

Summer garden

Discuss playing outdoors on sunny days by exploring this colourful, busy poster. Develop observational skills by encouraging children to concentrate on the small details

Activities to support the Early Years Foundation Stage

Personal, social and emotional development

- Talk about the activities the children are enjoying and sensitively draw attention to those who have a temporary or permanent disability, for example, the boy in the wheelchair and the girl with her arm in a sling. Refer to any linked experiences shared by the children in the group. Explain that all children can enjoy a summer outing, but that some have to adapt their activity choices to suit their needs. Talk about ways in which this might be achieved.
- Focus on the children in the pool and discuss why the very young child is wearing armbands. Ask children about any safety equipment they wear when swimming in a pool or paddling in the sea, for example, goggles, armbands, floats and swim rings. Why do we need to be very careful when playing near or in water? Who helps them to stay safe?

Communication and language

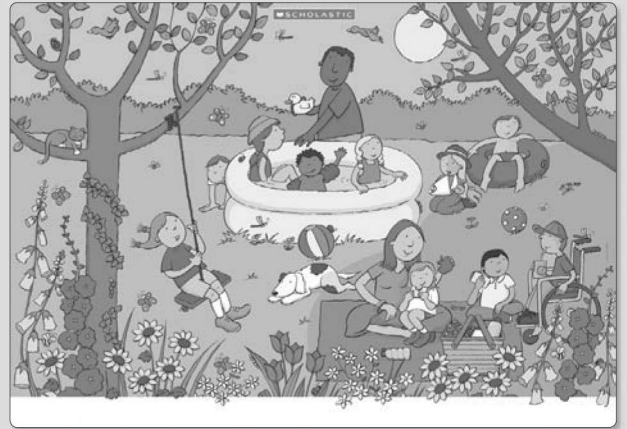
- Set up a 3D version of the poster using small world resources. Invite the children to make up a story about the outing from the perspective of someone in the poster, for example, the mother sitting on the picnic blanket or the boy waving from the pool. Re-enact the story using small world characters on your 3D version of the poster.
- Put real versions of some of the things on the poster into a 'feely bag', for example, a flower, teddy, blown-up armband and twig with leaves. Take turns to feel in the bag and describe an object for the others to guess and point to on the poster.

Mathematics

- Encourage children to count the things that they see on the poster such as children, adults, cats, butterflies, balls. There are lots of minibeasts that are harder to find too! Compare amounts using 'more than' and 'less than'.
- Invite children to describe the position of an object or person and ask the others to guess what/who it is, for example, 'This object is on the grass in front of the pool, behind the dog', 'This person is sitting on the blanket eating an apple'.

Understanding the world

- Ask the children to find as many different minibeasts as they can on the poster. Write down a list, keeping a tally of how many of each. Discuss similarities and differences between them and point out any key features.
- Ask the children to point to signs of summer that they can see on the poster, such as the green leaves on the trees, the clothes worn by the people, the different flowers in bloom and the busy insects.



How to use the poster

Encourage children to explore the 'Summer Garden' poster more closely by creating an interactive display with it as a centrepiece. Surround it with children's artwork depicting flowers and birds and position a table draped in green fabric underneath. Arrange a selection of poster-related objects on the table, such as an artificial sunflower, sunhat, ball, model ladybird and water bottle. Ask the children to name the objects and find them on the poster.

Display the poster in different play areas in your setting, for example, role-play, small world and creative areas, to motivate child-initiated ideas. Alternatively, you could laminate the poster and hang it outdoors close to picnic related role-play resources.

Physical development

- Discuss the things that the children have for their picnic and name them. Talk about how a healthy balanced diet helps us to keep fit and strong. Emphasise the importance of drinking lots of water, especially on a hot day.
- Find the balls on the poster. What might the children do with them? Provide a selection of large balls and divide the children into small groups to invent and try out games for the poster children to play.

Expressive arts and design

- Explore the colours, shapes and patterns on the summer flowers in the poster. Display the poster and provide the children with vases of summer flowers, paint and collage materials to create group posters depicting summer flowers.
- After exploring the poster, suggest setting up a role-play picnic outdoors. Use salt dough to make pretend food and when it is dry, paint it to look even more realistic.

Jean Evans is an early years consultant and author.