



Journal for the support  
and development  
of content and language  
integrated learning  
(CLIL)

## Putting Pre-Primary CLIL into Practice

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## **TO THE AUTHORS**

Submit materials to the following e-mails: keithpkelly@yahoo.co.uk and elicit\_bg@abv.bg

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Begin with:

Topic

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For what purpose the material is

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## Introduction

I had the delightful privilege of working with colleagues from Pre-Primary schools in Cyprus who came to Anglia School for a week of training and cultural experiences through the Erasmus+ programme. Our focus during the course was Implementing a Pre-Primary CLIL Curriculum – A Whole-School Approach, taking [Anglia School](#) as the context. We built the course around the terms ‘principles and practice’. The principles followed 4 main themes, one for each of the 4 days of the course.

Day 1 looked at ‘Building a Pre-Primary CLIL Curriculum’ and presented a history of how our school curriculum has developed over the ten years that we’ve been working with young children through the medium of English. Day also offered a summary of some of the main ideas behind how we organize the curriculum. One essential idea is the importance of flowing dynamics in the lessons. This means that the activities are planned with an eye on the ‘ups’ and ‘downs’ of energy and action, making sure that learners are never kept at one energy level for too long. Another idea revolves around the three dimensions of CLIL: Concepts, Procedures and Language, where attention is given in varying measures to each of these key dimensions depending on the conceptual stage, language level and procedures specific to themes and content. The second session of the day gave participants live examples of classroom sessions, materials and tasks to try out as learners and discuss as teachers. The afternoon session was dedicated to developing approaches and resources immediately usable for the colleagues back home in school in Cyprus. The move, then was from principles, through practice to production. We very quickly got out the Ministry of Education of Cyprus’ preprimary curriculum as a place to begin matching materials to concepts and procedures. Section 1 of this publication ‘Building a PrePrimary CLIL Curriculum – Up and Down Dynamics’ offers an overview of the input from day 1, and a ‘CLIL’ draft of a section from the Cypriot preprimary curriculum for Science. This is offered as a basis for continued work in this direction, namely adapting a national curriculum to CLIL classes.

Day 2 focused closely on curriculum skills and we listed major learning skills from the preprimary curriculum and gave each of them concrete examples from Anglia School practice, sharing and building on practice and experience the participants brought with them. It’s important to point out here that we all believe firmly that however young our children are, we should treat them as young scientists, young artists, young mathematicians etc., during our curriculum classes with them. In this way, it is the child and the content at the heart of our classes and our aim is functioning in the language of a specific curriculum field. We don’t oversimplify the content or the language, we make it accessible and age-appropriate. Another key principle is that the curriculum skills are largely cyclical and occur over many areas of the curriculum, and so it makes sense to have a good idea of where these contexts are so that we can create logically joined-up learning for our children. Day 2 relates to Section 2 of our collection – ‘Concepts and Skills – an overview’. The afternoon sessions had us exploring the Cypriot curriculum and the skills therein, and had us discussing what appropriate procedures and language we should consider when developing it into a CLIL version.

Day 3 explores input media in all its forms from picturebooks, through objects, film, animation, experiments and many more. At the heart of this day presented in Section 3 ‘Creating, visualizing and interacting with concepts’ you will see that we identify conceptual structures in our input media and make attempts to exploit this structure to help guide learners through the input. These structures are frequently obvious as seen in the lovely burglars’ map from the story ‘What the ladybird heard’, or there may be a logical structure that the teacher can create such as the folding house in the story ‘There’s a cow in the kitchen’. Even with film which doesn’t readily offer a clear structure, it is possible to identify one which can be used for work with children on the concepts, such as the diagram in the film ‘What animals eat’. All of the above, and the other examples, aim to help learners work their way through input content by interacting with the structure in a variety of ways. In the afternoon session we set about examining other

input content with the aim of identifying the conceptual structures in order to produce instruments for guiding our very young learners through the content.

Day 4 and Section 4 of this publication move us onto 'Talk through Skills' and then it goes without saying that the 'conceptual structures' we've seen in Section 3 (among others, maps/paper mountains/tables/objects/folded paper houses/drama box/stage/characters/processes/repetitive 'sequenced' talk (rhyme, song, chant)) also support talk. The principle that these structures can be used to guide young learners through curriculum input is equally valid for supporting learners in their classroom talk with only a need for a slightly altered use of the instrument. You'll see plenty of examples from Anglia School in this section for supporting preprimary talk. We spent more time on the Cypriot curriculum as we realized that adding columns to the original curriculum for CLIL Options, and Language would lend itself not only as a context for this collection, but also as a template for colleagues developing this approach further back in Cyprus.



## The Pre-Primary Curriculum in Cyprus - Science

While working on ideas for collecting materials which would be useful for the colleagues on our course, we very quickly realized that we had to get out their national curriculum guidelines and take a look at exactly what the aims and objectives are for pre-primary education. The reason for this is quite simply that any CLIL lessons, materials or activities have to be linked to the expectations of the mother-tongue national curriculum if it is to have any respect or standing among teachers. Plus, my own feeling is that the curriculum guidelines are the 'go to' for any beginning of planning whether for CLIL or other. It is the one document that all teachers have access to and by which they can all gauge their work and the learning of their children.

We also understood when opening the [curriculum document \(https://archeia.moec.gov.cy/sd/270/dee\\_nip\\_proscholiki\\_ekpaidefsi.pdf\)](https://archeia.moec.gov.cy/sd/270/dee_nip_proscholiki_ekpaidefsi.pdf) that we couldn't do very much in the space of 4 days of CLIL teacher development, no matter how good we are!

It should also be born in mind that CLIL in Cyprus is delivered in the form of 'showers' where sections of lessons are given in English. There is no expectation that the curriculum be delivered entirely through the medium of English. What colleagues need and are looking for is a collection of ideas to help them find opportunities for some CLIL work in English during their delivery of the curriculum in Greek.

So, the following pages are an attempt to map the CLIL course content and materials onto one section of the Cyprus curriculum for pre-primary.

Apologies for the quality of translation, for which I take responsibility and recognize with more time, a more perfect translation is entirely possible. For the purposes of our 'toolkit of ideas', however, it works. The heading describes the main 'Axis' or branch of learning of the curriculum and you can see that we chose to go with Science. The first column offers 'pursuits' which may also be described as macro curriculum skills in science. Column two gives the 'framework for development' and these points present the micro-skills in science and the third column gives 'indicative practices', or examples of things to do in the classroom. You will find that we added two columns to the table and column four relates to CLIL activities in our course collection and those suggestion by the colleagues, while column five indicates key language for teachers to consider.

The aim of this table is by no means to give a comprehensive overview of a CLIL curriculum for pre-primary science in Cyprus. What it does aim to do is indicate how the wonderful CLIL programme in Cyprus might move forwards in the great success it has already achieved in CLIL by taking curriculum guidelines as a 'toolkit' of ideas to provide the wider network of teachers. Our hope is that CLIL teachers around Cyprus will continue to build on this small initiative and as they develop their CLIL 'showers' they can integrate them within the national curriculum and eventually develop a fully-functioning CLIL Curriculum Document for Cyprus. Hey, if you have dreams, why not make them big ones!

# AXIS – SKILLS DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD

PURSUIITS	FRAMEWORK OF DEVELOPMENT	INDICATIVE PRACTICES	CLIL Options	Useful classroom language
<p>Data collection and observations.</p> <p>Learner to collect systematically and targeted information with the help of one or more senses or with use of instruments, which extend the senses</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free observation of environment data</li> <li>Enhance observations with simple instruments</li> <li>Use more than one sense for observing objects, phenomena or events</li> <li>Identify simple differences and Similarities</li> <li>Observing changes in relation to Time</li> <li>Selection of suitable instruments for observations (lense, ruler, thermometre)</li> </ol>	<p>The children record their observations daily on the height of their plants (e.g., the lentils they have planted and have place in their 'nature' learning center.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audit (count, name) plants, trees, bushes in the local neighbourhood or school yard using a grid and ticks for tallying</li> <li>Survey leaves by size</li> <li>Survey seeds / pods / types of seed (seed, bulb)</li> <li>Collect seeds from foods (apple, tomato, pumpkin)</li> <li>Mapping plants / create a simple sketch of the local area (yard, garden) – make a simple key</li> <li>grow from seed to seedling in the window greenhouse over a week / two weeks</li> <li>potting seedlings in plant pots</li> </ol>	<p>One, two, three ...</p> <p>Names of plants (roses)</p> <p>Names of trees (plane, oak)</p> <p>There is ...</p> <p>There are...</p> <p>Smaller/bigger</p> <p>Smallest/biggest</p> <p>This is a ... seed</p> <p>Names of plants</p> <p>It feels (soft, hard,...), it smells (fresh)</p> <p>I feel .../I smell .../I see /</p> <p>This is the ... (root, stem, petal, leaf)</p> <p>It's red, blue</p> <p>It's 2cm (unit)</p> <p>It's 5 .../it's grown ...</p> <p>Days (Monday,</p> <p>To begin / start</p> <p>At the end</p> <p>Sequences (first, then, next, after that, don't forget...)</p>
<p>Classification</p> <p>The learner organizes objects,facts, data or more broadlyinformation through identificationand application of specific criteria.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select and group objects based on a feature</li> <li>Locate the foreign element in a group</li> <li>Identify differences and similarities and create simple groups of objects based on a specific criterion and descriptionand justify the classification</li> <li>Select and group objects based on two or more given criteria</li> <li>Serialization of three or moreobjects obviously different inascending or descending order. Explanation of classification and reference to the criterion</li> <li>Grouping and serialization of objects on the basis of unseen characteristics</li> <li>Select and group objects based on two or more criteria</li> </ol>	<p>In the learning center'Aqueduct', in a structured game, children play with objects and discover the properties in terms of sinking and navigation with the kindergarten teacher helping children.</p>	<p>Sorting by size / by type</p> <p>Grouping according to similarity</p> <p>Counting</p> <p>Sorting leaves by type / colour / shape</p> <p>Matching of seed and food / plant (tastes)</p> <p>Matching leaves or fruit with tree</p> <p>Ordering the stages of growth of a plant</p> <p>Odd one out (same / different or doesn't belong)</p>	<p>X ... is a ... y</p> <p>It's a</p> <p>It isn't a</p> <p>It's the same, different</p> <p>It's a tomato seed / an apple seed / a pumpkin seed</p> <p>It's a leaf from a tree / plant (an oak tree)</p> <p>This is first .../last ...</p> <p>Firstly, To start with, In the beginning, After that,</p> <p>Next,</p> <p>Finally,</p> <p>This isn't the same</p> <p>This is different</p> <p>'the odd one out'</p> <p>It matches</p> <p>It doesn't match</p>

