plant pots and boxes
- Sharpies or paint
- Wooden numbers
- Card and glue with feathers, leaves, conkers, seed pods etc. to make number lines
- Camera and printer (for children's faces or finger number lines).

Activity outline

- Start by setting up a number line that children can move around and use in all areas of their play. This may be small discs of wood, pebbles, wooden numbers or pictures of the children holding up the numbers of fingers for each number - the opportunities are endless
- Whatever you choose, include the children in the design. This is part of the learning curve and also helps the children to engage more

- Place the number line in an area where the children can access them freely. If you use laminated pictures or numbers, ensure you do not stick these down as children will not be able to move them in their play
- A simple activity to support children to fully understand number order is to manipulate the number line so that they are out of order or one number is missing. Children can then place them back in the correct order and discover which is missing
- Once you have your number line use this to support your teaching of one-to-one counting. Use a variety of loose parts for the children to choose freely and ask them to put the correct number of items on each number. Count together as you place them
- Revisit this once you have placed back all the items and count them again together.

Perfume and potion making

Making perfumes and potions is such an easy but fun way for children to explore their senses and the outdoors.



Learning Aims

- Maths and measurement
- Literacy and language
- Physical development.

Resources

- Blank recipe book to add in your perfumes recipes
- Pestle and mortar
- Bottles
- Labels
- Water
- Flowers, herbs, soil and mud.

Activity Outline

This can be introduced into your mud kitchen area or general outdoor area:

- Get the children to smell and feel the different flowers and herbs, if you have your own garden or wild area ask the children to choose and pick their own ingredients
- Use the pestle and mortar to grind the herbs and flowers into a paste. Scrape this out and pop it in to a bottle

- Add water to the bottle and shake to mix it up. How much water do you need to add? Use trial and error to get the correct amount ensuring it has enough liquid, but not too much to dilute the scents
- Mix the perfume and then sift it to remove the paste / fragments, but leave this a few days for the scent to fuse into the water
- For boys that may not wish to make perfume, they can opt to make potions instead. This could be the same process but they may want to add mud, stones and sticks as well into a large cauldron or bowl
- Ask the children to label their perfumes and potions and write or draw their instructions into the recipe book for others to use and share. You could take pictures and print and stick these in to the recipe book too, to show the process
- This activity could then form part of your continuous provision in the outdoor area and you may choose to add new ingredients each day to engage children in this play and learning opportunity.

Working with Babies

Create plenty of opportunity for sensory development in your babies' and toddlers' play. Plant some sensory plants in the garden to enhance their play outside, e.g. lavender, herbs, long reed grass that make different sounds and soft grass for them to feel under their feet.

Talk to the children about what they can see, smell, feel and hear in the garden and introduce new language or reinforce existing knowledge and language development

Mini Maths Explorers – measuring the world around us



A change in season is a great opportunity to further develop children’s knowledge of the world around them as they go out and experience these changes for themselves.

Whilst you are out and about, whether this is in the setting’s outdoor area, the local community or the nearby park, wood or gardens you can introduce lots of maths at the same time.

Resources:

- Clipboards, paper and pens
- Collecting buckets / tubs
- Tape measures / measuring sticks / rulers / string / rope
- Weighing scales
- Sorting bowls
- Cameras (optional)
- Outdoor clothing / wellies
- The outdoor environment

Activity Outline:

- Collecting autumnal materials and sorting and classifying these into different groups. You can then tally the numbers and introduce simple graphs to the children
- Map where you find the different materials (e.g. where in the park did you find the conkers / pine cones / red leaves / yellow leaves)

- Weigh the different materials and compare the different items, e.g. how many leaves weigh the same as a conker?
- Place the pinecones and conkers in a row and measure how long the line is using different methods including measuring tape / string, footsteps (children and adults and compare), handprints (children and adults and compare). Can the children think of any other ways to measure them?
- Measure the length and width of the different types of leaves they have found. What other identifying factors do these leaves have? (e.g. how many points on the leaves / what shape). The children can then do a leaf identification book for other children to match the leaves with
- How many conkers fill a box / jug / cup? What about acorns? Do they think it will be more or less? Why do they think this?
- Linking the materials they find to the trees around them – where do conkers come from? Acorns? Pinecones? The different leaves? Seed pods?
- Consider large scale measuring – e.g. measuring the circumference of the trees they find... which is the biggest? Which is the smallest?

Working with babies:

When working with babies and toddlers you can still go out and collect different materials with the younger children – the mobile can collect them supervised. You can use these with the children in sensory tubs indoors and outdoors to allow children to feel, see and smell the different textures / colours / smells. For the older toddlers you can introduce matching games with these natural resources to support their early maths skills.

