

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH CULTURE

Museums and Galleries
as part of the
Early Years Foundation Stage

RENAISSANCE SOUTH WEST



Foreword

Every artefact tells a story, and this publication vividly demonstrates the ways in which museums and galleries can encourage children to explore, think imaginatively, ask questions, solve problems and ultimately create their own stories too. The voice of the child can be heard throughout and their enthusiasm for these experiences is palpable.....the possibilities are indeed endless when children are immersed in such exciting environments of enquiry.

*Sally Jaeckle, Early Years Senior Regional Advisor,
National Strategies Team at the Department for Children, Schools and Families.*

Introduction

This booklet is the result of museums and galleries in the South West and North West working in partnership with Early Years practitioners. They were amazed at how much children gained from their experiences in museums and galleries. Through our projects we found that children had unusually high levels of involvement and that their language for thinking and for communication benefited from the experience. We discovered that museums could help settings deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in a creative and exciting way. Parents and carers were genuinely interested and many came along to museums for the first time. We and the practitioners got almost as much from our learning journeys as the children did and we wanted to share what we had found.

We hope this booklet will help you see some of the wonderful learning and development that can come from young children engaging with objects and art works. There is practical guidance on visiting a museum or gallery and a sheet in the back cover helping you identify those close to you. Our projects showed us the value of children starting or continuing their close encounters with culture in their own setting. The activity ideas included have all been developed by practitioners and work with easy to source objects as well as historical ones.

*Kate Brindley,
Lead Director, South West Museums Hub.*

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PHOTO BY JOEL CHESTER-FILDES/WHM/NORTH ART GALLERY

Children engaging with objects

Children find objects interesting

Museums collect objects because they have a meaning. They may be things that belonged to famous people or came from interesting places. They might be the first ever of something, or the last of something. They could be ordinary things that help us to understand about people's lives in the past. The things all around us now could one day be in a museum.

For children, being interested in objects is just part of being interested in the world around us. Objects can be useful for sparking off work in all the areas of learning and development.

Objects are relevant to young children

Some practitioners worry that children won't be able to make sense of museum objects and will quickly become bored.

“ I would have been wary of taking very young children to the Museum because it might not be interesting to them. Now I wouldn't hesitate to take them.
Childminder

In fact, children often become fascinated with objects, especially things that are unusual or slightly different from their everyday experience.

“ Keanu was interested in the paintings of the sea with the ships on the rocks. He spoke about this when we got to the lighthouse saying: “crashing into stones.” Keanu's learning journey. Keanu is 2



Objects encourage active learners

The Early Years Foundation Stage identifies active learning as the key to early success. It says: active learning occurs when children are keen to learn and are interested in finding things out for themselves.

Active learning gives children real choices and decisions to make. When they are exploring objects children can become highly absorbed, spending a lot of time investigating in different ways. They gain a sense of satisfaction from following their own interest and investigating their own questions.

Objects prompt language for thinking

The Early Years Foundation Stage details how children develop their language for thinking: from early curiosity, to using talk to organise their thoughts. Successful young thinkers demonstrate all kinds of thinking skills, from beginning to think ahead and speculate, to finding, processing and recalling information. Investigating objects helps them use their reasoning, and their imaginations take flight.

“ A group of 4 year olds is handling a cannonball. Child: I think it's made out of rock. It's really, really hard. Child: I think it might make your arm ache.

“ Jenna drew a fox at the drawing table, referring to the stuffed fox. Then she went to paint a fox in the painting area. She was self-resourced and created her own space to work. She made up a verbal story about a fox, asking the adult to scribe for her. Then she read herself the previously read fox story, turning pages, pointing at words and carefully looking at pictures and interpreting them.
Jenna's learning journey. Jenna is 4.



Objects develop language for communication

Practitioners often find it difficult to encourage children to ask their own questions and to talk together. As children investigate new objects, questions seem to come naturally and interesting topics of conversation often emerge.

“ Children were asking their own questions and answering each other's. The words came tumbling out. They were almost falling over themselves in trying to get their ideas out. Early Years practitioner



Contributing to the EYFS themes

A unique child

Children can have their own unique way of relating to different objects. There is a lot that is not known about many objects and has to be imagined. Each child can decide how important, interesting or beautiful something is and opinions will vary. Many museums have world culture collections that could strike a chord with children from a wide range of communities. Objects from the distant past can introduce a kind of living equally unfamiliar to everyone. Investigating objects in this open-ended way, where there are no wrong answers, can help build children's confidence.



