Planning for Learning through ICT

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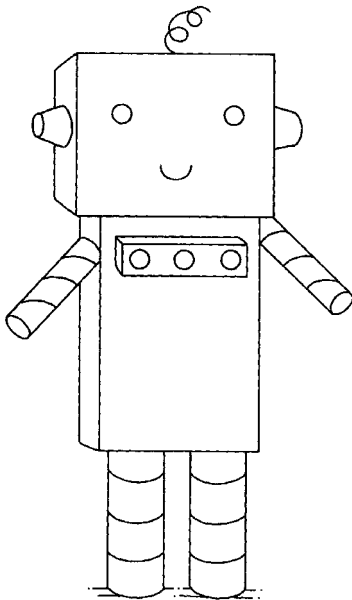
Practitioners must ensure that their provision has Health, safeguarding and e-safety policies in place for the use of ICT. Practitioners must ensure that use of equipment is safe and the use of websites and Internet searches supervised at all times.

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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 and although Areas of Learning are presented separately withing each framework, in reality children's activities and explorations cross over and combine with different subject areas. Thus the Areas of Learning are perhaps of most use
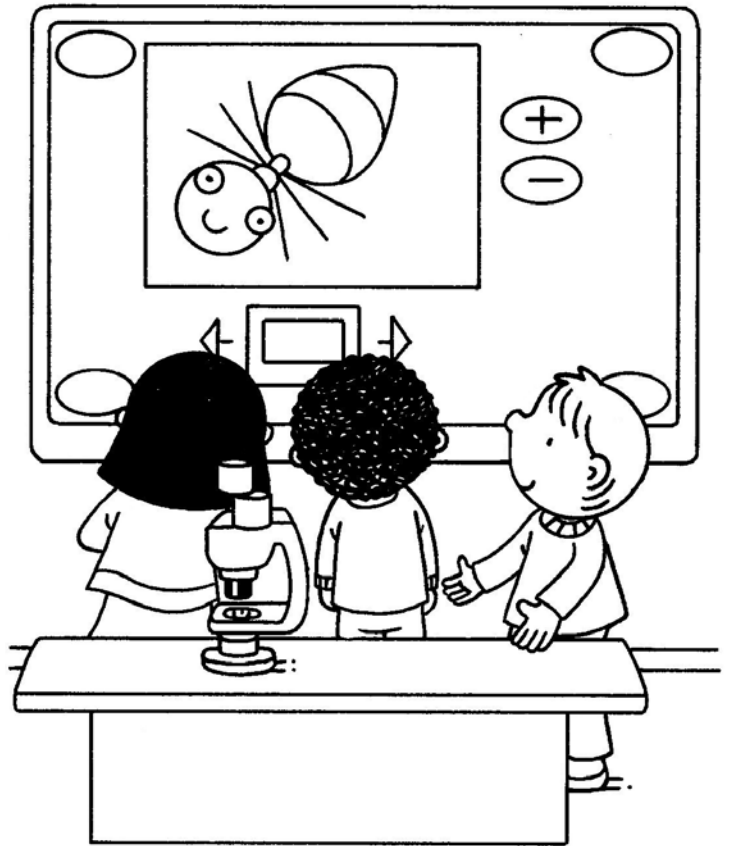
for planning, assessment and recording to ensure that key areas are not overlooked.

Focused area plans

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

Making plans

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 'ICT'. (Note: ICT is Information and Communications Technology. It includes any product that can store, retrieve, manipulate, transmit or receive information electronically in a digital form. CDs, DVDs, remote control toys, personal computers, iPods, tablets and Interactive Whiteboards (IWBs) are examples of ICT.)

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 'ICT' 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 'ICT' activities can be brought together within an 'All about me 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. Page 22 provides information on websites and ICT resources that could prove useful. *Planning for Learning through ICT* assumes that settings will have access to digital cameras, timers and scales; computers, Bee-Bots®, CD players and, for one activity, a digital microscope. Other ICT resources, though useful, are not essential.

The activity overview chart on page 24 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 23 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.

Health, safeguarding and e-safety

ICT is used on a regular basis as part of children's learning. It is vital that whenever ICT is used directly with children, risk assessments have taken place. Ensure your setting has all e-saftey procedures in place and that your staff is well-acquainted with them. Ensure your equipment is safe at all times, with control software installed, and strict safe search for Internet. As appropriate to their age, you must ensure you explain to the children how to use the Internet safely, reminding them regularly how to stay safe online.

It should also be recognised that the content of websites may be changed and all sites should always be checked thoroughly before being used directly with children.

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 activities relating to 'ICT' 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 pictures of sugar crystals viewed with a digital microscope, they will use creative skills. Also, children will develop their understanding of the world as they make observations. 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)

'ICT' provides many opportunities for children to enjoy listening, understanding and speaking. Story books featuring ICT can be used to stimulate interest in the chosen themes, encouraging children to listen and to talk. When having mobile phone conversations in a role-play supermarket, using

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: What is 'ICT'?

