

LEARNING THREADS FOR THE EYFS

*Practical activities
for 3-5 year olds*

ELEANOR HOSKINS

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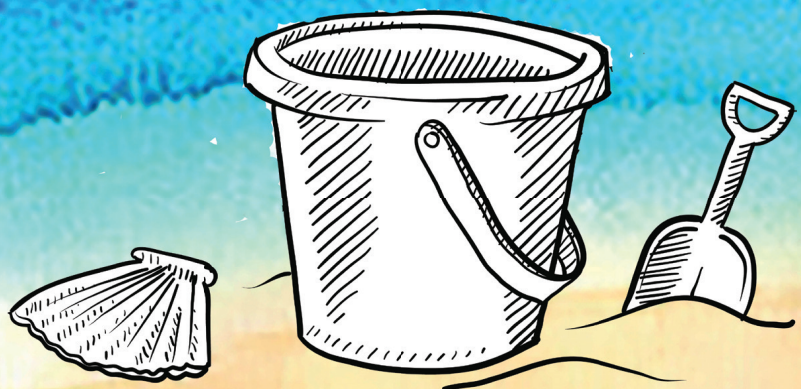
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CHAPTER 1

LEARNING THREAD
BEACHES AND BLUE SEAS



Beaches and Blue Seas

In this chapter

In this chapter, you will find activities related to beaches, holidays and underwater sea worlds. This learning thread links to:

- sensory discovery and exploration through activities such as 'secret shells' and 'mysteries of the sea'
- imaginative discovery via 'underwater world'
- exploration and construction through 'splendid sand'
- reflections upon experiences from the children's world through 'happy holidays!' and 'wish you were here' activities.

The activities in this chapter will help you to work towards:

- encouraging children to reflect upon experiences from the world around them and express this imaginatively and creatively
- developing children's sensory processing and skills through exploration and discovery.

Activities

Activity	Page	Provision
1 <i>Secret shells</i>	3	Continuous provision indoors or outdoors
2 <i>Underwater world</i>	9	Continuous provision indoors or outdoors
3 <i>Happy holidays!</i>	15	Continuous provision indoors
4 <i>Splendid sand</i>	21	Continuous provision indoors or outdoors
5 <i>Wish you were here!</i>	27	Continuous provision indoors or outdoors
6 <i>Mysteries of the sea</i>	33	Continuous provision indoors or outdoors

Role-play area links:

- Travel agents
- Under the sea play area with blue voile curtains so children can 'swim' in and out, pebbles, sea creature toys, sea creature masks, mask and snorkels
- Beach area (outdoors) with sand, deckchairs, windbreak, parasol, etc.

Activity 1 Secret shells

Activity outline and preparation

This sensory activity encourages the children to predict and discover through their sense of touch using a feely bag or box. The feely box or bag needs to be big enough so the children can easily touch and feel (with both hands if possible) a selection of shaped shells. The activity is intended to develop children's descriptive vocabulary in relation to what they 'feel' therefore aim to secure the box or bag so the children are not tempted to 'look' instead.

Resources

- Secure feely box/es or bag/s
- Selection of different shaped and sized shells to place inside the box/bag - try to source starfish and sea urchins as well as these have unusual textures and shapes
- Shell word wall and Post-it notes
- Pencils

Preparation

- Create a secure feely box or bag so the children can place one or two hands inside and feel but not see. Add different sized and shaped shells.
- Create a shell word wall with pre-labelled 'texture' adjectives (feely words) e.g. smooth, spiky, soft, etc. on Post-it notes (30-50 months) or blank Post-it notes (40-60+ months).

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Activity development

ESSENTIAL LITERACY AND MATHEMATICS DEVELOPMENT			
PRIME AREAS	Development guidance	SPECIFIC AREAS	Development guidance
COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE	<p>Listening and attention</p> <p>30-50 months Focusing attention - still listen and do, but can shift own attention (<i>listening to others while exploring shells</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Two-channelled attention - can listen and do for short span ELG Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity. (<i>simultaneous listening and exploring of shells in boxes or bags</i>)</p>	LITERACY	<p>Reading</p> <p>30-50 months Knows information can be relayed in the form of print (<i>texture adjectives on shell word wall</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Begins to read words and simple sentences. (<i>texture adjectives on shell word wall</i>) ELG Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read. (<i>texture adjectives on shell word wall</i>)</p>
			<p>Writing</p> <p>30-50 months Sometimes gives meaning to marks as they draw and paint. (<i>some children may add marks to Post-it notes</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Uses some clearly identifiable letters to communicate meaning, representing some sounds correctly and in sequence. ELG Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences, which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible. (<i>sounding out phonetically plausible texture adjectives to add to Post-it notes</i>)</p>
	<p>Understanding</p> <p>30-50 months Shows understanding of prepositions such as 'under', 'on top', 'behind' by carrying out an action or selecting correct picture. (<i>understanding how to locate shells in box or bag</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion. ELG Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events. (<i>responding to others' ideas while exploring shells and following basic instructions about feeling shells in box or bag</i>)</p>	MATHEMATICS	<p>Numbers</p> <p>30-50 months Uses some number names and number language spontaneously (<i>spontaneous use of number language related to shells, e.g. counting of starfish legs</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Estimates how many objects they can see and checks by counting them (<i>estimation and spontaneous counting of shells in the box or bag while exploring</i>)</p>
<p>Speaking</p> <p>30-50 months Uses vocabulary focused on objects and people that are of particular importance to them. Builds up vocabulary that reflects the breadth of their experiences. (<i>development and use of vocabulary related to shells and textures</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Extends vocabulary, especially by grouping and naming, exploring the meaning and sounds of new words (<i>vocabulary related to shells and textures</i>) ELG Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events. (<i>while exploring shells alongside others</i>)</p>	<p>Shape, space and measure</p> <p>30-50 months Beginning to talk about shapes of everyday objects (<i>while feeling shell shapes in box or bag</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Can describe their relative position such as 'behind' or 'next to' ELG Children use everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money to compare quantities and objects and to solve problems. They recognise, create and describe patterns. They explore characteristics of everyday objects and shapes and use mathematical language to describe them. (<i>using everyday and some mathematical language whilst exploring and feeling shell shapes in box or bag</i>)</p>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING	Suggested outcomes
Playing and exploring – engagement	Using sense of touch to explore and describe shells
Active learning – motivation	Persistence while exploring shells in feely box or bag
Creating and thinking critically – thinking	Making links between touch, textures and describing vocabulary

Planning: Blended prime and specific learning

PRIME AREAS	Development guidance	SPECIFIC AREAS	Development guidance
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	<p>Moving and handling</p> <p>40-60+ months Begins to form recognisable letters. Uses a pencil and holds it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed (<i>while adding texture adjectives to Post-it notes</i>)</p>	UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD	<p>People and communities</p>
			<p>The world</p> <p>30-50 months Comments and asks questions about aspects of their familiar world such as the place where they live or the natural world (<i>shells from their natural world</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Looks closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change ELG Children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes. (<i>recognition of similarities and differences in shell textures</i>)</p>
			<p>Technology</p>
PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	<p>Health and self-care</p>	EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND DESIGN	<p>Exploring and using media and materials</p> <p>30-50 months Beginning to be interested in and describe the texture of things (<i>interested and describing shell textures</i>) ELG Children sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing them. They safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function. (<i>exploration of materials via shell textures and form in feely box or bag</i>)</p>
			<p>Being imaginative</p>
<p>Making relationships</p> <p>30-50 months Initiates play, offering cues to peers to join them (<i>encouraging others to join in exploring shells in feely boxes or bags</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Initiates conversations, attends to and takes account of what others say. ELG Children play co-operatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity. They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and other children. (<i>conversations while exploring while taking turns with feely boxes or bags</i>)</p>	<p>Self-confidence and self-awareness</p> <p>30-50 months Confident to talk to other children when playing (<i>confidence discussing shell textures</i>) ELG Children are confident to try new activities, and say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or don't need help. (<i>confidence exploring shells in feely boxes or bags</i>)</p>	<p>Managing feelings and behaviour</p> <p>30-50 months Begins to accept the need to and can take turns and share resources, sometimes with support from others (<i>while sharing feely boxes or bags</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Aware of the boundaries set and behavioural expectations in the setting (<i>aware of behaviour while exploring shells and boxes/bags</i>) ELG Children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class, and understand and follow the rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations, and take changes of routine in their stride. (<i>working within a group sharing feely boxes or bags and discussing ideas about shells and textures</i>)</p>	

