

One of my favourite books to read to children is 'We are Going on a Bear Hunt'. It is highly interactive and rhythmic, and the repetitive text encourages children to participate and promotes language development. It is highly engaging, repetitive, and interactive, making it ideal for young children's language and literacy development. The rhythmic structure and repeated phrases encourage participation, build confidence, and support memory. It also lends itself naturally to actions, movement, and sensory exploration, which makes it perfect for extending learning beyond the classroom.

I thought it would be beneficial for the children aged 5-6 to go on an actual bear hunt and tell the story outdoors. Using practical elements and an outdoor setting would set the scene for the story. The children have been listening to the story as part of their literacy development and so I thought it would be enjoyable for them to experience the story as a practical lesson.

The children are Deaf, so I used an Assisted Listening Device that was connected to their hearing aids and cochlear implants. The two girls use British Sign Language (BSL) and Signed Supported English (SSE) and so I incorporated it into the story for visual reference. For Deaf children in particular, the clear sequence of events and strong visual elements make the story accessible and easy to follow. The repetition supports understanding through sign language and spoken language, while the different settings in the story provide rich opportunities for sensory, descriptive, and experiential learning outdoors.

I used an outdoor area that was suitable and carried out a risk assessment to remove any objects that could have been a hazard prior to the lesson and made sure the area was safe before starting the activity. I incorporated practical elements of the story. I used a water tray to represent the river, and I put water in a water tray to represent the river. I make up snow by using Snoball Play and cold water and put it in a tuff spot.

I began the activity by explaining to the children we were going to go on a 'Bear Hunt' and showed them the story they have been reading. They were very excited and I told them we would be walking around the outdoor area. One of the children had already spotted the snow. The children were engaged throughout the activity and kept focused. They were able to communicate and follow along with the story, as this type of book allows for repetition. The children were able to feel the elements with their hands first before walking through the elements in their wellies. This allowed them to take part in sensory play and were able to describe how the elements felt. I would love to be able to expand this activity further by allowing them to walk bare foot through the elements for them to be able to explore the sensory aspect with their feet. Appropriate risk assessments would need to be in place, and this could be the next step for another lesson enhancing the children's learning and development further. I feel that by spacing out the elements, it added to the theme of the book and created the sense of 'going on an adventure'. The elements were not

too far apart though so the children would be able to keep focused and engaged with the activity and not get distracted by looking around at different objects or wondering off. If I was completing this activity again, I would source a longer water tray or even turn it around so the children would walk through the water tray length ways, so they have longer in the water. The fake snow was a little slippery, which I had not anticipated but I suppose it added to the texture of the snow. I was able to support the children to walk through it, so they did not slip. The cave could be different next time also as then the children would be able to walk through it and experience some darkness as well, assisting with another sensory aspect. Due to the children being Deaf, I did not want it to be too dark in the cave so that the children would not get scared and as they rely on visual prompts it might have caused some unnecessary distress. I would also change the forest area to a larger path so the children are able to walk through the trees, and a discussion could take place to ask what they can see and hear.

By the children taking part in this activity it allowed them to access the outdoor area and a sensory experience. Outdoor learning is particularly important as it provides children with opportunities to explore, investigate, and learn through real-life experiences. Being outdoors encourages physical development, supports mental wellbeing, and promotes independence and confidence. It allows children to take managed risks, problem-solve, and engage their senses in ways that are often not possible within a classroom environment. For Deaf children especially, outdoor learning offers rich visual and tactile stimuli that can enhance understanding and communication, while also encouraging social interaction and collaboration.

The incorporation of sensory elements such as water and artificial snow enriched the experience and encouraged descriptive language, curiosity, and exploration. The children's enthusiasm and sustained focus demonstrated how experiential learning can enhance engagement and understanding. Careful planning and risk assessment ensured that the activity was both safe and stimulating, highlighting the importance of balancing creativity with responsibility in outdoor learning environments.

Reflecting on the session has allowed me to identify areas for further development, such as extending the sensory opportunities, adapting resources, and enhancing certain elements of the environment. These reflections will inform future practice and support continuous improvement. Overall, this activity showed how outdoor, practical experiences can significantly enhance literacy learning, promote inclusion, and provide children with memorable opportunities that support their holistic development. I really enjoyed carrying out this activity and to see the children engaging with the story and enjoying their 'Bear Hunt' was amazing.