

Practical  
Pre-School Books

Planning  
for Learning  
through  
**Spring**



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# Theme 1: Detecting Spring

## Communication and Language

- Look at a large picture of a Spring-time scene (trees in blossom, Spring flowers, children playing outside). Discuss what children can do in Spring that they cannot do in Winter. Talk about how children feel in the Spring. What are their favourite activities? Why? (CL3)
- Read a tale about a plant growing such as *The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle. Talk about the changes that take place. Discuss the differences between Spring and Winter and Spring and Summer. (CL1)

## Physical Development

- Choose a nice day to use outdoor toys that were put away for the winter. Afterwards, encourage children to talk about the experience. (PD1)
- Encourage children to be hungry caterpillars searching for food as they crawl and slither through hoops and larger apparatus with holes. (PD1)

## Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Make a spring picnic role play area. Securely fix a tight string at ceiling height across a corner of the room. Cut across an unopened roll of green crepe paper every 1-2 cm. Without unrolling these sections encourage the children to help you to twist them. Then shake them open to make long twisty fronds. Dangle these from the string, packing them fairly closely, and introducing paler greens, pinks and whites. The end result is a weeping blossom tree which encloses an area. Place a picnic rug and tea set on the floor. Children love the feel of moving through the tree curtain to reach this special place. (PSE3)

## Literacy

- Begin a collection of words that end in 'ing'. Encourage the children to add their own words and to enjoy reading them. (L1, 2)
- As a group read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle. Make a group version based on children's favourite Spring foods. (L1, 2)

## Mathematics

- Use the group's version of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* to practise counting. Ask questions such as 'How many apples did the caterpillar eat?' (M1)
- With the help of children make a number frieze with a Spring theme: one blossom tree, two lambs, three baby rabbits, four eggs in a nest, five ducklings on a pond etc. On each picture display clearly the corresponding numeral. (M1)



## Understanding the World

- Choose a fine day to go for a Spring walk. Look for signs of Spring such as nests, leaves emerging from the earth, buds on twigs and minibeasts. Take photos. Once back inside encourage children to describe what they saw and to record their observations in drawings and paintings. (UW 2, 3)
- Use bulbs planted the previous term to show children how bulbs form shoots and grow into plants. Explain that you are going to look at the plants each day. Make a timeline for the bulbs. Begin with a large display showing a plant pot and green shoots cut from sugar paper. Each week add other pots which show how the shoots have grown and the leaves and flowers starting to appear. (UW2)
- Make nests (see activity opposite). (UW2)
- Discuss festivals which children in the group celebrate during Spring. These might include Easter (Christian), Baisakhi (Sikh), Holi (Hindu), Passover (Jewish). Invite parents to come and talk to children about the celebrations. (UW1)

## Expressive Arts and Design

- Mime being a bulb changing during Spring. Encourage slow, controlled movement. (EAD2)

- Use buds found in pot-pourri to make collages of trees in blossom. Encourage children to look at real trees in blossom (or use pictures) and to describe the colours and scent. (EAD1)
- Observe real daffodils. Encourage children to look closely at them, to count petals and leaves and explain that they will be making accurate models of the daffodils. Use egg cartons or bun cases for the trumpet, yellow card petals, green card leaves and green straws. Write children's names on the leaves before arranging them in a large vase. (EAD1)

## Activity: Being bulbs

**Learning opportunity:** Moving with control and imagination. Listening to instructions.

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

**Resources:** Large space.

**Organisation:** Whole group in a large space.

**Key vocabulary:** Bulb, shoots, bud, flower.

**What to do:** Talk to children about Spring being a time of new life. Remind them of the signs of Spring they saw on their walk. Explain that the children are going to be bulbs, turning into shoots, growing buds and finally bursting into flower. Talk about the kinds of shapes children will need to make themselves into.

Ask children to be a bulb (tightly curled up), a shoot (long and thin), roots growing under ground (wriggle toes), in bud (clenched fist), in flower (open hands, tall and stretched). As children try each stage praise those who make controlled, clear shapes.

Talk to the children about how plants grow over time and that things happen gradually. Repeat the mime but this time tell the story of the bulb, encouraging children to listen to the details and to change gradually and smoothly.

## Activity: Making nests

**Learning opportunity:** Recognising features of nests, selecting materials and building nests.

**Early Learning Goal:** Understanding the World. The world.

**Resources:** Pictures of common birds and birds' nests; old nests; a range of materials for making nests including made and natural materials.

**Organisation:** Small group.

**Key vocabulary:** Twigs, grass, moss, nest, soft, safe, warm.

**What to do:** Show children either pictures of birds' nests or examples of old nests. Remind them that they should never touch or disturb a nest which is in use. Explain that the old ones are no longer used by the birds.

Talk about the types of birds that might have lived in the nests. Look closely at the nests, the materials they are made from and how they are made. If nests were seen on the Spring detecting walk, talk about them.

Show children a range of materials they might like to use to try making a nest. Encourage them to think about a particular bird. How big is it? Where might it build its nest? What materials would it use? Show children how twigs can be bent into a nest shape.

