

LCP Design & Technology Resource File Foundation Stage

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Designerly thought and action

The phrase 'designerly play' was coined by Ken Baynes in the mid-1980s to refer to the way in which young children make design decisions as they naturally play and explore the potential of the world around them. This world is one of made and found objects; a human and social world as well as a physical one. Small children creatively combine elements from their environment as they play. They may use elements of the made environment (a large cardboard box, for instance) into which they take feathers or pebbles to be animals or people who interact with each other in an ongoing invented social drama.

Making play props – 'making for play' in general – is a clear developmental stage within children's cognitive and social learning. It signals the point at which children move beyond using their imagination just to redesign properties of the found world (including toys) to suit their play purposes, towards creating objects from source materials, such as fabric and card, specifically to support the current play scenario.

Such designerly play in the young child is the basis of designerly thought in the adult. Children with a rich capacity for designerly play are, therefore, more likely to exhibit creative and designerly behaviour as adults. This does not mean that these children are more likely to become professional artists or designers, but that they have the essential skills of creativity, imagination, analogical and metaphorical thought, autonomy of intellectual thought, and the ability to negotiate and seek compromise or a best-fit solution. Creative people of all ages use knowledge, skills and understanding from a combination of sources in order to perceive opportunities or solve problems.

Learning to be designers makes a major contribution to children's creativity and problem-solving skills, as well as developing cognitive, social, communication and practical capabilities. **Learning about technology** plays a significant role in developing children's knowledge and

understanding of the world around them. In each Theme in this File, there are opportunities for children both to learn *about technology* and to learn *through designing* and making products.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum does not talk specifically about the development of design capability, yet designerly action and designerly play underlie many of its principles. Skills that contribute to design capability can mainly be found in these early learning goals:

- Knowledge and Understanding of the World: exploration and investigation; designing and making
- Physical Development: using equipment and materials
- Creative Development: exploring media and materials; being creative – responding to experiences, expressing and communicating ideas; developing imagination and imaginative play

Having opportunities for designing and learning about technology in the Foundation Stage is not just to be considered as an early start on the Key Stage 1 curriculum for design and technology. Being able to make choices and decisions about actions affecting other people and the use of resources, tools and equipment is essential learning within early years settings, contributing to children becoming imaginative and autonomous learners. Research has shown that children who have rich opportunities for creative action are more independent, have greater motivation to learn and have a greater sense of well-being than those whose activities are over-prescribed and over-directed.

This Resource File has been written in the belief that the encouragement of designerly thought and action in the Early Years Foundation Stage is vital for children's well-being and self-esteem, as well as for their cognitive growth and creative development.

What is 'design and technology' in the Foundation Stage?

'Design and technology' is difficult to define because it is a hybrid, artificially invented name to describe part of education for which there was no commonly agreed term. Design and technology uses knowledge from science, art, history, geography, literacy, mathematics... indeed the whole of human knowledge. It is about solving real-life problems, about playing with ideas, about creativity and innovation. Even the word 'design' is a fairly modern one – and in everyday speech is more likely to be used for interior decorating than industrial processes.

It might almost seem as if this skill is so basic to being human that we are unaware of ourselves using it and, therefore, struggle to define what it is we do when we decide what

to wear in the morning, choose ingredients and cook a meal, put up a shelf in the garage. We do not necessarily group together the skills involved in wiring a house, typing an e-mail, making a dress, building a ship. Yet all these examples involve *designing*, and all of them are aspects of *technology*: all involve evaluative choices about future action and all involve using tools to assemble materials, components and ideas.

Design: what we might do or imagine we could do.

Technology: what we do and how we do it.

Consider how often the following examples of design and technology come up every day in your setting.

