

Activity Plan		
Activity: A mini beast hunt		
Number of children: 6	Age of children: 4 – 5 years old	Number of adults: 1
Location: Foundation Phase outdoor garden area.	Preparation time: 20 minutes.	Activity time: 30 – 40 minutes (depending on the child's interest may be the whole afternoon session).
<u>Resources:</u> • Outdoor space with natural materials. • Six waterproof coats and trousers. • Six pairs of wellies (children's own wellies if possible to ensure correct fitting). • Six clean containers with no lid. • Six magnifying glasses. • Six plastic spoons to help pick up bugs. • A table to enable children to investigate the mini beasts with equipment provided. • Six bug hunt checklists. • A Bug identification chart. • Six clipboards. • Six pencils. • Shelter willow dome already in the garden. • Hand washing facilities. • Hand wash gel. • First aid bag, containing sterile wipes, plasters and dressings. • Bottled water and six plastic cups.		
<u>Aim/s of activity:</u> • Encourage children to treat animals in the environment with care and sensitivity. • Explain the importance of the natural environment. • Work together as part of a group or in pairs, taking turns and sharing equipment fairly. • Encourage children to communicate by sharing ideas and information.		

- Develop the children's curiosity and interest by exploring the outdoor environment using their senses.
- Share information of an experience with bugs, discussing likes and dislikes.
- Develop new language soil, damp, insects' names.
- Encourage prepositions, under, on, behind, in front by questioning children.
- Observe and recognize some simple characteristics of minibeasts and other living things.
- Begin to Identify, classify and group mini beasts.

Links to outcomes:

Understanding the World

- Develop children's understanding of the world by providing opportunities to explore and observe the environment.
- Learning the similarities and differences of minibeasts by observation (where they live, the colour and how they move).

Communication and Language

- Listening to and following instructions to treat mini beasts and the environment with care.
- Sharing information and experiences about the mini beast hunt with other children and adults.
- Answering questions and describing the minibeasts.

Physical Development

- Developing balance and spacial awareness by moving around to gain the best view of mini beasts.
- Gross motor and fine motor skills while moving and handling tools effectively to collect and investigate minibeasts.
- Discussing personal hygiene and the importance of washing hands after engaging in outdoor play.
- Developing self-confidence by asking a partner for a turn on the piece of equipment.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Developing relationships by working together in pairs or groups.

Maths

- Counting the amount of legs or minibeasts found.
- Recording amount of each minibeasts found.
- Classify and group mini beasts.

Differentiation:

- Support children with clues to where mini beasts can be found.
- Guide children around the garden suggesting where the mini beasts can be found to encourage them to explore independently.
- Assist with reading mini beasts on identification card and mark making on check list.

Health and safety:

- Inform children with clear boundaries of where investigation can take place.
- Explain the importance of health and safety aspects of the area.
- Explain to the children it is important not to put their hands in their mouth, ears and eyes or they may become unwell.

Role of adult/adults:

- To observe children exploring the environment.
- Ask open ended questions when appropriate.
- Encourage opportunities to discuss mini beasts and the environment based on the child's interest.
- Encourage areas of learning and holistic development to achieve or work towards the curriculum outcomes.

The activity:

- Introduce the mini beast hunt.
- Discuss mini beasts with the children, allowing time to respond and make predictions of what mini beasts might be found or where they might live. Suggest ideas to deepen

the children's thinking, to look in-between flowers, under bushes and around the base of a tree.