Ask the children to make a nest. If old nests or natural materials such as twigs and leaves are used remind children to wash their hands thoroughly after finishing the activity.

## Display

Display the tree collages on a notice board. Place the nests on a table in front of the board. On another board begin the bulb timeline display described above. Place the vase of model daffodils and growing plants nearby.

Begin a display of the books read during the week and the group's version of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Over the coming weeks encourage children to find other books for each new theme.



# Theme 2: Frogs

## Communication and Language

- Set up a tank with frogspawn in the room. Talk to children about where the spawn came from and how it will change. Explain that it will be returned to where it came from. Talk about how children should be 'gentle giants' when dealing with living creatures. (CL1)
- In small groups, talk about what it would be like to be a tadpole in the tank. What would they see? Make up a group story. (CL1, 3)

## Physical Development

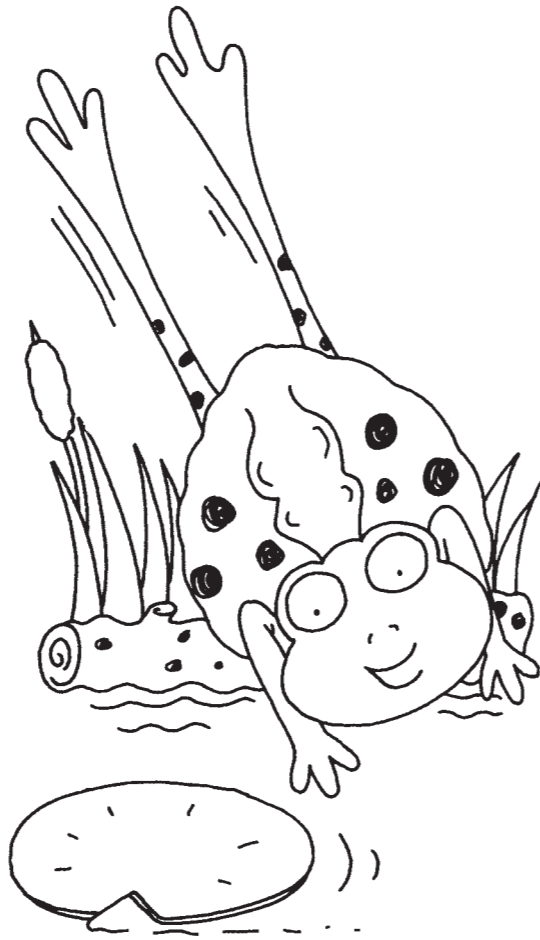
- Talk about the way frogs jump. Show children how to jump like frogs. Tell a story about a frog on a Spring day. Include descriptions of how the frog jumps and where it goes. Encourage the children to pretend to be the frog in the story, acting out its adventures. (PD1)
- Use PE mats or chalked areas to play the lily pad game on a large scale - see activity opposite. Remind children how to land with bent knees when they jump. Encourage light movements and long/high jumps. (PD1)

## Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Talk about the need to be 'gentle giants' when dealing with living creatures such as tadpoles. Make 'Be gentle giant' posters. (PSE2)

## Literacy

- As a group make a collection of words to describe frogspawn. Write them on circles of card. (L2)
- As soon as the spawn has hatched into tadpoles ask the children to work in small groups to observe and



describe the tadpoles. Cut out tadpole shapes of black paper and help children to write their own, descriptive words in white crayon. Display the tadpoles on a large pond. (L2)

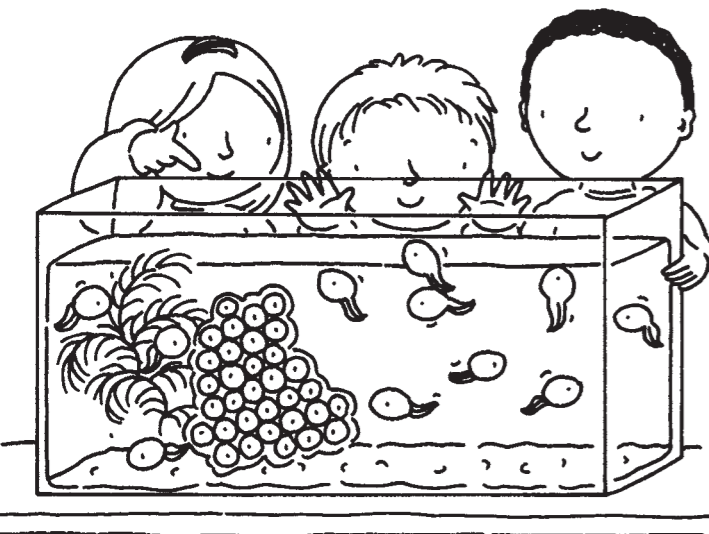
- Cut out a card frog shape for each child and ask them to write their name and draw a picture of themselves onto it. Explain that the frog labels will be used to identify ponds they are going to make - see activity opposite. (L2)