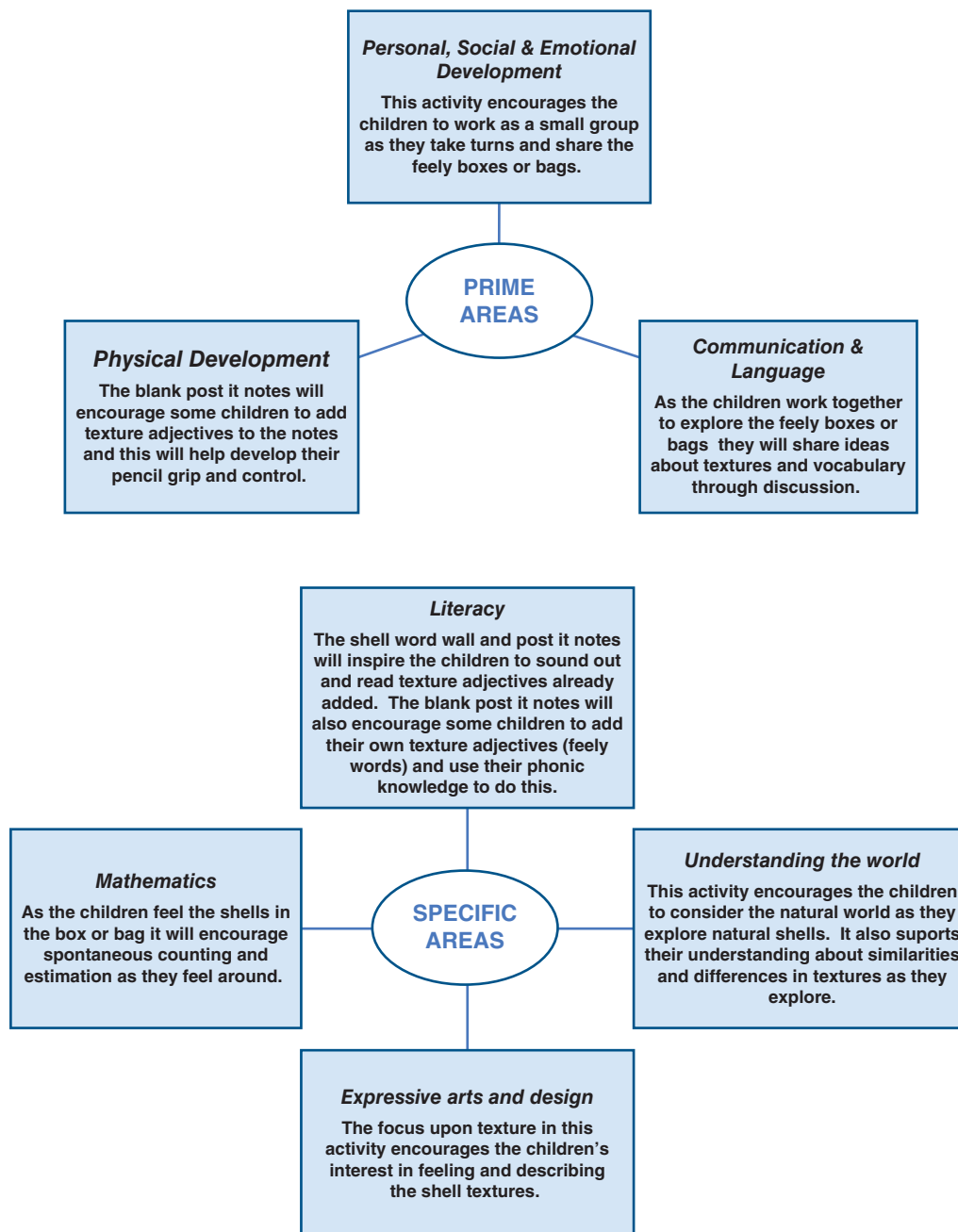
Activity guidance

This is a continuous provision activity that aims to develop children's descriptive vocabulary through sensory exploration.

Organise the feely boxes or bags and prepare the shell word wall with Post-it notes nearby.

To initiate interest ask some children to try the feely box/bag and talk about what they can feel inside. Scaffold their description by asking questions such as 'what does it feel like?' 'What words would describe the object?' Encourage the children to feel and describe as opposed to guessing what the object is.

After children have independently explored for a while, return to the activity to encourage some children to record on Post-it notes and add to the shell word wall.



Possible next steps and opportunities for further development

Feely trays

To consolidate textures and feeling further, repeat the activity using trays or baskets to add variety and focus upon new objects to discover. Fruits and vegetables are good for textures and shapes.

Some children will benefit from other sensory activities that encourage feeling textures such as exploration of sensory baskets.

Creative textures

Explore textures further through creative activities such as shell and fruit printing (pineapples and avocados are great for this) or rubbings.

Final thoughts and reflections

Observation and observational skills are crucial but consider how this sense can also dominate. This activity encourages the children to 'feel' instead of 'look' (observe) and this develops the children's sense of touch without the influence of sight.

Consider the impact of developing early vocabulary to ensure language gaps do not occur. This activity focuses upon feeling and describing while the shell word wall helps to capture some of the vocabulary.

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Activity 2 Underwater world

Activity outline and preparation

This sensory activity encourages the children to play imaginatively as they create and explore an underwater world in the water tray.

It is a good idea to share an underwater story with the children before they begin in order to ignite their interest and imagination.

To create the underwater world, the children will need a water tray or water tanks as well as sea creature plastic toys, pebbles and foliage.

Resources

- Water tray or water tanks (you can use cheap, plastic fish tanks)
- Plastic sea creatures (labelled)
- Foliage (real pond weed works well or use artificial foliage)
- Pebbles and small rocks
- Food colouring (if you wish to change the colour of the water)
- Paper, pencils, crayons
- Underwater stories such as *Fidgety Fish*, *Smiley Shark*, Octonaut stories or poems such as 'Commotion in the Ocean'

Preparation

- Half fill the water tray or small tanks with water and add colouring if you wish to add colour to the water.
- Label plastic sea creatures and ensure pebbles and rocks are clean. Organise foliage (wash if using real foliage) and any other resources for the children to choose and use. Arrange these resources in baskets near the water tray.
- Arrange paper, pencils and crayons next to the activity so children can create underwater pictures.

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Activity development

ESSENTIAL LITERACY AND MATHEMATICS DEVELOPMENT			
PRIME AREAS	Development guidance	SPECIFIC AREAS	Development guidance
COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE	Listening and attention	LITERACY	Reading 30-50 months <i>Listens and joins in with stories and poems, one to one and also in small groups.</i> <i>Listens to stories with increasing attention and recall (underwater stories or poems shared before activity begins)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Hears and says the initial sound in words.</i> <i>Can segment sounds in simple words and blend them together and knows which letters represent some of them</i> ELG Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read. <i>(segmenting and using other phonic skills to read plastic sea creature labels)</i>
			Writing 30-50 months <i>Sometimes gives meaning to marks as they draw and paint. (some children may add mark-making to underwater sea picture)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Gives meaning to marks they make as they draw, write and paint.</i> ELG Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible. <i>(mark-making and sounding out phonetically plausible words to underwater sea picture)</i>
	Under-standing	MATHEMATICS	Numbers 30-50 months <i>Knows that numbers identify how many objects are in a set (links between numbers and counting of sea creatures in set)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Estimates how many objects they can see and checks by counting them (estimation and spontaneous counting of pebbles, rocks and sea creatures while imaginatively playing with an underwater world)</i> ELG Children count reliably with numbers from one to 20, place them in order and say which number is one more or one less than a given number. Using quantities and objects, they add and subtract two single-digit numbers and count on or back to find the answer. They solve problems, including doubling, halving and sharing. <i>(counting reliably to 20 whilst arranging sea creatures and other resources in an underwater world.)</i>
			Shape, space and measure 30-50 months <i>Shows an interest in shape and space by playing with shapes or making arrangements with objects (exploring shapes while building an underwater world)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Can describe their relative position such as 'behind' or 'next to'</i> ELG Children use everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money to compare quantities and objects and to solve problems. They recognise, create and describe patterns. They explore characteristics of everyday objects and shapes and use mathematical language to describe them. <i>(using everyday language to talk whilst positioning objects in underwater world and exploring all object shapes)</i>
	Speaking	MATHEMATICS	30-50 months <i>Uses vocabulary focused on objects and people that are of particular importance to them.</i> <i>Builds up vocabulary that reflects the breadth of their experiences. (development and use of vocabulary related to story and underwater)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Uses language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences in play situations (language inspired by an underwater story during imaginative play in an underwater world)</i> ELG Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events. <i>(connections between an underwater story and imaginative play in an underwater world)</i>

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING	Suggested outcomes
Playing and exploring – engagement	Engaging in open ended imaginative water play
Active learning – motivation	Paying attention to detail while arranging underwater world
Creating and thinking critically – thinking	Making links between story ideas and imaginative water play

