

Planning for Learning through Sounds

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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 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 'Sounds'.

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



Making plans

children in practical activities and giving them opportunities to follow their own interests. For each 'Sounds' 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 'Sounds' activities can be brought together with The concert.

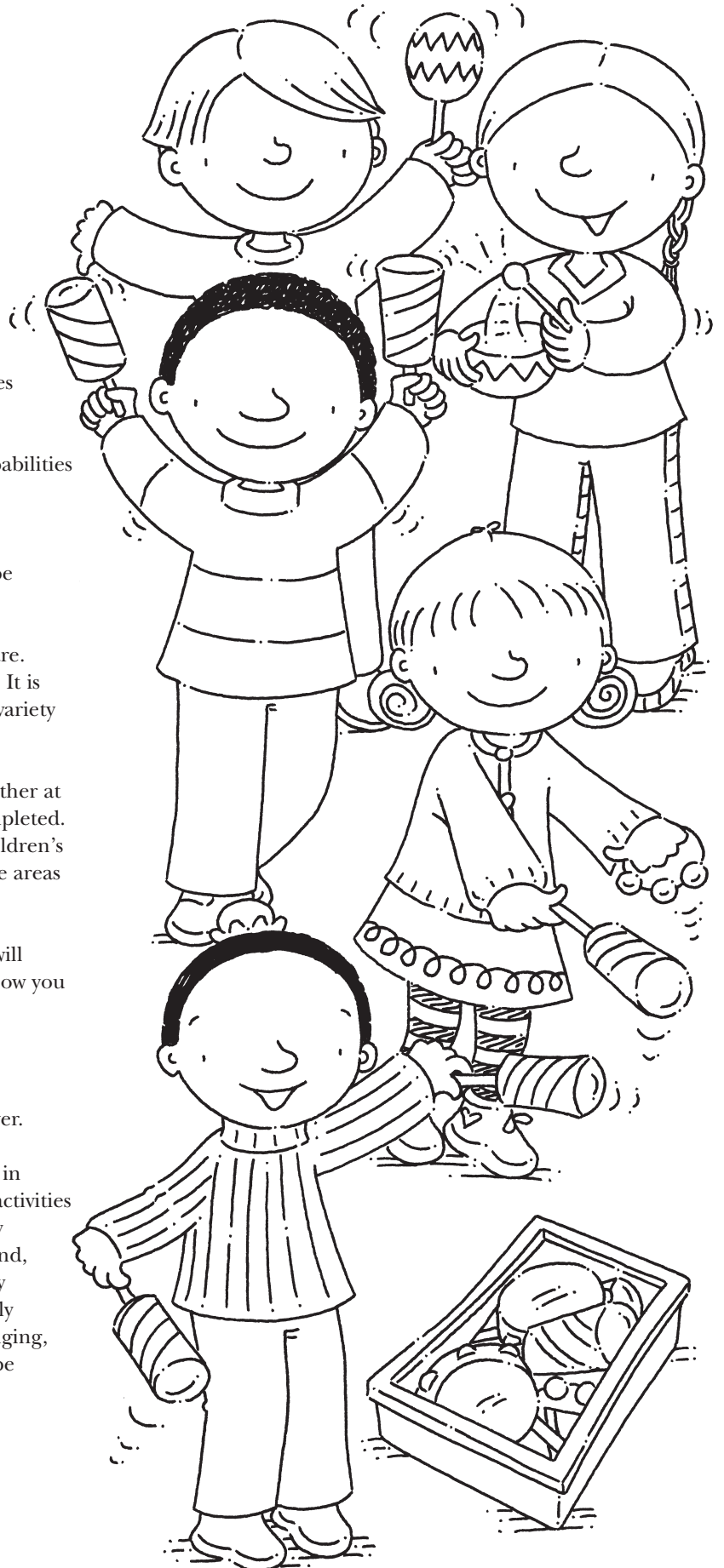
Use page 21 for ideas of resources to collect or prepare. Remember that the books listed are only suggestions. It is likely that you will already have within your setting a variety of other books that will be equally useful.

