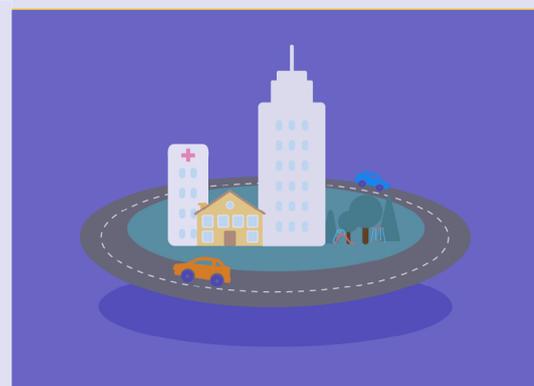
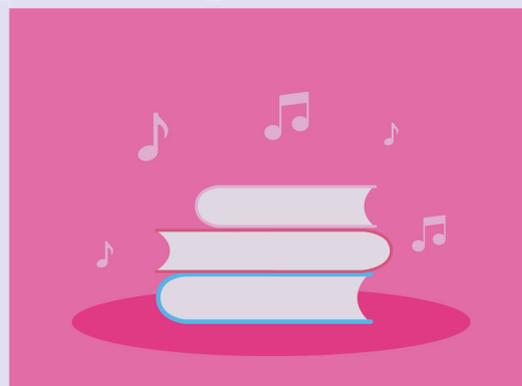
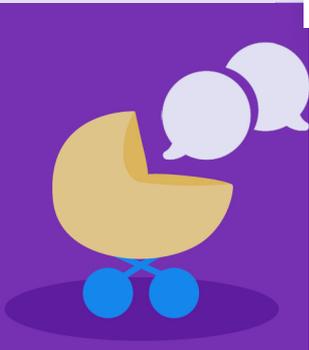


# The EYFS Activity Library: **50 EYFS Activities**



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# Introduction

A lot has changed in Early Years since the first publication of this guide, and with a shiny new version of the EYFS Framework for 2021, it's time for a refresh. We've added new activities, and updated some old favourites to better fit developments in best practice for young children.

We've also removed the age bands from the activities, as it's better to leave deciding what's right for your children to you, the people who know them best.



*"Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time." -EYFS 2021*



## Things to consider while using this guide

### Follow the children's lead

While adult-lead provocations for learning can be a great start, always follow the lead of the children you're working with. The EYFS states that you must plan your provision to children's interests, so this should be your inspiration when choosing what resources and activities to provide.

You may have spent a long time creating an activity or an invitation to play for children, but if they're taking it in a different direction, or more interested in something else, go with the flow. The activities and resources you provide should not be so prescriptive that there is only one possible 'right' way to play or interact with them.

*"Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development." -EYFS 2021*



### Make sure things are accessible

The activities and continuous provision you offer in your setting must be accessible to all children who wish to take part. Some activities may need to be made more simple for some children, or more risky, or complex, to challenge others. These ideas will hopefully inspire you, so you can tailor and adapt them, using your knowledge of the individual needs and abilities of the children in your setting.

*"It involves practitioners knowing children's level of achievement and interests, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge" -EYFS 2021*



### Take it back to basics

Amongst projects, adult-led activities, continuous provision, and learning provocations, don't lose sight of the value in the basics. Don't feel that everything children do requires a huge pile of resources, weeks of planning, and an immaculate set-up. Great practitioners make every event in the day a learning experience and opportunity to build on skills - hand-washing before lunch, tidy up time, getting ready for going outside. In this way, an activity doesn't need a finished product (or anything physical) as an outcome - the experience itself is the goal.





# Number Hunting

 **Set-up difficulty (1-5): 3**

Submerge some numbers and have the children pick them out using tongs to improve fine motor control while working on number recognition!

## What you'll need:

- A substance like **Oobleck**, shredded paper, pasta or rice
- Bowls
- Plastic numbers
- Tongs

## What you do:

1. First, take a bowl filled with your substance of choice and submerge a few plastic numbers in it. That might be a liquid substance like jelly or Oobleck (which you can find out how to make in [another of our activities](#)) or a solid substance like pasta, rice, or shredded paper.
2. Once you're ready to start the activity, hand out tongs to the children and let them work out how to pick up the numbers using the tongs.
3. As the children are getting stuck into the messy play, get your practitioners to engage the children with open-ended questions about the numbers, gradually helping to improve the children's number recognition.

## EYFS areas:

- Physical development
- Mathematics
- Expressive arts and design





## Loose Parts Play

 **Set-up difficulty (1-5): 2**

Allow children the freedom to explore a variety of open-ended resources.

### What you'll need:

- Pretty much anything that interests the children! Loose parts can constitute recycled materials, household objects, natural items (like shells or seeds), containers, cardboard tubes...the list goes on.

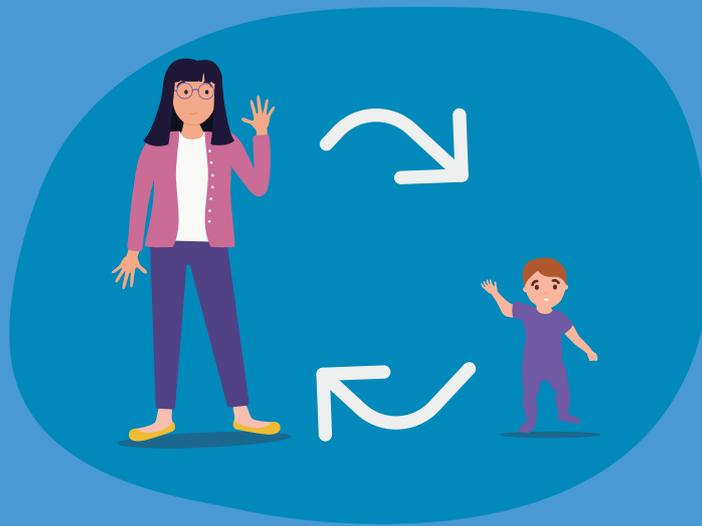
### What you do:

1. Present a variety of objects from the same 'theme', perhaps 3-4 of each thing. The children will do the rest! The magic of loose parts is that there is no set purpose for any item, so the children can use them exactly as their interests dictate.
2. A practitioner can keep an eye on how things progress and extend the activity by asking open-ended questions and considering which new objects could be brought into the setting to continue a popular theme.

### EYFS areas:

- Physical development
- Expressive arts and design
- Communication and language
- Understanding the world





## Teacher For The Day

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 2

Let your children be the practitioner or teacher for the day.

### EYFS areas:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Expressive arts and design
- Understanding the world
- Communication and language
- Literacy

### What you'll need:

- Teacher indicators (spare uniform, lanyards, aprons, glasses etc.)
- A pretend tablet, or pen and paper

### What you do:

1. Allow the children to utilise the props you've selected that reflect staff at the setting so that they can pretend to be you! Not only is this great for the children to explore playing at being in a position of authority, you'll get great insight into your own practice!
2. You can extend the activity by getting the team to pretend to be the children!





# Cardboard Box Play

 **Set-up difficulty (1-5): 1**

Inspire collaborative, imaginative play and problem-solving with the most open-ended “toy” in the world- an empty box!

