



Developing Activity Areas Nursery and Reception



Produced by The Early Years Quality Improvement Team



Displays

Images of local buildings
Photos of children's models and designs
Laminated pictures examples of models that can be made.
Building vocabulary
Images of different places of worship



Construction area

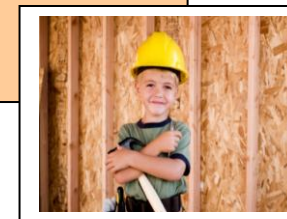
Supportive texts:

Books and pictures about buildings
Signs for construction sites – warning people at work, danger, concealed hole etc.
Three little pigs, 3 Billy goats gruff.
Humpty Dumpty
London Bridge
Screw fix and Wickes catalogues
Lego books
Instruction manuals
Dig, dig digging – M Mayo



Open ended challenges

- How can we organise this area so we can get to all the things we need?
- How can we make sure things don't run out?
- How many bricks can you use to make the highest tower, before it falls?
- Can you make a bed/chair to fit your teddy?
- How can we fit all the bricks in the box?
- Which floor shapes fit together the best?
- How tall can you make your tower before the sand runs out?
- How many different ways can you fit 3 blocks together?
- Can you get the 3 Billy goats gruff across the river?
- Can you stop the ball/car rolling down the slope?
- Can you make a model using two different types of construction kit?
- Can you make a model using all the pieces in the construction box?
- Who can build the tallest/longest/widest tower before the timer runs out?



Resource suggestions for cross curricular learning:

Tape Measures
Rulers
Breeze Blocks, bricks, Lego, Duplo, Interstar etc.
Clipboards, order forms and pencils
Mobile phones
Hard hats and high visibility jackets
Garage, Farm, airport, Dinosaurs, Cars, Barbies, Animals
Sand timers, stop watches
Architectural plans and designs
Tool belts
Screwdrivers, hammers, saws
Real bricks and off cuts of wood
Large sheets of paper and felt pens
Swathes of fabrics of different textures and designs
Pegs
Masking tape
Scissors
Flasks, tea bags and mugs
Shoe boxes of different sizes
String
Trowels and hods



Displays

Numbers in the home
Party invitations
People wearing different clothes
Images of different room layouts.
Positive images of different family groups



Role play Home corner

Consider changing the home corner to reflect different rooms within the home

- Kitchen
- Lounge
- Bedroom
- bathroom

Supportive texts

Recipe books
Newspapers, adult books and magazines
Car manuals
e-readers
Argos catalogues
I will not ever never eat a tomato
Alfie get's in first
Mog the forgetful cat
Tiger who cam to tea
Peace at last



Open-ended challenges

- How can we organise this area so we can get to all the things we need?
- How can we make sure things don't run out?
- Can you find the hidden parcels and sort them by weight?
- Can you set the table for all our guests?
- How many times can we wrap the sari fabric around our body?
- Where will your magic carpet take you? What will you need to take?
- Can you make sure everyone will come to the party?
- Can you change the ending of our story?
- How can you retell the story of....



Resource suggestions for cross curricular learning:

Pictures, photographs, posters
Crocery and cutlery
Clock/alarm clock
Vegetable rack and vegetables
Note pad, paper and pens
Food packages and containers
Notice board
Tea towels, washing up liquid and pan scourers
Telephone, mobiles and directories
Teapot and kettle, tea bags, coffee and sugar pots
Fruit bowl and fruit
Plants, real or plastic
Cooking utensils
Television/music system
Lamp and shade
Photo frames
Spice rack
Swing bin
Dog or cat basket
First aid kit
Smoke alarm
Lunch boxes
Brooms and dust pans
Clothes tree and pegs
Laundry basket
Bedding, sheets and duvets
Till receipts
Store cards
Greeting cards
Take away menus/taxi cards
Calendars and diaries
Appointment cards
Mirrors
Scales
Magazine rack

Displays:

- Laminated road signs and labels
- Laminated numbers
- Images of children playing with sand in different ways
- Images of different uses of sand, beaches, deserts, builders, construction sites, fires, floods etc.