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 (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 4, 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 activities relating to 'Sounds' 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 write their own versions of *Peace at Last* during Theme 2, 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)

'Sounds' provides many opportunities for children to enjoy listening, understanding and speaking. There are a wide range of books featuring sounds and these can be used to stimulate interest in the chosen themes, encouraging children to listen



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: Hearing sounds

Communication and Language

- Set up a 'Listening area' and encourage children to sit and listen to stories and songs on CD or online. Can they retell a story to the group? Can they make up their own story to tell others? (CL1, 3)
- Play a cumulative circle game 'I went to the park and I heard a...'. Repeat with a different destination. (CL1, 3)

Physical Development

- Play 'Sounds and silence'. Ask the children to dance around when they hear the music. When it stops they must stand still and be completely silent. Anybody moving or making a sound is out! (PD1)
- Talk about the importance of listening carefully. Play 'Keeper of the tambourine'. One child is blindfolded and sits in the middle of the circle with the tambourine behind them. Children take turns to creep up and try to take it away. The keeper must shout 'Stop!' if any sound is made. (PD1)

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Introduce the theme by taking the children on a listening walk around the setting (see activity opposite). PSE2)
- During circle time, talk about how it might feel to not be able to hear any sounds. Learn some simple sign language. Learn a song in sign language online. (PSE1, 2)
- Read *Little Beaver and the Echo* by Amy MacDonald. Talk about feeling lonely and making friends. Go round the circle and ask children to 'echo' their names. (PSE1, 2, 3)
- Play 'Good morning your majesty'. Invite one child to sit with their back turned to the room. Ask other children to greet them and to disguise their voices. Can they recognise their friend's voices? (PSE1, 3)

Literacy

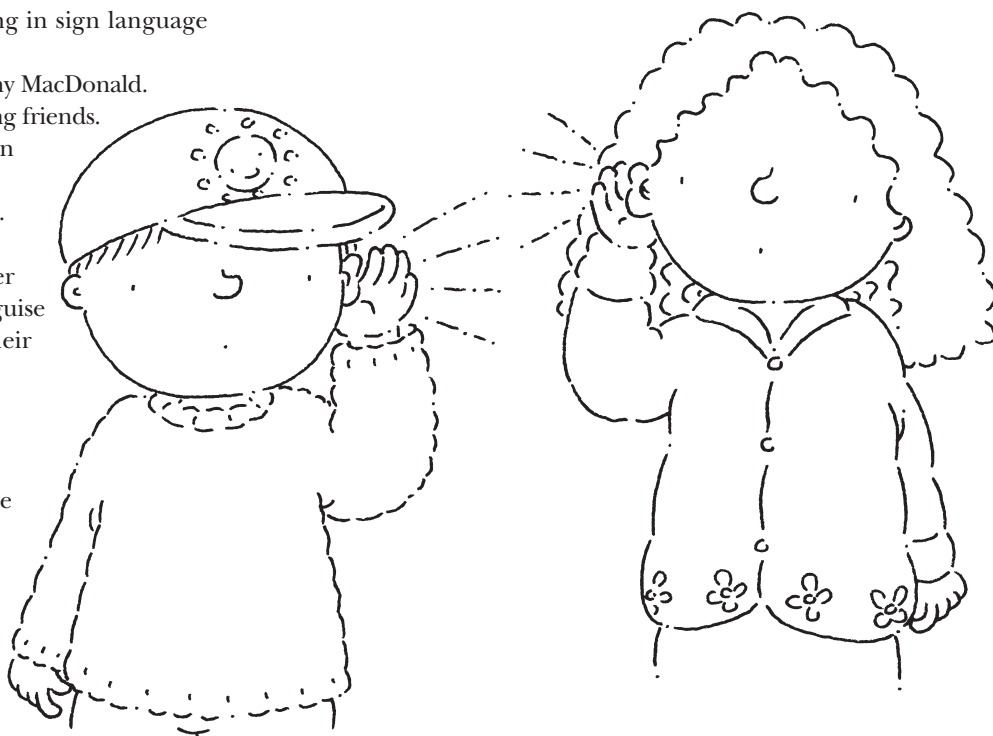
- Play this phonics listening game: 'I hear with my little ear... someone or something beginning with b'. Change it to 'something that rhymes with fish' or 'something very loud'. Ask children to write a list of all the 'b' words or rhyming words that they can hear. (L1, 2)

