PR

Playful Roadmaps

Making EYLF planning simple and joyful

Complete Activity-Based

Lesson Plans

for Early Childhood Educators

EYLF Aligned · Australia · 25 Ready-to-Use Lesson Plans

Classroom-Tested | EYLF Linked | Differentiated | 25 Plans

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A Note From Playful Roadmaps

Hello, lovely educator! ■ We know your days are full — full of curious questions, busy hands, big feelings, and beautiful learning moments. That's exactly why we created this resource.

Every lesson plan in this pack has been designed with real early childhood classrooms in mind. These aren't activities created in isolation — they're grounded in intentional teaching, child-led inquiry, and the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). Each one connects to EYLF Outcomes 1–5, so your documentation stays rigorous without adding hours to your prep time.

At Playful Roadmaps, we believe planning should feel joyful, not overwhelming. We're here to be your trusted teaching companion — saving you time, sparking your creativity, and supporting your professional practice every step of the way.

Whether you're new to the profession or a seasoned educator looking for fresh provocations, we hope this resource makes you feel excited to walk into your room tomorrow. ■

■ **25 Lesson Plans**
Covering 10 categories for a rich, balanced program

■ **EYLF Aligned**
Every plan maps directly to Outcomes 1–5

■ **Time-Saving**
Open, gather materials, and begin

■ **Educator-Friendly**
Written by educators, for educators

■ **Distinctly Australian**
Designed for EYLF and Australian contexts

✏ **Differentiated**
Ideas for every age, stage, and need

Quick EYLF Outcomes Reference

Outcome 1	Children have a strong sense of identity
Outcome 2	Children are connected with and contribute to their world
Outcome 3	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
Outcome 4	Children are confident and involved learners
Outcome 5	Children are effective communicators

How to Use This Pack

Each lesson plan in this pack follows the same consistent layout so you can find what you need quickly. Here's a guide to each section:

■ Learning Intention	What children will explore and develop through this experience.
■ EYLF Outcomes	Specific outcome links to use directly in your programming documentation.
■ Materials Needed	Everything you need — most items are already in your room!
■ Setup & Process	Step-by-step instructions from room setup to activity completion.
■■■ Educator Role	Your intentional teaching strategies and how to extend children's thinking.
■ Open-Ended Questions	Ready-to-use questions that deepen inquiry and generate rich responses.
■ Differentiation	Ideas to include younger children, older children, and children with additional needs.
■■ Safety	Essential safety notes — especially detailed for excursions and incursions.
■ Reflection Prompts	Questions to guide your own professional reflection after the experience.
■ Tip & Extend Boxes	Quick educator tips and extension ideas highlighted for easy scanning.

Planning With This Resource

■ Use 2–3 plans per week across different categories for a rich, balanced program.

■ Document each experience with photos, anecdotes, and children's voice for your programming portfolio.

■ Connect plans across categories — e.g., farm excursion → vegetable wraps cooking → farm mural.

■ Visit www.playfulroadmaps.com.au for new plans released monthly, free downloads, and bonus resources.

❤■ Trust your professional instincts. Adapt, modify, and make every plan your own.

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■ Dramatic Play

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16	Ramp & Roll Physics Exploration	3–6 yrs	40 min
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■ Find more free resources and lesson plans at **www.playfulroadmaps.com.au**

01 Animal Encounter Incursion

Incursion · Age 3–5 yrs · 45–60 min

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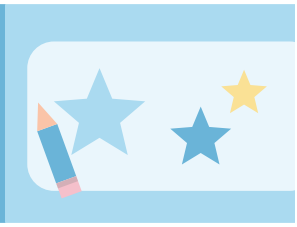

■ Learning Intention
Children develop curiosity, empathy, and respect for living creatures through hands-on interaction with a visiting animal handler.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 2 – Connected with their world
- Outcome 4 – Confident and involved learner
- Outcome 3 – Strong sense of wellbeing

■ Materials Needed
Visiting animal handler (pre-booked) · Hand sanitiser · Information cards about each animal · Child observation journals · Camera/iPad for documentation

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Arrange seating in a large circle on the mat. Ensure the animal handler has set up a safe viewing/handling area. Place hand sanitiser at the entry/exit point. Brief children beforehand about respectful behaviour.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Gather children in circle; introduce the handler and explain what to expect.
2. Handler presents each animal one at a time, sharing key facts.
3. Children ask questions using raised-hand protocol.
4. Guided gentle touching opportunity (handler decides animal by animal).
5. Children sketch or write one observation in journals.
6. Group discussion: 'What surprised you? What did you wonder?'

■■■ Educator Role
Facilitate respectful listening. Model wonder ('I wonder why its scales are so smooth!'). Support anxious children by offering observation-only option. Document learning via photos.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- What do you notice about how it moves?
- How do you think it feels when we touch it gently?
- Where does this animal live in the wild?
- What does it need to stay healthy?

■ Differentiation
Offer visual animal fact cards for EAL/D children. Allow reluctant children to observe from a distance. Challenge older children to compare two animals.

■■ Safety Considerations
Confirm animal handler holds relevant permits and insurance. Check for allergies prior. Establish 'hands in laps' rule. Ensure immediate access to first aid kit.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
Which animal generated the most curiosity? How did children demonstrate empathy? What follow-up provocations could extend this learning?

■ Educator Tip
Send a pre-visit letter home so children arrive excited and informed. Prepare three discussion starters in case the group is shy.

■ Extend the Learning
Create a class 'Animal Facts Book' where children illustrate and dictate facts about each animal visited — a beautiful literacy artefact.

02 Cultural Performers & Dance Incursion

Incursion · Age 2–5 yrs · 30–45 min

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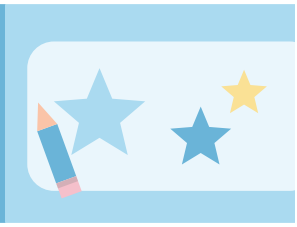

■ Learning Intention
Children appreciate cultural diversity and develop rhythmic body awareness through live cultural performance.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 1 – Identity
- Outcome 2 – Community and cultural connections
- Outcome 5 – Effective communicators

■ Materials Needed
Booked cultural performer/dance group · Open floor space · Percussion instruments (optional) · Display of cultural artefacts

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Clear the main room. Set up a dedicated performance area with a visual boundary. Arrange children in a U-shape. Display cultural artefacts at a low viewing table.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Introduce performers; locate their cultural background on a world map.
2. Performers share a short cultural story or context before performing.
3. Children watch two or three dances/songs.
4. Performers teach children a simple movement sequence.
5. Children perform the sequence together.
6. Closing circle: share one word describing how the music made them feel.

■■■ Educator Role
Participate in dance alongside children to model respect and enthusiasm. Facilitate cross-cultural questions sensitively. Extend vocabulary: rhythm, beat, tradition, costume.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- What did you see the performer do with their hands/feet?
- How did the music make your body feel?
- Do you have special dances in your family?
- Why do people have special dances?

