

Animals

Parental involvement:

- Tell the parents that the topic for this half term is going to be about animals.
- Ask for parental permission if taking the children out of the group on a visit to the farm and also for a walk into the community. Enlist extra help from the parents if necessary.
- Ask if any of the parents would like to come into the group to show the children how to knit.
- If any of the parents have a young baby, ask if they would be willing to bring the baby into the group for a visit.
- During pet week, ask if anyone has a pet which they could bring into the group for the children to meet. Seek parental permission for the other children to meet the pet.
- Put up a list of extra resources needed for the topic, for parents to assist with.
- Display weekly activities and learning aims for parents to see.

Resources

Week 1 – Farm animals

Toy plastic farm animals; Coloured paper; Scissors; Pencils; White and black wool; Knitted garments; Small piece of sheep's fleece; Milk; Jug; Beakers; Resource sheets 1 to 5; The three little pigs story; Egg; Bowl; Washed out empty egg shells; Cotton wool balls; Cress seeds; Sticky shapes; Ten plastic cows; Box with a lid.

Week 2 – Animal patterns

Sand; Play dough; Books and pictures showing patterned animals; Paper; Paints; Brushes; Rollers; Blocks for printing; 'The mixed up chameleon' by Eric Carle; Animal pictures for cutting out; Crayons; Scissors; Felt tip pens; Wax crayons.

Week 3 – Animals in the wild

'We're going on a bear hunt' by Michael Rosen; Old children's socks; Paper plates; Paints; Crepe paper; Wool; Glue; Scissors; Crayons; Elastic; Pictures of animals for cutting out; Pencils; Paper; Tape player; Music to represent animal movements; Musical instruments; Rolling pins; Animal cutters; Resource sheet no 6 and ingredients for animal biscuits; Toy animals.

Week 4 – Animal homes

Boxes; Long lengths of material; Play dough; 'Kipper' by Mick Inkpen; Pictures of animal homes; Plastic animals; Craft materials; Sand tray; Paper; Pencils; Scissors; Hexagon template; Picture of a honeycomb; Glue; Paper plates; Wool; Sticky tape; Small garden spray; Ovals cut from thin card; Crayons; Felt tip pens; Ingredients for nests and resource sheet 7.

Week 5 – Animal babies

'Are you my mother?' by P.D. Eastman; Plastic animals (babies and adults); Names of animals written separately; Child's apron or coat with a pocket; Number cards; Pictures of marsupials; Books about life cycles; Play dough; Height chart; Pencils; Paper; Children's tape measures.

Week 6 – Pets

Doctors set; A goldfish (bought or borrowed); Balls; Paper; Pencils; Paints; Brushes; Coloured paper; Scissors; Drinking straws or art straws; Glue; Circle and oval template; Card cut into bone shapes; Cellophane; Crayons; Magnifying glasses; Saucer; Wool or string; Stapler.

Enhancing learning during play

- Set out a selection of books about animals for the children to choose from at story time.
- Encourage the children to talk about any experiences that they have had with animals, such as pets, or animals seen at the zoo or on the farm.
- Provide patterned materials for adding to the dressing up rack, for children to pretend to be various made up animals.

Related literature

- Rosie and Jim and the drink of milk – John Cunliffe, Celia Berridge (Illustrator)
- Wonderful earth – Nick Butterworth, Mick Inkpen
- Catch up little cheetah – Michele Coxon
- The new puppy (Usborne First Experiences 5) – Anne Civardi, Stephen Cartwright (Illustrator)
- Pets, pets, pets – Kathy Henderson

Useful resources relating to topic

- Picture globe – Early learning centre
- Wild world lotto – Orchard toys
- Two by two – Orchard toys
- Pig and piglet snap – Orchard toys

Animals

Activities and learning objectives

The activities in the animal topic will give the children the opportunity to learn about various animals. During the topic they will be able to learn a little about pets, farm animals and animals in the wild. They will be introduced to animal patterns and camouflage, and learn about some animal habitats.

Week 1 – Farm animals

Farm visit – Children will be able to visit a farm to meet some of the animals.

Follow the leader – A follow the leader game where the children will pretend to be sheep moving around the apparatus.

Old Macdonald – Singing the song of Old Macdonald, children will be choosing which animal to be and making the appropriate noises.

Farm animal sets – An activity involving sorting animals by size, type, colour etc.

Woolly sheep – The children will be recognising and describing texture as they make a picture of a sheep.

Cow's milk – Learning about where milk comes from and how it makes its way to the supermarket or homes.

Three little pigs – Acting out the story of the three little pigs.

Egg heads – Looking at the differences between raw and cooked eggs before making an egg head using cress.

How many cows? – A counting activity using toy cows.

Week 2 – Animal patterns

Pattern hunt – Looking inside and outside for patterns.

Footprints in the sand – Children will be making prints in wet sand using a variety of objects.

