

Things to do with your children during spring time



Here are some suggestions on what you can do with your child/children at this time of year whether you are a parent/carer or work in a setting. Remember not all experiences will have an end product, it's the process that counts! These experiences align with the five developmental pathways- communication, exploration, belonging, physical development and well-being and can be used to follow a particular interest of a child or as an invitation to learn/play.



They also take into consideration the cross curricular skills – literacy, numeracy and digital competence. These experiences are communication-rich and numeracy skills can be developed by counting, recognising numbers and number bonds. Children can use cameras to record different elements of the experiences or digital scales for weighing out ingredients. You can also use the autumnal and wintry experiences and adapt them for spring.

<https://meithrin.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Llyfryn-Hydref-Saesneg.pdf>

<https://meithrin.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Llyfryn-Gaeaf-Saesneg.pdf>

* Remember to allow children to explore and be curious, even if they get messy!

* Don't forget to include Story Time – below is a list of suitable books for this time of year.



Know your **why** – always ask yourself **why** are you providing a specific invitation to play/learn. Knowing this will make it relevant and purposeful. It could be because:

- a child has shown a particular interest in something
- learning through this experience will allow the child to develop important skills i.e. communication, mathematical concepts
- it will enable children to experiment with the process rather than focusing on an end result
- it will encourage curiosity
- it will improve their cognitive, physical, social skills and well-being
- it will help them make sense of different concepts and apply them to the 'real world'

When children are involved in these experiences, don't forget to observe them. Observation is key to children's progress and will help us identify children's current strengths, where they need to go next and what needs to be done to get them there, taking account of any barriers to their learning. You can observe by:

- listening to children
- joining in and talking to them
- watching their actions
- noticing their behaviours i.e. repeated patterns of behaviour
- interpreting their expressions
- observing their interactions i.e. who they play with, what they like doing

[View - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](http://gov.wales)

*Remember your risk assessments if you are using small loose parts.



1. Natural numbers
2. Observing daffodils
3. Spring treasure basket
4. Large-scale weaving
5. A basket of imagination
6. Nature walk
7. Nest making
8. Birdwatching
9. Raising caterpillars
10. Visiting the local farm
11. Splash in a puddle
12. Play in the rain
13. Create a fairy garden
14. Mud paintings
15. Making bird feeders
16. Planting and growing
17. Spring art
18. Pond dipping
19. St David's day
20. Exploring mud and clay



1. Natural numbers

We see maths all around us – everywhere! We see shapes, patterns, different size objects and much more. Having numbers in your environment is important and helps children with their number recognition. Invite children to form numbers using playdough and natural objects such as sticks, flowers, stones and pebbles. You can make sensory playdough (see recipe in our *Autumn and Winter Experiences*) and add shampoo to create a flowery scent. Or alternatively, children can count and press the natural objects into the playdough.

You may need:

- Playdough
- Stones, sticks, flowers, pebbles etc
- Numbers for children to copy



2. Observing daffodils

Springtime is a time of new life and new beginnings. Animals come out of hibernation and young are born. Our days start to get longer, flowers begin to bloom as the natural world wakes following the dormant winter months. Encourage children to observe the changes in nature and the seasons. Create an invitation to play that provides children with the

opportunity to draw or paint what they see. Place pots of growing daffodils for children to observe and watch bloom. Talk about the relevance of the daffodil to Wales. Discuss the colours and how to create green paint by mixing blue and yellow paint. Drawing and painting stations could be set up all around your setting – indoors and outdoors.

You may need:

- Blue and yellow paint
- Paper
- Mark making tools such as pencils, chalks, charcoals, paints
- Paintbrushes
- Water
- Pots of daffodils

Alternatively, create a field of flowers on a large scale by encouraging children to paint outdoors on a fence, wall or plastic sheet using large mark-making tools such as sweeping brushes, dustpan brushes etc. Allow time for children to EXPLORE!



