**Introduction**

**Early Years Lesson Plans**

*No Pens Day Wednesday* lesson plans have been created by practising early years teachers and speech and language therapists. They can be used as they are, or adapted and built upon to suit your needs and the children you work with. Each has ideas for differentiation to support different levels of development.

Lesson plans aim to follow good practice principles, i.e.

* Identifying explicit learning objectives, based on the early years foundation stage (EYFS).
* Encouraging the use of visual supports to encourage understanding and learning.
* Including plenary sessions that allow for consolidation of learning.

Visit I CAN’s webpage for more information about [supporting children with special educational needs](https://ican.org.uk/no-pens-day-wednesday/supporting-send-on-no-pens-day/) and [continuing to embed speaking and listening into your teaching](https://ican.org.uk/no-pens-day-wednesday/taking-your-spoken-language-focus-further/).



**Early years lesson plan contents:**

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| **Activity** | **Speaking and listening objective** |
| *Going on a bear hunt* | **Listening and attention*** Listens to others one to one or in small groups, when conversation interests them.
* Listens to stories with increasing attention and recall.
* Joins in with repeated refrains and anticipates key events and phrases in rhymes and stories.
* Focusing attention – still listen or do, but can shift own attention.
* Is able to follow directions (if not intently focused on own choice of activity).

**Understanding*** Shows understanding of prepositions such as ‘under’, ‘on top’, ‘behind’ by carrying out an action or selecting correct picture.
* Responds to simple instructions, e.g. to get or put away an object.
* Beginning to understand ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions.

**Speaking** * Can retell a past event in the correct order.
* Uses talk to connect ideas, explain what is happening and anticipate what might happen next.
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| *Exploring Bridges and Towers* | **Listening and Attention*** Listens to others one to one or in small groups, when conversation interests them.
* Focusing attention – still listen or do, but can shift own attention.
* Is able to follow directions
* Is able to follow direction (if not intently focused on own choice of activity).
* Two-channelled attention – can listen and do for short span.

**Understanding** * Understands use of objects (e.g. “What do we use to cut things?’)
* Shows understanding of prepositions such as ‘under’, ‘on top’, ‘behind’ by carrying out an action or selecting correct picture.
* Beginning to understand ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions.
* Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion.

**Speaking*** Builds up vocabulary that reflects the breadth of their experiences.

Uses talk in pretending that objects stand for something else in play. |
| *Handa’s Surprise* | Children are able to tell a sequence of events using picture prompts. |
| *Leo the Listening Bear* | Children are able to identify listening behaviours |
| *Emotions faces* | **Managing feelings and behaviour*** Can express their own feelings such as sad, happy, cross, scared, and worried.
* Responds to the feelings and wishes of others.
* Understands that own actions affect other people, for example, becomes upset or tries to comfort another child when they realise they have upset them.

**Listening and Attention*** Listens to others one to one or in small groups, when conversation interests them.
* Focusing attention – still listen or do, but can shift own attention.
* Is able to follow directions.
* Two-channelled attention – can listen and do for short span.

**Understanding*** Understands use of objects (e.g. “What do we use to cut things?’)
* Shows understanding of prepositions such as ‘under’, ‘on top’, ‘behind’ by carrying out an action or selecting correct picture.
* Responds to simple instructions, e.g. to get or put away an object. Beginning to understand ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions.

Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion. |
| *Fruit Kebabs* | **Listening and Attention*** Listens to others one to one or in small groups, when conversation interests them.
* Focusing attention – still listen or do, but can shift own attention.
* Is able to follow directions
* Two-channelled attention – can listen and do for short span.

**Understanding*** Understands use of objects (e.g. “What do we use to cut things?’)
* Shows understanding of prepositions such as ‘under’, ‘on top’, ‘behind’ by carrying out an action or selecting correct picture.
* Responds to simple instructions, e.g. to get or put away an object.
* Beginning to understand ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions.
* Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion.
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| *I-Spy bottles* | **Listening and Attention*** Listens to others one to one or in small groups when conversation interests them.
* Focusing attention – still listen or do, but can shift own attention.
* Is able to follow directions
* Two-channelled attention – can listen and do for short span.

**Understanding*** Understands use of objects (e.g. “What do we use to cut things?’)
* Shows understanding of prepositions such as ‘under’, ‘on top’, ‘behind’ by carrying out an action or selecting correct picture.
* Responds to simple instructions, e.g. to get or put away an object.
* Beginning to understand ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions.
* Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion.
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| *Sound hunt with natural objects* | **Literacy*** Hears and says the initial sound in words.
* Links sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet.
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| *Listening Walk* | **Listening and Attention** * Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity.
* Two-channelled attention – can listen and do for short span.

**Understanding*** Responds to simple instructions, e.g. to get or put away an object.
* Responds to instructions involving a two-part sequence.

**Speaking*** Builds up vocabulary that reflects the breadth of their experiences.
* Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events.
 |
| *Scented play dough* | **Listening and Attention*** Listens to others one to one or in small groups, when conversation interests them.
* Focusing attention – still listen or do, but can shift own attention.
* Is able to follow directions
* Two-channelled attention – can listen and do for short span.

**Understanding*** Understands use of objects (e.g. “What do we use to cut things?’)
* Shows understanding of prepositions such as ‘under’, ‘on top’, ‘behind’ by carrying out an action or selecting correct picture.
* Responds to simple instructions, e.g. to get or put away an object.
* Beginning to understand ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions.
* Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion.
 |
| *Talking Table* | **Speaking*** Links statements and sticks to a main theme or intention.
* Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events.