- Children participate, agree and follow the rules and behaviour not to harm the environment, mini beasts and the safety of themselves. Encouraging children to be calm and quiet, otherwise the mini beasts get frightened and will slither, run or fly away. Always be gentle to avoid damage to the wings or harm the mini beasts in any way. After examining the minibeasts they must be returned to the same place as they were found. Be gentle when moving rocks and logs and must be placed back in the same position as they were found.
- Provide each child with waterproof coats, trousers and a pair of wellies.
- Children choose a partner to work with and share equipment. Demonstrate how to use the equipment when collecting mini beasts, by carefully scooping the creatures with a plastic spoon and placing them gently into a container. Advise the children to place some leaves and grass in the bottom of the container so the mini beasts don't get frightened and is comforted by its natural environment.
- Children will be guided into the outdoor environment, based on this activity the garden located at the rear of classroom leading out through the conservatory doors.
- Children can explore the outdoors as little scientists to see what mini beasts can be found and where the mini beasts live.
- Children can use their senses to look, listen and touch whilst exploring in the outdoor environment, encouraging children to describe what sounds can be heard and how the natural resources look and feel. Prompt children to describe how the outdoor environment make them feel and the likes and dislikes of the sensory experience.
- Observe children examining mini beats using a magnifying glass provided to look at the colour, shape, size, how it moves and the number of legs. Encouraging children to group mini beasts according to the same bug or insect, size, movement, colour or even where they live.
- Children can identify the mini beats on the identification chart and mark the bug hunt checklist to provide information of what mini beasts where found and the amount of each one in the outdoor environment.
- A mini beast hunt provides children with curiosity to explore the world whilst learning and practicing new skills in the outdoor environment. Practitioners can observe and play an active role by interacting with children to develop holistic learning approach.

- Allow the activity to be led by the child's interests and observe the child's whole learning process.

Risk-benefit assessment.

Activity	Hazard	Risk	Likelihood + Severity	Benefit	Action to remove or reduce risk	Who?	When?	Risk Level when actions observ -ed
Outdoor mini beast hunt.	Uneven surfaces.	Slips, trips and falls causing injuries.	16	1. Physical activity- gross motor skills, coordination and balance to move on uneven ground. 2. Underpins mental health and wellbeing. 3.Provides awareness of unequal levels of the natural environment grounds.	1. Area checked before outdoor activity. 2. Instructions and warnings given to take care when outdoors. 3. First aiders available.	1. The children participating in the activity. 2. The practitioners observing the children. 3. First Aider.	1.Befor e and during the outdoor activity .	12

				Supports personal and social health.	4. Appropriate footwear worn by all. 4. Children encouraged to take care when running on uneven surfaces such as the grass area.			
Outdoor mini beast hunt.	Adverse weather conditions- too cold, too hot, wet or high winds.	Sun burn. Continued wear of wet clothing may cause rash and the individual to become	9	1. Physical activity- gross motor skills, coordination and balance by jumping in puddles. 2. Underpins health and wellbeing. 3. Curiosity of the water cycle.	1. All children and staff encouraged to apply sun protection when necessary. 2. Sun hats required. 3. Accessibility and regular reminders of fluid intake.	1. The children participating in the activity. 1. The practitioners observing the children.	Before and during the outdoor activity .	3

		cold and unwell. High winds can cause natural resources and objects to blow and could cause injury if they come into contact.		4. Provides children with knowledge of the four seasons, with change in climate and how the environment changes.	4. Suitable personal protective equipment available to all individuals waterproof clothing, foot wear and layer clothing. 5. Weather conditions and group ability considered during the activity.			
Exploring the garden area during the	Illness from biological matter.	Litter, soil and animal feces found in	25	1 The knowledge and understanding of personal hygiene.	1. Check area to remove any litter, feces with correct protective equipment	1. The children participating	Before and during the	5

mini beast hunt.		the outdoors.		2. Ability to identify animal feces. 3. Understanding animal feces are harmful and cause upset stomach if touched and hands are not thoroughly washed.	gloves, apron and bags and dispose safely according to correct procedures. 2. Clear instructions given to children to call upon an adult if any litter or feces is found in the area and advised not to touch. 3. Clear instructions given to children not to place hands or any materials found outside in their mouths.	in the activity. 2. The practitioners observing the children.	outdoor activity	
Exploring the garden area during the	Injury from falling on sharp	Rocks, bricks, shed with sharp	20	1. Activates the brain for new learning and understanding of hazards.	1. First Aid box required whilst carrying out activities.	1. First aider.	Before and during the	12