Other resources that can replace the sand:

- Dried pulses
- Shredded paper
- Sawdust
- Soil/compost
- Polystyrene packaging
- Leaves
- Flower petals
- Gravel and pebbles

Supportive texts:

- Sea side stories
- Bob the builder books
- Around the world – deserts
- Pirate stories- buried treasure
- Sharing a shell

Open-ended challenges

- How can we organise this area so we can get to all the things we need?
- How can we make sure things don't run out?
- Can you stop the sand going through the holes of the sieve?
- If we bury the treasure how will we know where to find it?
- Which container holds the most sand? How will you test if you're right?
- What type of sand makes the best sandcastle?

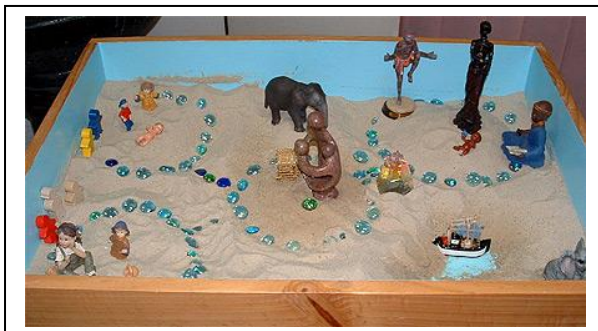
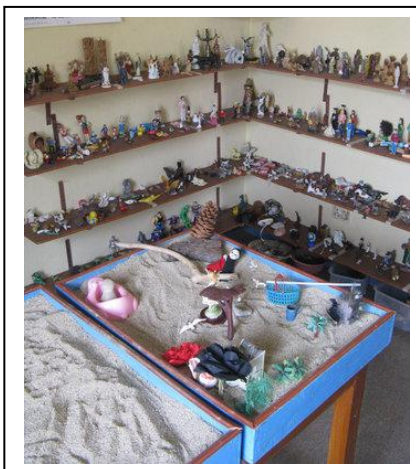


Resource suggestions for cross curricular learning



Empty bottles of varying sizes
Kitchen utensils – tongs, spatulas, chop sticks, spoons etc
Measuring jugs/spoons
Small world characters, imagined worlds, such as fairies, dinosaurs etc.
Pebbles, shells, leaves, twigs, conkers, acorns etc
Hose piping lengths
Patterned socks and gloves
Flower pots and seeds
Old jewellery – treasure
Access to water – buckets/tap
Mark making tools – sticks, twigs, vegetables i.e. celery, screwdrivers etc.
Jelly moulds
Sieves and funnels
Different size jars and lids
Resources for making flags
Straws and tubes – different thicknesses

Sand play



Displays:

Images of water in a range of contexts – oceans, rivers, lakes, ponds, baths, sinks, water pipes, taps, hydrants etc

Uses of water – drinking, fire extinguishing, watering plants, sailing swimming etc.

Key descriptive language to use.



Supportive texts:

Mr Archimedes Bath
Five minutes peace
The lighthouse keeper
Harry the dirty dog
Percy the park keeper – the stormy night
Mr Gumpy's outing



Water play



Open-ended challenges

- Which container holds the most water?
- Can you make a cork sink?
- Can you make a boat that floats?
- Can you make a water spout for Incy Wincy to climb up?
- Can you make a string of bubbles?
- I need to water my plants. My bucket has a hole in it. Can you help me?
- The three Billy goats gruff can't swim. How can we help them get across the river safely?
- My elephant is very thirsty. Can you find the container that holds the most water to give him a drink?
- Who can make the biggest bubble? Who can make the smallest?
- Which is the quickest way to fill the large bottle?

Resource suggestions for cross curricular learning:

Small world figures – under the sea.
Tea party sets
Sieves and colanders
Tubing and piping
Shampoo bottles, sponges, flannels, soaps etc
Objects that float and sink
Shells and pebbles
10 green bottles
Bowls and containers of different sizes and shapes



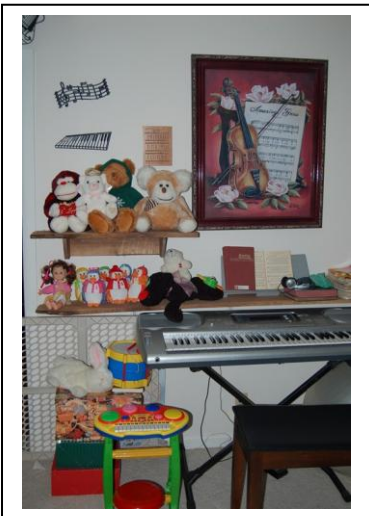
Large paint brushes and rollers
Plastic guttering
Selection of spoons
Washing up liquid, scourers,
Pot scrubbers, bottle brush
Rubber gloves