**Listening and Attention*** Listens to others one to one or in small groups, when conversation interests them.

**Understanding*** Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion
* Beginning to understand ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions
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| *Gloop and Sand Activities, focusing on language and communication* | **Understanding*** Responds to simple instructions, e.g. to get or put away an object
* Beginning to understand ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions

**Speaking*** Learns new words very rapidly and is able to use them in communicating
* Questions why things happen and gives explanations. Asks e.g. who, what, when, how
* Builds up vocabulary that reflects the breadth of their experiences
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**Preschool - Listening and attention**

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| **Target age:** Preschool | Activity: Going on a bear hunt | **Area of learning:** Listening and attention |
| **Early learning goal**: Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipate key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, whilst engaged in another activity. | **Links to development matters**: **Listening and attention*** Listens to others one to one or in small groups, when conversation interests them.
* Listens to stories with increasing attention and recall.
* Joins in with repeated refrains and anticipates key events and phrases in rhymes and stories.
* Focusing attention – still listen or do, but can shift own attention.
* Is able to follow directions (if not intently focused on own choice of activity).

**Understanding*** Shows understanding of prepositions such as ‘under’, ‘on top’, ‘behind’ by carrying out an action or selecting correct picture.
* Responds to simple instructions, e.g. to get or put away an object.
* Beginning to understand ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions.

**Speaking** * Can retell a past event in the correct order.
* Uses talk to connect ideas, explain what is happening and anticipate what might happen next.
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| **Activity** Small group 4-6 children | **Differentiation** | **Resources** |
| **Starter**Introduce and read the story to the children. Comment on what is happening in the book, why the characters are going on a bear hunt and how they are feeling. Make up a tune to the chorus which is simple and repeat it so the children can sing it while you read the book.Explain to the children that they are going to explore the idea of looking for a bear.Ask the children to think about the ways they might have to move, using the pictures and the words in the book to help them. Make sure to model any new vocabulary like ‘creeping’ or ‘crawling’. |  | Bear Hunt bookOutdoor clothingItems for the adventure, binoculars/telescopes, mud, water, ribbons. |
| **Main**In a large space explore the movements they have suggested such as creeping on tip toes, crawling on hands and knees, moving sideways.If possible set out some scenes of the bear hunt in the garden. Low tray of water, near some trees, walking in mud.**Activity**Discuss that they need to get ready for the hunt and ask the children what they may need e.g. wellies, coats, binoculars. Allow the children to match the wellies and try to put on their own coats. Use binoculars and telescopes to find the bear.Explore the movements they suggested whilst recalling the story and walking through the mud and forest. Use the words from the story like squelch etc. Emphasise key preposition vocabulary. Ask how they are feeling as they do it. You can use ribbons to illustrate the snowstorm – use this as an opportunity to explore the whirling movements.When the children get to the cave allow them to choose the ending, using wondering and questioning based questions.Do they want to be chased by the bear? Or would they like to become friends with it? I wonder what the bear was doing before we found it?Would the bear be happy or sad if we scared it? Why might it chase us?I wonder what the bear might be called?What other animals live in caves? What would happen to the story if we were looking for one of those animals instead? | Encourage more able children to help and set up the garden. Encourage them to risk assess the situation.Follow it on by using instruments to make the sounds of the movements, allow the children to repeat the sequences of their movements indoors to other children/ adults.Encourage more able children to think of other situations that they could go through i.e. walking through quick sand, going over a broken bridge.Lower ability pupils: If these pupils have a lower attention span, only do a couple of the adventures so not to lose their concentration. Alternatively use small world people to act it out in a sensory tray. |  |
| **Plenary:** Talk about themovements that they made during their activity to help them find the bear. Can the children think of all the obstacles they had to get through to find the bear? The plenary could also be used to consolidate some of the prepositions/actions vocabulary that you’ve covered in the lesson , using actions to show how the children went over/under/through different obstacles.  |
| **Assessment for Learning:** Are the children able to retell the story in their own words? What happens at the beginning, the middle and the end? Can they think of a different ending and act it out with their friends? Were the children able to understand different prepositions vocabulary? |

**Understanding**

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| **Target age:** Preschool | **Activity:** Exploring Bridges and Towers | **Area of learning:** Understanding |
| **Early learning goal**: Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events. | **Links to development matters**: **Listening and Attention*** Listens to others one to one or in small groups, when conversation interests them.
* Focusing attention – still listen or do, but can shift own attention.
* Is able to follow direction (if not intently focused on own choice of activity).
* Two-channelled attention – can listen and do for short span.

**Understanding** * Understands use of objects (e.g. *“What do we use to cut things?’*)
* Shows understanding of prepositions such as ‘under’, ‘on top’, ‘behind’ by carrying out an action or selecting correct picture.
* Beginning to understand ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions.
* Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion.

