

Planning for Learning through Water

by Judith Harries. Illustrated by Cathy Hughes

Contents

Making plans 2-3

Using the 'Early Learning Goals' 4-6

EYFS Planning Chart 7

Theme 1: Watery weather 8-9

Theme 2: Using water 10-11

Theme 3: Needing water 12-13

Theme 4: Living in water 14-15

Theme 5: Travelling on water 16-17

Theme 6: Working and playing with water 18-19

Bringing it all together – 'Water Fun Day' 20

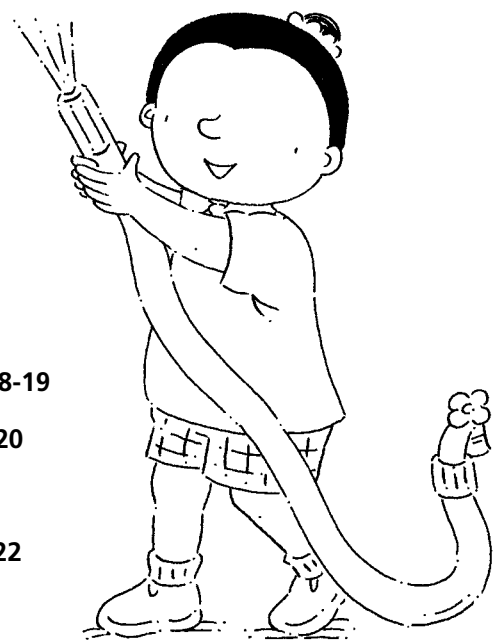
Resources 21

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 edition (third edition) © MA Education Ltd 2014. Revised edition © MA Education Ltd 2008. First edition © MA Education Limited 2001.

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 Water: ISBN: 978-1-909280-66-3

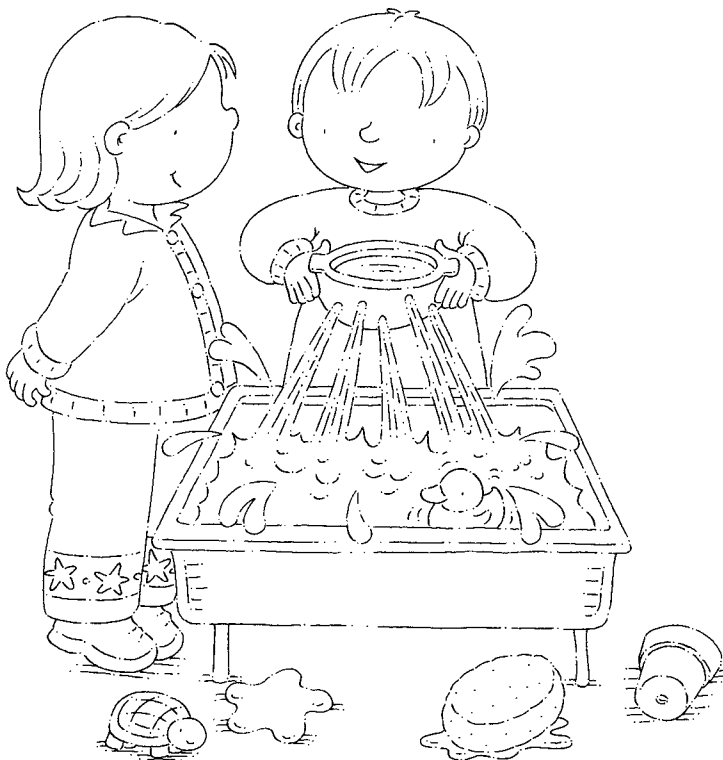
Making plans

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 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.

Making plans

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 'Water'.

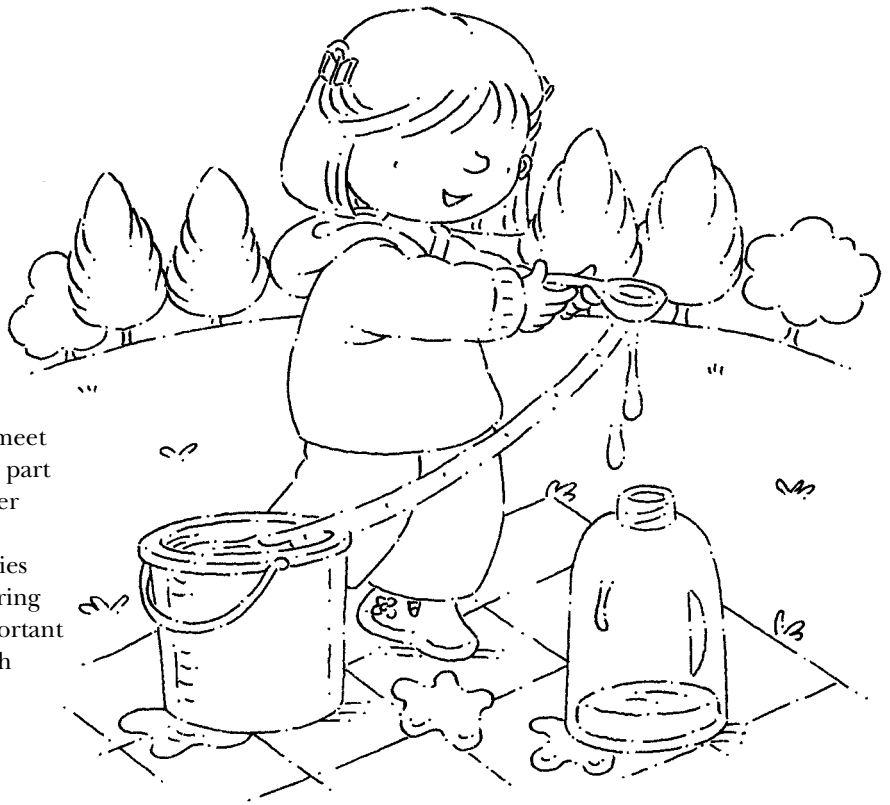
The chart on page 7 gives an example format for weekly planning. It provides opportunity to plan for the on-going continuous provision, as well as more focused activities.