Calm Cave

Create a Calm Cave to help children when they feel like they need some time out, away from the hustle and bustle of daily nursery life.



Learning Aims

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Self-regulation
- Language and literacy development

Activity Outline

- Create your Calm Cave 'shell' with a large cardboard box, an old tent or even a den made out of blankets
- Add in a few battery powered fairy lights (lots left after Christmas) and put some cushions in so the children can get comfy
- Add quiet activities to help calm the children, this supports their self-regulation:
 - Books and a torch
 - Sensory calming bottles, e.g. vegetable oil, water, glitter and colouring
 - Sensory touch pad, e.g. velvet, wool, foil, carpet etc.
 - Treasure basket with soft items in
 - Soft toys and puppet.

Considerations

- Don't completely fill the Calm Cave as children need space to relax and too much content will hinder this
- Rotate the materials around or have them in storage baskets outside the cave so the children can take in what they wish
- You could add calming music.

'All about me' box



Children can make an 'all about me' box individually or in groups, add to it as they have new experiences, and use it as a fun way to express creativity!

Learning aims

- **Personal, social and emotional** – communication and interaction with peers and adults, sharing experiences and individual interests, recalling emotions and feelings and developing attachments
- **Language and communication** – describing places and objects and using open-ended questions to develop language, words and emotions
- **Knowledge of the world** – knowing what objects are and what they are used for, and developing knowledge of people, places and animals
- **Technology** - using a camera
- **Expressive art and design** – using their own ideas and a wide range of materials to decorate their box.

Resources

- Paper for drawing
- Mark making medias such as crayons, chalks, felt tips, paint, pens and pencils
- Materials to cut and stick, such as wallpaper and magazines
- A box to collect objects and memories - ask the children/parents to bring a shoe box or similar from home
- Child scissors, left and right handed
- A photograph of the child's key person
- Child-height storage shelves for the boxes – children need to be able to easily reach their own box when they want to reflect or add to it
- Disposable cameras - this allows children to take them home and take their own photographs of special people, pets, toys etc. This can also give practitioners the opportunity to develop secondary focus activities

on technology - such as photographs, developing images, the history of cameras - which could be used to make an interest table, display or themed box. If you have a 'take home' teddy or similar that the children take turns in taking home, this could be a good opportunity to take the camera home and visually record experiences.

Activity outline

Making an 'all about me' box is an activity that can be done with new groups of children individually or in a small group (for example, key person groups). There will be times in the year when children move up from the younger age groups into pre-school or when new children register at the setting. Ensuring each child has the opportunity to put a personal box together when entering the group will be a really useful tool.

- Encourage the child or parent to bring a suitable box from home - this encourages the parent to take an interest and helps the child to develop a real interest in their 'all about me' box
- Allow the child to use a range of mark making or cutting and sticking to decorate their box in their own expressive way, for example with a self-portrait or pictures of their family or house. A small group of children working together will provide rich communication and language development opportunities
- Encourage cutting pictures from magazines or catalogues of their favourite toys, foods etc. This will encourage taking turns, sharing and language development
- Offer children the opportunity to take photographs of the people, animals, objects, buildings and experiences in their life – this can be at the setting or in their home
- Fill the box with pictures and items and add to it whenever the child experiences something new or has a new member of the family.

Working with Babies

Consider children of all ages having a 'family book' photo album or an 'all about me book' – this can be introduced to parents as part of registration and is a wonderful way of aiding attachments, offering pleasant reminders of home as a comfort and encouraging parent communication. Display the books in a basket at floor level.

Celebrating families



Learn about the world around us, our community and our families and encourage children to communicate and share experiences with this activity.

Resources

- IT (computer / iPads etc.)
- Books about families from around the world
- Large scrap books
- Small world resources.

Activity Outline

- Ask the children to bring in photos of their wider family and where they live
- Start to create a scrapbook with these pictures and ask children to talk about the people in the photos or children could make their own book if they wanted to
- Add annotations to the photos to give them more meaning



- Now look at different families from around the world
 - What do children think families look like in different places?
 - Where do they live?
 - Where do the children go to school?
 - What do they wear?

- What do they do at the weekends?
- Look at a variety of different places, such as Australia, Sweden, Japan, Chile, The Gambia, so the children can see a wide range of places. You could choose a different country each day!
- Use the IT or the books to research the different places.
 - The children may come up with their own things they wish to research, if not why not have a list of things they may choose to start them off?
- Children may wish to present their work to you (or their parents) and tell you what they have found out, this is a good skill to develop. Try to encourage this wherever possible.

