

Exploring the Wider World Project Menu

*Making the most of what is on your
doorstep*

This menu has been devised from foci that settings have identified for themselves, with each category grouping these foci into similar themes. These represent ways in which practitioners can engage with 'exploring the wider world', supported by a specialist Associate.

The menu indicates an overview of the suggested input as part of the project: starting with the key general topics to cover, before exploring your chosen focus in more detail, and culminating in a follow-up session. These options are not exhaustive, but represent examples of suggested support and topics for exploration. They will be made bespoke to each setting depending on their requested focus and needs: please discuss with your Associate or contact Caroline on caroline@early-education.org.uk.

The number of foci that your setting can access will vary depending on the support offered. Some settings may feel that it is better to focus on one of these themes over a sustained period of time to ensure practice change becomes established. It may be possible for different staff members to work on different foci, if you feel your practice can sustain this, or for practitioners to work in local networks or groups where similar settings share the same focus, to maximise the time spent exploring particular foci.

What you will receive:

All settings will receive bespoke support on organising visits by looking at these key aspects which contribute to a successful visit. The mix of these aspects covered will depend on your starting point and what is most relevant and helpful to you. Some will be covered as part of individualised training for the setting, and some as part of a training offered to groups of settings.

Organisational aspects:

Organising a trip – Gain the confidence and knowledge of what needs to be in place before, after, and during a visit.

Risk benefit analysis – Develop the confidence to identify risks and then to counterbalance them with the potential learning that can result. Foster an understanding of the positivity of risk taking.

Why go out – Revisit the wider benefits of taking children out on local and further afield trips. Focus on the learning that these trips offer.



Refining what you do when you go out – Hone the experiences and opportunities you provide for the children when you go out.

Overcoming your barriers to going out – Analyse your barriers to going out, identify whether they are perceived or a matter of reality and develop strategies to minimise them.

Boosting staff confidence – Develop ways of staff feeling more confident to organise and carry out trips both locally and further afield.

Making the most of what is on your doorstep – Developing your knowledge of what your locality has to offer to support the learning of your children.

Learning environments that are rooted in the local community – Develop resources that will ensure your learning environment is stimulating, rich, and reflects the communities your children come from.

Taking back shared spaces – Do you feel your local environment is not suitable for young children due to anti-social behaviour or unsightly features. Discover ways of being pro-active to change perceptions or reality.

Benefits of going to the same place often – Children need repetition and like going back to the same place to develop ideas and refine skills. Develop ideas to support extending learning in a place that is very familiar to the children. Developing a deep sense of place.

Families and going out – Develop ways of supporting families to take children out during the evenings, weekends, and holidays through sharing what is possible and ideas of things that could be done there.

Supporting families to go out – Develop strategies for sharing the learning that can take place in local venues in ways your family will access and that will increase their confidence to visit them with their children.

Bringing the community in – It can sometimes be useful to invite members of the local community into the setting. Explore possibilities which build on children's interests.

Practicalities of going on a visit:

If you are unsure as to a possible focus, please discuss with your Associate to talk through options and they can make recommendations – including new possibilities not listed here.

Going to the park – Develop ideas of opportunities that can be offered at the park. Find the place children like to keep going back to and make the most of what it has to offer.

Going to the museum – Plan and carry out a trip to one of the local museums. Find that particular exhibit a child or group of children keep wanting to go back to and enable that to help to establish a strong sense of place.

Going to the Canal – Overcome barriers to taking the children to the canal so that this important feature of Stoke can be utilised to its fullest. For example, enjoy using

the many bridges to get a different perspective and bring the 3 Billy Goats Gruff to life.

Going to the – Plan and explore a trip to a place of your suggestion, exploring potential barriers and issues to overcome to enable you to carry out the trip. (This might be a place of worship, the shops, the library, or other places within your locality that follow the children’s interests).

Going further afield – Think about destinations that are further afield to increase the life experiences of your children. Plan the trip and carry it out.

Developing animal ideas – This focus will enable you to explore places animals live, life cycles of animals.

Using nature – This focus will enable you to make the most of the learning in natural spaces close to you.

Where does clay come from? – Explore your local surroundings through looking for natural clay. Go through the whole process of digging up clay, preparing it for use, and creating with clay. Compare locally dug and new clay, to find out which is suitable for firing, and its changing material properties.

Using local businesses to promote learning – Develop links with local businesses that will promote life skills and enable children to benefit more from role-play scenarios you set up in your learning environments to ensure deeper engagement from the children. Some examples might be hairdressers, dentist, vet, office, art gallery, etc.

What to do when you get back:

Associates will follow up with you to look at the impact of the training and support offered, and identify possible other avenues to continue to help developing practice.

Making the most of the experience – look in depth at the experiences you offer the children once they are back in the setting after the trip to ensure learning is extended or embedded.

Making the most of maps – Young children are fascinated by making and looking at maps. Use maps of your locality to extend and refine children’s thinking about where they live, the features they find and places that are familiar to them. Encouraging children to create their own maps as well as looking at commercially produced maps.

Developing your own museum – Young children love to collect ‘treasures’. Explore ways that they can be displayed and curated to ensure children feel valued and can share their ‘treasures’ widely. This can be used as a way to explore the life behind the scenes at the museum and to think about the different professions found at the museum.