3. Spring treasure basket

This is a follow up to the experience provided in the Winter Booklet. The concept is designed to allow children to explore with everyday objects, opposing the trend to provide commercial plastic toys. This will provide a richer sensory experience. This experience is suitable for children who have schemas. Depending on what objects you put in the baskets, you can provide opportunities for children with different types of schemas. For example:

- Trajectory – up, down, along and back movements
- Transporting – moving objects and themselves from one place to another
- Enveloping – covering things and themselves up
- Rotational – things that go round
- Enclosing/containing – putting things into containers
- Connecting/disconnecting – joining things together and taking things apart
- Positioning – putting items in particular places
- Transforming – changing things
- Orientation – looking at things from different angles



[View - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](http://gov.wales)

Fill a small basket with 'real' resources such as baubles, strings of beads, scarves, flowers etc. Add different textures and colours that may be experienced during the season of spring such as green and yellow items.



4. Large-scale weaving

Weaving is an exciting experience for children especially when they can do this on a large scale. There is so much freedom and space to explore! Give them opportunities to explore with a variety of different objects and materials, both natural and man-made. Be creative and use things like bicycle wheels, picture frames, chicken wire, fences, fishing net, crates, branches, bamboo etc and provide items such as rags, leaves, flowers, scarves, foil, string, wool. The only limits are your imagination!

5. A basket of imagination

This experience can be carried out every season/term. Make it interesting for children by changing the items based on their interests or according to the season. It allows children to go wild with their imagination. All you need is a basket full of interesting items. You can use objects rich in spring colours and use the objects as prompts to let their imaginations run free. Provide mark-making materials so that children can write down their ideas or create illustrations. Or as the enabling adult, be their scribe if you are invited into their play. This shows that we as adults are valuing their ideas. This will also help



children understand that words have meaning. Children's ideas can then be collaborated into a book to be shared during amser cylch/storytime. You could begin

introducing the language of storytelling such as:-

- Once upon a time...
- This is a story about...
- The end...

Let your child/children take the lead and as the enabling adult be mindful when to assist.

You could include:

- a basket
- loose parts
- mark-making materials
- animals associated with spring i.e. chicks, lambs, piglets, rabbits
- green, yellow, pink, purple materials/scarves

6. Nature walk

Take the children out for a walk in nature. Talk about the changes observed since winter such as buds or blossoms appearing on the trees, plants beginning to grow, baby animals such as lambs in nearby fields etc. They may see birds flying above carrying nest building materials. They may see bees or butterflies. They may want to collect natural objects that can be used to sort, discuss, explore. Mathematical concepts can be reinforced by using language such as big, bigger, biggest. New vocabulary can be introduced such as bloom, bud, shiny, new, pollen, butterfly, bee.



7. Nest making

Spring is the time of year that represents new life. It is an exciting and vibrant time full of new beginnings. You could provide this experience following a nature

walk where you have seen a bird's nest. You could discuss the different materials birds use to make their nests i.e. swans need