Extension Ideas

Why not try food from the different countries on each day too? This will enable children to expand their experience whilst trying out new food and developing their taste for food.

Make a kindness box

Nelson Mandela once said: “There can be no greater gift than that of giving one’s time and energy to helping others without expecting anything in return.”

Help children celebrate the life of Nelson Mandela and the kind acts he demonstrated by making a kindness box to share with others.



Learning Aims

- To listen to stories and ask questions about why some things happen
- To show care and concern for other people
- To learn that actions affect other people
- To work in partnerships with parents to support learning.

Resources

- Nelson Mandela story book or video
- Shoe boxes
- Decorations e.g. ribbon, paper, card, pens etc.
- A variety of inexpensive and home-made items.

Activity Outline

- The purpose of this activity is to introduce children to Nelson Mandela and help them learn that acts of kindness make a difference to other people’s feelings
- Use this [YouTube video](#) or a Nelson Mandela children's book to introduce his life and how he made the world a kinder place
- Talk to the children about what kindness means to them. Have they made or received any kind acts? How did it make them feel? Talk about ways they can be kinder to their friends, family and even themselves

- Work with the children to identify some members of the community who deserve to receive kindness. This could be a local nursing home, police station, fire station etc.
- Gather a range of inexpensive items that you think members of the community would benefit from. This could be hand drawn pictures and other little things that make people smile. You could ask parents to get involved by bringing in items or doing some baking
- To make the kindness box, children should decorate the shoe boxes with the paper, ribbon, pens etc.
- Fill the shoe boxes with the items you have gathered from your setting and parents
- Deliver the boxes to your chosen members of community and take pictures. Make a kindness display in your setting to remind children of the kind acts they demonstrated and how it made other people feel.

12 sensory experience activities



Exposing children to sensory play helps them develop and refine the use of their senses which include touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste.

Sensory activities facilitate exploration and naturally encourage children to use scientific processes while they play, create, investigate and explore. Spending time stimulating their senses supports all areas of children's learning and development.

Below we've provided 12 sensory experience activities:

(Please supervise these activities at all times to minimise risks)

Eye Spy Bottles

- Place some rice in a snap lock bag and add a few drops of food colouring and vinegar
- Squish the rice around the bag until it is all coloured and pour it into a transparent bottle with a lid
- Add some little figurines, trinkets and buttons (material stores and some craft stores sell buttons that feature animals, foods and a variety of themes)
- Babies can shake and roll the bottle around discovering new and exciting objects each time they move the bottle.

Frozen Ice Paints

- Pour poster paint into an ice cube tray, put it in the freezer for about 20 minutes and let it begin to harden
- Add lollipop sticks (so they stay firmly upright) and let the paint freeze overnight
- For babies you can use water and food colouring and follow the same process.

Sensory Obstacle Course



- Suspend coloured scarves or ribbons at one end of a tunnel / large open box for babies to crawl, or walk through
- Place a mirror and torch at different points in the tunnel and include different textured materials including cushions to interact with
- Boxes could also be added to an obstacle course to crawl in and out of.

Rain Maker

- Fill re-cycled cardboard tubes or small plastic bottles with rice or lentils
- Ensure a lid is securely sealed (with tape)
- Allow babies to explore the sound.

Edible Paint Recipe

Take 250g of cornflour and mix with 2.5 cups of cold water and Stir until dissolved

- Pour in a saucepan and heat gently (stirring all the time), after a few minutes the paint will thicken
- Add a few drops of food colouring and mix well (or split the recipe and create a few different colours)
- Add a drop of cold water if the paint is too thick
- Use once the paint has cooled and store in an air tight container or sealed jar.

A Sensory Peek-A-Boo Board

- Secure photos onto a piece of cardboard (a shoe box lid is perfect for this)
- Consider using photos of babies' family members, animals or pictures to represent their favourite songs e.g. a spider for Incy Wincey Spider
- Put clear tape over the photos to protect them
- Cover each photo with a piece of textured fabric and attach ribbons to each as a 'handle'.

Outdoor Sensory Experiences



- Talk with children about the sounds you hear, movements you see, fragrances you can smell
- Touch natural objects that are smooth, rough, bumpy
- Observe babies interests in experiencing different textures under their feet as they walk on grass, or put their feet in sand.

Icy Shaving Foam

- Place shaving foam in a refrigerator for a few hours or store in the fridge overnight. Fill tins / bowls with the chilled shaving foam
- Stir colouring into the paint
- Add a touch of paint to the foam and gently swirl to make a marble effect. Add glitter if you wish to make the paint sparkle
- You can add a few drops of each colour into the foam and let the children mix them as they paint / play with the foam.