**Speaking*** Builds up vocabulary that reflects the breadth of their experiences.
* Uses talk in pretending that objects stand for something else in play.
 |
| **Activity Small group 4-6 children** | **Differentiation** | **Resources** |
| **Starter**Introduce the children to the experience by explaining that they will be looking at bridges and towers, how they can be built and who might use them. Show the children pictures of bridges and towers, talking about what they have been built with (bricks and wood etc), and how tall they might be. Allow the children to ask questions and engage in an open discussion, enabling them to explore ideas of what might happen in the activity. Talk about the resources they could use to build the bridges and towers (lego, mobile, wooden blocks).  | Encourage more able children to gather the resources. Support lower ability children with simple language and direct instructions. Turn it into a full day experience by going to see a bridge, talking about how the bridge might have been constructed and who built it. Take photos of the bridges and towers you have visited to revisit at the setting.  | Pictures and books with bridges and towers.  |
| **Main**Begin by gathering the resources together, take them into the garden and draw a ‘river’ with the chalk. Talk about what the river looks like, and how the children could build a bridge to go over it. Allow the children to choose the resources they want to use and support them in using teamwork to achieve their goal. Remember to use lots of comments, as well as using questions such as:I wonder how big it needs to be?I wonder if this is long enough?I wonder what will happen if the bridge falls down?**Activity**Once the children have fully explored their ideas and what they could build, support them in choosing resources and putting them together to form the bridge. Once the bridge has been formed support, the children in creating some vehicles to go over the bridge and some boats to go under the bridge. Introduce words and support children in their understanding of these:BuildConstructRiverPeopleTowerBridgeChalk Prepositions such as on top, beside, beneath, underOnce the bridge and vehicles have been constructed, take a step back and allow the children to explore what they have created with the small world people and vehicles. Listen to their language and comments, joining in with conversations about what is happening. Take photos of the creations.  | Ask more able children to help gather the resources. For lower ability children use the pictures to help them understand what a bridge needs to support itself, i.e., two towers to support it.  | Small world peopleLego/duploMobiloChalkPictures of bridgesCamera  |
| **Plenary:** Regroup and use the photos to talk about what occurred during the activity, ask the children to point out what they created and give praise for what they did. Use the plenary as an opportunity to consolidate key vocabulary from the lesson, repeating it as you talk about the activity.  |
| **Assessment for Learning:** **Question –** Can you remember what we did to make the bridges? Can you explain to adults/parents/practitioners what you created and how?**Observations –** Are the children able to work together when making the bridge and vehicles? Are children able to explain to a practitioner/another child what they want to achieve and how they can do it? Are children able to listen to one another’s ideas and comments and engage in and follow conversations?  |

**Communication and language**

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| **Age group:** Preschool | **Area of learning:** Communication and Language |
| **Early learning goal**: Speaking | **Communication and language objective**: Children are able to tell a sequence of events using picture prompts. |
| **Activity:** Handa’s Surprise | **Differentiation** | **Resource** |
| **Starter** Children should be familiar with the story of Handa’s Surprise. Re-read the story again if needed. Explain to the children that Handa is very confused about what has happened to all of the fruit in her basket! It’s their job to explain it to her... |  | Handa’s Surprise book |
| **Main**Put the children in to groups (group size approximately 6)Provide the children with pictures of the animals and fruit from the story. Ask each group to put the pictures in order so it can help them explain to Handa what has happened to her basket of fruit. Once the pictures are in order, the children need to tell their story. In each group, give each child a turn to talk about an animal and a fruit, working their way through the sequence of pictures as each child has a turn. Come back together as a whole group to tell the story as one big group. Put the pictures up at the front of the classroom and ask the children to take turns to talk about a part of the story.  | Lower ability: Support from an adult to sequence/tell the story.Higher ability: Working independently as a group to sequence and tell the story  | Animal and fruit pictures from the story  |
| **Plenary** Summarise the story that has been told, adding in and emphasising sequencing vocabulary.  |
| **Assessment opportunities:** **Observations:** How did the children use their language to help sequence the events in the story? Were ideas sequenced/linked, or did children tend to use just key vocabulary, using the pictures for support?  |

**Communication and language**

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| **Target age:** Preschool | **Teacher:** | **Date:** | **Area of learning:** Communication and Language |
| **Early learning goal**: Listening and attention | **Communication and language objective**: Children are able to identify listening behaviours |
| **Activity** | **Differentiation** | **Resource** |
| **Starter**Introduce the children to Leo the Listening Bear and explain that he’s going to help with the lesson, which is about good listening. |  | Teddy bear (or any other toy/animal) |
| **Main**Using the teddy, introduce the children to the body parts that are needed for good listening:* Ears (for listening)
* Eyes (for looking at the person who is talking)
* Hands (to stay still)
* Feet (to stay still)
* Head (for thinking about what the person is saying)

Ask the children to identify these body parts on their own body**Activity**Ask the children to get into pairs. Give each pair an ear picture and a mouth picture. Explain that the person with the mouth is the speaker and the person with the ear is the listener - when you have the mouth you can talk, when you have the ear you have to listen. Encourage the children to think about all the parts of their body that they need to do good listening.The talker has a minute to speak about anything they like – a favourite toy, film, activity, TV programme etc. You could provide pictures or objects to talk about if the children find it difficult. The listener needs to do good listening. Then swap so that each child in the pair has a turn to be the listener and talker.  | Lower ability pupils: Allow time for them to name different body parts on the bear. Ensure body parts are familiar before moving on to how each part helps listening.During paired work, use pictures to work from as a prompt for talking turn. For children with limited spoken language, give them specific pictures or objects to communicate about – encourage them to use gesture, symbols or picture clues. Encourage their listening partner  | * Ear pictures
* Mouth pictures

Possibly picture materials for children to talk about in their pairs  |
| **Plenary:** Praise children for specific behaviours seen during the activity, and remind them about the different body parts and what they help us to do in relation to listening. Challenge the children to try to think about using these good listening behaviours whenever they can – show them a visual prompt (poster) that will be up in the classroom to help them remember about good listening and how important it is for learning.  |
| **Assessment for Learning:** **Question –** Can you remember what body parts we need to help us do good listening? **Observations –** Are children generalising good listening behaviours to other activities and lessons? “Catch” the children doing good listening and see if they can tell you what they are doing....e.g. looking at the person speaking... |

**Understanding**

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| **Target age:** Preschool | **Activity: Emotions faces** | **Date:** | **Area of learning:** Understanding |
| **Early learning goal**: Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events. | **Links to development matters**: **Managing feelings and behaviour*** Can express their own feelings such as sad, happy, cross, scared, and worried.
* Responds to the feelings and wishes of others.
* Understands that own actions affect other people, for example, becomes upset or tries to comfort another child when they realise they have upset them.

**Listening and Attention*** Listens to others one to one or in small groups, when conversation interests them.
* Focusing attention – still listen or do, but can shift own attention.
* Is able to follow directions.
* Two-channelled attention – can listen and do for short span.