■ Differentiation
Offer ear defenders for sensory support. Provide seated participation options. Extend: older children research the country on an iPad.

■■ Safety Considerations
Ensure no trip hazards on the floor. Brief performers about sensory sensitivities. Maintain adult supervision throughout.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
Did children make connections to their own culture? How did this experience support belonging? What provocations could sustain interest?

■ Educator Tip
Display images and artefacts from the featured culture for a week before the incursion to build anticipation and vocabulary.

■ Extend the Learning
Create a world map display where children add stickers to countries represented in their community — a living document of diversity.

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03 Local Park Nature Walk

Excursion · Age 3–5 yrs · 2–3 hours

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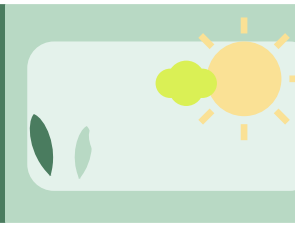

■ Learning Intention
Children develop environmental awareness and scientific observation skills through purposeful outdoor exploration.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 2 – Explore and care for natural environments
- Outcome 4 – Investigate and problem-solve
- Outcome 3 – Wellbeing through physical activity

■ Materials Needed
Excursion permission forms · First aid kit · Magnifying glasses · Nature bingo cards · Clipboards and pencils · Sunscreen, hats · Water bottles

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Complete all risk assessments and permission forms. Brief staff on supervision ratios (1:4). Prepare nature bingo cards. Conduct roll call before departure.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Review nature bingo expectations and walking safety rules.
2. Walk to park maintaining buddy system.
3. Children use magnifying glasses and complete bingo.
4. Educator-led mini lesson: compare bark textures on three trees.
5. Children collect 3 natural items to bring back.
6. Picnic snack and quiet reflection time.
7. Return: count nature sounds heard.

■■■ Educator Role
Observe and extend children's discoveries with questions. Use scientific vocabulary. Photograph learning. Support less mobile children with alternative observation tasks.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- What do you notice under that rock?
- Why do you think this leaf has holes in it?
- How many different shades of green can you find?
- What do you think lives in that tree hollow?

■ Differentiation
Pair children who need support with confident peers. Offer camera to children who prefer documenting. Simplify bingo cards for younger children.

■■ Safety Considerations
1:4 ratio. No child out of sight. Sun protection applied. Risk assessment completed. First aid trained educator present. Emergency contacts carried.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
What did children connect with most deeply? Were there unexpected teachable moments? How will collected items extend learning?

■ Educator Tip
Always conduct a pre-visit walk yourself before bringing children. Knowing where the best spots are makes for a richer, safer experience.

■ Extend the Learning
Use collected natural items to create a 'Nature Museum' display in the room with child-made labels and fact cards.

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04 Farm Visit Experience

Excursion · Age 3–6 yrs · Half day

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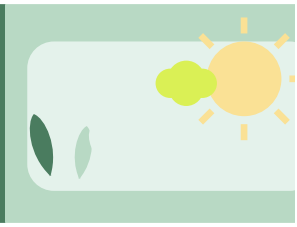

■ Learning Intention
Children connect with food origins and develop empathy for animals through immersive farm exploration.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 2 – Sense of belonging to wider community
- Outcome 4 – Active investigation
- Outcome 5 – Express ideas through talk

■ Materials Needed
Permission slips & medical forms · Bus hire confirmation · Hats/sunscreen · Change of clothes · Child-safe hand wash · Journal and pencils

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Pre-visit: read farm books in the room. Print farm animal fact cards. Confirm farm educator program. Organise seating on bus. Brief families on clothing.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Arrival orientation by farm host; establish farm rules.
2. Guided tour: meet cows, chickens, sheep, and pigs.
3. Hands-on activity: collect eggs or groom a docile animal.
4. Planting activity: each child plants one seed to take home.
5. Farm-to-table lunch using farm produce.
6. Debrief on bus: 'What surprised you today?'

■■■ Educator Role
Co-explore alongside children. Use vocabulary: habitat, livestock, harvest, compost. Support language-rich conversations. Photograph and take anecdotal notes.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- Where does your breakfast come from before it reaches the shop?
- How does the farmer look after animals every day?
- What would happen if farmers didn't exist?
- What does a seed need to grow into food?

■ Differentiation
Pre-teach key vocabulary to EAL/D children using visual cards. Offer alternative observation for children fearful of animals.

■■ Safety Considerations
Complete risk assessment for transport and farm. Confirm allergies before animal contact. Carry EpiPens. 1:4 ratio enforced.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
How did children's understanding of food change? Which moments sparked the richest language? How might this link to a cooking experience?

■ Educator Tip
Ask the farmer to keep aside a simple task for children to do independently — gathering eggs or carrying a small basket makes the experience feel real.

■ Extend the Learning
Link the farm visit to a cooking experience back at the centre using produce from that visit or the same variety of vegetables.

05

Nature Mandala Painting

Creative Arts · Age 3–5 yrs · 30–40 min

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■ Learning Intention
Children develop creative expression, fine motor control, and mindful attention through collaborative nature-inspired art.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 4 – Creative thinking
- Outcome 5 – Explore and expand on ideas
- Outcome 3 – Calm and wellbeing

■ Materials Needed
Large circular paper or wooden rounds · Watercolour paints · Flat brushes · Collected leaves and petals · Water cups · Drop sheets

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Set tables at child height. Arrange natural materials in small trays. Play soft instrumental music. Provide a visual reference of mandalas at child eye level.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Introduce mandalas: show images and explain symmetry.
2. Children choose natural items and arrange them on the paper.
3. Photograph the arrangement for reference.
4. Children paint the circular design inspired by their arrangement.
5. Allow to dry; children can add natural items with craft glue.
6. Gallery walk: children share one thing they love about their artwork.

■■■ Educator Role
Resist directing the artwork. Ask process questions. Narrate observations aloud. Offer vocabulary: symmetry, pattern, centre, repeat.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- What happens if you put your darkest colour in the middle?
- How could you make both sides look the same?
- What feeling does your mandala give you?
- What natural shapes can you see in your painting?

■ Differentiation
Offer larger brushes for developing fine motor. Extend: older children cut their own circular paper and write descriptions.

■■ Safety Considerations
Ensure paints are non-toxic. Cover tables and clothing. Supervise scissors if cutting is included.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
Did children engage with process or outcomes? What vocabulary emerged? How could this connect to cultural pattern studies?

■ Extend the Learning
Set up the provocation the evening before so children discover it as a morning invitation — that first moment of wonder is powerful.

■ Educator Tip
Research Aboriginal dot painting or Islamic geometric art with children and discuss how cultures use patterns to tell stories.