<p>Communication</p> <p>The learner exchanges and represents ideas, knowledge, questions and experiences using appropriate means of expression, for the better understanding and interaction with others.</p>	<p>1. Free expression of experiences</p> <p>Free registration of comments by any means.</p> <p>Report simple properties of objects</p> <p>2. Recording and presentation of findings of observations in graphic representations</p> <p>Annotation of graphics, performances of other children</p> <p>Narration of experiences and description of projects of other children's models</p> <p>3. Thinking along the way, presentation of findings</p> <p>4. Selection of appropriate symbolism for presentation of observations and data</p>	<p>In the building material learning center, children in a structured game, children make a flower garden, showing the stages of development of their flowers.</p>	<p>Drawing / using symbols to reflect (emojis)</p> <p>Graphing (numbers, pictures)</p> <p>Interpreting results</p> <p>Modelling</p> <p>Make a map/model</p> <p>Brainstorm ways to show 'size', 'height', etc.</p> <p>Symbols, units, objects (teddy bear)</p>	<p>Show</p> <p>Draw a picture to show the cycle of growth of your plant</p> <p>I like / I don't like (tick, cross / smile / sulk, thumbs up / thumbs down)</p> <p>How many ... (are there? / .. like? / ... don't like ...?)</p> <p>9 like ... x ...</p> <p>3 don't like ... y ...</p> <p>... more ...</p> <p>... less ...</p> <p>Child Describes 'work done' map model</p> <p>(1 – 1)</p> <p>(1 – 5)</p> <p>(1 – class)</p>
<p>Using conventional or non-conventional measurement units, the child should determine the value of x.</p>	<p>1. Comparison of two objects with respect to the same size</p> <p>Perform simple measurements with non-conventional units, given or chosen by the learner</p> <p>2. Use two measurements of the same size to support comparisons</p> <p>3. Selection of appropriate units of measurement</p> <p>4. Use of two or more units for measuring the same size</p> <p>5. Using a suitable instrument for each measurement</p>	<p>The child decides which is the right medium (beans, pencils or rope) to use to measure height.</p>	<p>Comparing sizes of tissue paper caterpillars before and after adding water.</p> <p>(option – use tissue paper as stem of plant and wet it to show growth)</p> <p>Deciding how to measure the growth of seedlings.</p>	<p>It is x cm (finger tips, paper clips, etc.)</p> <p>I need ...</p> <p>Numbers</p> <p>bigger/smaller/longer/shorter/same more/less</p> <p>I used ...</p> <p>I'm going to use...</p> <p>Let's use...</p> <p>It's 5 crayons / pencils long but</p> <p>It's 20 paper clips</p> <p>This one is ... this one is...</p>
<p>Identifying problems</p> <p>The learner identifies situations or phenomena for which we do not have explanations (problems) through observations (data) that arise for the purpose of finding solutions (requested).</p>	<p>1. Ask Free Questions for things in the immediate environment that arouse interest with the use of closed-ended questions</p> <p>2. Use of open-ended questions</p> <p>Wondering why something happens and searching for answers through exploring the natural world</p> <p>3. Ask other children questions</p>	<p>The learner identifies that materials are suitable to be used for making an umbrella (non-waterproof).</p>	<p>Making a covered area in the yard, so we can go out even in the rain.</p> <p>Gift wrapping (different materials clear/opaque, soft/hard)</p> <p>Making decisions about clothes according to seasons.</p> <p>Chance to brainstorm problems they know, (rubbish – recycling / litter, pooch poo, cats, school vandalism)</p> <p>Posters and signs (images)</p> <p>Action – clean up</p> <p>Planting</p> <p>Bird feeders in winter</p>	<p>We need ... / Let's try ... / How about</p> <p>Names of materials</p> <p>Characteristics (transparent, waterproof/good-not good/smooth-rough)</p> <p>(Seeds, rolls, honey)</p>
<p>Identifying data and drawing conclusions</p> <p>The child locates and determines the necessary information for solving a problem in a way where it can be determined what can be a possible outcome and what can not</p>	<p>1. Identify information that arises from the problem</p> <p>2. Determine what the problem is asking children to do.</p> <p>3. Selection of appropriate information for problem solving</p>	<p>At the Experimental learning center during free play, children wrap gifts for the learning center. Shop and try to recover the items so as not to be visible</p>	<p>Soft (tear)</p> <p>Transparent (see through)</p> <p>Frame for a family picture (material to protect the picture but still be seen – cellophane, glass, wood metal)</p> <p>Fixing Goldilocks' messes!</p> <p>(build a new chair)</p> <p>A letter from Goldilocks to the children for help/suggestions</p>	<p>We need ...</p> <p>Why not?/Let's try</p> <p>That's fine/OK</p> <p>It's no good</p> <p>It doesn't work</p> <p>It's perfect</p> <p>It works</p> <p>It's just right</p> <p>Yes/It might be good/perhaps...</p> <p>Not too hard</p> <p>Not too soft</p>



<p>Predicting</p> <p>The learner states what it is or may occur in the future, if certain conditions are met.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prediction based on intuition</li> <li>2. Prediction of a future event, based on observations and experiences</li> <li>3. Making predictions based on experiences and explanation of the rationale</li> <li>4. Suggestion of ways to investigate predictions</li> <li>5. Formulation and verification of predictions for specific phenomena</li> </ol>	<p>The child expresses his personal views on materials floating or not in water.</p>	<p>Go for an acoustic walk and the children listen and record what they hear</p> <p>The children predict beforehand</p> <p>Instrument for recording sounds</p> <p>Sink or float (plasticine/foods)</p> <p>What things don't sink?</p> <p>Paper towel and the shapes (which colour?)</p> <p>Forecasting the weather later in the day / week</p>	<p>It will...</p> <p>I think it will...</p> <p>It won't</p> <p>It's heavy,</p> <p>It's light</p> <p>It will sink/float</p> <p>(I see clouds) It will be/rain</p>
<p>Formulation of a case</p> <p>The child to formulate a possible explanation or theory of what happened or is going to happen in the future in a way that can be investigated later</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Making assumptions intuitively</li> <li>Identify a simple cause of one effect or a phenomenon, based on previous experiences</li> <li>Following instructions to carry out an investigation and the validity of the hypothesis</li> <li>3. Awareness of the need for reformulating a hypothesis, when it arises</li> <li>4. Formulation and justification of a hypothesis based on the direct study of a phenomenon</li> </ol>	<p>The learner expresses personal views on materials floating or not in water and justifies these views, explaining how different materials sink or float on the water.</p>	<p>Planting in different conditions</p> <p>In dry soil</p> <p>In wet soil</p> <p>In sunlight</p> <p>With no sunlight</p> <p>Demo</p> <p>Picture instructions</p>	<p>Apples (do/don't, will/won't) float.</p> <p>The apple (didn't float) floated</p> <p>If the plant has water..., it grows/will grow.</p> <p>If the plant is in sunlight, it grows/will grow. (sunlight/dark)</p>
<p>Interpretation of data and observations</p> <p>The learner formulates mechanisms to give causal explanations to information or correlate information collected through observation in order to justify, explain facts or phenomena.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support a statement based on previous experiences and observations of regular events</li> <li>2. Recognize patterns during observations</li> <li>3. The learners should realize that explaining their way of thinking makes their conclusions more convincing</li> <li>4. Organization and recording of data and finding the relationships between them</li> <li>5. Use of data for confirmation or rejection of a hypothesis</li> <li>6. Accepting a hypothesis which is supported by the data, and rejecting one which is not</li> <li>7. Identification of the data that will be used to find answers to questions that are being investigated</li> <li>8. Correlation of observations to identify patterns to formulate generalizations</li> </ol>	<p>Studying the data collected from the experiment on which materials are attracted to the magnet and which are not, the child decides that all materials that are attracted to the magnet are metal.</p>	<p>Testing materials with a magnet</p> <p>Water cycle/life cycle (caterpillar, plant)</p> <p>Sequence stages in pictures of the plant cycle on a numbered sheet</p> <p>Show the growth with a measuring instrument</p>	<p>It is metal</p> <p>It is not metal</p> <p>Metals are magnetic</p> <p>Plastics are not magnetic</p> <p>First</p> <p>Next</p> <p>Then</p> <p>Finally</p> <p>We should (put)</p> <p>We need to (place)</p>

## **Section 1–Building a PrePrimary CLIL Curriculum –Up and Down Dynamics**

### **Getting started**

One of the ways to ensure as many children 'on task' as possible is to vary the focus and energy of your activities. In writing your session notes, you might take the following check list as a guide:

- Choose a topic
- Choose what kind of activities to include (we use the Anglia School 'wheel')
- Alternate active and passive types of activities
- Follow a certain routine (Hello song-Day/ weather/ season-Topic songs) and choose the other types of activities depending on time
- Be creative (create your own materials)
- Use a lot of realia to create excitement (toys, natural materials-stones, sticks, etc.)
- Well prepared materials in advance
- Art, cooking and science are a HIT! ☺
- Use classroom attention phrases! (1,2,3 eyes on me!)
- Start the different activities with a chant (story time, make a circle, etc.)