**Understanding*** Understands use of objects (e.g. *“What do we use to cut things?’*)
* Shows understanding of prepositions such as ‘under’, ‘on top’, ‘behind’ by carrying out an action or selecting correct picture.
* Responds to simple instructions, e.g. to get or put away an object. Beginning to understand ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions.
* Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion.
 |
| **Activity group 6+ children** | **Differentiation** | **Resources** |
| **Starter**Introduce the children to the experience by explaining that they will be making pictures of their faces showing different emotions, or feelings.Talk about the different emotions they may feel and how their faces change to communicate their emotions or feelings . Use an adult model initially to provide examples, e.g. when I do this (pull a sad face), how am I feeling? How do you know I feel sad? Give each child a mirror and ask them to show a happy face, then a sad face and talk about what is different with each. You can also discuss things that make us feel happy and sad.  | For children who might struggle to understand different emotions, just talk through happy and sad. For children who may find this activity easier, you can discuss different emotions like angry, bored, surprised etc.  | Mirrors |
| **Main**Look through all the different materials that the children have to work with and talk about them, giving examples of how they could use the resources to make their face. Ask the children to select their paper and resources, and to think about what face they want to make. Explain that you will be sharing the pictures at the end of the day with the whole group to see if the other children can guess what emotion your picture shows. Allow the children to use the materials available to make their face however they want to, talking to them about the emotions as they are doing it and having discussions about emotions and feelings, for example:* How else can our bodies tell people what we are feeling?
* Times when we’ve felt different emotions
* What we do when we’re feeling a certain way?
* How we help our friends/family if they’re feeling sad/angry etc?
 | Extend the experience by talking about how other people feel when we are happy/sad/angry and what can turn uncomfortable emotions into comfortable ones, such as a hug, a smile etc.Some children will be more understanding of their own and other’s emotions than others, so discussions can be more simple/complex depending on the child’s understanding of emotions and emotions vocabulary.  | Paper in different coloursVariety of small shapes of coloured paper, felt, off cuts, card etc. Wiggly eyesPre-cut mouth and eyebrow shapes (?)Wool or stringGlue and spreaders |
| **Plenary:** Praise the children for specific behaviours seen during the activity and remind them about the different objects they used, encourage the children to think about different emotions. Use the pictures in a circle time to again explore body language and see if the children can guess the emotions. |
| **Assessment for Learning:** **Question –** Can you remember what we did to make the pictures? Can they explain it to a friend/adult/parent?**Observations –** Are children generalising good listening behaviours and able to wait their turn to speak? Are they sharing their own experiences and connecting past experiences and stories? Do they show an understanding of their own and other’s emotions? Can they follow simple instructions in sequence? |
| **Speech, language and communication home activity:** Explain to parents/carers the activity that children took part in, focusing on emotions recognition and vocabulary. Support parents to help their children’s emotional vocabulary development at home through:* Talking about pictures in books/magazines where pictures show an obvious emotion – encourage parents to talk about the pictures with their children, discussing how the person in the picture might be feeling
* Encourage parents to name emotions that their child is feeling, to help children learn to recognise their own emotions, explaining to them that they’re feeling happiness/sadness/excitement/anger etc
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**Understanding**

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| **Target age:** Preschool | **Activity: Fruit Kebabs** | **Area of learning:** Understanding |
| **Early learning goal**: Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events. | **Links to development matters**: **Listening and Attention*** Listens to others one to one or in small groups, when conversation interests them.
* Focusing attention – still listen or do, but can shift own attention.
* Is able to follow directions
* Two-channelled attention – can listen and do for short span.

**Understanding*** Understands use of objects (e.g. *“What do we use to cut things?’*)
* Shows understanding of prepositions such as ‘under’, ‘on top’, ‘behind’ by carrying out an action or selecting correct picture.
* Responds to simple instructions, e.g. to get or put away an object.
* Beginning to understand ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions.
* Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion.
 |
| **Activity Small group 4-6 children** | **Differentiation** | **Resources** |
| **Starter**Introduce the children to the experience by explaining that they will be looking at lots of different fruit and making snacks to share together at snack/lunch time.Ask the children if they can tell you what resources they might need and what needs to be done before we begin any cooking activity. Talk about the need to wash hands thoroughly. Ask the children if they can explain the sequence of events that might be needed to make the kebabs – selecting fruit and equipment, peeling and cutting, threading onto skewers, tidying up and washing hands again.Talk about the safety aspects of working with food and knives, encourage the children to think about what they might need to be aware of. | Encourage more able children to go and get the resources from the kitchens/cook rather than having everything ready.Turn it into a full day experience by going shopping to buy the ingredients first – if possible, take photos as you go to help children remember when you get back to class. | A variety of fruit in different colours/sizesTablecloth or small chopping boardsSharp fruit knives- for one per childBarbeque skewers or similar |
| **Main**Begin by looking at each of the fruits in turn, ask the children to describe them, can they name them? Let them hold them and smell them all, and talk about similarities and differences. Have they tried them before? Remember to use lots of comments instead of questions, such as:*I wonder what this one tastes like**I wonder what it looks like on the inside**This one is bigger than this one, maybe we can sort them into sizes/colours/shape**I wonder where this one was grown, was it on a tree or a bush?**This fruit feels smooth/rough/hairy/bumpy* **Activity**Once the children have explored the fruit through touch and smell, ask the children to remind you of the sequence of events and the safety rules. Then give each child a piece to cut (sharp knives are less likely to cause injury as they will cut through the fruit, rather than sliding off of the top and catching a finger!). Encourage them to cut the fruit in half then stop the class and discuss the fruit.*This one has seeds in the middle, who else has seeds in their fruit?**Mine looks like a star**It is white inside and yellow on the outside**Was it easy/hard to cut**Does it smell differently now?**What bits can you eat? What needs to go in the bin?*Once the fruit is cut up, give each child a skewer and encourage them to thread different fruit onto it.Encourage the children to tidy up and wipe down the tables etc.Take photos of the different stages for follow up work. | Lower ability pupils: provide them with pictures of fruits and ask them to match the fruit to the picture, with the adult supporting language by saying each fruit as the pair is found and then encouraging the children to repeat the process.Encourage more able children to think about where the fruit comes from and point out the labels/stickers that show where it was grown.More able children may be competent in mathematical knowledge so use this activity to introduce ½, ¼ etc.More able children may start to notice a pattern in their kebab, or could be encouraged to form a pattern or make a ‘rainbow kebab’Make a story board with the photos so that the children can follow independently. |  |
| **Plenary:** Praise specific behaviours seen during the activity and remind the children about the different fruits they looked at. Use the photos later to re-engage the children in a conversation about the different fruits, who cut up what, what differences and similarities were there between the fruits. Use the photos as a story board to put in the right order. |
| **Assessment for Learning:** **Question –** Can you remember what we did to make the kebabs? Can they explain it to a friend/adult/parent?**Observations –** Are children generalising good listening behaviours and able to wait their turn to speak. Are they sharing their own experiences and connecting past experiences and stories? Can they follow simple instructions in sequence? |