mini beast hunt.	objects and plants.	edges. Falling trees or branches, stinging nettle plants. Sharp gardening equipment .		2. Encourages the child to be self-aware. 3. Encourages children to work with natural materials and identify the risks if used inappropriately.	2. First Aiders available. 3. Adequate supervision. 4. Clear instructions and warnings given to all individuals participating in activity. 5. Immediate removal of dangerous and sharp items.	2. The children participating in the activity. 3. The practitioners observing the children.	outdoor activity .	
Exploring the garden area during the mini beast hunt.	Obstructed access to evacuate in an emergency .	Causing obstruction during an emergency to gain access or	15	1. If necessary the children can evacuate the area quickly, safely and calmly without obstruction.	1. Ensure all gates in the outdoor area are free from clutter and obstruction.	1. The practitioners observing the children.	Before and during the outdoor	12

		to evacuate during an event of a fire.		2. Aware of safety to keep exits clear of clutter. 3. Promotes understanding in an event of an emergency, all children and staff must report to the assembly point to register.	2. Keep all entrances free from clutter and obstruction. 3. Keep paths leading to fire exits free from clutter and obstruction.	2. The children participating in the activity.	activity .	
Exploring the garden area during the mini beast hunt.	Poisonous plants, mushroom s and fungi.	Causes severe skin rash, allergic reaction.	16	1. Identify different plants.	1. Check area and remove mushrooms. 2. Clear instructions given to all individuals not to pick any plants or growing things. 3. Clear instructions given to children not to place hands or	1. The children participating in the activity. 2. The practitioners observing the children.	Before and during the outdoor activity .	12

					anything found outside in their mouths. 4. Ensure all individuals wash their hands thoroughly. 5. First Aider available. 6. Ensure all medical details are up to date and practitioners informed of any allergies.	3. First Aider.		
Exploring the garden area during the mini beast hunt.	Appropriate clothing and footwear.	Possibility of thorns or small items that may pierce	12	1. Physical activity-gross motor skill 2. Health and wellbeing.	1. Ensure children wear appropriate footwear throughout the activity.	1. The children participating in the activity.	Before and during the outdoor	6

		the sole of shoe. Scratches or stings.		3. Encouraging independence to recognize when it is appropriate to take shoes off.	2. Clear instructions given not to remove footwear unless aided by an adult. 3. Ensure all individuals are dressed appropriately to participate.	2. The practitioners observing the children.	activity .	
Exploring the garden area during the mini beast hunt.	Stings and bites from mini beasts.	Wasps, bees and hornets.	6	1. Physical activity-gross motor skill 2. Health and wellbeing. 3. Children are educated on flying insects and what attracts them to an area.	1. Ensure all medical details are up to date and practitioners informed of any allergies. 2. Instruct children to not touch wasps, hornets and bees, to move away carefully not to frighten the mini beasts.	1. The children participating in the activity. 2. The practitioners observing the children.	Before and during the outdoor activity .	4

						3. First Aider.		
Exploring the garden area during the mini beast hunt.	Chocking caused by small objects being swallowed.	Small materials found in the outdoors pebbles, acorns, stones.	16	1. Fine motor skills. 2. Multi-sensory, identifying and grouping rough and smooth objects. 3. Encourages children to learn about different things that grow on trees. 4. Health and wellbeing.	1. Clear instructions given to children not to place anything found outside in to their mouths.	1. The children participating in the activity. 2. The practitioners observing the children. 3. First Aider.	Before and during the outdoor activity	12
Exploring the garden area during the mini beast hunt.	Children absconding/ wandering out of safe area.		20	1. Encourage children to follow instructions on boundaries given. 2. To engage with others and build trust.	1. Main gate in outdoor garden bolted and latch secured. 2. Adequate supervision.	1. The children participating in the activity.	Before and during the outdoor	6

					3. Individual children at higher risk of wandering identified, with a behavior risk assessment completed and one-to-one supervision required. 4. Explain clear boundaries to children. 5. continual head counts.	2. The practitioners observing the children.	activity .	
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likelihood	x	severity	risk level and acceptability
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			Low - L	medium - m	high - H
1-5	x	1-5	1-5 acceptable risk level	5-12 acceptable with precautions	12+ unacceptable risk level - find ways to reduce risk.