Discovery Baskets

- Put together a themed collection of objects based on current interests / sounds / colours / textures
- You can also create themed discovery boxes / baskets for exploration.

Cloudy Playdough

- Combine two cups of cornflour
- And one cup of hair conditioner



Lavender Dyed Rice

- Place uncooked rice into a bag (double bag as a precaution for tears and spills)
- Add food colouring (blue and pink to make lavender colour) to the rice and stir to evenly distribute
- Lay the rice out overnight to dry on trays ensuring the layer of rice is not too thick or it will not dry
- Before sharing with the babies add some lavender flower heads.

Painting

- Add paint to zip lock bags
- Let babies swirl, squish and press the paint around in the bag.
- Make it a true sensory experience (and full body one too) and let babies apply paint to a canvas.

Exploring Senses



- Provide a range of items found in and around a home for babies to explore e.g. wooden spoons, measuring spoons, an orange, loafer sponge etc.
- Put the items into discovery bags (cloth bags or shoe boxes) and share these with parents
- Add a small laminated card outlining the learning potential to ensure parents can extend on these activities in the home
- They could add photos to the bag of other items their babies have enjoyed exploring.

Nursery activity guide: Sensory toe trays

Learning aims

- Physical development and developing muscles in the foot
- Sensory exploration with toes
- Language development - describing what they feel (age appropriate)



Resources:

- Trays, tubs, plastic boxes
- Plastic sheeting (if you are doing this indoors)
- Washing up bowl, flannels, towels
- Variety of sensory materials for you all to wriggle your toes in e.g. honey, feathers, smooth pebbles, cut grass, cut herbs, materials/cloth, baked beans, bubble bath/washing up liquid, plastic bricks, wooden blocks, coins, shredded paper, hay, grains/seeds, flour, jelly, paint, cotton wool.

Activity outline

1. Set up the trays with the materials
2. Think about how the children will access them... will they walk in them? Do you want a chair at each tray so children can sit down and wriggle their toes? How will you help the babies access these trays?
3. You may choose to have covers on the trays to encourage the children to tell you what they think is in the tray using their feet (this would be a good extension activity for the children exceeding this stage of development)
4. Set up the foot washing station
5. For older children - invite the children over and role model the activity; talk about what you want the children to do and what you want them to talk about (e.g. describe what they are feeling, tell you what is in the

tray), they may choose to work in pairs and tell their partner what they think is in the tray, then swap over!

6. For babies – sit with the babies and role model by wiggling your toes in each tray and introducing or reinforcing language development with the children e.g. tickly, soft, sticky, hard, smooth, cold, warm
7. Record the activity using the words the children come up with, take photos of the children's expressions as they wriggle their toes and pictures of the tray contents, then the children can match the expressions to the materials after the activity when you are consolidating their learning. You may also ask the children to write down or draw what they did and felt as an extension activity if you wish to incorporate mark making
8. Use the wash station to clean children's feet after the activity.

Next steps

You may choose to extend this activity for children if they are interested and wish to take it further, by asking the children to set up their own sensory toe trays for their friends and you as adults. What materials do they think would be good for wiggling toes in? Can they think about safe materials so toes don't get hurt?

Special considerations

- Remember to risk assess the activity for safety
- Don't use sharp materials and be careful of slippery feet during and after the activity
Check children's allergies to ensure you don't use anything a child in the group is allergic to
- Remember cross contamination between trays so avoid allergens if children have any allergies
- Consider that some children will not enjoy this activity or feel comfortable putting their feet in these trays, don't force this and remember you can start small by wiggling toes in the water play or sand play to introduce this activity to reluctant participants.

Holidays around the world

Where are you going on your holidays? This is the time of year when children are going or have been on holiday, so it is the perfect time to learn about different locations around the world.



Learning Aims

- Learn about different places
- Understand different modes of transport
- Develop imaginary skills in the role play area.

Resources

- Postcards or photos from around the UK and rest of the world
- Map of the UK and map of the world
- Books on different modes of transport e.g. cars, trains, planes.

Activity Outline

- This is the time of year when children are going or have been on holiday, so it is the perfect time to learn about different locations around the world
- Remember not all families will be able to afford to go away, but you can look at what they have been up to, even if this is playing at home or going to see their families
- Look at where the children have been on the map. You may need support from parents to establish where they have been if the child has forgotten
- Talk about how they travelled there. Why don't you create a graph to show the different forms of transport used? This will help develop children's mathematical skills

- Why not stick pictures or photos of the children on holiday to the map? Ask parents to send you photos so you can print them or bring them in already printed if possible
- Have a selection of books available for the children to look through and see different countries. You can also spend time with the children using the internet to look up information about places they have been. Why not use Google Maps to see how long it takes to get there? Zoom in to see what you can find
- Some children may be travelling abroad for Eid, you could talk to the children about their holidays and celebrations while they have been away; extend the learning further by discussing this festival at the same time.

