

Active World Minibeast Mat



Spring in the Woods

Creep through the woodland and discover plants, animals, insects and birds in their natural habitats.

Build up the landscape using our Bark Chippings, Mopani Wood, Pea Gravel and stones for lots of small world wet and dry sensory play.

Fits snugly into our standard Active World Tray.

Aims and Objectives:

- Children learn best when they are actively involved, enjoying what they are doing. Active Worlds enable children to experience learning through a multi-sensory approach. They provide learning opportunities for a wide range of curriculum areas, where children can freely explore materials within the confines of the tuff spot.
- There will be elements of consolidation, exploration, investigation, and fun in every activity.
- All the activities can be free play, where the children explore independently, or adult directed, where children are given specific tasks to undertake.

Links with Foundation Stage:

- Links can be made with every area of the Foundation Stage. We have merely highlighted those links with the area Knowledge and Understanding of the World. Others are included generally in the next section.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World:

Can investigate objects and materials by using all their senses as appropriate.

E.g. Using peat, twigs, moss, leaves or artificial grass to explore textures and properties. Can examine objects and living things to find out more about them

E.g. use real compost, twigs, leaves in the woodland scene, then examine them closely with a magnifying lens; see if any minibeasts are present on twigs or bark that is used. Can find out about, and identify some features of living things, objects and events they observe.

E.g. Can experience a themed play area and use the appropriate vocabulary – e.g., geographical terms (wood, glade, pond etc.); sorting animals into family groups with appropriate names; Can look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change. E.g. Vocabulary related to seasons, growth, life cycles; different species of plants and animals.

E.g. looking at patterning in nature – butterfly wings, veins in leaves, different types of leaves, textures and patterns in bark or wood;

Can ask questions about why things happen and how things work.

Why do we need to put food out on bird tables? What has happened to the leaves that fell off the trees in the autumn? What happens to the pond if it gets filled up with rubbish?

Why do some things float on the pond, and others sink?

Can build and construct with a wide range of objects, selecting appropriate resources and adapting their work where necessary.

E.g. Build a beehive for the bees to live in. Make a bird table from scraps of wood, or construction sets.

Can select tools and techniques they need to shape, assemble and join the materials they are using.

E.g. Make nests from tissue paper, grass, moss, twigs etc. for the birds.

Can observe, find out about and identify features in the place they live and the natural world.

E.g. The children discuss the woodland scene they have created and played with, and see how much, if any corresponds to their own local environment.

Can find out about their environment, and talk about the features they like and dislike.

E.g. If they do not have any woodland nearby, use this scene as a prompt to discuss whether or not they would like to have woods or a pond nearby. Why would they like it? If they have some nearby but it has been vandalised, what could they do to clear it up? How could they make their own nature area in their school grounds? How could they encourage birds to come into their playground? Ideas for use and links with National Curriculum areas:

Mathematics: Opportunities for sorting (animals, birds, insects); counting (numbers of animals, birds, Minibeasts, etc.); measuring (heights of trees, lengths of branches); comparing (different sizes of birds, spiders, animals); shape and space (finding shapes in the environment); describe position (where things are in relation to each other, behind, in front, on top of); estimation (how many fish in the water?); prediction (what will happen if there's no rain? What will happen if it starts to snow?); data recording (how many insects can you find in a particular area?)

Personal and Social: Is interested, excited and motivated to learn through this hands on experiential approach. Is confident to try new activities to initiate ideas and to speak in a familiar group. Can work as part of a group taking turns, sharing, and collaborating. Has the opportunity to consider the consequences of their actions for themselves and others (e.g. the issue of spoiling the woods and the pond). Can select and use activities and resources independently.

Creative Development: Exploring colour, texture, shape form and space in two or three dimensions; recognise repeated sounds – (e.g. listen to recordings of bird songs). Use their imagination in imaginative role play and stories; respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and feel; express and communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings by using a widening range of materials, suitable tools, imaginative and role play, designing and making.

Communication, Language and Literacy: Uses language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences. Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events. Interacts with others, negotiating plans and activities and taking turns in conversations. Extends vocabulary through contextual experiences. Attempts writing for various purposes – (e.g. writing a notice asking people to take their litter home). Initial sound hunt e.g. find something with the 'b' phoneme; creates narratives; listens and follows instructions; name and label –plants, insects, birds, animals etc.

Physical Development: Uses a range of small and large equipment; handles tools, objects construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control;

Geography: Learn more about people, places and environment; use geographical vocabulary; create landscapes comparing and contrasting; make observations and record findings; learn more about natural and man-made resources

Resources: (Here are some ideas of what could be used – this is just the beginning!)

Minibeast pack

Magnifying glass

Bug set

Gardening gloves

Minibeasts investigation tub

Bug hut

Insect trap

Icelandic green moss

Natural bark

Pea gravel

Improvisation – Make your own resources!

Rice/bulgur wheat for gravel; dried peas and beans for pebbles

Make slime from wallpaper paste, soap flakes - use it in the marsh area around the pond

Use a margarine tub and fill with water for the pond

Use real twigs, branches, leaves

Make trees from branches in oasis or playdough

Use coloured rice for grass

Make tissue paper flowers

Make spiders' webs from glue, salt and cotton

Care Instructions

Use damp cloth to wipe surface.

We would recommend that you roll rather than fold your mat after use, with the picture facing outwards. Any wrinkles can also be removed by wafting a warm hairdryer over the mat. Ideally to avoid creases store in a warm environment