## Mathematics

- Use circular objects to make frogspawn patterns in clay or dough. Encourage the children to compare the sizes of the circles they make and to count their 'frogspawn'. (M1, 2)
- Play the Lily Pad Game (see activity opposite). (M1)
- Sing and act out 'Five Little Speckled Frogs' from *Apusskidu*. (M1)

## Understanding the World

- Observe frogspawn turning into tadpoles. Each child can record the process on card cut into the shape of a fish tank. For example, on day one they could stick on frogspawn made from bubble wrap or white circles with black dots. As changes are noted new spawn/tadpoles can be added to the tanks. NB It is best to return the tadpoles to their natural surroundings as soon as they have hatched. The development of legs and the change to frog can be discussed with the aid of good picture books or internet photos. (UW2)



## Expressive Arts and Design

- Make model ponds in cereal boxes (see activity opposite). (EAD1)
- Paint frogs on lily pads. (EAD1, 2)

## Activity: Lily pad game

**Learning opportunity:** Counting to ten.

**Early Learning Goal:** Mathematics. Numbers.

**Resources:** 20 lily pads cut from green sugar paper or card; a bean bag frog or soft toy; a die; four different coloured counters cut from card in the shape of tadpoles.

**Organisation:** Group of four children on the floor or around a small table.

**Key vocabulary:** Numbers up to ten, start, finish, first, next.

**What to do:** Show children the lily pads. Together arrange the lily pads on a large piece of blue paper in a 'squiggly' line ending with one with the frog on it.

Give each child a tadpole to place on the lily pad furthest from the frog.

In turn the children shake the die and move their tadpole towards the frog. The winner is the first one to land on the frog's pad.

Children must throw the exact number to win ie, if it is two spaces to the pad a three cannot be used. As children play, encourage them to count aloud and to count how many pads they still have to go on to finish. On further occasions increase the number of lily pads used.

## Activity: Make a model pond

**Learning opportunity:** Children will work collaboratively to make model ponds.

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

**Resources:** Cereal boxes; brown and green paints; coloured tissue papers; pipe cleaners; pasta shells; bubble wrap; glue.

**Organisation:** Small groups.

**Key vocabulary:** Fold, stick, glue, under/on/in (the water).

**What to do:** Show children how to turn a cereal box inside out and refasten the seams with masking tape. Cut a large

hole in the front of the box so that when it lays flat the upper surface is open.

Show children how to paint the outside of the box in browns and greens to look like the banks of a pond.

Provide modelling materials such as brown and grey tissue to crumple to make pebbles for the bottom of the pond, green shredded paper to make pond weed, shiny coloured paper to cut out fish, bubble wrap for frog spawn, black pipe cleaners to model tadpoles and pasta shells for snails.

For a finishing touch cover the open top of the pond with clear cellophane so that paper lily pads can rest on the water surface.

## Display

Place the tank of frogspawn and a simple picture book about frogs on a table covered with blue cloth or paper. On a notice board create a scene of a pond and lily pads. Display the black tadpoles with words to describe them on the pond scene.

Put a tray of scraps of paper near the pond picture and invite children over the week in spare moments to make other creatures and plants that might be seen in or near a pond. Let children choose where they wish to place their animal or plant and encourage them to say why.

Arrange the children's model ponds nearby with their frog labels.



# Theme 3: Spring rain

## Communication and Language

- Use a picture of a rainy day or a poem to talk through feelings about rain. Talk about the kinds of clothes people wear in the rain and the need to wipe feet and remove outdoor clothing when coming inside. (CL3)
- Enjoy sharing stories and poems about wet weather. (CL1)

## Physical Development

- Talk about the way raindrops run down window panes. Use runny paint to do a blow painting. Ensure each child has a new straw. Encourage blowing not sucking! Discuss what the pictures remind children of. Ask each child to give their picture a title and scribe this for them. (PD1)
- Outside use hoops or chalked lines as puddles. Encourage the children to enjoy jumping in the 'puddles'. (PD1)

## Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Discuss ideas for keeping a teddy dry if it were to go outside in the rain. Encourage children to share ideas and to say why they think their solution will work (see activity opposite). (PSE1)

## Literacy

- Make a group big book about things children like to do in the rain. Encourage each child to draw a picture of what they like to do when it is raining, and to write a sentence such as 'When it is wet I like to....' or 'In the rain I like to....'. When the book is made share it with the group. (L1, 2)
- Prepare a large card cloud from which to hang card raindrops. Use a rain maker instrument to stimulate children to describe the sound of rain. Write the words on the raindrops. (L2)

## Mathematics

- Use the opportunity of water play to develop vocabulary related to capacity: full, empty, half full or half empty, more or less. (M2)
- Begin to measure capacity by counting how many small containers can be filled from one large one. Encourage children to predict and then count. Use the reverse procedure of counting how many times a small container can be filled and the water poured into a larger one. (M1, 2)

## Understanding the World

- Use sieves, funnels and pots with holes to explore rain making. Which makes the largest drops? Which sound like rain on a very wet day? (UW2)