“A child with English as his second language was totally engaged with exploring an egg slice. He said something in Russian about it and when his mother arrived he went straight to her saying: “I did that by myself”. Practitioner observation

Positive relationships

Investigating objects can involve parents. Museum objects can form a bridge to home experiences. Older relations may own something similar or remember when they used one. Children connect objects to things they've seen at home.

“A child aged 4 investigated a bottle opener. He talked about home and the kitchen and his mum. “My mum has one of those. That takes the lid off beer”.



Enabling environments

Objects and artworks can help make the learning environment more stimulating and exciting. They might spark off investigations indoors or outdoors. In one setting, exploring a museum's woodland collection led to an outdoor adventure with soft toys.

“The children spent a lot of time thinking about where the animals could live. They wandered about placing them under the trees, on branches and in various dens.

Museum and gallery buildings can provide new environments to explore: stimulating children and bringing a sense of awe and wonder.

“Kerry spent a lot of time in the days after the trip talking about the Roman soldier's hut and about matching the pot in the picture to the one in the cabinet. Parent of child aged 4

Learning and development

Objects, artworks and stories are a great resource for children's active learning. Whether they are incorporating them into their play, representing them, exploring them or talking about them, children can develop at their own pace and in their own way.

Investigating

Investigating comes first. Children ask questions and gather information using all of their senses.



Communicating

Children begin to express their ideas and feelings through words, sounds or signs. They listen, apply their reasoning and offer explanations.

“Macion is touching a tapestry.
Macion: It's soft!
Adult: Yes, it is soft, it's made of wool.
Adult picks up toddler so she can touch it too.
Adult: It's soft Grace. Grace:(smiling) Aahh!
Macion aged 2.5 yrs, Grace aged 17 mths

Representing

Children quickly move to representing their ideas. They might choose to draw or make, to play imaginary games, sing songs or make up stories about an object.



Recalling

Encounters with objects can provide potent memories for children to recall and share. A museum visit can produce plenty to talk about, and objects back in the setting can encourage exploration to continue.

“Izzy loved it. She told my gran all about the animals and the Exeter Puzzle Jug.
Parent of child aged 3

Our projects

In the summer of 2007, the South West Museum Hub ran a series of research projects aimed at finding out what children get from their encounters with culture and heritage. We worked with 5 settings across the South West involving children from across the Foundation Stage: from toddlers to 4-year olds. Although the settings and practitioners varied we had a set of common principles. Each project:

- followed children's interests
- focused on providing opportunities to communicate
- offered active learning experiences, including the chance to be creative
- lasted a number of weeks
- documented children's learning journeys, using logs, diaries and stories

Across the projects children developed the skills for active learning, language for thinking and language for communication. Children were really involved in learning from the objects, art works and buildings in the projects. They were highly motivated and excited about their experiences. The tales from children's learning journeys, quotes, children's drawings and many of the photos in this booklet come from the exploratory projects.

Most importantly the projects demonstrated the intensity of the learning that could be achieved through engaging with museums and galleries and the breadth of the areas of learning and development that could be covered. The evidence from our projects is the foundation for this booklet, ensuring that it is really relevant for practitioners.

The following pages give more detail about each of the projects. Of course, not all museums and galleries could take part in projects like these but many have resources they could contribute, people who could come to your setting or interesting buildings and collections to go and see. Pages 16 and 17 give some ideas of exciting things you could do with your children in a museum or gallery, even if they don't have any targeted provision.

Bournemouth: The Russell-Cotes Museum and Art Gallery and Bournemouth Childminder Network Coordinator

Childminders came to 4 weekly sessions bringing children from 17 months to 4 years. Sessions began with a starting point created by observing children the previous week. Starter activities were investigative, looking round the museum,

gallery, garden and external artwork. Having had lots of opportunity to communicate, children moved on to an open-ended making activity linked into the visit theme.