Learning about technology	Learning to be designers
<p><i>Looking at existing products</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is it? • What is it made of? • How does it work? • Who uses it? • Can we use it/make it work? • Can we make one? • Does it work as well as it could? • Could we make one that's better? 	<p><i>Having ideas</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What I thought was... • What we could do is... • I've got an idea... • If I/you/he/she/it/we/they... <p><i>Choosing materials and components</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I want some card for... • I think green would be best... • What we need is...
<p><i>Learning to use tools and materials</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch carefully... • Hold it like this... • Be careful because it's... • Practise on this spare piece first. • Are you OK with that now? 	<p><i>Trying them out</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm/we're making a... • It's going to be a... • What I've done is... • I've finished my...
<p><i>Learning new skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you...? • I want to... • Can you help me to...? • I can't quite... • I can... 	<p><i>Evaluating the results</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This goes round here and... • It's a bit wonky but... • That looks nice/tricky/hard/...! • Look what we've done! • I think Mum will like this.

Progression to Key Stage 1

Some schools will have Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 children working together in the same classroom. You might have some gifted and talented children who, you feel, would benefit from extension or enrichment activities. Additionally, many Key Stage 1 teachers are now looking for a more holistic way of planning, and the Themes in this File are equally appropriate for Key Stage 1, provided that learning outcomes are sufficiently challenging for these older children.

The skills promoted under 'The Importance of Design and Technology' in the *National Curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2* can be summarised as:

- Evaluation and analysis of previous choices and solutions;
- Imagining possibilities for future action;
- Evaluating alternative solutions and possibilities;
- Developing practical skills in a range of materials and techniques;
- Control of personal decision-making and practical action;
- Developing personal creativity and innovation;
- Perceiving and taking into account the needs and preferences of others;
- Evaluating own learning and achievements.

These principles are equally applicable to EYFS children and underpin the Themes and Strands in this Resource File.

Breadth of study

Each subject of the National Curriculum has a 'Breadth of study' statement that summarises the context in which the knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject should be placed. For design and technology, this consists of the following three aspects, all of which can be applied within EYFS teaching and learning.

Investigating and evaluating existing products

This enables children to know how things are made, to understand how they work, to develop respect and admiration for the people who made them, and also to begin to suggest whether they are well-suited to their purpose. For example:

- Trying different tools for whisking eggs, picking up rubbish, and so on;
- Visiting a church, castle or windmill;
- Handling jewellery, pottery, fabric, and so on;
- Taking apart mechanical devices, such as old clocks;
- Examining something made by an adult as an example of what they could make;
- Admiring another child's finished work.

A child's finished work also counts as a product – remember the feel-good factor that raises self-esteem through genuine adult praise, and encourage children to praise each other too.

Focused practical tasks

This is the way in which children learn the skills necessary to make successful products. Young children use play to practise skills in creative and imaginative ways, without feeling the need to have a final product. So, many practice opportunities can be set up in the role-play area or provided within choices for child-initiated activities. For example:

- While playing with a toy tool-bench, a child repeatedly practises using screwdrivers and spanners;
- Threading beads and sewing cards using long, coloured shoelaces;
- Playing with bricks to make a tall tower, bridge, walls;
- 'Cutting and sticking' activities – the youngest children need simple practise activities such as cutting up old greetings cards and coloured, patterned and shiny papers to make collage pictures.

Design and make assignments

This element is the creation of products for a specific purpose (for example, a throne for a king in a fairy story) and, especially when working with young children, their own ideas and design choices must be respected and encouraged. Designing can take place through imagining, talking, drawing, writing, constructing and making, though not all of these would necessarily happen within one project. For example:

- A group of children sitting in the home corner have a wonderful discussion about their dream house. One of them goes to a table to draw his idea and comes back to show the others.
- A child spends a long time experimenting with rolling newspaper, walks away and joins another group playing with a train layout. She quietly adds a rolled-up piece of card to the end of a section of track – it's a tunnel.
- A group of children work with an adult to make Divali lamps. They learn how to make a thumb pot and talk about how they will decorate it. The adult supplies the paint and glitter that the children have said they will need.

Knowledge, skills and understanding

From the perspective of an EYFS practitioner, the Key Stage 1 curriculum can look like a long list of objectives that are almost impossible to achieve; but remember, the children have until the end of Year 2 to achieve these, and many of these skills come together as children turn seven. There is a deep cognitive shift across the five-to-seven age gap, which is reflected in skills of personal organisation and ways of seeing the world.