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06 Loose Parts Collage Studio

Creative Arts · Age 2–5 yrs · Open-ended

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■ Learning Intention
Children exercise creative agency and aesthetic sense through self-directed collage with open-ended materials.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 4 – Creativity and imagination
- Outcome 1 – Strong sense of identity
- Outcome 5 – Communicate through visual arts

■ Materials Needed
Fabric scraps, ribbons, buttons, beads · Card stock in various sizes · Glue sticks and craft glue · Scissors (right and left handed) · Natural items: shells, dried flowers

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Arrange materials in open trays at child height. Provide range of paper sizes. Set up a drying rack. Display examples of collage artists at eye level.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Open invitation: 'Today there are lots of materials — whatever you feel like making!'
2. Children self-select materials and begin creating.
3. Educator circulates, observing and asking questions.
4. Mid-session: invite children to share work-in-progress if willing.
5. Display all works in a temporary gallery with child-authored titles.
6. Children dictate or write a sentence about their artwork.

■■■ Educator Role
Resist suggestions. Honour process over product. Document via photos and anecdotes. Support stuck children: 'What else could you add?'

■ Open-Ended Questions
- What made you choose those colours together?
- How did you decide where to put that piece?
- What would happen if you layered that fabric over the paper?
- Does your collage tell a story?

■ Differentiation
Pre-cut shapes for developing scissor skills. Offer larger materials for toddlers. Challenge: set a constraint (only use circular shapes).

■■ Safety Considerations
Remove small parts for children under 3. Supervise glue use. Ensure scissors are child-safe.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
Whose creative confidence grew today? Were there surprising material combinations? How does this build a culture of artistic risk-taking?

■ Extend the Learning
Rotate your loose parts trays every fortnight to keep materials fresh and inspiring. New textures spark new ideas.

■ Educator Tip
Host a family 'Collage Evening' where children showcase their work and families create their own piece alongside them.

07

Our Community Mural

Creative Arts · Age 4–6 yrs · Multiple sessions

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■ Learning Intention
Children develop collaborative skills and community identity through a shared large-scale mural project.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 2 – Sense of community
- Outcome 5 – Creative communication
- Outcome 1 – Identity and belonging

■ Materials Needed
Large roll of paper (butcher's paper) · Acrylic or poster paints · Wide brushes and rollers · Community photographs · Sponges, stamps

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Roll paper across a long table. Brief children: 'We are creating a mural of our community together.' Show reference photos of the local area.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Session 1: Children brainstorm what to include (sketch ideas on small paper).
2. Session 2: Lightly pencil the layout onto the mural.
3. Sessions 3–4: Children paint assigned sections collaboratively.
4. Session 5: Add personal touches — handprints, names, symbols.
5. Final display: mount mural in shared community area.
6. Invite families to a short unveiling celebration.

■■■ Educator Role
Facilitate negotiation between children. Document the process. Prompt reflection about community connections. Model inclusive language.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- What is important about our community that we must include?
- How can we make space for everyone's ideas?
- What does community mean to you?
- How do you feel when you look at what we made together?

■ Differentiation
Assign roles based on strengths (sketcher, painter, sponge-stamper). Offer verbal contribution options for children who prefer not to paint.

■■ Safety Considerations
Use non-toxic paints. Protect clothing with smocks. Secure paper to prevent slipping.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
How did children negotiate differences? What community knowledge did they share? How did the product reinforce belonging?

■ Extend the Learning
Take a photo of the mural at each session stage and create a 'Making Of' display alongside the finished piece — process is as valuable as product.

■ Educator Tip
Write a class book: 'The Story of Our Mural' where each child contributes a page about what they added and why.

08 Muddy Marvels Mud Kitchen

Sensory Play · Age 2–5 yrs · Open-ended

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■ Learning Intention
Children develop sensory processing, language, and scientific thinking through immersive mud and water play.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 3 – Wellbeing and physical engagement
- Outcome 4 – Investigation
- Outcome 5 – Language-rich play

■ Materials Needed
Mud kitchen setup (old pots, pans, utensils) · Access to dirt/mud and water · Natural add-ins: leaves, flowers, seeds · Old muffin tins, ice trays · Smocks, gumboots · Hand-washing station

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Set up mud kitchen outdoors. Pre-mix mud to ideal consistency. Place natural ingredients in small containers. Lay a tarp for traction. Ensure hand-washing is accessible.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Introduce: 'Today we are chefs — what could you make?'
2. Children freely explore materials: mixing, pouring, moulding.
3. Educator joins as a curious customer: 'What's on the menu?'
4. Children create 'recipes' and name their dishes.
5. Document with photos and scribe children's recipe descriptions.
6. Clean-up becomes part of the learning: rinsing, scrubbing, sorting.

■■■ Educator Role
Use culinary vocabulary: simmer, whisk, ingredient, texture, temperature. Extend play by introducing new ingredients. Narrate children's actions.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- What happens to the mud when you add more water?
- How is this texture different from dry dirt?
- What ingredient does your recipe need next?
- How would you describe the way this feels?

■ Differentiation
Offer gloves for tactile sensitivity. Allow observation-only initially. Extend: older children write or dictate their recipe on a card.

■■ Safety Considerations
Ensure no toxic plants in materials. Check for sharp objects in dirt. Reinforce hand-washing before eating. Supervise water temperature.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
What language emerged? Did children lead their own narratives? How did open-ended nature support diverse learning styles?

■ Educator Tip
Change one element of the mud kitchen weekly (add coffee grounds, pebbles, or flower petals) to keep curiosity alive and spark new vocabulary.

■ Extend the Learning
Create a 'Mud Kitchen Menu Board' with child-authored recipes illustrated and displayed in the outdoor area for ongoing play.

09 Colour Mixing Sensory Bins

Sensory Play · Age 2–4 yrs · 20–30 min

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■ Learning Intention
Children explore colour theory, cause and effect, and sensory engagement through hands-on mixing with safe materials.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 4 – Curious and enthusiastic learner
- Outcome 3 – Sensory wellbeing
- Outcome 5 – Communicate discoveries

■ Materials Needed
3 clear bins with water (yellow, blue, red food dye) · White playdough portions · Pipettes, cups, spoons · White paper for colour prints · Aprons

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Fill three bins with coloured water. Prepare undyed playdough balls. Arrange pipettes and tools. Place white paper alongside. Play calming music.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Invite children to explore: 'What do you notice about these colours?'
2. Children use pipettes to mix water between bins.
3. Observe: 'What happened when you mixed yellow and blue?'
4. Add white playdough; children press coloured water into dough.
5. Encourage children to document discoveries on white paper.
6. Close: read a colour-mixing picture book together.

■■■ Educator Role
Name colours precisely. Introduce secondary colour vocabulary. Ask predictive questions. Resist correcting — let discovery lead.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- What do you predict will happen if you mix those two?
- Can you make orange? How did you do it?
- Which colour is your favourite to look at? Why?
- What would happen if we added white?

■ Differentiation
Offer syringe pipettes (easier to squeeze) for younger children. Add glitter or scented oils for additional sensory layers. Challenge: mix a specific shade.