Pipettes, Turkey baster
Watering cans
Old taps
Boats, pirate figures, treasure, messages in bottles
Vegetable peelers and potatoes
Ice cubes of different sizes
Bubble blowers



Displays:

Images of different orchestras, bands
Images of people playing instruments/singing
Children's own songs / lyrics
Musical notes and vocabulary
Current song lyrics that children are learning



Supportive texts:

Sheet music
Song books
Rhyme books
Instructional manuals for instruments



Open-ended challenges:

- Make a dance to show how the music makes you feel
- Compose a superhero tune
- Find all of the instruments that can be played with your hands
- Make your own instruments with the modelling resources
- Find a way of showing who likes which piece of music best.
- How many different sounds can you make with one instrument?
- How could we record your ideas so we could make that song again?
- Can you make up a superhero rap?
- Can you sing a lullaby for Sleeping Beauty?

Music area

Resource suggestions for cross curricular learning:

Pots, pans, washing up bowls and wooden spoons
Tape recorder/CD player
Collection of CD's of different genres of music.
Interesting stimuli that will evoke a musical response – Mexican sombrero, streamers, top hat, brides veil or bouquet, scarves etc.
Range of musical instruments that are played in different ways.
Music from different cultures
Writing materials and pens
Rhyme props – 5 little ducks, 5 sausages etc
Children's own home made instruments
Song bags to select
Dance mats



Small world play

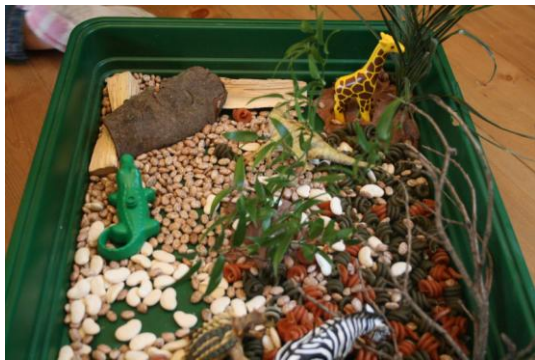


Supportive texts:

Environmental theme books ie, homes, shops, farms, dinosaurs etc
Current topic stories ie Billy goats gruff
People and cultures books
Diaries, calendars
Road maps and atlases
Station / bus timetables
Children's own stories from small world
We're going on a bear hunt
Rosie's walk
Duck in the truck
The Gruffalo
Where the wild things are

Displays:

Children's own drawings and designs
Photographs of the children playing
Images of different locations



Possible themes:

Farms/zoo/wild animals
Fairies
Dinosaurs
Garage
Airport
Dolls house
Under the sea
Space world
Train set
Towns



Resource suggestions for cross curricular learning:

Natural resources to make imagined worlds – wood chips, sand, leaves, twigs, pebbles, shells etc
Builders trays, foil containers, cardboard boxes
Swathes of fabrics of different colours and textures
Clip boards and pens
Large sheets of paper and felt pens – to draw out plans and scenes
Miniature road signs and labels
Box of hats to stimulate children into roles connected with the theme – ie park keepers hat, train drivers cap etc.
CD with music that represents the theme.
Playdough/modelling clay and tools

Open-ended challenges:

- Can you make a house for to live in?
- What could Goldilocks do to cheer up baby bear?
- How can we make sure things don't run out?
- How can you get the 3 Billy goats gruff across the river?
- How can you stop the ball/car rolling down the slope?
- How many different ways can you set up the train set?
- Can you change the ending of our story?
- How can you retell the story of....
- Use all the objects to tell a story.



Investigation area



Displays:

Images of unusual objects
 Images of everyday objects from unusual angles
 Drawings and photos of children's investigations



Resource suggestions for cross curricular learning:

Feely bags/boxes
 Magnets
 Kaleidoscopes
 Magnifying glasses
 Smell pots
 Lavender bags/pot pourri/herb and spices/coffee etc
 Pine cones, conkers, acorns, shells
 Batteries of different sizes
 Screwdrivers
 Old circuit boards and clocks, radios, toys etc to disassemble
 Clip boards, paper and pens
 Cameras
 Collections of things to taste – bitter/sweet/acidic/sour etc
 Collections of things to touch - soft/hard/rough/smooth/shiny etc
 Colour paddles
 Prisms and lenses
 Egg timers
 Stop watches
 Torches
 Mirrors

Supportive texts;

Eye spy books
 Magic eye books
 Books about the senses
 Science books
 Instruction manuals

Open-ended challenges

- How many things can you fit in a matchbox?
- How could you sort the objects?
- What will the magnets stick to?
- How can you move the objects from A to B without touching them?
- How many different ways can you pick up the objects without touching them?
- How can you record everyone's favourite smell?
- Can you sort the object into old and new?
- Which coin do you think is the oldest?
- Which key will unlock the padlock?
- What can you find inside the radio?