## What you'll need:

- Large variety of cardboard boxes, some that can be stacked, some big enough for children to climb into

## What you do:

1. Set out the boxes in an interesting way, leaving a few flat/unfolded (for children to attempt to assemble with developmentally appropriate tools), or find other uses for .
2. Practitioners can facilitate minimally, with open ended questions for example, but the point is to allow the children to find their own way to play and interact with the boxes.

## EYFS areas:

- Expressive arts and design
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and language





# The Family Memory Box

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 3

## EYFS areas:

- Communication and language
- Understanding the world

Get some photos from home and prepare a little memory box to help children feel comfortable in the setting and understand their place in the world.

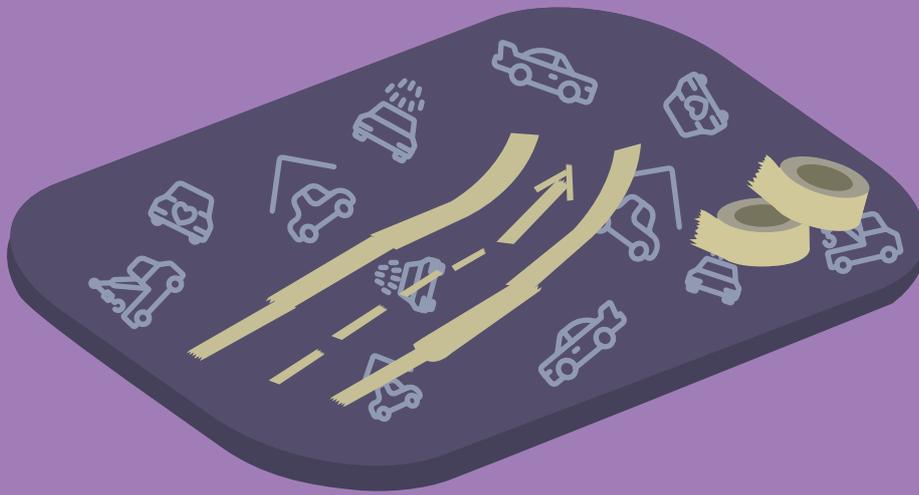
## What you'll need:

- Photos from family members
- A box or wall display

## What you do:

1. Start by asking family members to bring in photographs of the children's relatives, favourite things, and other close attachment objects such as pets.
2. Create a memory box with the photographs in, which you can share with the little ones throughout the day.
3. Got a bit more time on your hands? Why not let the children create their own display out of their items, and discuss them, to help each other learn about different families.
4. The photographs can help comfort younger children and give them some understanding of their place in the world. As they grow, the pictures can be useful to give them an understanding of the differences between their own home environment and that of their fellow learners.





# Masking Tape Road

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 2

## EYFS areas:

- Mathematics
- Physical development

Support developing spatial awareness and imaginative play with this road-building activity.

## What you'll need:

- Lots of toy vehicles
- Several rolls of masking tape (other types of tape leave a sticky floor!)
- Cutting tools (if age-appropriate)

## What you do:

1. Start by outlining a short distance with the tape, and place a few of the cars in it to suggest a road. You could add directional arrows too.
2. Now leave the tape and cars for the children to develop further for themselves.
3. Extend this by placing or moving obstacles for the children to navigate around, as well as each other, or setting a challenge to get to the other side of the room, or the length of a corridor.





## The Dark & Light Nook

 **Set-up difficulty (1-5): 2**

**Find a dark corner of the setting and use torches to let the children explore light and dark, shadows and silhouettes.**

### What you'll need:

- A dark corner or DIY fort
- Some torches or other lights
- A music player

### What you do:

1. To begin, you'll need to have a dark corner or resources such as blankets and chairs prepared, which the children can experiment with to make a dark space.
2. Take a few children with you at a time, handing them the torches and letting them experiment with dark and light, turning the torches on and off. Ask open-ended questions to help them set up their dark space. They can also look at the silhouettes they create and the shadows their bodies can make.
3. To add a new layer to the activity, take a music player in with you and see if the children are interested in moving the light and dark shapes in time to the music.

### EYFS areas:

- Understanding the world
- Communication and language
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Expressive arts and design





## Sensory/ Reflection Bottles

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 3

Use imagination and fine motor skills to create calming and fascinating bottles.

### EYFS areas:

- Physical development
- Expressive arts and design
- Personal, social and emotional development

### What you'll need:

- Cleaned, empty, recycled bottles (with lids)
- Paint, food dye, water, glitter, beads (plus any other decorations the children would like.)

### What you do:

1. Children can choose the ingredients they'd like to use to create their own bottle. Lighter colours of paint or food dye work best, so you can see the other items, such as glitter or beads, in the bottle.
2. Once these are all mixed up, children can begin to use them as 'reflection bottles' - something to support managing strong feelings. By shaking it up, then watching the beads or glitter float around the bottle, children give themselves time to reflect on how they feel, take some deep breaths, and find calmness again.





# Magical Letters

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 2

## EYFS areas:

- Literacy
- Physical development

Let the children draw in white crayons onto paper, before using paint to let their drawings magically appear before their eyes!

## What you'll need:

- White crayons
- Watercolour paint
- White paper
- Paintbrushes

## What you do:

1. Give each child a white crayon and ask them to do some drawings on the white paper, asking why they think it's invisible at the moment.
2. After this, it's their chance to try out the watercolour paint on the page.
3. Watch as they are fascinated by the shapes that start to appear before their eyes!
4. If the children are interested in the activity, why not show them again how the magic is done? If they're engaged, then it's a great opportunity to improve their mark-making and maybe even get them to try some rudimentary letters of their own depending on their age.





# The Story Bag

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 4

Create a story bag with items from a child's favourite story and let the child explore the bag, matching the items up to parts of the book as they go.

## What you'll need:

- A favourite picture book
- A soft material bag
- Items from the story

## What you do:

1. Start by selecting a picture book that the children love, and then collect a number of items that represent characters, objects, or other aspects of the story.
2. Get the children to feel around in the bag and pick an item out.
3. Now the fun begins! The children can match the item to passages that you read out, or flip through the pages to try and find the item. They can explore the item and describe to you what it looks, feels, or smells like.
4. To take it to the next step, recap a little about the story and the role the item plays. Then see if the little ones can apply it to other contexts, by asking them questions about what it's used for, whether they've seen it before, and see if they can find another example of the item in the room.
5. For the younger children it's best to start with identical 3D objects but as the children get older, you can use different or more sophisticated representations of items in the story.

## EYFS areas:

- Communication and language
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Literacy
- Understanding the world





# Nursery Science: Making Oobleck

## Set-up difficulty (1-5):

Make this fascinating substance that is both liquid and solid all at once and you'll have yourself endless hours of multi-sensory messy play.