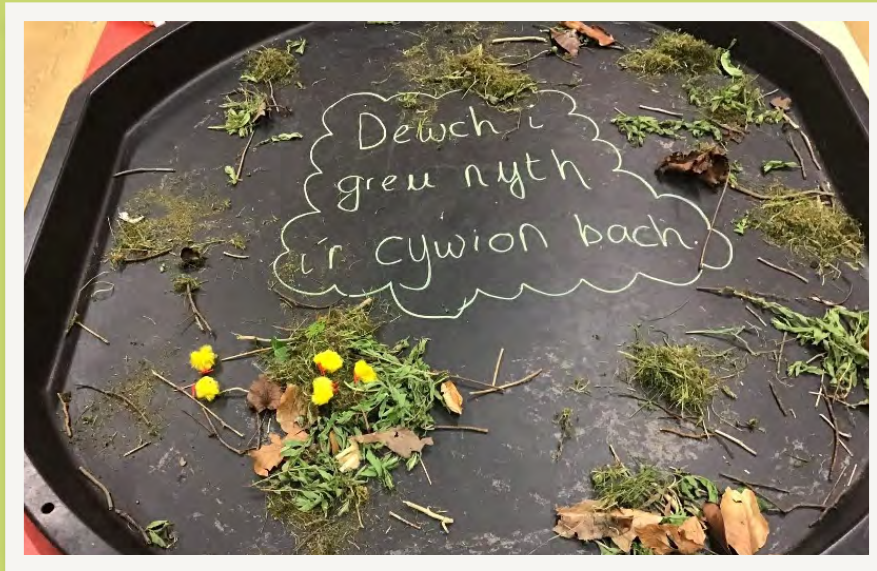


sticks, branches and pondweed, whereas blue tits would use grass, moss and feathers. Explore the purposes of nests such as egg laying, chick rearing and shelter.

You may need:

- pictures of different birds
- books about birds and nest building
- different materials such as twigs, hay, feathers, grass, moss
- models of birds

Children can explore nest making with the different materials



8. Birdwatching

Spring is an exciting time for birdwatching. Visit different places such as a forest, beach or river – different birds like to live in different places. Many birds will be returning from hot countries to start building their nests and gorge on a fresh supply of insects. Listen to the sounds different birds make. Encourage the children to use binoculars and to use their eyes and ears. You could participate in different campaigns to record sightings of different birds such as the British Trust for Ornithology or RSPB.

[Garden BirdWatch | BTO - British Trust for Ornithology](#)
[Big Garden Birdwatch \(rspb.org.uk\)](#)

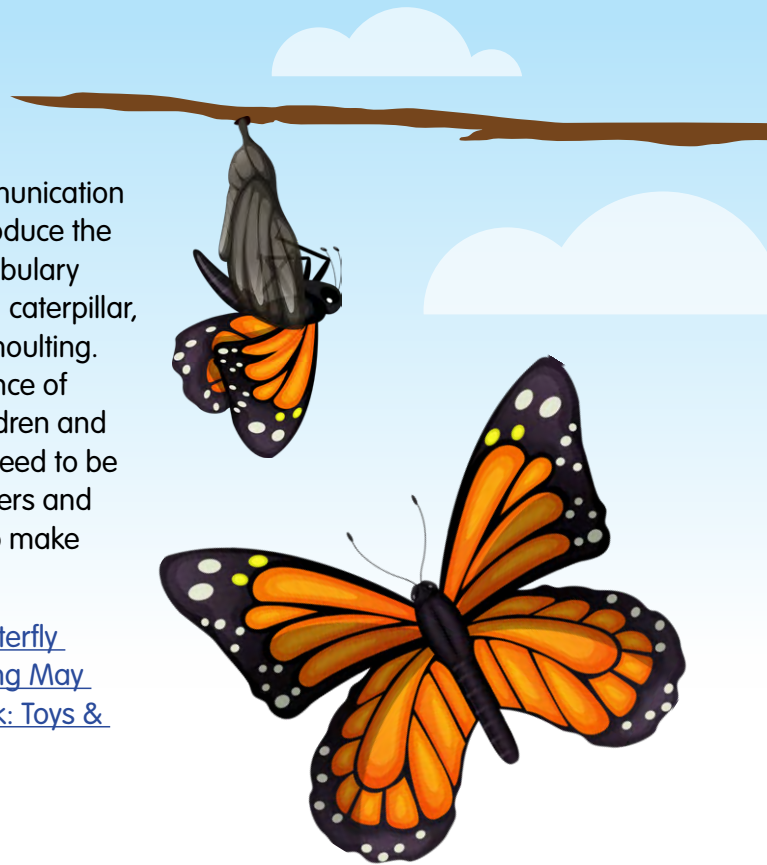


9. Raising caterpillars

Metamorphosis is a unique life cycle where a creature goes through two or more significant changes to reach adulthood. This is a wonderful example for young children to observe this process first-hand. They will be able to observe all four stages – tiny eggs, caterpillars, chrysalis and butterfly. Kits can be bought via the internet on selling sites such as Amazon.

