

Learning Environments inside and outside.

by Carys Evans

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Learning Environments inside and outside.

Component 1

Activity Plan		
Activity: Walking to the beach and creating sea animals out of resources collected while on the way to the beach and while at the beach. Walking across steppingstones in river when leaving beach.		
Number of children: 8 children. All 8 children have Autism Spectrum Disorder. 3 children are nonverbal and communicate through using a communication board and PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System).	Age of children: 5 and 6 years old.	Number of adults: 4 adults. 1 adult per 2 children.
Location: 5-minute walk to the beach and on the beach.	Preparation time: 15 minutes (adults collect resources while children wear waterproof suits and wellington boots).	Activity time: 1 hour and a half.
Resources: • Waterproof suits • Wellington boots • Buckets • Spades • First aid kit including inhalers for any children who suffer from asthma. • Mobile Phone (in case of emergencies) • Communication board and PECS • Stones, wood, leaves, rubbish collected on the way to the beach and while at the beach)		

- iPad (to take photos of sea animal creations).

Aim/s of activity:

- For children to become confident when working independently in different environments and enhance their knowledge and understanding of the outdoor environment.
- To develop the children's creative development through using natural resources and loose parts.
- For children to develop their gross motor development, focusing on balance and controlling their body movement.

Links to outcomes:

- Enabling children to become independent thinkers and learners, ensuring the children feel confident enough to take risks through creating a positive attitude for exploring and caring for the outdoor environment (Welsh Government, 2018).
- Enabling children to develop their imaginative and creative ideas through sensory experiences in both the indoor and outdoor environment (Welsh Government, 2018).
- Involving children in different physical activity, enabling them to discover how their bodies move (Welsh Government, 2018).

**Differentiation:**

- Creating an outline of a sea animal on the sand for children to struggle to visualize the shape, this enables the children to follow the outline and fill the shape with their resources.
- Children who find the activity too simple may create a bigger sea animal or create a 3D sea animal out of the resources.
- Holding the children's hand as they walk across the steppingstones, enabling them to feel secure when completing the activity.
- Using a communication board and PECS with children who are non-verbal to ensure they are included throughout the activity.

Health and safety:

- Children to walk hand in hand with adults when walking to the beach. 1 adult per 2 children.
- First aid kit and mobile phone to be taken to the beach in case of emergencies.

- Adult supervision when collecting resources on the beach, ensuring children do not pick up any harmful objects off the sand.
- Adult supervision when exploring the beach, ensuring children do not go into the sea, step into rock pools or climb on slippery surfaces.
- Adult supervision and assistance when walking over steppingstones in river, ensuring there is one adult either side of the steppingstones.
- Children to wash hands after returning from the beach.

Role of adult/adults:

- Collect and prepare resources.
- Assist children when changing into waterproof suit and wellington boots.
- Supervise children during the walk, on the beach and while crossing the river.
- Offer support to other adults if change of face is needed when walking with children to the beach.
- Helping children when collecting resources, ensuring children understand the importance of looking after the environment by only collecting resources already on the floor.
- Encouraging communication with children during activity through using both the communication board/PECS and verbally.
- Observe and offer support if needed when creating sea animals out of the resources.

The activity:

Children are to change into their waterproof suits and wellington boots before leaving the school. Three of the adults will help the children with changing while one adult prepares and collects the resources and checks the first aid kit. Once the children are ready, they will gather in the classroom and view photos of sea animals created out of natural resources while one adult explains the activity.

When leaving the school, the children will walk hand in hand with the adults, ensuring there is one adult per two children. Children may carry their buckets on the walk and fill with any resources found along the way. Children are reminded to only collect stones, leaves and twigs that have already fallen on the ground.

