

Planning for Learning through Dinosaurs

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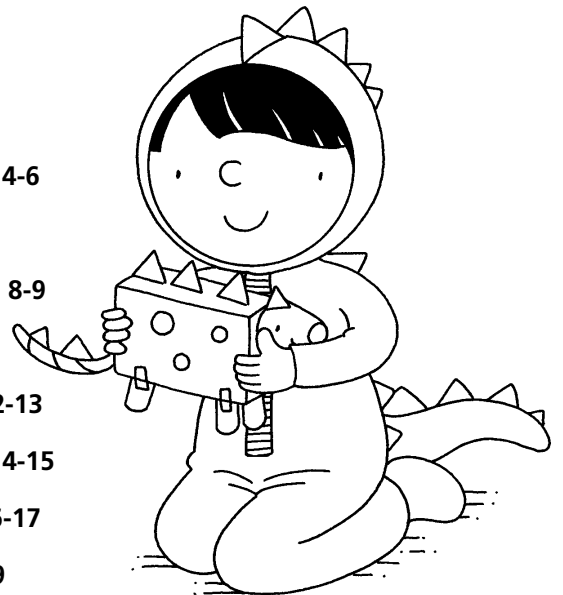
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Making plans

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 activities that promote 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 and focus on key skills or concepts. This 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, book corner, 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.

Furthermore, 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 also 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 and although areas of learning are presented separately within each framework, in reality children's activities and explorations cross over and combine the different subject areas. Thus the areas of



learning are perhaps of most use for planning, assessment and recording to ensure that key areas are not overlooked.

Focused area plans

The plans you make for each day will outline areas of continuous provision and focused, adult-led activities. Plans for focused 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;
- key questions.

Identify the learning and the Early Learning Goals that each activity is intended to promote. Make a note of any

Making plans

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 next 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 questions. 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 'Dinosaurs'.

The chart on page 7 gives an example format for weekly planning, including 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 'Dinosaur' 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 'Dinosaur' theme can be brought together by creating a prehistoric play landscape.

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 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 (2014), 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 7, DfE 2014). 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 the activities relating to 'Dinosaurs' aim to help children meet these expectations. For example, for Personal, Social and Emotional Development, one aspect relates to the development of children's 'self-confidence and self-awareness'. Activities aimed at helping children develop in this area have the reference PSE1. This will enable you to see which 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 areas of learning. For example, when the children make Pterosaur mobiles they will develop skills in art and design as well as their fine motor skills, which are part of physical development. Thus, whilst focused adult-led 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)

'Dinosaurs' activities provide many opportunities for children to enjoy listening, understanding and speaking. By playing the word games with dinosaur names, children are encouraged to count syllables and listen for initial sounds. They also talk about their favourite dinosaurs, examine toys and describe their features. Children find out about volcanoes by watching videos and looking up information in books, prompting them to ask questions, talk and share ideas. In addition, as role-

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: Meat-eating predators

Communication and Language

- Play dinosaur name games. Say the names of different dinosaurs out loud and clap the syllables. Challenge the children to think of an alliterative name for each dinosaur. The name must start with the same **sound** as the species, for example Anna Ankylosaurus or Daniel Diplodocus. (CL1, 2, 3)
- Press some giant dinosaur footprints into the sand pit or soil area. Otherwise print some muddy footprints running through the setting. Uprun tables and chairs as if something has come crashing through in the night. Stand back and let the children speculate about what has happened. (CL1, 2, 3)

Physical Development

- Take the children to a large space and encourage them to move like enormous dinosaur predators. For example, Velociraptor (running fast), Pterodactyl (swooping), Gigantosaurus (stomping), Tylosaurus (swimming and leaping out of the water), Troodon (running together in packs). (PD1)
- Make dinosaurs out of construction materials, such as brio, Lego, stickle bricks or magnetic blocks. (PD1)

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

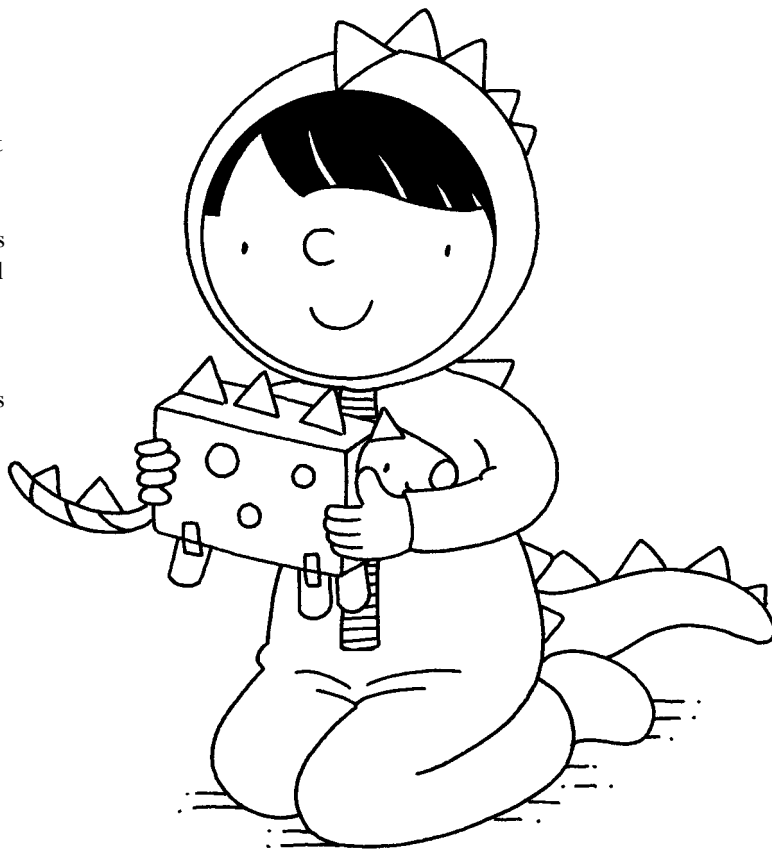
- Read *Gigantosaurus* by Jonny Duddle. It is a story about a little dinosaur who cries wolf one too many times. Talk about little Bonehead's antics and ask the children why his friends stopped believing him. Ask them why Bonehead was lucky. What could have happened? (PSE2)