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 'Water' 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 'Water' activities can be brought together with the 'Water Fun Day'.

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 'Water' 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 a group book about rain during Theme 1, they will develop their writing skills for Literacy. Also, when they write with a pencil and illustrate the book, 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)

'Water' provides many opportunities for children to enjoy listening, understanding and speaking. There are a wide

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: Watery weather

Communication and Language

- Sing ‘What is the weather today?’ from *Bobby Shaftoe* or *Clap your Hands* by Sue Nicholls (see Resources). Can the children think of a line to sing to describe the weather today? (CL3)
- Cut out two large cloud shapes from card. Write the word ‘water’ on one and ‘weather’ on the other. Ask the children to make a list of words to describe water and weather. Print these onto raindrop shapes and attach to the cloud shapes with a silver string. (CL2)
- Read *Alfie Weather* by Shirley Hughes. Talk about the different weather that Alfie explores in the stories and poems – frozen puddles, a cool stream, and walking in crisp snow on a journey to the North Pole. (CL1, 2)
- Invite children to present a weather forecast as though on television. Put a map of the country on the wall and add the weather symbols. Film the children speaking and enjoy watching their presentations. (CL3)

Physical Development

- Ask children to bring in waterproof coats, boots and umbrellas and go for a walk in the rain. Can they put on their own coat and boots? Enjoy jumping in puddles, dodging the raindrops, and handling the umbrellas. (PD1, 2)
- Enjoy umbrella races. In two teams, help children to dress a child or grown-up ready for the rain. Lay out two sets of clothes across the room for team members to fetch. (PD1, 2)
- Play a version of musical statues. When the music stops, ask children to freeze in different weather shapes: rain (arms above head like a raindrop); rainbow (arms outstretched); snowflake (spiky); icicle (tall and thin). (PD1)

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Introduce the theme by talking about the weather. Show the children a big weather chart. Choose symbols to indicate rain, clouds, sunshine, wind and snow. Help the children to fill in the chart each day. Which is their favourite type of weather? (PSE1)
- Tell the children the story of Noah or read *Noah’s Ark* by Lucy Cousins (see Resources). How does it feel to be safe inside when it’s raining outside? What do the children like about rain? (PSE2)

Literacy

- Make a group book about rain. Ask the children to draw a picture of what they like to do indoors and

outdoors when it is raining. Help them to write a simple sentence at the bottom of each picture. (L2)

- Make named welly pegs for children to keep their Wellington boots together. Help children to write their names onto a clothes peg. (L2)

Mathematics

- On a rainy day, watch the raindrops on the window. In pairs, play a game to guess which raindrop will reach the bottom first. Use ordinal numbers to describe results. (M1)
- Leave a container outside to collect rainfall and measure it each day. Help children to record results in a chart shaped like a bucket with a differently coloured section for each day. (M2)

Understanding the World

- Make ‘Weather wheels’ (see activity below). (UW2)
- Find out more about the water cycle by reading *A Drop in the Ocean* by Jacqui Bailey. (UW2)
- Help the children to make some coloured ice cubes using food colouring. How long does it take for the water to change into ice? Introduce words to describe this change: ‘liquid’, ‘solid’, ‘freezing’ and so on. Put the ice in the water tray. Ask children to describe how it feels. Leave some ice to thaw at room temperature. Put some ice in warm water. Which thaws quickest? (UW2)