Hide and seek – The children will be playing hide and seek as an introduction to camouflage.

Play dough patterns – Making patterns in the play dough using a variety of objects and tools.

Paint patterns – Looking in books for examples of animal patterns and reproducing them in paint.

Camouflage – Reading a story about a chameleon and discussing camouflage and the different colours.

Zigzag snakes – Recognising and recreating simple patterns, the children will have the opportunity to make a snake from paper.

Pattern rubbings – Children will be looking for patterns and textures out of doors to take rubbings of with wax crayons.

Zebra crossing – Children will be going for a walk into the community where they will be looking for patterns in the environment. They will be learning how to cross safely on a zebra crossing.

Week 3 – Animals in the wild

Bear hunt – Acting out a story.

Sock snake – Children will be making a snake puppet from an old sock.

Matching animals – Looking at initial letters of animals and matching names to animal pictures.

Pretending to be different animals – Experimenting with different ways of moving, children will be pretending to be animals for the other children to guess.

Animal masks – Using imagination in the designing and making of animal masks.

Animal alphabet – Making a collective frieze for the wall, children will be able to recognise and name initial letters of the animals.

Animal movements – Exploring different types of music, children will be able to move freely using their imagination.

Animal biscuits – Children will be making and decorating animal biscuits.

Big and small – Children will be sorting animals into sets by size, recognising which ones are big and which are small.

Week 4 – Animal homes

Box house – Constructing a house for an animal to live in using a variety of large resources.

Snails – Making snails using play dough.

Kipper – Reading and taking part in the story of Kipper.

Being safe – A physical activity where children move around the room and hide when danger threatens.

Where I live – Learning about animal homes.

Beehives – Experimenting with shapes as children learn about honeycomb patterns.

Spider's webs – Weaving and threading spider's webs after observing them outside.

Tortoise – Making a tortoise from card.

Nests – Following a recipe to make chocolate nests.

Week 5 – Animal babies

Growing up – Children will be investigating the things that animals have to learn as they grow up.

Visit from a baby – Children will be able to meet a baby on a visit to the group.

From baby to adult – Pretending to grow up from a baby into an adult.

Are you my mother? – Joining in with refrains as a story is being read out loud.

Animal families – A sorting activity for children to group animals into families of young and old.

Babies in pouches – A counting activity with babies in pouches.

Life cycles – Children will be learning about life cycles and the way that animals change over time.

Animal pairs – Experimenting with animal sounds and movements, children will have to find their partners.

How we grow – Measuring sizes of hands, feet, height etc.

Week 6 – Pets

Vets surgery – Setting up and playing at vets with toy animals.

Pet visit – A visit to the group by an adult with their pet.

Goldfish for a pet – Looking after a pet in the group.

Playing ball – Children will be throwing and catching balls.

Pet paintings – Children will have the opportunity to talk about and paint a pet, either one that they own or someone that they know owns.

Cat picture – Making a picture of a cat using paper shapes.

Collecting bones – A physical activity where children will be finding hidden bones following instructions on a map.

Goldfish in a bowl – Making pictures of fish to hang on the wall.

A finger mouse puppet – Making a finger mouse from card.

Topic: Animals

Week 1: Farm animals

Activity: Egg heads

Date.....

Area of learning: Knowledge and understanding of the world

Main learning intentions: Look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change

Vocabulary: Egg, chicken, hen, yolk, white, boiled, cress, head, shell, raw

Resources: Egg, bowl, hard boiled egg, knife, washed out empty egg shells with the tops removed, cotton wool balls, cress seeds, sticky shapes

Method:

1. Show the children an egg. Talk about where the egg comes from, explaining that a hen lays it.
2. Explain that the eggshell is very delicate and it will break very easily.
3. Crack the egg and tip the contents into a bowl for the children to see. Explain that the egg is raw; it has not been cooked.
4. Show the children the hard-boiled egg, explaining that it has been cooked in boiling water. Pass the egg around and explain that although the egg will still break, the inside is hard now, rather than runny.
5. Take the shell off the egg and show the children the inside. Cut the egg in half with a knife to reveal the yolk.
6. Encourage the children to look at the two eggs and to talk about the differences.
7. Give each child an empty eggshell, explaining that they should be careful not to break it.
8. Encourage them to stick shapes onto the shell to represent eyes, nose and mouth.
9. Ask them to place a cotton wool ball into the empty eggshell and wet it with a few drops of water. Let each child sprinkle a few cress seeds into their shell. When the seeds grow it will look like hair growing on the top of the egg head.

Note: Some children may have an egg allergy, don't allow children to touch the eggs without permission from parents.

Organisation of children: Small group with an adult

Opportunities for observation and assessment:

Talk about what is seen and what is happening (kuw)

Engage in activities requiring hand-eye coordination (pd)

Extending activity for more able children: Some children may prefer to decorate their eggshell using felt tip pens, either by drawing faces or patterns onto the eggshells.