### **Free play**

Free play is a wonderful time and opportunity for the children to choose what they want to do. They all have their favourites! It can allow the teacher some freedom for preparing while children arrive, and for the period waiting for parents to collect their children.

- arrange centres before the kids arrive (they can choose the toys they want play with moving from centre to centre)
- free communication between students (if they can already speak) or between a teacher and the students
- colouring worksheets
- students can help the teacher prepare materials for the session (perfect time for free communication)
- teacher can show/ suggest a game and one of the children (a child who can speak well) can lead it
- role play/ drama



We always begin with 'circle time' and this will have a welcome song. Everybody knows and sings our welcome song to welcome newcomers, but we also adapt the words to be able to introduce new words and concepts. The hello song is sung sitting down usually making use of an object or something shown on the whiteboard. Here, we see the hello song adapted to incorporate the concept of autumn leaves falling and the changing colour of leaves in autumn.

### **Hello song (whiteboard activity)**

Talk about the colours of leaves in summer (green) and tell children that they change colour in autumn (red, orange, yellow, brown).

Invite kids to pick a green leaf from the whiteboard and ask them to turn it around. What colour is it?

Sing:

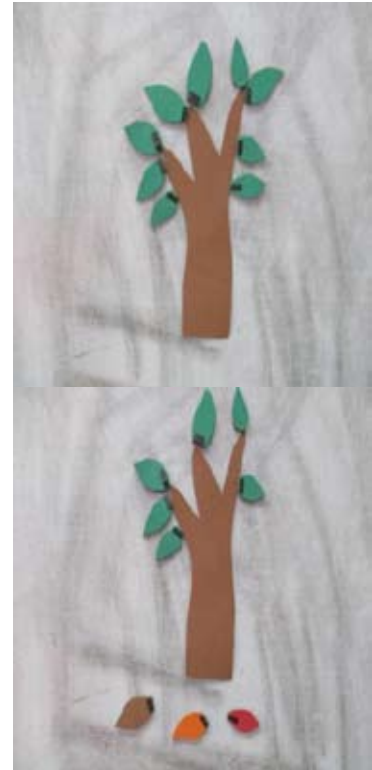
Hello.....hello .....

What have you got?

I've got a brown leaf, I've got a brown leaf

How about you? (they point to another child and repeat)

Then they put the leaves on the ground.



### **Action game (to follow on from the welcome song leaf activity)**

Cut some long leaves out of green paper. Draw a stick on the White Board or pick one from the park. Line all the children and put the leaves in front of them. They need to run and add the leaf on the stick.

Sing:

How many leaves are in the tree?

How many leaves Do You See?

How many leaves Do You See?

Let's all count them

Count with me

123456789..... Depends how many kids are in the classroom

Circle time may vary from the welcome song to have a similar short rhyme to be able to repeat the day's key words. For example, when looking at concepts to do with the senses we use a rhyme for the senses and repeat word items from the theme.

- Stick pictures on the whiteboard with things that can be seen, touched, smelled, tasted, heard.
- Turn the pictures upside down so students cannot see them. (Optional: write numbers on the back)
- Students take turns to pick a picture, say the number and choose one of the sense organs (cardboard nose, hand, mouth, eye, ear) and sing the song:

With my eyes I can see

I can see

I can see

With my eyes I can see

I can see a.....



From circle time, the session can take any direction, but bear in mind the dynamic at each step to maintain interest chance to come down from exhilarating learning experiences you create for them.

### **Action games**

Action games can be adapted to your curriculum themes and concepts and can provide a well needed opportunity to get out of the chair.

### **Assault course letters**

A lovely activity involving a line drawn on the floor, a pair of tweezers and a coloured ball gives the chance to get children following instructions and repeating letter sounds.

Students have to carry a ball from the teacher with a letter sound on it balancing it on one hand only, walking along a zigzag line. They grab a ball from a bowl with the same letter using tongs repeating the sound again, and place it on a number called out by the teacher and then repeat the letter once more.





### **What's the time Mr Wolf?**

We are lucky to have a park right next door to our school and weather permitting we go out often to do activities there. What's the time Mr Wolf? is a favourite. In this well-known game, a child is the wolf with their back to the group of children standing some distance away. One child asks 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' and the wolf says a time and the children can take the number of steps in the time given. At some point, the wolf decides to say 'It's time for lunch' and sets off to catch something to eat. Wonderfully active, and good practice of numbers and times.



If the wolf catches someone, they become the wolf and the game continues.

### **Concentration**

Students stand opposite each other on both sides of the line. Put toilet paper rolls in front of each pair, a soft ball on top. Write phonics or stick small pictures of vocabulary you want to revise, numbers, colours, etc. on the ball.

Teacher starts calling out instructions to touch different body parts like in the game 'Simon Says' ('touch your head', 'touch your tummy', 'touch your ear', etc.). Students have to touch them.

At a certain point the teacher calls out the number, phonic, colour or word that is on the soft ball and the pair have to grab the ball and say the sound or word on the ball. The first child to grab it, wins.



### **Focused observation activities**

#### **Sorting (seeds)**

Use 3 to 5 different kinds of seeds and beans. Mix 3 to 5 of each kind of seed together. Have children sort the seeds according to type. Ask the children which is the biggest and which is the smallest. Get the children to sort them in order of size.

Sorting seeds according to type can also be done with pictures at the white board where children are given 5-6 cards with images of seeds which they sort into 'like' groups and with the teacher's instruction they come to stick their images in the correct column on the board. In this way, you move from a concentrated individual table activity to an active 'stick it in the right place on the board' activity.

#### **Water bomb fruits**

Matching fruits with corresponding objects of same colour can be adapted to involve bursting water bombs where each child picks a picture card of a fruit from the tray and take a waterbomb from a bowl full of different coloured bombs. They take a chopstick from the teacher and burst the corresponding balloon while repeating a rhyme with the group and teacher.

Orange peach, orange peach

Hands up who likes orange peach!

Yummy, yummy, yummy

Put it in my tummy

I like, you like orange peach.





### Travelling rainbow

Revise the colours of the rainbow with a song. Invite students to make an experiment to see how far a rainbow can travel.

Draw two rainbows on paper towel and set them in two different ways. You might have one rainbow going up a sheet stuck to a tray placed upright, or a rainbow travelling over a chopstick placed in a box.

Start adding water (each child can have a go) and then watch. Children compare 'more', 'less', 'longer', 'shorter'.



### Bubble art

Art is a vast and varied creative area. We highly recommend including bubble art in your repertoire of focused craft activities.

Prepare a tray with water. Add a coloured paint. Mix in some washing up liquid and swish it around to create bubbles. When you have plenty of coloured bubbles, place a blank sheet of white paper on top to take an imprint of the bubbles. Be careful not to soak the paper, just take the print.

Then use the print as a backdrop for some art, or as an ocean or lake for a 3-dimensional craft.



### Places to live art game

Another art-to-action activity involves children painting or drawing places to live. We like to use construction blocks as prints to create the idea of bricks on the paper. Let your children suggest what places they can think of, this could be: a cottage, a block of flats, house, igloo, tent, caravan, villa, castle, etc.



Once the buildings are dry, cut them out and play a game to practise them a little bit more.

Use a small car and a toy (girl or boy).

*Students chant: Little (boy) girl, little girl! Where do you live?*

*Teacher: I live in a castle.*

The child should position the car in front of the castle and push it so it goes straight in the castle.

### **Growth cycle of a plant action song**

Collect rhymes and songs that you can adapt to your curriculum theme.

Here, the life cycle of a plant is sung to the tune of 'I'm a little teapot'.

*I'm a little Daisy*

*I'm a little Daisy*

*Tall and slim (stand on tiptoes)*

*Here are my petals (place hands near your head and wiggle your fingers)*

*Here's my stem (hold your arms straight down by your sides)*

*When the sun comes up (mime the sun rising with an arm circling over your head)*

*And the rain comes down (wiggle your fingers down like rain into a squatting position)*

*I grow, grow, grow up from the ground (slowly rise up from the floor to a tall flower)*

Children sing along and follow teacher's actions representing the parts of the plant and plant growth.

### **How leaves breathe**



As part of work on plants, children talk about how plants feed and breathe and this activity allows the children to 'see' that plants do breathe by transferring carbon dioxide and oxygen in and out through leaves. You need a large healthy leaf and stem which you place under water and after a couple of hours small bubbles of oxygen will appear on the surface of the leaf. Give the children magnifying glasses to look more closely.



