



Understanding the World

Natural Development

Focus

Look at how children developing their Understanding of the World naturally when moving and playing

Knowledge and Understanding the world and movement and active play go hand in hand as children do not find out about the world around them through us telling them or from books, they learn through discovering, exploring and experiencing for themselves.

Aspects of Knowledge of and Understanding the World

Animals

- Animals we know, pets, etc.
- Animals from different countries
- Minibeasts
- Land animals
- Birds
- Fish
- Lifecycles (butterflies/worms/frogs)

Through movement and active play we pretend to be different animals. Creating stories about animals and their surroundings, such as a tiger in the jungle or farmyard animals on the farm, will bring them to life and help children to learn and understand them.

Top Tip – Use of animals in physical education lesson or structured sessions will not only stimulate children's imagination, make the activities more fun but can also help children to learn about the animal world.

Children will naturally learn about mini beasts, birds, fish, insects and other local creatures when exploring environments such as gardens, forests, parks and the seaside.

Colours

- Creating different colours
- Colours in nature

Large painting, drawing and mark making is fun and energetic.

Children will naturally learn about different plants and creatures and different colours when exploring environments such as gardens, forests, parks and the seaside.

Plants

- Growing
- Seeds
- Differences and similarities
- What plants need to grow
- Where our food comes from
- Parts of plant/flower

Young children learn many things from food growing and gardening and have a great time doing so. Activities and active stories about food and food growing is an enjoyable way for children to learn about nature. When they have opportunities to explore an array of environments they will discover different plants.

Senses

- How sounds are generated in different ways
- Tones
- Loudness
- Matching sounds
- Different sights
- Different textures
- Different smells
- Different tastes

Myself

- Body parts (body awareness)
- What we need to remain healthy
- Similarities and differences between me and others
- Similarities and differences between humans and others animals

Water

- Different states and bodies of water, i.e. lakes, rivers, ice, mist, etc.
- Movement in water, i.e. waves, currents, etc.
- How objects react with water, i.e. float, sink, etc.

Shapes and Patterns

- Identify and discuss natural and manmade patterns
- How the world is made up of different shapes
- How different shapes fit together

Transport and travel

- Different types of transport
- How travel affects our lives, the local area and the whole world

Our world

- Different countries
- Different cultures
- Differences and similarities
- Where we live and our family
- Local places such as our house, flat, village, town, road, church, temple

People

- Differences and similarities between boys and girls
- Uniqueness of all
- Difference and similarities of all
- Myself and other living things
- Myself and non-living things
- Different workplaces and roles people play in society

Time

- Growing up
- How time impacts on us and our lives
- How time impacts other living and non-living things
- Sequencing the passing of time (a day, a year, a lifetime, etc.)
- The past and the present
- Old and New
- Talking about significant events in their lives

Materials and their Properties

- Different natural materials, e.g. sand, clay, wood, stones.
- How interaction of materials can make changes to them
- Shapes of material and how some change
- Properties of natural and manmade materials

Environment

- Changes
- Weather
- Seasons
- Recycling
- Climate change

Light and Electricity

- Different times of day
- Light and dark
- Light sources
- Different seasons and change in length of daylight
- Electricity at home, including safety
- Using and making electrical circuits

Forces

- Push
- Pull
- Throw
- Roll
- How different objects move
- How we move

Sorting

- Sorting animals, objects, people, etc. into groups

Technology

- Understanding how to operate and operating simple toys and equipment that need manipulation
- Using media such as CD players, computer music programmes, remote controls, mobile phones and cameras
- Understanding basic use of computers and programming

Natural Development

Examples of how children will learn about knowledge of and understanding the world through self-directed movement and active play in the early years:

- When children are exploring the **outdoor environment** they are learning about animals and bugs, plants, forces, the environment, the weather, seasons and different natural materials.
- Children learn about time, what affects growth and different plants through **gardening and food growing**.
- As adults we can make use of many teachable and reflective moments by **asking questions** that will encourage them to think about what they are experiencing.
- Children can discover many different worlds, cultures, people and places through **role play** and **active stories**. Active stories can be created spontaneously using their imagination or can be an extension of subjects you have been exploring. Active stories and role play will also give children to opportunity to discover the differences and similarities between themselves and others and also to discover their impact on the environment. This will make more sense than learning from books. Children can also discover more about themselves and time through active stories based on their lives, from babies, to current times, to when they will be adults.
- There are many **rhymes & songs** about subjects such as our body parts, the world and animals. that help children learn about the world around them and themselves. Make them big and energetic.
- When children create **constructions** out of boxes and other recycled household goods they will discover how to manipulate materials and how objects and can materials fit together.
- Through **water play** they can discover how some things float and others sink.
- Children can learn how **water** can turn into different forms and mixed with other materials, can change into something else, i.e. mist, ponds, ice, mud, etc.
- Children can learn how **combining natural materials** can change, such as sand and water creating mud or flour, water and salt creating playdough.

Skills

Children will develop and need to develop the following skills to discover the world around them:

- Need to express opinions and describing objects, occurrences and outcomes
- Observing, explore, curiosity and experiment
- Sort, compare, group and sequence
- Communicate their thoughts and listen to others
- Problem solving and decision making
- Classify and record
- Predict, evaluate and reflect

Through all these activities, children will not only develop an understanding of the world around them and begin to learn the basics of science, geography and history. Everything we learn is based on what we already know so the more we discover through exploration and joy in the early years the more we will learn and discover as we grow older.