

Nourish and Flourish - Activity Report

Activity Date: 4th October 2018

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<p>Activity:</p> <p>Shapes and Patterns In Nature</p> <p>Brief summary - (see observation for more detail)</p> <p><i>We drew shapes and patterns on the ground and asked the children where they recognised them. We encouraged them to draw the same shapes and patterns themselves.</i></p>	<p>Group Size: 3 groups of 3/4 children</p>	<p>Age range: 2 to 4 yrs</p>
	<p>Area of learning: Physical Development - Moving and Handling</p>	
	<p>Location: Outside in play area</p>	

<p>Initial Learning Intention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imitates drawing simple shapes such as circles and lines. • May begin to show preference for dominant hand. • Draws lines and circles using gross motor movements. • Handles tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control. 	<p>Resources and People:</p> <p>Bucket, wooden shapes, large coloured chinks, leaves, acorns and twigs, garden, internal and external environment, staff, Permaculture designers & children.</p>
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Key Vocab questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What shapes can you find? • Where can you find this shape? 	Adaption/Differentiation:
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Extension Activities:	Children for whom this activity is particularly appropriate: All children
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Observation:

We sat with the children inside for a short while and asked them where they could find shapes such as a circle or square. The box of wooden shapes was out so we integrated this as part of the activity. Before we went outside we asked them what shapes they could recognise elsewhere around them.

Once outside with the first group, F had brought a tractor with him. I asked him if he could identify any shapes on the tractor. He pointed to the bucket and said "that shape." He couldn't identify what shape the bucket was but with help he identified the wheels as a circle.

Using chalk we drew patterns and shapes on the playground. We started with a spiral pattern and asked the children where they recognised the shape from. B recognised it and said "snail". We drew a snail's body to the spiral pattern so they could identify it more clearly and recognise where they could find this in their gardens. From his facial expression A was excited about recognising the shape but lacked the confidence to say and hesitated by starting to say "sna...". With encouragement he eventually said it. He looked very happy that he had got it right! We drew more shapes: a wavy pattern and a circle. Again we asked them where they could find these shapes. S pointed to his head to indicate that it was a circle shape and followed the spiral pattern around on his feet, which made him dizzy, making him really laugh.

We encouraged them to draw the same shapes on the ground themselves. Some did this or copied alongside the patterns we had drawn.

F wanted to play with his tractor. We encouraged him to use it instead, to push it along the spiral following the pattern. This we hoped would keep

his focus. ① We also felt this was meeting the edge between him wanting to play with the tractor and engaging in the session.

To make it more interesting we encouraged them to take out leaves and acorns from the 'little bucket' and place them along the patterns so as to define the shapes but also to help with their motor skills.

We then invited them to go over to the garden and find a circle and wavy pattern. We looked at the wavy pattern on the flowers, indicating the petals. B pointed to a cosmos flower and pointed to the circular centre of the flower and said "button". Clare directed them to the circles in the small logs in the flower beds. *(These are drilled holes for children's exploration and wildlife habitat)*

When the next group came out we added another shape, a branching pattern, and drew a tree on the ground. They pointed to the red maple tree above them to indicate they were the same and then with encouragement, added more branches to the drawn tree.

D was in the last group to come out with F, A and Z again. ② She was with Sarah and looked very nervous and seemed as if she was going to cry. Sarah said D went rigid as they came out. As D looked quite nervous we asked F, as he had already been out in a previous group, to draw one of the shapes we had done before. He drew a circle. I went to D and tried to get her to draw a spiral shape but she was still too nervous. We led the children over to the garden but walked past the shapes previously drawn. We stopped and looked at them and encouraged D to put the leaves and acorns on the wavy line; the other children joined in. D seemed to relax after this and started to be much more confident.

