

# Sharing books, stories and mark-making outside- session plan

## Sharing books, stories and mark-making outside (45 minutes)– ensure everyone is wearing warm and weather appropriate clothing

### Aims of the session:

- Promoting interest in reading and book sharing
- Exploring the potential of environmental print
- Encouraging children to have a go at mark-making outside
- Using opportunities to share and enjoy books throughout the day, outdoors as well as indoors

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 (10 minutes)  <b>Aim:</b> 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 ( <b>self-talk</b> ).  Allow time for children to run around and explore the area. They may want to check on spaces, plants or insects they found interesting on the last visit and will remind you of what they observed before. Spend	This session focuses on environmental print, mark-making, book sharing and story-telling while making the most of being outdoors.  Children may want to actively explore the area so give time for this to support their health and wellbeing, go at child pace.	Warm, weather appropriate clothing and time to explore and enjoy the natural resources you find outside.	Encourage children to identify the changes they see or are interested in, and provide patient support and words if they are struggling to verbalise exactly what is different from the week before.

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	time chatting through and supporting with language here.	Children will talk, listen and want to find out more about something they find interesting, so share their fascinations!		
Activity 1 (10 minutes)  <b>Aim:</b> Explore environmental print and mark-making outdoors.	Encourage children to explore the environmental print. Explain that signs with letters, numbers or pictures give messages, warnings or information and use signage you find to illustrate this in a child friendly way.  Help children find their name, first letter or age number in the environmental print. Encourage them to follow the letter snake, number line or play hopscotch. Let children enjoy 'writing' their own signs and exploring mark-making with coloured chalk.	Environmental print refers to signs, adverts, seed packets, notices, numbers and letters on the building, playground, or in the outdoor space.  Focusing attention on the print and pictures around them links to understanding of print holding meaning. Environmental print can help children develop their literacy skills and their interest in learning to read and write.	Environmental print items Coloured chalks  If you have a tarmac area you may like to write out a hopscotch board, number line, children's names or an alphabet snake in chalk, or series of arrows and pictures. Write and draw in front of the children so they can watch and ask what you are doing.	Children with more advanced literacy skills will notice patterns and similarities and hold more interest in this activity. Encourage children to articulate what they notice and see and give support as needed.
Activity 2 (10 minutes)  <b>Aim:</b> Encouraging awareness that books can be read and	Set up several den areas with cosy spaces – under trees, or in small nooks and crannies under bushes and encourage children to choose a book and find a comfortable space to enjoy looking at it.  Follow the child's interests! Let the child turn the pages, skip pages or finish the book early to go onto another one. Be	Reading and sharing books with children helps to develop a child's talking, listening and reading skills.	A box of pictures books, including non-fiction picture books about trees, insects and spiders.  Cushions, pop up tents, or rugs, sheets and clothes pegs can be used	Ensure a range of books are provided from word-less picture books to longer, more detailed stories and encourage child choice.

enjoyed anywhere.	responsive and read the stories or explore the pictures as requested.		to make instant dens, hideouts or other cosy spaces to take books and make reading outside fun.	
<p>Activity 3 (10 minutes)</p> <p><b>Aim:</b> Making up stories using the natural environment encourages talk when you are out and about.</p>	<p>Explain you don't always need a book to share a story and talk about made-up stories, these can happen anywhere and can be short, silly or fun. Give an example e.g.:</p> <p>"One day Afua and Tom went outside and squelched in leaves and wrote magic spells and then they followed the signs and arrows to a secret tunnel under the trees. They made a cosy reading den and looked at books about stag beetles and then it was time to go back inside – the end."</p>	<p>Making up stories can be fun and support a sense of self-identity and personal wellbeing while encouraging children to use their imagination as they developing language skills and learn about the world.</p> <p>Children really like stories about themselves and this helps memory skills develop, along with language and listening skills.</p> <p>Made-up stories can happen anywhere!</p>		Encourage contributions to the 'stories' about the session.
Ending the session (5 minutes)	Have a final look around the outdoor area, value and admire all the children's 'writing' and pack away the reading dens and books. <b>Encourage everyone to wash their hands carefully when they return inside.</b>			