- Make rainy day pictures by painting on wet paper. Talk about what happens to the paint. (UW2)
- Talk about puddles. Where do they go? Draw around a puddle with chalk and observe it later in the day/week. (UW2)

## Expressive Arts and Design

- Use tapping and clapping sounds to simulate a gentle trickle of rain, building up to a big storm then turning into a bright and sunny Spring day. Record the storm 'music' (see activity opposite). (EAD1)
- Make up a rain dance. (EAD2)
- Sing 'I hear thunder'. Make shakers from yoghurt pots and rice to accompany the singing. (EAD1)

## Activity: Rainy clothes for teddy

**Learning opportunity:** Working as a group and independently, initiating ideas and solving problems.

**Early Learning Goal:** Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Self-confidence and self-awareness.

**Resources:** A teddy; a range of scraps of materials including ones which would be waterproof; examples of real rainwear; Teddy in the Rain poem; photocopied outlines of a teddy; pencils, crayons, felt pens.

**Organisation:** Whole group sitting comfortably on the floor.

**Key vocabulary:** Waterproof, umbrella, Wellington boots, raincoat, plastic, rubber.

**What to do:** Read the poem to the group.

### Teddy in the Rain

*Outside it is raining  
Teddy wants to be there,  
But to keep his fur dry,  
Special clothes he must wear.*

*He likes to splash in puddles,  
Feel the rain upon his face,  
And if his friend comes as well,  
They will hold a splashing race!*

*Teddy loves to be outside,  
On a wet and rainy day,  
So please help him decide  
What to wear for rainy play!*

Talk about being outside in the rain. What kinds of clothes do children wear in the rain?

Invite one child to put on the rainwear clothes. Why are they good in the rain? From what sort of materials are they made? How do the materials look and feel? Show the teddy to the children. Ask what would happen to him if he went out in the rain. What would he need to wear to stay dry? Show children the scrap materials. Ask them to suggest which would be best for a raincoat.

Give each child one of the photocopied teddies. Invite them to design an outfit which would keep the teddy dry. Children could either do a collage with the scrap materials or they could colour with pens and crayons. At the end of the session ask some children to show their pictures to the group and to explain why they have chosen the clothes and materials.

## Activity: Tapping rain

**Learning opportunity:** Working collaboratively to make a rain tape.

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

**Organisation:** Whole group sitting comfortably on the floor in a circle.

**Key vocabulary:** Pitter, patter, drip, drop, splish, splosh, splash.

**What to do:** Talk about the sound of rain. If you have a rain maker instrument, listen to the sound it makes as it is tipped.

Show children how they can tap two fingers of one hand gently against the palm of the other. What kind of rain does it sound like?

Explain that the group is going to try to make the sounds of rain by tapping with their fingers and by clapping. Explain that they must listen carefully and watch. Encourage them to tap gently, copying the sound of light rain, to tap progressively louder for heavier rain, to clap for a downpour and then become quieter until eventually the rain stops.

Repeat the performance and tape record the sounds. Play the tape back. Discuss whether it did sound like rain and whether the children might like to change any of the sounds.

## Display

On a large piece of paper in the shape of an umbrella write out the 'Teddy in the Rain' poem. Display this with the children's teddy clothes designs. If there are too many designs to go on the display some could be placed in clear plastic wallets and put in a loose leaf file on a table by the board. Put the group's big book about the rain and the teddy on the table. Hang the cloud of rainy words near the board.





# Theme 4: Woolly week

## Communication and Language

- Look at items made from wool and a ball of wool. Talk about the way sheep provide wool. Enjoy sharing stories that feature sheep and lambs. (CL1, 3)
- Recite 'Little Bo Peep'. Talk about what it feels like to lose something which is precious. (CL3)

## Physical Development

- Use the context of sheep following each other to introduce a game of follow my leader. Encourage the leading sheep to use actions, clapping, skipping, hopping and steps of different sizes. Introduce simple obstacles, such as a hoop to climb through stepping stone mats, a skipping rope on the floor to walk along or a set of cones to weave between. (PD1)

## Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- If possible arrange a visit to a farm which has new lambs. Talk about caring for living creatures. Also discuss appropriate behaviour for the visit. (PSE2)

## Literacy

- Draw attention to the rhymes in 'Little Bo Peep'. 'Peep' and 'sheep' both contain an 'ee' sound. Saying this sound makes us smile! Can the children think of any other words with this sound? Give clues: 'I saw a kitten the other day. It was fast as .....,', or 'When it was rainy I stepped in a puddle which was very d.....'. Provide strips of paper for children to write the 'ee' words. (L2)
- Involve children in making a display featuring sheep and woolly items. Encourage children to write labels and questions for the display. (L2)

## Mathematics

- Play a simple number matching game with card sheep and a die labelled 1, 1, 2, 2, 3, 3. Children pick up some sheep - they can choose to take one, two or three sheep. They then throw the die. If the number is the same as the number of sheep they took, they keep them. If not, they return their sheep to the pile. The game continues until no sheep are left. (M1)
- Use the sheep counting rhyme (see activity opposite). (M1)
- Enjoy measuring lengths of objects, both inside and outside with strips of wool. (M2)

## Understanding the World

- Reinforce descriptive vocabulary relating to wool: soft, fluffy and warm. A piece of wool can be long or short.