This is another communication rich experience. Introduce the children to new vocabulary such as hatch, eggs, caterpillar, chrysalis, butterfly, moulting. Discuss the importance of welfare with the children and how the butterflies need to be released to visit flowers and collect nectar to help make new flowers.

[Insect Lore Giant Butterfly Garden Kit \(Packaging May Vary\) : Amazon.co.uk: Toys & Games](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Giant-Butterfly-Garden-Kit/dp/B000000000)



10. Visit the local farm

Young and old, everyone loves baby animals! Much research has been carried out on the benefits of interactions between children and animals. (See our case studies on animal interactions [Animal interactions - Meithrin](#)). Visiting the local farm is a fun way for children to interact with baby animals that are born during the springtime.





11. Splash in a puddle

Most children love jumping in puddles. Not only is it a lot of fun – it helps children learn how to navigate their own bodies, develop gross motor skills, master skills such as spatial awareness and interacting with their environment. They will learn about mathematical concepts such as large and small. Introduce vocabulary such as deep and shallow, wide and narrow. Puddles are also a whole new world of imagination – it is a tactile medium for children to be anything they want in that moment such as a graceful fairy darting from pond to pond, a jumping frog or a jungle explorer escaping some crocodiles. The act of jumping involves using all the muscles in the entire body. It is a great way of making exercising fun. Remember to have spare sets of clothes or protective clothing – the fun can soon stop when children become cold and wet. Remember to also join in the fun!

12. Play in the rain

We have all heard the quote *“There’s no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing.”*

Be prepared with spare sets of clothing and instead of avoiding the rain...embrace it! Get the wet weather clothing and wellies on and encourage the children to go outdoors. Provide loose parts such as wooden blocks,

jugs, containers and let the children explore with rain. Give them opportunities to watch rain fall; catch raindrops in pots, containers, cups and use rain in their play. Add drops of paint to rainwater and watch clouds of colours appear and change colours when new colours are added. A good way to demonstrate colour mixing.



13. Create a fairy garden

Step into a magical world by transforming a small area of outdoor space into a fairy garden. Ask your children to collect natural items such as flowers, sticks, twigs, shells, stones, pebbles, leaves, small plants etc. You could add items such as miniature wooden doors to create a mini magical world!



14. Mud painting

Humans have an intrinsic need to make marks. Throughout time, humans have made marks as evidenced by cave paintings more than 40,000 years old! Earth

pigments have been used to paint rock walls for thousands of years so this experience should come naturally to young children. This is a messy experience so make sure there are spare sets of clothes handy. Some children may not

like getting messy so be mindful that not all children will join in. Place a handful of earth in a bowl, you may want to add washing up liquid for better flow of paint. Powder paint can also be added to create different colours. During this experience, children learn about spatial awareness, colour recognition,

visual expression as well as developing their creativity and fine motor skills. They can paint on plastic sheets, long rolls of paper, fences, walls etc. Give children the opportunities to experiment with colour and texture. This is a precursor to writing skills.



15. Making bird feeders

This experience encourages young children to enjoy and learn from nature (for more ideas on nature play see our new information sheet on the Benefits of Nature Play <https://meithrin.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Manteision-Chwarae-Natur-Saesneg.pdf>.)

The easiest and quickest bird feeder for young children to make is to simply tie an apple to a bush, tree, branch etc, and encourage the children to observe what birds come to visit. Apples are a favourite of blue tits, blackbirds and robins. Another easy bird feeder for children to make are 'monkey nut chains'. All you need is some string and monkey nuts (peanuts still in their husk.) The enabling adult will need to support by making small holes in each end of the husk for children to thread string through to form a

IMPORTANT
* Be mindful of any nut allergies with this experience.

chain and tie between two points. Another type of bird feeder is a 'seed cake' - melt suet or lard on a tabletop hob or in a microwave (another opportunity to demonstrate what happens when a material it is heated and cooled) and add in the seeds. When the mixture is cool enough to handle, allow the children to mould into pots to make seed cakes. You can add a piece of string at this point. The seed cakes will harden – discuss the changes during the process. Hang and observe. There will be plenty of opportunities for discussions about the birds that visit.

