

# Planning for Learning through Space

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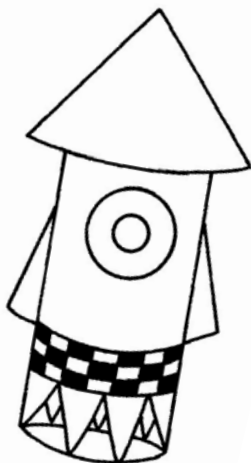
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# Making plans

## 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.

## A final note

Planning should be seen as flexible. Not all groups meet every day, and not all children attend every day. Any part of the plan can be used independently, stretched over a longer period or condensed to meet the needs of any group. You will almost certainly adapt the activities as children respond to them in different ways and bring their own ideas, interests and enthusiasms. The important thing is to ensure that the children are provided with a varied and enjoyable curriculum that meets their individual developing needs.

# 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 ‘Space’ 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 the Sun children can make suns from card and straws. They will develop knowledge of shape and number as they use circles and count rays. In addition, they will explore media and materials and develop aspects of Expressive Arts and Design. 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)

‘Space’ provides many opportunities for children to enjoy listening, understanding and speaking. When the children discuss the first Moon walk and the importance of the Sun for providing light and heat, or listen to stories about ‘Space’, they will develop listening, speaking and questioning skills. Games such as travelling to stars chalked on the playground, require the children to follow instructions. The role-play space station encourages children to express themselves and to show awareness of the needs of their peers.

## Physical Development

**Moving and handling:** children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing. (PD1)

**Health and self-care:** children know the importance for good health of physical exercise, and a healthy diet, and talk about ways to keep healthy and safe. They manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs successfully, including dressing and going to the toilet independently. (PD2)

‘Space’ offers many opportunities for children to enjoy movement activities and to handle tools and equipment.

## Example chart to aid planning in the EYFS

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



# Theme 1: The Earth

## Communication and Language

- Discuss ways to take care of the Earth such as not dropping litter, turning off taps, recycling and switching off lights. (CL2)
- Look at a globe. Show the children that the Earth is a sphere. Find places on the globe that the children have visited. What were the places like? Would the children like to revisit the places? (CL3)

## Physical Development

- Talk about how the earth spins. Enjoy playing with spinning hoops and balls. (PD1)
- Talk about the Earth traveling through space. Enjoy blowing bubbles outside. Which 'Earth' travels the furthest? (PD1)
- Outside use chalk to draw a large Earth. Enjoy using the Earth for movement activities. Encourage children to 'paddle' in the sea, 'drive' to Wales and 'fly' to France. (PD1)

## Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Enjoy co-operative play in a role-play weather station. Encourage children to use globes and maps, to give forecasts and to suggest new resources to include in their weather station. (PSE3)
- Look at photos of rubbish dumps. Talk about recycling. Help the children to understand the need to use materials sensibly and to know how they can help to take care of the Earth. (PSE2)

## Literacy

- Begin a display of questions about the Earth and Space. Help the children to ask and write questions and over the weeks to find answers in non-fiction books. (L2)
- Make posters to encourage people to take care of the earth. (L2)
- Address envelopes to be sent to the Earth from space (see activity opposite). (L2)
- Enjoy reading stories that include a range of settings such as *Elmer* by David McKee (jungle) *Percy the Park Keeper* by Nick Butterworth (forest) and *Harry and the Dinosaurs* by Ian Whybrow (town and country). (L1)

## Mathematics

- Sort a box of 3-D shapes to find 'spheres like the Earth'. (M2)
- Use three different sized circles of coloured paper to make a picture of the inside of the Earth (see activity opposite). (M2)



- Use toy cars and road layouts to 'drive' around the Earth. Reinforce language for positions and directions. (M2)

## Understanding the World

- Talk about how the Earth turns to create day and night. Draw pictures of animals and people that are awake during the night. (UW2)
- Use travel brochures to make a display of pictures that show features on the Earth such as mountains, hills, seas and deserts. (UW2)
- Look at pictures to show the Earth in space. Explain that it is one planet in the Solar System. (UW2)
- Enjoy taking photographs of the local environment. Compare the pictures with ones in books of places on the Earth. How are they similar or different? (UW2, 3)

## Expressive Arts and Design

- On circles of white paper use green and blue smudged pastels or chinks to make pictures of the earth as seen from space. (Note: When finished, an adult in a well ventilated area can 'fix' the Earths with hairspray.) (EAD1)
- Talk about the different climates and weathers around the world. Paint pictures to show favourite places visited by the children or ones they would like to go to. (EAD2)

## Activity: Letters from space

**Learning opportunity:** Writing on envelopes.

**Early learning goal:** Literacy. Writing.

**Resources:** Picture of the Solar System, envelopes, pencils, a used envelope with an address on it.

**Key vocabulary:** Solar System, Earth, address, envelope.

**Organisation:** Small group.

**What to do:** Show the children an envelope with an address on it. Point out the different features such as the street, the village/town, the county and the postal code.

Next, look at the picture of the Solar System. Identify the Earth.

Ask the children to imagine they were on another planet, way out in Space and wanted to send a letter to someone on the Earth. Together write an address, but this time, go further to include the country, the Earth and the Solar System. Provide envelopes for the children to enjoy writing their own addresses and sticky labels to use as stamps.

## Activity: Making circle collages of the Earth

**Learning opportunity:** Using size and shape vocabulary.

**Early learning goal:** Mathematics. Shape, space and measures.

**Resources:** Colourful paper circles in three different sizes (e.g. 12cm, 18cm and 20cm diameters; glue.)

**Key vocabulary:** Earth, circle, biggest, smallest, core, mantle, crust.

**Organisation:** Small group.

**What to do:** Cut a fruit such as an orange, a plum or a nectarine in half.

Explain that it is a bit like the Earth in that it has a centre, a middle part and an outer layer. Show the children a picture of the inside of the Earth and point out the core, mantle and crust.

Provide a basket of paper circles in different colours and sizes. Tell the children that they can be used to make pictures of the Earth. Encourage the children to use the word 'circle' and size vocabulary and to say how many circles they will each need. Make colourful pictures to show the Earth's cross section.

## Display

Make a 'Take care of our Earth' board to display the climate paintings and posters. On a table put out two boxes labelled 'waste paper' and 'plastic' to encourage the children to recycle. Cover a second board with black sugar paper and a blue border. Put up the pastel Earths interspersed with the circles that show the structure of the Earth. Make a post box from a large cardboard box, painted red. Put up the envelopes as if falling from the box.