One week the children investigated the metalwork sculptures on the railings along the Cliff Path close to the Museum. They looked at the beach from their vantage point, talking about what they could see and comparing it to old postcards and their own holiday experiences. Back inside the Museum children were given materials, including sand, to make their own pictures. This led to the starter activity for the following session - looking at paintings of the seaside and matching postcards to the paintings.



“ *This week, the children did sticking and gluing to make a stained glass window. They chatted all the time during this activity. Already I have seen a great change in their speech.* Tia aged 2.5, Henry aged 2.5 and Jensen aged 2

Bristol: Bristol City Museum and Hartcliffe Children's Centre

Children over four years of age took part in this project. The Museum brought some of their woodland stuffed animals collection to the Centre. Over a series of visits children explored and talked about the animals, bringing in their knowledge from a previous project about woodlands.



Circle time proved an effective way to introduce each animal and stories provided a chance to reconnect with them. Whilst some children chose to make, draw and paint, others took the project outside. Homes were carefully chosen for soft toy animals and a singing robin really intrigued children. Children and parents visited the Museum, many for the first time.

“ *Boyd spent ¾ hour on different days using singing birds outside. He noticed that if the toy robin “sang”, a real robin answered with the same song. Many other children noticed and listened carefully too. The children returned to this activity on different days, over a period of two weeks.* Practitioner observation

Our projects

Plymouth: Plymouth Museum and Lark Children's Centre

Children between 30 months and 42 months took part in this project exploring lighthouses and the sea. The project included visits to the Museum's Art Gallery and to the real lighthouse on Plymouth Hoe. In the gallery they met a seal puppet who told them stories of the sea from the paintings. They made sea sounds with instruments and created calm and rough seas using lots of exciting fabrics.

The Learning Officer visited the setting bringing nautical objects, puppets, torches, fabric, clay and sculptural materials. Children engaged in story-building and in making projected pictures together. They explored the idea of lighthouses, stormy seas and boats in danger through play and visited the library to explore books on the same theme.

“ *Once there was a mermaid. She met her friends at the bottom of the sea and they told her a secret. Then she met Eric. The mermaid swam to the shark and then the shark ate the mermaid. But then, the strong hero Ariel came and rescued the mermaid. The mermaid got out some pink glasses and had a drink and suddenly the shark was nice.* Story by children aged 4



Truro: Royal Cornwall Museum and Truro Nursery

The nursery was exploring the topic of “Nursery Rhymes”. Working with the four-year-olds, the Museum brought real and replica objects to the setting for children to explore and play with. After a hands-on investigation, children created fantastic story maps, spending 25 minutes on these, only finishing because the session ended. Leaving the objects in the nursery meant that this experience could be followed by role play, art work and story-telling, determined by children's interests.



Towards the end of the project, children visited the Museum where they met Marvin Mouse. They joined Marvin as mouse detectives and found many of the things at the Museum that they had seen or played with in the nursery.

“ *I need to put the wood on the fire. It's very cold today. It's winter. I'm going to melt this ice in the pot.* Child aged 4

Exeter: Royal Albert Memorial Museum and West Exe Children's Centre

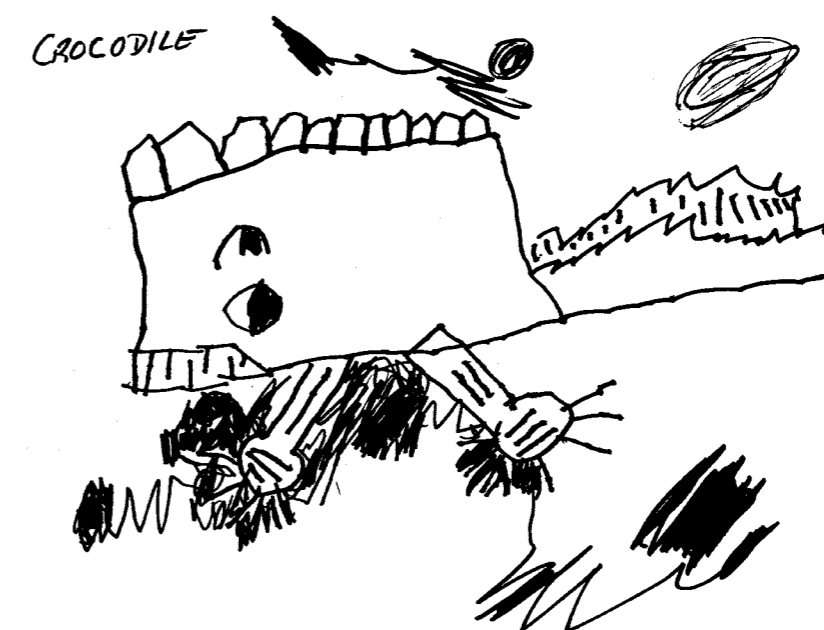
On an initial visit, the Museum Learning Officer noticed a child making imaginary potions that turned into stories. Inspired by this, Exeter's project took a theme based around cooking and food.