Which piece of wool is the softest? Can children find anything else in the room which is fluffy? (UW2)

- Use the internet and books to investigate Spring lambs. (UW3)

## Expressive Arts and Design

- Make paper plate wool weavings. (EAD1)
- Make sheep collages by sticking white cotton wool balls on to green paper. Use black felt pen to add feet and a head to the sheep. Encourage children to use scraps of materials/draw to add other signs of Spring. (EAD1, 2)
- Make models of sheep and lamb from white dough. (EAD1)

## Activity: Sheep counting rhyme

**Learning opportunity:** Using a counting rhyme for 1 to 5.

**Early Learning Goal:** Mathematics. Numbers.

**Resources:** None.

**Organisation:** Whole group sitting comfortably on the floor.

**Key vocabulary:** Numbers to five.

**What to do:** Talk to the children about shepherds. What do shepherds do? Talk about the importance of looking after sheep and of counting to check that none are lost. Pick five children and ask them to kneel on all fours pretending to be sheep. Walk around the sheep saying the following rhyme as you go:

**A shepherd in his field one day,  
Finds a sheep sitting in his way  
He pats the sheep saying 'Come with me, (Pat one sheep)  
One sheep and I will go home for tea.'**

The child who is patted wakes up and follows you Repeat the rhyme changing the last line to two, three, ..... until all the sheep have gone home for tea.

As you demonstrate the rhyme encourage the children who are watching to join in with the words and to clap their hands on the word 'pats'. Once the children know what to do, a child can be the shepherd.

## Activity: Paper plate weaving

**Learning opportunity:** Exploring colour and materials.

**Early Learning Goal:** Expressive Arts and Design.

**Resources:** Small paper plates or card circles, notched around the edge using pinking shears. Wools in a wide variety of Spring colours.

**Organisation:** Small group with adult supervision.

**What to do:** Talk to the children about the colours which are associated with Spring. Talk about the colours of blossom, Spring flowers and so on.

Explain to the children that they are going to make some wool weavings to show these Spring colours. Encourage each child to select the colours of wools which they would like to include in their weaving.

Help each child to start weaving by taping the end of a long piece of their chosen wool to the back of their plate. Show how to wind the wool across the plate, catching it in the notches, so that the child ends up with something rather like the spokes of a bicycle wheel. Accuracy is not important. Now new colours and textures of wool can be woven between these spokes.

Some children may enjoy weaving very carefully, but most will use the frame to hold pieces of wool

in a fairly random manner. It does not matter. If the wools are thick and bright or fluffy all the results will be attractive.

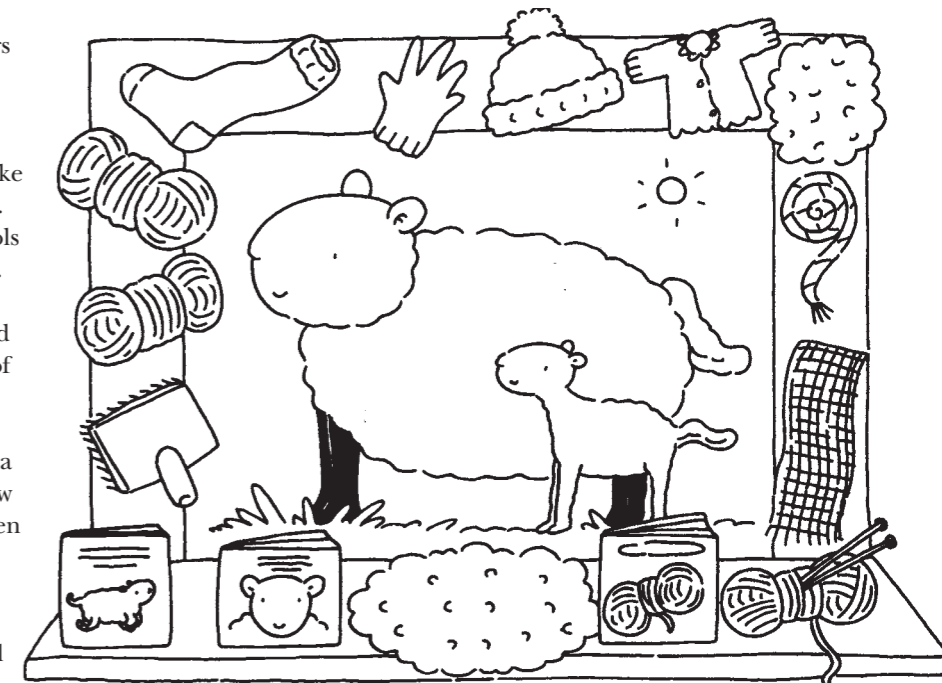
As the children work, talk about the choices they are making. What does this colour remind you of? Does this wool feel quite the same as that one? Which wool is softer?

Encourage children to experiment with a variety of shades and textures. Some children may like to stick small twigs or coloured feathers into their pictures.