Mathematics

- Play a game of 'Counting sounds'. Ask a child to tap a drum a number of times. Can the others in the group listen carefully, and count how many taps they heard and point to the correct number symbol? Ask another child to tap that number and add one more on their drum. Can they tap one less? (M1)
- Help the children develop their listening and number skills (see activity opposite). (M1)

Understanding the World

- Show the children a simple diagram of the ear and talk about how it works. Why do we have two ears? Sit in a circle and blindfold one child in the centre. Ask another child to make a sound. Can the first child point to where the sound came from? What happens if one ear is blocked with an ear plug? (UW2)
- Make a telephone using two plastic cups and a length of string. Pull the string taut and ask children to have a conversation across the room. Make a listening tube. Press the stem of a plastic funnel into a length of plastic tubing. Can they hear each other whisper? (UW2)
- Investigate how far away a sound can be heard. Make a sound on an instrument and ask children to move away until they can no longer hear the sound. (UW2)



Expressive Arts and Design

- Try to learn a special song each week. Begin with 'I hear thunder'. Change the words to include other sounds such as traffic, birds or children. (EAD1)
- Have fun painting to music. Provide huge pieces of paper and invite children to paint in pairs as they listen. Does the style of the music affect the results? (EAD2)
- Play miming games. Ask the children to mime a favourite game or activity for the others to guess. (EAD2)
- Design special ears for funny face pictures. Encourage children to draw or paint big, colourful or spiky ears. (EAD1)

Activity: Listening walk

Learning opportunity: Developing awareness of sounds around them and aural memory. Talking about keeping safe when out and about.

Early Learning Goal: Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Managing feelings and behaviour.

Resources: Recording equipment; tablet or phone; paper; pictures of sounds.

Organisation: Whole group for walk, small group for listening game.

Key vocabulary: Listen, safe, look, hear, sounds, outside, inside.

What to do: Tell the children that you are going on a listening walk around the nursery. Before you go out talk about how important it is to keep safe and listen to the adults. Ask for extra adult help to accompany you on the walk.

Sing: 'We're all going on a sound hunt, we're going to hear some good sounds'.

Make a list of which sounds the children expect to hear inside and outside. Encourage the children to be quiet and listen carefully so they can hear all the sounds around them.

Make another list of the sounds they actually hear. Can they identify all the sounds?

Take along portable recording equipment on a tablet or phone and record as many of the sounds as possible.

In small groups, talk about the noises and sounds that they heard. Play the recordings back. Can they recognise all the sounds? Which sounds did they like or dislike?

Find pictures to match the sounds and play sound bingo.

Activity: Listening number games

Learning opportunity: Developing listening and sequencing skills.

Early Learning Goal: Mathematics. Numbers.

Resources: Tray containing eight objects; three sound sources from equipment such as a scrunchy plastic tray, bricks, pencils; number cards; percussion instruments.

Organisation: Small group.

Key vocabulary: Listen, order, sound, first, second, third.

What to do: Choose eight small objects and lay them out on a tray. Begin by playing 'Kim's game' – ask children to look very carefully at each thing. Cover the tray with a cloth and remove one item. Can the children tell you what is missing?

Ask the children to listen carefully as you name three of the items. Can they hand them to you in the correct order and use the number cards to label them, first, second and third? Try a sequence of four items. Ask one of the children to choose the order for others to copy.

Let the children explore making sounds with equipment – scrunching, tapping, scraping and so on. Label the sound sources one to three. Ask children to close their eyes, or make the sounds behind a screen. Can the children identify the sounds and put the number cards in the correct order?

Repeat this game using percussion instruments. Can the children echo or play the sounds in the same way and repeat the musical sequence?

Display

Mount and display a large poster of the ear so children can see how it works. Ask children to paint pictures of their favourite sounds and arrange them around the ear. Add the words 'With my ear, I like to hear...'

Make a chart showing each week's special song. At the end of the topic this can be used at the concert and the children can choose their favourite song.