Open-ended challenges

- How can we organise this area so we can get to all the things we need?
- How can we make sure things don't run out?
- Can you find the hidden parcels and sort them by weight?
- What numbers can you make using matchsticks?
- Can you find/make the missing number on the number line?
- Can you find/make the number that comes next on the number line?
- Which floor shapes fit together the best?
- How many marbles can you put in the pot, in one minute, using the chopsticks or tongs?



Maths area



Supportive texts

Number rhymes, songs and stories and props

Shape books

Pattern books

Number books

Size books

Kippers birthday

Titch

Jaspers beanstalk

Number rhyme books – five little monkeys etc

The bad tempered ladybird

The very hungry caterpillar

Ten terrible dinosaurs

Displays

Numbered birthday cards

Calendars and diaries

Interactive number lines

Pictures of numbers in the environment

Car number plates

Images of clocks and watches



Resource suggestions:

Ordering, classifying and counting

Conkers, shells, buttons, pebbles, beads, cars, animals acorns, fir cones, coins, marbles, matchsticks etc

Exploring pattern and shape

Tap a shape

Laces and beads

Pegs and boards

Tessellation shapes

Elastic bands and boards

Magnetic shapes

Linking chains

Socks, stripy, spotty etc

Measuring

Rulers

Tape measures

Sand timers

Stop watches

Balances and scales

Graded containers

Number

Calculators

Abacus

Clear and appropriate number line

Magnetic and dough numbers

Remote controls key boards

Clocks/watches

dice

Paper and pens



Displays;

Due to the nature of this area – this area should remain free of displays that are led and influenced by adults.

However consider the following:

- Keep it uncluttered
- Make targeted use of colours, understanding the influence of colour on concentration levels
- Maximise natural light or make use of innovative lighting ideas



Communication friendly space

Supportive texts:

Any current children's favourite stories

Texts linked to the stimulus

Magazine racks

Not now Bernard

Guess how much I love you

You choose

Something else

I love you just the way you are

A space that is

- An open ended space
- quiet or darker space
- hidden/private spaces
- cosy spaces
- intriguing/ stimulating
- clear, calm spaces
- personal/ individual

Open-ended challenges:

- What will you talk about today?
- How does that make you feel?
- How can you tell everyone what you have talked about?
- How many words can you think of to describe this?

Resource suggestions for cross curricular learning:

Fabrics that reflect cultural diversity
Cushions of different textures, sizes and shapes

Plants and herbs

Puppets and soft toys

Treasure chest - or a box that opens to reveal a stimulus

Small baskets with interesting objects based on children's current interests

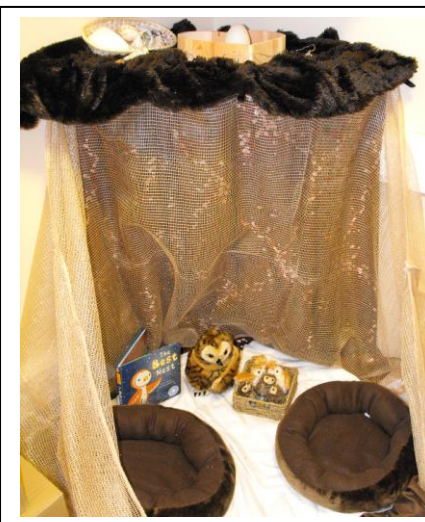
CD and mood music

Torches

Telephones/mobiles

Think about cards. Images of calm scenes – woodland, beaches fields etc

Any photos of children talking within the area.