Communication and Language

- Talk about ICT. Explain what ICT stands for and ask the children to talk about the things in their own homes that are ICT. Does any parent have a mobile phone or digital camera? Does any child already use a computer or tablet? (CL1, 3)
- Ask the children to help to make a collection of books that include pictures showing ICT such as mobile phones, remote control toys and computers. Search the book area and also invite the children to bring in books from home. Enjoy sharing the books. (CL1)

Physical Development

- Develop fine motor skills playing computer games suitable for the EYFS. (PD1)
- Talk about the way that ICT can help things to happen quicker such as sending an email in seconds as opposed to a day or more for a letter. Set out activities using small equipment such as throwing a beanbag into a bucket before the sand runs through a timer. Repeat the activities challenging the children to be quicker. (PD1)
- Cut the letters ICT from large sheets of card. Ask the children to cut pictures of ICT equipment from catalogues and magazines and to stick them on the letters. When complete, 'varnish' the letters with watered down PVA glue and use them for a display. (PD1)

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Talk about how to look after and take care of CDs and DVDs. Explain how to hold them and why they should always be replaced in their cases after use. Play a game passing a CD around a circle whilst music plays. When it stops the child holding the CD gets a sticker. Praise those that are holding the CD carefully. (PSE 2, 3)
- Put out examples of 'new ICT' for children to explore. Encourage them to talk about the resources. Do they like them? Why? (PSE1)

Literacy

- Remind the children that ICT stands for Information and Communications Technology. Talk about the children's initials. Display letters around the room and ask the children to hunt for the letter that starts their own first name. Use the letters to make new words. (L1, 2)
- Invite children to write their names using a word processing programme, such as Microsoft Word. Encourage them to style their names in a variety of fonts, sizes and colours. Print out the names and compare the way they are written. Ask questions such as "Whose name begins with an 'a'?", "Does anyone have a 'y' in their name?" (L2)
- Show the children a number of mobile phones. Use magnetic words to write text messages (see activity below). (L2)

Mathematics

- Use a keyboard to practise number recognition and counting. (M1)
- Provide outlines of mobile phones for children to stick on the numbers 1 to 9. Use the phones in role play. (M1)
- Using IWB software, create a selection of simple flat shapes. Provide a group with a selection of flat shapes on the carpet. Ask the children to find similar ones on the IWB. Compare the similarities and differences. (M2)
- Enjoy playing with large calculators or use an IWB calculator. (M1)

Understanding the World

- Use catalogues to find pictures of things that could be classed as ICT. Use them to make posters for an 'All about ICT' display. (UW2)
- Investigate a computer keyboard. Explore the different keys. Help the children to realise the purpose for keys such as 'backspace' and 'return'. (UW3)

Expressive Arts and Design

- Use cereal packets and other available materials to make model laptop computers for a role-play office or to take on a role-play train journey (see activity opposite). (EAD2)
- Sing *Miss Polly Had a Dolly*. Talk about how Miss Polly used a phone to get hold of the doctor. Talk about other ways she could have contacted the doctor such as sending a text message or email. Enjoy role-playing being Miss Polly in a home role-play areas with toy mobile phones. (EAD1, 2)
- Show the children pictures of laptop computers, mobile phones and iPads with colourful covers. Provide pieces of paper for the children to decorate as covers for ICT equipment. (EAD2)

Activity: Writing messages

Learning opportunity: Reading and writing a range of familiar words.

Early Learning Goal: Literacy. Reading. Writing.

Resources: Mobile phones; magnetic board and key words; sticky notes and pen.

Key vocabulary: Mobile phone, text, message.

Organisation: Small groups.

What to do: Show the children the mobile phones. Which one do they like best? Why?

Explain that mobile phones can be used to write text messages. Write the word 'cat' on the phone and ask a child to read it.

Tell the children the magnetic board is going to be their mobile phone and that you are going to send them a message. Use the magnetic words to write a simple sentence using easily recognisable words. Together read the message. Invite a child to 'send' a message back.

Enjoy role-play sending text messages. As well as using the magnetic words, provide sticky notes and pencils for the children to 'write' their own words.

During a subsequent session tell the children that sometimes people rush and send wrong words in their texts. Provide some sentences with gaps and invite children to choose words that make sense.

Activity: Making model laptop computers

Learning opportunity: Using recyclable materials to make models.

Early Learning Goal: Expressive Arts and Design. Being imaginative.

Resources: Laptop computer; mobile phone; selection of boxes e.g. from cereal and biscuits; masking tape, paint; stickers; scissors; felt pens; paper; card.

Key vocabulary: Laptop computer, names of materials.

Organisation: Small groups.

What to do: Show the group the laptop. Look at the keys and the way the computer opens. Why is it called a laptop?

Show the group the materials. Which ones would be useful for making models of laptops? Demonstrate how to undo a cereal packet and then remake it inside out, with masking tape, to give clear surfaces that can be painted and decorated.

Help the children to choose materials to make their own models and to consider how to make a laptop that opens. Could hinges be made with card or tape? Would sticky labels work? Encourage the children to paint and decorate their models.

When completed, enjoy using the computers in a role-play office or on a role-play train journey.

Display

Cover a board with black paper. For a border use children's hand prints cut from used computer paper. Put up the 'ICT' collage letters at the top as a title and in the centre, the question 'What is ICT?'. Arrange the collages of pictures, cut from catalogues, around the question. On a nearby table place some of the children's model laptops.

Arrange four chairs as if seats on a train. On each seat place a model laptop and a toy mobile phone. Invite children to go on train journeys showing awareness of the other passengers. Encourage them to consider how not to annoy others if they use their phones or computers.

A model laptop