**Understanding**

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| **Target age:** Preschool | **Activity: I-Spy bottles** | **Area of learning:** Understanding |
| **Early learning goal**: Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events. | **Links to development matters**: **Listening and Attention*** Listens to others one to one or in small groups when conversation interests them.
* Focusing attention – still listen or do, but can shift own attention.
* Is able to follow directions
* Two-channelled attention – can listen and do for short span.

**Understanding*** Understands use of objects (e.g. *“What do we use to cut things?’*)
* Shows understanding of prepositions such as ‘under’, ‘on top’, ‘behind’ by carrying out an action or selecting correct picture.
* Responds to simple instructions, e.g. to get or put away an object.
* Beginning to understand ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions.
* Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion.
 |
| **Activity group 6+ children** | **Differentiation** | **Resources** |
| **Starter**Introduce the children to the experience by explaining that they will be following a series of instructions to make their own game of I-spy bottles.Talk about the traditional game of I-spy, ask if any of them have played it and whether they can explain the rules to you or each other. If there is time, have a game together.Talk the children through the new version of the game; that they will need to make some coloured rice and then hide little objects in the rice inside of their bottles.  | Encourage more able children to find the objects to put in the bottles from around the room.For children who need shorter activities, have the rice ready prepared or just use plain rice. | Long grain white riceZiplock bagsFood colouring in as many colours as wanted for the rainbow riceEnough plastic bottles for each child, 500ml are ideal but a variety could be used to discuss size too.A variety of small objects that will fit in the neck of the bottles, such as buttons, pompoms, shaped beads, small fabric flowers, small shells, small animal modelsFunnelsGlue gun |
| **Main**Ask the children if they can tell you what you might use to colour the rice. Explain that you are going to use food colouring, and then decide as a group what colours you are going to use. Add about 4 cups of rice to a Ziploc bag and add 2 teaspoons of food colouring. Zip it closed and let the children gently massage the bag to spread the colour around and cover the rice. Repeat this for all of the colours you want to use. Spread the rice onto a tray and leave it to dry.Meanwhile, encourage the children to talk about and choose which objects they want to hide in their bottle. You can help the children sort them into piles of different sizes, colour, shapes or category (e.g. animals, food).Use open-ended questions and comments to discuss the activity/objects that children have chosen while you wait for the rice to dry. For example: I wonder what would happen if we mixed the food colouring togetherThis one is bigger than this one, maybe we can sort them into sizes/colours/shapeWhere do you think this button lived before it came to school?This feels smooth/rough/sharp/bumpy Once the children have explored the objects and the rice is dry, let the children choose a bottle and put a small scoop of rice in, followed by a few objects until the bottle is not quite full to the top. Let the children put the top on and see what happens when they move the bottle around and shake it. Can they see the different objects appear? Can they find them all? Which one is hardest to find? Can they swap with a friend and see what theirs is like or can they have a race to see who can find the button first?Once you are happy that they are ‘working’, glue the tops on with the glue gun to secure it into place. | Extend children’s exploration of language to see if they can make a rhyming bottle, a colour bottle, or use the objects to make up a story by finding an object and then incorporating it into the narrative. Use different levels of questioning for children with different language levels. |  |
| **Plenary:** Summarise the activity sequence**,** praise specific behaviours seen during the activity and remind children about the different objects they used. Encourage the children to think about different things they could put in another bottle. |
| **Assessment for Learning:** **Question –** Can you remember what we did to make the I spy bottles? Can they explain it to a friend/adult/parent?**Observations –** Are children generalising good listening behaviours and able to wait their turn to speak?. Are they sharing their own experiences and connecting past experiences and stories? Are children able to categorise/sort objects? Can they follow simple instructions in sequence? |