The children may explore the beach in search for more resources, including stones, shells, driftwood, seaweed and any rubbish that has been left on the beach. The children are observed by the adults to ensure they stay safe. Once the children have collected enough resources, they are asked to create a sea animal using their resources. Children can work individually or as a pair. Communication board and PECS are to be used with non-verbal children when making the sea animals. Adults to observe the children during the activity and offer support if needed. The activity may then be altered if children are finding the activity too difficult or too simple. The adults may draw an outline in the sand for children to follow. For children finding the activity too simple, they may use the spades provided to create a 3D effect sea animal. Adults to observe and offer help if needed with the harder activity. Adults to take a picture of each sea animal with the iPad once every child has finished. Children can see each other's creations and compare the resources used, the shapes created and the different colours and sizes. Children are then asked to return the resources to where they found them on the beach. The litter and non-natural materials collected on the beach will be disposed of in the correct bins. Children will be able to continue exploring the beach, looking at rock pools and splashing in the sea water. Adult supervision is needed when children are looking at the rock pools and when near the sea, to ensure stones and shells are not removed and ensuring the children are safe.

The final part of the activity will involve walking over the 8 steppingstones in the river that runs down to the sea. Each child will take it in turn to cross the steppingstones. One adult will be placed on either side of the river then the remaining two adults will stand in the river, either side of the steppingstones to offer a hand if needed. Children who are feeling unsure about crossing the steppingstones can walk through the river and avoid the steppingstones or may cross the steppingstones while holding the adults' hand. Once all the children have crossed the river safely, the children are asked to go hand in hand with the adults and walk back to the school. Children may place their resources back on the ground on the way back to the school. Children to change from their waterproof and wellington boots and wash their hands after returning to the school.

Component 2**RISK BENEFIT ASSESSMENT**

Location / Activity:	Beach. Walking to the beach and creating sea animals out of natural resources collected along the walk and at the beach. Walking across steppingstones in a river.	Date:	8 th October 2020
Assessor:	Carys Evans	Review date:	2 nd October 2021

ACTIVITY	How will young people BENEFIT from this activity?	Possible hazards	Who is at risk?	PRECAUTIONS in place to reduce the risk of injury	Overall risk RATING: L/M/H
Walking to the beach by a main road: stopping to collect natural resources.	Children learning to wait, and turn take in collecting resources. Children reminded to only collect natural resources already on the floor, teaching the children to care and look after the environment.	Children becoming impatient when Running into the road.  2	Children	- Children to walk hand in hand with adults. One adult per two children. - Adults to offer change of face with another adult if child is becoming distressed on walk. - Walking in a row, following each other on the pavement. <i>high visibility jackets?</i> - Adults to discuss with children their order in the line walking to the beach to reduce any children trying	Low

				to go onto the road to push past.	
Searching for resources on the beach.	Allows children to learn about natural resources and other resources found on the beach. Working on fine motor development through collecting small stones and shells from sand. Encourages the children's creative development, looking for different resources for their sea animal creations. Developing the children's holistic development including learning to balance as they walk on the wet and dry sand.	Splinters from wood, cuts from any non-natural materials found on the beach, including broken glass or drink cans.	Children	• Observe children searching for resources. • Adults to look around beach on arrival in case of sharp non-natural materials. • Children to inform adults when they have discovered sharp non-natural materials before picking item up. • First aid kit ready in case of any cuts. • Children to stay on one half of the beach to search before moving to the second half, allowing the Adults to observe all the children together.	Low
Exploring the beach: slippery rocks near rock pools.	Allows children to explore the outdoor environment and learn about different	Slipping, falling, grazes, cuts and	Children and adults.	• Adult to assess the rock pool area before allowing children to explore.	Low

	habitats on the beach. Developing their language and communication skills through talking to each other about what they see.	bumping head.		• Adult to supervise children exploring rock pool are. • No access to rock pools where children are required to climb up to see. • Only two children at a time to explore rock pools in case of shuffling, causing a child to fall. • First aid kit ready in case of any injuries.	
Jumping on the waves as the sea water comes in.	Allows children to take risks and feel confident when exploring different areas of the outdoor environment. Children learning about their own capabilities and controlling their body movement.	Falling, going too deep in the sea, hidden dips on the seabed, drowning, getting stuck in the wet sand, tide coming in fast.	Children	• Discuss the boundaries with the children and how high the water level can get on their wellington boots. • Adult to stand close to the sea to observe the children and intervene if needed. • Check the tide times before going to the beach.	Low

