

Planning for Learning through The sea

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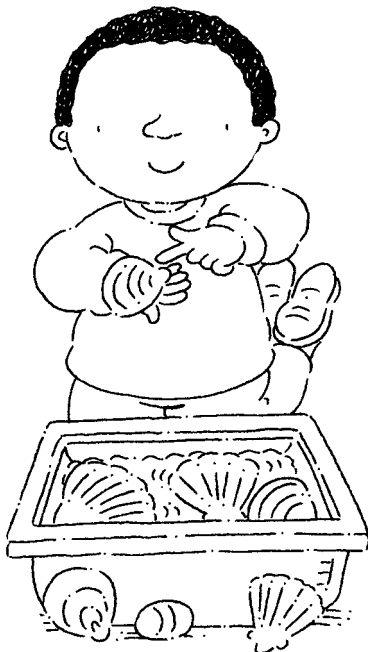
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Published by Practical Pre-School Books, A Division of MA Education Ltd,
St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, Herne Hill, London, SE24 0PB Tel: 020 7738 5454
www.practicalpreschoolbooks.com

Revised (2nd edition) © MA Education Ltd 2013. First edition © Step Forward Publishing Limited 2009.

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Planning for Learning through The sea ISBN: 978-1-909280-36-6

Making plans

Child-friendly Planning

The purpose of planning is to make sure that all children enjoy a broad and balanced experience of learning. Planning should be flexible, useful and child-friendly. It should reflect opportunities available both indoors and outside. Plans form part of a planning cycle in which practitioners make observations, assess and plan.

Children benefit from reflective planning that takes into account the children's current interests and abilities and also allows them to take the next steps in their learning. Plans should make provision for activity that promotes learning and a desire to imagine, observe, communicate, experiment, investigate and create.

Plans should include a variety of types of activity. Some will be adult-initiated or adult-led, that focus on key skills or concepts. These should be balanced with opportunities for child-initiated activity where the children take a key role in the planning. In addition there is a need to plan for the on-going continuous provision areas such as construction, sand and water, malleable materials, small world, listening area, role-play and mark-making.



Thought also needs to be given to the enhanced provision whereby an extra resource or change may enable further exploration, development and learning.

The outdoor environment provides valuable opportunities for children's learning. It is vital that plans value the use of outdoor space.

The UK Frameworks

Within the UK a number of frameworks exist to outline the provision that children should be entitled to receive. Whilst a variety of terms and labels are used to describe the Areas of Learning there are key principles which are common to each document. For example they advocate that practitioners' planning should be personal based on observations and knowledge of the specific children within a setting. They acknowledge that young children learn best when there is scope for child-initiated activity. In addition it is accepted that young children's learning is holistic. Although within the documents Areas of Learning are presented separately to ensure that key areas are not over-looked, within settings, children's learning will combine areas. Thus the Areas of Learning are perhaps of most use for planning, assessment and recording.

Focused area plans

The plans you make for each day will outline areas of continuous provision and focused, adult-led activities. Plans for focused-area activities need to include aspects such as:

- resources needed;
- the way in which you might introduce activities;
- individual needs;
- the organisation of adult help;
- size of the group;
- timing;
- safety;
- key vocabulary.

Identify the learning and the Early Learning Goals that each activity is intended to promote. Make a note of any assessments or observations that you are likely to carry out. After carrying out the activities, make notes on your plans to say what was particularly successful, or any changes you would make another time.

Using the ‘Early Learning Goals’

The principles that are common to each of the United Kingdom curriculum frameworks for the early years are described on page 2. It is vital that, when planning for children within a setting, practitioners are familiar with the relevant framework’s content and organisation for areas of learning. Regardless however, of whether a child attends a setting in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales they have a right to provision for all areas of learning. The children should experience activities which encourage them to develop their communication and language; personal, social, emotional, physical, mathematical and creative skills. They should have opportunities within literacy and be encouraged to understand and explore their world.

Within the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2012), Communication and Language; Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development are described as Prime Areas of Learning that are ‘particularly crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive’ (page 4, DfE 2012). The Specific Areas of Learning are Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

For each Area of Learning the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) describe what children are expected to be able to do by the time they enter Year 1. These goals, detailed on pages 4 to 6, have been used throughout this book to show how activities relating to ‘The Sea’ could link to these expectations. For

example, for Personal, Social and Emotional Development one aim relates to the development of children’s ‘self-confidence and self-awareness’. Activities suggested which provide the opportunity for children to do this have the reference PSE1. This will enable you to see which parts of the Early Learning Goals are covered for a given theme and to plan for areas to be revisited and developed.

In addition, an activity may be carried out to develop a range of different Early Learning Goals. For example, whilst exploring sea and beach safety children might make sun safety posters and use writing skills. In addition, they will consider how people can be protected from the sun, and use creative skills. Thus, whilst adult-focused activities may have clearly defined goals at the planning stage, it must be remembered that as children take on ideas and initiate their own learning and activities, goals may change.

The Prime Areas of Learning

Communication and Language

Listening and attention: children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity. (CL1)

Understanding: children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events. (CL2)

Speaking: children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners’ needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events. (CL3)

‘The Sea’ provides many opportunities for children to enjoy listening, understanding and speaking. When the children hear stories about the sea and sea creatures they will be able to listen, pay attention and ask questions. Times spent describing shells hidden in the sand tray and experiences they have had at the seaside will encourage both speaking and listening. When the children follow instructions to make hula skirts for the beach party they will have the opportunity to develop CL2.

