

Learning Environments: Indoor and Out

Context

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Component 1: Activity Plan for Activity 1

<u>Bug investigation</u>				Time: 35 minutes
Setting:	Pentre'r Penguins	Age of Children:	2-3 years	
		Ratio Required:	1:4	
Area of provision:	Outside area	Number of children:	5	
		Number of staff needed:	2	
Resources required: 6 magnifying glass, 6 tweezers, wetsuits, 3 bug hunt work sheets.				
Learning objectives - To be able to find and identify/describe different bugs. - To be able to share the bug hunt book. - To be able to use tweezers to move leaves and other natural resources. - To be able to use a magnifying glass to look for bugs.			Differentiation: - Some children will struggle to Concentrate on an activity for extended periods of time. (Use positive reinforcement and praise). - Some children might have little or no language and be unable to name things they find. (Encourage them to point at different natural resources/ bugs).	

• To explore the natural environment.	3. Some children may be more advanced. (Encourage them to count them and identify their colours).
Links too Education for Sustainable development and Global Citizenship (Welsh Government 2017)) • The natural Environment - <i>Children are to be encouraged to explore the natural environment whilst protecting the plant life and creatures.</i> • Consumption and waste - <i>Practitioners and children are to take all resources</i>	Links to Foundation phase (Welsh Government (2015)) • Personal and social Development- <i>-Children are to be encouraged to take it in turns whilst working in a small group/social environment</i> - <i>Encourage Children to put on their own wellies and coats.</i> - <i>Encourage children to wash their hands independently.</i> - <i>Discuss if the children enjoyed/ didn't enjoy the activity.</i>

<i>back to the setting not to leave any litter.</i> • Wealth and Poverty - <i>The resourced used in this activity don't cost much and the bug hunt can take place without spending any money.</i> • Choices and decisions - <i>The children are to be encouraged to explore freely deciding where they want to explore and for what bugs.</i> - <i>Practitioners are to follow the child's interests if they want to extend or lessen the allotted time for the activity (when possible).</i> • Health - <i>Spending time outside has positive health benefits for both the practitioners and the children.</i>	• Language, Literacy and communication- - <i>The children are encouraged to point out the different bugs they find.</i> <i>Children are encouraged to describe their colours and shape.</i> • Knowledge and understanding of the world - <i>The children are encouraged to explore the natural environment and discuss the textures.</i> • Cognitive development - <i>count reliably up to 5 objects</i> - <i>sort and match sets of objects by recognising similarities</i> • Welsh Language - <i>All work is verbally done bilingually. Children to be given instructions in English and Welsh and encouraged to identify the name of buys bilingually (e.g. caterpillar –lindys).</i> • Physical Skills - <i>Gross motor skills walking up and down the step and moving large objects.</i>
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		- - fine motor skill – using magnifier, holding a pen to mark make.
Time	Objective(s)	How to achieve this
(approximately 10 minutes)	1, Introduce the Activity.	1, Discuss with the children what we are going to do and show them how we are going to use the resources.
	2, Discuss Safety precautions.	2, Discuss the importance of wearing clothing and shoes. For example, the wet suit to remain dry and wellies to prevent slipping.
	3, Getting ready to go outside	3, Encourage the children to put on their own wellies and coats to promote independence.
(approximately 15 minutes, extend the time if the children are	4, Exploring	4. Encourage the children to explore the natural resources freely, reminding them to be careful whilst moving rocks not to pick or snap any plants not to damage any creatures or wildlife.
	5, Looking for bugs	5, Use the resources provided (e.g. Magnifying glasses) to look for bugs.

still engaging in the activity) (10 Minutes)		Encourage the children to take it in turns identifying the bugs in English and Welsh.
	6, Ending the bug hunt.	6, Give the children a two-minute warning before asking the children to collect up the resources singing ‘rowch tegannau yn y bocs’. Give the children loads of positive reinforcement and praise for completing the bug hunt.
	7, Wash hands	7, Remind the children the importance of washing hands after playing with dirt and other natural resources.
	8, Circle time discussion	8, Ask the children if they enjoyed the activity, what bugs they found, what natural resources were used etc.
	9, Story time	9, finish by reading the ten little caterpillars and comparing what we found (how many legs etc)

Component 2: Risk Assessment

Activity: Bug investigation

Area of Provision: Outside – Top Yard Age of children: 2-3 years

Number of children: 6

Ratio required: 1:4 (2 Staff)

Suitable clothing – wellies and wetsuits if raining

Sun – Factor 50 sensitive sun cream to be applied regularly, only allow short periods in direct sunlight

Rain – Practitioners and children to wear wellies and a full body rain coat.