Once mounted they can be used as the basis of Mothers' Day or Easter cards or just simply be appreciated as pictures of Spring.

## Display

Make a display of children's clothes which are made from wool, balls of knitting wool, and books and pictures relating to sheep. Add captions which reinforce the processes involved in making woollen garments.



# Theme 5: Mother's Day

The topic of Mothers' Day should be dealt with sensitively so that no child feels excluded, whatever their personal circumstances. Mothers' Day should be viewed as an occasion when some people like to say thank you to their mother but others may prefer to focus on someone else.

## Communication and Language

- Read *Five Minutes' Peace* by Jill Murphy. Talk about the mother elephant. How could the children have been more helpful? Discuss the ways in which children can help their parents. (CL1, 3)
- Follow a simple recipe to bake biscuits or buns for mothers. (CL2)

## Physical Development

- Hold a Mum's Choice Day. Invite mums, friends and carers to show the children some of the games which they enjoyed playing when they were young. Examples might be ring games such as 'The Farmer's in the Den', 'The Hokey Cokey', 'Oranges and Lemons', or simple playground games such as Grandmother's Footsteps. (PD1)

## Personal, Social and Emotional Development

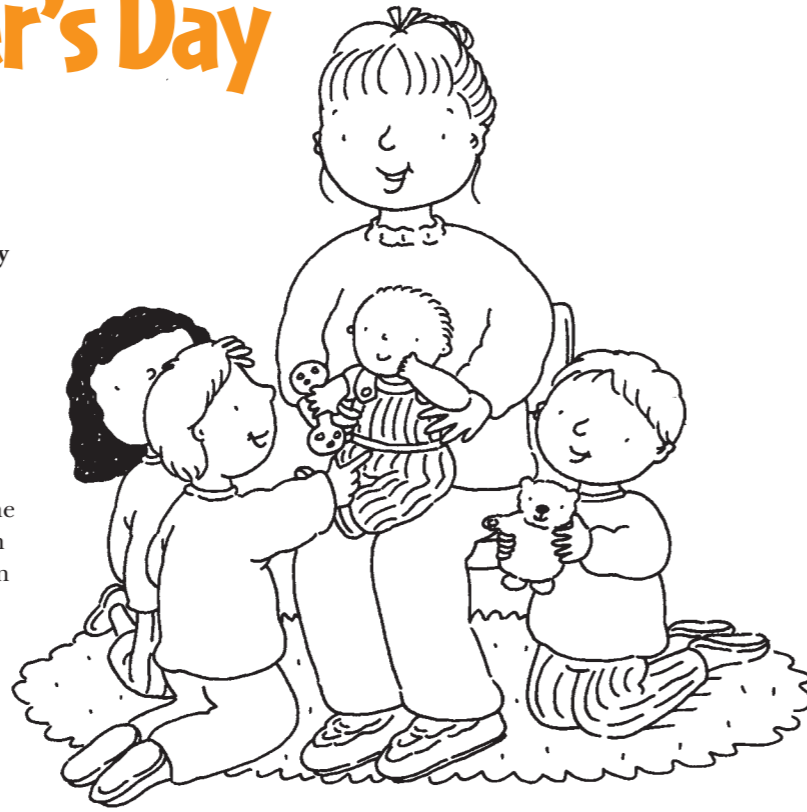
- Use the 'Mother bakes' story opposite to discuss how 'little things matter'. (PSE2, 3)

## Literacy

- Help children to write a simple greeting and their name in a Mothers' Day card. (L2)
- Talk to the children about all the different jobs which mums do. Make a list. (L2)
- Encourage each child to paint a picture of their own mum busy doing one of these things. Perhaps there is something special which their Mum is interested in or is especially good at. Talk to the children about their pictures. Write titles for the pictures. (L2)

## Mathematics

- Use plastic animal families to practise sorting and grouping. Encourage the children to identify which animals they think are parents and young. How did they make their choices? As the children play with the animals encourage their use as a context for counting and problem solving. 'How many ducklings are following the mother duck?' 'How many lambs does each mother sheep have? How many is that all together?' (M1)



- Use 2-D shapes to make pictures of spring flowers to give mothers on Mother's Day. Encourage the children to name the shapes that they use. (M2)

## Understanding the World

- Talk about animal families, introducing and reinforcing the names of parents and young: a baby cat is a kitten, a baby horse is a foal and so on. Introduce some of the more specific names for male and female animals, such as cow and bull, mare and stallion. Reinforce the language by making a simple matching or happy families game. (UW2)
- Invite a parent or friend with a young baby to visit the group. How does the baby need to be looked after? What can the children do that the baby cannot? (UW1, 2)

## Expressive Arts and Design

- Make a mug-shaped card for a Mothers' Day card (see activity opposite). (EAD1)
- Enjoy role-playing being mothers with new-born babies. (EAD2)

## Activity: Mother bakes

**Learning opportunity:** Working collaboratively. Initiating ideas.

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

**Organisation:** Whole group sitting comfortably on the floor.

**What to do:** Explain that the group is going to mime to a story about a mother who decides to bake a tart. As you tell the story mime the baking, reading and so on. Encourage children to join in.