Planning: Blended prime and specific learning

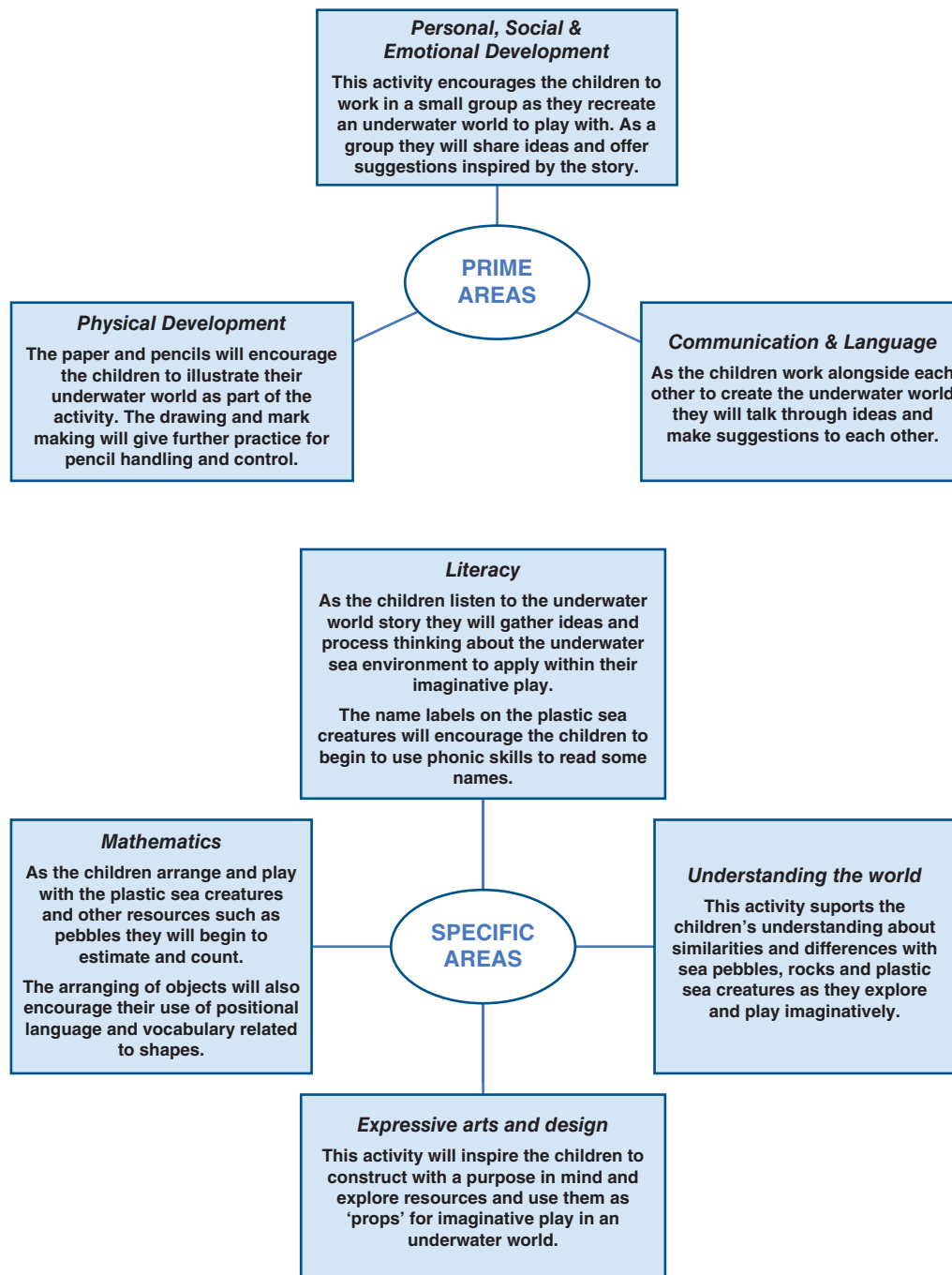
PRIME AREAS		Development guidance	SPECIFIC AREAS		Development guidance	
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	Moving and handling	<p>30-50 months Holds pencil between thumb and two fingers, no longer using whole-hand grasp. (<i>while mark-making and drawing underwater picture</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Begins to form recognisable letters. Uses a pencil and holds it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. ELG Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing. (<i>handling equipment whilst mark-making and word-writing on underwater sea picture</i>)</p>	UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD	People and communities		
		The world		<p>30-50 months Can talk about some of the things they have observed such as plants, animals, natural and found objects (<i>plastic sea creatures, rocks, pebbles and foliage to create underwater world</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Looks closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change ELG Children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes. (<i>observations and recognition of some similarities/differences of plastic sea creatures, rocks and foliage whilst creating underwater world</i>)</p>		
		Technology				
		Health and self-care	<p>30-50 months Understands that equipment and tools have to be used safely (<i>awareness about playing safely in the water and trying to keep the floor dry</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Practises some appropriate safety measures without direct supervision (<i>understanding about playing safely in the water and not leaving wet toys or other resources on the floor where others could slip</i>)</p>	EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND DESIGN	Exploring and using media and materials	<p>30-50 months Beginning to be interested in and describe the texture of things (<i>interested and describing pebble, rock and foliage textures</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Constructs with a purpose in mind, using a variety of resources (<i>using variety of resources for creation of underwater world, inspired by story and using imagination</i>)</p>
			Being imaginative		<p>30-50 months Uses available resources to create props to support role-play (<i>use of resources to create underwater world to play with</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Introduces a storyline or narrative into their play (<i>while imaginatively playing with underwater world</i>)</p>	
	PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Making relationships	<p>30-50 months Initiates play, offering cues to peers to join them (<i>encouraging others to join in exploring shells in feely boxes or bags</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Initiates conversations, attends to and takes account of what others say ELG Children play co-operatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity. They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and other children. (<i>conversations whilst exploring and taking turns with feely boxes or bags</i>)</p>			
Self-confidence and self-awareness		<p>30-50 months Confident to talk to other children when playing, and will communicate freely about own home and community. (<i>confidence when discussing shell textures and ideas related to this</i>)</p> <p>ELG Children are confident to try new activities, and say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or don't need help. (<i>confidence trying the activity and when exploring shells in feely boxes or bags</i>)</p>				
Managing feelings and behaviour		<p>30-50 months Begins to accept needs and can take turns and share resources, sometimes with support from others (<i>while sharing feely boxes or bags</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Aware of the boundaries set and behavioural expectations in the setting (<i>aware of behaviour while exploring shells and boxes/bags</i>) ELG Children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class, and understand and follow the rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations, and take changes of routine in their stride. (<i>working within a group sharing feely boxes or bags sensibly</i>)</p>				

Activity guidance

This is a continuous provision sensory activity that aims to develop children's imaginative play.

Prepare the water tray and organise labelled plastic sea creatures, pebbles, rocks, foliage and other items in baskets nearby. Ensure blank paper, pencils and crayons are available near the activity.

To initiate interest gather a small group of children to share an underwater story such as *Fidgety Fish* or *Smiley Shark*. While sharing the story, draw attention to the underwater sea environment. Once the story is complete, ask the children whether they could create an underwater world similar to the story. Show the children the resources and explain that paper and crayons are available to capture a picture afterwards.



Possible next steps and opportunities for further development

Further imaginative play

To consolidate imaginative play within the water further, explore adding new resources such as a cave or castle (use fish tank toys or familiar sea toys such as Octonaut toys) to encourage the children to play out new ideas and stories. Another twist on this activity is to replace the water tray with a paddling pool so children can explore with shoes and socks off. This will need closer supervision for safety though!

The sensory element to the underwater play will benefit some children more than others. For those who are ready, consider the vocabulary and writing that can develop from repeated consolidation of imaginative play within a common theme.

Links to events

Imaginative play can also take a new turn when linked to events from the world around us. Consider stories from the news, e.g. an oil spillage in the sea, to pose a problem for the children to solve. Add black food colouring to the water and encourage the children to work as a group to save and clean the sea creatures from the underwater, now polluted, world.

Final thoughts and reflections

Reflect upon children engaging in imaginative play inspired by stories. In addition to this, consider how the use of 'props' helps to recreate story ideas, adding direction and opportunities to develop related vocabulary.

Consider the importance of imaginative play linked with problem-solving and real-life events. Adding real-life purpose will often capture the children's interest and build in new motivation.

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Activity 3 Happy holidays!

Activity outline and preparation

This activity inspires the children to reflect upon a happy holiday or other family times and to share these memories. It involves creating a group or class photo album so children can add their own family holiday photo alongside illustrations and marks. If there are children in the setting who do not have any family holiday photos then encourage a photo related to another family time, e.g. a day visit to a zoo, theme park or a trip to the cinema or theatre.

Resources

- Group or class blank photo album - use a blank scrapbook so there is plenty of space on each page for children to add their photos alongside illustrations or other marks
- Complete the first page/s with a WAGOLL ('What A Good One Looks Like') by adding a/ some staff family photos with simple illustrations and words/simple sentences to begin
- Pencils, crayons
- Glue, scissors

Preparation

- Organise or create the group/class photo album.
- Ask the children to bring in one holiday family photo/other family visit photo or request emailed photos. Set time aside to collect the photos or print these off with the children in preparation for the activity.

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Activity development

ESSENTIAL LITERACY AND MATHEMATICS DEVELOPMENT				
PRIME AREAS		Development guidance	SPECIFIC AREAS	Development guidance
COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE	Listening and attention	<p>30-50 months</p> <p>Listens to stories with increasing attention and recall (<i>shared discussion stories about family holidays in conjunction with photos</i>)</p> <p>ELG Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity. (<i>listening and sharing discussion stories about family times in conjunction with photos</i>)</p>	LITERACY	<p>Reading</p> <p>30-50 months</p> <p>Holds books the correct way up and turns pages (<i>handling of class photo album</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months</p> <p>Begins to read words and simple sentences</p> <p>ELG Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read. (<i>reading of others' words or simple sentences in class photo album</i>)</p>
		<p>Writing</p> <p>30-50 months</p> <p>Sometimes give meaning to marks as they draw and paint (<i>some children may add mark-making and illustrations alongside family photo</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months</p> <p>Gives meaning to marks they make as they draw, write and paint</p> <p>ELG Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible. (<i>mark-making and sounding out phonetically plausible words or simple sentences alongside family photo in album</i>).</p>		
	Understanding	<p>30-50 months</p> <p>Responds to simple instructions (<i>instructions/guidance - sticking photo in album and adding an illustration or marks</i>)</p> <p>ELG Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events. (<i>following simple instructions/guidance regarding sticking photo in album and adding illustrations, words or simple sentences</i>)</p>	MATHEMATICS	<p>Numbers</p> <p>30-50 months</p> <p>Uses some number names and number language spontaneously (<i>while looking at photos in album, e.g. these are my 'two' sisters</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months</p> <p>Recognise some numerals of personal significance. (<i>while discussing own and others' family photos in the album, e.g. these are my 'two' sisters</i>)</p>
Speaking	<p>30-50 months</p> <p>Beginning to use more complex sentences to link thoughts (<i>while talking a little about family photo</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months</p> <p>Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events (<i>while talking about family photo</i>)</p> <p>ELG Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events. (<i>talking about family photo and future related events</i>)</p>	<p>Shape, space and measure</p> <p>30-50 months</p> <p>Shows awareness of similarities of shapes in the environment (<i>while discussing their own and others' photos in the album</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months</p> <p>Orders and sequences familiar events.</p> <p>Uses everyday language related to time.</p> <p>ELG Children use everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money to compare quantities and objects and to solve problems. They recognise, create and describe patterns. They explore characteristics of everyday objects and shapes and use mathematical language to describe them. (<i>in relation to time whilst discussing own family photo</i>)</p>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING	Suggested outcomes
Playing and exploring – engagement	Showing curiosity about other children's families and their family events.
Active learning – motivation	Maintaining focus while adding their photo to the album.
Creating and thinking critically – thinking	Thinking of memories and ideas to accompany family photo in album.

