

# Things to do with your children during summer



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 autumn, winter and spring experiences and adapt them for summer.

- [Autumn Booklet](#)
- [Winter Booklet](#)
- [Spring Booklet](#)

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



Know your **why** – always ask yourself **why** you provide 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 you 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. schemas
- interpreting their expressions
- observing their interactions i.e. who they play with, what they like doing.

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

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



1. Sand atelier
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18. Growing and exploring sunflowers
19. Nature display
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# 1. Sand atelier

An atelier is a workshop where an artist creates. A sand atelier is a place that is dedicated to allow children to create and explore the properties of sand and its possibilities. Children need the time to be able to explore what they can do with sand on a large and small scale. Why not use a variety of authentic resources and loose parts in your sand atelier and allow children to be the masters of their own creations. Providing a variety of authentic resources and loose parts will ignite and spark children's curiosity. Using open ended resources allow children to explore and observe how sand behaves when it is trickled or poured or when water is added – this changes the sensory experience.

## Suggestions on what you could provide:

- large/small brushes
- sieves/colanders
- cups and saucers
- variety of kitchen utensils – scoops, forks, spoons, spatulas, tea strainers
- crockery
- trays
- baskets
- drainpipes/guttering
- pots and pans



# 2. Water rainbows

Provide children with opportunities to explore with water and paint. They can experiment through play and discover what colours they can create. Children will lead the way with this experience and may add items from around the provision such as mud kitchen items, brushes, jugs, squeeze bottles etc. You could provide ready mix paint, powder paint, food colouring, inks, chalks etc for them to experiment with. Discussions could be around what colours mixed together create new colours; what medium works best etc.



## Suggestions on what you could provide:

- a deep container or tuff tray for the water
- powder paint/ready mix paint/food colouring/chalks/ink
- a range of authentic resources
- syringes/squeeze bottles



### 3. Inspirational art

Provide opportunities for children to observe different types of paintings i.e. watercolours, acrylics, oils etc – these can be a source of inspiration for young children as they observe the colours, patterns and shapes

used. They can be famous artworks or what the children have created themselves. Allow them the opportunities to create their own artworks and express themselves using different media.

#### Suggestions on what you could provide:

- a selection of different artworks and images – you could source these from charity shops or ask parents if they have any they no longer want
- a roll of wallpaper to paint on
- a selection of paints, paintbrushes and colour charts

### 4. Sandy maths

Maths is everywhere! Please see our maths resource – Making maths purposeful and meaningful

[Adnodd-Mathemateg-Saesneg.pdf \(meithrin.cymru\)](#)

This resource explains how maths is not just in one place and is not designated for a specific time. Children are around maths constantly and learning about concepts such as number, weight, shape, time etc through

experimenting. Hearing mathematical language in their relevant contexts helps children develop their understanding of mathematical concepts. Why not provide an invitation to play/learn using the sand area and encourage children to explore mathematical concepts such as weight – how many scoops are

needed to make this heavier? Estimation – how many scoops are needed to fill this bowl etc?



### 5. Calming lavender

Lavender is well known for its calming effects – it can calm the nervous system, lift mood and helps reduce headache pain. This very simple invitation to play/learn is a beautiful sensory experience and will cater for children with schemas see:

[View - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)

[Schematic Development Toolkit 2022 \(gov.wales\)](#)

You could provide children with a lavender gloop where they can explore using their senses.



#### Suggestions on what you could provide:

- tuff tray
- purple paint
- lavender flowers
- cornflour
- water

You could change this invitation to play/learn simply by changing the flowers to other highly scented flowers/herbs such as roses, mint, rosemary etc.

\*As part of your risk assessment, check the flowers you use are not toxic.

## 6. Floral ice blocks

This is a wonderful experience on a hot summer's day for children to cool themselves down! Children can cut the petals from a variety of flowers (you can ask a local florist for any broken flowers, don't encourage children to pick flowers as some are endangered species) and place them in different size and shape containers with water and freeze. When they are frozen place on a tuff tray for the children to explore and enjoy. Include the children in the whole process from collecting the flowers from the florist to placing them in water and freezing.



