

Planning for Learning through Farms

by Rachel Sparks Linfield. Illustrated by Cathy Hughes

Contents

Making plans 2-3

Using the 'Early Learning Goals' 4-6

EYFS Planning Chart 7

Theme 1: Farmers 8-9

Theme 2: What farmers grow 10-11

Theme 3: On the farm 12-13

Theme 4: Farm vehicles, machines and tools 14-15

Theme 5: Farm animals 16-17

Theme 6: Farmers' market 18-19

Bringing it all together – Farmers' market 20

Resources 21

Collecting evidence of children's learning 22

Activity overview 23

Home links 24

Family page Inside back cover



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 (3rd edition) © MA Education Ltd 2013. Revised edition © MA Education Ltd 2008. First edition © Step Forward Publishing Limited 2006.

Front and back cover images taken by Lucie Carlier © MA Education Ltd.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopied or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Planning for Learning through Farms ISBN: 978-1-909280-48-9

Making plans

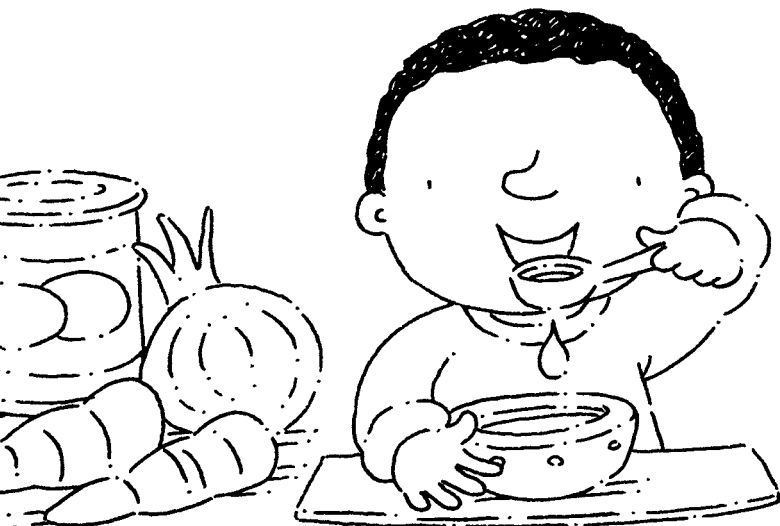
Child-friendly planning

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

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 'Farms' 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 the children make posters for a role-play farm shop they will develop their writing skills for Literacy. In addition, when they decorate and use their posters, 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)

'Farms' provides many opportunities for children to enjoy listening, understanding and speaking. When the children



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: Farmers

Communication and Language

- Talk about farmers and what they do. Explain that many of the foods that we eat are grown on farms, in other countries not just the UK. Talk about the jobs that farmers need to do to give us milk and cereal for breakfast. (CL1)
- Put out a box of clothes. Invite children to select clothes that a farmer might wear to work in a muddy field. Ask them to explain their choices. Talk about why we wear different clothes for different jobs. (CL2)
- Enjoy sharing stories, set on farms, such as *Muddle Farm* by Axel Scheffler or *Farmer Duck* by Martin Waddell. (CL1)

Physical Development

- Tell the story of a farmer's day. Encourage children to mime to the words. (PD1)
- Set out large apparatus and mats. Take children, as if farmers, on an imaginary walk around a farm. Take them through muddy tracks, up ladders into hay lofts, around fields, into barns, to dig, sow seed, and so on. (PD1)

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Decorate pegs for keeping a farmer's boots in a pair. Make extra ones to sell at the farmers' market' (see activity opposite). (PSE1)

Literacy

- Help children to write and draw forecasts, on television screen shaped card, that farmers would like for helping their crops to grow and ripen. (L2)
- Begin a farmers' alphabet in which children suggest farming words for each letter of the alphabet. Over the weeks, encourage children to add new words. (L2)
- Begin a collection of words to do with farmers and farming. Over the weeks encourage children to add new words and to enjoy reading them. Collect the words in clean, plastic plant pots. (L1, 2)

Mathematics

- On a large piece of paper write the numbers to show the hours 5am through to 5pm. As a group, plan out a day for a farmer (see activity opposite). (M1)
- Make pictures of farmers using 2-D shapes. Look at pictures of straw bales. What shapes are the bales? Look for 3-D shapes that match the bales (M2)

Understanding the World

- Talk about the importance of the weather for farmers. Look at pictures from drought stricken countries. Plant cress seeds. Leave the seeds in different places to help children realise the importance of sun and rain for crop growth. (UW2)
- Draw around a child. As a group, paint on clothes to turn the child into a farmer. As the children paint, reinforce the language for body parts. (UW2)
- Provide a pile of shoes and boots for children to explore. Ask them to select ones suitable for farmers to wear in their fields and yards. Help them to give reasons for their answers. Make wax crayon rubbings of the soles of the chosen shoes/boots. (UW2)

Expressive Arts and Design

- Make televisions out of cereal packets for displaying the weather forecasts (see Literacy). (EAD2)
- Sing songs that mention farmers such as 'Three Blind Mice' and 'The farmer's in his den'. Encourage children to mime to the words and to move with control and imagination. (EAD1)
- Make up new versions of 'The farmer's in his den' such as the farmer's in his field; the farmer wants a shepherd; the shepherd wants some sheep. (EAD1)
- Paint characters from the new versions of 'The farmer's in his den'. (EAD2)

Activity: Boot pegs

Learning opportunity: Talking, drawing and sticking.