## What you'll need:

- Corn flour
- Water
- Food colouring

## What you do:

1. Mix together 2 parts corn flour to one part water with a few drops of food colouring, older children can also try making the mixture themselves to learn about colour mixing, counting and measuring, using tools, and collaboration - seeing how the mixture changes as they experiment with different quantities.
2. You'll now have a slimy substance that goes solid when you apply hard pressure and is more liquid when you apply less.
3. The children can explore the way the goo feels and moves, and understand ideas like cause and effect. For example, when they hit the goo fast it will be hard, while it will turn to liquid when they move more slowly.
4. You can also practice language skills as they describe the texture, look, and smell of the goo, and you can develop fine motor skills by hiding objects in it.
5. **CLEAN UP ADVICE** - You don't want to just pour the mix down the sink as it can clog up your drains. Wash little hands and tools in a big bowl and then leave the mix in an **unsealed container** overnight. The corn flour will settle to the bottom and you can pour the water from the top down the sink and the corn flour straight into the bin.

## EYFS areas:

- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Mathematics
- Expressive arts and design





# Fantastic Fabrics

 **Set-up difficulty (1-5): 2**

## EYFS areas:

- Expressive arts and design
- Communication and language
- Physical development

Exploring textures, colours, and construction with fabric.

## What you'll need:

- Fabrics of different sizes, textures, weights, pattern, colours.
- Clothes pegs (optional extension)

## What you do:

1. You can present the fabrics as an activity by themselves, observing the thousands of ways children will find to play with them. You can also use fabrics to supplement small-world play as a backdrop, or other scenery.
2. You can also extend the play with fabrics by providing clothes pegs for the children to use for den-building, creating outfits, or furniture for the children to utilise in their structures.





# Songs & Nursery Rhymes

## Set-up difficulty (1-5): 1

Songs and nursery rhymes are classics for a reason. Take a look at the full range of learning opportunities they can offer.

### What you'll need:

- Songs and nursery rhymes
- Stuffed animals or hand puppets (optional)

### What you do:

1. Pick your favourite nursery rhyme or song and introduce it to the children. We've got some [inspiration over on our blog](#) if you're stuck.
2. Teach actions, facial expressions, and motions to children so that everyone can join in on some level, even if they can't remember the words yet.
3. You can give each child a stuffed animal or puppet and get them to hold them up when they're mentioned in the song. Once the children are familiar with the song, you can expand into more learning experiences by tapping the objects one by one to practise 1:1 correspondence and have the children imitate and join in (especially with counting nursery rhymes).
4. Another way to extend the activity is to leave out words and have the children shout or sing the word to practise memory and literacy skills.

### EYFS areas:

- Communication and language
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Literacy
- Mathematics





# The Obstacle Course

## Set-up difficulty (1-5): 3

Create a mini indoor or outdoor obstacle course to get the children physically active, all while learning how to interact with one another.

### What you'll need:

- Tents
- Tunnels
- Ramps
- Toys for inside
- Whatever you can find!

### What you do:

1. Start out by laying out an obstacle course. You can use things like tents, tunnels, and ramps. You can also have the children take the lead and get creative by letting them incorporate things you have around the setting into the obstacle course
2. The activity really can work for any age. If they can crawl, then you can run a little simple obstacle course. You might need to make it a little more complicated for the older ones though!
3. If the younger children are reluctant, you can try using toys in the tunnels and ramps to encourage them to engage.
4. Children will interact with one another, and gain confidence from copying and playing together. They learn skills about taking turns and will try lots of new, and challenging, activities. It's a great idea to try to let them manage their own turn taking and risk assessing, but be ready to step in if they need a hand!

### EYFS areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development





# Pots, Pans and Sand

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 1

## EYFS areas:

- Physical development
- Expressive arts and design

Placing various different pots, pans, and other cooking utensils in a sandbox gives children an opportunity to practice moving the sand around while making sweet

## What you'll need:

- A sandbox
- Pots
- Cans
- Colanders or sieves
- Wooden spoons

## What you do:

1. Fill up your sandbox with all sorts of kitchen implements - pots, pans, colanders, sieves, wooden spoons and more.
2. Let children explore the resource. They may choose to make music with the pots and pans, or use them to move around the sand, filter it out, or watch it fall through.
3. They'll also get to explore the different textures, and hear the different sounds that the sand makes as it runs through the different implements.





# Treasure Baskets & Heuristic Play

 **Set-up difficulty (1-5): 2**

**Exploring different objects in a completely open-ended way.**

## What you'll need:

### For treasure baskets

Variety of objects, freely chosen and safely explored by babies (not toys) - consider handling, mouthing, throwing, rolling, waving etc. Items should be small enough that babies can easily pick up and hold them, without posing a choking risk. Items could be man-made or natural, such as a brush, a shell, a whisk, a wooden spoon, a piece of fabric, a chain, a sponge.

## What you do:

### For treasure baskets

Practitioners assemble the items chosen in a low, sturdy basket, for babies to sit at and explore. Babies should be reaching in and choosing items of their own interest, so allow them to do so freely.

## EYFS areas:

- Literacy
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design
- Mathematics
- Physical development

### For heuristic play

'Collections' of different objects such as household objects, tubes, containers, natural materials etc. Consider items to support different types of exploration, such as filling and emptying, working with unfamiliar items or tools, exploring natural items, stacking, fitting items inside others, rolling, moving and transporting, and balancing.

### For heuristic play

Practitioners present the collections of objects in a clear area, where children have the room to explore the items for themselves, in any way they choose. The room or area should be quiet and relatively free from distractions.

Children should be allowed to explore the objects presented with minimal adult interference- just observe!





# Modelling Dough

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 1

An early years classic - roll it, mold it, shape it.

## EYFS areas:

- Mathematics
- Physical development
- Expressive arts and design
- Communication and language

