



How and why?

Child-led learning plays a large part in the Early Years curriculum, and rightly so. Supporting children in following and exploring their own interests allows for a greater depth of learning and understanding and much higher levels of well-being and involvement.

As the adult, you can model how to use D&T to aid children in their pursuits and scaffold the learning so that they can reach a deeper level of understanding.

As teachers, we know that the difficulty with child-led D&T projects often arises when the pupils are not equipped to properly plan their creation or execute their ideas in the way that they wish, sometimes meaning that they will spend a very short amount of time at the workshop or junk modelling area before moving on. To plan, design, make and develop skills and knowledge are all a fundamental part of our D&T scheme. As you work through Unit 1 with the pupils (ideally at the beginning of the autumn term), they will have opportunities to get to know these areas of the classroom and will begin to understand the importance of creating a plan.

When pupils are accessing these areas outside of lesson times, it is your job to support and scaffold their learning, offering suggestions or listening to their ideas. Rather than creating artificial learning opportunities during these times of child-led play, instead wait until you observe that a child or group of children have shown a particular interest in a topic. Offer to help them enhance their chosen area of exploration by providing additional resources, demonstrating how to use existing resources or even using the computer. This could mean:

- ▶ Providing encouragement and support
- ▶ Introducing new vocabulary through informal conversation
- ▶ Encouraging children to create together as a group
- ▶ Starting to create on your own, encouraging others (pupils) to join in
- ▶ Scaffolding the planning, designing and creating process
- ▶ Using familiar, everyday objects to create models
- ▶ Learning about different artistic techniques from around the world
- ▶ Looking at books that showcase different topics e.g.. houses and buildings from around the world
- ▶ Learning and practising new techniques together
- ▶ Using a safe search engine to find out more information or facts about particular topics
- ▶ Finding out about different customs/festivals that are important to the children and are influencing their ideas
- ▶ Drawing pupils' attention to posters or other sources of information, like our poster on different types of joins

The children can then use the information you have given them, or that which you have discovered together to further their project or to influence a new idea. Learning in this way often sparks curiosity in the other children in the class, leading to potential large group projects or even whole class projects.

Print off any relevant pictures and/or use a camera to take photographs of the children's project and record the learning in a class book, make a display or to present to the other class members.

It is also important to note that often, adult support is simply not needed for pupils to have meaningful creative experiences. Choose when to interact and when to step back and allow pupils to explore independently.



Resourcing your Continuous Provision

If possible, it is best practice to have D&T materials and tools available as part of your continuous provision. This means that it is accessible to children at all times and stays the same throughout the year. You can enhance the provision by adding additional resources to support projects but the foundation resources should always be available. Often you may find that the resources needed for D&T and Art overlap, so you may be able to create one workshop area that suitably serves both purposes.

Use the list below as a guide:

- ▶ Wax crayons, HB pencils, pencil crayons, chalk, felt tips etc.
- ▶ Junk modelling resources such as: cardboard, fabric scraps, foil, empty bottles/cartons, lolly sticks, corks etc.
- ▶ Loose parts (see our loose parts guide for ideas)
- ▶ Coloured paper, white paper and craft card
- ▶ Clipboards
- ▶ Left and right-handed scissors
- ▶ Joining materials: paper clips, tack, tape, split pins, treasury tags, string, ribbon, glue sticks and PVA glue
- ▶ Glue spreaders and pots
- ▶ Paint (see paint station below)

Enhanced provision may include:

- ▶ Seasonal materials or those related to a special festival, for example, snowflake sequins at Christmas.
- ▶ A provocation to create, for example: a threading board and various lengths of ribbon
- ▶ Materials chosen to develop certain skills or enhance an interest such as clay, papier maché or needles and thread.

Enhanced provision is normally provided to either encourage consolidation of learning after a lesson, or in response to children's expressed interests. It is up to you how long you leave the enhanced provision in your classroom but as a guide, you would normally expect this to be taken away after a week or when the children are no longer using the resources.

Useful prompts for learning

Enhanced provision is normally provided to either encourage consolidation of learning after a lesson, or in response to children's expressed interests. It is up to you how long you leave the enhanced provision in your classroom but as a guide, you would normally expect this to be taken away after a week or when the children are no longer using the resources.

- ▶ "I wonder why...?"
- ▶ "What if...?"
- ▶ "How could we...?"
- ▶ "I wonder how...?"
- ▶ "What do you think?"
- ▶ "What can you...?"
- ▶ "Tell me about..."
- ▶ "What might happen if...?"
- ▶ "How can we find out about...?"
- ▶ "How could we decide?"



Creating a woodshop

If you have the space, a self-service woodshop is a hugely beneficial resource for all pupils. This can be situated either indoors or outdoors and will encourage creativity, problem solving, independent thought and physical development.

What you need:

- ▶ Workbench.
- ▶ Safety glasses.
- ▶ Junior screwdrivers.
- ▶ Children's hammers.
- ▶ Junior hand drill and palm drills.
- ▶ Flexible tape measures, spirit level and rulers.
- ▶ G-clamps.
- ▶ Junior hacksaws.
- ▶ Wooden blocks, disks, wheels etc. (balsa wood blocks and sheets are very easy to work with).
- ▶ Cork discs/boards.
- ▶ Nails and screws.
- ▶ Twine and string.
- ▶ Rasps/files.
- ▶ Sandpaper.

When you first set up your station, work alongside the pupils as they discover how to use the materials and explore the skills needed to work relatively independently such as selecting tools and resources and using these safely. It is very important that your woodshop is always staffed and that pupils are taught how to use each of the tools safely and with care.

The aim is to foster as much independence as possible (pupils using tools independently and working through their own projects, not working alone) but in order to do this, you may need to begin by demonstrating certain skills or ideas.

Allow the pupils the freedom to be creative. They may not always want to create something specific and that is . They may spend a whole session hammering nails into cork and in doing so will be developing many physical skills and characteristics of effective learning. When pupils do show the desire to create something specific, you can support this:

Pupil: "I want to build a house."

Adult: "Ok. What would you like it to look like? Should we draw a picture?"

When the picture is finished:

Adult: "What do you think you need to make the different parts of your house? Which tools will you need? Let's go and gather them."