Malleable table/messy play



Resources suggestions:

Clay
Soap flakes
Variety of different types of dough
Cornflour
Gak
Shaving foam
Jelly
Baked beans
Flour and water paste
Cooked pasta
Mashed potato
Paper mache
Mud pies
Petal perfume



Resource suggestions for cross curricular learning:

Cake tins, cutters, rolling pins
Candles
Match / lolly sticks, cocktail sticks
Tongs
Chocolate box inserts
Bowls of different sizes
Spoons of different sizes
Potato ricers and garlic presses
Chopsticks
Beads, buttons and pebbles
Shells
Cake cases
Birthday cards
Recipe cards
Paper and pens
Mini oven/hob
Plates, cups, bottles
Water/flour shakers

Supportive texts

Make and do books
Recipe books/cards

Rhymes such as wiggly
worms
Kippers Birthday

Displays:

Images of the children playing
Photos of any models
Key descriptive vocabulary
Recipe ideas for parents and
carers.

Open-ended challenges:

- How many words can you use to describe how this feels?
- How many different patterns can you make?
- How many people can you share the dough with? How will this be fair?
- Can you make a model with this?
- What could you add to this to change it?





Open-ended challenges:

- How many different endings can you think of, for this story?
- Which book is the nursery favourite?
- Use all the objects to tell a story.
- How many ways can you start a story?
- How can you link all these characters?
- Can you make up a silly sentence about yourself?
- Can you change the ending of our story?
- Find a way to record your story, so that we remember it?
- How can you retell the story of....



Types of texts that could be included:

- Story books
- Board books
- Information books
- Traditional rhyme and story books
- Photograph books
- Novelty books
- Comics and magazines
- Cloth books
- Pop-up books
- Sound books
- Poetry books
- Dual language texts
- Home made books
- Number, counting and shape books

Book area

Displays

- Book posters
- Environmental print
- Photos of the children reading
- Images of libraries
- Images of alphabet letters that are meaningful to the children
- A favourite story with touch, smell and taste display – such as Handa's Surprise with real fruit to handle and try

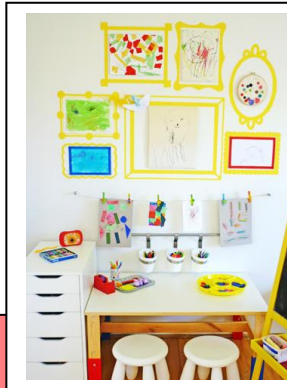


Resource suggestions for cross curricular learning:

- Magnetic story props
- Taped stories and player
- Headphones
- Objects and games to support phonological awareness
- Finger and rhyme puppets
- Story props
- Magnetic board
- White boards and pens
- Puppets
- Index boxes and library cards
- Ink pads and stamps
- Cushions and fabrics
- Story sacks
- Plants/fresh flowers
- Scented candles

Displays

Both 2D and 3D displays of children's work
Images of different genres of art work – poster, photos, postcards etc.
Interesting stimuli to engage children's interests
Spaces for children to display their own work



Open-ended challenges

- Can you make a party hat that fits Asim's head?
- Can you make a bed/chair to fit your teddy?
- Can you get the 3 Billy goats gruff across the river?
- Can you make an aeroplane which flies?
- Can you make a boat that floats?
- Can you make a paper line that is longer than the room?
- How could you make Daddy Bear's bow tie spin?
- Can you make a vehicle with moving wheels?
- Can you make something for Handa to carry the fruit to the village, so that it is safe?
- How many pieces of paper can you cut from this?
- Which piece of paper can you fold in half the most times?
- How many ways can you join two pieces of paper together?
- Can you design a cape for Batman?
- Make a car for the Power Rangers.
- Make a magic wand. What magic can you make with it?

Resource suggestions for cross curricular learning:

Powder paint, ready mixed paint and block paints
Textured and thickened paints
Pots, pallets, trays and easels
Brushes of different lengths and thicknesses
Selection of printing objects
Collage materials, such as buttons, feathers, wrapping papers, recycling materials, wools, ribbons, fabrics, corks
Pencils, pens, pastels, charcoal, crayons.
Stapler, hole punch, treasury tags, scissors, sellotape, blutak
Elastic bands

Resource suggestions for cross curricular learning

Masking tape, glue and glue sticks
Paper and card of different sizes
Name cards
Rulers
Cotton buds
Toothbrushes
Rollers
Roll-on containers
Reclaimed boxes and tubes etc
Pipettes
Water sprays
Adhesive labels – for attaching names to models