## Window greenhouses



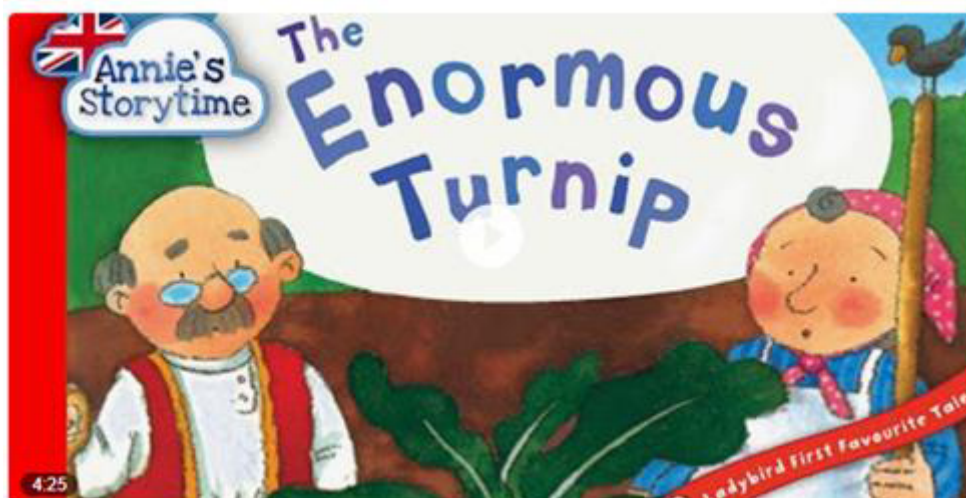
Action can also be focused and individual when children are involved in craft or experiments. Using plastic bags or ziplock bags, tissue paper, seeds, water and the shape of a house cut from paper and stuck around the bag, the children can create 'greenhouses' which they hang in the window and watch the seeds sprout.

## Sequencing action in a story



In Jasper and the Beanstalk, things happen in a certain order and the children can be engaged with the story and the sequence by getting them to work with picture cards of the action and placing them in the right order.

## Drama follow-up to story



Of course, one perfect way to go over the action in a story is to get children to play the roles of the characters in the story. They can be given short scripts to learn and repeat and 'curtains up!' the play begins.


## Action songs

### Plants

*Tune: The Farmer in the Dell*

The farmer plants the seeds  
The farmer plants the seeds  
Hi, Ho and Cherry O  
The farmer plants the seeds

*Other Variations:*  
The rain begins to fall  
The sun begins to shine  
The plants begin to grow  
The buds all open up  
The flowers smile at me



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There are many action songs to find and use. Do several, repeat them and you'll find that when you do quiet craft or art activities your children will naturally start singing their latest and favourite songs.

## Dinosaurs (active and passive)

### Dino rhyme (action)

DinoDitty – action song to the tune of 'Doo Wa Diddy Diddy'

Before singing the rhyme, teacher can prepare some plastic food items to give to the dinosaur after the end of the rhyme. Kids can take turns to put on a dino mask or a costume.

Hello song with the Dino rhyme - DinoDitty

*Here he comes stomping his feet  
Singing DinoDitty, DittyDum DittyDo  
Looking all around for something good to eat  
Singing DinoDitty, DittyDumDittyDo  
He's Huge (teacher) (circle hands round like a huge belly)  
He's Huge (kids)  
He's Strong (teacher) (make strong arms)  
He's Strong (kids)  
He's huge, he's strong, won't be hungry very long.  
Singing Dino Ditty, Ditty Dum Ditty Do.*

### **Salt dough volcano (passive)**

- After the rhyme, kids can make a salt dough volcano (as one of the theories how dinosaurs became extinct is a massive volcano eruption). Put plastic dinosaurs around the volcano.
- Make the dough, shape it around a glass bottle and colour it brown- if possible, in the beginning of the class so the paint dries a little bit.





### **Moving from action to stillness in a group**

There are many ways to move from action to stillness in a group. It's important to think about the media you can exploit to bring about the stillness. The secret is to create a focus of attention using: whiteboard, objects, light table, listening, watching, poster, experiment, observation, and the children can be engaged through individual participation by placing images on a visual or arranging items according to instructions.

#### **Experiment – planting**



#### **Observing objects – magnets and magnet fishing**



## Whiteboard cooking / magic potion making



## Observing – tastes



## Moving from group to individual work

Similarly, we can bring stillness as we move from a group to individual work.

We can do this by creating 'products' for individuals to work on such as art work:-

– painting (fingers, different objects, different styles) – drawing – collages – crayoning – chalking

We can also Create 'products' for individuals to work on through craft:-

– modelling – puppets – scenes – recycling – cosmetics



### Scratch and sniff pictures for your latest story reading

Here, children are mixing white glue with cinammon and light brown coloured paint to make 'mud' which they then use to paint their pig-theme pictures. When the paint is dry, the children get to scratch and sniff and describe the smell.



### Paint with hands and fingers

When painting, get the children to use their hands and fingers, and fingerprints to create the art work. Here, children are painting volcanoes in our dinosaur theme where their hand represents the erupting lava coming from the volcano. Brushes are great, but using your hands and fingers to create art work is so very liberating!



### Paint with objects – leaves

Many objects can lend themselves to painting. Here, children are using leaves to print on paper to create pictures of trees.



### Paint with objects – plastic bottles

You'll find objects that make the perfect print such as the base of a plastic bottle to represent the petals of a flower.



What other objects can you think of to use for painting or printing? Look around and see what you can find.

### Crafting – A pirate ship model

Crafting in a group can be great for team work and individuals working on their own parts of the whole is a great focus for toddlers.





### **Crafting – Paper plate masks and puppets**

Faces are easy to make with paper plates, and you can make a smiley or a sulky on the same plate face to represent emotions during a theme on emotions.



Bear in mind that from this focused craft activity, there is a natural move ‘up’ in dynamics to some drama or role play using the emoti-face.

### **Crafting – soaps and cosmetics and their packaging**

It’s quite easy to find all you need to make simple cosmetics in the preschool classroom. You can prepare a basic mix which the children can colour, perfume, add seeds, petals to, and they can produce their own packaging for their products.

Doing craft like this can be great for any festival in your calendar. Why not try to sell your products to raise money for charity. Get the children to take charge of the sales, the pitch, the takings and handing over the donations to your chosen charity.



### Using objects to produce models of other things – dinosaurs

We often create collages and build things with many shapes including spaghetti and pasta to make dinosaur fossils.





## **Section 2 – Concepts and Skills – an overview**

Our thematic curriculum revolves around the lives of our children. We focus on their routines, their families, festivals, celebrations, their needs, relationships and experiences. As we go through these themes, we recycle and consolidate routines, concepts and skills. We focus on 'performance' and 'products' through theatre, exhibitions or displays, gifts, auctions, and take-home objects made in class. The curriculum also builds on school routines, tidying, caring, sharing and being responsible. The key in all of these areas is to identify the 'conceptual routines' which both practice and offer repetition and recycling of key curriculum concepts. By imagining the very youngest learner as a scientist or an artist, an architect or an engineer, we can create ways of accommodating curriculum skills to make them accessible to these young specialists.

We began doing this by:

- talking about how things are designed
- looking at how things work
- talking about processes
- looking at why things happen
- looking at how things are made up
- testing things
- building things
- making observations of things
- collecting information about things
- showing results and explaining them

By thinking about our learners as budding specialists, we begin to develop a conceptual curriculum and from there we can easily build sessions which include all manner of rich meaningful learning experiences.

A handy checklist of early learning concepts includes:

- Observation
- Problem solving
- Curriculum language
- One-to-one correspondence
- Number sense
- Shapes
- Spatial sense
- Sets and classifying
- Ordering
- Comparing
- Patterning
- Counting
- Measurement
- Process description
- Parts and wholes
- Numbers and symbols
- Graphing

There are others, and we are constantly updating our curriculum with new learning conceptual routines we discover and consider important for our learners. What follows is a collection of example activities based on the list above.

### **Observation: Using the senses**

Observing is the first step in gathering and organizing information. Children use their senses to observe. When given a collection of items (for example apples) children use their senses to observe attributes such as color, size, sweet/sour, texture, and soft/crunchy.

Example – Tasting and deciding what flavours familiar foods have.

What other things around us can we observe?



### **Problem Solving**

Convergent problem solving is the ability to gather individual pieces of information together in one's mind and come to a single solution to a problem. Divergent problem solving is the ability to gather many pieces of information and consider a variety of possible solutions to a problem.

Example – Winter means less food for birds. Problem - What can we do to help them?

Solution - Make bird feeders and hang them in the local trees.

Can you think of other problems we often meet around us?



### **Curriculum language**

Use maths language throughout the day as well as during activities. Introduce new words with activities such as “This is a pattern! Red, white, red, white.”

Other examples of maths language we use in preschool are heavy, light, tall, short, round, rectangular, add to, take away, etc.

Example – It floats! It sinks!

Become language aware – identify learning language and script for it!



### One-To-One Correspondence

This is the understanding that one group of items has the same number of items as another. It can involve any activity where the children match one thing to another thing. This could be a coloured button to represent an animal, or a paper cup to represent a step in a process.

Example - balloon and fruit correspondence by colour.

What other items can we use to represent other things?



### Number Sense

Number Sense is the concept of understanding number.

It helps children to understand the connections between quantities, counting, more, less, etc.

Example – how many fruits can you fit onto your very hungry caterpillar?

Always be on the look out for possible number sets, how and where they can be practised – groups of 5 seeds.



### Shapes

Shapes are the beginnings of early geometry. At this age, children won't be figuring out formulas for lengths, distances, or shapes, but they will be recognizing and identifying basic shape names and comparing, sorting, classifying and drawing them and using them for their own collage artwork.

Example – Shape-o-saurus (using coloured geometric paper shapes to make a dinosaur.)