A range of cooking utensils including a large cauldron and a Roman pot were brought to the Centre for children to investigate. Many of the children spent longer than normal exploring the unusual objects and even usually reluctant children were keen to join in. The project included storytelling, making porridge and a visit to the Museum, where children and family adults made pots together and did, among others, the wonderful picture below.



The project ended in a participatory story-based celebration. Children helped to make Stone Soup over an open fire and family adults came and tasted the result.

“ *The whole project has been a fantastic stimulus for the children, staff and parents. Building the theme through a series of visits embedded the learning for the children in a real, experiential context. The excitement and wonder generated was a joy to behold.* Senior Teacher



In your setting

The things you can see in museums or galleries are usually more “awe inspiring” than the everyday objects around us. However, a lot of the skills needed to understand objects can be developed in your own setting, using objects loaned from a museum or things you’ve collected.

Where do I get objects?

- from your local museum or schools’ loans service (see insert in back cover)
- at an antique shop, car boot sale, on ebay, or even your loft
- ask children to bring things from home or from older relatives
- the resources page (p.21) has ideas on where to buy replicas or investigation tools

Remember to risk assess everything you give children to investigate. Name and take care of anything loaned to you by children’s families. This is a good opportunity to show children how to care for other people’s things.

What are the learning outcomes?

Objects from the past and present are an important source of information for us. Children need the opportunity to investigate them. As children notice the materials things are made of, they begin to build their understanding of the world around them. As they explore how objects work, they develop a sense of simple technology. As they hear stories about objects and make up their own, they begin to understand the connections and differences between their lives and other people’s: past and present.

Through objects children can start to develop a sense of time, find out about materials, develop observation skills and learn to sort and group things. They investigate, ask questions and build communication skills. They can make connections with their lives outside the setting and develop their creativity as they imagine what an object is, does or who it belongs to. Thinking about special objects, memories and feelings can support personal, social and emotional development.

Activities to try

Use the following activity ideas to introduce children to objects or change the way they think about them. Museum visits, or objects brought into your setting, can fire the imagination so be prepared for children to have some activity ideas of their own.

How does that work?

Learning outcomes: interested and motivated to learn • language for thinking • exploration and investigation skills

You will need: a set of safe objects to explore and things to do with them: e.g. kitchen gadgets such as whisks, egg slicers, blunt knives and forks, a range of spoons, sieves, mixing bowls, mortars and pestles and herbs, oats, lentils etc.

Younger children: observe children investigating the objects independently, e.g a range of different material and size of spoon. Give them further objects or materials depending on their interest. Tins and pans if they are keen to explore sound, bowls and safe materials like home-made playdough if they would like to explore mixing or stirring.

Older children: hand around objects at circle time to introduce children to them. Ask children what they think about each object. Listen to their ideas. What questions do children want to ask? Let them explore the objects independently and help them find out about them if asked.



Telling Tales

Learning outcomes: interested and motivated to learn • creative thinking • interacting with others • speaking confidently • responding to stories and making up their own

You will need: ‘It’s The Bear’ by Jez Alborough (or another favourite story), related props, e.g. Mum’s hat, a picnic basket, a large box to hide in, a small teddy.

Younger children: read the story, but pause at crucial moments to let children join in. Let children wear the hat, or open the picnic basket, connecting story pictures with 3D, concrete experiences. You could wear the hat or carry teddy yourself to bring Mum or Eddy to life.

Older children: what will Mum say when Eddy says he doesn’t want to go into the woods? Let different children put on the hat and pretend to be Mum. What’s in the picnic basket? Let children peep inside and pretend to see the picnic.

