

Geography in Early Years



A guide to this subject in our school



1 - Introduction

Geography helps children to make sense of their world. Very young children are naturally curious, and they actively explore the world around them, noticing details in the places and people familiar to them. Young children are interested in their local area but are also often fascinated by the wider world. This should be nurtured and encouraged.



Geography Early Learning Goals

The Natural World

Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons.

Explore the natural world around them, drawing pictures of animals and plants.

People and Communities

Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and, when appropriate, maps.

Explain some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.

Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps.



Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them—from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting firefighters,

police officers and nurses. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, rhymes, poems and non-fiction will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As long as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.



2 - Child Initiated Learning

We know that there are key indicators and examples of effective practice that can be seen when monitoring Geography in the Early Years, in relation to child initiated learning in an enabling environment. We know what we want to see children doing.

Block Play and Construction

- * Creating real and imagined buildings, structures and worlds
- * Acting out familiar experiences
- * Creating stories around a setting
- * Designing buildings or settings for stories and characters
- * Drawing and labelling designs for structures and creating maps
- * Using geographical language to describe buildings and structures



Imaginative Play and Role Play

- * Recreating familiar, real life scenarios— being a family, caring for pets
 - * Acting out common scenarios such as meal times, feeding baby, watching TV, reading, birthdays, coming in and going out
- * Playing in character—real world and imaginary
 - * Making sense of their physical world



Small World Play

- * Talking about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members
- * Making observations of people, animals and places and discussing these
- * Creating imaginative and real world scenarios
- * Creating stories around a set of characters
- * Acting out familiar experiences
- * Designing settings for stories and characters
- * Designing and labelling designs and creating maps of story settings



Outdoors

- * Many of the experiences offered indoors are possible to offer outdoors, but on a larger scale
- * Children have frequent opportunities to describe their local area outside of the school environment



Adults scaffolding learning during child initiated play

Adults will be

- * Observing children and responding to their fascinations
- * Responding to children's ideas and suggestions
- * Suggesting possibilities to extend their ideas
- * Offering other tools and resources when appropriate
- * Playing alongside children to move learning forwards, suggesting ideas and showing what's possible
- * Play alongside or in small organised groups to model language as well as correct or extend vocabulary
- * Sharing their own experiences and making suggestions
- * Role modelling thinking aloud and commenting
- * Modelling how to use equipment and resources
- * Posing questions and ponderings to stimulate ideas and add challenge
- * Introducing and using new language linked to key learning

3. Adult led Learning

We know that there are key indicators of effective practise when monitoring art in the Early Years, in relation to adult led learning.

- * Adults set an intention for learning that is well matched to the developmental stages of the children, building on what children already know, can do and show an interest in
- * Adults lead learning through playful, experiential activities which are presented in imaginative ways, are hands on and require active participation from the children
- * Activities and experiences are as open ended as possible to allow for children's imagination and active exploration and for them to express their on ideas
- * Activities and experiences are delivered with individuals or small groups of children, depending on the activity and the developmental stages of the children. In Reception, sometimes activities are introduced to the whole class
- * Adults use resources and materials that children are familiar with and have (or will have) access to in their child initiated play
- * Adults skilfully interact with the children through skilful questioning, by modelling thinking aloud and by showing genuine interest and curiosity