Mum finds a bowl, some flour, some water, some salt and some fat. She mixes them together to make pastry.

She rolls out the pastry, puts it in a pie dish, trims the edges, peels some apples and puts them in the dish. She covers it with more pastry, cuts it, pinches the edges and pops it in the oven.

While waiting for it to cook she reads a book. Suddenly she realises something smells nice. She puts on oven gloves and carefully takes the pie out. She cuts a slice, blows on it, and tastes. She shudders. It tastes horrible. She has forgotten to put the sugar on. It is sour!

The story is then repeated two more times. The second time she puts too much sugar on, the final time it is just right. She eats a slice, then another and so on until the pie has all gone, she feels full and falls asleep.

After the story talk to children about why only one pie tasted nice. Talk about the way just a small amount of sugar could make such a difference. Talk about little things children can do to make a difference such as picking up litter, saying 'please' and 'thank you'.

## Activity: Mothers' Day 'Have a tea break' cards

**Learning opportunity:** Exploring colour.

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

**Resources:** Crayons, pens and for each child a pre-cut mug-shaped card (see below) and a fruit tea-bag.

**Organisation:** Small group.

**Key vocabulary:** The names of colours, extending to include 'bright', 'dark', 'pastel' and 'deep'.

**What to do:** Show children the mug card and how a fruit tea-bag string can be inserted through a slit in the card.

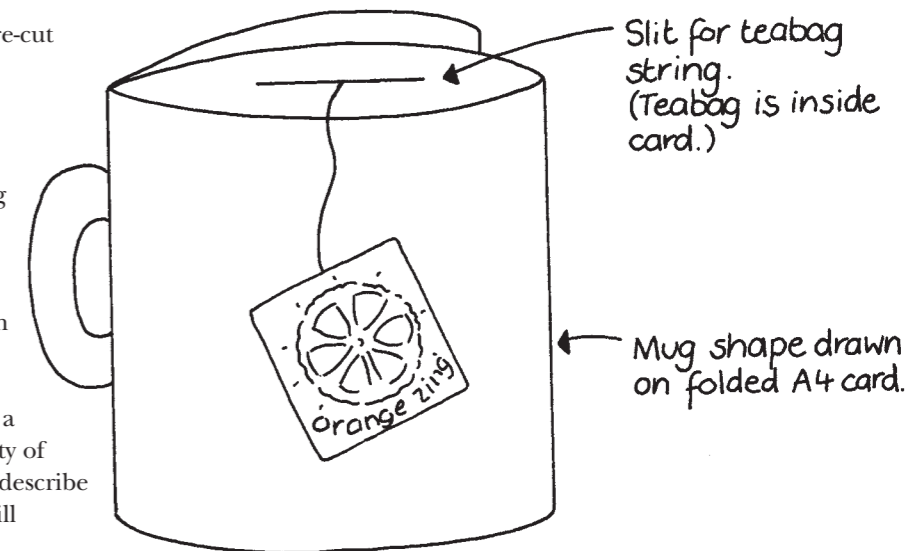
Explain that each child can make one to send to a mother, friend or relation. Show children a variety of flavours of fruit tea-bags and encourage them to describe their scents. Which one would the person who will receive the card prefer?

Provide each child with a mug card and ask them to decorate it. Encourage children to think about the person for whom they are making the card. What colours and patterns would they like? When it's completed each child can select a tea-bag for their card.

## Display

Mount and display the children's paintings of their mums to make a small exhibition. How many mums recognise themselves?

Cover a small table with green fabric or paper. Encourage children to make their own display of animals with their 'animal babies'. Provide materials for the children to make things such as farm buildings, food and a pond for ducks. Also include a tractor, a farmer and family.





# Theme 6: Spring parade

## Communication and Language

- Explain to the children that they are going to invite friends, parents and carers to visit their group to see some of the work they have been doing during the last few weeks. Use the opportunity to recap some of the key experiences of the Spring themed activities, reinforcing relevant vocabulary. Invite the children to identify personal highlights. (CL1, 3)
- Work with the children to tell a collaborative, imaginative story. Begin with the discovery on the doorstep of a strange and wonderful egg. What do the children think it looked like? As you tell the story incorporate incidents which involve actions typical of individual children. Perhaps Amy took the egg to play with in the home corner, or Benji tried to play football with it. Stop at intervals to allow the children opportunity to contribute ideas and enjoy deciding together what will hatch out of the egg and the adventures to be had. Once started, you will find that the children will want to continue the story over several days. (CL1, 3)

## Physical Development

- Make musical egg shakers (see activity opposite). (PD1)
- Talk about parades where people walk or march smartly. Enjoy parading to music with a strong beat. (PD1)

## Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Use balls as eggs. Hide the 'eggs', outside and inside, for the children to enjoy going on a Spring parade egg hunt. (PD3)