Identified hazard	Potential hazard (e.g. Injury, harm)	Risk rating (High, Medium, Low)	Current control in force	Risk rating after control (High, Medium, Low)	Who is Responsible ?

Running on the concrete (Practitioners and children)	Slipping, tripping or falling	Low (Dry Conditions) Medium (Wet conditions) High (Icy Conditions)	Explain to the children not to run and push each other. Staff supervision adhering to the ratio. Ensure suitable shoes are worn. Check the floor during the daily risk assessments to ensure suitability for the children and to make it safe (e.g. grit to be put down in icy/snow conditions).	Medium	Setting Leader, Risk assessment co-ordinator, setting practitioners carrying out the activity, Parents to provide the children with suitable shoes.
Artificial grass	Slipping tripping or falling	Low (Dry Conditions)	Explain to the children not to run on wet grass.	Medium	Setting Leader, Risk assessment

(Practitioner s and children)		High (Wet Conditions)	Ensure suitable shoes are worn. Explain to children to look where they're walking		co- ordinator, setting practitioners carrying out the task, Parents to provide the children with suitable shoes.
Escaping children (Practitioner s and children)	Getting hit by a moving vehicle	High	Ensure the main gate is locked Discuss road safety with the children. Wear Reflective jackets whilst out of the setting. Explain importance of staying within the outside area.	Low	Setting Leader, Risk assessment co- ordinator, setting practitioners carrying out the task, Care taker to lock the main gate.

The gate (Practitioner s and Children)	Trapped fingers/ limbs.	Medium	Ensure suitable shoes are worn. Ensure the walkway is cleared of tripping hazards Ensure the gate is checked on the daily risk assessments and are safe for use (e.g. gritted in icy conditions). Ensure staff adhere to the opening and closing risk assessment, where gate is locked once visitors have used it	Low	Setting Leader, Risk assessment co- ordinator, setting practitioners carrying out the task, Parents to provide the children with suitable shoes.
Stingy nettles		Medium	Explain to the children not to	Low	Setting Leader,

(Practitioners and children)	Getting stung or cut		grab the stingy nettles. Create boundaries to avoid large clusters of stingy nettles. Staff supervision adhering to the ratio.		Risk assessment co-ordinator, setting practitioners carrying out the task.
Eating grass, Blackberries (Or other natural resources). (Children)	Poisoning, upset stomach	High	Explain to the children not to eat any natural resources. Staff supervision adhering to the ratio. Wash hands on returning to the setting.	Medium	Setting Leader, Risk assessment co-ordinator, setting practitioners carrying out the task.
Walking on uneven ground	Tripping and falling	Medium	Explain to the children to look where they are stepping.	Low	Setting Leader, Risk assessment

(Practitioner s and children)			Use boundaries to avoid unsuitable areas. Ensure suitable shoes are worn.		co- ordinator, setting practitioners carrying out the task.
Flooding in the outside area (Practitioner s and children)	Drowning, Tripping	Medium	Use boundaries to avoid unsuitable areas. Risk assess the area to ensure it isn't over flooded. Wear appropriate shoes and clothes.	Low	Setting Leader, Risk assessment co- ordinator, setting practitioners carrying out the task and Parent's to provide the children with appropriate shoes and clothes.
Animal faeces	Illness, upset tummy	Medium	Practitioner to ensure the area is free of faeces	Low	Practitioner and setting risk assessment

(Practitioner s and children)			before starting the activity.		co- ordinator.
The step to outside	Falling, tripping slipping	Medium	Ensure suitable shoes are worn. Ensure the step is clear of tripping hazards Ensure the step is checked on the daily risk assessments and are safe for use (e.g. gritted in icy conditions).	Low	Setting Leader, Risk assessment co-ordinator, setting practitioners carrying out the task, Parents to provide the children with suitable shoes, Care taken to clear the steps

Environmental Audit

Activity: Bug Hunt

<u>Environmental feature</u>	<u>Potential Issue</u>	<u>Prevention of damage</u>	<u>Resources Needed</u>	<u>Who is responsible?</u>
Bugs	Stepping on the bugs, dropping large natural resources on the bugs such as stones and sticks, picking up the bugs and removing them from their habitat.	Practitioners and children to be careful where they are stepping and with natural resources that are moved, looking out for bugs and creatures. Return all bugs to where they were found and avoid removing them if possible.	N/A	Setting leader and practitioners.
Tree, grass, flower, brambles and any other plant	Picking the plants from the ground, stepping on the plants.	Remind the practitioners and children not to pick or snap plants.	N/A	Setting Leader and practitioners