**Understanding**

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| **Target age:** Preschool | **Activity: Sound hunt with natural objects** | **Area of learning:** Understanding |
| **Early learning goal**: Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read. | **Links to development matters**: Literacy: * Hears and says the initial sound in words.
* Links sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet.
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| **Activity Small group 4-6 children** | **Differentiation** | **Resources** |
| **Starter**Tell a story to the children explaining to them that you went for a walk in the woods and found some objects, and you were interested in the sounds that they began with. Show the children the objects (or pictures) and ask the children to identify the sounds that the words start with, e.g. ‘twig’, ‘leaf’, ‘pebble’ etc. Emphasise the initial sound in these words to help children with listening out for sounds. Tell the children that your walk made you want to make a collection of different things and to think about the different sounds that words begin with. You thought this would be a fun activity for the children so prepare them for a walk to collect objects. Tell them where they are going, a local park or area with trees or maybe a beach. Ask them what objects they might expect to find that they could use. Explain the routine expectations of walking in pairs, health and safety etc. | For children who might find this difficult, use a laminated card with the initial letter of their name and a picture of an arrow. Talk to them about their name and then the sound that it begins with, use lots of examples to illustrate what it means to listen out for the first sound. | Prepared cards with pictures of natural objects such as twigs, leaves, pebbles, or real objects |
| **Main**Organise the children for the trip and carry out the routine risk assessments. Stop at a suitable place and remind children what they are looking for. Encourage them to say the names of things out loud as they find them and identify the initial sounds. Throughout the activity, talk to the children about the objects they’ve found, modelling any new vocabulary and supporting them with identifying the sounds in the word.  **Activity**If the weather is good enough this is a good activity to do outside. Make an arrow with sticks, (or shells/pebbles) and encourage the children to make their own trails. Ask them to name the objects they find on their trail and think about the sounds in the word. If the weather makes it difficult to carry out this activity outside, ask the children to put the objects in their bags to take back to the nursery.An extension activity could include finding things back in the setting that also have the same sounds, or sorting the objects into sets by initial sound. Can the children give the objects silly names that start with the same sound? Lovely Lucy Leaf for example. | For some children who are struggling with their language, focus on naming the objects they find. Some children may need prompts to think about the sounds. Some children may be able to identify other words that begin with the same sound as their object. | Cameras. Re-usable cotton bags to collect and carry found objects in |
| **Plenary:**Discuss the outing with the children encouraging them to listen to each other, describing where they found their objects, their trail story and the objects they found.  |
| **Assessment for Learning:** Praise the children’s work and display the pictures of their objects, using them to assess their understanding and ability and use of imagination. Observations – observations of the children’s activity, pictures of their trails and objects they found. |

**Understanding**

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| **Target age: Preschool** | **Activity: Listening Walk** | **Area of learning:** Understanding |
| **Early learning goal**: Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipate key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity. | **Links to development matters**: **Listening and Attention** * Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity.
* Two-channelled attention – can listen and do for short span.

**Understanding*** Responds to simple instructions, e.g. to get or put away an object.
* Responds to instructions involving a two-part sequence.

**Speaking*** Builds up vocabulary that reflects the breadth of their experiences.
* Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events.
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| **Activity Small group 4-6 children** | **Differentiation** | **Resources** |
| **Starter**Ask the children to sit quietly in a group and explain that they are about to take part in a listening activity. Ask them to sit very still, shut their eyes and listen to the sounds around them. After a minute ask them to tell you what they can hear. Encourage them to think about the kinds of sounds they heard and where they are coming from. Ask them what other sounds they might hear on their way to nursery or during a walk. Make a verbal list of the sounds and encourage additions to the list.Explain that they are going out on a walk and you want them to listen out for some sounds. Show them some photographs of a variety of sound sources; cars, planes, crying baby, birdsong, dog bark, motorbike or anything else they might hear.Put the children into pairs and give them a print out of these images on a clip board and ask them to put a sticker on ones they have heard. Explain that they need to go on a quiet walk so they need to pay close attention to when the adult puts their finger on their lips and mouths ‘sshhhh’ Practice getting them to be silent in response to this signal. Tell them it would be really good if they heard another sound that was not on the board and that they should try to remember it. | Be aware if any of the children have a specific hearing problem. Use describing noises that take into account the vibration of large sounds, e.g. a lorry. Talk about whether sounds are high or low. You may want to play some recorded sounds before the activity to find out which sounds a child can hear.  | Photographic images of sound sources. Sound cards and clip boards, small stickers. |
| **Main Activity**After carrying out the usual risk assessment and organising staffing ratios organise the children into pairs and take the planned route, stopping at key points to identify sounds. Remind them to put stickers on pictures of the sounds they have heard. After each focused ‘listening’ stop, ask the children what they have heard, encouraging quieter children to contribute if they are able to.When they have returned to the nursery, have a discussion time and ask them if anyone has managed to put stickers on their pictures. Encourage the children to describe the sounds they heard and ask if anyone heard anything different. Give the children time to think about describing words.**Extension*** This could be followed up with a music/percussion session where children have to find an instrument, voice or body part which best mimics the sounds they have heard. Demonstrate the concept yourself first.
* Display the sound pictures and let the children make a sequenced story based on all the sound items.
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| **Plenary**Discuss what the children had to do in order to listen to all the sounds and also make sure to talk about the sounds that they heard. Encourage children to think about why listening is important when they’re at school and at home.  |
| **Assessment for learning**How well did the children describe what they heard? Were they able to describe what they heard? Have the children been listening well and responding to the instructions both in the sitting group and during the walk where there were more opportunities for distraction? |

**Understanding**

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| **Target age:** Preschool | **Activity: Scented play dough** | **Area of learning:** Understanding |
| **Early learning goal**: Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events. | **Links to development matters**: **Listening and Attention*** Listens to others one to one or in small groups, when conversation interests them.
* Focusing attention – still listen or do, but can shift own attention.
* Is able to follow directions
* Two-channelled attention – can listen and do for short span.

