

Looking and talking outside- session plan

Looking and talking outside (45 minutes)– ensure everyone is wearing warm and weather appropriate clothing

Aims of the session:

- To encourage talk outdoors
- To spend time following the child's interests and exploring outside to support emotional wellbeing and encourage healthy activity
- To practise asking questions which follow the child's interests and extend talk through using natural resources found in the outdoor environment

Risk assess the area first to ensure it is safe and hazard-free for children without harmful litter or poisonous plants and clearly mark any areas of danger that cannot be removed as out of bounds. 'Wilder' areas will give more interest with bees and insects, and a smaller group size will encourage quieter children to engage and talk.

Activity	What to do	Focus	Resources	For children with more advanced language
Introduction to outdoors (10 minutes) Aim: to use the natural outdoor environment to extend opportunities for talking.	Designate the area children can explore and explain why some areas are unsafe. Talk about the trees and plants, pointing out any seasonal signs such as spring bulbs, nesting birds or fallen acorns and conkers (self-talk). Encourage children to follow 'outdoor rules': we take care of natural things, we do not litter, we use only fallen resources so do not pick flowers or leaves and we put all items back	This session focuses on ways to extend talk outdoors. In order for a child to communicate and develop language skills they need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to listen • Understand what they hear • Learn new words and how they are used • Put words together and make sentences Children will talk, listen and want to find out more about something	Warm, weather appropriate clothing and time to explore and enjoy the natural resources you find outside.	Encourage children to say what they find interesting and help them with descriptions, e.g. a large bird, or the 'candles' on a springtime conker tree.

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	<p>afterwards to leave no trace of our visit outside.</p> <p>Allow time for children to explore and tell or show you what they find interesting, share discoveries together such as an ants nest, interesting leaf or feather and take time to talk about the colours, textures or smells of the natural resources. Support children as they connect with the natural surroundings. Go at child's pace.</p>	<p>they find interesting, so share their fascinations!</p> <p>As a child learns to talk they will make mistakes and miss words e.g. "see bird." Help them learn more words by filling in the gaps, repeating and adding e.g. "See the bird hopping on the grass."</p>		
<p>Activity 1 (10 minutes)</p> <p>Aim: Teach listening skills and model specific praise.</p>	<p>Tell the children you need to check if they have their ears switched on! Play 'traffic lights' by explaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you call out 'red' children need to stop and listen • When you call out 'green' they can go and run around the area. <p>Spend some time listening to other sounds you can hear outside – can you make the same sound? Encourage everyone to have a go!</p>	<p>Help children learn to listen carefully by teaching them to stop and look at the person speaking. Listening is important in developing language so any listening games you play will help develop school readiness.</p> <p>Praising a child's attention will help them feel valued and understand what they need to do.</p>	<p>If you have a large area a red and a green item (card or a jumper) may be useful.</p>	<p>Try whispering the traffic light signals or just hold up the colours without calling out the word to promote children's listening and attention skills and praise those who respond appropriately.</p>

<p>Activity 2 (10 minutes)</p> <p>Aim: Introduce naming and matching. Model questioning and describing.</p>	<p>Ask the children to make a collage, or make one together – remind them to use fallen items, from leaves, sticks, dropped flowers, acorns, feathers and stones, and to remember where they found each item to return back afterwards. Collages can be made on the ground, on logs or larger stones. Model parallel talk, where you describe what they are doing, e.g. “Oh, you’ve got an empty snail shell and a red leaf. You’ve put the shell on top of the leaf.”</p> <p>Ask children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name, e.g. “What colour is this?” • Match, e.g. “Can you find some brown leaves?” <p>Admire the collages and any of the interesting finds.</p>	<p>A child learns best from face-to-face interaction. Let children explore and follow talk about what items look, feel, or smell like. Be led by the child’s interests and questions. Say words to describe what the child is doing at the moment (parallel talk). This is great for building vocabulary.</p> <p>Value and praise all the collages and take photos to preserve as a memory, then encourage taking the collages apart and returning all the natural items back where they were found.</p>	<p>Check there are plenty of sticks, stones, logs, conkers and natural ‘fallen items’ accessible to discover and use for this activity.</p> <p>Ensure fragile ecological sites such as areas of spring bulbs or nesting birds, are marked out of bounds so do not get disturbed, encourage ideas of responsibility and caring for nature.</p>	<p>Ask children more complex questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find an item based on two characteristics: “find something that is soft and green (leaf)” or “tiny and moving quickly” (ant or spider) • Identify differences: “how are these collages different?”
<p>Activity 3 (10 minutes)</p> <p>Aim: Encouraging awareness that books can be read and</p>	<p>Gather children together and read a story from a picture book, try to find one with an outdoor story or seasonal theme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain new vocabulary as it appears • Link pictures in the story and natural elements with what you 	<p>Children learn new words more quickly when you give an explanation in the moment, when you help to make connections and when you follow what the child finds interesting.</p>	<p>A picnic blanket or mat to put down for the story area</p> <p>A picture book</p>	<p>Ask children more complex questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What is happening on this page?” • “What will happen next?”

enjoyed anywhere.	can experience outside, like the cloudy sky, windy weather or tall trees			
Ending the session (5 minutes)	Have a final look around the outdoor area before returning indoors. Encourage everyone to wash their hands carefully when they return inside.			