Environmental audit.

<i>Issue / environmental feature</i>	<i>Damage that could occur</i>	<i>How to lessen negative impact</i>	<i>Resources needed</i>	<i>Who is responsible</i>
Mini beast hunt.	Inappropriate handling of mini beasts.	Encourage children to be careful, mini beasts are living things and should be treated with care and respect. Children participate and agree on rules and behavior not to cause harm to the mini beasts and the environment. Remind children the importance of placing mini beasts back where they were found. Educate the children of biodiversity and the importance of a variety of species in the environment.	N/A	Practitioners involved and the children participating in the activity.
Mini beast hunt.	The collection of a variety of mini beasts in a container causes harm.	Encouraging children to collect snails and slugs separately to other mini beasts. Explaining snails and slugs produce a sticky slime that will harm the other creatures.	Plastic containers.	Practitioners involved and the children participating in the activity.
Mini beast hunt.	Damage to flowers and natural materials	Discussion based on how to care for the environment. Explain the importance of biodiversity while exploring the environment.	N/A	Practitioners involved and the children participating

	through carelessness.			in the activity.
Mini beast hunt.	Damage to habitats.	Encourage children to be careful when moving logs and stones. State the importance of placing logs and other natural materials back in the same position as they were found.	N/A	Practitioners involved and the children participating in the activity.
Mini beast hunt.	Over collecting mini beats.	Encourage children to investigate a small number of mini beasts to avoid overcrowding.	Plastic containers and plastic spoons.	Practitioners involved and the children participating in the activity.
Mini beast hunt.	Damage to the wings of flying insects.	Instruct the children not to catch flying insects with their hands. Demonstrate by placing a transparent container over the flying insect, investigate and let them free as soon as possible.	Transparent containers.	Practitioners involved and the children participating in the activity.
Mini beast hunt.	Pollution to the environment and dangers	Discuss recycling materials by washing and reusing equipment. Dispose of waste appropriately.	Black plastic bag for waste.	Practitioners involved and the children participating

	to the mini beasts.			in the activity.
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The chosen activity the mini beast hunt is both relevant to the curriculum framework and Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC). Both the curriculum framework and ESDGC states by interlinking skills throughout practice will develop the child's holistic learning, encouraging opportunities to experience situations and ideas in the outdoor environment prepares children with responsibilities and experiences for adult life (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, 2008 (a) and (b)). Rodger 2016 agrees explaining practitioners have improved knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum framework to encourage children to develop self-confidence through physical activity, communication and socializing in active play.

The decision of the activity was influenced by the authors Knight and White, who provide interesting explanations to create opportunities to enhance the learning and holistic development through carrying out a mini beast hunt. Both authors explain children are interested and enthusiastic about exploring the outdoor environment that facilitates the learning, understanding and knowledge of the world (Knight, 2011) and (White, 2014).

White (2014) and Knight (2011) state the outdoor environment is essential for children to experience and create a concrete understanding through first hand experiences, enabling children to experience learning through play. Fumoto (2012) explains children need time to explore to gain better knowledge and build on prior experiences and skills to enhance development, where the child does not feel pressured to give right or wrong answers. The outdoor space included a willow dome where children could relax, reflect and discuss the experience or ideas with peers where they can disengage from the busy world (Edgington, 2014).

Furthermore, Piaget agrees explaining time is precious for children to experience and replace existing schemas, by repetition and pattern building. The process of accommodation changes and extends cognitive structures, Piaget called this stage accommodation (Pound, 2011).

The mini beast hunt encourages curiosity and enthusiasm for children to become little scientists exploring the natural materials and living things in the outdoor environment. Piaget's theory cited in Bruce (2012) states independent experimenting and problem solving is beneficial for the child's development.

Although Wood (2013) explains the difficulty practitioners encounter incorporating children to achieve curriculum goals and outcomes when children independently lead the play.