### Suggestions on what you could provide:

- water
- variety of containers
- variety of flowers

## 7. Seaside treasures

At this time of year children may bring in items they have collected on a visit to the beach. They may be keen to show them to their friends. Why not create an invitation to play/learn including magnifying glasses, identification books etc for children to explore? The items may include oyster shells, crabs,

muscle shells, cockle shells, razor shells, stones with barnacles on, mermaids' purses etc. There will be a range of different textures and items for children to explore. You could alternatively take the children to the beach if possible.



## 8. Painting with ice

This is another perfect experience for a hot summer's day. When the temperatures start to rise, children love to spend time outdoors. It is important you provide different opportunities for them to be able to cool down – such as shade, water and ice play and plenty to drink!

You could provide blocks of ice (again include children in the process of freezing the ice and talk about what happens to the water etc) and watercolours. As the ice begins to melt children will have fun making new colour shades whilst keeping cool at the same time.



### Suggestions on what you could provide:

- tuff trays
- variety of different containers to freeze water including ice cube trays etc
- water colours
- different size paintbrushes

## 9. Fruity potions

This experience is also suitable on a hot summer's day. There is something magical about potions play, children can create spells or magical potions. Give them the opportunity to run free with their imagination. Place a variety of chopped fruit and water in a large bowl or saucepan with syringes, spoons and various utensils. Children may want to add their own additions such as food colouring herbs etc to the mixture. Remember to give children the experience of cutting the fruit themselves.

### Suggestions on what you could provide:

- chopping boards and suitable knives
- utensils, syringes and spoons
- a variety of fruit
- water

\*Be mindful of any allergies or intolerances.



## 10. Summery soup

This is a beautiful invitation to play/learn and is another sensory

experience. You could provide children with coloured water, and they can collect their own petals, flowers, leaves etc. Adding cornflour or milk to the mixture gives a milky appearance. Allow children to experiment with colours. Encourage the children to speak about what they are creating.

### Suggestions on what you could provide:

- petals, flowers, leaves etc
- large saucepans, bowls etc
- food colouring/paint
- water
- cornflour/milk
- variety of utensils



## 11. Changing perspectives

Painting does not always need to be done at the table or easel. Painting from different angles can spark children's curiosity. Why not try painting on clear umbrellas or plastic sheets – children can observe the brush strokes creating patterns from the inside and see a whole new perspective on how a painting can evolve and develop. Children could work in pairs, small groups or individually.

### Suggestions on what you could provide:

- clear plastic umbrellas or plastic sheets
- paintbrushes of different sizes
- paints

\*If using plastic sheets, ensure they are fastened securely, and children cannot become entangled.



## 12. Trimming the garden

If you're lucky enough to have a small garden at your setting, why not provide gardening invitations? If you have concrete areas, why not create a container garden? Many children may be handling soil, mud, garden tools for the first time or maybe worried about getting dirty. Mud and soil can increase brain activity and develop fine motor skills. They use the smaller muscles in their hands, wrists and fingers, feet and toes by adding water to the soil and mud and squeezing, mixing and pouring the mud. Or provide scissors and trim plants and bushes. Explain to the children

that sometimes plants need to be trimmed for them to grow healthier and provide an invitation to play/learn where this can be done. This will also develop their smaller muscles in their hands and wrists.



## 13. Counting using loose parts

Loose parts are a must and are so versatile in the early years setting. They are a set of materials with no specific set of directions and can be used alone or with other materials. Children can assign their own meaning to the objects they are playing with allowing them to be

creative, experiment and explore. They can be used indoors or outdoors. Children can collect items such as flowers, pebbles, acorns, leaves, sticks etc and these can be your loose parts. Use them for counting, creating shapes, sorting, transporting or just observe what the children use them for.



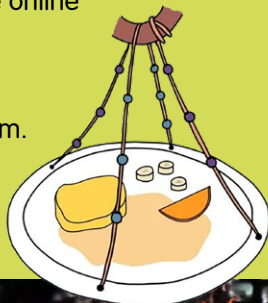


## 14. Feeding butterflies

There are 56 species of butterfly in Britain and Ireland. They have fascinating life cycles that can be used to teach children about the natural world. The transition from egg to caterpillar to chrysalis to butterfly is one of the wonders of the natural world and children can observe this transition by purchasing a butterfly kit - there are many available online

Butterfly feeders are a brilliant way to encourage butterflies to your setting for children to observe and learn about them.