■■ Safety Considerations
Use food-safe dye only. Supervise pipettes with toddlers. Mop spills promptly.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
Which children showed scientific thinking? Were discoveries transferred into other play areas? How can you document this as scientific inquiry?

■ Educator Tip
Set up just two bins initially — the moment children discover mixing, introduce the third bin. Drip-feeding novelty sustains engagement longer.

■ Extend the Learning
Set up a 'Colour Lab' provocation with eyedroppers on coffee filters — children make beautiful tie-dye patterns as they explore further.

10 Bug Hotel Building

Outdoor / Nature · Age 3–6 yrs · 45–60 min

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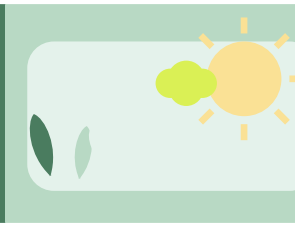

■ Learning Intention
Children develop environmental stewardship and engineering thinking by building habitats for insects.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 2 – Environmental responsibility
- Outcome 4 – STEM thinking
- Outcome 3 – Connection to nature

■ Materials Needed
Wooden crates or sturdy boxes · Bamboo tubes, pine cones, bark · Straw, string · Small trowels · Insect information cards · Magnifying glasses

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Select a quiet garden corner. Pre-collect natural materials. Display insect fact cards at child height. Prepare building frames.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Read an insect habitat book to introduce the concept.
2. Discuss: 'What do insects need to shelter and be safe?'
3. Show materials and let children plan what to put in each 'room'.
4. Children fill the hotel chambers with natural materials.
5. Place completed hotel in the garden together.
6. Set up ongoing observation: children check for visitors daily.

■■■ Educator Role
Use engineering vocabulary: structure, chamber, insulate, habitat. Facilitate cooperative decisions. Guide scientific predictions.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- What kind of insect do you think will move in first?
- Why did you choose straw for that section?
- What do insects need that we haven't included yet?
- How will we know if an insect has visited?

■ Differentiation
Pre-sort materials for sensory-cautious children. Offer visual building plan cards. Extend: children create a 'Vacancy' sign with their names.

■■ Safety Considerations
Check materials for splinters or sharp edges. Ensure bamboo tube ends are smooth. Supervise trowel use closely.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
Did children apply prior knowledge about insects? How can ongoing observation be documented? What STEM vocabulary was consolidated?

■ Extend the Learning
Take weekly photos of the bug hotel and display them in a sequence so children can observe changes and evidence of visitors over time.

■ Educator Tip
Research which Australian insects are most common in your region and create a class 'Wanted: Tenants!' poster with illustrated profiles.

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11 Puddle & Rain Exploration

Outdoor / Nature · Age 2–5 yrs · 30 min

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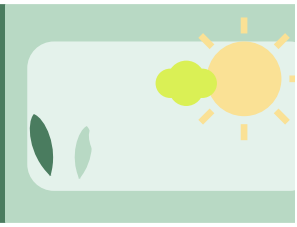

■ Learning Intention
Children develop physical confidence and weather literacy through intentional rainy-day outdoor play.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 3 – Physical wellbeing and challenge
- Outcome 4 – Curiosity about the natural world
- Outcome 2 – Environmental connection

■ Materials Needed
Gumboots and waterproof jackets · Waterproof measuring containers · White sheets of paper in ziplock bags · Chalk · Camera for documentation

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Choose a light-rain day. Notify families in advance (dress code). Set out measuring containers. Mark puddle circumferences with chalk before going out.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Gather children; discuss rain: 'Where does it come from?'
2. Children dress in rain gear together (independence practice).
3. Outdoor exploration: jumping puddles, catching rain, measuring puddle depth.
4. Place white paper in bags flat on ground: watch raindrops create patterns.
5. Children record puddle sizes; compare measurements.
6. Return inside; warm drink and reflection time.

■■■ Educator Role
Model delight in the rain. Use weather and measurement vocabulary. Challenge assumptions. Ensure everyone participates at their own comfort level.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- How deep do you think the puddle is? Let's measure!
- What happens to the puddle if the sun comes out?
- Where do you think the rain comes from?
- How does your body feel running through the rain?

■ Differentiation
Allow sensory-sensitive children to observe from under an umbrella. Offer towels for grounding when returning inside. Extend: graph puddle measurements across multiple events.

■■ Safety Considerations
Avoid lightning. Ensure surface is non-slippery (grass preferred). Change wet clothing promptly.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
How did outdoor confidence grow? Were there children who overcame hesitation? How does risk-rich outdoor play support resilience?

■ Extend the Learning
Create a 'Rain Day Kit' box that children can access independently — gumboots, raincoats, and measuring tools — so rainy days become exciting, not disruptive.

■ Educator Tip
Read 'Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs' or 'The Snowy Day' and create a class story: 'What if it rained _____ at our kindy?'

12 Vet Clinic Dramatic Play

Dramatic Play · Age 3–5 yrs · Open-ended

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■ Learning Intention
Children develop empathy, language, and collaborative role play through a vet clinic scenario.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 5 – Language and literacy
- Outcome 1 – Agency and identity
- Outcome 2 – Community roles

■ Materials Needed
Stuffed toy animals · Bandages, toy stethoscope · Appointment cards, clipboards · Prescription pad · Lab coats (adult shirts) · Animal X-rays (printed)

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Set up a reception desk, waiting room, and examination table. Create environmental print: 'Welcome to the Animal Clinic'. Laminate appointment cards.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Educator models opening the clinic and introduces roles.
2. Children self-assign roles: vet, nurse, receptionist, pet owner.
3. Play unfolds organically — educator steps in only to extend.
4. Introduce a 'problem': an animal arrives with a broken wing.
5. Children collaborate on a treatment plan.
6. Brief group meeting to debrief roles and experiences.

■■■ Educator Role
Participate as a customer to model language. Introduce real medical vocabulary. Add literacy provocations: 'Can you write the animal's name on the form?'

■ Open-Ended Questions
- What does your patient need today?
- How do you know if an animal is feeling sick?
- What would a real vet need to learn at university?
- How can we make the waiting room more comfortable?

■ Differentiation
Offer picture-supported forms for developing literacy. Simplify roles for toddlers. Extend: older children write diagnosis cards.

■■ Safety Considerations
Ensure no sharp toy components. Supervise bandage play. Wash hands after touching shared props.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
What health literacy emerged? Which children led the narrative? How might you update props to respond to children's interests?

■ Educator Tip
Invite a real vet or vet nurse in for a brief Q&A; session before setting up the dramatic play space — it supercharges the authenticity.

■ Extend the Learning
Add a 'Pet Adoption Centre' corner to the scenario where children create adoption profiles for toy animals, integrating literacy and empathy.