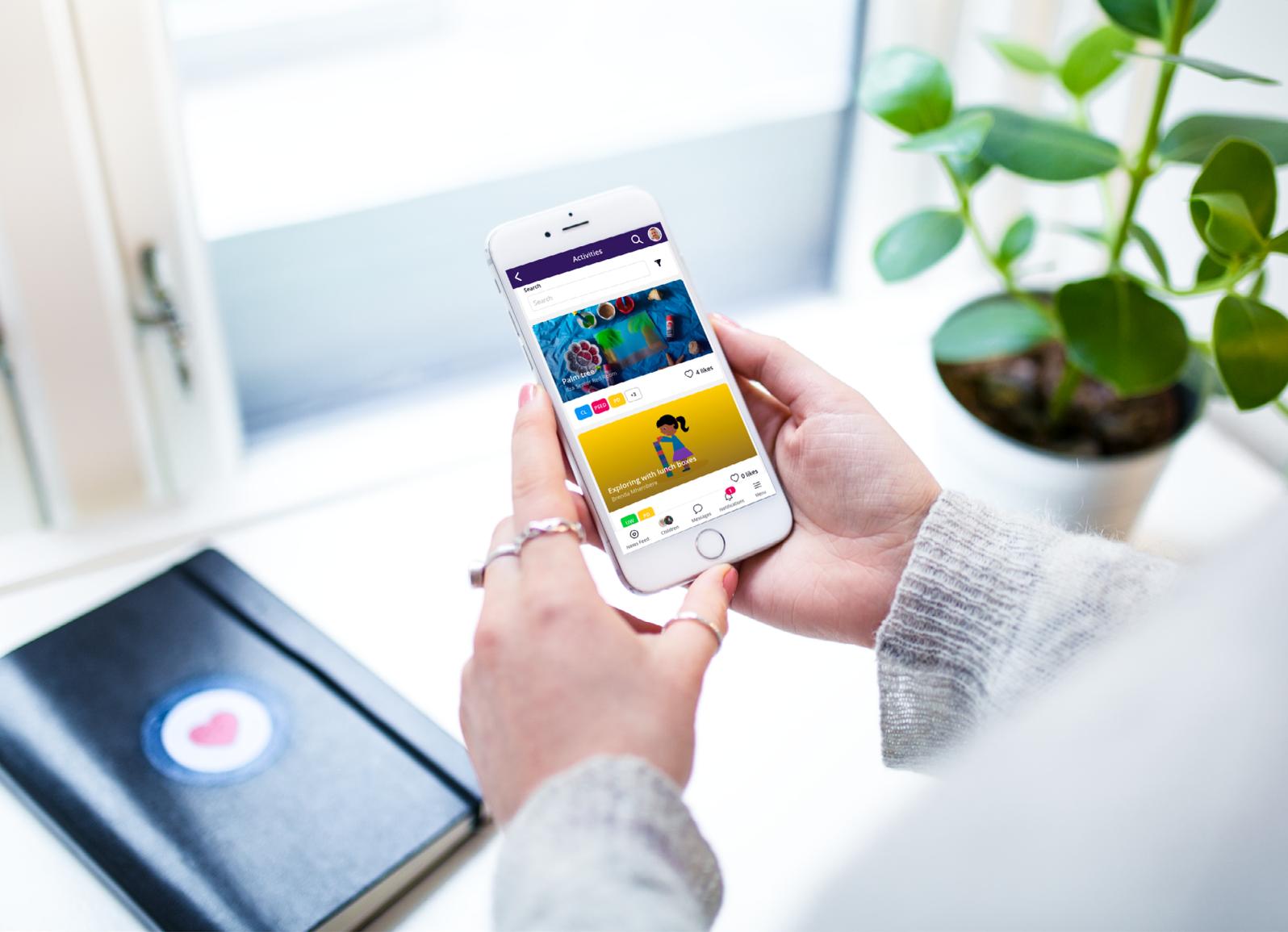
## What you'll need:

- Flour
- Water
- A pinch of salt
- Food dye.

## What you do:

1. Encourage children to mix the ingredients themselves, using trial and improvement to find a good balance. This will result in some dough and a wonderful, tactile, sticky experience.
2. Talk to children about how the dough feels, describing texture to help decide which ingredient is needed.
3. You can extend the activity by adding tools to use on the dough.





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# Woodpile Wildlife Wonders

 **Set-up difficulty (1-5): 2**

## EYFS areas:

- Understanding the world
- Physical development

Create a simple woodpile in order to attract more wildlife to the garden.

## What you'll need:

- Wood cuttings
- A shady spot outdoors
- A bucket (optional)

## What you do:

1. Take some wood cuttings and sticks from trees, shrubs or other herbaceous plants. Logs about an adult fist-wide with the bark still on are perfect. If you want to go with thicker logs, contact a local tree surgeon to see if they have some logs you could take.
2. Get the children (either separately or as a group) to find a shady spot and pile the wood up. You don't want the spot to be too cold, but the shade will help keep everything damp.
3. Over time, the decaying wood will start to attract insects and other wildlife into your setting, a great way for the little ones to explore nature in any space.
4. If you're particularly short on space, a bucket with holes in can be loaded up with small twigs and leaves and it'll do a good job of attracting insects too.
5. You can also extend this activity by talking about respecting nature and not disturbing the insects with the children





# The Guest Visit

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 3

## EYFS areas:

- Understanding the world
- Communication and language

Extend your preschoolers understanding of their local community by asking guest visitors to come in.

## What you'll need:

- A guest visitor
- A few attentive little ones

## What you do:

1. Discuss with the children who they'd like to meet. You could consider local inspirational figures like fire or police officers, chefs, gardeners, animal experts etc. This is also a great chance to try and challenge some stereotypes around different roles and who can do them.
2. The most important part when choosing a guest visitor is that they can do something that is engaging and the children can get hands-on with. You don't want a boring lecture for the little ones.
3. Don't assume that children understand how to frame the right questions, so help to model question-asking by having plenty prepared that you can step in and ask yourself.
4. Done well, a guest visitor can help to introduce the children to aspects of their wider community and be the spark of inspiration for plenty of exciting play afterwards.





## The Old Computer

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 4

Got access to a dead old computer or keyboard? Whatever it is, tinkering with real-life tech is the best thing for your curious preschoolers. Just ensure you have enough resources to go around.

### What you'll need:

- An old computer
- Different kinds of screwdrivers

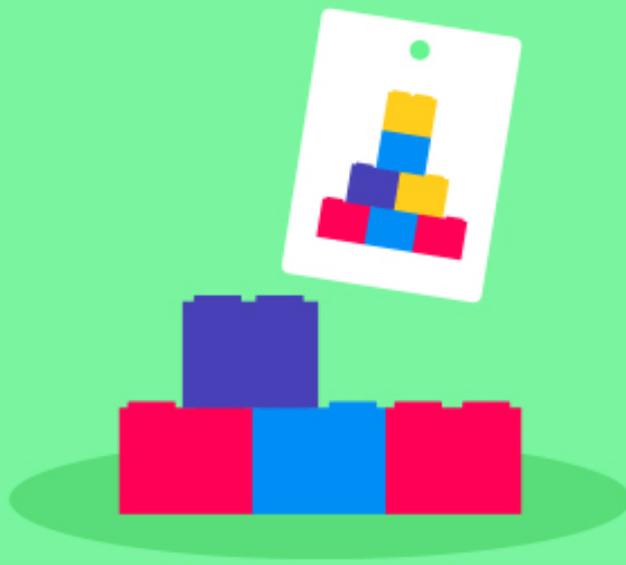
### What you do:

1. For children of this age, an adult will most likely need to remove the larger components from the computer, as it can be a little dangerous to have them working on the whole thing.
2. Once you've got some smaller components out, allow the children a bit of free reign with the screwdrivers. Try to encourage them to think methodically and carefully about what they're doing.
3. The focus that you'll see in children with tasks like this is like nothing else, and there's nothing more fascinating for a curious tinkerer than to get to see the inside workings of a giant computer.

### EYFS areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design





# LEGO Tower Cards

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 2

Improve pattern recognition and counting by talking through ideas for tower with the children which they can design and then build.

## What you'll need:

- Paper cards
- Coloured pencils
- LEGO blocks

## What you do:

1. Prepare some cards and explain to the children that they should draw a design for a lego tower, using different colours. You could give an example to get things rolling if need be.
2. Based on their designs, encourage the children to try and recreate the patterns with their own real-life LEGO block towers.
3. Great for pattern recognition and counting, you can get the children to help make the cards to begin with too.

## EYFS areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Mathematics
- Expressive arts and design





# Splish Splash Water Play

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 3

Fun for all ages with this multi-sensory activity that lets children explore and learn.