Literacy

- Recite the rhyme, 'I Had a Tiny T-rex' (see activity opposite). (L1)
- Make vital statistic posters for the fiercest carnivorous dinosaurs. Invite the children to draw or paint large pictures of dinosaurs. Use information books to find out how tall, heavy, strong and fast each dinosaur was. Look up how many spikes, claws or teeth they had. Find out how many millions of years ago they existed. Write these facts on the posters. (L1, 2)

Mathematics

- Make a pictogram of scariest meat-eating dinosaurs (see activity opposite). (M1, 2)
- Print off some pictures of carnivorous dinosaurs with mouths wide-open. Count how many teeth each dinosaur has. (M1)
- Use playground chalk to draw numbered dinosaur



footprints on the floor outside for the children to jump on. (M1)

- Read *Ten Terrible Dinosaurs* by Paul Stickland. Line up ten toy dinosaurs in a row and take away one each time. (M1)

Understanding the World

- Use information books and the Internet to find out what dinosaurs were. Ask the children if they have seen or touched any reptiles that are alive today. Can they describe what a reptile feels like to touch? Arrange for someone to bring some reptiles into the setting for the children to see. (UW2)
- Explain the difference between herbivores and carnivores using animals and reptiles as examples. Find out what different dinosaurs ate. Look at how their physical features helped them source and eat different types of food, for example, Tyrannosaurus' large teeth for ripping into meat and Brachiosaurus' long neck for reaching high branches. (UW2)

Expressive Arts and Design

- Make fierce carnivorous dinosaur masks with big sharp teeth and dress up like dinosaurs. (EAD1)
- Make junk model dinosaurs. (EAD1)

- Read *Katie and the Dinosaurs* by James Mayhew. Ask the children to imagine going on a similar adventure. Which dinosaur would they like to go with? Where would they go and what would they do? (EAD2)

Activity: I Had a Tiny T-rex

Learning opportunity: Shows awareness of rhyme and alliteration; joins in with repeated refrains and anticipates key phrases in rhymes.

Early Learning Goal: Literacy. Reading.

Resources: Water tray; soapy water; Tyrannosaurus rex toys; water aprons

Key vocabulary: Bubble, bubbly, frothy, pop, dip, splash, swim, paddle.

Organisation: Small group

What to do: Give each child a toy Tyrannosaurus rex. Encourage them to join in the following rhyme, which is based on the traditional version about a turtle:

*I had a tiny T-rex, his name was Tiny Tim,
I put him in the bath tub to see if he could swim.
He drank up all the water and gobbled up all the soap,
Then when he tried to talk he had bubbles in this throat.
Bubble, bubble, bubble, bubble... pop!*

As you recite the rhyme, swim the toy dinosaurs in the water. When singing the last line drop the dinosaurs in the water, raise hands into the air and clap them for the pop.

After singing the rhyme allow the children time to play around with the bubbly water and encourage them to talk about how it looks, feels and sounds.

Activity: Dinosaur pictogram

Learning opportunity: Counts reliably with numbers from one to 20; uses everyday language to compare quantities.

Early Learning Goal: Mathematics. Numbers. Shape, space and measure.

Resources: Playground chalks; tub of sorting dinosaurs.

Key vocabulary: Numbers to twenty, names of dinosaurs, count, how many, total, altogether, column, pictogram, most popular, least popular.

Organisation: Whole group.

What to do: Use playground chalks to draw a grid on the floor outside. Write numbers to 10 down one axis and place a selection of toy dinosaurs from a sorting tub along the other axis.

Invite the children to choose what they believe to be the scariest of the meat-eating dinosaurs from the tub and place it on the grid in the corresponding column.

Encourage the children to look for data presented in the graph by asking them questions. Can they see which is the most scary/least scary of the meat-eating dinosaurs? Can they count how many thought each dinosaur was scariest? Can they work out how many children voted altogether? Can they think of any other ideas for pictograms?

Display

Set up an interactive carnivore/herbivore sorting display. Put two hoops on a table, one labelled 'carnivore', with a picture of some meat next to it, and another labelled 'herbivore', with a picture of a plant. Place a bowl full of toy dinosaurs in between the hoops. Display pictures and posters of various dinosaurs eating to help the children decide.