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13 Construction Site Role Play

Dramatic Play · Age 3–6 yrs · Open-ended

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■ Learning Intention
Children explore community roles, mathematical thinking, and collaborative problem-solving through construction play.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 4 – Mathematical thinking
- Outcome 2 – Community connections
- Outcome 5 – Communication

■ Materials Needed
Hard hats and high-vis vests · Large blocks and tubes · Blueprints · Rulers, tape measures · Clipboards and pencils · Toy vehicles · Construction signs

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Designate a large space. Set out blocks, tools, and props. Post construction signs. Place blueprints at the planning table. Add trucks and diggers.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Show children a real construction photo and discuss jobs on site.
2. Assign or allow self-selection of roles: site manager, builder, crane operator.
3. Children consult blueprints and begin building.
4. Introduce a challenge: 'The bridge needs to hold this block.'
5. Test, redesign, and rebuild.
6. Photograph completed structures; children narrate what they built.

■■■ Educator Role
Use mathematics vocabulary: measurement, balance, estimate. Prompt engineering thinking. Support children in reading and creating blueprints.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- How tall is your building? Let's measure!
- Which design is stronger — wide base or narrow base?
- What job does the site manager have?
- What would happen if we changed the shape of the foundation?

■ Differentiation
Offer pre-drawn blueprint templates for structure seekers. Provide smaller blocks for developing fine motor. Extend: older children calculate blocks needed.

■■ Safety Considerations
Establish block height limits. Hard hats worn appropriately. Ensure vehicle toys have no sharp edges.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
What mathematical language was used spontaneously? Which challenges led to persistence? How did children support each other's ideas?

■ Educator Tip
Add a 'Project Notice Board' to the space where children can pin their blueprints and building updates — it authentically models real worksite documentation.

■ Extend the Learning
Visit a real construction site nearby (with appropriate safety arrangements) or invite a builder parent in to share what they do.

14

Instrument Exploration & Sound Maps

Music & Movement · Age 3–5 yrs · 30 min

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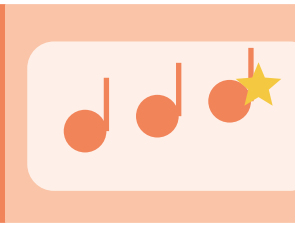

■ Learning Intention
Children develop musical awareness and creative expression through exploration of diverse instruments and sound-mapping.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 5 – Creative arts and music
- Outcome 4 – Investigation and curiosity
- Outcome 3 – Wellbeing through creative expression

■ Materials Needed
Range of instruments: drums, maracas, xylophone, finger cymbals, rain stick · Paper and crayons for sound maps · Listening scarves · Recording device (optional)

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Arrange instruments in a circle on a mat. Place paper and crayons at each spot. Hang visual 'sound vocabulary' chart: loud, soft, fast, slow, high, low.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Silent listening: close eyes and identify three sounds in the room.
2. Introduce each instrument; children predict its sound before playing.
3. Free exploration: each child plays one instrument for 60 seconds.
4. Create a 'sound map': draw lines or shapes to represent what you hear.
5. Small groups create a 30-second composition and perform it.
6. Reflect: which instrument was your favourite and why?

■■■ Educator Role
Model sound mapping with your own drawing. Use musical vocabulary. Facilitate turn-taking. Record children's compositions for playback.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- How does this sound make your body feel?
- Can you find a soft sound on the drum?
- What colour would you choose for that sound?
- How could we make our composition tell a story?

■ Differentiation
Provide adaptive instruments for fine motor challenges. Offer quieter instruments for sensory-sensitive children. Extend: older children notate their composition with symbols.

■■ Safety Considerations
Ensure instruments have no sharp edges or loose parts. Manage volume for auditory sensitivity. Supervise small instrument pieces with toddlers.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
Which children surprised you with musical creativity? What vocabulary was consolidated? How can music be woven into other learning areas?

■ Extend the Learning
Record children's compositions and play them back at group time — hearing themselves perform is one of the most powerfully motivating experiences for young children.

■ Educator Tip
Create a class 'Sound Library' where children record 10 different sounds from around the service that others can guess with their eyes closed.

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15

Freeze Dance & Feelings

Music & Movement · Age 2–5 yrs · 20 min

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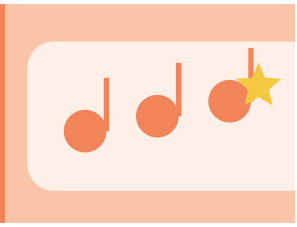

■ Learning Intention
Children build emotional literacy and self-regulation through music-connected movement and freeze games.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 3 – Self-regulation and emotional expression
- Outcome 1 – Identity and confidence
- Outcome 5 – Communication through movement

■ Materials Needed
Bluetooth speaker · Diverse music playlist (fast, slow, happy, calm, dramatic) · Feelings cards with images · Open floor space

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Clear the floor. Test music playlist. Prepare feelings cards face-down in a pile. Mark a 'home spot' for each child with a dot.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Warm up with slow stretching to calm music.
2. Play freeze dance: music plays → children dance freely → music stops → freeze.
3. Introduce feelings: flip a feelings card when music stops — children freeze in that emotion.
4. Transition to slow music: children move how the music makes them feel.
5. Cool down: children lie on the floor and breathe to a slow song.
6. Share: 'Which feeling was easiest/hardest to show in your body?'

■■■ Educator Role
Participate enthusiastically. Name emotions and validate all expressions. Support children who need a peer model. Narrate what you see: 'I can see you're showing surprise!'

■ Open-Ended Questions
- What does happy look like in your body?
- How is your dancing different when music is slow vs fast?
- What feeling did the last song give you?
- Can you show me shy without any words?

■ Differentiation
Offer a seated dance option. Simplify feeling vocabulary for toddlers (happy/sad/surprised). Extend: older children suggest a feeling for the group to mime.

■■ Safety Considerations
Ensure ample space between children. Remind children of safe personal space. Avoid music over 85dB.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
Which emotions were children most/least comfortable expressing? How might this support a child experiencing emotional challenges?

■ Extend the Learning
Build a dedicated playlist that moves from fast/exciting to slow/calm — the musical arc itself teaches self-regulation without a word being said.

■ Educator Tip
Create a 'Feelings Wall' where children add a photo of themselves (or draw their face) under a feeling each morning as part of the arrival routine.

16

Ramp & Roll Physics Exploration

STEM · Age 3–6 yrs · 40 min

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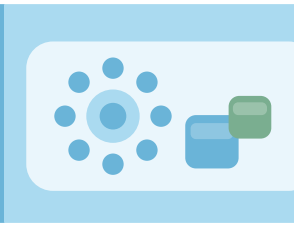

■ Learning Intention
Children develop scientific inquiry and hypothesis-making through ramp investigation with varied materials.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 4 – STEM investigation and prediction
- Outcome 5 – Document and communicate findings
- Outcome 4 – Persistence and problem solving

■ Materials Needed
Ramps (wooden boards, cardboard tubes cut in half) · Variety of rolling objects: balls, cars, cylinders · Rulers and tape measures · Recording sheets · Blocks for propping ramps

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Set up 3 ramp stations at different angles. Place a variety of objects at each. Provide recording sheets with a 'Predict → Test → Discover' format.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Hook question: 'Which ball do you think will roll the furthest?'
2. Children predict and record on sheets.
3. Test each object; measure and mark how far it travels.
4. Change one variable: raise the ramp height. Test again.
5. Compare results: which object won at each angle?
6. Group share: present findings like scientists.