## EYFS areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Expressive arts and design

## What you'll need:

- Pots or buckets
- A water tray
- A waterproof mat
- Sponges and water toys (optional)
- Bubbles and food colouring (optional)

## What you do:

1. Outdoors - Lay out some pots or buckets filled with water and an array of toys, sponges, and other things that can float.
2. Indoors - If you're taking it indoors, you're better to start with a small water tray to place the toys in and a waterproof mat to protect the floor.
3. For the younger children and babies you'll need to supervise them more closely, but it is the perfect activity for them to explore different textures and practice their visual tracking, motor and attention skills.
4. The babies will love it if you blow bubbles and let them float on the water. Otherwise let them be free to splash about, grab toys and explore this new environment.
5. For older children, you can set them some water play challenges. Get them to craft floating boats, explore floating and sinking, and get them to try and build a dam.
6. Water play tends to have a calming effect on most children, and it's great for SEN teaching due to the multi-sensory aspect.





# Finger Stories

## Set-up difficulty (1-5): 1

Favourite finger stories like 'Where is thumbkin' and 'Round and round the garden' are perfect for developing little brains.

### What you'll need:

- Your fingers
- A few memorised songs

### What you do:

1. Get your practitioners to learn short, engaging, repetitive finger stories like 'Where is thumbkin', 'A little flea went walking', or 'Round and round the garden'.
2. These stories involve simple, repeating lines that create a narrative, but are also related to the movement of the practitioner's fingers and hands.
3. It's great for developing attention and interaction skills with the youngest children, and they also learn to anticipate an event and develop their understanding of patterns and routines.
4. Even if the babies do not understand the words yet, the visual cues from the practitioner's hands will be engaging and prepare them for joining in when they're older.
5. Eye contact and exaggerated facial expressions are really important non-verbal cues to help develop understanding of emotions within every child.

### EYFS areas:

- Communication and language
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Understanding the world





# The DIY Telephone

## Set-up difficulty (1-5): 3

Who hasn't explored the wonders of two cups and a piece of string? Technology, creativity, speaking and listening - this activity has it all.

### What you'll need:

- Cleaned out plastic cups
- Rope or string
- Metal marbles
- Magnets
- Paint

### What you do:

1. It all starts with the decorating. Give each child a plastic cup, a magnet and a marble.
2. Then show them how they can dip the marble in various pots of paint and use the magnet to move the marble around the inside of the cup. Let them make their own paint choices and patterns and you'll have some highly concentrated little faces.
3. Once the plastic cups have dried, make a hole in two different cups and connect them with the rope and a couple of knots.
4. Get the kids to explore what happens when they go far away and speak quietly into the cups - the noise should travel down the rope to the little ear at the other end.
5. Get the children to explore more options and experiment. Will a glass marble work in the same way? Will a thinner or thicker rope work better? There's plenty of learning opportunities in this simple activity!

### EYFS areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design





## Let's Go Logo

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 1

Recognising familiar logos can be one of the first ways that children recognise that marks have meaning- a precursor to reading

### What you'll need:

- Several familiar logos (printed or digital)

### What you do:

1. Select logos from companies, media or places that the children are likely familiar with. You could also use a local shopping centre or attraction, sports teams, and your setting's own logo.
2. Present the logos and listen to children's stories about them, for example "That's where daddy takes me shopping", or "I watch that on TV". You can begin to talk about the letters in the logos (if there are any), but keep it open-ended.
3. Encourage discussion of what the logos mean for different children, so they can share their experiences.

### EYFS areas:

- Literacy
- Communication and language
- Understanding the world
- Personal, social and emotional development





# Tummy Time Sensory Bags

## Set-up difficulty (1-5): 2

Getting babies to explore while they're on their tummies develops crucial strength. But how do you keep it safe when they want to put everything in their mouths?

### What you'll need:

- Large sandwich bags
- Tape
- Background items like oil, rice or sand
- Feature items like buttons, beads or glitter

### What you do:

1. Start by filling up a large sandwich bag with the background item for your babies to explore. This might be something like oil, rice, sand, shaving cream, or crushed crackers. These form the background substance for the sensory play.
2. After this, you can add small featured items for the babies to find and explore within the background items. These might be things like buttons, beads, glitter, marbles, or seashells.
3. Tape the bag down to the ground to make sure all the items are safely sealed in and stay in place while the little ones explore.
4. Place the child on their tummy to explore the bag, as this can help with crucial muscle and motor development as they happily explore in a safe way, without putting anything into their mouths!

### EYFS areas:

- Physical development
- Mathematics
- Literacy
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design





# Treasure Hunt

## Set-up difficulty (1-5): 2

### EYFS areas:

- Mathematics
- Communication and language
- Personal, social and emotional development

The children will help an adult find a missing item, by using positional language to describe where the 'treasure' is.

### What you'll need:

- Some 'treasure' and a small group of children. This is best played in groups of around 4 children, so there is an opportunity for all to speak and be heard.

### What you do:

1. A child or fellow practitioner hides the treasure while the 'hunter' cannot see.
2. The small group of children can then work together to describe how to find it. This can be as simple as 'in the drawer' or 'on the desk' or as complicated as a set of positional instructions, such as, 'in a box, in a coat pocket, on a peg, in the room next door'.
3. Practitioners can also feed more positional language in to their questions, to extend vocabulary, for example 'You said it was under the table. Is that the table that's near to me, or far away?'
4. Try deliberately doing the opposite of the instructions children give and see how they react and try to correct you.





# Toilet Paper Roll Hairdressing

 **Set-up difficulty (1-5): 2**

## EYFS areas:

- Physical development
- Expressive arts and design

Re-use some old toilet paper roll tubes and let your little ones express themselves as crafty hairdressers.

## What you'll need:

- Toilet paper roll tubes
- A pen
- Scissors/pinking shears

## What you do:

1. Start off by having a few examples ready with faces drawn on toilet rolls and various hairstyles cut out from the top, showing these to the children.
2. Then let the children experiment, with the different tools to make their creation, using paint, pens, googly eyes etc.
3. The children can then cut different 'hair styles' into the top half of the tube. Make sure that the children can handle scissors safely before letting them cut and supervise them.
4. Younger children could glue or stick short bits of straws on the top half of the tube or cut with hand-over hand support by an adult.





# The Colour Wheel

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 3

EYFS areas:

- Literacy
- Understanding the world

Out and about or on a day trip? These colour wheels are perfect to help kids explore the world around them and learn their colours on the go.

## What you'll need:

- Paper plates
- Several coloured pens
- Scissors

## What you do:

1. Begin by adding several different colours around the edge of the paper plates, depending on which coloured pens you have available.
2. Next, cut two incisions on either side of the letters so that each letter can be folded into the centre of the paper plate.
3. When you're out and about, on a day trip or even just in the nursery, give the plate to a child and see if they can tick off each colour by folding it down when they see something that matches with that colour. It should help them to engage with the world around them even more inquisitively, and learn their colours as they go.
4. Depending on the age of the children, you can extend this activity by using numbers or letters on the wheel instead.





# Composting

## Set-up difficulty (1-5): 1

The magic of watching food leftovers turn into soil is the perfect way to foster curiosity amongst your little ones about the outside world.