We went over to the garden, asking D where she could find a circle shape. There were mushrooms in the bed and she pointed to them. The tops of them were round. She was very interested in these. She then went round the other beds exploring them, parting the foliage, investigating what was in amongst the flowers and other shrubs. She found black fly on the calendula flowers, and wiped them off with her fingers on my hand. She started to collect seeds from the flowers and examine them closely. She then said, "let's go and see the mushrooms again". She interacted with Iain looking at the mushrooms and became confident with him. She showed Iain the spots on her hand. Sarah indicated "this shows you are her friend".

One of the children started playing on the slide. Iain said, "oh you want to play on the slide? Have you tried rolling the acorns down the slide?" This engaged him again into exploring the acorns. The children also pointed out the different colours of the acorns, "it's green", it's sort of white". Z really concentrated on "peeling" his acorn. He was using his fingernails and rotating it. S enjoyed squeezing the acorns until they popped or pinged out of his fingers. F and S also stamped on the acorns to get them out of their shell. These actions showed they were problem solving. L gathered a lot of the acorns and 'hid' them under the slide, saying, "they are my hazelnuts." Iain explained they were acorns rather than hazelnuts. So he said it again replacing hazelnut with acorn.

When it came to the end of their time outside they wanted to take all the acorns with them. Iain negotiated with them to take less by inviting them to take them home to show mum. This was something Iain had done with W, one of the older children now at school, when making oak gall necklaces.

Staff Feedback:

" A good activity to help with their gross motor skills."

Designers' Feedback:

- Initially drawing shapes on the ground was ok but we had to draw more when the other groups came out. As the snail was already drawn in full this lost the impact it might have done when first drawn. Nonetheless the activity worked well.
- The tractors and cars were a distraction, so we incorporated them to aid learning. The boys especially were distracted.
- We felt we held the space well. The children could play, explore and create but it always came back to pattern/shape learning especially using the cars and tractors to follow the spiral and to try to keep them engaged.
- This activity was coherent and fluid.
- Activity was a good mix of play and creativity whilst helping to build on their motor skills.
- Placing acorns etc on patterns worked for a short while but didn't hold their attention for more than a couple of minutes.
- All of the children engaged with the garden, they even harvested their first apple!
- Integrating what they are doing inside with outside (as last week) acts to engage them prior to going outside.
- ② We felt this session was a good example of being able to measure ours and the garden's effect on the children, e.g D and Sarah's feedback.

Additional Learning:

Other areas of learning that naturally took place were:

- **Understanding The World - The World**

- Can talk about some of the things they have observed such as plants, animals, natural and found objects.
- Shows care and concern for living things and the environment.
- *Exploring the natural world without fear and with curiosity*

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Self Confidence and Self Awareness**

- Demonstrates sense of self as an individual, e.g, wants to do things independently, says "No" to adult.
- Separates From main carer with support and encouragement from a familiar adult
- Expresses own preferences and interests
- Can select and use activities and resources with help
- Welcomes and values praise for what they have done
- *Using the garden to not focus on self/emotions*
- *Problem solving by carrying out alternative actions or methods.*
- *Supporting peers through showing and guiding in tasks*

- **Physical Development - Moving and handling**

- *Developing motor skills*
- *Uses dexterity to handle and place tiny objects into small and defined spaces*

**Items in black text are those which appear in the EYSF guidance and which we feel have specifically been observed. Those in red text are our additional interpretation of how we feel the area of learning has been met.*

Apart from the designers' feedback - (*applying self regulation and accepting feedback*) - how has Permaculture been introduced?

This activity encouraged the exploration of finding **Patterns in nature and pattern language** which they recognise in their home, in the outside world or otherwise. Coincidentally research done prior to this session was beneficial, (*see resources link below*). **Integrating** the toys the children bring out with them, rather than putting them to one side, can be used to help them stay focused and learn. Encouraging the children to only take a little of the acorns rather than all of them - **Fair Share**

Relevant Resources:

① permies.com/t/50429/teach-permaculture
Pinterest.co.uk
Pinterest (North Devon Permaculture)

*Report information collated by Wenderlynn and Iain Bagnall
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