Let's help the shape-a-saurus get its shapes back! Once upon a time there was a huge but friendly shape-a-saurus. Show a small picture of it.

But all of a sudden, he lost all of its shapes and now he's sad and wants to find them.



Here, you see geometric shapes used to create a dinosaur. Can you think of other creations which we might use geometric shapes for?

### **Spatial Sense**

Spatial sense is the ability to place objects in the right space logically, or appropriately to the space given, or following a certain pattern.

As an example, here, children are working to build a city with recycled materials. They use their spatial reasoning to decide on size and shape of buildings.

The example is creating a small city on a poster. Can you think of other ideas for making children think spatially?





## Sets and Classifying

When children group items in a logical way, they are creating sets. In order to do this, they need to be able to use the skill of classifying which is a related but higher-level skill to comparing. Once they have observed and compared, children can move on with information collected and begin sorting, classifying and grouping logically.

Children may separate objects according to their observations. This could be grouping leaves according to their colour, or size, or shape.

The example here is sorting apples according to discoloration after being placed in different liquids – lighter to darker.

Can you think of other ways to set and classify?



## Ordering

Ordering is also related to comparing but is a higher-level skill.

When ordering objects, children compare several things or groups and puts them in a logical sequence.

Children may place things in order based on any characteristics such as size or shape.

Alternatively, children may place objects in in order of sequence from first to last, for example reflecting actions they have just seen and heard in a story.

The example given is ordering animals in a food chain according to pictures on toilet rolls.

What other things do we order, put in a series?



## Comparing

Comparing involves seeing similarities and differences in objects or groups. Once children have had time to explore objects, they can begin to compare them.

They may see similarities and differences in terms of colors, weights and sizes of fruits.

Example 1 – Tissue paper caterpillars made wet will grow. They are placed alongside each other to compare lengths.

Be aware of opportunities for comparison whether it's length, size, shape or other!



### Example 2 – Opposite rhymes ([Two little dickybirds](#))

Students practice opposites with this lovely rhyme.

Encourage them to use different voices and act out the different words with stick puppets which 'act' the adverbs in their movements.

Fast/ Slow- sitting in the snow

Early/ Late- sitting on a gate

Mean/ Nice- sitting on the ice

Wobbly/ Straight- sitting on a gate

Serious/ Silly- sitting on a lily

Near/ Far- sitting in a car

Quiet/Loud- sitting on a cloud



### Patterning

Patterns involve the ability to put items in an order that repeats itself.

You might have a picture to colour using glossy paper squares following choices of patterns (blue + pink or green + yellow).

You can pattern colours, but you can also toys, children, or other objects according to your chosen criteria.

Example – using glossy paper cut-outs to colour in shapes and linking the shape to a letter sound – 'S'.

Think about incorporating pattern practice in any regular art activity like this one.



### Counting

Counting can be either rote counting which is reciting numbers in order from memory or rational counting which means counting items in a group and understanding the last number said is the amount for a set.

Example 1 – Foxes in the den. Draw a burrow on a big flip chart paper sheet. Print and laminate foxes. Prepare number cards with dots (if children don't recognize numbers). Sing the song, and every child picks a number card, counts the dots and puts the corresponding foxes in the den.

Sung to [The muffin man](#)

*Have you seen my little fox, my little fox, my little fox?*

*Have you seen my little fox, my little fox, my little fox?*

*Fox number 5.*



Children have to find fox number 5 and put it back in the den.



### Example 2 – Fruit maths

Use a big flip chart paper sheet to draw different types of small fruit. Draw small squares at the bottom.

Sit around the poster. Teacher calls out a fruit (apple) and gives a marker to a child. They need to circle all the apples and count them. Then they write/ stick the corresponding number.



### Example 3 – Elephant Hop-Scotch

Part 1- Colour by numbers (Elephant hopscotch is a picture by a modern artist Dabito)

Teacher: Number 1 is green.

Students find a green pencil and colour the number circle.

Continue until all numbers are coloured.

Part 2 - Teacher puts small dots of coloured paint on the picture (revise the colours of the rainbow).

Students spread the colours with a small cardboard piece with one movement of their hand.



### Measurement

Measuring includes many areas such as volume, weight, length, height, temperature and time.

Example 1 – Measuring out ingredients (dry grammes and wet millilitres) and cake batter into baking trays.

Cooking is a great context for measuring amounts, dry and / or liquid or items. We also measure lots of lengths, and also objects within objects. What things can you measure?



### Example 2 – Raindrops in clouds

Give each child a tray, some tissue paper with a picture of a happy cloud on it, some watery blue paint and a pipette.

Ask: How much water/ how many raindrops can a cloud hold?

Get the children to count how many drops it takes to fill the cloud.

Talk about how clouds are formed.



### Example 3 – Sausage mummies

Every time you cook with your children, they will be measuring.  
Cook, cook, cook!



### Process description

Processes occur everywhere and give many opportunities for developing curriculum language in very young learners.

Example – The process of making paper from beginning (shredding the paper) to the end (drawing on a piece of handmade paper).

Repetitive language includes sequencing phrases: First, Next, After that, as well as the process verbs: mash, press, mix, stir, pour, dip.



### Parts and Wholes

Exploring parts and wholes is an early fraction skill. You can explore parts and whole by breaking things up, or tearing up paper and looking at the parts and how they fit back together to create a whole item.

Example - Use wooden block shapes as parts of a whole (here, flower or other symmetrical shape).

Wooden block flowers are a good example to show parts of a whole.  
Can you think of other situations?

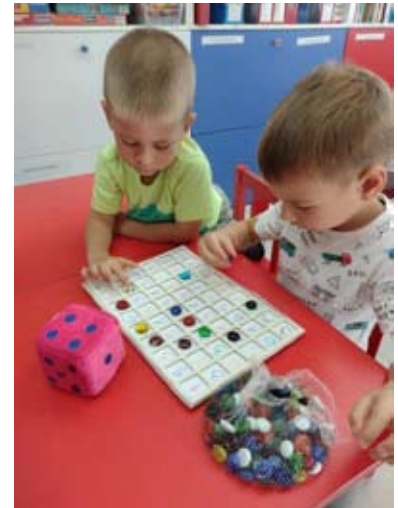


## Numbers and Symbols

Numbers are symbols to represent quantity of an item. When we talk about numbers and symbols, we need an understanding that a number is a symbol and that symbol stands for a set of specific objects.

Example 1 - Roll the dice and find the number on the grid. Cover the number symbol with a counter to match the dots on the dice.

The dots on a dice represent numbers. Can you think of other symbols we use to represent amounts or sets?



Example 2 – Flame numbers

Write numbers on small paper flames.

Fill a spray bottle with water.

Students have to find the number and put the fire out.

Fireman, Marty!

Number 5 is on fire!

Put it out!



## Graphing

Graphing is a visual way of recording and communicating results and data that the children have observed.

Example – Counting objects and recording numbers in a bar graph on the white board.

We graph a lot at Anglia School, often at the white board. You can graph likes and dislikes by handing out pictures to children and getting them to stick them in the right column on the board.

Can you think of other graphs?





### **Section 3 - Creating, visualizing and interacting with concepts**

Whatever concepts you deal with in your PrePrimary class, there will be a natural, generic 'package' it comes in. This section offers examples for looking at the shape of that package and exploiting it to support learners as they process in their minds the content they see and hear in your lessons.

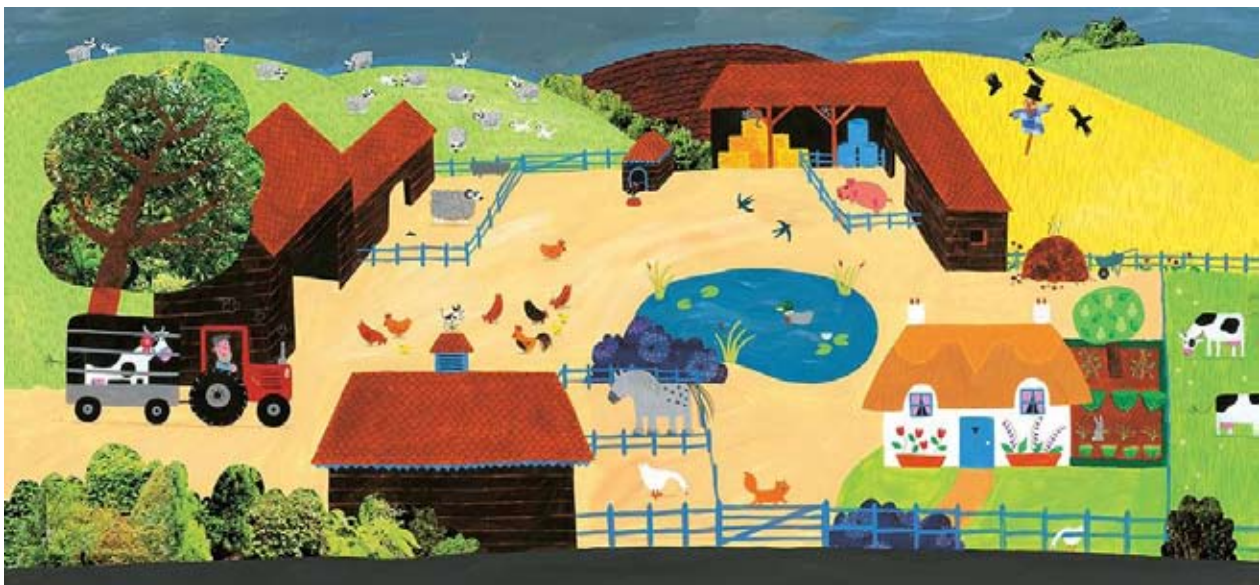
We began with the idea of a thematic curriculum but there is a logical progression in all of the themes. The progression makes use of various media to embrace the concepts. A key principle then is to make use of conceptual structures to help guide learners through input. Learners interact with the content using scaffolding 'shaped' around the input. There are many ways to create this input scaffolding, there are many instruments a teacher can build to guide learners through input. Some approaches are:

- Using stories and picture books to practice concepts. In the examples given here, you will see us 'lift the concepts off the page' through the use of manipulables.
- Using videos to introduce and consolidate concepts. In this case, we identify concept structures in video and exploit these structures in tasks.
- Using realia to teach a concept. Here, we make opportunities for touch and movement with objects which are representing the concepts we are teaching and learning.

