

# Planning for Learning through Toys

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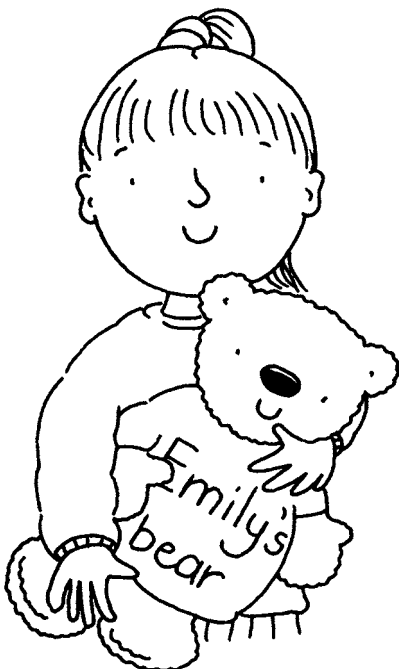
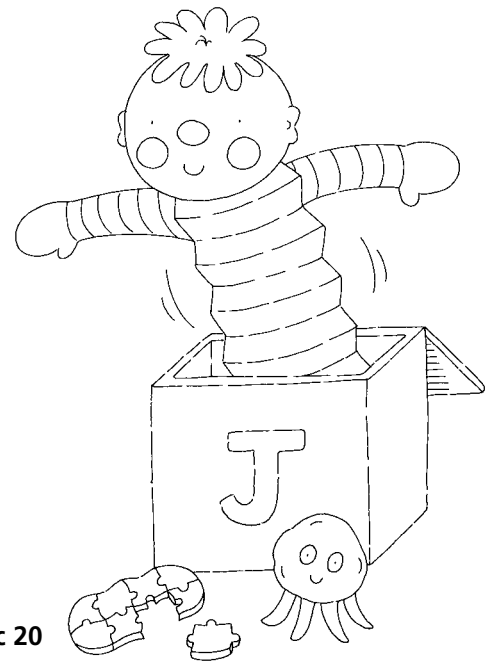
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Published by Practical Pre-School Books, A Division of MA Education Ltd,  
St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, Herne Hill, London, SE24 0PB Tel: 020 7738 5454  
[www.practicalpreschoolbooks.com](http://www.practicalpreschoolbooks.com)

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Planning for Learning through Toys ISBN: 978-1-909280-53-3

# 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 overlooked, 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.

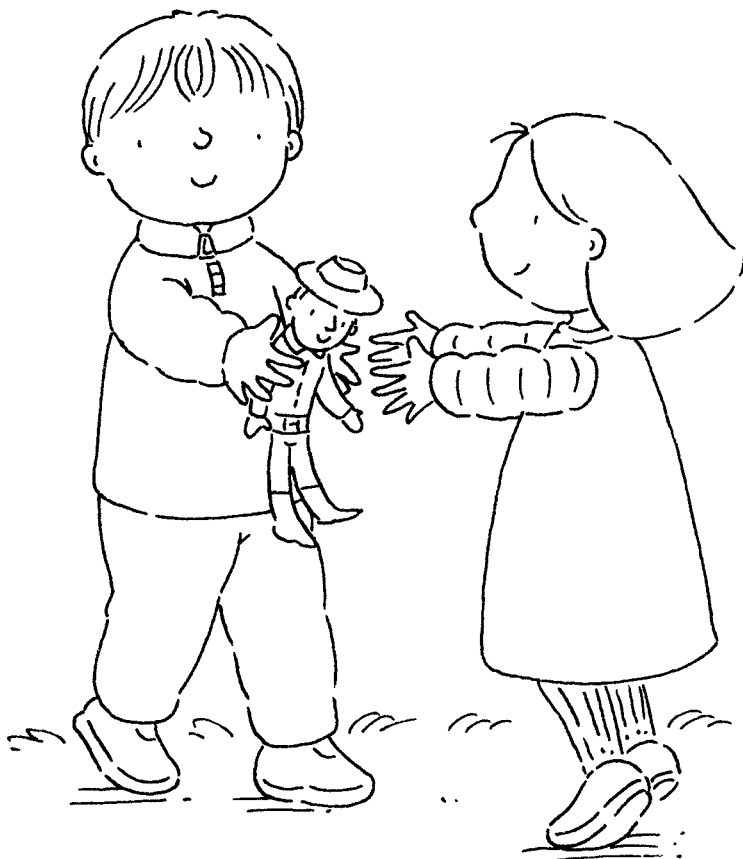
## A final note

Planning should be seen as flexible. Not all groups meet every day, and not all children attend every day. Any part

# 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 'Toys' 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 labels and posters for exhibits within a role-play museum of favourite toys they will develop their writing skills for Literacy. Also, when they write with a pencil and illustrate their posters, they will use their fine motor skills which are part of Physical Development. 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)