Take it further: Have a ‘story things’ box or even a ‘story room’. Include objects that have links to familiar stories, like the three bears’ wooden bowls or a basket that could have been Handa’s. Add things like an old wooden box, a large key, an old shawl or a large cooking pot. Encourage children to use things from the story box in their imaginary games or tell stories to each other, or to ask an adult to write for them.

In your setting

Make Connections

Learning outcomes: interested and motivated to learn • reasoning skills • creative thinking • similarities and differences • materials and their properties.

You will need: objects such as keys, natural things like fir cones and shells, unusual kitchen utensils like mortars and pestles, egg whisks, pots or plates made of different materials, e.g. plastic, enamel, wood, stainless steel.

Younger children: let children use their senses to explore the objects. Group things together yourself, explaining your reasons and watch to see if children make any connections. Give children an object and see if they can 'find another one like it'.

Older children: Encourage children to sort and group objects however they want to and in lots of different ways. What groups and connections do they make? You could offer a range of containers or special boxes to support their sorting. Put different coloured paper onto the table top to suggest sorting, or let children use it to make labels. Offer children mirrors and magnifying glasses to explore the objects.

Take it further: take photos of children's object groups and let them dictate a label. Encourage children to talk together about the groups each child made and to tell parents and carers about their thinking.

Shadow Play

Learning outcomes: creative thinking • problem solving • reasoning skills • interacting with others • materials and their properties • responding to stories and making up their own.

You will need: A darkened space, an overhead projector, white screen, board or pale wall, coloured cellophane, torches, objects that cast interesting shadows, instruments.

Younger children: Let children handle the objects, then give them torches to examine them. Use your torch to make a shadow on the wall and point it out if children don't notice.

Older children: Ask children to find out how to make their object shadows bigger and smaller. Try laying cellophane on the overhead projector surface and then adding objects. Make up stories to go with the objects and use instruments to make the story sounds.



Treasure Hunt

Learning outcomes: creative thinking • problem solving • similarities and differences

You will need: a basket or 'feely' bag, a set of small objects, a set of pictures of the objects, pegs.

Ask children to peg pictures of objects around your setting, indoors and outdoors. Ask other children to choose an object from the basket or feely bag and take it round to find the matching picture. Other hunts might include: plastic animals and pictures of animals from a museum, old and new versions of the objects, or objects themselves hidden and picture clues as to their whereabouts. Older children could use a digital camera to make the picture clues.



Imaginative Play

Learning outcomes: imaginative language • language for organising ideas • creative thinking • reflecting on experiences • interacting with others • designing and making

You will need: what you make depends on what has inspired children on their visit, for example a kitchen with old-fashioned cooking equipment, a clock maker's workshop with tools and bits of clocks, children's own art gallery with picture frames, a prehistoric cave with 'dinosaur bones' and cave painting, or animals in their habitats.

Following a museum visit, give children the chance to revisit their experiences and build on them creatively together through your role play area or outside. Involve children in choosing what to put in the area and in making props and costumes.

Mini Museum

Learning outcomes: a sense of family and identity • other people's cultures • other lives past and present • understanding memories and feelings • language skills

You will need: children's objects from home, display space and materials, your own interesting objects, e.g. something from an overseas holiday or another culture, natural things like a large shell or old things like a game or old photos.

Ask if any children could bring in an interesting thing from home to make a mini museum. Have some of your own objects ready to make up numbers. Let children display the objects, working in pairs or groups if possible. Write out any labels that children might want to add, explaining why each object is interesting.

Going to a museum or gallery



Objects and artworks in museums and galleries are usually bigger and much more exciting than anything that could come to a setting. Many museum and gallery buildings are amazing places that children find fascinating.

A visit is a great opportunity to involve parents and carers and to get children out exploring their local community.

“For many, coming to a museum environment was a new experience. It fired their imagination and developed their confidence.” Nursery creative collaborator

Getting there

Check out your nearest museum or gallery. It may be within walking distance or a short bus ride away. Even the journey itself can be exciting for children, as this journey map drawn by a 4 year-old illustrates.

If travel really is impossible, contact a local museum or gallery to see if they can come to you. The sheet at the back of this book will help you find what is nearby.