Planning: Blended prime and specific learning

PRIME AREAS		Development guidance	SPECIFIC AREAS	Development guidance
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	Moving and handling	<p>30-50 months Holds pencil between thumb and two fingers, no longer using whole-hand grasp (while mark-making and drawing alongside family photo in album)</p> <p>40-60+ months Begins to form recognisable letters. Uses a pencil and holds it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed</p> <p>ELG Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing. (using equipment whilst illustrating, mark-making and writing simple word/sentences alongside family photo in album)</p>	UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD	<p>People and communities</p> <p>30-50 months Remembers and talks about significant events in their own experience. (recall and discussion of family happy memories). ELG Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children don't always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions. (discussion about happy family memories)</p>
		<p>The world</p> <p>Technology</p> <p>30-50 months Knows that information can be retrieved from computers. (supporting children with retrieval of photos to print from emails) ELG Children recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes. (supported retrieval of photos from emails)</p>		
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	Health and self-care		EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND DESIGN	<p>Exploring and using media and materials</p> <p>Being imaginative</p>
PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Making relationships	<p>30-50 months Initiates play, offering cues to peers to join them (encouraging others to add to the photo album and sharing their photos)</p> <p>40-60+ months Initiates conversations, attends to and takes account of what others say</p> <p>ELG Children play co-operatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity. They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and other children. (taking turns co-operatively with the photo album)</p>		
	Self-confidence and self-awareness	<p>30-50 months Can select and use activities and resources with help (adding to the album with some help if required)</p> <p>ELG Children are confident to try new activities, and say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or don't need help. (confidence adding photo to the album and associated illustrations and mark-makings. Asking for help if they need it.)</p>		
	Managing feelings and behaviour	<p>30-50 months Begins to accept the need and can take turns and share resources, sometimes with support from others (sharing of photo album and resources, taking turns to add their photo)</p> <p>ELG Children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class, and understand and follow the rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations, and take changes of routine in their stride. (taking turns with photo album and understanding behaviour expectations with the album e.g. not to write on other children's photos/illustrations)</p>		

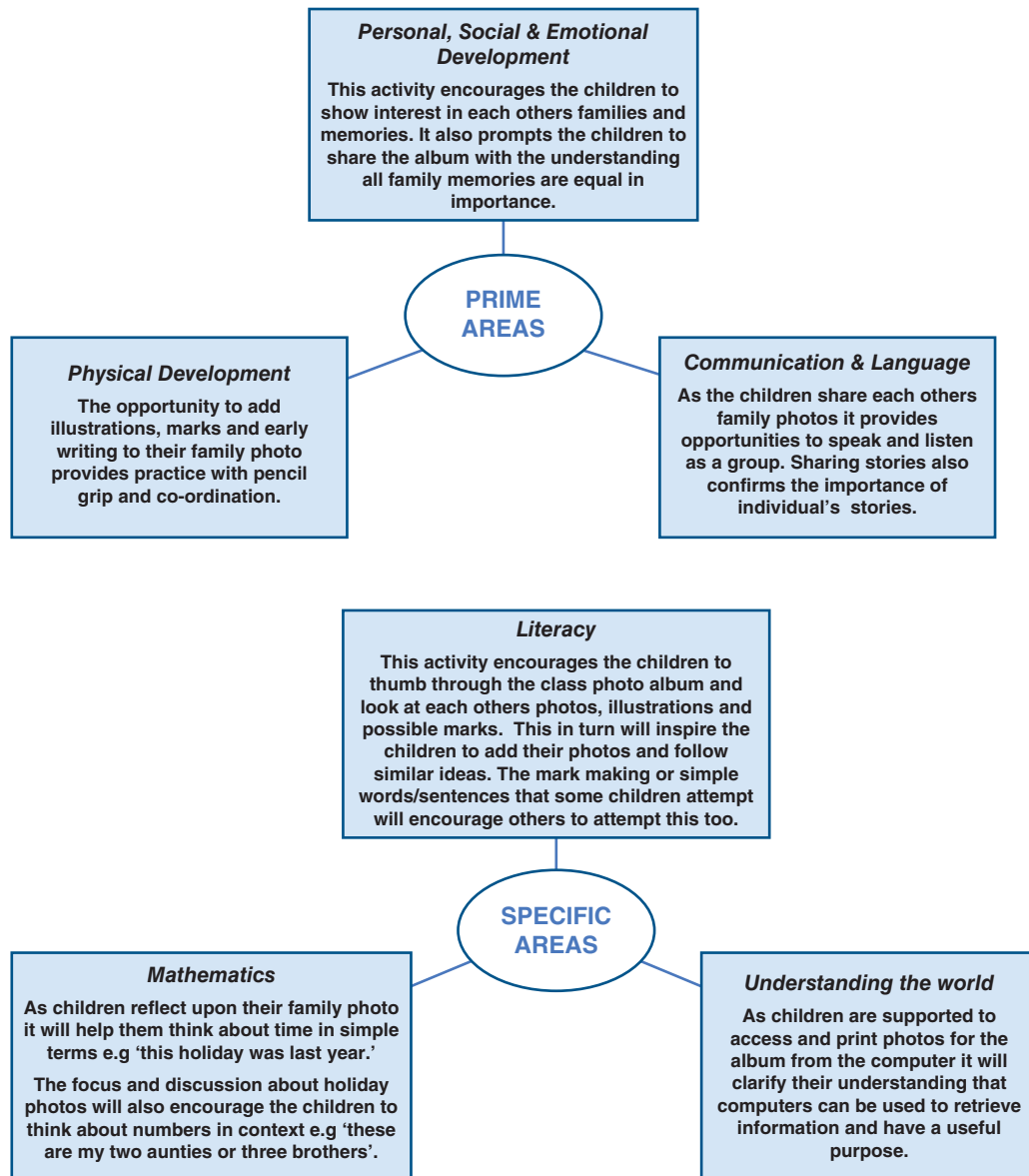
Activity guidance

This is a continuous provision activity that encourages children to reflect upon events from their own and others' family lives.

Organise the class/group photo album and begin by adding an example or some examples of staff family photos and simple words or short sentences. Work with children individually to print out any photos from emails after sending requests to parents and carers.

Set up the photo album with glue, scissors, pencils and crayons nearby.

To initiate interest chat to children about happy family holidays and use the photos you have received to structure this brief discussion. Encourage children to talk about their family photo and memories from the photo. Share the album with inserts from staff to provide an encouraging WAGOLL and explain how children can stick a photo on their own page and add drawings and words if they wish.



Possible next steps and opportunities for further development

Family stories

To further encourage children to talk about their family photo and associated memories, record their individual comments via short video shots. These can then be displayed via a video loop alongside the photo album.

Consider the impact of opportunities for further talk associated with the photos. Encouraging the children to keep talking about their photos will continue to develop their communication skills through the sharing of special family memories alongside a constant recap over mathematics in context via language associated with time and quantities.

Holidays in the past

To cement an understanding about families and build further upon the strong community links within the original activity, consider inviting grandparents into the setting to share their childhood holiday memories. Talk and photos from holidays 'long ago' will help the children make links with families in the past and further develop their mathematical understanding of time.

Final thoughts and reflections

Consider the strong links with people and communities within this activity. Making firm links with home and the children's familiar world not only adds comfort and familiarity for the children but taps into core principles of early years.

Value the impact of encouraging the children to talk alongside a familiar, structured photo. This will support the children to remember detail and memorable information that can prove difficult for some children from memory alone.

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Activity 4 Splendid sand

Activity outline and preparation

This activity encourages the children to explore shape creation and construction with sand by building different sized and shaped sandcastles. It requires a sand pit or large sand tray and can link to current phonics and mathematics learning through choice of sand play resources – see list below.

Resources

- Sand pit or large sand tray and play sand
- Water to mix with sand - this often works well with water spray bottles. This encourages the children to spray and wet the sand but not soak it
- Different shaped sand buckets
- Flags to add to sandcastles - link this to mathematics by adding numbers to flags. To stretch further consider also adding in flags with + or - and = so number sentences can be constructed on top of the sandcastles. If addition or subtraction flags are used, consider providing counting apparatus also
- Spades, scoops, sieves and other sand play equipment
- Alphabet sand moulds - link this to phonics by adding in letter sand moulds that will spell some simple words related to the current phonic focus

Preparation

- Prepare the sand pit or sand tray with fresh sand and fill water spray bottles.
- Create and laminate number flags.
- Source and organise buckets, spades, scoops and other sand play equipment as well as alphabet sand moulds.
- Consider which alphabet sand moulds to use and ensure correct letters are available to spell words. Consider children's confidence with phonics: do you need to display a list of words they can copy and create?