■■■ Educator Role
Model scientific language: variable, hypothesis, result, compare. Ask predictive questions. Facilitate measurement. Avoid giving answers — let discovery lead.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- What do you predict will happen if the ramp is steeper?
- Why do you think the big ball went further?
- What is the one thing we changed between tests?
- If you were a scientist, how would you record this?

■ Differentiation
Simplify recording for younger children (draw the winner). Extend: older children graph results. Add challenge: 'Make the car go exactly 50cm.'

■■ Safety Considerations
Ensure ramps are stable. Direct balls away from other children. Tape ramp edges if sharp cardboard is used.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
Did children apply understanding of gravity and speed? Who showed persistence when results were unexpected? How can this connect to block play?

■ Educator Tip
Always document the 'fail' as much as the success. Children who see you celebrate mistakes develop a growth mindset that underpins all STEM learning.

■ Extend the Learning
Link to a maths investigation: 'If you rolled 5 balls down the ramp, how far would the total distance be?' Introduction to addition through science.

17

Shadow Tracing & Sun Investigation

STEM · Age 3–6 yrs · All-day

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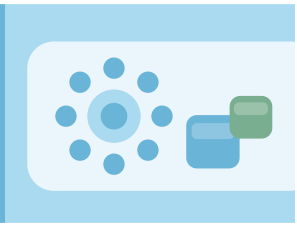

■ Learning Intention
Children investigate light, shadow, and the movement of the sun through hands-on outdoor inquiry.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 4 – Scientific thinking
- Outcome 2 – Connection with natural world
- Outcome 5 – Represent discoveries

■ Materials Needed
Chalk · Outdoor paved area with sun access · Objects to cast shadows: sticks, toys, self · Clock or timer · Camera for documentation

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Choose a sunny day. Mark observation times: 9am, 11am, 1pm. Explain this is an 'all day investigation.'

Step-by-step Process:
1. Morning session: each child stands in sun; partner traces their shadow in chalk.
2. Write child's name and time inside the shadow.
3. Mid-morning: visit the shadow and notice any changes.
4. Midday: trace shadow again. Compare length and direction.
5. Afternoon: final trace and compare all three.
6. Debrief: 'What did you notice? Why do you think it changed?'

■■■ Educator Role
Introduce concepts: light source, direction, length. Guide comparison. Photograph each time point. Scribe children's explanations for documentation.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- Which shadow was the longest? When was that?
- If you turned around, what would happen to your shadow?
- Where do you think the shadow goes at night?
- Why do you think it changed direction?

■ Differentiation
Extend: older children measure shadow lengths and graph changes. Offer indoor torch shadow play for children who cannot be outdoors.

■■ Safety Considerations
Apply sunscreen. Limit outdoor time during peak UV. Provide hats. Ensure children face away from the sun.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
What prior knowledge did children bring about the sun? Which explanations showed developing scientific understanding?

■ Educator Tip
Take a photograph of the chalk outlines at each time point. The visual time-lapse is one of the most concrete ways to make the Earth's movement visible to children.

■ Extend the Learning
Create a class book: 'The Day Our Shadows Changed' where each child illustrates and dictates what happened to their shadow and why they think it moved.

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18 Water Engineering: Build a Boat

STEM · Age 4–6 yrs · 40–50 min

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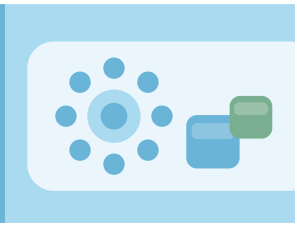

■ Learning Intention
Children apply engineering design processes and buoyancy concepts by designing and testing miniature boats.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 4 – Engineering and design thinking
- Outcome 4 – Persistence and critical thinking
- Outcome 5 – Explain and represent ideas

■ Materials Needed
Water tray or sink · Materials: cardboard, foil, corks, straws, tape, rubber bands · Small weights (coins, counters) · Design recording sheets · Camera for documentation

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Set up a water tray with 10–15cm of water. Lay out all materials in an 'engineering workshop' arrangement. Post the challenge: 'Design a boat that floats AND holds the most cargo!'

Step-by-step Process:
1. Introduce challenge and discuss what makes things float/sink.
2. Children sketch their boat design on recording sheet.
3. Build phase: children construct boats from available materials.
4. Test 1: does it float? Adjust if needed.
5. Test 2: load with cargo (coins/counters) — how many can it hold?
6. Debrief: share designs, results, and what they would change.

■■■ Educator Role
Facilitate using engineering language: design, test, improve, material, waterproof. Encourage persistence when boats sink. Prompt redesign thinking.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- Why do you think that material will float?
- What will you change if it sinks on the first test?
- How could you make it hold more weight?
- What real boats use similar designs?

■ Differentiation
Provide pre-cut base pieces for children who need support. Extend: older children calculate and graph total cargo per design.

■■ Safety Considerations
Supervise water depth. Dry floors promptly. Ensure coins used as weights are large enough to not be swallowed.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
How did children respond to failure? What persistence strategies emerged? Which design principles did children articulate independently?

■ Educator Tip
Have a 'Design Wall' where children pin their sketches before building — the act of planning on paper first develops metacognitive skills that transfer across all learning.

■ Extend the Learning
Watch a short clip of real engineering design tests (e.g., bridge load testing) and discuss: 'How is this like what we did today?'

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19

Rainbow Vegetable Wraps

Cooking · Age 3–6 yrs · 45 min

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■ Learning Intention
Children develop nutrition literacy, fine motor skills, and independence through preparing a healthy colourful meal.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 3 – Health and nutrition knowledge
- Outcome 4 – Mathematical thinking
- Outcome 1 – Confidence and agency

■ Materials Needed
Wholegrain wraps · Vegetables: carrot (grated), red capsicum, cucumber, avocado, purple cabbage, spinach · Hummus · Plastic knives · Graters (supervised) · Plates, napkins

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Check all allergies. Set up a wash station. Lay out one cutting board and safe knife per child. Arrange vegetables in rainbow order. Post a visual recipe card at child height.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Wash hands thoroughly — make it a fun procedure!
2. Discuss the rainbow and which vegetables match each colour.
3. Children spread hummus on their wrap.
4. Children choose and place at least 4 vegetable colours on their wrap.
5. Educator demonstrates safe cutting; children cut soft vegetables.
6. Roll, secure, and eat together.

■■■ Educator Role
Use mathematical vocabulary: half, whole, more, less, equal. Discuss nutrition: different colours = different vitamins. Model safe food preparation. Foster independence.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- Which colour vegetable is missing from your rainbow?
- What does your body get from eating green vegetables?
- How many pieces did you cut? Can you count them?
- How does this taste different from a sandwich?