Planning the visit

The museum or gallery will want to help you. Get in touch and see what they can offer. Some museums and galleries have specific programmes for younger visitors such as hands-on experiences or storytelling. Someone may be able to help you plan your trip. Many museums are free but some may charge.

Bringing a small group can be easier and can have benefits for the children. It may also mean children can make more than one visit.

“Being a small group had benefits – it was a quality experience with individual support for each child. We were able to follow the interests of the children within the galleries due to the adult: child ratio.” Practitioner

Planning exciting things to do

Even if a museum or gallery doesn't have a specific Early Years programme or resources, there's plenty you can do to ensure that any museum or gallery will be a place of wonder and excitement for children.

Why not:

- take along torches, magnifying glasses, mirrors, even accessories like capes or hats and ask them to be explorers
- give them digital cameras to photograph the most interesting things they see
- give them photos of objects, artworks or parts of the building to find. Older children may be able to match photos of small details or unusual views of objects or paintings
- give them a trail that asks them to find the scariest thing in one area, the largest in another, the funniest, prettiest etc
- tell children the bare bones of a story that takes place in the museum or gallery. Ask them to find out more detail so you can make up the whole story together when you get back
- provide drawing equipment and let children choose what inspires them



Going to a museum or gallery

Exploring the building

Remember that children will be just as interested in the museum or gallery building as they are in the displays, so why not include a structured chance to explore. A simple map with photos of one or two things to spot in each space could help children begin to feel at home in the new environment.

You could:

- get adult helpers to ask children what they like about each new space they enter
- encourage children to move in different ways on different floor surfaces or in different spaces, e.g. tiptoe on the tiles
- use the pattern of 'going on a bear hunt' to explore the different 'rooms' and architectural features
- give children digital cameras and encourage them to take photos from unusual vantage points, e.g. balconies, looking up huge staircases
- use a story like 'Peepo' to encourage children to look around. You could even give them cut-out 'Peepo' holes to use as they explore.



Before you go

Most organisations encourage planning visits. These are often free, even if a museum or gallery charges. On your planning visit:

- ask staff if you can take photos to help with your planning, to turn into activities or to use as talking points with children ahead of the visit
- check out the facilities. Where are the toilets? Is there space to leave coats or have a snack? Are there stairs or is there a lift?
- do a risk assessment, staff there may be able to help with your paperwork
- ask if someone from the museum or gallery can come and meet the children.

Make sure you have photo permissions in place and pack a digital camera on the day.

At the museum

What to expect:

- excited faces
- time to adjust to the new setting
- lots of exploring, talking and questions
- some quieter children coming out of their shell



PHOTO BY STEVE DENNIN/THE MANCHESTER MUSEUM

It's a good idea to try to note down the things children do and say on a visit. If adult helpers are confident they could be given note pads or a camcorder. These records of the visit are great for assessing learning, informing planning and can be a useful tool in helping children reflect on and revisit their experiences.

“ Museums and galleries can offer the resources that 'spark' the imagination of young children and encourage their enthusiasm to extend their learning whilst having fun together in an exciting venue. Children's Centre Manager

Back in your setting

Give children the chance to talk about their experiences at the museum or gallery. Let them represent the things they were interested in through drawing, painting, modelling and imaginary play. Challenge children to build a museum or gallery with blocks and use small world figures as the visitors. Make maps so children can show where they went in the building. Use the internet to help any children who want to find out more about the collections.

Why not make a scrapbook to share the children's learning journey?

- put in pictures of children in the museum or gallery
- add photos children took on the visit
- write in things children remember
- send postcards home for parents'/carers' memories and then stick those in

If you have an interactive whiteboard or computer you could make a rolling presentation and share it with children and family adults who couldn't make that trip.

When you evaluate your visit, think about giving feedback to the museum or gallery. They will find it really useful in developing their services.