The curriculum specifies four areas of knowledge, skills and understanding:

- Developing, planning and communicating ideas;
- Working with tools, equipment, materials and components to make quality products;
- Evaluating processes and products;
- Knowledge and understanding of materials and components.

All of these areas are covered in the activities in this Resource File, at a level appropriate to early years children, including those who are ready to move on to Key Stage 1 work.

How to use this File

As design is a creative activity in which people see opportunities or choose the best solution to a practical problem, it would be contradictory to supply a series of templates or patterns for young children to work to. Additionally, your setting might already have well-established ways of working and achieving successful learning outcomes. It is important that this Resource File enhances this good practice and encourages you to go further.

In the File, therefore, the terms *Themes* and *Strands* have been chosen rather than 'units' or 'topics'. The intention is that the activities will slot into the work across the curriculum that you already do. The early years learning experience must be a holistic one, and many

of these design and technology activities will overlap with science or art, history or geography, or RE. In addition, the activities make use of songs and stories as starting points, along with visits and home-school links.

How the File is organised

Activities are organised into connecting Strands within six Themes:

Theme	Strands
Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping clean, looking smart • Keeping warm, staying cool
Our places and spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homes • Gardens • Special places
Having fun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special days • Show time
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the baker's shop • Chips with everything! • Fruity-tooty • Teddy's picnic
Travelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheels go round • In all directions
We have the power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In control • Light fantastic

Each Strand contains:

Key opportunities for designerly thought and action	These indicate the broad aims of the Strand and how the Strand contributes to Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Physical Development (and Creative Development, where appropriate).
Starting points and support for learning	As well as indicating useful resources, this section suggests other tools for linking the Strand across the curriculum, to home-school learning and to visits and events.
Focused learning activities	These activities support learning about the made world under Knowledge and Understanding of the World: Exploration and investigation. Often, they provide knowledge and skills for the focused design activities.
Focused design activities	These activities support Knowledge and Understanding of the World: Designing and making. They present children with creative design opportunities, most often in a small group.
Structured play activities	In these activities, the practitioner sets up and plays alongside or supports children in play and investigations. The practitioner acts as facilitator or advisor rather than teacher.
Extending learning through play	These are the most fluid and open-ended activities in the File – often 'free play' opportunities.
Assessment opportunities	All settings will have their own way of recording children's progress, but this table provides a simple recording device for involvement and success within the Strand.

Although this Resource File begins with 'Myself' and moves outwards to encompass the places where we live, work and play; how we move about; and so on, there is no necessity to cover the topics in this order. Indeed, if you are working in a setting that includes children across the 3–5 age range, this may well be impossible. The medium-term plans for 'Our places and spaces' and 'Travelling' indicate alternative ways of combining different Strands within a Theme.

Planning

Your planning should begin from the capability and interests of the children and then move them on into new areas of learning. Teachers at Featherby Infant School in Gillingham, Kent use 'thinking and planning' books in which they record conversations where the children were asked what they knew already and what they wanted to find out about a particular topic. From these conversations, the staff were able to assess children's prior knowledge and understanding and to plan appropriate activities that maximised learning. The activities in this Resource File fit readily into that approach.



Medium-term plans

As guidance, the Themes 'Myself', 'Our places and spaces', 'Travelling' and 'We have the power' contain sample medium-term plans. 'Having fun' and 'Food' are short projects and activities designed to fit into other topics across the curriculum.

Each medium-term plan groups the activities by type (free play; structured play and so on) into six progressive stages. These have not been labelled as 'weeks' or 'lessons' since

the lengths of terms vary. Additionally, your children may become very interested in one part of the Theme and you will want to spend more time developing one aspect of the Strand, or, conversely, they may quickly pass over part of it that you thought would especially fascinate them. Reading down a column shows how a free play activity leads into a structured play activity and so on.

The plans are easily adaptable and provide an overview of all the activities, as the plans show some topics are naturally more suited to particular approaches and activities than others. You will need to adapt these plans in the light of your discussions with the children at the start of the Theme and in the light of your assessment of children's progress and interests as the Theme progresses.

Finally, the relationship between the design and technology content of any topic and that of other subjects of the curriculum has not been developed within these plans. You will need to make these direct links within your own wider planning.