**Understanding*** Understands use of objects (e.g. *“What do we use to cut things?’*)
* Shows understanding of prepositions such as ‘under’, ‘on top’, ‘behind’ by carrying out an action or selecting correct picture.
* Responds to simple instructions, e.g. to get or put away an object.
* Beginning to understand ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions.
* Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion.
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| **Activity small group 4-6 children** | **Differentiation** | **Resources** |
| **Starter**Introduce the children to the experience by explaining that they will be following a series of instructions to make their own play dough.Talk about the children’s experiences of play dough and ask them if they have ever made it before. Discuss what they think they might need to make it. Explain that they will be able to make their play dough look and smell different by adding different ingredients. Talk about the different scents and ask the children what they think of them, do they like the smell? What does it remind them of? Which is the favourite/least favourite? What colour do you think it will make the play dough or what colour do you think of when you smell it? | Encourage more able children to independently find the ingredients from a large selection. For children who need shorter activities, have the ingredients ready measured and encourage them to choose the scent. | Plain flourCream of tartar (or baking powder will work just as well)Boiling waterVegetable or sunflower oilSaltFood colouringVarious different scents, such as:Cocoa powderGround cinnamonPeppermint essencePaprikaGround coffeeVanilla essenceLemon juiceLavenderGlitterBowls- one for each childCups (they don't have to be measuring cups, as long as the children use the same cups for each ingredient, the ratio is what is important)Large spoons (tablespoons or similar) |
| **Main**Using the recipe, encourage the children to measure out their ingredients then an adult can add the hot water. Talk about safety with the children and stirring gently so not to splash the water.**RECIPE**2 cups plain flour1 cup salt2 large spoons cream of tartar2 large spoons oilFew drops of colouring if neededApprox. 1 large spoon of ‘scent’As the children are mixing, encourage them to use lots of describing words to talk about the mixture. Introduce and model some new descriptive words to them such as soft, smooth, thick etc. by using comments as you’re mixing.Once the mixture has been thoroughly stirred, it will need to rest and cool for about 5-10mins. While the mixture is cooling, encourage the children to link this to their experiences at home – ask them to talk about a time they have cooked at home, what did they do? Can they remember the ingredients? Who helped them?Once the mixture is cool, the children can kneed the play dough (this part is important as it will keep the dough pliable for longer!) for a good 5mins, pushing, pulling and stretching. This is another great opportunity to encourage a variety of descriptive words and talk about the similarities with bread making and the need for big strong muscles to kneed lots of bread!Once the dough is ready, the children can then choose how they want to use it in their play. Maybe the scent reminds them of something and they can explore that theme on their own, or find resources to use.Ideas may include:Making birthday cakes with cases, bun tins etc.Straws to make hedgehogs or use as candlesBread making in the role playPrinting with stones and pebblesUsing natural objects such as leaves, twigs etc to create artUncooked spaghetti to create towers and buildingsUsing knives to practice cutting and make play foodSquishing play dough into balloons and tying up to make ‘stress-relievers’ Wrap the play dough in cling film and store in an airtight container to be used over and over again.  | Use pictures as instructions for more able children to follow independently. Use the opportunity to take the children to the shop to buy ingredients and look at different smells and scents they might use. Encourage families to bring in any left-over herbs or spices that could be used.Put the different playdough on a table for the children to guess the smell. Some children may need support/models for how to use play dough creatively in their play |  |
| **Plenary:** Praise specific behaviours seen during the activity and discuss what they used to put in the dough. What were the different smells?Which was their favourite?  |
| **Assessment for Learning:** **Question –** Can you remember what we used to make the play dough?**Observations –** Are children generalising good listening behaviours and able to wait their turn to speak? Are they sharing their own experiences and connecting home experiences? Were they able to express their opinions on the smells/colours? Did they show awareness of the safety issues? |

**Understanding**

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| **Target age:** Preschool | **Activity: Talking Table** | **Area of learning:** Understanding |
| **Early learning goal**: Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners’ needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events. | **Links to development matters**: **Speaking*** Links statements and sticks to a main theme or intention.
* Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events.

**Listening and Attention*** Listens to others one to one or in small groups, when conversation interests them.

**Understanding*** Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion
* Beginning to understand ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions
 |
| **Activity Small group 4-6 children** | **Differentiation** | **Resources** |
| **Starter**Suggested books for a starter: Eddies Garden by Sarah Garland, Jasper’s Beanstalk, The Trouble with Tadpoles by Sam Godwin, My Little Book of Life Cycles.Share a suitable book about life cycles with the children and then explain they are going to take a look at a table all about growing.Ask them to choose a ‘Talking Partner’ \* Explain that they should look carefully at all the things on the table and choose something that interests them; ask them to keep that thought in their heads.  | \*or pair children who might find this task difficult with an adult or in a small group supported by an adult.For children who may struggle with this task, a simple sequence of pictures could be used, for them to put them in order e.g. an egg, and then a chicken | Book for young children on life cycles.Have a table set up with resources books and objects on the theme of growth and change. This could include pictures of a caterpillar to butterfly life cycle, a photo album showing a baby growing into a young adult or beyond, an acorn growing into a tree or an apple tree from an apple seed, a chick hatching from an egg, a new born baby. Find picture books about life cycles. On the table alongside the pictures place the models of insects, pieces of fruit cut open to show the seeds, a pot plant, small branches and leaves from a tree, and a vase of flowers.You could include model animals and their babies. |
| **Main**Lead the children to the table and repeat that they should choose something from the table that interests them. Tell the children what’s on the table, modelling the vocabulary for them. Ask children to choose something that interests them and look at it with their partner. You could divide the children into pairs and then label them as either a frog or tadpole so that first the frogs then the tadpoles can explain to their partners why they chose their object.If the children appear to struggle the teacher can support their questions; for example, ‘Have you seen anything like this before? or, ‘Where do you think this has come from?’ or a question about their own growth or family if they are looking at photographs. You can also model thoughts and comments for the children, such as ‘I like this one because the flowers are bright colours’ or ‘I like that such a big tree can grow from a tiny acorn!’. This might help them with their own ideas.When the children have had time to talk and explore, ask them if they have any good questions to ask, or interesting thoughts about their chosen object. You could initiate this by saying, ‘My question was, I wonder how a tiny seed can make such a big tree?’**Activity**Show the children a collection of objects, living and non- living and ask them to put them into hoops according to whether they are living or non-living or another if they are not sure. Put large labels in each hoop and explain which is which. Prompt and encourage the children with questions.   | For less able children have plenty of choice of model animals and small items and let them explore these on a play mat. A practitioner to work alongside them supporting and scaffolding their talk and making a note of any questions and interesting thoughts.For children who find this difficult, you can summarise to the class what the child showed an interest in during the session e.g. ‘Sam liked the flowers. He was looking at the colours’.  | Resources comprising of a range of living things, seeds, fruits pants, twigs etc.and inanimate objects e.g.- duplo, plate and cup, doll, book etcThree large PE hoops |
| **Plenary:** Praise the children for interesting thoughts and questions. Ask children if they can share their thoughts and questions- support children in helping to verbalise their thoughts making sure you give them thinking time and encourage patient turn taking. Lots of praise, encouragement and enthusiasm for the subject. |
| **Assessment for Learning:** Are the children able to connect their thoughts and ideas and come up with interesting questions?**Observations –** Are children generalising good listening behaviours and able to wait their turn to speak? Are they sharing their own experiences and connecting past experiences and stories. Can they follow simple instructions in sequence? |

