

Exploring the Wider World Project

Making the most of what is on your doorstep

Newsletter issue 4 – November 2019



The Project:

We are so pleased that so many of you have chosen to take part in this incredibly exciting and practical project. We have had some really positive feedback from project members so far. The project resources have been well received and have been seen in use in many settings. The experiences offer is well under way: 139 children will have been on a barge and inside a bottle oven by the end of the first week in December during their trip to Middle Port pottery. They got there in a number of ways – walking, going on the train or a bus, and by taxi. 331 children have been able to stroke animals that they have never or rarely seen so up close and personal before! More children will have experienced this by the time the funded children finish for their Christmas break. 2 settings have had an exciting journey into Hem Heath Woods to explore a very different environment from the one they are used to. Other experiences, besides, have also taken place.

Reminders

- Do please get your data returns in as a matter of urgency in as they are important and your additional resources are dependent on their return – please submit these **by the 6th December**. If you are unsure about what you need to return, please get in touch with Caroline to discuss or to resend the forms as appropriate.
- If you have not already sent in your choices for the Enriching Experiences, please get in touch by the 13th December so these can be planned for early in the Spring.
- Have the discussions with your Associate about what will make a difference to you for getting your children out and about or to enable your children to shine in the strands of the World and People and Communities.
- If there are other areas you would like to cover as part of the general training foci, please let me know.

If you have any queries or feedback, you can contact the project lead, Caroline Eaton, by email at caroline@early-education.org.uk

Going out in the dark!

The fact that it gets dark so early now has got me thinking about the opportunities we could be giving or are giving children to experience the world after dark. The world appears very differently once the sun goes down, with different animals coming out, different sights, sounds and smells. Senses are heightened and excitement and learning can still be found.

Going out with children in the dark may require a different mindset to going out in the light and different precautions may need to be taken but will open up a whole new world to some children.

Some children may be scared of the dark and so going to explore it may well enable them to overcome this.

Ideas to do in the dark:

- Look at the moon and talk about what the children can see. Is it waxing or waning?
- Learn some of the constellations
- Introduce and use new vocabulary e.g. gloaming, nightfall, dusk, crater etc
- Play torch tag
- Dance with torches
- Walk the route you usually do and talk about the differences between daytime and night
- Listen to the sounds that can be heard at night
- Identify features found, using photographs taken in the day
- Talk about how to keep safe in the dark
- Explore reflective properties of materials
- Jumping in and out of streetlamp circles of light
- Which streetlights shine the brightest? What do they look like?
- Notice the coming on of the streetlights
- Look at the headlights on the cars, buses and lorries etc
- Play catch the light
- Find a dark place and just be, in it
- Look for what they can see in the dark
- Experiment with what to wear to be seen and record their findings

Things to do to build on the going out in the dark:

- Make electrical circuits
- Talk about safety and the need to be seen
- Discuss how the children could make themselves be seen
- Make a collection of clothing with reflective items for keeping safe
- Make a collection of torches that work in different ways and have differing strengths
- Share stories with a dark theme such as *The Sea of Tranquillity*, *Can't you sleep little Bear?*
- Think about jobs people do at night
- Have some solar lights and note when they switch on
- Make books of outings in the dark or getting ready to go out in the dark etc
- Talk about how the dark makes them feel
- Make a collection of streetlights found locally

I am sure you already have quite a repertoire of ideas and if you have any that are not on this inexhaustive list, do feel free to share.

The days will continue to get shorter until the 21st December, when they will start to lengthen again. I know this has mainly focused on the evenings but the mornings are often dark as well and these ideas work just as well at either end of the day. The Christmas lights will soon be twinkling, so why not enjoy them?

Safety thoughts:

- Be seen
- Stay close
- Stay in familiar streets, explore newer places by day
- Be aware of driveways and turnings where it is harder to see young children
- Encourage children to be inquisitive rather than anxious



Case study

Part of the project is to share the good practice and learning that has been going on across Stoke. I do hope that you enjoy hearing what others have been doing:

'I FOUND A LAMPOST WITH MY MUM!' Brook Cottage's experience

From a confident foundation of already going out on trips and outings, this setting has found the project has really enhanced their appreciation of the opportunities available to them in their local area. This includes the simple, everyday things that adults often take for granted (and no longer see) but are intriguing to children e.g. post boxes and lampposts. Finding a lamppost with your mum may not seem like a momentous experience – but it clearly was for this child who gleefully reported back his find, after he'd been exploring lampposts with the nursery. Making connections, remembering and recalling vocabulary from previous first-hand experience and linking knowledge between home and nursery are powerful learning experiences for young children and contribute to a sense of achievement and self-agency in their learning. Expeditions to discover more lampposts (and learning why we have them) was enhanced by the resource materials from the project which triggered conversations about similarities and differences and also encouraged staff to consider appropriate vocabulary to extend language learning.

Finally

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. If there are any subjects you would like covering do let me know and remember to share your experiences with Caroline: caroline@early-education.org.uk

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