Lesson planning

It has been assumed that the design and technology teaching and learning will be just one of many parallel activities going on within the busy EYFS setting and that each practitioner is the expert within their own setting. This Resource File contains, therefore, a mixture of quite clearly structured activities (most of the Focused activities fall into this category) and 'looser' suggestions that you can develop yourself in more detail.

In the starting points and support for learning given at the beginning of each Strand you will find links and ideas that will enable you to develop each Strand according to your children and circumstances. Some of the stories, songs and rhymes are used within specific activities, but some are not. You might want to use these as an introduction to the whole Strand, share them during an end-of-session story time or use them in dedicated music or movement/drama sessions.

The same is true of the photofiles – provided in Microsoft® PowerPoint® and Microsoft® Word versions. These collections of photographs relate to each Theme to stimulate learning through discussion. Some of the activities specify the use of a photofile, but some of the photofiles are not directly tied to any one activity. This again is designed with your flexibility in mind, according to the circumstances of your setting. You may want to show the whole of a particular photofile when you have timetabled access to a data projector. You may want to use specific slides with a small group gathered around a computer for discussion, for example a group with English as an additional language. The Word versions include suggestions of how you might use the images to prompt the children's memories and ideas.

As well as seeing pictures, it is important for children to handle real objects connected with a topic. This is the idea behind the Discovery boxes sometimes suggested in a Strand's Starting points and support for learning. These should be cross-curricular and contain items that will stimulate children's curiosity and motivate them to learn about the topic. Ideally, the contents should be changed gradually across the topic, to maintain interest and stimulate new learning and connections. Depending on the age of the children and the organisation of your setting, you may want to introduce these yourself or site them strategically for children's own exploration. My preference is for the latter, but circumstances and the nature of the children within your setting may not make this possible.

Assessment

You cannot record everything every child does throughout the day, even for one subject. Focusing on a specific key activity for each Theme enables you to manage the assessment. An assessment pro forma is provided for each Theme. Remember assessment *for* learning – how will the assessment made today inform your planning tomorrow?

The Characteristics of designerly thought and action in the Foundation Stage table

shows the main Foundation Stage areas that relate to designerly thought and action. Each Theme has a version of this that relates to the Theme, with examples from the Theme that may provide you with that evidence. The grids are comprehensive, but not exhaustive. There will be many more ways that children will demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and development within each Theme.

Self-assessment




























The generic self-assessment sheet is designed to record the development of children's design capabilities as well as their self-confidence in practical work.

The left-hand column lists areas of design capability, but not all of these may be relevant for a specific activity. For example, the children may have been using skills they had gained in a previous activity and so not have learned new ones this time. In this case, you could simply record it as not applicable. You may like to write the specific skill for the activity in this box. This might be really simple (for example, *Chose appropriate fabric* for the collage in 'Myself: Keeping warm, staying cool: Exploring fabrics') or more complex (*Collaborative problem-solving* in 'Myself: Keeping clean, looking smart: Where does the water flow?'). The addition of such rubrics frequently help adults supporting the task, too, as it alerts them to what you are hoping the children will get out of the activity.