Extension Ideas

- You may have a nursery bear or other toy that children take home for adventures that can go on holiday with them too
- Why not create a separate photo album (either digital or printed) to show the bear at different places?
- Support the children to either print out the photos or add them into the digital library. This will develop their IT skills as well as give them ownership of their albums.

Further information

Remember to mention to parents that airports will have facilities to support children with Autism or children who may require extra support. Take a look [here to view Manchester Airport's disabled facilities guide](#) and their [Airport Awareness PDF here](#).

Learning about disabilities



We often avoid having difficult and confusing conversations about disabilities with children, but discussing disabilities and differences helps children to understand and be accepting

Some disabilities are long term, others are short term but there are also injuries such as a broken leg which would inhibit a person's movement for a period of time. You could use an example like this to start discussions with the children at your setting. For example, how would someone with a broken leg, using crutches or a wheelchair, manage to move around in your setting?

Resources

- A bag/sack/basket for your resources
- Your chosen book(s), props and resources such as photos, dolls and small world figures featuring disability
- Old pairs of glasses (you may want to pop the lenses out), hearing aids
- You may have some crutches that the children could explore (under supervision)
- An asthma inhaler (for a adult to show the children).

Depending on which types of disabilities or injuries you'd like to discuss, there are lots of books available such as 'Why Do Some People Use Wheelchairs?' or books covering a range of conditions including asthma and wearing glasses. Other books are story based such as 'Topsie and Tim Make a New Friend'.



Activity Outline

Start the conversation with an introduction, such as this one from the [Child Without Limits](#) website:

"Most children are born with everything they need, but sometimes children are born without everything they need. Sometimes they need crutches or wheelchairs or braces to help them do what you do naturally."

- Ask the children about whether they know anyone who wears glasses or uses crutches / a wheelchair
- Use real life objects, dolls, props or photos to match:
 - "Ana can't walk so what could Ana use to help her move around? A wheelchair"
 - "Tamil can't hear so what could help Tamil to hear? A hearing aid"
- Look at photos of guide dogs and talk about how the dog helps a person who cannot see
- If you have access to the internet in your setting you could look for photos with the children, having researched appropriate information beforehand
- Read/look at your chosen book(s) and share the collected resources with the children.

Extension ideas

- Try making an access ramp for small world figures
- Ask the children if they would like to be blind folded and try to move around the setting or do a tasting activity
- Ask the children if they would like to wear noise cancelling headphones and explore what this is like
- Introduce an empathy doll with a disability
- Make a role play opticians
- Teach the children some sign language or Makaton signs.

'Getting ready' game

Many children struggle to adjust to changes in their day, whether it is tidy up time or getting ready for lunch. For children with additional needs this can be a time of high anxiety. Using visual clues and fun activities can help them to get used to routines.



Learning Aims

- Helping children to become familiar with routines.

Resources

- Photographs or pictures of routines
- Large 'homemade' dice

Activity Outline

- Discuss things we need to 'get ready for' such as meal times, bed time, going to the park and going to school. Include some of the setting's routines in the game
- Make a large 'homemade' dice with the children sticking the routines on the faces of the dice
- Ask the children to photograph the different stages of the routines (a little bit of acting here!)
- Once printed, add key words, signs and symbols or annotations before laminating
- Play the game by throwing the dice and then asking the children to find the right pictures – have fun putting the routine into the right order. You could use a sand timer
- Provide lots of visual prompts, signs and gestures as you play the game.

Working with Babies

For your babies and toddlers choose three main routines to put on the dice and cover the other sides with sensory material.

When making the laminated cards show the main part of the routine, and print these in a size that is easy for the babies to see. Sing an action song to go with each routine e.g. This is the way we wash our hands (sing to the 'Here we go round the mulberry bush' tune).

Developing physical skills

Why not have a themed week at your nursery, to focus on different physical skill development?



Learning resources

- To promote fitness and health
- To keep physically fit
- To develop different muscles.

Resources

- Wide range of sports equipment (whatever you have available).

Activity outline

Support children to learn new skills such as kicking a ball, using a bat or throwing a Frisbee.

Why not set up an obstacle course?