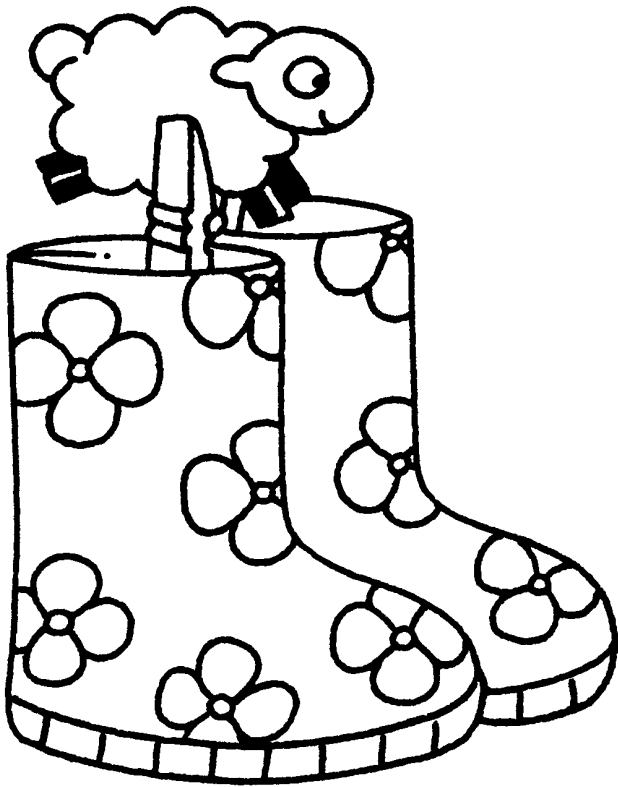
Early Learning Goal: Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Self-confidence and self-awareness.

Resources: About six pairs of Wellington boots; stiff card; PVA glue; scissors; wax crayons; pencils, wooden pincer-type clothes pegs.

Organisation: Whole group introduction, small group for the peg making.

Key vocabulary: Wellington boots, pair, tidy, pegs.

What to do: Remind children about routines for taking turns and listening such as 'listening eyes' – looking at the person



who is speaking. Show the group the collection of boots. Ask children to help you put them into pairs. Talk about when Wellington boots are worn. Ask why farmers might find boots useful. Explain that it would be good to keep the sorted boots in pairs always. Show children a pair held together with a peg.

Invite small groups to draw a picture of something found on a farm on a piece of card that is slightly larger than the peg. Cut it out and stick it with PVA glue onto the peg. When dry, use the pegs for keeping boots or shoes in pairs. Ask each child to make another boot peg to sell at the farmers' market.

Activity: Planning a farmer's day

Learning opportunity: Using numbers for times of the day. Working collaboratively to sing a number song.

Early Learning Goal: Mathematics. Numbers.

Resources: Numbers one to twelve written on A5 pieces of paper; clock face with moveable hands; picture of a farm with animals and a field.

Organisation: Small group.

Key vocabulary: o'clock, numbers to twelve, words associated with parts of the day, for example lunch, morning, breakfast.

What to do: Show children the picture of the farm. Together make a list of all the things the farmer would need to do during a day such as getting up, milking the cows, feeding the

hens, searching for eggs, having meals. Explain that when you have lots to do it is useful to plan out your time.

Show the group the clock. Explain that when the big hand is on the twelve it says o'clock. Show how to set the time for one o'clock. Invite different children to show other o'clock times.

Tell the group that they are going to plan a day for a farmer. He has lots to do so he is going to get up early. Set the hands on the clock to show 5 o'clock. On the paper that says five, write or draw the farmer getting up. Continue in this way to plan out the day.

When the papers have been completed, use them as prompts to sing to the tune of 'Here we go round the mulberry bush' verses such as:

We're busy farmers working hard,
Working hard,
Working hard.
We're busy farmers working hard,
On a bright and sunny morning.

At five o'clock we get dressed ...
To go and do the milking.

At 2 o'clock we search for eggs ...
Ready for our baking.

Display

On a table, display the boot pegs on Wellington boots. Put up a notice explaining that the pegs will be sold at the farmers' market and advertise the date and time for the forthcoming event. Cut out the painted characters for 'The farmer's in his den', stick them on black paper and cut them out leaving a 1cm border. Cover a board with light green paper and arrange the characters in an oval around a central farmer. Write out and put up the new version of the song. Nearby place some percussion instruments for children to use if they sing the song.