Characteristics of designerly thought and action in the Foundation Stage


	KUW: Exploration and investigation	KUW: Designing and making	PD: Using equipment, tools and materials	CD: Exploring media and materials	CD: Imagination
22–36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show curiosity and interest in the features of objects and living things. Describe and talk about what they see. Show curiosity about why things happen and how things work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are curious and interested in making things happen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance blocks to create simple structures. Show increasing control in gripping and using hammers, books, beaters and mark-making tools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand that they can use lines to enclose a space, then begin to use these shapes to represent objects. Create three-dimensional structures. Begin to construct, stacking blocks vertically and horizontally and making enclosures and creating spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pretend that one object represents another, especially when objects have characteristics in common.
30–50 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice and comment on patterns. Show an awareness of change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate various construction materials. Realise tools can be used for a purpose. Join construction pieces together to build and balance. Begin to try out a range of tools and techniques safely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operate equipment by means of pushing and pulling movements. Engage in activities requiring hand-eye coordination. Use one-handed tools and equipment. Construct with large materials such as cartons, long lengths of fabric and planks. Demonstrate increasing skill and control in the use of mark-making implements, blocks, construction sets and small-world activities. Understand that equipment and tools have to be used safely. Explore malleable materials by patting, stroking, poking, squeezing, pinching and twisting them. Manipulate materials to achieve a planned effect. Use simple tools to effect changes to the materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore what happens when they mix colours. Choose particular colours to use for a purpose. Understand that different media can be combined to create new effects. Experiment to create different textures. Create constructions, collages, paintings and drawings. Use ideas involving fitting, overlapping, in, out, enclosure, grids and sun-like shapes. Work creatively on a large or small scale. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice what adults do, imitating what is observed and then doing it spontaneously when the adult is not there. Use one object to represent another, even when the objects have few characteristics in common. Use available resources to create props to support role-play. Engage in imaginative and role-play based on first-hand experiences. Introduce a storyline or narrative into their play. Play alongside other children who are engaged in the same theme. Play cooperatively as part of a group to act out a narrative.

Self-assessment

Strand:		Name:		
Activity:		Date:		
Having design ideas	 I had lots of good ideas.	 I had some good ideas.	 It was hard to think of ideas.	
Communicating ideas	 I explained to other people my ideas about what I was making.	 I showed other people my ideas about what I was making.	 It was hard to tell other people my ideas about what I was making.	
Working with others	 I really enjoyed working with other people.	 I was happy to work near to other people.	 I did not enjoy working with other people.	
Learning new skills	 I learned to do something new.	 I practised something new.	 I found some new things hard to learn.	
Using tools and equipment safely	 I thought about keeping myself and others safe while I was working.	 I thought about keeping myself safe while I was working.	 I did not think about keeping myself and others safe while I was working.	
Making	 It was easy to make my idea.	 I was able to make my idea.	 I found making my idea really hard.	
Adapting ideas	 I knew how to change things when my idea didn't work.	 I asked for help when my idea didn't work.	 I didn't know what to do when my idea didn't work.	
Completed work	 I was really pleased with what I made.	 I was quite pleased with what I made.	 I was disappointed with what I made.	
Enjoyment	 I really enjoyed this activity.	 I quite enjoyed this activity.	 I did not enjoy this activity.	

Health and safety

Practical work with young children always has implications for health and safety. Ensure that you are working to your setting's health and safety policy and guidelines. Rules for safe working should be made clear to the children and to adults working with them. The reasons behind the rules should also be made clear and discussed frequently. Use the risk assessment sheet provided to identify potential hazards before you start, along with ways of minimising them.

Specific activities within the Strands have health and safety recommendations further to the general recommendations made here, indicated by the  icon. There is an additional safety section at the beginning of the 'Food' Theme.

Storage

- All potentially hazardous materials, components and tools should be stored out of the children's sight as well as out of their reach.
- Non-hazardous items should be stored *within* children's reach, so that they do not try to climb to get them.

Preparation and clearing away

- Think carefully about *how* and *when* materials and equipment are set out ready for use. Children move across a classroom far faster than adults and will be instantly drawn towards anything new and exciting.
- Train children to get out and tidy away construction kits and small role-play sets.
- For practical work that involves potentially hazardous tools or materials, organise the children first and produce the hazardous items once they are settled.
- If the children will be working standing up, have them sitting during the explanation, as it is easier to insist on children staying in one spot to listen if that spot is a seat.
- Remove all hazardous items before children begin to tidy up. This includes pots of water and paint.

Working practices

- Ensure sufficient space and elbow room for each child to work effectively.
- Teach children how to use all equipment properly, and don't let them struggle, even with simple tasks.
- Consider group size: the higher the risk of injury and the lower the classroom experience of the supervising adult, the fewer children there should be.
- Check the sizes of the tools. 'Child-sized' often appears to be that of an average 10-year-old and there seems to be a quirky notion that the smaller the hand, the bigger the paintbrush. Saw down paintbrush handles to a length of about 12 cm to prevent near-misses of the eye and snags on baggy aprons, while providing the children with a tool that they can wield with control and precision.

