

Planning for Learning through **What are things made from?**

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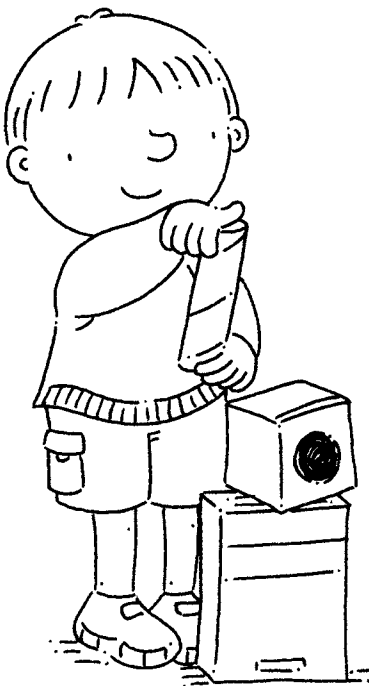
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Making plans

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.

Making plans

Using the book

Read the section which outlines links to the Early Learning Goals (pages 4-6) and explains the rationale for focusing on 'What are things made from?'

The chart on page 7 gives an example format for weekly planning. It provides opportunity to plan for the on-going continuous provision, as well as more focused activities.

Use pages 8 to 19 to select from a wide range of themed, focused activities that recognise the importance of involving children in practical activities and giving them opportunities to follow their own interests. For each 'What are things made from?' theme, two activities are described in detail as examples to help you in your planning and preparation. Key vocabulary, questions and learning opportunities are identified. Use the activities as a basis to:

- Extend current and emerging interests and capabilities
- Engage in sustained conversations
- Stimulate new interests and skills.

Find out on page 20 how the activities for 'What are things made from?' can be brought together through holding a jumble sale.

Use page 21 for ideas of resources to collect or prepare. Remember that the books listed are only suggestions. It is likely that you will already have within your setting a variety of other books that will be equally useful.

The activity overview chart on page 23 can be used either at the planning stage or after each theme has been completed. It will help you to see at a glance which aspects of children's development are being addressed and alert you to the areas which may need greater input in the future.

As children take part in the activities, their learning will progress. 'Collecting evidence' on page 22 explains how you might monitor each child's achievements.

There is additional material to support the working partnership of families and children in the form of a reproducible Family Page found inside the back cover.

It is important to appreciate that the ideas presented in this book will only be a part of your planning. Many activities

that will be taking place as routine in your group may not be mentioned. For example, it is assumed that sand, dough, water, puzzles, role-play, floor toys, technology and large scale apparatus are part of the ongoing early years experience. Role-play areas, stories, rhymes, singing, and group discussion times are similarly assumed to be happening in each week although they may not be a focus for described activities.



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 (2014), 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 7, DfE 2014). 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 'What are things made from?' 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, when using clay as part of the 'Materials around us' theme, the children will develop handling skills which is part of PD1. In addition, they will use their imaginations, aiding the development 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)

'What are things made from?' provides many opportunities for children to enjoy listening, understanding and speaking. When the children discuss shiny objects that they have seen or make plans for the jumble sale they will talk about events in the past, the present and the future. When discussing the need to save paper and to recycle; or explore objects made from wool, fabric and wood, children will have the opportunity to listen and to ask questions. Identifying items on a jumble sale stall from spoken clues, and making objects from paper such as planes or chains of dolls, will allow

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 1: Materials around us

Communication and Language

- Show children pieces of different materials. Encourage children to describe them and to talk about the things and feelings of which they are reminded. (CL3)
- Blindfold children and ask them to take turns to describe a material such as wood, plastic or paper hidden in a feely bag. Encourage them to use as many descriptive words as possible and to guess what their friends are feeling. (CL1, 3)
- Give each child a piece of playdough. Encourage them to explore it using only their fingers and to describe what is happening. Scribe their ideas for a playdough poem (see activity opposite). (CL3)

Physical Development

- Enjoy playing with outside toys. Talk about the toys and the materials from which they are made. Ask why they are outside toys. (PD1)
- Set out a circuit of challenges such as throwing a bean bag into a bucket, walking along a wooden bench, rolling across a rubber mat and building a tower with wooden bricks. Again help children to be aware of the materials in the things they use. (PD1)
- Make models with clay. Talk about the way the clay behaves and feels. Leave the models to dry over a week and help children to notice the way the clay changes. (PD1)