- Set up different activities inside and outside to develop different muscles, don't forget your fine motor muscles too
- What about an [obstacle course](#)? This develops a wide range of muscles as you run, crawl, jump, climb, skip, hop
- Set up an obstacle course for the children to engage with, but allow it to be moved and adapted by the children to suit their own needs and design their own course
- Children could set up a course for their friends
- Babies and toddlers can also do obstacle courses too, why not add crawling tunnels and climbing ramps to their area to develop their muscles?

Think about equipment:

- For your older children why not see if the local school will let you go and use their equipment in their playground / sport's field?
 - This will not only help with transitions but also help children access the kind of PE resources they will be using in school.

You could host a Sports Day:

- Hold a Sports Day on the last day of the week so the children can show the skills they have learnt
- Invite your parents in – they could take part too!
- Make sure you have “races” that enable all children to be able to take part and have a chance of winning. Why not do a “slow” race?
- The children could make their own medals and trophies to give out to their friends.

Heart Health

Support nursery children to understand the importance of keeping their heart healthy with this active learning and physical development activity.



Learning Aims

- Physical Development
- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Mathematics
- Active Learning
- Creative and Critical Thinking.

Resources

- An open space indoors or outdoors
- A range of large and small equipment that support physical activity
 - Climbing frame, slide, bikes, walking beams, tyres, balls, ropes, hoops
- Chalk
- Music.

Activity Outline

- When standing or sitting still, ask the children to put their hand on their chest and feel their heartbeat
- Talk to the children about the importance of keeping our hearts healthy through physical exercise and eating healthy food
- Encourage the children to move their bodies
 - If you're outside or if you have a large indoor place such as a hall you could ask them to run to a chalked line or specific object

- If space is an issue, encourage the children to jump up and down on the spot or dance around to some music for a few minutes
- Ask the children to stop and put their hand on their chest again to feel their heartbeat
- Ask the children if their heart is beating faster or slower than when they were standing still
- Support the children to recognise how their heart beats faster when exercising and how being active is good for their health.

Extension Activities

You could create an outdoor or indoor obstacle course to help children to move in a range of different ways and engage their interest in being active.

Working with Babies

Ensure non-mobile babies have plenty of tummy time to stretch and wiggle their limbs and be active. Putting interesting objects just out of babies reach will encourage them to move towards the object.

Indoor active play activities for 3-5year olds

Children should be encouraged to be active from birth in order to develop essential muscles, learn new skills and become independent.

There are a variety of activities and resources you could provide for children to encourage active play and minimise sedentary time.

Here are some indoor active play ideas as part of our [Healthy Body, Happy Me physical development](#) campaign.



Malleable play

Such as making and manipulating playdough:

- Provide a playdough station for children to access their own materials (with support as needed)
- Weighing, mixing, kneading, pressing, rolling and cutting enables small muscles and large muscles to be developed and exercised.

Music and movement activities

- Provide children with a variety of different sounds and music types to dance along to
- Why not try dancing with scarves or ribbons to extend the exercise to include their arms too?
- Encourage children to react to music and the beat / tempo – e.g. move fast, slow, up, down.



Indoor obstacle course

- Use resources from the room to create a challenging course
- Allow the children the chance to create their own courses for themselves and their friends.

Balloon game

- Blow up several balloons
- Explain to the children that the balloons must not land on the floor, so they have to keep them up in the air at all times
- How long can they keep them in the air?
- Start with a couple of balloons and then add more as the children become more confident with this activity.

Movement dice

- Make two cardboard dice
- Add photographs of a range of actions e.g. jump, hop and skip to each side
- Ask the children to throw the dice and to copy the moves they see.

Let's Build!

You can learn a lot about a child by observing the way that they undertake a simple task. Explore the range of developmental benefits this 'Let's Build' activity provides.



Learning Aims

- Characteristics of Effective Learning
 - Encourage children's creating and critical thinking skills
 - Have and develop their own ideas
 - Make links between ideas
 - Develop strategies for doing things
- Physical Development
 - Use gross and fine motor skills
- Communication and Language
 - Use talk for thinking and communicating
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
 - Work together with others; make friendships; take turns and share
- Expressive Arts and Design
 - Use imagination.

Resources

- A selection of resources in various sizes suitable for building:
 - Wooden blocks
 - Real and or plastic bricks
 - Cardboard boxes
 - Crates
 - Containers
- Tubes made of various materials
- String
- Sticky tape.

Activity Outline

- Arrange a selection of the resources in a space, indoors or outdoors
- Invite a group of children to explore the resources, choose what they like to build and create something of their choosing
- Allow the children the time and freedom to explore and investigate the resources
- Observe:
 - The imagination that takes place:
 - What inventions have they come up with? Are they working together to make something or working alone?
 - How they problem solve and find ways of doing things
 - Any new ways or ideas they come up with and how they work out how to use the resources in different ways
- Scaffold their learning by encouraging them to use their thinking skills to work out problems. Ask questions such as 'how else could you do that?', 'what do you think might happen if?'
- Extend their range of skills by challenging them
- Watch as they create their own 'story'.