Scissors

- These are probably the most hazardous items in common use in EYFS settings. They are often a weapon of choice for children who throw things.
- Insist that scissors stay on the table where they are needed. Put the rack on the table and train children to put them back in the rack when they have finished working.
- Children should not move around the room holding scissors, even in the 'safe' way of holding them by the closed blades.
- Choose scissors with rounded points. Safety scissors that cut only paper, not fingers, are available, but often these don't cut fabric or card, though they do cut hair.
- Look for teaching scissors that allow adults to guide small hands in the correct slicing motion.
- Blunt scissors can be more dangerous than sharper ones, as children will try to tear material with the scissors rather than slicing and then have no control of their arm or the scissors when the material gives way.

Risk/Hazard

Risk control

Resources

Suitable resources for all kinds of design work can be both consumable (single use, such as paper and card) and reusable. Collect as many recycled/reusable resources as possible from home and local business donations. Your local council may also run a recycling scheme for educational establishments. Kent County Council, for example, runs Scrapstore, which is an Aladdin's cave of materials at a nominal fee for a trolley-full, and the staff demonstrate wonderful things you can do with them.

When painting, provide thick ready-mixed paint rather than block paint for use at easels – young children find controlling the water content very difficult. For economy, buy powder paint in primary colours plus black and white to mix in quantity in a wide range of colours (add PVA glue to thicken). Store it in reused squeeze bottles and put small amounts into lidded pots. Provide a brush for each colour and a jar of water to wash the brush if colours get mixed. Change the water frequently.

Recycled/reclaimed resources

Paper and card

In as many colours, thicknesses and textures as you can get hold of, including wallpaper, office stationery, advertising boards, wrapping paper, tissue and crêpe.

Plastic

- *Sheets*: Stiff and flexible of all sizes, from office folders (opaque and transparent) to rolls of bubble wrap and cling film. Provided it can be cut easily with scissors, refuse nothing.
- *Struts*: Useful for supporting large structures.
- *Mixed sundries*: Small caps, components from small factory runs, etc. Consider size as well as potential – are they more likely to go in mouths than actually be useful?

Household items

Set up a row of covered boxes to receive

donations from parents and carers of: *boxes, card tubes, dessert pots, egg cartons, margarine tubs*, etc. However:

- No toilet roll middles.
- No milk cartons.
- Check for chipped or sharp corners to anything metal or rigid plastic.
- Be prepared to wash and sterilise plastic dessert pots.

Packaging

- *Polystyrene packaging chips*: Make sure you have a use for these before accepting – they will probably arrive by the dustbin-bagful.
- *Solid polystyrene packaging*: Can be useful, but is bulky to store. Difficult to work with, as it flakes once cut.
- *Bubble wrap*: Invaluable – accept all offers, especially of large sheets.

Catering supplies

- *Drinks stirrers*: Make excellent glue spreaders – accurate and economical.
- *Paper, plastic, polystyrene cups*: Ensure they are well washed if not brand new.
- Serviettes, doilies, and all decorative table items.
- Take-away tubs, especially with lids.
- Large tins and tubs with plastic lids.

Textiles

- *Fabric*: Any length, any type – you may need to wash it.
- Ribbon, lace, buttons, beads, sew-on badges, Velcro.
- Wool, embroidery and dress-making thread.

Wood

Check for splinters and old nails and screws.

Metal items

Check for rust and wash before use to remove traces of oil and so on.

Our places and spaces

Homes

Free play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House play • Building a den 		
Focused learning activities	Sitting comfortably	Caring for our pets	
Structured play activities	Home-making	A home for someone new	
Focused design activity	Chairs for our toys	Cupboards	Farm, zoo or safari park Huff and puff
Extending learning	Building a den		
Visit/visitors/events	<i>Visit:</i> Farm, zoo or safari or <i>visit:</i> a local historic house or museum		
Home-school links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patchwork quilt • Pet day! 		