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Go on a walk to look for materials in the local environment. Before the walk talk about routines for safe walking. (PSE2)



Literacy

- Begin to collect words for naming and describing materials. Write the words on pieces of card and place them in boxes covered with the corresponding material. (L1, 2)
- Give pairs of children a card on which the name of a material is written (e.g. wood, plastic, metal). How quickly can they find an object made from the material? (L1)

Mathematics

- Sort objects into hoops, according to the materials from which they are made. Encourage children to name the materials and to count the number of objects in each hoop. (M1)
- Make a shape rice salad (see activity opposite). (M2)

Understanding the World

- Look at the materials used in the sorting activity (see Mathematics). Discuss what they might be used for. Encourage children to use names such as 'wood' and 'plastic', as well as words for textures and appearance. (UW2)
- Look at pictures of homes around the world. Talk about the materials from which they are made. Encourage children to think of reasons for why the materials have been used. (UW 2, 3)

Expressive Arts and Design

- Put out a range of things such as plastic tubs, card boxes, tubes, pipe cleaners, fabrics and straws. Invite children to make props for acting out nursery rhymes. (EAD2)
- Make a collection of wooden blocks, sponges, plastic cotton reels and other objects suitable for making prints. Enjoy using them with ready-mixed paints on black paper. (EAD1)
- Sing 'The wise man built his house upon the rock' from *Okki-tokki-unga: Action Songs for Children* chosen by Beatrice Harrop, Linda Friend and David Gadsby. Encourage children to talk about the wise and foolish men and to act out the tale when playing with sand or construction toys. (EAD1, 2)

Activity: Squashy poem

Learning opportunity: Collaborating to make up a poem about playdough.

Early Learning Goal: Communication and Language. Speaking.

Resources: For each child a ball of playdough, large sheet of paper, pen.

Organisation: Small group.

Key vocabulary: Playdough, squash, stretch, soft, push, pull, flat, stretch.

What to do: Give each child a ball of playdough. Ask them to say, in turn, a word to describe how it feels. Write down the words children say. Repeat this for what the playdough looks and smells like. Read back the words to the children starting with the words 'Playdough is ...'. Explain that together you have written a poem. Ask whether they can add any more words to their poem about playdough. Add the new words and read it once more. Finally, let the group enjoy playing with dough.

Repeat the activity with other groups. Write out the poems and make a book of poems about playdough.



Activity: Shape rice salad

Learning opportunity: Collaborating to make a rice salad.

Early Learning Goal: Mathematics. Shape, space and measures.

Resources: Packet of rice; red and orange peppers; sultanas; red and green seedless grapes; cucumber; apples; pears; clementines; saucepan/microwave bowl; safe knives; chopping boards; set of clean flat and solid shapes; hot plate or microwave; small plastic tubs.

Organisation: Small group.

Key vocabulary: Words for flat and solid shapes, rice, red pepper, orange.

What to do: Tell the group that together they are going to make a shape rice salad. Explain that the rice will be cooked, and that when it is cool they will cut the fruits into shapes to put in the rice. Wash hands. Cook the rice according to the instructions on the packet. Involve the group in measuring the water and in counting how many cupfuls of rice are being used. Make sure that children are safe whilst the rice is cooked and that no children touch the rice until it is cool.

Give each child a chopping board and safe knife. Help them to cut the peppers into a variety of shapes. Repeat this with the cucumber, grapes and clementines. As children work, talk to them about shapes. Show them flat and solid shapes such as squares and cubes to compare with the pieces they cut. Finally, help the children to cut the apples and pears into pieces. Roll these pieces in lemon juice to stop them going

brown. Together add the chopped pieces to the bowl of cool rice and mix it with a wooden spoon.

Invite children to taste their shape rice salad. Talk about the way the salad was made and the things that the cooking utensils were made from. Divide the remaining rice salad into small plastic tubs for sending home.

Display

Cover a table with sugar paper. Use ribbon or border strip to divide it into six sections labelled 'wood', 'paper', 'card', 'fabric', 'wool' and 'shiny materials'. Over the weeks, invite children to bring from home objects to place on the table in the appropriate section. Where an object is made of more than one material, place it in the section for the material it is mainly made from.

Make a group collage of the prints on black sugar paper. Nearby place the objects used for printing. Encourage children to match the objects to their prints and to notice the difference in the prints made by different materials.