

# Planning for Learning through Shapes

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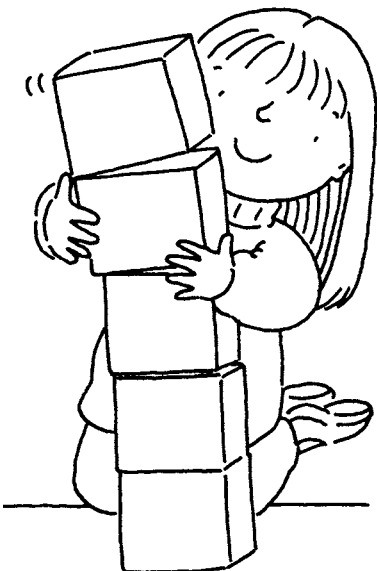
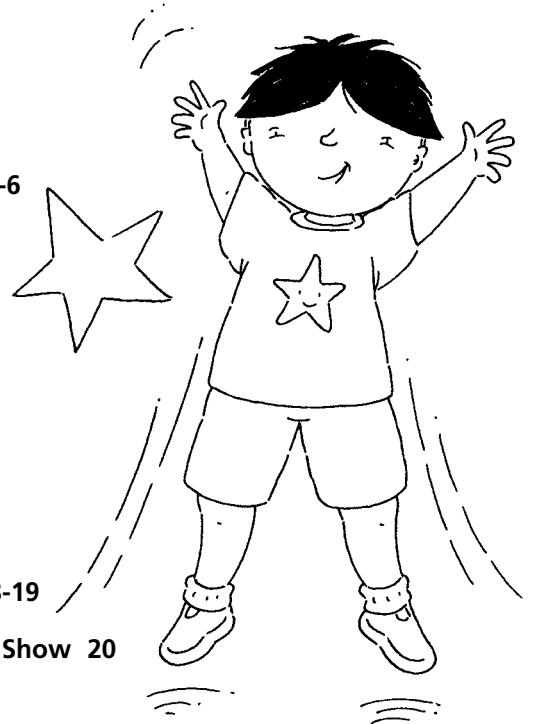
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# Making plans

## 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

# Making plans

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 book

Read the section which outlines links to the Early Learning Goals (pages 4-6) and explains the rationale for focusing on 'Shapes'.

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 'Shapes' 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 'Shapes' activities can be brought together within a 'Great Shape Show'.

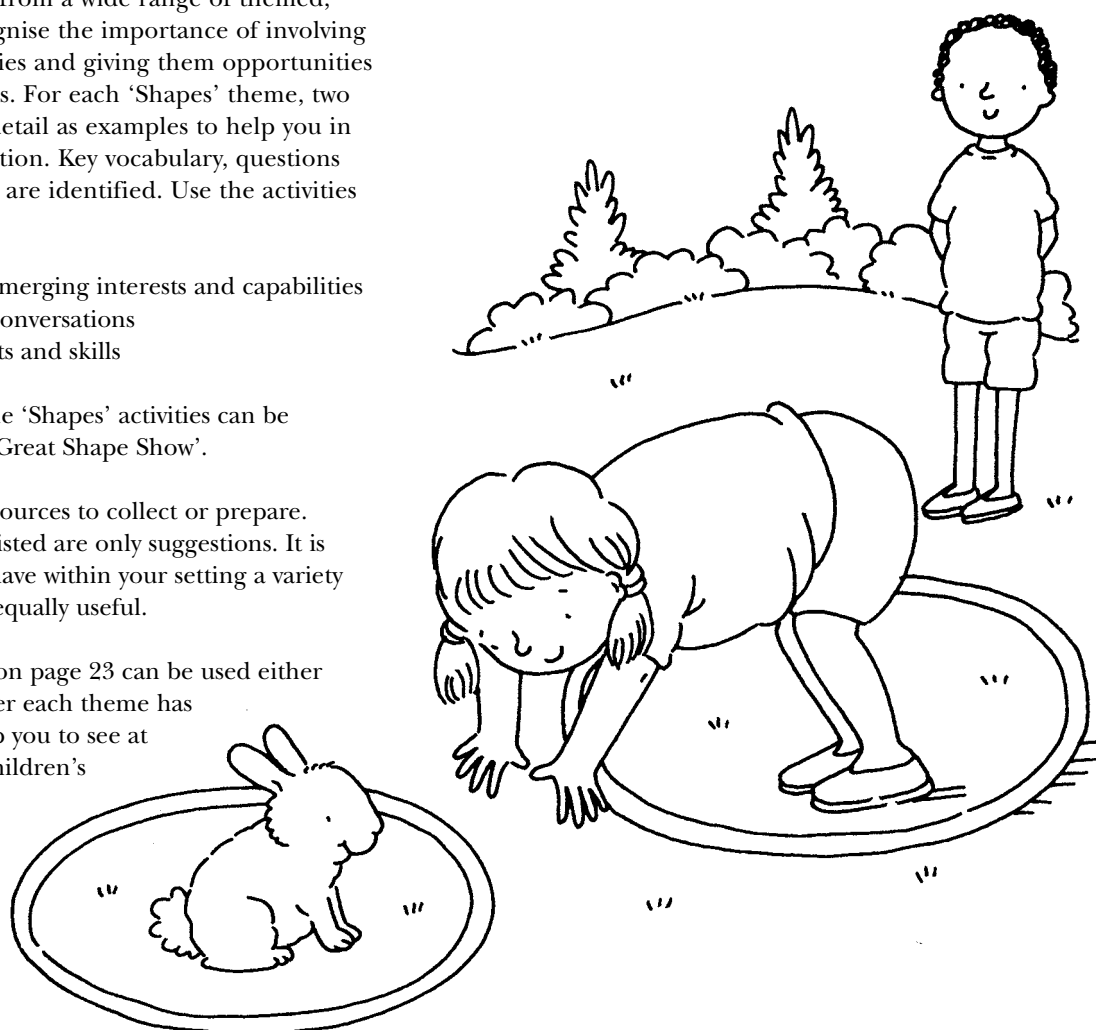
Use page 21 for ideas of resources to collect or prepare. Remember that the books listed are only suggestions. It is likely that you will already have within your setting a variety of other books that will be equally useful.