However, Vygotsky and Bruner disagree stating language is an important learning tool, where learning is developed by the more knowledgeable other (MKO). Both theorists explain the importance of children working with or alongside peers of all ages promotes learning through exchanging ideas and experiences (Smidt, 2015) and (Prichard, 2014). Both Malaguzzi and Vygotsky cited in (Smidt, 2015) emphasize the importance of socializing through a collaborative dialogue encourages children to attempt a task, when the child gains the confidence the skills will be used to further development.

Washington (2010) states group work is important encourages children to interact and elaborate on ideas with peers, asking open ended questions to develop knowledge, understanding and language development. Pound (2011) explains individuals of all ages have experiences and knowledge to educate others.

The mini beast hunt provides opportunities for group discussions, encouraging children to interact by asking and responding to questions to develop language and listening skills (DCELLS, 2008 (a)). Children verbally express and exchanged feelings and emotions with peers when engrossed in the activity suggesting shared play encourages children to discuss ideas and relate to experiences to expand on further investigations to form emotional bonding and friendship (Canning, 2011).

The adult's role during the activity is to encourage children's thinking to develop skills and knowledge of the world around them (DCELLS, 2008 (b)). The children were involved in the explanation and discussion at the beginning of the session to brainstorm ideas and predictions of what? and where? mini beasts may be found. The Reggio Emilia cited in Canning (2011) suggests adults should give some explanation of the activity before it takes place to balance adult led activities and play, allowing some structure to develop the child's understanding. Both Bruner and Vygotsky cited in Smidt (2015) agree highlighting the importance of the theory Zone of Proximal Development. Vygotsky believed by scaffolding children they become challenged to increase learning further socializing through a collaborative dialogue is important to encourage children to carry out a task, when the child is confident the support of the adult can be minimized.

The adult's role in the activity is to observe offering support and guidance when necessary, asking and answering questions that interest the child to develop further understanding. Observation enables adults to discover the fascination of learning and understanding of the experience through the eyes of the child (Rodger, 2016). Smidt (2015) describes observation a

vital strategy to reflect, observation encourages adults to question their practice, identifying strengths and weaknesses. Considering the benefits of the activity for learning and the emotions of the participating child, to develop a broader picture for improvements to be made.

Montessori explains language as a powerful tool for learning offering support and guidance during the activity enables children with a variety of abilities to participate and develop self-esteem and well-being. Children need opportunities to find answers with time to reflect to extend learning (Maynard and Waters, 2014) and (Washington, 2010). Furthermore, Malaguzzi cited in Smidt (2015) agrees suggesting active listening is important to provide appropriate answers to the child's questions to assist the child's learning.

However, for learning to flourish by the sharing of positive interactions between the adult and child interest, the planning and outcomes must be flexible to offer meaningful opportunities. (Maynard and Waters, 2014). Forest schools explain activities must be calm and not rushed for children to practice tasks and language skills to form a foundation for cognitive and emotional development (Rodger, 2016).

The adult must be an enthusiastic role model and value the outdoor environment to encourage holistic learning through vital experiences, play is central to children's mental and emotional health, well-being and happiness (Rodger, 2016) and (DCELLS, 2008 (a)). Bandura cited in Prichard (2014) states children mimic actions performed by others, it is vital to be a good role model to develop an enthusiastic approach for the child's leaning and well-being. The adult provides children with opportunities to connect with living creatures and develop respect caring for the nature in the environment, encouraging children to develop responsibilities by place mini beasts back in their habitats where they were found. Froebel explains a child who is given the responsibility to care for a living thing will develop affection for others and to care for themselves (Maynard and Waters, 2014) and (DCELLS, 2008 (b)).

The adult provides the children with a selection of resources to investigate and explore living things in the outdoor environment. Although Kalliala cited in Canning (2011) argues that adults who offer a selected amount of resources to shape the direction of learning, where opportunities of independent learning are taken away from the child. However, McMillan disagrees with Kalliala and Montessori stating that artificial resources are not essential when exploring the outdoors and explained meaningful and greater knowledge is developed by first hand experiences (Maynard and Waters, 2014).