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Activity development

ESSENTIAL LITERACY AND MATHEMATICS DEVELOPMENT				
PRIME AREAS		Development guidance	SPECIFIC AREAS	Development guidance
COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE	Listening and attention	<p>30-50 months Is able to follow directions (if not directly focused on own choice of activity) (<i>following of simple directions about building sandcastles</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Two-channelled attention - can listen and do for short span</p> <p>ELG Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity. (<i>listening to others around them whilst building sandcastles responding if they choose</i>)</p>	LITERACY	<p>Reading</p> <p>30-50 months Knows information can be relayed in the form of print (<i>displayed list of simple phonic words that children can copy and create with sand moulds</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Begins to read words and simple sentences.</p> <p>ELG Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read. (<i>using phonic knowledge to decode and words from displayed list or words created by sand moulds</i>)</p>
				<p>Writing</p> <p>30-50 months Ascribes meanings to marks that they see in different places (<i>ascribe some meaning to words/partial words moulded in sand by others</i>)</p> <p>ELG Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible. (<i>using phonic knowledge to spell out words created with sand moulds</i>)</p>
				<p>Numbers</p> <p>30-50 months Uses some number names accurately in play (<i>while using number flags to display on sandcastles</i>)</p> <p>ELG Children count reliably with numbers from one to 20, place them in order and say which number is one more or one less than a given number. Using quantities and objects, they add and subtract two single-digit numbers and count on or back to find the answer. They solve problems, including doubling, halving and sharing. (<i>counting and ordering number flags on sandcastles. Some children will also add and subtract two single-digit numbers if number sentence flags are also provided</i>)</p>
	Understanding	<p>30-50 months Understands use of objects (<i>understands and uses correct equipment for digging, moulding and dampening sand</i>)</p> <p>ELG Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events. (<i>following instructions/guidance about how to build sandcastles, add number flags and spell out words</i>)</p>	MATHEMATICS	<p>Shape, space and measure</p> <p>30-50 months Shows an interest in shape and space by playing with shapes or making arrangements with objects (<i>playing with shapes as moulding and constructing with sand and equipment</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Uses familiar objects and common shapes to create and recreate patterns and build models (<i>using sand to build models and create shapes</i>)</p>
				<p>30-50 months Uses vocabulary focused on objects and people that are of particular importance to them (<i>use of vocabulary related to sandcastle building</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events (<i>talking through ideas whilst sandcastle building</i>)</p> <p>ELG Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events. (<i>using narratives and explanations to connect previous experiences of building sandcastles with current activity</i>)</p>
				<p>30-50 months Uses vocabulary focused on objects and people that are of particular importance to them (<i>use of vocabulary related to sandcastle building</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events (<i>talking through ideas whilst sandcastle building</i>)</p> <p>ELG Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events. (<i>using narratives and explanations to connect previous experiences of building sandcastles with current activity</i>)</p>

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING	Suggested outcomes
Playing and exploring – engagement	Engaging in open-ended sandcastle building and construction
Active learning – motivation	Paying attention to detail as they mould sand carefully to create shapes
Creating and thinking critically – thinking	Solving problems and developing ideas until sand is correct moulding consistency

Planning: Blended prime and specific learning

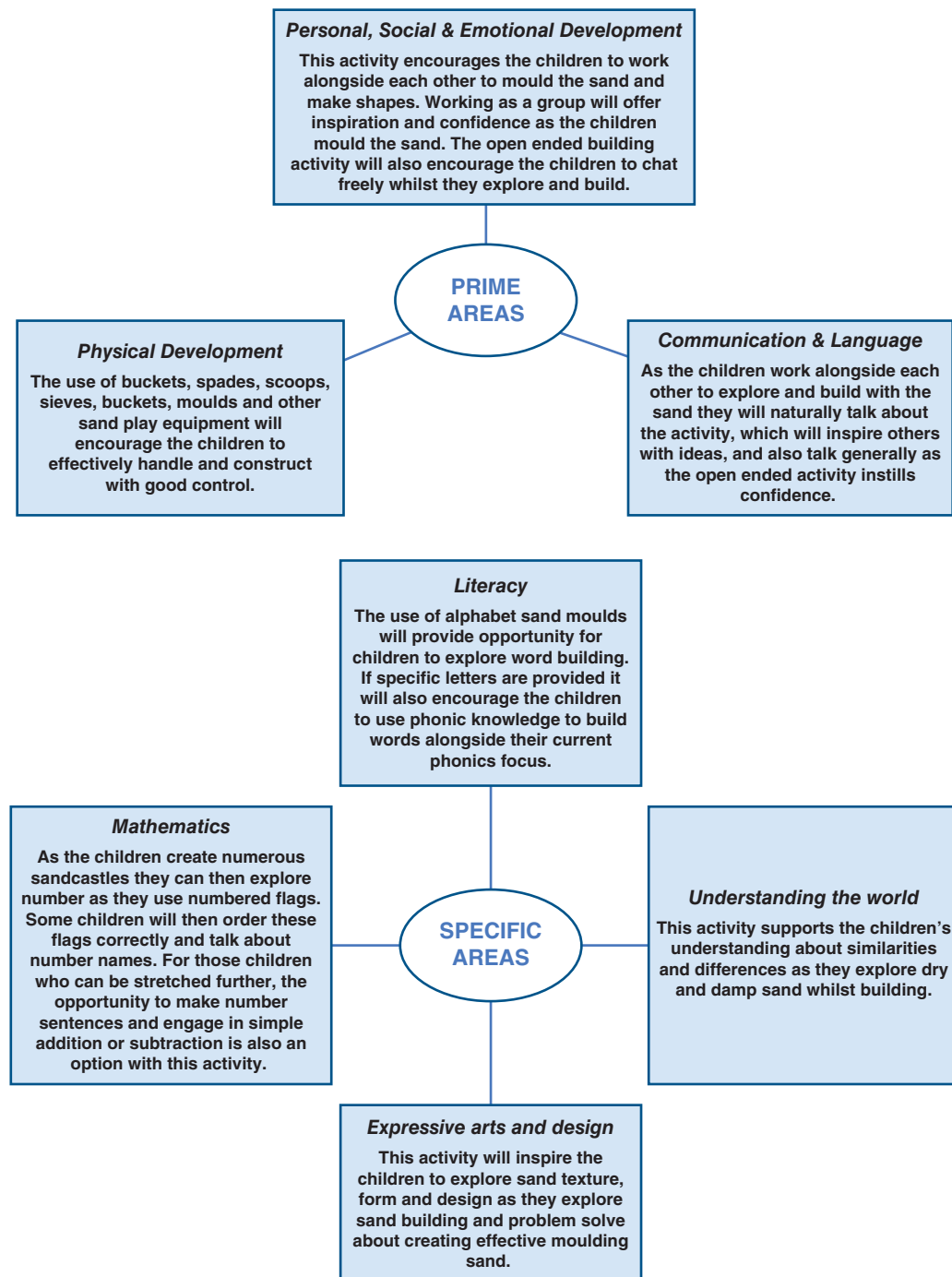
PRIME AREAS	Development guidance	SPECIFIC AREAS	Development guidance
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	<p>Moving and handling</p> <p>30-50 months Uses one-handed tools and equipment (<i>sand play equipment</i>).</p> <p>40-60+ months Uses simple tools to effect changes to materials Handles tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control (<i>sensible use of sand equipment to construct with control</i>) ELG Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing. (<i>effective handling of sand play equipment</i>)</p>	UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD	<p>People and communities</p>
			<p>The world</p> <p>30-50 months Talks about why things happen and how things work. (<i>talk whilst mixing sand with water and moulding</i>) 40-60+ months Looks closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change. ELG Children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes. (<i>exploring similarities and differences whilst exploring dry sand, wet sand, sand moulds and shapes</i>)</p>
			<p>Technology</p>
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	<p>Health and self-care</p> <p>30-50 months Understands that equipment and tools have to be used safely (<i>sand play equipment</i>) 40-60+ months Shows understanding of how to transport and store equipment safely (<i>sand play equipment</i>)</p>	EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND DESIGN	<p>Exploring and using media and materials</p> <p>30-50 months Realises tools can be used for a purpose (<i>sand play equipment and tools</i>) 40-60+ months Manipulates materials to achieve a planned effect Uses simple tools and techniques competently and appropriately Selects tools and techniques needed to shape, assemble and join materials they are using ELG Children sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing them. They safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function. (<i>competently and safely exploring sand design, texture and form with sand play equipment and tools</i>)</p>
			<p>Being imaginative</p>
PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	<p>Making relationships</p> <p>30-50 months Keeps play going by responding to what others are saying or doing (<i>keeps sand play going by sharing ideas and imitating others</i>) 40-60+ months Explains own knowledge and understanding and asks appropriate questions of others (<i>own knowledge and understanding about mixing sand carefully to carefully mould</i>) ELG Children play co-operatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity. They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and other children. (<i>sharing sand play equipment, flags and taking turns.</i>)</p>		
PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	<p>Self-confidence and self-awareness</p> <p>30-50 months Confident to talk to other children when playing, and will communicate freely about own home and community (<i>confident chat while playing alongside other children in the sand</i>) ELG Children are confident to try new activities, and say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or don't need help. (<i>confident working within a group and choosing resources whilst playing in the sand</i>).</p>		
PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	<p>Managing feelings and behaviour</p> <p>30-50 months Begins to accept the needs and can take turns and share resources, sometimes with support from others (<i>sharing of sand play equipment and resources</i>). ELG Children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class, and understand and follow the rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations, and take changes of routine in their stride. (<i>taking turns with sand play equipment and playing sensibly</i>)</p>		

Activity guidance

This continuous provision activity aims to encourage children to construct and build while problem-solving about how to manipulate and mould sand successfully.