[Make a butterfly feeder | Scottish Wildlife Trust](#)



## 15. Bubbles

Many children enjoy chasing bubbles or marvelling at the rainbow of colours on their surface or simply popping them to see what happens. Bubble mixture making is a wonderful scientific experiment for children. Children can explore with a variety of hoops to see who can make the biggest or smallest bubbles. There is a lot of trial and error with bubble making – children will have so much fun experimenting.

### Suggestions on what you could provide:

- 6 cups of water
- 1 tablespoon of baking powder
- 1 tablespoon of glycerin
- half a cup of cornflour
- half a cup of washing up liquid
- tuff tray
- different size hoops

## 16. Blackberry paintings

Blackberries can be collected at the end of the summer. Take children on a nature walk to collect blackberries and these can be added to the mud kitchen, or children can squash them into a bowl with water. Add cornflour or flour to thicken the paint. You can also create different colours by using spices such as turmeric. As this is a natural product, it may need to be discarded after a day or two. Be mindful that blackberries are a food source for many animals and birds so only take what you need.



## 17. Books in outdoor spaces

Children need to have as much exposure to books as possible - they need to listen to, respect, handle and start to 'read' books independently. Creating areas for books and reading can be provided both indoors and outdoors. You could create a quiet area with soft furnishings, baskets of books, fairy lights and plants for children to take time out and relax in both the indoors and outdoors.

### Possible books for this time of year:

- Ar Lan Y Môr gyda Dewin a Doti by Caryl Parry Jones
- Pi-Po! Dan y Dŵr by Atebol
- Ar Y Traeth by Clare Beaton
- Peppa yn y Sw Môr by Owain Sion
- Pi-Po! Helô! By Georgie Birkett
- Smot Ar Lan Y Môr by Eric Hill
- Dewin a Doti'n Mynd I'r Parc by Nia Ceidiog
- Tyfu Prysyr by Dref Wen
- Sblash! Gyda Fflap a Seren by Derek Brockway
- Ar Goll Ar Y Traeth by Ian Beck
- Gwyliau Sali Mali by Dylan Williams and Simon Bradbury
- A variety of information books on sunflowers, beach, summer flowers etc.
- Any books that children show an interest in



## 18. Growing and exploring sunflowers

The head of a sunflower is huge and is packed with seeds. They can provoke curiosity in children leading onto discussions about the cycle of life and how one seed can grow into another sunflower. You may want to discuss the benefits of sunflowers such as being farmed to make sunflower oil or as a healthy snack. You may also want to set up an invitation to play/learn where children can look at the work of artists such as Van Gogh's famous sunflower painting and recreate their own versions. You could explore with your children, different concepts such as size and height. Children may have grown their own seeds and may be monitoring and documenting their growth with the use of digital aids such as tablets, iPads etc.



## 19. Nature display

Young children can be encouraged to create their own collections of natural treasures. This can be done during a nature walk or on their way to and from the setting. You could provide children with a small basket or paper bag for their collections. This develops their

connections with the world around them. The collections could be displayed on a shelf or a table for others to touch and feel – this fosters their sense of belonging, especially when their treasures are valued. Children could be encouraged to talk about their treasures e.g. what they are, where they found them, what is their purpose, how they feel, look etc.



## 20. Large loose parts

Loose parts provide children with an enabling environment full of interesting objects that develop creativity, curiosity, exploration and imagination. They can be used both indoors and outdoors. They are open-ended and can be used in individual and group play. Children will be fascinated and engaged with creating ramps, imaginary worlds, dens, balancing the list is endless....!



### Suggestions on what you could provide:

- crates, boxes etc
- buckets, bowls, saucepans, baskets, flowerpots etc
- cable reels, tyres etc
- planks of wood, logs, palettes etc
- rope, plastic washing line etc
- drainpipes, guttering etc
- fabric, material, tarpaulin



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