#### **Understanding directions and locations (in a story)**

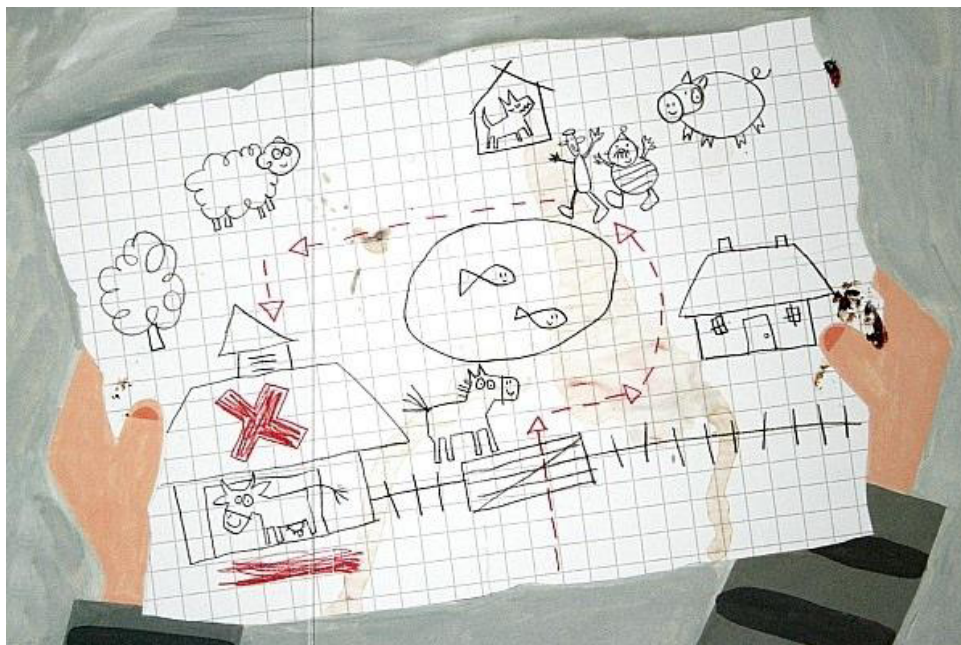
In the story 'What the ladybird heard' we meet animals and their names and the noises they make. We see and hear various buildings and sites around the farm (pond, gate, doghouse etc). We hear directions for moving around the farm 'Turn right, turn left, straight ahead, around, into (etc)'.

The picturebook offers a wonderful image of the farm among the many delightful pages of art depicting the animals in the story. The double spread of the farm lends itself perfectly to locating the animals and the buildings and other locations in the story.





We also get a lovely burglar's map.



The burglar's map gives us an idea for making our own map with the help of our children where they each produce one thing, animal or place to put in our poster map.

Building a DIY map takes the learners through the sequence of the story, allows them to position the animals and places while the teacher is giving instructions and directions. The 'visual' of the map embraces the concepts of locations and directions and is a lovely scaffold to use with learners.

### Taste from tongue to brain (in a video)

Concepts in this theme include:

- There are receptors on the tongue and they send different types of taste to neurons in the brain telling us what flavour we are experiencing (salty, sweet, sour, bitter, savoury).
- We can see receptors with a magnifying glass.
- We can group foods by their taste.

[Tigtagjr](#) offers a wonderful [video on taste](#) showing these concepts with accessible language and visual at the right level for preprimary.

A first viewing of the film might have learners identify what they see. Use laminated pictures of foods and put children in twos or threes and tell them to watch, and pick out the foods they see in the film.

We can check what foods learners see, and watch again if necessary.



Food	Like	Don't like	So so
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			

- Share your opinions and preferences
- Use the same film along with a table to get children's opinions on the foods they see

A simple way of following up is to ask children which foods they like, don't like and feel 'so so' about.

This can be done with a poster at the whiteboard where children come and indicate their opinion by ticking the right box.

(Option – use a smaller number of foods to include more children)

Survey tasters in the group:

- Supertasters (over 20 receptors)
- Medium tasters (between 10 and 20)
- Low tasters (less than 10)



One of the concepts we see in the film is to do with tastebuds. We are offered the science activity to survey the children in the class by painting their tongue with blue food colouring and counting the tastebuds we can see there. You can do this with a hole punch reinforcer placed on the tongue so that the area surveyed is controlled, a mirror and some good light. The less receptors you have, the stronger the flavours you like. The more receptors you have, the weaker the flavours you like.

As well as the survey, we work on the shape of the tongue and placing tastes on the tongue in a craft activity using styrofoam and toothpicks and pictures of foods.



Of course, children can also taste foods from the different groups and try to identify the flavours.



This has children sorting foods into groups according to taste: sweet, sour, bitter, savoury, salty.

The matching of foods with tastes, the grouping of foods into flavours, the process of tasting and naming reflecting the message from tastebud to brain, all of these concepts are readily accessible to preprimary learners. Simultaneously, these 'conceptual routines' occur throughout the preprimary curriculum, so it is sensible for us to recycle and consolidate both the concepts while we consolidate the language.

### What animals eat (preparation for work with video)

When deciding where to start bear in mind the three dimensions of CLIL (Ball, Kelly & Clegg 2016): concept, procedures, language. Work through the video and transcript and identify all of the above.

In this example educational film from tigtagjr we can see the following concepts:

- being able to say what some animals eat
- understanding that some animals eat plants, some meat, and some a mixture and these are called 'herbivores', 'carnivores' and 'omnivores'
- grouping animals according to what they eat

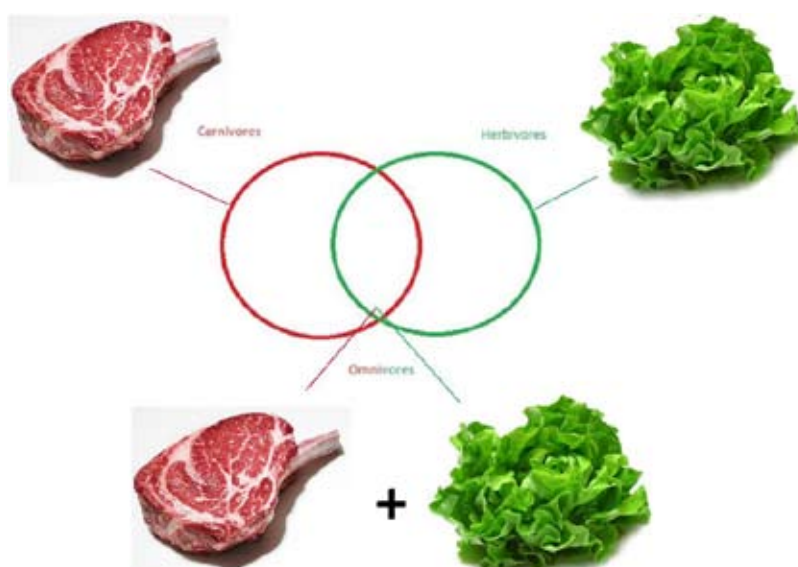
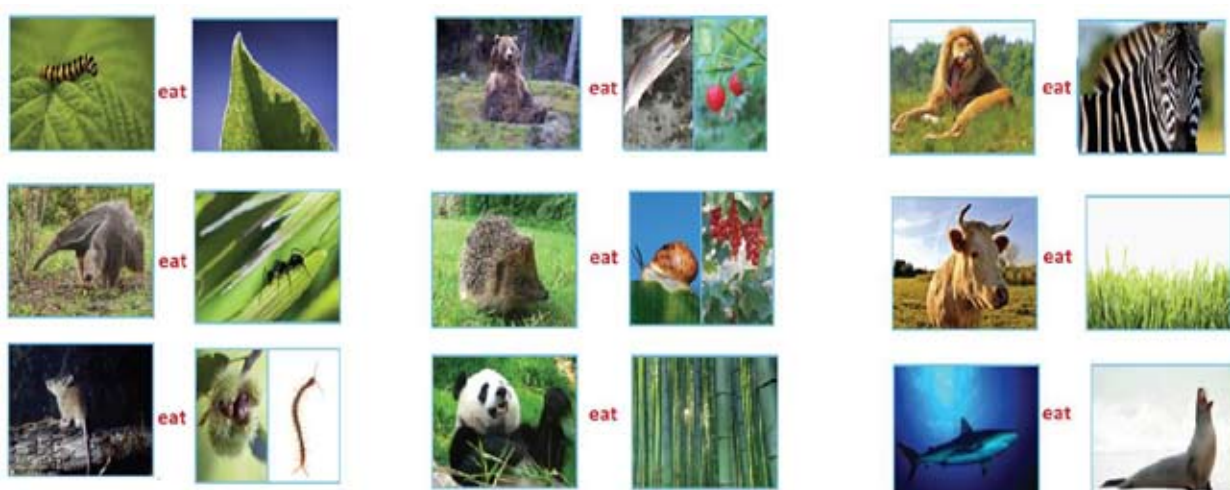
There is clearly some matching going on between animals and the foods they eat in the film. Reading through the script gives us further information about the learning expectations. Not only can we see the names of animals and the names of foods, we can also identify a useful verb structure 'x eats y'.