Babies and younger children

Young children start to show critical thinking skills from a very young age. A similar activity for babies and younger children is through treasure baskets.

- Watch how babies explore, how they pick up different objects and 'compare' them in their own way
- Observe how they learn what else they can do with the objects e.g. tipping the objects out and putting the basket on their head like a 'hat'
- See how they learn cause and effect e.g. if they bang two objects together what happens.

Move to the music!

Dancing is such a fun and enjoyable way to get children active, and dancing to music from different cultures will open up your children's minds to music from across the globe.

Learning aims

- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Being creative and expressive
- Listening and attention
- Moving in creative and different ways.

Resources

- Selection of different types of music from around the world
- Various images, books and resources reflecting world music and culture
- A selection of dance props:
 - Ribbons, scarves, pieces of cloth
 - Fans
 - Bells
 - Small drums
 - Castanets
 - Wooden sticks
 - Pan lids etc.

Activity Outline

Lots of cultures have their own style of music and it is important to broaden children's knowledge about the types of music out in the wider world, especially if you have families from different cultures in your setting.

- Introduce the children to the different types of music. Share images and books to give them a visual clue of the culture
- Allow children to choose a piece of music
- Play the music and encourage children to listen to the sounds they hear and move their bodies in whatever way they feel

- Introduce children to the different props. Demonstrate and model how the resources could be used to express themselves in movement.

Extension ideas

- Have the children make their own instruments from natural and everyday resources and encourage them to create their own music and sounds
- With your younger children introduce musical instruments into your treasure baskets for them to explore with their different senses.

Ribbon twirling

The Chief Medical Officer's guidance suggests that children between the ages of two and four years should be physically active for 180 minutes a day. How can you provide fun opportunities for children to achieve some of this daily activity?



Learning Aims

To experience different ways to move and enhance the opportunities for children to be physically active.

Resources

- Rolls of florist's ribbon
- Your setting's favourite music.

Activity Outline

- Firstly, make your twirling ribbons. Ask the children to choose a colour of ribbon (or two favourite colours). Tie a knot at one end of two lengths of florist ribbon to join them together (the length of the ribbon will depend on the size of the child but 45cms or more x two for each child is a good guide)
- Make rips in the ribbon, starting from the untied ends and finishing a few centimetres from the knot
- You can curl your ribbons if you like: trapping the ribbon between your thumb and a ruler, starting from the knotted end and pulling to the loose ends, works well
- Now all you need is some music to move to and to have fun!
- The children might need you to show them some moves to begin with – try waving the ribbon above your head, bending over and waving it

between your legs, waving to one side and then crossing the mid line of your body and waving it at the other side and then swap hands. The children will probably have some super and individual moves of their own once you model the idea.

Extension activities

- Why not try a 'wake up shake up' movement activity a few times a day?
- You could explore the Disney [10 minutes Shake Ups](#) via the Change4Life resources
- Try playing Simons Says e.g. "Jump three times, hop three times, turn around, run to the wall, touch your head" etc – there are lots of opportunities to practice listening and attention as well as the obvious physical development here!

Working with babies

- Supervised tummy time is an important part of physical development for young babies. Could you try a whole body painting experience with babies on their tummies (supervised and risk assessed as required)?
- You can play crawling games for the slightly older babies – for example crawling through tunnels, or chasing games crawling around.

Sand Foam

Create a sensory soft sand material for children to explore.

Learning Aims:

- To offer children a sensory resource to manipulate
- To develop new language and vocabulary



- Understanding the world
- Develop creativity and imagination
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Support and develop motor skills
- Literacy development
- Mathematics.

Resources:

- Sand
- Shaving foam
- Tub/bowl for mixing together
- Measuring cup
- Tray for the finished sand foam
- Chosen resources to develop the sand foam activity according to children's current interests
- Paper/card and pen/photographs and glue for creating the instructions.

Activity Outline:

- Talk to the children about what you want to make and how you need to do this. Talk through the instructions (ideally you would have photographs of each stage of the process on your instructions card)
- Check off each item on your list

- Measure out three cups of sand into a bowl/tub
- Add shaving foam and stir together, keep adding the shaving foam until you make a soft creamy consistency, you can add more sand or foam to create the right texture
- Add the desired resources to the sand foam tray.