During the activity children discovered the plastic container represented a home for mini beasts, others made magic portions from the natural resources, where children are imaginative and represent resources as other objects (Flannigan and Dietze, 2017). Children cleaned the container to represent another idea, where children learned about re-cycling the object to use again (DCELLS, 2008 (B)). Maynard and Waters 2014 state the importance for children to play with soil and other natural resources builds a well-functioning immune system.

The outdoor activity provides a multi-sensory environment, encouraging learning through tactile exploration of the natural resources to influence knowledge and understanding of the world. The textures of different materials develop new language skills where children describe natural materials by turning over rough stones, crunchy leaves and wet wood to discover the mini beast habitats (White, 2013) and (Robertson, 2014). The natural resources provided physical control and arm strength to roll and lift stones and tree stumps (Edgington, 2014).

The mini beast activity stimulates the senses providing personal contact with meaningful sensory experiences that cannot be experienced by pictures and non-fictional books. Offering real life opportunities to experience the textures, movements and the temperatures of living things (Waters, 2013). White (2014) suggests personal contact provides emotional strategies to reduce levels of stress express feelings and engage in activities more than indoor activities. Bilton (2010) and Wood (2015) describe space as important and crucial to improve mental health and well-being, where the outdoor space improves behavior by reducing levels of hyperactivity and aggressive behavior. Allowing children to improve their focused attention and concentration in a calm and relaxed sensory environment.

Robertson (2014) explains the outdoor space allows children to feel free, building confidence to experience new moves and the feeling of satisfaction, pleasure and enjoyment to maximize children's health and well-being. Waters (2013) Physical movement develops the vestibular system, providing a sense of balance and spatial awareness to coordinate movement with balance. White (2014) states movement develops the core neurological sensory system where stimulation from the outside world allows the body to react. Movement enables children to understand where their body is in space develops the brain function, increasing concentration. Body awareness is highly influenced by proprioceptive processing, the sensory information received from movement and of muscles and joint groups. Many aspects of movement prepare children to acknowledge and understand safety measures for adulthood.

During the activity children explored a variety of physical movements, jumping off tree stumps and climbing on a cut down tree situated in the garden. The natural resources and uneven levels of the ground provide more opportunities for adventure and risk associated with the environment. The unforeseen risks were identified and assessed promptly, McMillan emphasized the importance of jumping off points of an acceptable level, to develop confidence (Knight, 2011). (Maynard and Waters, 2014) and (Bruce, 2012) suggests a good balance between potential risks and achievements develops problem solving, promotes confidence, raises self-esteem and the ability to achieve. Vygotsky's theory ZPD theory states it solely depends on the child's development, whether the child is ready for a risk, if not the risk can be greater (Knight, 2011). However, Isaac cited in Maynard and Waters (2014) disagreed suggesting the advantages of risk rather than the disadvantages, minimizing the risks so children can be challenged and develop independence, confidence developing skills to be safe and responsible.

Overall the mini bug activity is a cross curricular activity linking to all aspects of framework outcomes. The activity provides a variety of real-life experiences, where children show enthusiasm and can be engrossed for a long period of time led by their own interests where the adult can differentiate questions and challenge learning to the next level. The environment provided a relaxed atmosphere where confidence and relationships can be developed. Children learn to respect and take care of living things and the environment by handling living things with care returning them to where they were found, recycling and disposing of litter appropriately. The activity enables children to share scientific and mathematical skills with peers, how many legs? Colour? Grouping living things and recording. The children will always be reminded of personal hygiene not to put fingers in ears, nose or mouth and wash hands thoroughly with warm soapy water.

Piaget and Vygotsky share different views on learning through play where Piaget believes independent learning is the most beneficial for development and Vygotsky states scaffolding a child and the more knowledge other are important to develop children's learning. Both learning theories provide A balance between both the theories, child led, and support of an adult provides an excellent approach to develop children's learning and knowledge and understanding (Rodger, 2016).

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