■ Differentiation
Offer pre-cut vegetables for developing cutting skills. Support EAL/D children with visual recipe cards in home languages.

■■ Safety Considerations
Check all allergies prior. Use only safety knives. Educator handles toothpicks exclusively. Ensure clean preparation surfaces.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
Which vegetables were new to children? Did this change their willingness to try new foods? How might this connect to a garden-to-table project?

■ Extend the Learning
Photograph each child's completed wrap and print it for a display: 'Our Rainbow Creations!' — families love seeing cooking moments and it validates children's independence.

■ Educator Tip
Start a simple class vegetable garden. Grow spinach or capsicum from seed, and use the produce in a future cooking experience for a true farm-to-table connection.

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20

Banana Oat Cookies (No Bake)

Cooking · Age 2–5 yrs · 30 min

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■ Learning Intention
Children experience the joy of cooking and develop measurement concepts through a simple wholesome recipe.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 4 – Measuring and sequencing
- Outcome 1 – Self-help and independence
- Outcome 3 – Healthy food choices

■ Materials Needed
2 ripe bananas · 1 cup rolled oats · Optional add-ins: raisins, coconut, choc chips · Mixing bowls · Forks, measuring cups and spoons · Baking paper, tray

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Check allergies. Set up individual mixing stations. Pre-peel bananas. Lay out measured ingredient portions. Post visual recipe with pictures.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Wash hands. Introduce recipe and discuss each ingredient.
2. Children mash banana with a fork — great fine motor workout!
3. Measure and pour oats into the banana mash.
4. Stir and add chosen mix-ins.
5. Scoop mixture onto baking paper and shape into cookies.
6. Refrigerate for 30 min. Eat at snack time and celebrate!

■■■ Educator Role
Use measurement language: full, half, more, less, equal. Narrate children's steps. Celebrate each child's contribution. Make the process visible to families via photos.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- How many scoops of oats did we add?
- What will happen to the bananas when we mash them?
- Why do we mix the ingredients together?
- How does your mix-in make the cookie taste different?

■ Differentiation
Pre-mash banana for limited hand strength. Offer visual timer for the refrigeration wait. Extend: older children double the recipe.

■■ Safety Considerations
Check all allergies. No baking (no oven required). Refrigerate immediately. Wash hands before and after.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
What mathematical language was used? Did children demonstrate sequencing ability? How does cooking connect to literacy (reading a recipe) and science (observing changes)?

■ Extend the Learning
Let children personalise their cookies with their own mix-in combination and give it a name — 'Cooper's Coconut Crunch Cookie' — ownership drives pride and appetite!

■ Educator Tip
Create a class recipe card for these cookies and send it home with each child. It becomes a treasured family moment when they make it at home.

21 Playdough Fine Motor Station

Fine Motor · Age 2–5 yrs · Open-ended

"Making EYLF planning simple and joyful"

■ Learning Intention
Children develop hand strength, finger dexterity, and creativity through purposeful playdough experiences.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 3 – Wellbeing and physical development
- Outcome 4 – Creativity and imagination
- Outcome 5 – Express ideas through making

■ Materials Needed
Homemade scented playdough (multiple colours) · Tools: rolling pins, cutters, stamps, toothpicks · Natural loose parts: seeds, sticks, shells · Letter and number stamps · Laminated provocation cards

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Refresh playdough weekly with a new scent. Change provocation cards weekly ('Make a garden', 'Make the letter of your name', 'Create a dinosaur'). Set up at a dedicated table.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Set up with minimal direction — let the provocation card invite play.
2. Children self-select a provocation or invent their own.
3. Educator joins briefly to model a technique if needed.
4. Mid-session: encourage children to share what they made.
5. End: children return tools and playdough to containers.
6. Document interesting creations with photos and child's words.

■■■ Educator Role
Resist the urge to 'show' — model alongside. Use fine motor vocabulary: pinch, roll, flatten, squeeze, coil, stretch. Note which children exhibit stronger vs developing grip.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- How did you make it so smooth?
- What's the hardest shape to make? Why?
- Can you make it longer without breaking it?
- What would this look like if it was real?

■ Differentiation
Soften playdough further for reduced hand strength. Offer larger tools for developing pincer grip. Extend: school-ready children form letters and numbers.

■■ Safety Considerations
Ensure playdough is non-toxic. Check toothpick use closely. Clean station between sessions.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
Which children showed increased hand strength over time? Does playdough play correlate with improved writing grip? How are provocation cards inspiring vocabulary?

■ Educator Tip
Involve children in making the playdough! The sensory experience of mixing, kneading, and adding colour is as valuable as the play that follows.

■ Extend the Learning
Introduce natural dyes for your playdough (turmeric for yellow, beetroot for pink, spinach for green) and create a science conversation about colour from plants.

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22 Threading & Weaving Station

Fine Motor · Age 3–6 yrs · 20–30 min

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■ Learning Intention
Children develop bilateral coordination, concentration, and pattern recognition through threading and weaving.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 3 – Physical development and coordination
- Outcome 4 – Pattern and sequence
- Outcome 5 – Creative thinking

■ Materials Needed
Large blunt needles or lacing cards · Coloured yarn and ribbon · Wooden beads (age-appropriate size) · Weaving frames (old picture frames with nails) · Pattern cards showing bead sequences

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Pre-thread needles for younger children. Set up lacing cards at one end, weaving frames at the other. Provide pattern cards that increase in complexity.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Introduce threading using a large lacing card as a whole-group demo.
2. Children choose their activity: beading, lacing, or weaving.
3. Educator provides individual support as needed.
4. Encourage pattern-making: 'red, blue, red, blue — what comes next?'
5. Children create a bracelet or wall weaving to keep.
6. Share and describe pattern choices to the group.

■■■ Educator Role
Name patterns explicitly. Model perseverance when threading is tricky. Praise effort and precision. Photograph developing fine motor skills for portfolios.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- What pattern are you making? Can you describe it?
- How many beads did you use? Can you count them?
- What would happen if you changed the colour order?
- How does the weaving feel — smooth or bumpy?

■ Differentiation
Use chunky beads for younger children. Offer pre-threaded needles for developing children. Extend: older children follow complex pattern cards or design their own.

■■ Safety Considerations
Ensure beads are too large to swallow (for under-3s, use very large beads only). Supervise needle use closely. Check yarn isn't tangling around fingers.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
Which children demonstrated persistence? How did pattern recognition grow? Are there connections to mathematical sequencing you can document?

✏■ Educator Tip
Display your weaving frames on the wall as a 'living artwork' that children add to over weeks. The communal piece becomes a source of immense pride.

■ Extend the Learning
Invite a family member who knits, crochets, or weaves to come in and demonstrate their craft — a beautiful way to honour community skills and cultural practices.