Gardens

Free play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gardening play 		
Focused learning activities	Sowing seeds and growing plants		
Structured play activities	Miniature gardens		
Focused design activity	A courtyard garden	How to feed wild birds	Wind-catchers
Extending learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-dressing • Rainy-day collage 		
Visit/visitors/events	<i>Visit:</i> local park, wood/wild area or <i>visit:</i> a garden centre, nursery, allotments		
Home-school links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact parents about unusual gardens and plants 		

About this Theme

Homes

This is an essential topic for encouraging continuity of learning between home and school, and provides many opportunities for designerly thought and action. Children are very aware of their parents' planning, decorating, window-shopping and buying new things for the home. All aspects of the process of designing are demonstrated to them by their parents: assessing existing situations and products, generating and evaluating ideas and putting design plans into action.

Gardens

Research is increasingly showing that young children need frequent contact with the natural world for the development of their emotional and mental health. Many EYFS settings have outdoor areas in which children can play. Children need to be involved in the design of these outdoor spaces and in the decisions about what will be grown and where, in order to have a sense of ownership of the space. Some settings are fortunate to have quite a large garden area or can share part of a school garden. Others have only a bare asphalt 'playground', but with imagination, small areas can be transformed into growing spaces. Many families in urban areas grow plants in small spaces and can contribute knowledge, skills and design ideas.

Special places

This Strand connects with the landscape or townscape within the child's immediate experience and beyond and would fit into any topic on where we live, whether that be village, town or city. The experience of living in each of these environments is different, each with different technological implications:

The village child:

- will have a strong sense of local community: one school, few shops, pub,

village hall and village events (e.g. the annual fête, harvest or flower festival) and traditions;

- is aware of farms and the technology of agriculture: tractors, combines, sheep dips;
- recognises that getting the shopping has transport requirements and costs, dependence on postal services is greater, catalogue and online shopping is easier than visiting the store.

The town child:

- is aware of the countryside beyond, especially in valley towns with surrounding hills, but their experience of community has less clear-cut boundaries; there is a dual sense of community: the immediate locality and the whole town (e.g. during carnival);
- unlike for village children, going shopping or swimming after school is routine, but going to the out-of-town shopping centre or leisure complex may be easier than heading into a city centre;
- sees strong communication links between town and city as well as town and countryside; is aware of buses and trains, even if going on one is not an everyday event.

The city child:

- is surrounded by streets and houses that appear to have no end; young children may not be aware that the city has an end, especially if they only leave it by motorway or plane;
- sees a far greater range of buildings, many more different types of homes, and of people who live in them; cities often have a strong sense of history and tradition that young children may have some awareness of (the castle, the cathedral);
- is in the focus point for a wider transport system – rivers and canals as well as road and rail; even an airport.

Homes

Photofiles

- 'Homes'
- 'My Cat Likes to Hide in Boxes'
- 'Chairs for bears'

Literacy links

- A version of 'The Three Little Pigs'
- *Miss Bilberry's New House* by Emma Chichester Clark (Mammoth)
- *A New Room for William* by Sally Grindley (Bloomsbury)
- *A Chair for Baby Bear* by Kaye Umansky (OUP) A delightful 'sequel' to 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'
- *Each Peach Pear Plum* by Janet and Allan Ahlberg (Puffin)
- *My Cat Likes to Hide in Boxes* by Eve Sutton (Puffin)
- *My Home* by Jim Pipe (Franklin Watts Reading About series)
- *This is My Trailer* by Karen Taylor (Traveller Education Service) A simple story of a traveller child asking 'Is this my trailer?' and meeting a series of nursery characters, including Cinderella whose trailer is, of course, a pumpkin

Songs and rhymes

'The House that Jack Built'

Display

Imagine if all our homes were on one street...

- Wall display: Each child paints their home (or ideal home) and cuts it out once dry. The houses are mounted along a street, with trees, cars, and anything else that the children would like to see (and paint) to go on their street. Label it *Cherry Street* (or whatever is appropriate to your setting).

- Table-top display: Make a 3-D version of the street, displaying homes made from recycled resources, along with people and animals.

Visits

- Farm, zoo, safari park or local pet shop.
- Historic house or museum in the locality that has rooms from different periods. Some towns have preserved quite small houses (perhaps miners' cottages) that are more on a scale suitable for very young children.