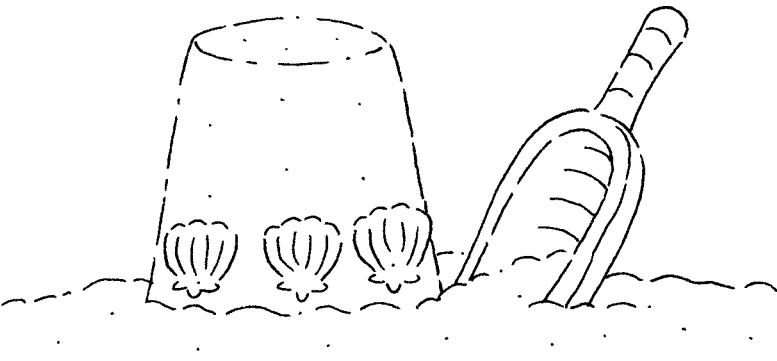


Example chart to aid planning in the EYFS

Week beginning:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
FOCUSED ACTIVITIES					
Focus Activity 1:					
Focus Activity 2:					
Stories and rhymes					
CONTINUOUS PROVISION (Indoor)					
Collage					
Construction (large)					
Construction (small)					
ICT					
Imaginative play					
Listening					
Malleable materials					
Mark making					
Painting					
Role play					
Sand (damp)					
Sand (dry)					
Water					
CONTINUOUS PROVISION (Outdoor)					
Construction					
Creative play					
Exploratory play					
Gross motor					
ENHANCED PROVISION (Indoor)					
ENHANCED PROVISION (Outdoor)					



Theme 2: Sand, shells and pebbles



Communication and Language

- Talk about how sand is formed by the sea wearing away rocks. Use plastic magnifiers to examine sand. Encourage the children to describe what they see. (CL3)
- Enjoy examining a range of shells and pebbles. Describe one and ask children to identify the chosen shell/pebble. (CL2)

Physical Development

- Use sand timers to encourage the children to perform a given action in a certain time. Challenges could include activities such as throwing beanbags into a bucket, catching and throwing balls and jumping on the spot. (PD1)
- Explore the patterns made by pressing shells into play-dough or clay. (PD1)
- In the sand tray enjoy practising letter formation. (PD1)

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Ask the children to select their favourite pebble or shell and to say why they like it. Invite them to make pictures of the shells/pebbles. (PSE1)
- Hide shells in the sand tray for children to find and to use in co-operative, imaginative play. (PSE2)

Literacy

- In small groups write feeling poems for sand, pebbles and shells (see activity opposite). (L2)
- Begin word banks to describe sand, shells and pebbles. Invite children to write their descriptive words on pieces of card. Collect the words in seaside buckets. (L2)

Mathematics

- Use A5 paper, tape and straws to make flags for sandcastles. Decorate the flags with 2-D shapes or repeated patterns of stripes and spots. Encourage the

children to talk about the patterns, colours and shapes that they use. (M2)

- Use pebbles and buckets for counting activities. (M1)
- Sort shells into hoops by colour, size and type. Encourage the children to work out how many more shells there are in one hoop than another. (M1)

Understanding the World

- Compare the differences between wet and dry sand. What type of sand is best for making sand castles? Why? (UW2)
- Make close observational drawings of shells. Talk about the colours, shapes and patterns. (UW2)
- Invite parents to talk to the group about how they played with sand and shells when they were children. (UW1)

Expressive Arts and Design

- Use coloured sands to make pictures of fish. (EAD1)
- Make a sea picture by sticking sand, shells and small stones on a piece of stiff, blue card. Use lolly sticks to give it a frame. (EAD2)
- Decorate pebbles to make paperweights (see activity opposite). (EAD2)

Activity: Sand, pebble and shell feeling poems

Learning opportunity: Writing a 'feeling poem'.

Early learning goal: Literacy. Writing.

Resources: Sand tray with a collection of buried shells and safe-sized pebbles, paper in the shapes of a shell, a pebble and also sand coloured pencils.

Key vocabulary: Sand, sea, pebble, shell, words to describe feelings.

Organisation: Groups of 2-4 children.

What to do: Gather around the sand tray. Invite a child to put their hand in the sand and describe how it feels. Give a second child a sand coloured piece of paper on which is written:

*My hand,
Is in the sand.
The sand feels ...*

Ask for words to complete the first verse of the group poem and help the child with the sand paper to write down the ideas.

Invite another child to investigate the sand and find a pebble. Ask for words to describe how the pebble feels. This time a child writes the ideas on a pebble shaped paper to make a second verse:

*My hand,
Is in the sand.
And finds a pebble
The pebble feels ...*

Finish by finding the shell. On further occasions poems could describe how the objects look.

Activity: Pebble paperweights

Learning opportunity: Gaining awareness of what pebbles are and using pebbles to make paperweights.

Early learning goal: Expressive Arts and Design. Being imaginative.

Resources: Smooth, egg-sized pebbles, paint, thin brushes, an example of a bought paperweight, felt-pens, glue, decorative materials.

Key vocabulary: Pebble, stone, paperweight, names for colours and patterns.

Organisation: Small groups.

What to do: Show the children a paperweight. Explain that paperweights can be used to stop pieces of paper from blowing away from a table. Put out a selection of pebbles for the group to feel. Talk about where the pebbles were found. Encourage the children to describe their textures. Explain that some pebbles are smooth because the rock has gradually been worn away by the sea and rain.

Ask each child to choose a pebble that they think would make a good paperweight and to give reasons for their choices. Invite suggestions for ways to change their pebbles such as by using paint, felt pens and scrap materials to make their pebble into a creature such as a ladybird. Enjoy making pebble paperweights.

Display

Cover two tables with blue paper or fabric. On one table set out the paperweights with a 'please look with your eyes' sign and name labels made by the children. On the second table put out non-fiction books showing shells, a collection of shells to sort and a bowl of sand to examine with plastic magnifiers. Nearby, display the drawings of shells with labels to show their type.

