



Introduction

Who this book is for

It is often a challenge to continue to come up with exciting and inspiring areas of provision week after week. The aim of this book is to support all early years' practitioners in creating a stimulating and awe-inspiring environment, by using what is already available in the setting. Creating such an environment does not mean spending a fortune, but means being resourceful and creative with what you have to hand available— on a daily basis.

For practitioners, books that **show you** how to create outstanding provision rather than text-heavy books that **tell you** how, are extremely useful, especially when time is so precious. *Outstanding Early Years Provision in practice* involves concise text with an emphasis on bright and detailed pictures to inspire you to transform your learning environment.

The book would also be an ideal resource for students taking their PGCE course or any early years childcare course.

How to use this book

Each chapter will focus on a specific **area of provision**; showing how achievable it is to take it to the next level (the 'wow' factor) by utilising everyday resources and getting inside the mind of a child! The detailed photographs and captions show fresh and easy-to-replicate ideas.

Alongside the photos will be a list of **resources** needed, a challenge section with ideas on how to extend the provision, **observations** of children and **links** to the current Early Years Framework. There will also be **key questions** for you to ask yourself about each area of provision, enabling you to reflect on the needs of the child across all **seven areas of learning** and in relation to the characteristics of effective learning.

The **areas of learning tables** at the back of the book can help you plan these effectively.

Remembering the following simple points as you use this book will help you develop and improve your provision!

- Utilise what you already have
- Use 'the real thing' wherever possible
- Involve the children
- Continually check and monitor the effectiveness of the provision
- Ensure there are opportunities for extension and challenge.

Continuous provision

The resources, activities and experiences that are constantly available in a setting, both inside and outside, can be thought of as continuous provision.

This provision should ensure coverage across the seven areas of the curriculum and should be planned for in response to the developmental needs and interests of the children and with careful consideration of the characteristics of effective learning. These are outlined in the 2012 EYFS Framework.

"In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **Playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **Active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- **Creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things."

Statutory Framework for The Early Years Foundation Stage 2012, Section 1.10, P6 and 7.

This book will give you practical ideas on how to enhance this basic provision, creating activities which engage, stimulate and challenge.

And finally... Think like a child and have fun with your creations!





Digging in the sand can become an archaeological quest to find the hidden remains of an ancient city!

Archaeological dig

Targeted areas of learning:
Understanding the World and
Communication and Language

“I don't know what this is but I think it's from something scary because it's got pointy bones.”

Setting up the provision

Method

Bury objects under the sand, making sure that some are visible to allow children to become curious about the activity. Position investigation resources around the edge of the tray.

Resources

- Sand
- Paint brushes
- Spades
- Magnifying glasses
- Old camera
- Head lamps or torches
- Clipboards and pens

- Collection of interesting rocks, fossils, logs, shells etc.
- Broken crockery.

Handy hints

- The paint brushes provide an excellent tool to enable children to delicately brush off the sand and examine their intriguing artefact.
- Fill the sand tray with lots of sand and bury many of the objects far below so that children to get the chance to dig deep!
- Natural materials such as logs and stones don't cost a penny. Ask children to help you build up a collection. The more unusual the better.

Chapter One: Exploration and investigation

How does the activity enable children to develop and demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning?

Characteristic of effective learning	The enabling environment: Archaeological dig
Playing and exploring – engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Finding out and exploring● Playing with what they know● Being willing to ‘have a go’.	<p>The activity is open-ended and multi-sensory.</p> <p>Children represent experiences through imaginative play, getting in character as archaeologists!</p> <p>The resources are new and exciting, encouraging children to ‘have a go’.</p>
Active learning – motivation <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Being involved and concentrating● Keeping trying● Enjoying achieving what they set out to do.	<p>The natural resources are unusual and intriguing, enabling children to show high levels of fascination and maintain sustained concentration as they explore.</p> <p>Children have the opportunity to problem solve by themselves or with others, trying to uncover what the objects are and where they have come from.</p>
Creating and thinking critically – thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Having their own ideas● Making links● Choosing ways to do things.	<p>Children have the opportunity to talk about and explain their knowledge, reflecting on how it links to previous experiences.</p>



Carefully dusting off the mysterious artefact. All in a day's work for this budding Archaeologist!