Crossing the steppingstones over the river.	Developing the children's gross motor skills including their balance and coordination. Children are able to watch each other crossing the river and learn from each other. Children becoming independent thinkers by deciding on the best way to cross the river on the steppingstones.	Slipping, falling, cuts, drowning, fast flowing river.	Children	• Adult to walk through river to check the steppingstones are secure before allowing the children to cross. • Check weather before going, if raining the steppingstones could be slippery. • Adults to stand either side of the steppingstones to offer a hand if needed.	Low
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Component 3

Issue / environmental feature	Damage that could occur	How to lessen negative impact	Resources needed	Who is responsible
Collecting natural resources on walk to the beach.	Children breaking twigs off tree. Children stepping over the grass on bank to reach other natural resources, possibly crushing insects and their natural habitats. Several children stepping on the bank could trample grass, flowers and other plants.	Adults to remind children to only take natural resources that are on the ground. Children to stay on pavement when collecting the natural resources. Children to place items back when walking back to school.	Individual buckets	All adults and children.
Exploring rock pools.	Removing natural resources from the rock pools may damage the habitat. Children placing their feet in the rock pools could	Adults to ensure children understand not to cause harm when exploring the rock pools. Adults to supervise to ensure children do not put their	N/A	All adults and children.

	damage or crush anything living in the rock pool.	feet in the rock pools. Children to leave all-natural resources in the rock pools, if any are removed children are to place them back in the same place.		
Searching the beach for resources to create sea animal.	Removing natural materials from where they are on the beach, could be removing from a habitat already created on the beach.	All-natural materials to be returned to where they were found on the beach. Any litter collected on the beach will be disposed of in the correct bins.	Individual buckets and spades.	All adults and children.

Component 4

The activity plan in component one of the portfolio involved children walking to the beach to create sea animals. These were created out of the natural resources collected along the way and during their time at the beach. The activity also included the children crossing a river by stepping over steppingstones. The activity plan was created to focus on three main aspects, these included, learning about the environment and the outdoors, developing the children's creative development while using natural resources and encouraging physical movement to focus on the children's health and their physical development. Although the plan focuses on three main aspects, the activity included six out of the seven of the areas of learning from the Foundation Phase Framework/ reference? areas of learning include Mathematic Development, Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Physical Development, Creative Development, Language, Literacy and Communication Skills, Personal and Social Development and Well-being and Cultural Diversity (Welsh Government, 2018). The activity plan consisted of who the activity involved, the resources required, the location, the aims and outcomes and the role of the adult.

*what about
ESDGC
themes?*

Creating an activity plan which focused on the outdoors allowed the children to learn about the environment they live in. When walking to the beach, the children were able to collect resources and were told by the adults the importance of only collecting material that were already on the pavement in order to leave the plants and trees as they were. Outdoor Matters (2011) believes children should encounter real experience within the natural environment in order to learn social interaction skills and a sense of care for their environment and all living things. "When young people are connected to nature, it has positive impacts on their education, physical health, emotional wellbeing and personal and social skills, and helps them to become responsible citizens" (RSPB, 2013, 5). The activity plan allowed children time to explore the beach including the rock pools, however close supervision ensured the children knew what they could and could not do while exploring. Wilson (2018) says giving children the opportunity to feel, look and listen will enable them to discover the endless amount of opportunities for exploring and discovering. Children were able to explore while learning the boundaries and making decisions on how to behave in the outdoor environment. Welsh Government (2018) believes giving children these opportunities will enable them to develop a positive attitude for caring about the environment. *links to theory?*

Froebel?

 5

The outdoors is beneficial for children as it is highly stimulating and can often be the best place for learning spiritual, moral and social skills (Ouvry and Furtado, 2019). However, RSPB (2013) claims that in 2009, only 10% of children in the UK would play in natural places. Welsh Assembly Government (2013) say how reintroducing parents to natural environments as part of Education for Sustainable Development ⁶ and Global Citizenship and showing them how to learn and enjoy in these areas will be beneficial for the children. RSPB (2013) suggest a strong factor that can influence a child's perspective and connection to nature is influenced by their parents and family's values towards nature and the outdoor environment.