### What you'll need:

- Leftover food waste
- A compost container
- A drill

### What you do:

1. Take a bin or large container and drill some holes into the side of it.
2. After lunches and snacks, help the children to separate out their food waste from their non-biodegradable containers and other bits. This helps to teach the children some self-care but also the difference between food waste and other types of waste.
3. Get the children to carry the waste out to the compost bin. If you want to speed up the process then you can also add some soil. It should work better in the hot summer months.
4. It might take a while for the compost to develop, but it should be a good lesson in patience for the children too. Once it's ready you can use the compost to plant some plants, flowers or vegetables with the children to bring the lesson full cycle.

### EYFS areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Understanding the world





# Planting Seeds

 **Set-up difficulty (1-5): 3**

Planting seeds will be great for fine motor control and even better to get kids learning about the natural world around them.

## What you'll need:

- Seeds
- Starter pots
- Water
- Compost (*ideally homemade, see previous activity*)
- Spoons

## What you do:

1. Start by picking out your seeds. Sunflowers, and sweet peas work well at the start of spring, as well as nasturtiums and calendula for attracting pollinating bees and butterflies.
2. All you need to do is fill a seed starter pot with compost, water it, and pop the seeds in an inch or so down using a spoon. You can reuse some shop-bought starter pots or use old cartons, egg boxes or old fruit peel.
3. Keep the packets! They'll be packed full of information that you can discuss with the children such as what conditions work best for the plants, the differences between different plants and why some will flower sooner than others.

## EYFS areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Understanding the world





# Number Grab!

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 3

EYFS areas:

- Mathematics
- Communication and language

**Beginning to use numerals as a label for quantity by racing to collect items!**

## What you'll need:

- Some written numbers
- An environment with plenty of 'things' to collect

## What you do:

1. A child or fellow practitioner holds up a number, while the children collect that number of items (you could use baskets for larger numbers of items).
2. The children then come together to count out their items. You could begin by also holding up the matching number of fingers and/or calling out the name of the number.
3. Allow children to help one another and count each other's items. Explore vocabulary such as 'too many', 'not enough', 'few', 'lots' etc.





# Stop! Go!

 **Set-up difficulty (1-5): 2**

## EYFS areas:

- Literacy
- Understanding the world
- Communication and language

A super simple activity to practice listening, concentrating, and recognising marks have meaning.

## What you'll need:

- A variety of signs to indicate when to stop and when to go (e.g. red and green dots, 'STOP' and 'GO', a red man and green man, or a cross and a tick mark)

## What you do:

1. Set up the different signs, and start displaying one or the other.
2. Encourage the children to respond, by stopping and going on seeing the appropriate sign. You could start out by giving verbal cues, then slowly allow the children to recognise just the signs.
3. You could extend the activity by practicing "stop, look, and listen" as well as talking about other road safety tips.





# How Many LEGO Pieces Long?

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 1

This great guessing game gives kids a chance to test out their predictive skills using this classic resource.

## What you'll need:

- Duplo blocks
- LEGO blocks
- Things to measure

## What you do:

1. Start the game off by getting your children to measure one of their favourite toys. How many pieces long was it?
2. This is your starting off point for lots of fun with open-ended questions and experimenting. Ask questions like 'Do you think this will be more or fewer LEGO blocks long?', 'Are you taller or shorter than these two things?' and so on.
3. For the younger children, this is a great activity for teaching early counting skills. For example, you could tap each of the LEGO blocks in turn while counting, helping to teach them that units correspond to numbers and that each number has a name.
4. For the older children, you can even see if they can guess exactly how many bricks it will be, and build up the tension as you make the measurement!

## EYFS areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Mathematics





# Group Tennis Ball Painting

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 4

This fun, physical painting activity is the perfect outdoors teamwork game.

## What you'll need:

- 1 small plastic pool
- Washable paint
- Tennis balls
- Tongs
- Large sheets of paper (around A1 size)

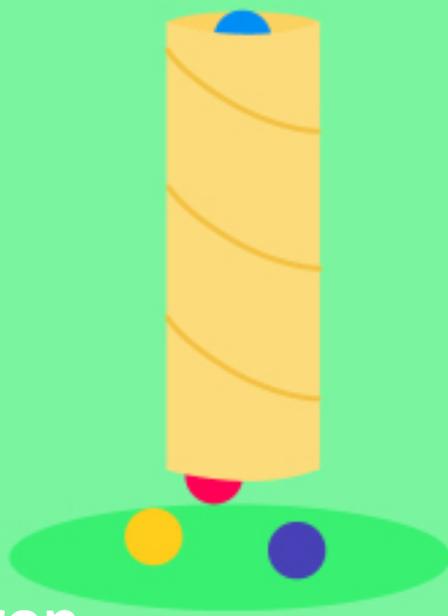
## What you do:

1. Start by filling up the pool with a piece of paper and getting those tennis balls nice and painty!
2. Allow the children to work together to get the tennis balls into the pool using the tongs.
3. After that, it's all about teamwork. The more the children work together to move the ball around, the more fun they're going to have.
4. The tongs are great for fine motor skills, while working together on rolling the balls around to create their masterpiece will work wonders for the children's strength and teamwork.

## EYFS areas:

- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Expressive arts and design





# The Pom Pom Drop

## Set-up difficulty (1-5): 2

Understanding how things can disappear and come back is central to early mathematical development, making this simple activity a winner for your littlest ones.

### What you'll need:

- Paper roll tube
- Craft pom poms
- Tape
- A container

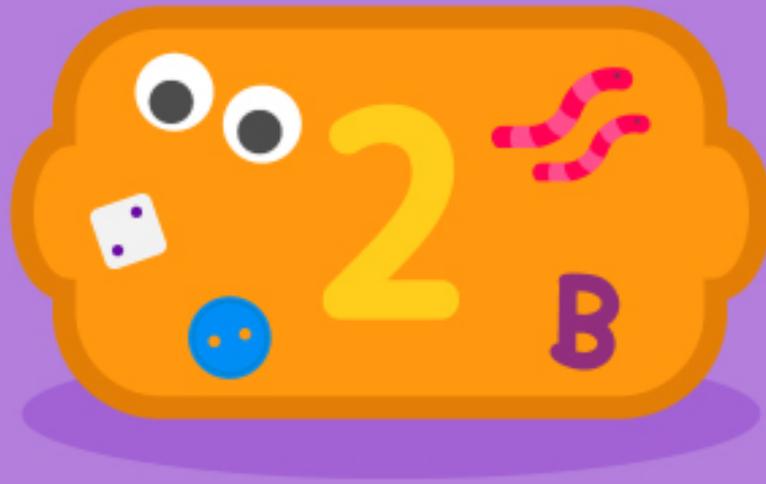
### What you do:

1. Tape the tube to the wall and let the children explore how the pom pom can travel down the tube when they put it in at the top, collecting at the bottom.
2. For the youngest, this lesson in cause and effect will also develop their fine motor skills, and should be fascinating.
3. Some children might not have the concentration for this yet. If they just want to pull the tube off the wall, park the game for a bit and try it again in a few months.
4. Extend the activity by discuss and show them what happens when they tilt the tube instead (of course, it's going to change the speed) and try to set up a slightly more complicated run of toilet tubes for the older children.