## Literacy

- Involve the children in making invitations for the Spring parade. Encourage them to design and make their own cards but have ready-made photocopied 'inserts' giving relevant information, which can be glued inside each decorated card. Help the children to check the information is correct and to write their names inside the invitations. (L1, 2)

## Mathematics

- Prepare large, card egg shapes for children to decorate with bands of patterns. Provide printing blocks or pre-cut shapes to encourage the use of repeating patterns. Talk to the children about the patterns they are making, the names of particular shapes, and the sequences being chosen. Which shape will come next? (M2)



## Understanding the World

- Make and grow cress Spring bonnets (see activity opposite). (UW2)
- Uses a non-fiction book about animals to discover which ones hatch from eggs. Play a game in which you repeatedly find an egg. Give the children clues and allow them to guess what sort of animals will hatch from it. Encourage the children to suggest actions to represent the movements and sounds of the baby animal. (UW2)

## Expressive Arts and Design

- Make Spring bonnets, hats or headbands. (EAD1)
- Use paper plates to form the basis of bonnets, with doilies or tissue paper flowers added and ribbons to tie. (EAD2)
- Make simple animal headband disguises by adding paper ears. (EAD2)
- Use grass made by fringing green paper to cover a headband and add spring animals, eggs or flowers. (EAD2)

## Activity: Cress Spring bonnets

**Learning opportunity:** Selecting and cutting coloured paper. Observing cress seeds.

**Early Learning Goal:** Understanding the World. The world.

**Resources:** Scissors, scraps of coloured papers, kitchen towel,

cress seed, grown cress, double sided sticky tape and for each child a plastic tub inside a card bonnet as shown.

**Organisation:** Small group.

**Key vocabulary:** Sow, seed, shoot, grow.

**What to do:** Show children the card bonnets. Explain that they are each going to make a Spring bonnet in which to grow cress. Talk about how they might like to decorate their bonnet. Look at the papers. Which colours will they choose? Encourage children to decorate the bonnet sides and brim.

Show children some cress seed and a pot of grown cress. Ask them to describe what they see. Show them how to line the base of a pot with damp kitchen towel and how to sow cress seed thinly on the surface. Explain that each day children will need to look at their pot and to check the paper is still damp. Place the pots inside the bonnets and put them in a dark cupboard or cover them with a sheet of paper.

During the next few days children should be encouraged to observe the changes as the seeds swell and shoot. Once they have begun to shoot they should be placed in a light area.

NB It is best to do this activity at the start of a week so that the cress has time to shoot. The pots dry out quickly and should be taken home at the weekend.

## Activity: Musical egg shakers

**Learning opportunity:** Children use materials to make musical instruments.

**Early Learning Goal:** Physical Development. Moving and handling.

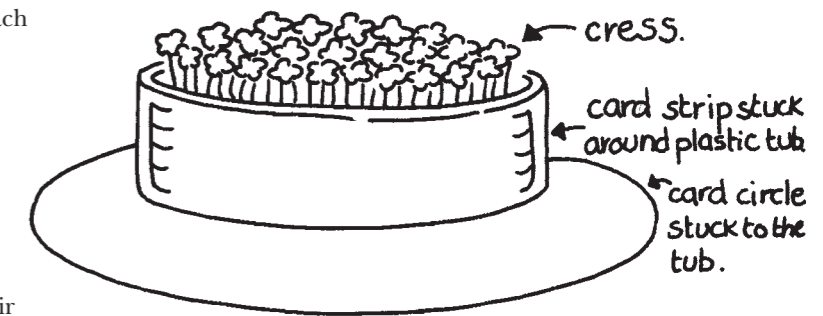
**Resources:** A collection of the small plastic containers found in some children's chocolate eggs which contain small toys. Various materials to use as fillings (rice, dried peas, sand) in pots, with teaspoons for handling. Sequins; glitter; glitter glue pens or gummed shapes to decorate. A small selection of shaker instruments.

**Organisation:** Small groups.

**Key vocabulary:** Shake, rattle, beat, rhythm.

**What to do:** Show the children the shaker instruments with which they are already familiar. (You may even have some commercially produced shaking eggs.) Talk about how different instruments make slightly different sounds. Why do the children think this is so? Could it be that they have different things inside?

Explain to the children that they are going to make some shaker instruments of their own. Draw their attention to



the plastic egg shapes, explaining that sadly they are empty! However, they are ideal for making small shakers which are easy for small hands to hold.

Talk to the children about the filling materials you have available and allow them to feel and handle them. Encourage each child to choose a filling for their personal shaker.

Show the children how to place a teaspoon of a chosen filling in one half of their shaker and then to fit the lid. These are often quite stiff and children may need adult help.

Encourage the children to then try out their shakers and to listen carefully to the sounds they can make. Do all the shakers make the same sound?

Suggest ways of decorating the outsides of the egg shakers.

Finally encourage children to shake the eggs rhythmically, perhaps adding stepping, foot tapping and singing. Use them as an accompaniment to a nursery rhyme.

## Display

Hang the completed bonnets around one of the seasonal displays. This provides a safe storage space and adds an attractive border to the existing work.