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23 Mark Making Exploration Trays

Fine Motor · Age 18m–4 yrs · Open-ended

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■ Learning Intention
Children develop early writing movements and sensory awareness through a variety of mark-making experiences.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 5 – Early literacy and emergent writing
- Outcome 3 – Sensory wellbeing
- Outcome 4 – Creative investigation

■ Materials Needed
Trays of: sand, flour, shaving cream, finger paint, kinetic sand · Sticks, fingers, stylus, cotton buds for mark-making · Light boxes (optional) · Letter cards as visual reference

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Set up 4 trays with different media. Place a variety of mark-making tools beside each. Set letter and shape cards nearby. Ensure aprons are available.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Open invitation: 'Today you can make marks in lots of different ways!'
2. Children move between trays at their own pace.
3. Educator models making a letter, shape, or line to spark interest.
4. Narrate children's marks: 'You made a long line — what else can you make?'
5. Encourage children to trace their name or draw a picture.
6. Photograph marks before trays are smoothed for next child.

■■■ Educator Role
Use literacy vocabulary: line, curve, letter, symbol, word. Acknowledge all marks as meaningful. For older children, ask them to 'read' their marks.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- Can you make a mark that goes all the way across?
- What is the first letter of your name? Can you find it?
- Which tray feels the best on your fingers?
- What story does your mark tell?

■ Differentiation
Offer light boxes for visual support. Use toothbrush-grip tools for children with reduced hand control. Extend: school-ready children practise pre-handwriting patterns.

■■ Safety Considerations
Use food-safe materials for toddlers (flour, sand). Avoid shaving cream for sensitive skin. Supervise all tray play to prevent ingestion.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
What stage of mark-making is each child at? How do these experiences lay the groundwork for writing? How will you share these with families as literacy documentation?

═■ Educator Tip
Set up mark making trays as the first activity children encounter in the morning — they are calming, self-directed, and a beautiful window into each child's development.

■ Extend the Learning
Create a 'Mark Making Museum' display where children's tray marks are photographed and printed with captions like: 'Aisha made circles. She said it was the moon.'

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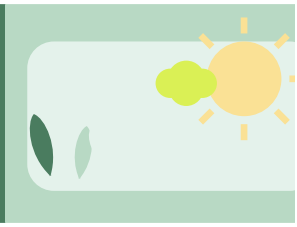
24 Loose Parts Sculpture Park

Outdoor / Nature · Age 3–6 yrs · 40–60 min

"Making EYLF planning simple and joyful"



■ Learning Intention
Children develop creative thinking, spatial reasoning, and connection to the natural environment through open-ended outdoor making.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 4 – Creative thinking and problem solving
- Outcome 2 – Environmental connection
- Outcome 1 – Agency and identity through making

■ Materials Needed
Large loose parts: logs, planks, tyres, crates, rocks, rope · Smaller natural items: pinecones, sticks, bark, seed pods · Chalk and spray bottles

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Designate a large outdoor area as a 'Sculpture Park'. Arrange loose parts in accessible piles. Brief children on safety rules: no climbing over 1m without educator.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Introduce: 'Today this space is a sculpture park — you are the artists!'
2. Children explore materials freely and begin constructing.
3. Educator observes, asking questions and photographing.
4. Mid-session provocation: 'Can you build something as tall as you?'
5. Children present their sculptures with a title and description.
6. Leave sculptures up for 2–3 days for ongoing iteration.

■■■ Educator Role
Champion risk-friendly outdoor play. Model awe and wonder. Use spatial vocabulary: above, beneath, balanced, unstable, heavy, light. Facilitate peer collaboration.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- What inspired the design of your sculpture?
- How did you decide where to put the heaviest piece?
- What happens if you remove that bottom log?
- If your sculpture could move, what would it do?

■ Differentiation
Offer lighter materials to children with physical limitations. Provide a collaborative space for team players. Extend: children sketch their sculpture from different angles.

■■ Safety Considerations
Thorough risk assessment of all loose parts (no splinters, nails, or rot). Establish height limits. One educator per 6 children. Remove damaged materials promptly.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
How did risk-tolerance grow across the session? Which decisions showed spatial intelligence? How can you incorporate this as a regular, evolving provocation?

■ Extend the Learning
Resist the urge to keep loose parts too tidy. A slight 'organised chaos' in how materials are arranged mirrors the complexity of natural environments and invites more creative thinking.

■ Educator Tip
Research the work of sculptor Andy Goldsworthy with children and create a class nature sculpture that uses only found natural materials — inspired by real contemporary art!

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Frozen Discovery Excavation

Sensory Play · Age 2–5 yrs · Open-ended

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■ Learning Intention
Children explore states of matter, develop scientific thinking, and build sensory curiosity through a frozen excavation activity.

■ EYLF Outcomes
- Outcome 4 – Scientific inquiry and discovery
- Outcome 3 – Sensory regulation
- Outcome 5 – Communicate observations

■ Materials Needed
Large ice blocks (prepared overnight with small toys/items frozen inside) · Spray bottles with warm water, droppers with salt water · Tools: toy mallets, spoons · Towels and aprons · Recording sheets

■ Setup & Process

Setup: Prepare ice blocks 24 hours ahead by filling containers with water, placing items inside, and freezing. Set up excavation station outdoors or on a waterproof mat.

Step-by-step Process:
1. Present ice blocks: 'Something is trapped inside! How can we set it free?'
2. Children predict what's inside and how they will excavate.
3. Children use tools and water to melt/chip away the ice.
4. Document the process: 'What's happening to the ice?'
5. Once items are freed, children describe how they changed.
6. Observe melt water: measure volume, feel temperature changes.

■■■ Educator Role
Use scientific vocabulary: freeze, melt, solid, liquid, temperature, dissolve. Ask predictive questions. Manage frustration by normalising slow progress as 'the experiment working'.

■ Open-Ended Questions
- What do you predict will happen if we pour warm water on it?
- Does salt make it melt faster than plain water?
- How does the ice feel now compared to when we started?
- If we left it in the sun, what would happen?

■ Differentiation
Offer gloves for sensory-sensitive children. Pre-crack ice for limited hand strength. Extend: older children conduct a hypothesis test comparing salt vs warm water melt rate.

■■ Safety Considerations
Ensure no sharp ice edges. Supervise hammer tools closely. Mop water spills promptly. Ensure frozen items are too large to swallow.

■ Educator Reflection Prompts
Which scientific concepts were naturally articulated by children? How did persistence develop as excavation progressed? What freeze-and-discover provocations could you set up next?

■ Educator Tip
Freeze items that are relevant to your current theme — dinosaur figurines for a dinosaur study, Australian animals for a nature study, letters for literacy — the possibilities are endless!

■ Extend the Learning
After the ice melts, measure the water collected. Compare morning vs afternoon measurements. Introduce evaporation: 'What happened to the water that was here this morning?'

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These activities are just the beginning — we're here with you, every step of the way.

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