The activity plan ensures children return all-natural resources that were collected are then placed back where they were found. Sorting the non-natural materials and disposing of them in the correct way will allow the children to learn about different materials and how to recycle. According to Welsh Government (2013) through learning about the natural environment, children begin to understand actions relating to waste ⁷ and consumption and how their actions including recycling or littering can affect the environment.

The second aspect the activity focuses on is the children's creative development while using natural resources. "Creativity is the essence of being human and is fundamental to learning" (Tovey, 2016, 3). The children are told what is expected of them during the activity and shown pictures of sea animals created using natural resources. Showing the pictures to the children could be both a positive and a negative as showing the picture will help them understand what to do, however, children may feel incapable of creating a sea animals as well as those in the pictures. Welsh Government (2018) believe creative activities in the Foundation Phase allows children the opportunity to express themselves through exploring and experimenting with a variety of materials. The materials collected during the activity involved mainly natural resources found on both the pavement and at the beach, however ⁷ er collected on the beach could also be used when creating the sea animals. Thornton and Brunton (2013) say that reclaimed and natural materials encourage sensory exploration, invite observation and stimulate a child's imagination. Once the children have collected enough resources, they are able to explore their findings before creating their sea animals. Children can see the different colours, textures, shapes and sizes of the materials collected. Having the different materials will encourage them to think creatively about what they could create. Daly and Beloglovsky (2014) believe allowing children to play with loose parts will enhance their ability to think imaginatively and will bring a sense of excitement and adventure to their play.

descriptive

The activity allows the children to work individually or in a pair. Welsh Government (2018) say children can learn their own capabilities and potential while also becoming confident and independent thinkers. Tovey (no date) says Frobel believed children learn best through firsthand experience, play and when in close relationship with others. Working together allows the children to compare their resources and communicate their ideas. Welsh Government (2020) believe learners should learn to value each other's contributions and work together effectively.

Collecting, sorting and arranging the resources collected allows the children to develop their fine motor skills. During the activity, the children may scoop up sand with their hands, collect small items, splash their hands in the water and scrape wet sand out of small shells. Constable (2012) says children will develop their pincer grip through using both fingers and thumbs when picking up small shells or stones off the beach.

The final aspect of the activity focused on the children's physical movement, focusing on the children's health and their physical development. "Piaget saw movement and physical development as the prerequisite for higher level of thinking" (Ouvry and Furtado, 2019, 34). During the activity, the children are involved in walking both to and from the beach, exploring the beach, jumping in the sea water and crossing the steppingstones over the river. During these activities, the children are developing their gross motor development. The children will develop their coordination, balance and learn how to control their body movement. Knight (2013) believes the outdoor environment benefits the children through building their confidence, self-esteem and wellbeing. Every Child Matters stated the importance of every child living a healthy lifestyle with good physical and mental health (GOV, 2003). Article 24 of The Un Convention on The Rights of The Child states every child has the right to be healthy and has access to the best possible health (UNICEF, 2019).

When crossing the river, the children can consider the best way for them to cross the steppingstones. The adults stand either side to intervene if needed, however, allowing the children to decide the route for themselves will encourage them to think independently, take risks and learn more about the environment. Welsh Government (2018) believes giving children opportunities to take risks will build their confidence in the outdoor environment. Tovey (no date) says Frobel believed practitioners should focus on the benefit of an activity rather than focusing on the risk. Introducing children to risks will enable them to learn their own strengths (Tovey, no date). The children turn take when crossing the river therefore can

watch each other crossing. The children can discuss with each other the most secure way to take when crossing the river. Ridgway, Quinones and Li (2020) believe children will learn more from other children who are younger or older than themselves than they would from children the same age, this will increase peer learning within the group.

The adult's role during the activity has been included as both safeguarding the children as well as their involvement in the activity and how they support the children. The activity plan involves the adults observing the children and helping when needed. One of the key roles for the adults was to encourage communication with both the verbal and non-verbal children. Article 12 of The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child stated every child has the right to a voice (Unicef, 2019). Adults must ensure they have both the Communication boards and Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) for all children to be heard equally. Using the communication boards and PECS will allow the non-verbal children to ask questions and communicate with other children. Constable (2012) believes the outdoor gives the children the opportunity to explain their findings, ask questions to both the adults and children and discover new words. Throughout the activity the adults reminded the children of the importance of leaving nature as it is and only collecting loose natural resources. Tovey (no date) believed adults should be included as co-player in children's play to offer them freedom to play, however this should involve guidance to enrich play as a learning context.