Supportive texts

Art and sculpture information books
Make and do books

Anthony Browne – Bears magic pencil
Quentin Blake – Patrick
Harry and the robots
The lighthouse keeper's lunch



Creative workshop

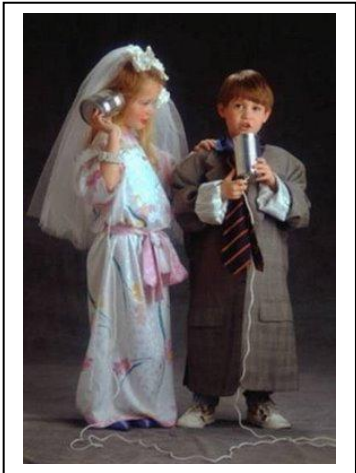


Resource suggestions for cross curricular learning:

- Selection of hats and scarves
- Selection of bags, purses and wallets
- Beads and bangles
- Microphones
- Mobile phones
- Money
- Bunches of silk or plastic flowers
- Take away boxes
- Shoes of different sizes
- Telescopes/binoculars
- Superhero capes
- Swatches of fabrics of different textures and designs
- Ribbons and streamers
- CD player and selection of different music
- Tool boxes and tools
- Magic carpet / lamp
- Clipboards, paper and pens
- Newspapers and magazines

Dressing-up area

Displays:
 Images and photographs of different characters and people – make sure they are positive images that reflect gender, culture and disability.
 Take photos of the children and tell their stories through a series of photos that are annotated.

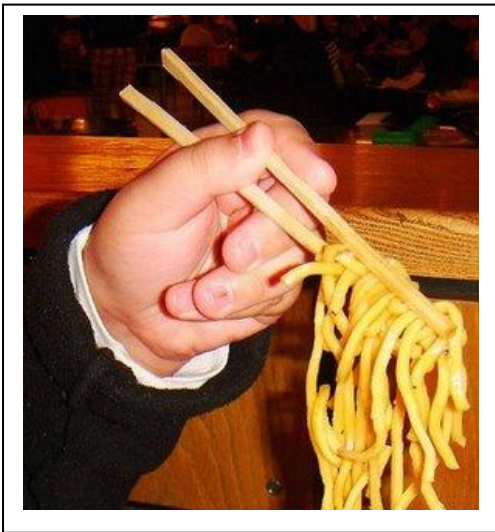


Supportive texts:

- People who help us books
- Theme books – such as pirates, fairies, explorers etc.
- Atlases and maps
- Superhero comics
- Dressing up stories.
- Whatever next

Open-ended challenges:

- How many ways can you wear this fabric?
- Without using your voice show your friends who you are today
- Can you record the story you have been acting so that we can show everyone?
- How many ways can you start a story?
- How can you link all these characters?
- What would your character do?
- How would your character sound?
- Can you tell a story that uses all of these hats?



Fine motor skills area



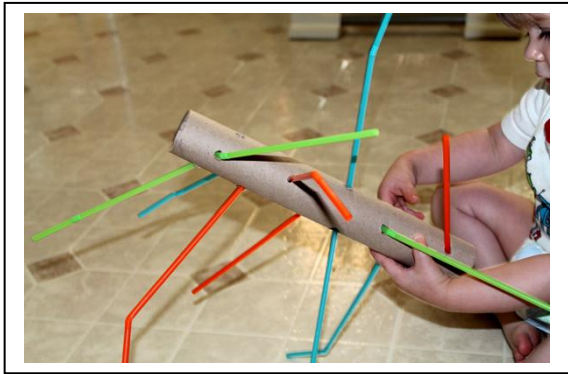
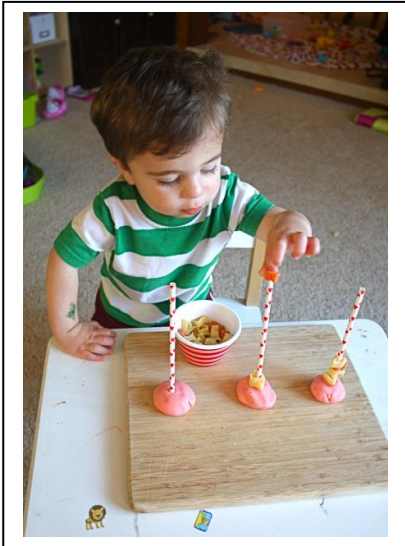
Resource suggestions for cross curricular learning:
Straws
Tongs
Tweezers
Chopsticks
Pipe cleaners
Small pots and bowls
Beads and buttons
Pebbles/marbles
Weaving frames and ribbons, strings, laces and wools
Pasta shapes/pulses
Threading cards
Scissors
Sieves and colanders - used for threading or weaving
Inset and shape puzzles
Tessellation shapes
Pegs and boards
Stacking boxes and cylinders
Small drawstring pouches
Selection of different sizes, thicknesses and colours of paper and card
Shoes and trainers and laces