### EYFS areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world





# Number Trays

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 4

## EYFS areas:

- Communication and language
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world

Prepare trays organised around certain numbers as a great resource for a whole variety of maths fun.

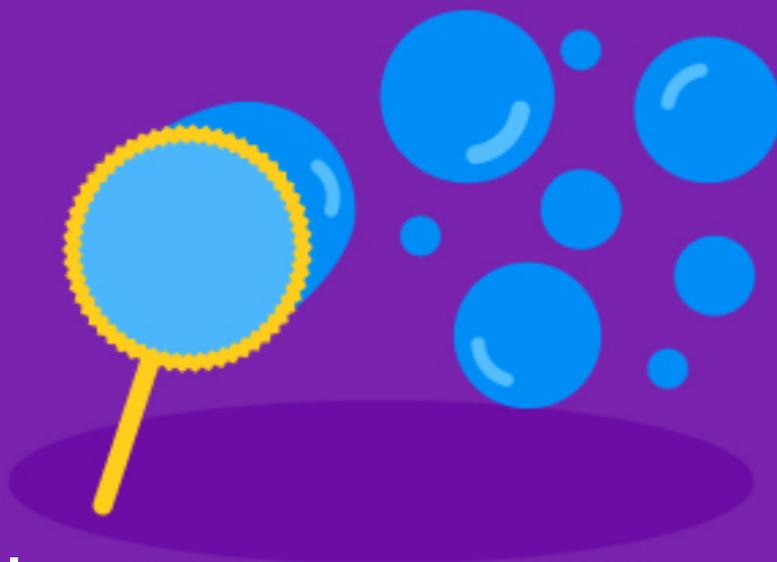
## What you'll need:

- Trays
- Foam numbers
- Dice
- Various items, drawings and shapes

## What you do:

1. The whole idea with this activity is to develop a resource that children can explore freely, and which you can use as a starting point for questions and problem-solving.
2. To start you need a tray and a few items representing the number itself, such as foam numbers, numerals or dice.
3. From here you can be as abstract or as simple as you like. You could have related letters, toys, numbers of things, animals toys with that number of legs, playing cards or shapes with the right number of sides.
4. These can start out as something to explore, but afterwards you can start to ask questions about why certain things are on there or what else you could include from around the setting too.





# Giant Bubbles

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 3

These giant bubbles will leave your kids full of wonder and excitement.

## What you'll need:

- 1 litre of water (hot)
- 250ml of quality washing up liquid
- 2-4 tablespoons of glycerine (find it in the baking aisle)
- Straws
- String

## What you do:

1. To make the bubble recipe, mix all of the liquid ingredients carefully and slowly so as to avoid making bubbles during the mixing process.
2. Leave the mixture for at least an hour (or even overnight).
3. Make your bubble wands by attaching two straws together with a piece of string at either end. The string should be roughly 8 times the length of the straws.
4. Let the kids go wild outside, dipping the bubble wands in the mixture and then running around to let the wind make the bubbles. The mixture might start off a bit weak but it should improve as you play.
5. The bubbles should give the kids plenty of food for thought on technology and shapes, while the mixing process is great to develop their measuring skills.
6. The activity is also perfect for developing social skills as the children collaborate and it's also great for safety awareness too as you explain that the bubbles are not for eating and might hurt their eyes.
7. As an extension of this activity, le

## EYFS areas:

- Physical development
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design





# The Human Sundial

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 1

This simple science experiment utilising the sun and shadows is the perfect starting point for lots of fantastic conversations

## What you'll need:

- Chalk
- The Sun!

## What you do:

1. The idea of this one is to teach the kids a little something about perspective and the world around them!
2. Make sure you have a sunny spot with plenty of space for long shadows and nothing creating its own shadows on your spot.
3. On a sunny day, get one of your children to stand on a certain spot and then have the other children draw their shadow on the ground in chalk.
4. Later on in the day, try again. How has the shadow changed? What's been going on? It's a great starting off point for all sorts of interesting questions and learning opportunities.

## EYFS areas:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Understanding the world
- Mathematics
- Literacy





# Mud Kitchen

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 1

There's nothing more delicious than a home-made mud pie!

## What you'll need:

- Mud-proof kitchen objects (pots, pans, bowls, cups, spoons, ladles)
- Access to a rainwater butt or tap

## What you do:

1. As part of your outdoor provisions, dedicate a section of soil as your mud kitchen. Add the tools to a bench or surface (to represent your kitchen counter or table), and invite your children to cook up a storm!
2. By using water from your rainwater butt or outdoor tap, you can let the children start experimenting with different mud textures and see how the soil changes when adding different amounts of water. Plus they can help with the clean up!

## EYFS areas:

- Physical development
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design





# Story Performing

## Set-up difficulty (1-5): 2

A story doesn't just have to be read- it can be performed!

### What you'll need:

- A familiar story book/s

### What you do:

1. Get the children settled and start to read the chosen story
2. As you read, ask who would like to act out certain characters in the book. Talk about how the characters are feeling, how they say their "lines", their relationship to other characters.
3. This helps bring the story to life, and also generates great conversation about labelling emotions and how we behave and interact!

### EYFS areas:

- Literacy
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and language
- Expressive arts and design





## Mini-Me Small World Play

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 5

Creating your own mini version of a town, maybe resembling your local one, is the perfect way to get children talking about the people and communities around your setting.

### What you'll need:

- A spare table
- Some coloured plastic sheeting
- Toy buildings and vehicles
- Mini-me figurines

### What you do:

1. This one might be an effort to make, but it's worth it if you want your children to be talking more about their community.
2. In essence, you can build up a central road, with buildings and vehicles dotted around. These could be toys or even local buildings printed from google maps and then laminated and stuck to bits of board.
3. The children can also make or customise figurines which they can move around the town.
4. It's perfect for endless discussion on children's knowledge of people and communities, like 'Me and daddy go to WHSmith's to buy colouring things'.
5. You can also consider changing or adding buildings after a trip to keep it at the top of children's minds.

### EYFS areas:

- Communication and language
- Understanding the world
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Mathematics





# Scribbling and Mark-Making

## Set-up difficulty (1-5): 1

Getting children started with scribbling and mark-making is central to creating confident writers when they grow up.