Prepare the sand pit or tray with fresh, soft sand. Organise and arrange water spray bottles, sand play equipment, flags and alphabet letter moulds in baskets or boxes nearby.

To initiate interest gather interested children around the sand pit/tray and talk through the available sand play equipment. Explain that children must explore how to 'create the best sand for moulding'. Show the number flags and alphabet letter moulds and encourage the children to use these resources too. Suggest a reward for the best sandcastles or moulded shapes.



Possible next steps and opportunities for further development

Mathematics and sand

Continue with the links to mathematics and consider adding different flags to completed sand-castles to support other learning in mathematics. This will open up opportunities to explore other areas such as 2D shapes, doubling, halving and simple money additions as well as positional language.

Consider how the practical links with sand building and mathematical concepts will help children grasp the mathematical content and cement understanding.

Sand art

To continue the exploration with sand, consider using different coloured sand for the children to explore and mix. Link this to creative activities as children create sand art pictures using different coloured sands and glue.

This further exploration and creation with coloured sand will help children who need further support with sensory development. The use of coloured sand is also good for encouraging children to use descriptive vocabulary as they mix and explore.

Final thoughts and reflections

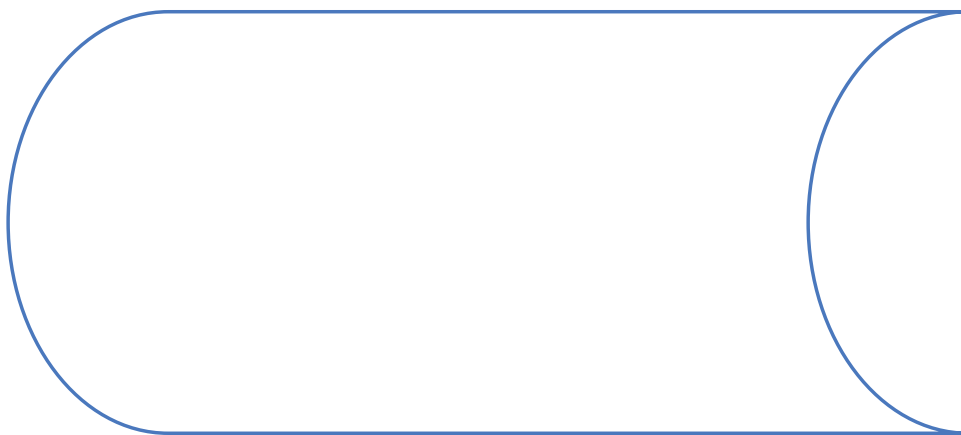
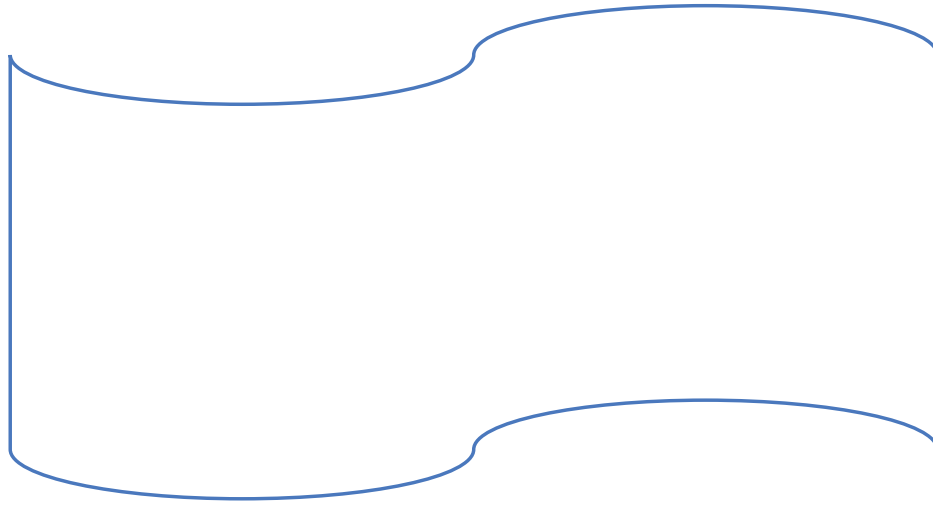
Reflect upon the opportunities for problem-solving within this activity. It is important the children mix the correct consistency of sand to successfully build and mould and this is something they will solve through trial and error.

Consider how this activity encourages the children to develop their fine motor skills through repetitive play. For example, they will quickly understand that filled moulds/buckets will need to be tapped carefully and lifted with caution to ensure the moulded sand does not break apart.

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Resource support: *Photocopiable examples of number flags*

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Activity 5 Wish you were here!

Activity outline and preparation

This activity encourages the children to reflect upon family special times, including holidays and day trips (not all children will have experienced full holidays) to create a postcard memory. It involves the children looking at holiday postcards and pictures to inspire their own postcard paintings.

Resources

- Selection of completed postcards (with stamps) or holiday images online or from magazines, brochures
- A3 paper
- Paints, brushes, easels and other painting equipment

Preparation

- Collect completed postcards and magazines from different holiday locations.
- Organise paints, brushes and other painting equipment.
- Collect sheets of A3 paper - this allows the children to paint in large scale.

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Activity development

ESSENTIAL LITERACY AND MATHEMATICS DEVELOPMENT			
PRIME AREAS	Development guidance	SPECIFIC AREAS	Development guidance
COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE	Listening and attention 30-50 months <i>Focusing attention - still listen or do, but can shift own attention (focusing upon painting postcard)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Two-channelled attention - can listen and do for short span</i> ELG Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity. <i>(able to paint postcard and listen to conversation around them simultaneously)</i>	LITERACY	Reading 30-50 months <i>Knows information can be relayed in the form of print (writing on postcards)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Begins to read words and simple sentences</i> ELG Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read. <i>(reading of simple words and sentences on postcards)</i>
	Writing 30-50 months <i>Ascribes meanings to marks that they see in different places (words on completed postcards)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Uses some clearly identifiable letters to communicate meaning, representing some sounds correctly and in sequence</i> ELG Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways, which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words <i>They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible. (using phonic knowledge to spell out words while writing a sentence on the back of their painted postcard)</i>		
	Understanding 30-50 months <i>Understands use of objects (paintbrushes and other painting equipment)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion.</i> ELG Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events. <i>(answering questions in response to holiday stories inspired by postcards)</i>	MATHEMATICS	Numbers 30-50 months <i>Shows curiosity about numbers by offering comments and asking questions (curiosity in numbers of postcard stamps)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Recognises numerals 1 to 5 (numerals on postcard stamps)</i>
Speaking 30-50 months <i>Uses talk to connect ideas, explain what is happening and anticipate what might happen next, and to recall and relive past experiences (talk about holidays or family days out while painting postcard)</i> ELG Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events. <i>(children express themselves about past, future holidays or family days out whilst painting postcard)</i>	Shape, space and measure 30-50 months <i>Beginning to talk about the shapes of everyday objects (comments about shapes on postcards)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Orders and sequences familiar events (children order and sequence events whilst painting own postcard.)</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING	Suggested outcomes
Playing and exploring – engagement	Showing curiosity about completed holiday postcards
Active learning – motivation	Paying attention to detail when creating postcard
Creating and thinking critically – thinking	Thinking about correct paint colours on postcard and experimenting with ideas