If we look at little deeper, we can identify a 'structure' to the concepts themselves which isn't actually in the film but which conceptually is very useful, and that is a Venn diagram.

### Transcript

What's your favourite food?  
 That caterpillar's favourite food is leaves.  
 In fact, that's all these caterpillars ever eat!  
 Animals that eat plants are called herbivores.  
 herbivores  
Cows are herbivores - they eat grass.  
 And pandas are herbivores - they eat bamboo.  
 There are also animals that eat meat.  
Lions eat meat.  
 This meat comes from other animals.  
 Animals that eat meat are called carnivores.  
 carnivores  
 The great white shark is a carnivore.  
 Here's a great white shark trying to catch a seal.  
Carnivores are carnivores - they eat meat and other insects!  
 But what about animals that eat both plants and meat?  
 omnivores  
 They are called omnivores.  
Goatly lions are omnivores.  
They eat grass and fish.  
 So animals are herbivores if they eat plants, carnivores if they eat meat and omnivores if they eat both plants and meat.  
 What about you?  
 Do you think humans are carnivores, herbivores or omnivores?  
 herbivores  
 omnivores  
 carnivores





By exploiting the generic structure to the concepts, i.e., a Venn diagram, we can engage learners in an activity which involves the children sorting pictures in the diagram around the terms carnivore, herbivore and omnivore.

This kind of early years curriculum conceptual routine practice builds essential skills for later in school life.

### Drama – the lonely prince

‘Once upon a time there was a king, a queen and their little prince who lived in a beautiful castle. The prince didn’t have any brothers or sisters so he was very lonely. His parents wondered what to do and they decided to let him go for a walk in the woods to look for some friends.’

Tell the story in an attractive way, using puppets, tiny animals and the castle. Cover the tiny animals with colourful cups (with numbers), practice colours and numbers. Invite children to lift the cups and see what animals/toys there are under the cups. Ask them to take the prince puppet and when he lifts a cup, the prince says: Hello dragon, do you want to be my friend? (teacher replies). Move the turn around the children so the routine is repeated and the number, colour, animal and ‘script’ are practiced.





## Apples and senses observation

Explore your five senses with an apple.

See - apple peels, stem, flesh, seeds and four colourful circle (red for the peel, brown for the stem, yellow for the flesh and brown for the seeds).

Hear - taking a bite, peeling an apple, cutting an apple.

Taste - happy and sad emojis according to number of students.

Smell - a tick and a cross.

Feel - stick small smooth, sticky, wet and hard objects so that children can touch the different textures in order to define how touching an apple feels. - work with the apple so kids can see, taste, touch the different parts and match the pictures to the corresponding sections on the poster



**Can you hear an apple?**

**How does an apple taste?**



Here, the table for collecting children's reactions scaffolds the concept of the 'characteristics of an apple'.

## Where's the penguin? Song and Game

You can create scaffolds from many prompts. Here, teachers use the traditional morning 'hello song' along with a house to scaffold learners placing animals and toys in different locations in the house.

Where's the penguin? Where's the penguin?

Where? Where? Where?

He's in the living room. He's in the living room.

Over there.



Follow up the song repetition with a game.

One child picks an animal and puts it in one of the rooms without the others seeing where it is.

Students ask questions:

Is it in the kitchen? Is it in the living room?

Encourage them to use short answers:

Yes, it is. /No, it isn't.

### The Very hungry caterpillar Drama (video)

Create a 'drama box' to go with your latest story. The 'theatre' that you make will scaffold the actions and events in the story and in doing so help learners follow the concepts and ideas they meet. You can consolidate their understanding by getting learners to interact with your 'mini theatre' by using characters or objects in the same way we did with the house.



### Shark poster art (food chains)

[‘There’s a hole in the bottom of the sea’](#) is a difficult song to sing for very young children but they can easily follow the images and understand the concepts. Based on the song, students make a big shark poster, colour the shark and the other animals and arrange the food chain. Then everyone takes turns to repeat.

The sun feeds the seaweed.

The seaweed feeds the snail.

The snail feeds the squid.

The squid feeds the eel.

The eel feeds the shark.



It's also possible and a very effective educational activity to get toddlers to make movies of their conceptual routines so that they 'perform' the ideas that they have learned in their own words and art in front of the camera.

### **‘This is my magic wand’ song and craft**

Using craft activities which get children into role play is also useful for practicing conceptual routines. Based on the song [‘This is my magic wand’](#) Students sing and dance to the song.

Then they do a craft activity where they repeat the rhyme and stick an animal on their sheet (a horse wearing purple pyjamas, a pig ballerina, a blue dog, etc.).

*This is my magic wand...tap, tap, tap.*

*Wave it in the air...and clap, clap, clap.*

*Tap it on your head, tap it on your knee.*

*Abarcadabra you will be.....a pig ballerina.*

### **The Messy Magpie story**

We can set up the ‘scene’ in the classroom to follow the storyline in our latest story. This [story is from Twinkl](#).

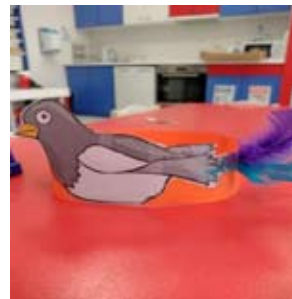
The story scene



Recycling centre



Magpie character



Do a drama activity where each child gets in the role of the Messy Magpie and picks a piece of rubbish from the forest, loads it in the truck and takes it to the recycling centre.

Discuss which of these are metal, glass, paper, plastic.

Think of a short rhyme to go with the drama activity.

*Look at all that mess!*

*The forest is in stress!*

*From all the rubbish on the forest floor.*

*No! No! NO! We can't take it anymore.*

### **The Water Cycle poster (Mixed media art)**

Students use different types of paper and sponge painting to learn about the rain cycle and create a poster.

Chant:

*The water cycle*

*Takes the water and moves it*

*Up and down*

*And all around.*





Repeat:

From the river

To the cloud

Back to the river



### **Dino Fossils**

Freeze small dinosaurs in a mixture of water and baking soda in advance.

Little paleontologists have to find out what dinosaur (name if possible) and colour is hiding in the egg.



### **Elmer art**

After listening to the story of Elmer who didn't want to be different anymore and painted himself elephant colour-grey, students have to identify what colours Elmer used to have on his body and help him get his colours back.





### Science based on a story – [Bartholomew and the oobleck](#)

Oobleck is a non-newtonian fluid. It acts like a liquid when being poured, but like a solid when a force is acting on it.

You can actually show this wonderful scientific process live with the children.

Let the children get their hands full of oobleck and see 'liquid' when they hold their hand flat and let the oobleck ooze through their fingers and 'solid' when they squeeze the oobleck up into a ball in their fist.



## **Section 4 – Talk through Skills**

The 'conceptual structures' we've seen in Section 3 - Creating, visualizing and interacting with concepts, also support talk. The principle that these structures can be used to guide young learners through curriculum input is equally valid for supporting learners in their classroom talk.

We've seen a variety of conceptual structures:

Maps / paper mountains / tables / objects / folded paper houses / drama box / stage / characters / processes / repetitive 'sequenced' talk (rhyme, song, chant)

Let's take a look at some examples where these and other structures are used to scaffold learner talk.

### **The bear went over the mountain – poster and paper mountain**

The well-known song 'The bear went over the mountain' can be scaffolded to support learner talk with a paper mountain and a poster.

*The bear went over the mountain, the bear went over the mountain, the bear went over the mountain, to see what she could see.*

*And all that she could see, and all that she could see, was the other side of the mountain, the other side of the mountain, the other side of the mountain, was all that she could see.*

Other prepositions and places are used in the song (The bear went across the river, ... The bear went through the forest, ... The bear climbed up the big tree, ...) and you could introduce even more options (across the road,



under the bridge, through the window, through the grass, through the waves, over the wall, over the lake)

### Building a good rocket (characteristics in a table)

The Rocket Factory is a kit for designing, constructing and launching and then assessing results of paper rockets. There are a number of conceptual routines involved:










Making predictions - Who thinks...?

Surveying opinions - Put a tick next to the shapes of the rocket you like

Graphing / tabling scores - Count the 'scores'

Following instructions and a demonstration of how to build the rocket - wings, fins, body, nose, size

The children decide on size of body, wings and fins, they choose a name and colour scheme, and they construct the rocket in a workshop format.

	short	medium	long
Body			
Wings			
Fins			



### Leaves, twigs, branches – what happens to them?

We have a composter and colony of worms which we began using in 2017. The composter produces plenty of healthy compost for us and we use this resource in our curriculum in a number of themes. Autumn gives us the opportunity to consider falling leaves and the growth cycle of a tree or plant. This includes talking about what happens to the organic matter that falls from the tree or plant. We look at types of organic waste (green, brown, organic kitchen) and we produce a small composter with worms in the classroom. The children learn about layering a composter and including a healthy mixture of raw materials. We also look at which foods to avoid (citrus, stones, egg shells anything from an animal product). Last but not least, we look at our beautiful worms.



Finally, the children care for the composter and worms by 'feeding' it new kitchen waste, green and brown waste over time.