**Communication and language**

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| **Target age: 3 -5**  | **Activity: Gloop and Sand Activities, focusing on language and communication** | **Area of learning: Communication and Language** |
| **Early learning goal**: Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.  | **Links to development matters**: **Understanding**: * Responds to simple instructions, e.g. to get or put away an object
* Beginning to understand ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions

**Speaking**:* Learns new words very rapidly and is able to use them in communicating
* Questions why things happen and gives explanations. Asks e.g. who, what, when, how
* Builds up vocabulary that reflects the breadth of their experiences
 |
| **Activity Small group 4 children** | **Differentiation** | **Resources** |
| **Starter**The room should be set out so that the children have very few distractions around them. At least 2 practitioners should be on hand to help the children explore and help scaffold their learning. As little background noise as possible is needed for this activity to give the children peace to think and confidence to speak.The resources should be sourced while the children are not kept waiting. Older children can help retrieve the resources needed to give them a sense of independence and self-worth. The resources should be brought back to an open space where the children can all see clearly. The children should be dressed appropriately for the activity (you may want to use aprons and a sheet to sit on to ensure that the children and practitioners are not distracted by mess during the activity). You can use lots of language while you’re getting all the children dressed appropriately, talking about what you’re doing and why they need their aprons.The bowls should be placed in front of the children (preferably at least one bowl each). One practitioner should slowly and clearly explain what the children will be doing and let the children explore the initial texture of their sand/gloop. The boundaries of the activity should be explained and all resources need to be checked with the families to avoid allergic reactions. | Colour cards can be used with older children to help them match the food colouring colour to the card.This activity could be carried out with younger children by using a big tough tray or bucket to mix resources. Children should be allowed to explore with their whole bodies.Wooden spoons and tools can be used with children who do not have such a strong exploratory impulse so that they can still join in. Tools can also help children develop co-ordination. | Sand or gloop as main resources- they should be put into various different bowlsOther materials on a tray ready to be mixed with the sand/ gloop to make a change. Resources could include: paint; washing up liquid; warm water; cold water; ice; food colouring; coffee; tea; milk; flour; baby lotion; shaving foam; moisturiser; rice; glitter; sequins; vanilla extract; herbs etcMagnifying glasses for children so they can take a closer look at the changesUse a camera if you would like to keep account of the activity and make observationsColour cards (optional) |
| **Main**Using one bowl at a time, let the children add a new resource to their initial mixture and let them see it change. Allow the children plenty of time so they can gradually add small amounts of the extra resources, as different quantities will also create different changes. For example, if you are using sand and adding washing up liquid, a little washing up liquid will make the sand form a clump. As you add more and more washing up liquid, the sand will become a thick liquid. Talk about what you are doing while you’re adding the different materials to the mixture, repeating key vocabulary like pouring, mixing, squeezing, stirring etc.Continue to talk to the children as you add more and more of the extra resource, speak about the change which is happening and ask the children open ended questions to support their learning such as:What is happening?What does it feel like?What happens if you try and hold it?Why does that happen?What might happen if we put more in?What does it smell like?Ensure that all the children are being involved in the activity by asking quieter children questions too and providing each child with their own bowl. Let the children explore and handle the resource as it changes and follow their lead as to when they have finished with each texture before moving onto the next bowl.**Activity**Work your way through all of the materials and bowls of resources with the children. Help to maintain their attention by moving onto another mixture when they have had enough of the last. Encourage the children to use speech through emphasising words, and learning new descriptive words from the practitioners.If the children are still enjoying the activity when all of the resources have been used, either get more resources or allow the children to mix bowls of resources that have already been mixed to see what happens e.g. soapy sand and sand with warm water. Take photos throughout the experience to create a display board for changes. This can be incorporated with changes the children might see in the environment, such as leaves changing and the weather.After the activity has finished, the children should be encouraged to help tidy up to promote independence. Older children may be able to wash up some of the bowls and help to put resources back. | Older children can be encouraged to see if mixtures will pass through a funnel and to make a judgement of whether the mixture will pass through or not.Be careful with questions for children who are struggling with language, rather than questioning, use comments like ‘ooh, this feels sticky’ or ‘it smells sweet’. | Wooden spoons and tools can be used to help children gain co-ordination |
| **Plenary:** Discuss the activity with the children a couple of times after they have done it to help refresh the language that was used. The children should be given lots of praise for participating in the activity and for specific actions such as mixing and pouring without help. |
| **Assessment for Learning:** **Question –** Do you remember what happened when we mixed the sand with paint?**Observations –** Are the children focused? Do they have fleeting attention? Do they use their language to describe what’s happened to the mixture? Were they able to understand and answer open-ended questions about the activity? To they use their exploratory impulse to handle all of the mixtures? Are they independent in their exploration? Do they need the presence of a familiar adult to feel secure and confident? |