Special guests

- A new toy animal (especially one brought back from the farm, zoo or safari park) will need a home in the classroom.
- If your setting is in a rural area, perhaps arrange for a lamb to visit for part of a day.
- Invite parents and carers with their small pets for a Pet Day (see the activity 'Caring for our pets').

Home-school links

Don't ask children to report in detail about their home circumstances, either physical or emotional. Ask, for example, *What is your favourite place at home? Where do you specially like to be?* Whether this is in the garden or in bed, this is more likely to produce commonalities than comparing types of houses or making assumptions about the furniture everyone will have.

The activities 'Sitting comfortably' and 'Caring for our pets' require contributions from parents and carers and make particular links to home.

Farm, zoo or safari park

Key design learning

- Bring knowledge about the needs of animals into creating a play product.
- Balance reality and fantasy while designing through representation of the real world.

Resources

- Card
- Recycled resources such as cartons, boxes, pieces of felt and fabric, lengths of thread/wool/string
- Corrugated card, straws
- Pens, crayons, paints
- Scissors

Organisation

Small group with adult.

This activity needs to take place after a visit to a farm or animal park.

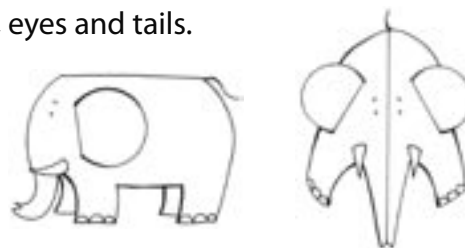
Design activity

Making their own model of the farm, zoo or safari park that they have visited extends children's thinking about the needs of animals in captivity or domestication and provides a means of reinforcing and extending their learning on their day out. It also extends the play possibilities of a ready-made farm or wild animal play set and develops children's creativity and imaginative skills.

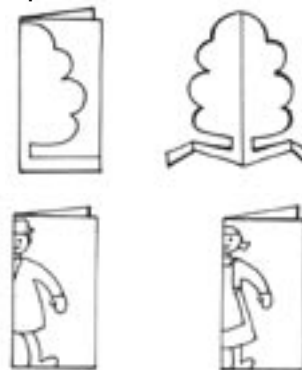
Animals that stand up can be made simply from folded card. Make one to show the children that they must not cut along the fold that forms the animal's back.



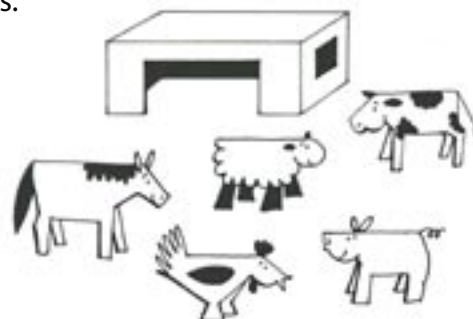
Glue the two sides of the face together for added realism and add features such as horns, ears, eyes and tails.



Help the children to make folded paper people (visitors and/or animal keepers) and trees to complete the set.



Following a visit to a farm, add sheds and barns.



Following a visit to the zoo, make an animal house or pen with bars made by threading cut-up straws through strips of corrugated card.



Note: These folded card animals are intended for play in the EYFS setting, but don't prevent children who particularly want to, from taking theirs home to play with.

A home for someone new

Key design learning

- Think about the needs of others.
- Respond imaginatively to a real-life problem.

Resources

- Soft toy that is new to the EYFS setting
- Large box to make into the toy's home
- Suitable props such as a cushion and food bowls, depending on the nature of the toy

Organisation

Small groups or pairs.

This activity is particularly suitable when many children are entering the setting or school.

Design activity

Being new and feeling strangely out of place is a common feeling that young children readily understand. They may find it difficult to talk about how they feel, so producing a new soft toy to join the setting can help children to articulate how they feel in similar circumstances.

This could be an activity to give to a small group or pair of new children to do together, to help them to make friends with each other and work purposefully together.

Provide the children with the props and leave them to arrange these and play with the toy as they wish. An adult might join them later to discuss progress and see if there is anything else the children feel they need to make the new toy feel at home.

Notes