The process lends itself to a lot of good repetition where the teacher demonstrates using sequencing language and invites a child to do each step. When the composter is ready, we sing and clap.

*Put it in the com – com*  
*Put it in the post – post*  
*Put it com, put it post*  
*Put it in the compost*

### **Songs, poems and fingerplays – The very hungry caterpillar**

Action songs often express processes and cycles, like this one about the caterpillar transforming into a butterfly.

*I'm a Hungry caterpillar* (sing to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot")  
*I'm a hungry caterpillar walking slowly* (Slowly walk two fingers from right hand up your left arm)  
*Looking for something* (place hand above eyes searching for something)  
*To fill my belly* (Rub belly)  
*When I go to sleep* (Close eyes, tilt head and rest on folded hands)  
*I make a little cocoon* (Cup hands together)  
*Pop! I'll be a butterfly soon.* (Throw open hands, link thumbs and make flapping movement)



The children make their own craft very hungry caterpillar with flaps for each day under which they place foods. All the time they do this, they usually break out into one of the songs they've learned and when it's ready they 'retell' the story, or test the teacher's knowledge with 'What does the caterpillar eat on Monday teacher?'

The concept of growth and the life cycle can be practiced with the drama box where the child talks through the story using the manipulables provided on the stage where all the action happens.



Simple picture colouring and then placing the foods in the body of the caterpillar also consolidates the story sequence in the right order. The children here are dealing with days of the week, names of foods, as well as the quantities they hear in the story.



Caterpillar comparison is also possible by making tissue paper caterpillars which the children wet with a pipette or syringe and watch as it grows. The children then compare lengths of growth of their own caterpillar and also comparative growth with the other caterpillars.



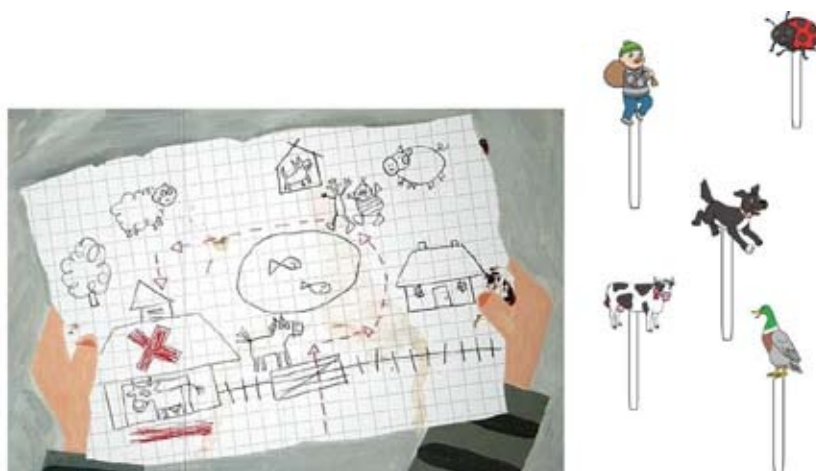
We've seen the drama box, but you can create any manner of interactive space / picture / object. Folded paper houses, for example, allow you to use them with stories which includes houses like 'Cows in the Kitchen' a wonderful exploration of crazy animals taking up residence in different rooms in a house.



The paper house is the conceptual structure which supports children talking about where they put their animal in the house.

### **What the ladybird heard – maps**

We've also seen this story. Consider making your own map with the children and then producing stick puppets for them to play the roles of the characters in the story.





### Children's maps to explore and repeat

Create craft maps to accompany your stories, songs and rhymes. Let the children decorate and while they do, repeat a part of the rhyme, song or story. They will be practicing the concepts and much of the language as you do this.



### Craft and drama objects – Goldilocks

Order and stick onto a coloured sheet the bowls of porridge, the chairs and the beds (big, bigger, the biggest). This completed sheet gives them the conceptual structure for their retelling.

Colour Goldilocks and the three bears puppets to use in a retelling of the story.

Optional - use colourful plastic bears. Each child picks a family and does the drama activity with their own bears.

Encourage kids to repeat 'too hot, too cold, just right, too hard, too soft, just right'

### Rhyme / song – bear family

The Goldilocks story comes in our 'bears' theme and we learn about bears and where they live.

Prepare a box with different teddy bears, have a look at them discuss colours

Students pick one and then the whole class decides who the mother, father, brother, sister bear will be. Put a box on the floor and cover it with a blanket to be a cave. Then sing 'Are you sleeping' to the tune of Frere Jacques.

*Are you sleeping, are you sleeping, Mother bear, Mother bear?*

*It's getting cold outside, it's time for you to hide.*

*In your cave, in your cave.*

*(Father Bear, Sister Bear, Brother Bear, Baby Bear)*



### Rhyme/Drama – matching butterflies and flowers

Prepare different coloured flowers. Use crochet butterflies.

One child picks a butterfly (pink) and flies it to the matching coloured flower.

Sung to Brother Jack:

Fly, fly pink butterfly

Up in the sky, up in the sky

Can you find a flower?

A pink, pink flower.

Fly, fly, fly

Up in the sky



### Maths - heart water lilies

Children pick a heart from a bucket, put it in water and wait to see what number is inside. The paper will gradually soak and the flaps will open to reveal a number inside.

Little heart, little heart.

Open up, open up.

Can you see a number?

Can you see a number?

What is it?

What is it?

Chant the rhyme while you are waiting for the hearts to open up.



### We're going on a bear hunt – map

After doing the story and the children produce their own craft map of the story, repeat the text together.

*We're going on a bear hunt*

*We're going to catch a big one*

*What a beautiful day*

*We're not scared*

*Uh-oh! A river!*

*A deep cold river!*

*We can't go over it.*

*We can't go under it!*

*We have to go through it!*

*Splish-splash-splish!*





After the story and the craft kids can listen and dance to a [different version of the story/ song](#).

### **Cows in the kitchen – drama rhyme**

After reading the story revise the animals that children saw in the story with cardboard puppets and the sounds they make. Revise rooms of the house with the paper house (invite children to close / open the doors, etc.), Ask children to choose an animal and put it in a room of their choice.

-Sing:

Pig in the kitchen...Oink, oink, oink

Pig in the kitchen...Oink, oink, oink

Pig in the kitchen...Oink, oink, oink

What shall we do, Didi?

Chase it away...shoo, shoo, shoo

Chase it away...shoo, shoo, shoo

Chase it away...shoo, shoo, shoo

That's what we do dear children



### **Plastic cups food chains - supporting talk**

After reading / singing 'There's a hole in the bottom of the sea', here, the cups stack inside each other representing sections of the food chain, with the lowest cup representing the bottom of the food chain, and the top representing the top of the food chain.



### Speech bubble phonics



Children choose post it letters to place in the speech bubble light, then they read / say what they've chosen.

### At the doctor's – role play

Children put an eyepatch on and try to read letter sounds in different size as they would when they see an optician.

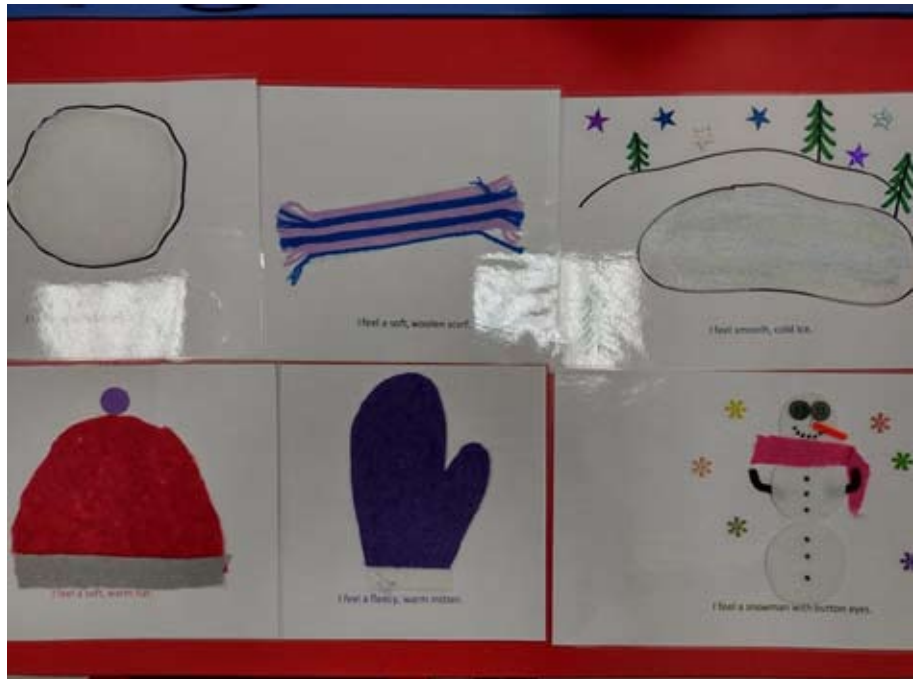


## Touch and feel book

We have a touch-feel book which we use to get children repeating simple sentences about what they are feeling.

How does it feel?

It feels soft / smooth.



## Red and yellow makes orange – chart



Children paint in the colours on a chart and they ‘see’ the sentence they should say out loud.

It’s worth stressing again that many of the conceptual structures which are given to help guide children through lesson input can be used equally well for supporting children in their talk. In guiding children through input, the structure embraces the concepts, while in talk the perspective is slightly changed by the addition of a toy, a fruit, an object which is described by the learner in terms of how it relates to the structure. The challenge for us as teachers of young learners is to discover these instruments and make rich and varied use of them in our lessons.

