

Planning for Learning through The senses

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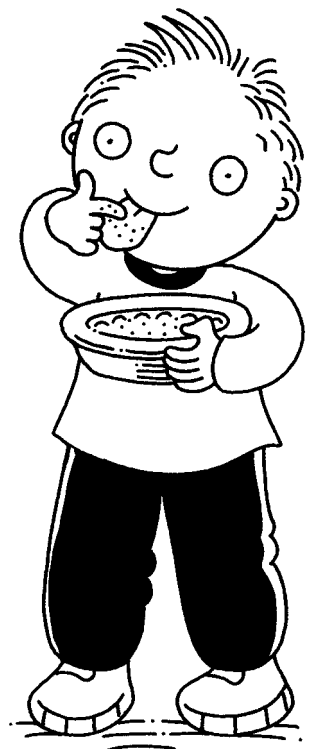
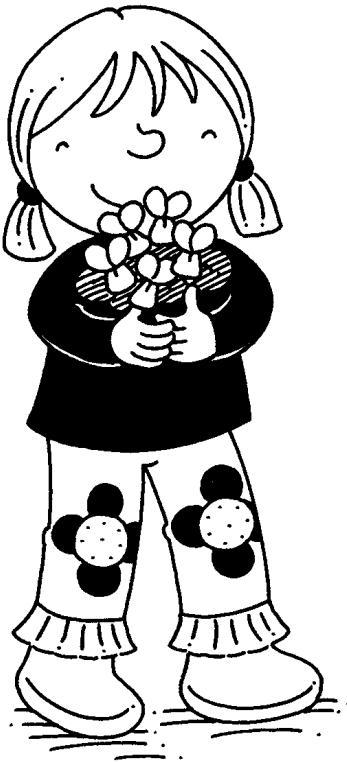
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Making plans



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:

Making plans

- 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 book

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

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 'senses' 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 senses' activities can be brought together with The senses factory.

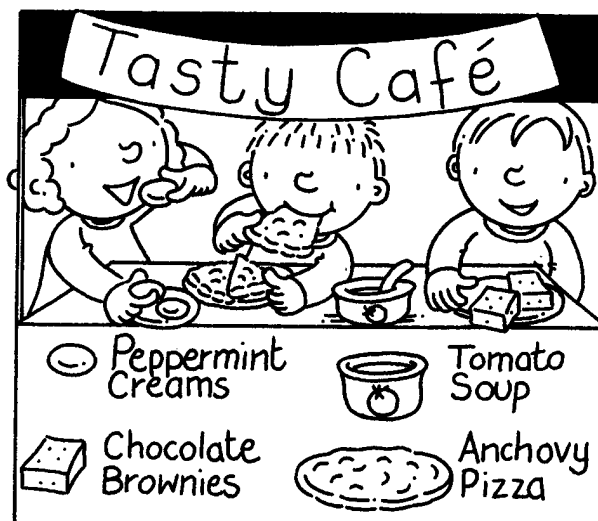
Use page 21 for ideas of resources to collect or prepare. Remember that the books listed are only suggestions. It is likely that you will already have within your setting a variety of other books that will be equally useful.

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 (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 'The senses' 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 menus of favourite foods for the Tasty cafe they will develop their writing skills for Literacy. Also, when they write with a good pencil hold, they will use their fine motor skills alongside gaining understanding of a healthy diet which are both 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)

'The senses' provides many opportunities for children to enjoy listening, understanding and speaking. There are a wide range of books featuring The senses and these can be

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: Seeing eyes

Be sensitive to children in your group who have visual impairment and adapt activities where necessary so that every child feels included.

Communication and Language

- Introduce the theme by inviting a child to lie down on a large piece of paper and then draw round their shape. Discuss and label the different body parts in relation to the senses. (CL1, 2)
- Set up an opticians in the role-play area (see activity opposite). (CL2, 3)
- Read some 'lift the flap' books such as *Duck's Key, Where can it be?* by Jez Alborough or *Where's Spot?* by Eric Hill. Make up some new stories about losing something important and having to look everywhere to find it. (CL1, 2, 3)

Physical Development

- Play 'Blindfold pairs'. Ask children to work with a partner. Blindfold one of the pair and ask the sighted partner to guide their friend around the equipment. Then swap over. (PD1, 2)
- Practise throwing and catching with different-sized balls, skittles, quoits and bean bags. Remind the children to keep their eye on the ball! (PD1)

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Play a circle game of 'I spy'. Use colours, shapes, sizes as well as initial letters. (PSE1, 3)
- Invite a partially sighted or blind person to visit with their guide dog and talk to the children. Talk about what it might feel like to not be able to see. Which activities would it be difficult to do? If possible, look at some Braille books. Use embossed stamps and coins to make raised patterns. (PSE2, 3)
- Read *Lucy's Picture* by Nicola Moon. How did Lucy help her blind Grandpa to see her picture? Make textured pictures to say thank you to your blind visitor or to give to a local RNIB group. (PSE3)