Image credit: Little Miss Early Years

Resources you could add to your sand foam:

- Natural materials, leaves, twigs, flowers etc.
- A drop of lavender or peppermint etc. to the mixture
- Glitter
- Sprinkles of powdered paint to create colours
- Shells of different shapes and sized
- Sand combs to create different patterns in the sand
- Mark making tools
- Scoops and spoons
- Allow children to lead and extend upon their interests and enjoyment.

Tubetastic!

Promote the Characteristics of Effective Learning and explore cause and effect, speed and gravity using different sized tubes and balls.



Learning Aims

This activity particularly promotes the development of the characteristics of effective learning:

Playing and exploring – engagement

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to 'have a go'.

Active learning – motivation

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do.

Creating and thinking critically – thinking

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things.

Resources

- Collect different sized tubes – inserts from wrapping paper, carpet roll cardboard tubes, crisp tubes (both ends removed), kitchen rolls, plastic tubes
- Collect a range of different size and weighted balls (pom poms are good for light ones)
- Buckets, boxes or baskets to catch the balls at the end of the tubes.

This activity is best carried out in the outside area or a large indoor space.

Activity Outline

Provide the children with the tubes and balls and encourage them to explore, putting the different sized and weighted balls down the tubes. Follow their interest, commenting on their exploration. Ask open ended questions, such as: Which balls are the fastest? Why? What might happen if we tipped the tube? Why?

You could provide them with large wooden blocks or stands to rest the tubes on or suggest they use other 'spare parts' from your outside area to further explore the movement of the balls down the tubes.

Could they join tubes together to make a long tube for the balls to go down? How? Help them to plan and try out their ideas.

Working with babies

Babies love balls too – provide them different textured balls in a basket for them to explore with crisp tubes and other small boxes e.g. empty tissue box. As the babies place the balls in the boxes and tubes say 'all gone' and ask them 'Where's the ball gone?'. Encourage them to look in to find the ball.

Ice-tastic sculptures!

Use cold weather to create ice sculptures or shapes by freezing water into a range of different objects to create interesting shapes.



Learning aims

- Exploring the properties of water when frozen
- Creating interesting shapes and objects with ice
- Observing how ice changes over time.

Resources

- A range of different size containers/packaging
- Water
- A selection of natural materials
- Small world figures
- Food colouring (optional)
- Rubber gloves / balloons
- Freezing temperatures or a freezer
- Trays to hold the ice-sculptures once frozen.

Activity Outline

- Gather a range of containers of various shapes and sizes that can be used in the freezer
- Fill each shape with water (add food colouring for coloured ice)
- Put the containers in the freezer or leave outdoors overnight if it is cold enough to freeze
- Once frozen pop the shapes out of the containers (ease the ice out with warm water over the container)
- Put the ice on to a tray for children to explore

- Give children some building tools to chip away at the ice to create their own ice sculptures.

Additional ideas

- Add small world figures to the water to make an exciting creative play scene
- Add a selection of natural materials to freeze
- Freeze water inside rubber gloves and balloons to create interesting ice shapes
- For large scale ice sculptures place a range of big containers outdoors overnight
- Guttering used for water play is a great way to collect large frozen construction blocks.

Gifts for Grandparents

Help the children in your setting to celebrate and appreciate their grandparents and the special people in their lives with an open ended crafting activity.



Learning aims

- For children to discuss their family and the special people in their lives
- To show affection and appreciation for people that are special to them
- This activity will support children's development in the areas of Personal, Social and Emotional, Communication and Language, Literacy and Expressive Arts and Design.

Resources

This would depend on exactly what the children decided to make, but a good selection of general open ended craft items such as:

- Paper and card
- Coloured pencils, crayons, felt tips or paints
- Glue, tissue paper and sprinkles (etc)
- Paint, brushes, sponges and other printing items
- Camera (if they make a card, photo frame or book mark)
- Clay
- Paper plates.

Activity outline

- Begin by using your knowledge of the make up of the families of your key children. Some will have Grandparents that live locally, some may have Grandparents that further away or in another country and some children may not have Grandparents but may have other special people in their lives

- Talk to the children about their family. They may speak about a special family event or the time spent with others or use specific words to describe their special people
- Help children to decide what they would like to make, for example a celebration card, a book mark, photo frame, a Grandparents Award, model, painting or picture
- Talk to the children about what they are doing. If they are making a card or picture perhaps they would like to you write some of their special thoughts/words on a speech bubble so that they can add their words too?

Working with babies?

Why not involve parents, asking them to provide photos of their family so that the babies and young children can point to and communicate to you about their special people? Ensure that you are aware of the specific names used for members of their family, such as Nanna, Grandad, Gramps and Pops.