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.

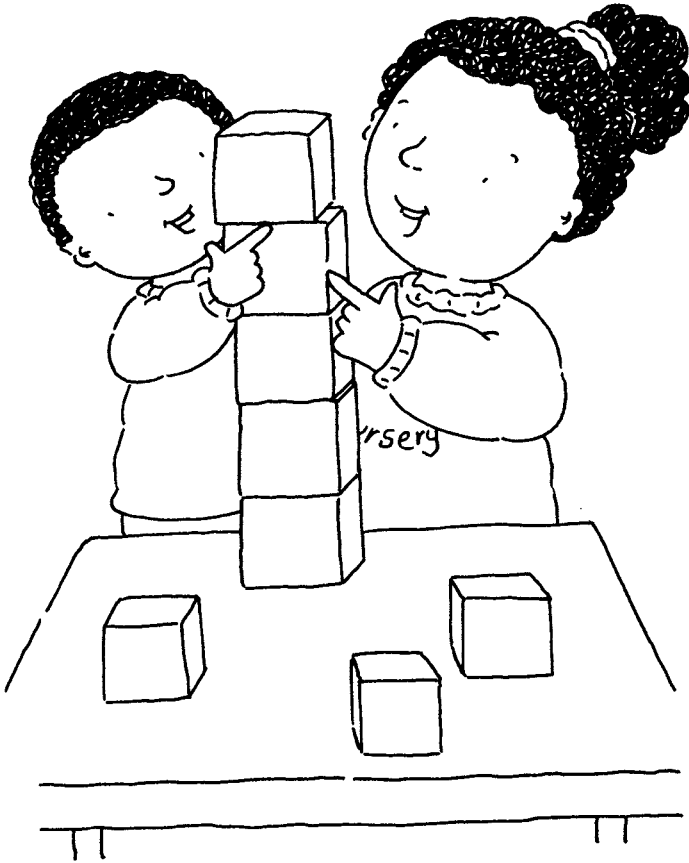
As children take part in the activities, their learning

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'



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 'Shapes' 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 play 'I spy a shape that ...' they will develop their mathematical knowledge of shape properties. In addition they will speak, listen and take turns and as a result use personal, social, communication and language 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)

'Shapes' provides many opportunities for children to enjoy listening, understanding and speaking. There are a range of books featuring aspects of shapes such as holes, boxes and sizes, and these can be used to stimulate interest in

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.