Literacy

- Make a class book of 'My senses', beginning this week with sight, and add to it throughout the topic. Ask children to draw or cut out pictures of eyes and label them. Help them to write simple sentences about their favourite sights. (L2)
- Let children make their own Braille initial letters. Push pencil into a reversed letter shape until it makes a small hole or indent. Repeat along whole letter shape. Turn

over and trace the letter shape with a finger. Can they read the letter? (L1, 2)

Mathematics

- Go on a treasure hunt outside. Give children a list of things to find or spot such as:
3 stones 2 birds
1 feather 4 windows
5 leaves 1 flower
Can they find one more stone? How many have they got altogether? (M1)
- Try some estimating activities (see activity opposite). (M1)
- Make a lift the flap picture using numbers. Draw some small pictures of groups of minibeasts, flowers, shapes, or smiley faces. Cover each picture with a flap. How many faces can the children find? (M1, 2)
- Play a game with a hand puppet and a set of coloured cards. Use three pairs of red, yellow and blue cards. If the puppet holds up one colour, ask the children to find the matching pair and shout 'snap'! Try the game with matching shape and number cards 1-20. Hide one card. Can the children tell which number or shape is missing? (M1, 2)

Understanding the World

- Ask children to look carefully at each other's eyes and their own eyes using hand mirrors. Show them a diagram of the eye and talk about how it works. What do eyelashes do? Why do some people need to wear glasses or contact lenses? (UW2)
- Make a collection of tools used for looking at things, such as mirrors, magnifying glasses, a digital microscope, visualiser, binoculars, telescope, and so on. Help children use them to see how they work. (UW2, 3)
- Make pretend binoculars out of pairs of cardboard tubes. (UW2)

Expressive Arts and Design

- Sing verse one of this 'Senses song' to the tune of 'In and out the bluebells':
With my two eyes, I can see (x3)
Using all my senses.
Add new verses each week, for example: 'With my two ears, I can hear' and so on. (EAD1)
- Make ink-blot paintings. Drop a pool of very runny paint onto paper and blow with straws to make new shapes. What can the children see? Can they turn it into something new? (EAD2)

- Make fancy spectacles. Cut templates for children to decorate with paint, sequins, beads, feathers, lace, ribbon, netting, fabric, and shiny paper. Display them at the opticians. (EAD2)

Activity: The opticians

Learning opportunity: Using the role-play corner to share and explore experiences. Writing letters, shapes, colours and numbers and using ICT to make eye charts.

Early Learning Goal: Communication and Language. Speaking.

Resources: A role-play area set out as an opticians (with a chair, lots of glasses frames, mirrors, torch, computer, telephone, eye charts, posters and brochures about glasses and contact lenses); card; pens; pencils; children's name cards.

Organisation: Whole group introduction with small group using the area.

Key vocabulary: Opticians, eyes, sight, see, letters, numbers, shapes, colours.

What to do: Talk about going to the opticians for an eye test.

Invite any children who have visited the opticians to share their experiences.

Involve children in setting up the area. Ask them to make eye charts using lower case and capital letters, simple outline shapes, blocks of colour or numbers. Can they make the rows of letters or shapes start big and get smaller as they move down the page? Use a computer to allow children to change the style and size of fonts.

Talk about how to use the area. Show children how to try on glasses and read the charts. Warn children not to shine lights or put anything in their eyes – only pretend! Encourage them to take turns at different roles: optician, patient, friend, receptionist.

Activity: How many?

Learning opportunity: Developing, estimating and counting skills.

Early Learning Goal: Mathematics. Numbers.

Resources: Cubes; sweets; raisins; glass pebbles; different-sized boxes; weights; weighing scales.

Organisation: Small group.



Key vocabulary: Estimate, guess, count, more, less, heaviest, lightest, same, tallest, measure.

What to do: Show children some cubes (start with under ten) and let them hold them in their hands. Can they guess how many there are? Count the cubes to find out if they are right. Try again with more cubes. Put some glass pebbles on a plate or sweets or raisins in a jar and ask children to estimate how many there are. Do they think there are more or less than ten? Help them to count and check.

Fill a set of different-sized boxes with a variety of weights. Can they tell which is the heaviest just by looking? Let them pick up the boxes and estimate again. Weigh boxes to establish their weights. Begin by making the biggest box heaviest, and the smallest the lightest. Then mix up the contents and try again. The children will find out that they cannot rely on just sight.

Display

On a display table, make a collection of fiction and non-fiction books about senses. Add posters, puzzles and games. This week include lift-the-flap books and those with things to spot! Compile a list of useful words about the senses and display them around the room.

Make a bar chart of eye colours in the group. Help children to cut out pictures of eyes from magazines to stick on the chart. Which is the most common colour?

Under a heading 'What can you see?' leave out the microscope and magnifying glasses for children to use. Provide some magnifying up pots and bugs for them to observe.