Involving parents

Going to a museum or gallery is a great opportunity to involve parents and carers. To get them interested in coming along, why not:

- explore intriguing objects in your setting so that children talk about them at home.
- make sure family adults come across the objects when they drop children off or pick them up
- arrange for someone from a museum or gallery to come and talk to children and family adults before asking for volunteers for a visit
- let parents and carers know what everyone will be doing on the visit. Reassure them no expert knowledge or experience is needed. Try a poster on your notice board. The page opposite is designed to be photocopied for parents and carers

“ *The visit to the Museum was a real adventure and it was wonderful to see parents and children working so closely together, harvesting the children’s language and observations.* Children’s Centre Senior Teacher

At the museum or gallery

Encourage family adults to really get involved with their group. Ask them to:

- listen to children
- encourage children to talk together
- notice what children are interested in and chat about it with them

After the visit

Make a book about your visit back in your setting and ask parents who came to contribute their thoughts about the trip and any photos.

“ *We made a museum book back in the centre. Children wrote detailed, super sentences as captions for pictures. This then sparked interest at home and many children visited the museum with their parents. It also encouraged conversation and sharing experiences.* Children’s Centre Manager

Ask the museum or gallery if they have information for families that could be sent home. Why not invite family adults to a mini museum, an exhibition of children’s art or a presentation about the visit?

Notes for parents and carers

It’s great that you’ve volunteered to come on this visit.

What should you do when you’re there?

Here are three top tips for having a successful trip.

Keep children safe

Make sure you keep an eye on children you are looking after, even if they go to the toilets or the shop.

They may want to explore and find things that interest them, so make sure you do that as a group.

Chat with children

Museums and galleries are exciting places for children.

They will be full of comments and questions.

Listen to all their ideas and chat about the things you see.

You don’t need to be a history or art expert to have something interesting to say.

Enjoy yourself

Join in with children as they explore. Get involved in their activities.

Enjoy having some special time together.



Useful resources

Stockists and suppliers

MIND STRETCHERS - www.mindstretchers.co.uk

A great source of multi-sensory materials, investigative tools, natural resources and objects.

EARLY EXCELLENCE - www.earlyexcellence.com

Ready made treasure baskets and interesting wooden objects are available by mail order.

EARLY YEARS RESOURCES - www.earlyyearsresources.co.uk

An educational supplier with a good range of investigative tools.

TOBAR - www.tobar.co.uk

Not just for Early Years but they offer a wide range of traditional toys, investigative tools and interesting objects.

TTS - www.tts-group.co.uk

Their Early Years resources are fantastic! Look also at their ICT resources and investigation tools. e.g. 'Explorer' set and 'Easi-Speak' robust MP3 recorder.

PUPPETS BY POST - www.puppetsbypost.co.uk

A fantastic range of puppets of all sizes, including animals and figures.

SCRAPSTORES - www.childrensscrapstores.co.uk

For a nationwide list of stores you could join.

Try high street stockists like **AU NATURAL**, **IKEA**, **CARGO**, **PIER** and **LAKELAND** for treasure baskets, chests and interesting objects e.g. kitchen utensils.

Resources

THE STANDARDS SITE - www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk

Interesting case studies on ways to use ICT in Early Years settings

THE SURE START SITE - www.surestart.gov.uk

Exciting case studies on developing children's creativity.

LTS SCOTLAND - www.ltscotland.org.uk

Lots of shared practice for Early Years settings, including ideas for active learning.

SIGHTLINES - www.sightlines-initiative.com

The UK contact point for the Reggio Children Network.

THE LITTLE BOOK OF... series, very practical and useful, especially on role play, prop boxes for role play and investigations. ISBN:1904187668

Lots of story books can be used to prompt exploration of a museum or gallery building. 'Katie' books e.g. **KATIE'S PICTURE SHOW** ISBN:1843623978 • **HARRY AND THE DINOSAURS AT THE MUSEUM** ISBN:0140503846 • **GOING ON A BEAR HUNT** ISBN:0744523230.

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Truro Nursery, Truro

Lark Children's Centre, Plymouth

**RENAISSANCE
SOUTH WEST**

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Renaissance is the Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) Council's widely supported and successful programme for regional museums. In the South West, £23.2m has been spent between 2006 and 2008 and the Government has committed to a further three years of investment. Renaissance in our region is focused on five Hub museums:

Bristol's City Museum and Art Gallery
Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro
Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter
Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery
Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth

The Hub museums work with MLA South West to deliver improvements based on the key themes of education, collections and exhibitions, workforce development and the wider museum community.

museums for changing lives

Additional copies, electronic and large print versions of this publication are available from:

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