## 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: Shapes and sizes

## Communication and Language

- Talk about experiences of changing size. Encourage each child to think of a change in their life caused by growth: something they can reach which they could not reach before, a favourite ride-on toy they are now too big for or a special item of clothing which they have grown out of. (CL1)
- Tell the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. Talk about the different sizes of objects which were found in the bears' house. Encourage children to join in as you tell the story. (CL1)
- Talk to children about their own experiences of shapes and sizes. Who can think of a round thing which they see at home or something which is very tall across the street from the setting? (CL1)

## Physical Development

- Play traditional circle games: 'Ring-a-Ring o' Roses', 'Hokey Cokey', 'Farmer's in the Den', 'Here we go Round the Mulberry Bush'. (PD1)
- Use playground chalk to draw a variety of long lines for children to move along. Use zig-zags, wiggly lines, curved lines and straight lines. Ask children to take giant strides along the straight line, take tiny steps along the zig-zag line or skip along the wiggly line. (PD1)
- Make decorated salt dough shapes (see activity opposite). (PD1)

## Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Having first received parental permission go on a 'Shape spotting walk' (see Mathematics activities). Discuss aspects of safety, such as the need to hold hands or stay together. Draw attention to any hazards such as roads or ponds and describe the safety rules associated with these. (PSE2)
- Play 'odd one out' games. Make a collection of objects: building blocks, toys, cut-out shapes, and so on. Present the objects to the children three at a time. In each set of three choose two objects which are similar in shape and one which is different – two spiky shapes and one smooth, two squares and a circle, two circles and a ball. In each case invite children to say which item is the odd one out. Ask them to try to explain how they made their choices. (PSE3)

## Literacy

- Collaborate to make a collection of words to describe shapes and sizes. (L1, 2)



## Mathematics

- Play 'I spy a shape that...'. Use descriptive vocabulary such as narrow, tall, round, curved, straight, pointed, wiggly, curly and spiky. Draw attention to similar shapes, and make simple comparisons: 'The clock and the plate are both round shapes. Which is bigger?' (M2)
- Make a washing line with examples of clothes of increasing size, from baby clothes through to those which might be worn by members of the group. Talk about the word 'fit'. Encourage children to find pairs of shoes and socks of matching sizes from a collection. (M2)
- Show the children a Russian doll or a set of stacking barrels before opening it to reveal a smaller one inside. Encourage the children to predict whether or not there will be yet another inside each doll. Ask the children whether all the objects in the set are the same shape. But are they all the same size? Which are the smallest and largest? Encourage the children to arrange the dolls or barrels in order of size. They can take turns in choosing two dolls from the selection. Which one is smaller? Check by seeing whether or not it will fit inside the larger doll. (M2)
- Enjoy making hand and foot prints. Compare the shapes and sizes. (M2)

## Understanding the World

- Play shadow games (see activity opposite). (UW2)



- Encourage children to explore the use of magnifiers. Talk about the way in which tiny objects appear much larger when viewed through the magnifier. Draw attention to new details which can now be seen. (UW2)

## Expressive Arts and Design

- Encourage children to use size and shape vocabulary in a role-play shop or cafe. (EAD2)
- Make shape collages. Choose a theme for the collage such as round, square or curly. Provide large paper shapes to use as a base and present a collection of materials designed to illustrate the theme. For example, a curly collage might include pasta spirals, thin strips of coloured curled paper, short lengths of party streamers, curled wrapping ribbon or wood shavings. Encourage children to be discriminating in the choices they make. (EAD1)

**Resources:** A batch of salt dough made by mixing the following ingredients:

- 2 bags plain flour
- 1 bag salt
- 4 tablespoons oil
- Water to mix
- Colouring (optional)
- Rolling pins
- Safe knives
- Small cutters
- Brushes
- Small water pot.

**Key vocabulary:** Square, round, straight, wavy, curly.

**Organisation:** Small groups.

**What to do:** Show the children how to roll out the dough and to use the safe knives and cutters to cut shapes from the dough. Additional shapes can be used to decorate. Use a damp brush to join pieces of dough when modelling. If a small hole is made near the edge of the shape, a ribbon can later be threaded through it to make a hanging decoration.

Bake the results very slowly – overnight in an oven just warm is best. The models can be painted after baking.

## Activity: Shadow games

**Learning opportunity:** Exploring ways of making different shapes and sizes of shadows.

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

**Resources:** A sunny day and an outdoor space!

**Key vocabulary:** Shadow, change, bigger, smaller, spiky, round, tall, short.

**Organisation:** Whole group.

**What to do:** Take the children outside on a sunny day. Ensure all children have adequate sun protection. Stand with them, facing away from the sun, so that the children can see their shadows on the ground in front of them. Encourage the children to lie down with their shadows. Can you run away from your shadow? Is it possible to stand on your shadow?

Set challenges for the children, making shadows as small, tall, wide or thin as possible. Is it possible to make a shadow with no head or no arms?

When children are confident they will be able to work with a friend, making monsters with two heads and three legs!

## Activity: Decorated salt dough shapes

**Learning opportunity:** Working imaginatively with a malleable material.

**Early Learning Goal:** Physical Development. Moving and handling.