Open-ended challenges

- How many pieces of paper can you cut from this?
- Which piece of paper can you fold in half the most times?
- How many ways can you join two pieces of paper together?
- How many different ways can you pick up the objects without touching them?
- How many things can you fit in a matchbox?
- Can you make a repeating pattern?
- How many marbles can you put in the pot, in one minute, using the chopsticks or tongs?

Supportive texts:
Pattern and design books

Displays:
Table top displays of children's own designs and work
Images of patterns and shapes
Postcards and posters of patterns and designs





It is essential that ALL area of provision are:

- Inviting and stimulating
- Clearly defined for adults and children
- Carefully planned for every day
- Monitored and evaluated
- Maintained and replenished
- Safe
- Clean and tidy



Displays

All displays should be used to enhance learning.

Whilst celebrating children's work is valuable consider ways that the displays can be used to support future or further learning alongside the celebration.

Interactive displays

Should be used to ignite interest and curiosity,

Use table tops, tops of shelf units or even large up turned boxes. Add pulleys or lift the flaps to wall displays and wherever possible add some texts to engage children in 'reading'.



Use of fabrics

Fabrics and drapes can make all the difference to your setting. Fabrics can include different textures such as shiny, hessian and velvet. Printed fabrics can be used to enhance themed play such as animals, numbers etc. Fabrics can also be used as table covers to enhance play, ie dark blue cloth with space resources.

Carpet tiles can be used for shelf tops and floors to add texture and interest.

Sheeting with fabric crayons will enable children to design their own drapes and material representations especially for small world play.

Maintaining the Learning Environment

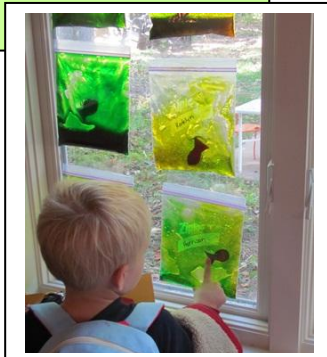
Using a workshop approach in each activity area.

A wide selection of resources is available at child height to encourage children to make independent choices to support their learning

Each set of resources should be:

- Clearly labelled - words and pictures
- Stored for ease of access
- Demonstrated to the children prior to them having free access

Children will need to be taught how to self select and also importantly how to return resources upon completion of their activity.



Activity areas Audit.

Choose an activity area that you would like to develop or one that is working well.

Where possible, try to involve more than one Practitioner when observing this area of provision.

Carry out two observations in the same activity area, possibly at different times of the day and days of the week.

You may not have enough evidence to complete all of the boxes. Use the information to build a picture of what equipment/resources is being used and how.

Include comments which are positive, to celebrate with others, as well as those identifying areas for future development.

Use the observation comments as the starting point for discussion with colleagues and in order to reflect on Early Years Provision.

Include comments about what the children are doing e.g. if a child brings equipment/resources from another activity area, or only stays briefly and then returns.

Focus for observation	Comments on observation	Areas for development/points to be shared with colleagues
Are the resources of a suitable variety and do they encourage choice?		
Are there too many, or not enough, resources? Are children being restricted in their learning through access to resources?		
Are the resources old and worn? Do they need reviewing? Who is responsible for maintaining and replenishing the resources? Are the children involved in this? How?		

<p>Are the resources well labelled and accessible for children to select independently?</p>		
<p>How are children encouraged to care for and use the equipment and resources appropriately?</p>		
<p>How is the activity area organised? Do the resources challenge and stimulate children? Do they meet the children's developmental needs as learners, enabling them to investigate, be curious and develop their thinking?</p>		

<p>Is there any dominant use? For example, boys as opposed to girls; younger children as opposed to older; children with special needs; children with English as an Additional Language?</p>		
<p>What planned enrichment is added to the provision to continue to stimulate interest and give opportunities for children to consolidate and deepen their learning?</p>		