** Encourage good hygiene – wash hands after touching bird feeders, seeds, suet etc.



16. Planting and growing

Planting and growing is a wonderful experience for young children as it enables them to interact with nature. Children are naturally curious about their environments and a small area for plants allows them to explore different smells, senses, and tastes. If you do not have any outside space you can use a small raised bed, tyres, sinks, grow bags, window boxes or hanging baskets. You can grow plants, flowers or food. Growing food helps children understand which

foods are good for us, how it grows and develops the feeling of pride that they have successfully grown something that they can eat. Children can be part of the process in deciding what vegetables/fruit to grow and can also be involved in their care.



17. Spring art

Many different mediums can be used to develop children's creativity including natural objects. Avoid mass produced works of art where children are limited by the use of templates and outlines. Why not use plants, flowers, sticks and greenery to create 2D and 3D pictures? Natural objects

found at this time of year can be used as the medium and allows the opportunity to discuss these objects and their characteristics. New vocabulary can be introduced, such as spring, buds, leaves, catkins, lambs, chicks, flowers etc. It's a fantastic way for children to express themselves outdoors.



18. Pond dipping

Pond dipping is a wonderful way to look at the creatures that live in and around water such as frogs, newts, toads, beetles and larvae. Pond dipping is good all year round but spring is a particularly interesting time as new life is beginning. It is worth going at different times of the year to observe the changes from week to week and month to month. Use this opportunity to introduce new vocabulary such as water, wet, pond, cold, frog, tadpole, frogspawn, beetles, larvae etc.

You may need:

- container
- nets
- magnifying glasses (if desired)

* Ensure risk assessments are in place for this experience and children exercise caution around water – ensure children don't lean too far over; they don't enter the water if they drop something as it could be deeper than it looks, and cover up any cuts as the water could contain bacteria.



19. St David's day

St David's day is celebrated in Wales on March 1st to celebrate the Patron Saint of Wales – St David. Castles, rugby, dragons, welsh cakes, cawl and daffodils are all associated with Wales and you can use these as a fun way to extend children's understanding of St David's day celebrations. You could make castles out of boxes – indoors and outdoors. Provide an 'invitation to play' based on rugby. Give children some loose parts and a picture of a dragon for them to create. Provide a cooking activity, making welsh cakes. Make real cawl or cawl in the mud kitchen – discuss the



different vegetables and what they look like. Take children for a walk to spot some daffodils or set



up painting stations indoors and outdoors for children to draw and paint daffodils.

20. Exploring mud and clay

It is really important that children get the opportunities to explore the properties of materials such as mud and clay. So much vocabulary can be introduced by doing so. Children need these

opportunities so that they can understand what works and what doesn't work. By learning what mud/clay feels like and exploring what clay and mud will do, they will be better equipped

to create. Discovering and exploring is more important than an end product!



Suggested books for this time of year:

- Yn y Parc by Clare Beaton
- Dere i Dyfu gyda Dewi Draenog a Beca Broga by Adam Jones
- Bili Broga by Edwina Morris, Gwyneth Parry a Mai Parri
- Dysgu gyda Sali Mali – Byd Natur by Casia Wiliam a Jacob Fell
- 123 @ebol
- Lliwiau @ebol
- Tyfu Pysur by Dref Wen
- Stori'r Pasg i Blant Bach
- Cwmwl Bychan by Anne Booth a Sarah Massini
- Sut alla i greu Enfys? by Caroline Crowe a Cally Johnson-Isaacs. Adaptation by Mari George
- Un Diwrnod Gwlyb by M Christian Butler



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