		Use different areas to prevent stamping out plant life.		
Litter	Pollution.	Ensure all resources are taken back to the setting and not left in the natural environment.	Bags to take the resources back to the setting.	Setting leader and practitioners



On evaluating the activity, the first thing to note is that the activity was a success and enabled some children to meet the learning objectives. These learning objectives were taken from the Welsh government Foundation Phase Framework FPP (2015) which included being able to count to five which was achieved by children counting the bugs legs. The Welsh language was also achieved as children were able to speak clearly, using simple words, greetings and expressions. This activity was set up in an outdoor environment which according to Parson (2011), outdoor play can give children the opportunity to be creative, encourage imagination and improve social skills. She goes on to say that natural play areas offer sensory stimuli and physical opportunities which is vital for children's development. White (2014) agrees with Parsons (2011) and informs us that too many children have little or no contact with nature and this could be as adults do not recognise the importance of outdoor play.

White (2014) then goes on to say that children need experience small scale experiences of the living world around them.

Knight, S. (2012) says that learning that takes place in the outdoor environment for example the bug investigation, say there are many benefits to outdoor learning including health, wellbeing and the exploration of the natural surrounding environment essential for children curiosity and also offers the opportunity for children to take greater risks. According to Dietze and Kashin 2018 young children's outdoor play serves important and diverse purposes, including physical exercise and opportunities for growth in all developmental areas.

It is important that we follow the curriculum FPP 2015 as the Welsh government have invested into the curriculum which promotes and recognises the importance of the outdoor play. The Welsh assembly government 2014 states in their First steps outdoor that outdoor experiences should be fun, exciting, stimulating and safe environment which promote children's development and natural curiosity, and this should be done by learning through first hand experiences. They also suggest that outdoor learning can support a child's development holistically and give the child new experiences that they wouldn't normally get indoors. Whilst doing bug investigating, children are able to explore various natural materials, textures and smells.

The bug investigation activity is suitable for all weather as long as precautions are taken, and risk assessment carried out. These measures would be sun cream in warm weather to reduce the risk of sun damage and when wet weather occurs ensuring wetsuits or coats and appropriate shoes such as wellies are worn. Waller et al 2017 tell us that children enjoy being in the outdoors and the challenges of finding different creepy crawlies and being in the outdoor environment is fundamental to their learning experiences as long they are not getting hurt or wet.

Wearing appropriate clothing ensure children are safe at play and promotes their well-being and general health, Tassoni (2006). Tassoni (2006) informs us of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and details each need. She states the importance of appropriate clothing as Maslow's first need is food, water and shelter, this first part of the Maslow's pyramid of needs are met by providing appropriate clothing sheltering the children from the element in the outdoor environment. If the lower basic needs of the pyramid are not met it is highly unlikely that children will have their other needs met for example their social and emotional needs. Clothing is also needed to ensure practitioner and children are adhering to the settings own health and safety policies and the daily, visual and activity specific risk assessments carried out by staff, as to promote safety at play, the risk assessment states that appropriate shoes and coats or wetsuit must be worn when the weather is wet or alternatively appropriate attire suitable to the seasons.

According to Bilton 2010, practitioners not only enjoy outdoor learning but also benefits the children and staff in many ways such as physiologically, physically, psychologically and socially, not only does the outdoor benefit us physically but also mentally.

The activity was adult led on this occasion, which according to Tassoni (2006) would have supported the children in the bug hunt, similarly Squire (2007) agrees and informs us that adult led activities not only support children with the use of vocabulary and skills, but also ensure the curriculum is covered during activities and that they are protected from the possibility of injury from bites or scratches when accessing the outdoor environment. However Squire (2007) also informs us that there are disadvantages to this such as children may feel they have failed if they do not reach the targets set, or on the other hand the activity may not be challenging enough for the child which could

result in shorter attention span resulting in staff being appropriately trained in managing behaviour to ensure children's well-being is considered before, throughout and after each activity so that every child is praised for participation. This method was used during the activity as some children had difficulties using the tweezers therefore staff used stickers to praise the children for 'giving it a go'.

On evaluating the activity, improvements could be made on the way the activity was carried out as child-initiated play may have been more beneficial to the children as this may have enabled the children to gain an understanding of the activity through their own spontaneous adventure. (Woods 2017).