Health and safety were considered throughout the entire activity plan beginning when the children and adults left the school, while on the beach, when crossing the river and when walking back to the school. The children walked hand in hand with the teachers, ensuring there were two children to one adult. This allowed the adult to keep the children close when walking near the road and to support when stopping to collect resources. While walking on the pavement with adult supervision, this will allow children learn how to walk sensibly near a road. According to Welsh Government (2018) as part of the four purposes for the curriculum to Wales, all children will become healthy and confident individuals who can build positive relationships based upon trust and also consider their actions when making choices. The adults were spread out on the beach, ensuring they could stay close to the children while exploring. Observing the children when collecting the resources ensured the children did not pick up anything harmful. When the children had the opportunity to cross the steppingstones, the adult had checked the stability of the stones before any children had crossed. The activity plan included taking a first aid kit and a mobile phone in case of any accidents as well as taking all inhalers of children who suffered from asthma. However, the plan did not include any other

descriptive

medication or information for children who may have Epilepsy. The plan involved the children washing their hands when returning to the school.

The activity plan was designed to focus on the children's holistic development in the outdoor environment. The activity incorporated physical and gross motor, fine motor, social interaction, cognitive development, language and sensory development. During the activity, the has opportunities to learn about the outdoors, the environment and nature. All eight children were included in each activity and the plan ensured there was diversity for children who found the activities too simple or too difficult. Article 23 of the UNCRC says every child with a disability has the right to independence and to play a part in the community (Unicef, 2019). The activity plan allowed for the children to explore the beach independently and create sea animals with adults observing, however the activity could have incorporated more child initiated play or child led activity where there was no need for an end result.

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Learning Environments inside and outside.

GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

70/100

GENERAL COMMENTS

Instructor

1. 7/10

There is evidence of research and the evaluation is well supported by your sources. However, it would be good to see more synthesis at this stage of level 5 study. The reference list is excellently presented.

2. 7/10

There is evidence of excellent understanding of the need to protect the natural environment. Some aspects could be considered in more detail; are you going to collect all the litter on the beach? This is potentially hazardous without specialist equipment.

3. 19/30

You evaluate the activity in some detail and show very good understanding of a range of issues. At times, the work is rather descriptive and you could consider some points in more depth and detail (see my comments on the work).

4. 23/30

The plan is clear and offers an interesting and enjoyable activity. You have considered the children's needs carefully and the outcomes are flexible and appropriate. You could have referred to ESDGC themes to show more depth of understanding. The resources are open-ended and appropriate but it would be hazardous to allow children to use found rubbish.

5. 14/20

The risk assessment is detailed and notes the benefits of each point as well as the potential risks. You consider how to manage the risks in some detail but more consideration is needed at times (rock pools). The potential risks from crossing the road need to be made clear.

Overall mark: 70%

PAGE 1

QM

explain

explain your meaning more clearly

Additional Comment

this could be hazardous

PAGE 2

QM

✓

good, this demonstrates an understanding of important issues relating to the topic

PAGE 3

PAGE 4

QM

?

?

Additional Comment

potentially hazardous



Comment 1

could the children do this themselves?

PAGE 5



Comment 2

but what could happen as a result of this? broken bones, collision

Text Comment. high visibility jackets?

PAGE 6



Comment 3

assess for what? you cannot change the pools



Comment 4

is this realistic? how will they know where to return a piece of driftwood on a large beach?

Text Comment. what about ESDGC themes?



reference?

where are the references?



Comment 5

good but you need to include more academic sources

Text Comment. links to theory? Froebel?



Comment 6

but how is this relevant to your activity?



✓

good, this demonstrates an understanding of important issues relating to the topic



descriptive

descriptive;



Comment 7

this needs to be critically evaluated



expand

this point needs to be expanded and discussed in more detail

this point needs to be expanded and discussed in more detail

PAGE 14



Comment 8

is this appropriate to the children's levels of development?



descriptive

descriptive;

PAGE 15

PAGE 16

PAGE 17

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