Planning: Blended prime and specific learning

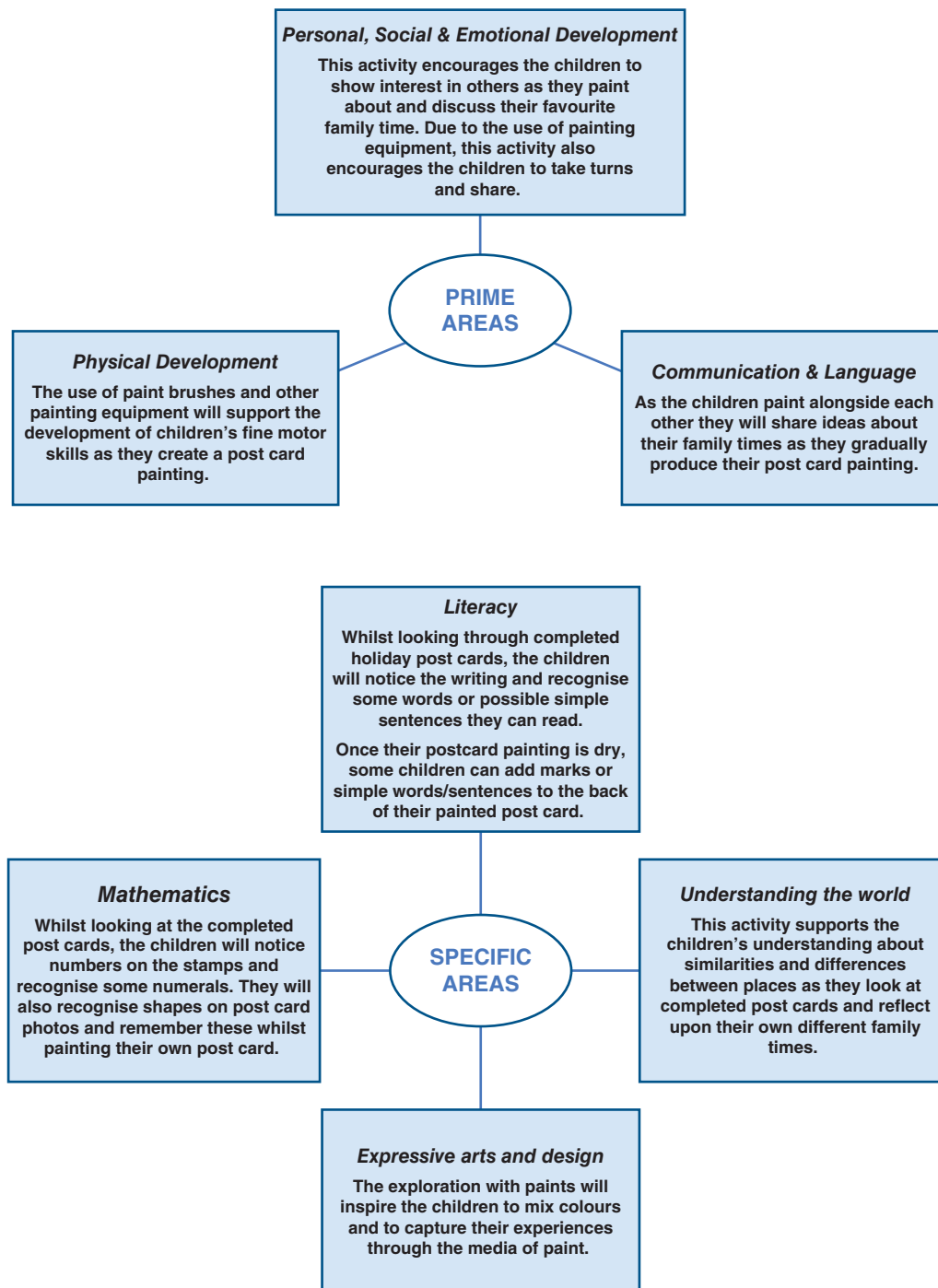
PRIME AREAS	Development guidance	SPECIFIC AREAS	Development guidance
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	Moving and handling 30-50 months <i>Draws lines and circles using gross motor movements (large-scale painting of postcard)</i> ELG Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing. <i>(good control and co-ordination of paintbrushes)</i>	UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD	People and communities 30-50 months <i>Recognises and describes special times or events for family or friends (while painting family holiday or day trip postcard)</i> ELG Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children don't always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions. <i>(children talk about their family and events whilst painting family holiday or day trip postcard)</i>
			The world 30-50 months <i>Comments upon and asks questions about aspects of their familiar world such as the place where they live or the natural world (comments upon natural world from holiday/other locations while painting postcard, e.g. beach, sea)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Looks closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change.</i> ELG Children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes. <i>(children recognise similarities and differences in relation to places as they are painting their postcard)</i>
			Technology
			Exploring and using media and materials 30-50 months <i>Explores colour and how colours can be changed</i> <i>Realises tools can be used for a purpose (colour exploration while painting postcard)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Explores what happens when they mix colours. Uses simple tools and techniques competently and appropriately (exploring colour, tools and techniques while painting postcard)</i>
PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Health and self-care 	EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND DESIGN	Being imaginative 30-50 months <i>Captures experiences and responses with a range of media such as music, dance and paint and other materials or words (capture of family experiences through postcard painting)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Chooses particular colours to use for a purpose (while painting their postcard)</i>
	Making relationships 30-50 months <i>Initiates play, offering cues to peers to join them (showing their postcard painting and encouraging others to have a go)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Explains own knowledge and understanding and asks appropriate questions of others (own knowledge and understanding about postcard painting locality and information)</i>		
	Self-confidence and self-awareness 30-50 months <i>Shows confidence in asking adults for help (while painting or adding mark-making to back of postcard painting)</i> ELG Children are confident to try new activities, and say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or don't need help. <i>(confident working within a group and choosing resources whilst painting)</i>		
	Managing feelings and behaviour 30-50 months <i>Begins to accept the needs of others and can take turns and share resources, sometimes with support from others (sharing paint equipment)</i> ELG Children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class, and understand and follow the rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations, and take changes of routine in their stride. <i>(taking turns and being sensible with paints)</i>		

Activity guidance

This continuous provision activity inspires children to create their own postcard painting.

Prior to the activity, collect completed postcards from a variety of holiday locations. Prepare the painting equipment and space for several children to paint.

To initiate interest gather engaged children to look at some completed postcards or holiday magazines. What do the holiday places look like? Encourage the children to look for similarities and differences. Draw children's attention to writing and the stamp on the postcard. Ask the children to think about their favourite family holiday or day trip.



Possible next steps and opportunities for further development

Snapshot postcards

To continue the idea of sending a postcard, provide opportunities for children to complete a snapshot postcard (provide a small template encouraging children to write a short sentence and/or draw a small picture) that they can send to another person in the class/setting. Alongside this activity, set up a 'postbox' and assign a post person to empty and distribute the post at the end of each day!

The writing for a purpose in this activity will encourage children's engagement. The fun 'posting' of completed postcards and distribution will inspire other children to have a go and be involved.

Computer art

To allow the children to explore postcard creation in digital form, support the children to use a program such as 2Paint a Picture (2simple software) or Tux paint to create and print a digital version of their painted postcard.

Consider how this activity will encourage those children who respond well to technology but less so to creative drawing and painting.

Final thoughts and reflections

Reflect upon how this activity encourages the children to visualise and illustrate their postcard. This illustration then provides a platform for simple writing or mark-making as the children write for a purpose inspired by memories and visual illustrations.

Consider the links to real-life mathematics through stamps and the opportunities that can arise. Consider questions and ideas such as: What do numbers on stamps mean? Why are they different? How do stamps relate to money?

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Activity 6 Mysteries of the sea

Activity outline and preparation

This sensory activity inspires the children to create their own 'mysteries of the sea' by adding sand, glitter, small shells and other items to a wide-necked bottle that they can shake and observe. Once creating and shaking, children can capture what they see on 'eye recorder' cards.

Resources

- Wide-necked, small, plastic bottles with lids (these will need collecting for several weeks prior to the activity - small, wide-necked smoothie bottles are perfect for this activity)
- Glitter
- Coloured sand (aim for different colours so children can choose a preference or mix)
- Small shells
- Pre-cut strips of green and blue netting
- Small sea toys if possible
- Sea or whale music to play on repeat in the background
- Small plastics scoops (scoops from baby formula feed are perfect), plastic spoons, plastic tweezers, funnels
- Dry-wipe 'eye recorder' cards and dry-wipe pens
- Tuff table-top tray

Preparation

- Gather plastic bottles (with lids) over a number of weeks prior to the activity. Ensure bottles are fully rinsed and air-dried.
- Gather other resources such as coloured sand, small shells, glitter, and netting alongside plastic tweezers, scoops and spoons. Organise all resources in boxes or trays and label.
- Create a WAGOLL ('What A Good One Looks Like') with some of the resources to display that will inspire and guide children.
- Source and set up sea or whale music to play in the background.
- Print and laminate 'eye recorder' cards.

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Activity development

ESSENTIAL LITERACY AND MATHEMATICS DEVELOPMENT			
PRIME AREAS	Development guidance	SPECIFIC AREAS	Development guidance
COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE	Listening and attention 30-50 months <i>Is able to follow directions (if not intently focused on own choice of activity) (following simple ideas about how to add items to the bottle)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Two-channelled attention - can listen and do for short span.</i> ELG Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity. <i>(able to choose and add items to bottle whilst listening to others also engaged in the activity)</i>	LITERACY	Reading 30-50 months <i>Knows information can be relayed in the form of print (labels on objects/resources)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Can segment the sounds in simple words and blend them together and knows which letters represent some of them</i> ELG Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read. <i>(reading of labels on objects/resources)</i>
			Writing 30-50 months <i>Sometimes gives meaning to marks as they draw and paint (illustrations and mark-making)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Gives meaning to marks they make as they draw, write and paint (marks and illustrations on eye recorder cards)</i> ELG Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible. <i>(using phonic knowledge to spell out words or simple sentences on eye recorder cards)</i>
	Under-standing 30-50 months <i>Understands use of objects (use of tweezers, spoons, scoops to add items to the bottle)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion (while adding items to their bottles)</i> ELG Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events. <i>(following simple ideas and completed WAGOLL about what could be added to bottle)</i>	MATHEMATICS	Numbers 30-50 months <i>Uses some number names and number language spontaneously (as choosing and adding to bottle, e.g. 'I'm adding one, two, three shells to the bottle')</i> 40-60+ months <i>Counts up to three or four objects by saying one number name for each item (counting of objects as selected and added to the bottle)</i>
			Shape, space and measure 30-50 months <i>Shows an interest in shape and space by playing with shapes or making arrangements with objects (exploration of objects as added to arrangement in bottle)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Uses familiar objects and common shapes to create and recreate patterns and build models (creation of their own patterns and model within the bottle as they choose and use from available objects/resources)</i>
	Speaking 30-50 months <i>Uses vocabulary focused on objects and people that are of particular importance to them (words related to under the sea or objects used in their bottle)</i> 40-60+ months <i>Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events (talk whilst choosing and adding objects to their bottle)</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING	Suggested outcomes
Playing and exploring – engagement	Showing continued interest and curiosity while creating their mysteries of the sea bottle
Active learning – motivation	Being proud of completed mysteries of the sea bottle
Creating and thinking critically – thinking	Thinking of own ideas for their mysteries of the sea bottle prompted by labelled available resources/objects