The role of the adult can be complex and can demand many different responsibilities according to Rose and Rogers (2012). The Child Centred Approach (2015) say that adult-led activities are activities that have been selected by adults but also tell us that we should ensure all activities are child-centred, which means making sure that activities encourage children to take learning into their own hands, instead of being directed by a practitioner.

The concept of Child centred play is commonly associated with Froebel Child-cantered pedagogy. (Rose and Rogers, 2012).

The role of the practitioner in this activity was to scaffold, support and extend children's learning. Vygotsky's theory supports this as he says that in order for children to reach the full potential, they need a more knowledgeable practitioners or peers to guide them. (Colwell 2015).

However in comparison (Tovey, 2017) looks at Froebel's approach which concentrates on characteristics such as playing and exploring where children have the opportunity to have a go for themselves, active learning where children concentrate for longer periods as they encounter difficulties and challenges and also thinking critically where children develop and make links in their own ideas and problem solve and make strategies for doing things.

In agreement to this approach is Montessori's methods, a central idea that children have within them the power they need to develop themselves. That children learn

through interacting with their environment and is done sub-consciously. Isaacs (2018) explain that children need to be active in their own dynamic experience within the world around them. With this in mind as practitioners we should be providing the children with carefully prepared environment in which to meet their particular development needs. Enabling them to connect to their surrounding environment via careful observation in order for them to build on their own learning through their own activities.

In the same way Reggio believe that children and practitioners should have a relationship where both are viewed as equals according to Thornton and Brunton (2014). Reggio also emphasises the importance of the environment in order to support children's development, play and learning enhancing the child's creativity.

The activity plan advocates extended learning and lessening the activity depending on the child's well-being and involvement. This can be measured by using the Leavers wellbeing and involvement scale according to Early learning HQ (2018). The knowledge a child takes in is enhanced by the level of wellbeing and involvement during the activity.

All these elements are especially important when working with children with additional learning needs.

The activity also links to the Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) which are highlighted in seven key areas by the Welsh government (2017). This is important to discuss with children and staff and to make them aware of current global issues, as our children are the next generation and will be responsible for looking after our planet as highlighted by the Welsh Assembly Government (2017). The environmental audit details the steps in which we can take to protect the environment this ensures all practitioner and children respect and care for the natural world around us. The ESDGC looks to find ways in which to raise awareness and actions to address climate change, poverty, conflict and consumer pressure. It also links to the local and global implications of everything we do and the actions that individuals and organisations can take in response to local and global issues.

Loose parts can also be taken into consideration when thinking about the environmental sustainability. Loose parts were originally created by Simon Nicholson in 1971 as he believed everyone had the potential to be creative and that loose parts invited imagination. Loose parts are unexpected, upcycled and natural resources that can be moved, carries, combines, redesigned, taken apart and put back together again in various different ways (Daly and Beloglovsky 2016). They are a resources and materials that have no specific set of directions and can be used alone or in combination with other resources. When used in the outdoor environment we can use a collection of loose parts such as:

- Stones
- Stumps
- Sand
- Gravel
- Fabric
- Twigs
- Wood
- Pallets
- Baskets
- Logs
- Rope
- Tyres
- Shells

This could also be used to promote Froebel's child-centred approach as loose parts have many purposes and allow children them to use resources in whatever way they choose. They can be adapted and manipulated, spark creativity and imagination as well as enhance the development of children more than the average plastic toy. Loose parts also encourage open ended learning.

Closely related to loose parts are the Curiosity Approach is a modern-day approach to early childhood. Taking segments from Reggio, Steiner, Te Whāriki and a little of Montessori (Hellyn and Bennett 2018).

According to Hellyn and Bennett 2018, one of the biggest issues with plastic resources is that they don't teach children any consequences. Therefore, children may throw plastic toys and they may not break, this could lead the child to leaving it on the floor without considering picking it back up. As part of the Curiosity Approach ceramic or china is now being introduced to setting which allows children to begin learning about the consequences of throwing toys. This is not only important for children to respect and value materials and resources but also teaches them to care for the planet.

The Curiosity Approach highlights the importance of respecting our environment but also health and safety element, improving the children's and practitioners risk analysis and also links to the ESDGC.

Parsons (2011), Bilton (2010) and Knight (2011) all agree that it is at the utmost importance that all children are safeguarded by practitioner throughout the use of the outdoor environment ensuring that risk and harm are prevented. The risk assessment undertaken by following the setting policies and procedures gives the staff a detailed procedure in regard to health and safety of the outdoor environment and the staffing required. This is also linked to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

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