## 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: Favourite toys

## Communication and Language

- Tell the story of a favourite toy and encourage children to share their own feelings of a special toy (see activity opposite). (CL1, 3)
- Ask children to talk about their favourite toys. Where and when do they enjoy playing with their toys? (CL3)
- Share books which feature favourite toys such as *I Love You Blue Kangaroo* by Emma Chichester Clark or *Harry and the Bucketful of Dinosaurs* by Ian Whybrow. (CL1)
- Hide some favourite toys in a bag and ask children to feel and describe a toy. Can other children identify the toy from the description? (CL1, 2)

## Physical Development

- As a group make a collection of favourite outdoor toys. Enjoy playing with them. (PD1)
- Take a favourite toy for a walk along a prepared track of bean bags or cones and talk about direction and position. (PD1)

## Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Encourage children to share favourite toys and play collaboratively, learning to handle toys with sensitivity and care. (PSE2, 3)

## Literacy

- Set up the role-play area as a museum of favourite toys. Encourage children to make labels and posters for the exhibits. (L2)

## Mathematics

- Use bubble blowing to promote language describing shape, size, number and movement. (M1, 2)
- Use hoop games to establish words: 'round', 'circle', 'roll'. (M2)
- Reinforce 'round' and 'circle' using a collection of favourite toys which are round – balls, wheels of tractors, cars, bicycles. Do some printing with round shapes. (M2)

## Understanding the World

- Explore children's favourite nursery toys. Compare their choices. Play with them! (UW2)
- Extend the bubble-blowing by using a variety of blowers, straws, funnels and hoops to make large bubbles (see activity opposite). (UW2)
- Sort favourite toys into categories such as outside toys, construction toys, moving toys. (UW2)
- Invite parents to show/talk about their favourite childhood toys. Record the visits with digital

photographs taken by the children. (UW1, 3)

## Expressive Arts and Design

- Use powder paints to make paintings of favourite toys. (EAD1)
- Listen to music about toys (Ibert's *Fantastic Toy Shop*; Mozart's *The Toy Symphony*; Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*). Dance to the music. (EAD2)
- Enjoy role-play in the museum of favourite toys. (EAD2)



## Activity: Telling the story of a favourite toy

**Learning opportunity:** Children will develop an awareness of the ways in which some possessions are precious.

**Early Learning Goal:** Communication and Language. Listening and attention. Speaking.

**Resources:** A favourite toy per child, a toy which is special to the leading adult.

**Organisation:** Small group or whole group.

**What to do:** Bring a favourite toy of your own to the group. Show it to the children and explain exactly why it is so special. Does the toy have a name? What does it feel like to touch? Does it have any special features?

Talk about how you came to own the toy. Was it given as a gift from a special person?

Tell stories about any adventures you may have had with the toy, perhaps a day it was lost and then found. How did you feel?

Talk about how the toy has been a special friend. Did you talk to it when you were unhappy or share exciting news?

Encourage the children to tell each other about their favourite toys. How are they special?

## Activity: Blowing bubbles

**Learning opportunity:** Children will observe and describe bubbles. They will select equipment to make large bubbles.

**Early Learning Goal:** Understanding the World. The world.

**Resources:** Selection of bubble blowers, such as funnels attached to rubber tubing, two straws with thick cotton through them, wire coat hanger with hook bent and taped so that it is safe, yoghurt pots of a variety of sizes with holes (approx 1 x 2 cm) in the bottom; bubble solution (half a cup of baby bubble bath, 1 cup of Gelozone - can be bought in health shops, 2 cups of water, quarter cup of glycerine); small quantity of cheap, ready-made bubble solution; washing-up bowl per pair of children; waterproof aprons.

**Organisation:** Small group either outside or in an area suitable for wet activity.

**Key vocabulary:** Bubble, round, slippery, wet, solution, float.

**What to do:** Blow a bubble using the cheap, ready-made solution. (Bubbles from this are usually quite small and will not last long.) Ask the children to describe what they see. Consider the sizes, colours, time before bursting and the way they travel. Could bubbles be made without blowing?

Demonstrate waving the blower. What is the difference between that and blowing? Show the children the washing-up bowls with the made-up solution and the variety of blowers. Challenge the children to make the largest bubble they can. Ask them which equipment they think will work best. Why?

*NB: Where equipment is likely to touch children's mouths (such as the yoghurt-pot blowers) ensure that there is one per child and that children do not use each others' blowers. The straw and cotton frames can be used to collect a film of bubble solution. If raised slowly above the head, huge bubbles can result. It takes time and practice to do this but a demonstration usually enthralls the children to try. It can also be excellent for hand coordination skills.*

## Display

Make a table display of favourite toys of the group. Children should be asked which ones they would like to put on the display and why. Care should be taken not to overload the table. It should provide an introduction to the 'Favourite toys' theme. Each day before the children arrive, one toy could be replaced by another. Children will enjoy spotting which toy has been taken away and what has replaced it. Paintings of favourite toys can be displayed on a nearby board or made into a book of favourite toys. Children should be encouraged to show their parents around the display in order to share their learning and also to stimulate further interest in the topic. This sharing should be encouraged for all displays in future weeks.