Expressive Arts and Design

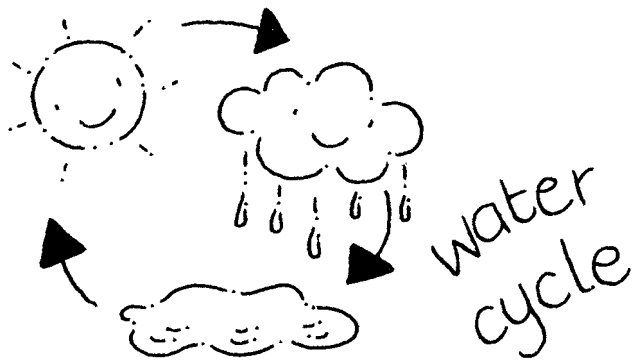
- Paint rainy day pictures. Ask children to first wet the paper thoroughly. Add drops of paint and watch them spread across the paper. Use straws to blow the paint. (EAD1)
- Make rain-sticks (see activity opposite). (EAD1)
- Put metal trays and foil containers in the water tray. Use sieves, colanders, funnels and plastic pots with holes punched into them to make raindrops. Which sounds most like rain? (EAD2)

Activity: Weather wheels

Learning opportunity: Recognising and illustrating different watery weather.

Early Learning Goal: Understanding the World. The world.

Resources: A wet day; chalk; each child will need two circles



cut from white card, one with a quarter segment cut away; pencils; crayons; split pins; weather symbols (see Personal, Social and Emotional Development).

Organisation: Whole group introduction followed by small group practical activity.

Key vocabulary: Puddles, clouds, rain, sunshine, dry up, evaporate.

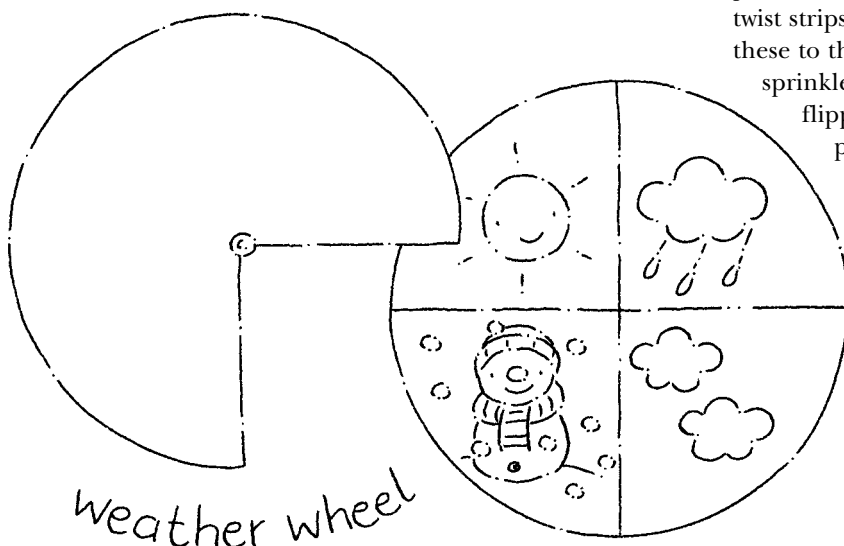
What to do: At the beginning of the session, go outside and look at any puddles. Draw round them using chalk. Talk about what might happen if the sun comes out.

Sing the rhyme 'Incy Wincy Spider'. Help children to think about the third line.

Draw a simple illustration of the water cycle (see diagram above).

Provide each child with a card circle divided into four segments (see below). Ask them to copy a different weather symbol in each space – rain, sun, clouds, and snow. Help them to attach the pre-cut card circle with a split pin and use their weather wheel to show today's weather.

Go outside and look at the puddles again. Have they changed in size or shape as the children predicted?



Activity: Making a rain-stick

Learning opportunity: Using a variety of materials to explore the sound of rain.

Early Learning Goal: Expressive Arts and Design. Exploring and using media and materials.

Resources: Rain-stick instrument; long cardboard tubes; cocktail sticks; scissors; adhesive tape; dried lentils or rice; thick paper or plastic circles to seal ends; paint.

Organisation: Small group.

Key vocabulary: Rain-stick, shake, turn, drizzle, pour.

What to do: Show children a rain-stick and listen to the sounds it makes. Explain that they are going to make their own. Give each child a tube. Help them to tape up one end securely with a card or plastic circle. Put a small amount of rice inside and listen to the sound it makes when shaken gently.

Listen to the real rain-stick again. Notice that the sound is sometimes interrupted when the seeds inside get stuck. Help children to push cocktail sticks through their tubes at different angles to form obstacles for the rice to fall against. Snip off sharp ends of sticks with scissors and cover with tape.

Seal the open end. Decorate the outside of the tube with paint. Use the sticks to accompany some 'rainy' rhymes such as 'I hear thunder'.

Display

Create an underwater area to use for role play. Cover the walls with blue fabric, paper and plastic sheeting as a backdrop. Make a curtain out of netting or fringed blue plastic through which children enter. Ask the children to twist strips of green crêpe paper into seaweed and attach these to the netting. Place blue mats on the floor and sprinkle with pebbles and shells. Provide mermaid tails, flippers and masks for dressing up. Add soft toys or plastic sea creatures to inspire imaginative play.