Planning: Blended prime and specific learning

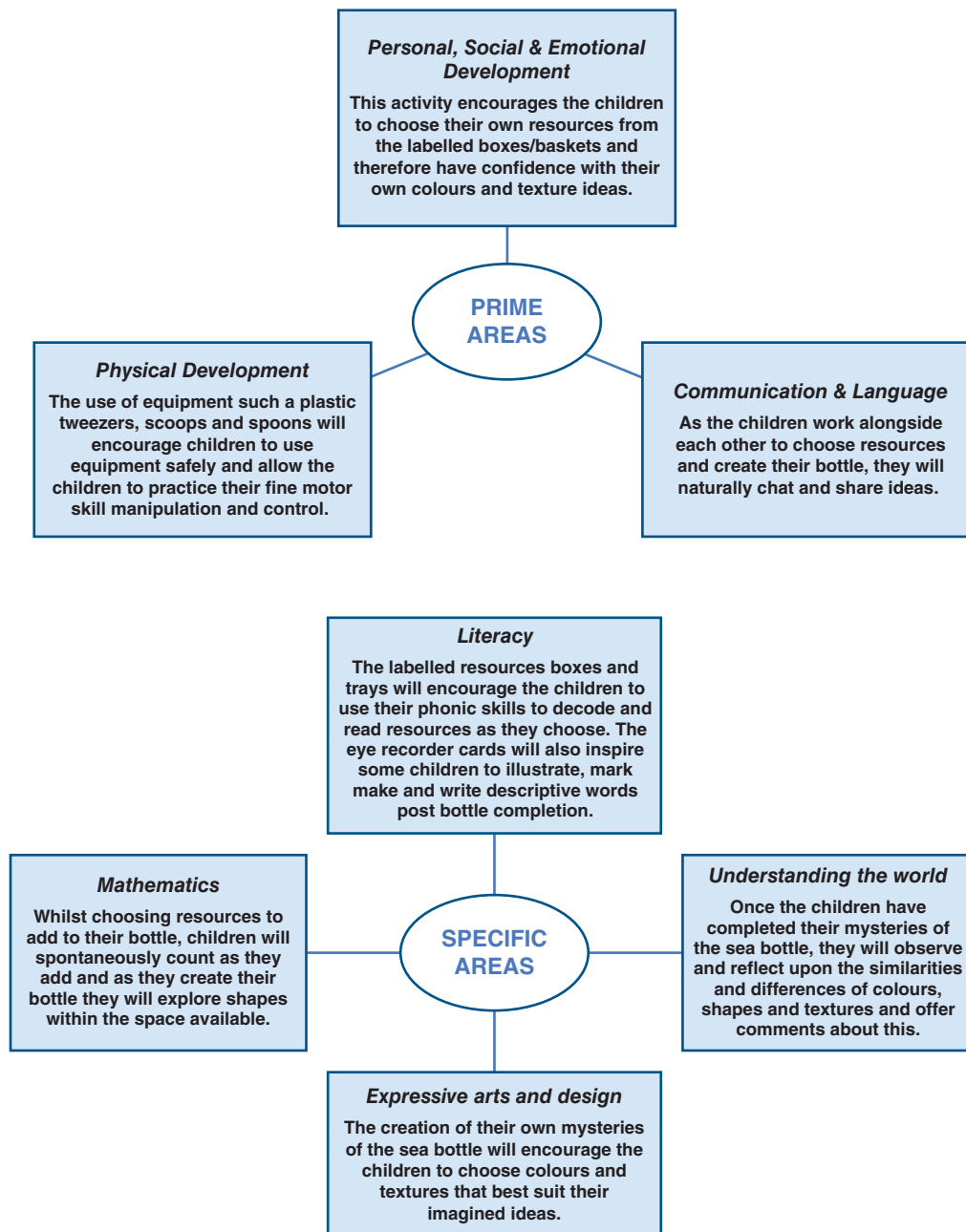
PRIME AREAS		Development guidance	SPECIFIC AREAS	Development guidance	
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	Moving and handling	<p>30-50 months Uses one-handed tools and equipment (<i>confident use of tweezers, scoops, spoons and other equipment while adding to bottle</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Handles tools, construction objects and malleable materials safely and with increasing control ELG Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing. (<i>good control and co-ordination of tweezers, scoops, spoons and other equipment whilst adding to bottle</i>)</p>	UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD	People and communities	
		The world		<p>30-50 months Can talk about some of the things they have observed such as natural and found objects (<i>talk about features of their mysteries of the sea bottle with natural and found objects inside</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Looks closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change. ELG Children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes. (<i>similarities and differences between objects/resources chosen and used in bottle</i>)</p>	
		Technology			
	Health and self-care	<p>30-50 months Understands that equipment and tools have to be used safely (<i>safely uses tweezers, scoops, spoons and other equipment while adding to bottle</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Practises some appropriate safety measures without direct supervision (<i>safely and sensibly uses equipment such as tweezers and scoops</i>)</p>	EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND DESIGN	Exploring and using media and materials	<p>30-50 months Realises tools can be used for a purpose (<i>tools: tweezers for adding small objects to bottle, spoons and scoops for sand</i>) Explores colour and how colours can be changed (<i>exploring and mixing coloured sand</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Explores what happens when they mix colours Uses simple tools and techniques competently and appropriately ELG Children sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing them. They safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function. (<i>exploring colour, tools and techniques whilst choosing and adding objects to their bottle</i>)</p>
		Being imaginative		<p>30-50 months Captures experiences and responses with a range of media, such as music, dance and paint and other materials or words (<i>created bottle captures response to childrens engagement with materials available and surrounding music</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Chooses particular colours to use for a purpose (<i>choosing from resources for bottle</i>) Creates simple representations of events, people and objects (<i>created bottle - simple representation of under the sea</i>)</p>	
	PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Making relationships	<p>30-50 months Demonstrates friendly behaviour, initiating conversations and forming good relationships with peers and familiar adults (<i>sharing ideas for bottles and working well alongside one another</i>)</p> <p>40-60+ months Explains own knowledge and understanding and asks appropriate questions of others (<i>sharing own knowledge and understanding about under the sea and what the bottle could look like</i>)</p>		
Self-confidence and self-awareness		<p>30-50 months Can select and use resources with help (<i>while selecting from available resources for bottle</i>) Welcomes and values praise for what they have done (<i>created mysteries of the sea bottle</i>) ELG Children are confident to try new activities, and say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or don't need help. (<i>confident working within a group and choosing their own resources for bottle</i>).</p>			
Managing feeling and behaviour		<p>30-50 months Aware of own feelings and knows that some actions and words can hurt others' feelings (<i>sharing resources/equipment</i>) ELG Children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class, and understand and follow the rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations, and take changes of routine in their stride. (<i>taking turns and being sensible with resources/equipment whilst creating mysteries of the sea bottles</i>)</p>			

Activity guidance

This continuous provision sensory activity encourages the children to use their imagination to create a snapshot of an underwater world.

Prior to the activity, collect, wash and dry small, wide-necked plastic bottles with lids. Small smoothie bottles are ideal for this activity. To set up the activity, organise resources such as small shells, strips of green and blue netting and small sea toys in labelled boxes or baskets alongside pots of coloured sand, glitter and plastic equipment such as scoops, tweezers and spoons. Display the completed WAGOLL at the activity table so children can be inspired and have a visual guide to follow.

To initiate interest gather interested children to view the WAGOLL mysteries of the sea bottle. Draw attention to the shapes, colours and textures in the bottle. Look at the equipment and discuss how these can be used to add items to the bottle. Encourage the children to choose and add their own sand and other resources and, if they wish to add water at the end, to seek adult support with this.



Possible next steps and opportunities for further development

Mysteries of the sea words

Once bottles are complete, consider creating a display area with the creations. As part of the display, encourage the children to add words that describe the sea. Children could use pencils, paints, chalks or pens to allow exploration with colour and letter shape. Display the words alongside the completed bottles, images and sounds of the sea.

Children will benefit from focusing on writing after they have created and explored colour, shape and texture. The 'visual' clarification and understanding will really help some children to conceptualise and then describe appropriate adjectives.

Mysteries of the sea music

Following the creation of mysteries of the sea bottles make further links with sounds and music. Using their own bottle as inspiration, encourage the children to explore instruments such as triangles, cymbals, chime bars and rain sticks to create their own mysteries of the sea music to accompany their bottle.

As children complete their mysteries of the sea bottles while listening to background sea music or whale sounds they will begin to make links between audio and kinaesthetic actions and this will pave the way for further audio musical exploration.

Final thoughts and reflections

Reflect upon how this activity supports children's sensory development as they explore and create via vision, touch and hearing. Alongside this, it will also inspire imaginative thoughts about under the sea and the creatures that live there.

Consider the foundations this activity lays for future work with mark-making and writing. The sensory, creative nature of the activity allows the children to explore colour, texture and shape as well as sound and create confident visual images. Such confident visual images help the children make links with vocabulary and writing.

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1 Resource support: *Photocopiable example eye recorder card*

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Look at your bottle...

Draw or write what you can
see