## EYFS areas:

- Literacy
- Physical development
- Expressive arts and design

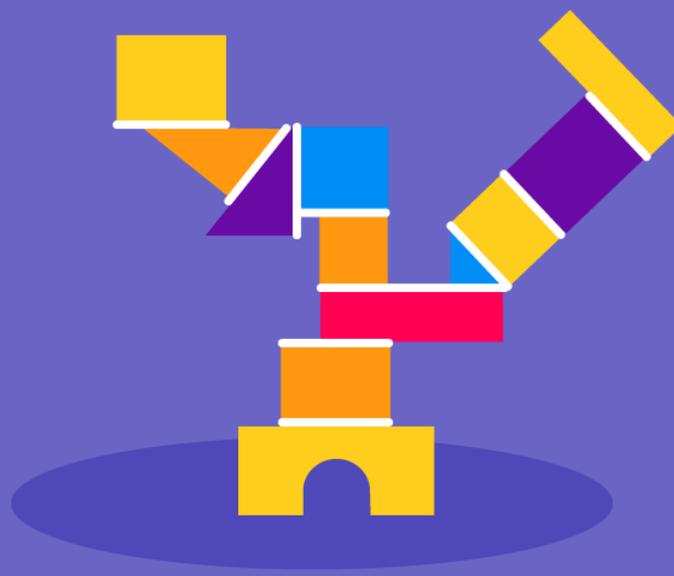
## What you'll need:

- Paper
- Crayons
- Pens
- Paint
- Modelling clay

## What you do:

1. Encouraging children of all ages to start making marks is crucial for their development.
2. With the youngest, they will start by discovering that their movements can make marks on the page, but as they grow, they'll start to be able to give shape and maybe even meaning to the marks they make.
3. At the earliest stages, it's important that children are able to explore the sensory experience. The feeling of crayons, the smell of paint, the roughness of the paper.
4. It might be that very young or SEN children don't have the fine motor skills necessary or just lack interest. In this case, you could try out finger painting or getting them to draw using their finger dipped in water on the pavement outside.
5. It could be that the sensory overload is a little too much, and some younger children will seem to not be interested in art activities at all. That's fine, just make sure you routinely come round to it every month or so to check in and allow them to explore it when they're ready.





# Velcro Blocks

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 3

Velcro strips can make building block towers easier for the youngest and even more challenging for the oldest!

## EYFS areas:

- Physical development
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

## What you'll need:

- Building blocks
- Lots of velcro strips

## What you do:

1. Start by applying velcro strips to the different sides of the building blocks. Don't forget to leave some free so the children can explore the differences.
2. Let the children go wild. It should be helpful for the youngest children who aren't yet able to properly stack the blocks. They may need a hand getting them unstuck though.
3. For the older children, they can now introduce different angles to their block building, and experiment with the effects of balance on a grander scale. Getting the velcro unstuck is good for developing stronger fine motor skills too.





# Get Moving!

## Set-up difficulty (1-5): 1

### EYFS areas:

- Physical development
- Mathematics
- Communication and language

Use language and gesture to get children moving and expand vocabulary about how they're doing it!

### What you'll need:

- Just your body (and maybe some music). You could incorporate equipment as obstacles too.

### What you do:

1. Explain, while demonstrating, different ways of moving or being still. For example, standing very tall on tip-toes, curling up very small, being all floppy, or standing stiffly, while encouraging children to mirror what you're doing.
2. You can talk about running fast or walking slowly, moving backwards and forwards, jumping up and down, as well as positional language about going around, over, under, or through obstacles.





# String Painting

 Set-up difficulty (1-5): 2

This new way to paint lets children explore and do things their own way.

## What you'll need:

- Paint
- String
- Scissors
- Paper

## What you do:

1. Cut short lengths of string and fill up painting pots with various colours of paint.
2. Make sure the children are properly covered up - it's about to get messy!
3. Some children might try pressing down with the string. Others might drag it across the paper or use it as a tiny paint brush. Whatever it is, they'll explore new ways to make marks and their own imagination.

## EYFS areas:

- Physical development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Expressive arts and design





# Feeding Time

## Set-up difficulty (1-5): 3

Eating time isn't just about getting energy into your little ones, it's the perfect learning opportunity too.

### What you'll need:

- Lots of different food!
- A few excited eaters

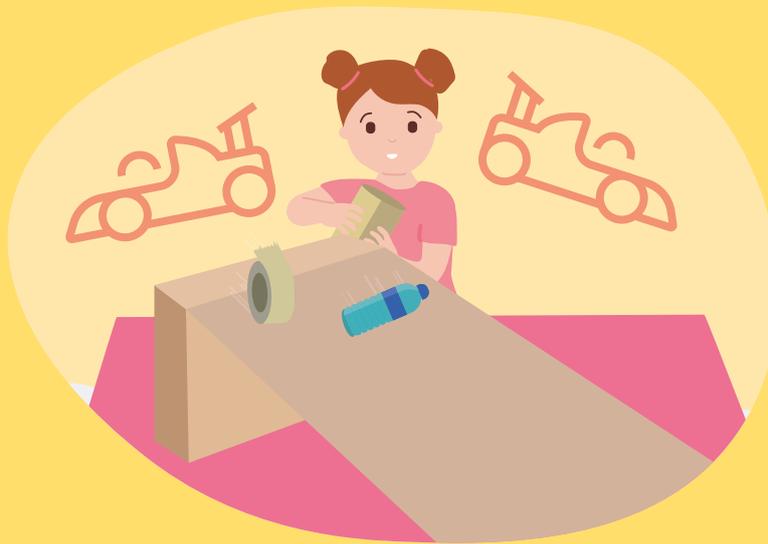
### What you do:

1. Promoting the health and self-care area of the EYFS for the youngest in your setting is really more about routines, help with washing, creating a clean, comfortable environment and of course an understanding of how to encourage self-feeding.
2. That's why you have to start to encourage them to feed themselves as soon as they're ready. And worry about the mess later!
3. Finger foods will also encourage better fine motor control when they're ready, and proper routines around hand-washing will help to promote good hygiene.
4. All in, don't let your eating time get too boring! Keep it fresh and make sure you encourage healthy attitudes amongst all your children.

### EYFS areas:

- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development





# Racing

## Set-up difficulty (1-5): 2

Challenge children to predict the outcome of racing objects, and experiment with changing those outcomes.

### What you'll need:

- An object that can be used to create slopes at different heights (e.g. a board, a large piece of cardboard, or a drain pipe)
- Objects to race down the chosen slope (e.g. cars, balls, other objects or toys that can roll)

### What you do:

1. Allow children to race the items down the slope, experimenting with what happens when the slope is at different inclines.
2. Challenge children to see how they can make the slope higher or lower, while also predicting how this will change what happens to the racing objects.
3. You can extend this by assigning numbers for first, second, and third place, or by adding different textures to the slope.

### EYFS areas:

- Mathematics
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Understanding the world





## Feel How...

### Set-up difficulty (1-5): 1

This is a game all about encouraging young children to speak and learn new concepts, by asking them to 'feel how' certain things will have certain qualities.

### What you'll need:

- Toys or objects
- Material
- Whatever is around you!

### What you do:

1. When you have your baby's attention, try grabbing something close by like a toy bear and saying 'Feel how soft teddy's tummy is!'
2. This is all about encouraging them to explore words using their senses, and talking directly to them will give them confidence about their own speaking.
3. Try to keep it simple to start with and don't overload them with lots of different examples until they're ready. Keep returning to the same idea to scaffold their learning.

### EYFS areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Understanding the world





# Rhyme and Reading Time

## Set-up difficulty (1-5): 1

There's a reason why reading has always been one of the most valuable early years activities!

### What you'll need:

- Some favourite books
- An attentive little one

### What you do:

1. Introducing concepts like rhyming, matching and getting children excited about reading time is central to developing competent readers when they grow up.
2. That's why it's never too early to read to the little ones. Don't forget to keep eye contact and use lots of exaggerated facial expressions so that they can develop their vocabulary and understand emotions from your non-verbal cues.

### EYFS areas:

- Communication and language
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Literacy





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