

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH CULTURE

Museums and Galleries
as part of the
Early Years Foundation Stage

RENAISSANCE NORTH WEST



Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I write this foreword for the Museum and Galleries booklet for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

A number of Early Years settings have been involved in work with the Museum and Galleries in Manchester and the feedback has been fabulous. Children from inner city areas have visited with Practitioners and have been full of awe and wonder at the experiences they have had. Practitioners have been delighted by the responses from children and have used visits as the catalyst for developing a range of learning experiences.

Visits to the museum and galleries have enabled children to access objects that they would not have experienced before and little ones have exploded the myth that museums and galleries are places where you have to be quiet and still. Involvement of parents has been key to the work and as well as involving parents in children's learning at the setting, families have returned at other times to enjoy the museum.

I am sure that you will enjoy reading the booklet and will glean helpful ideas from it and finally – enjoy your visits and links with your museums and galleries.

Pam Tideswell, Head of Sure Start, Manchester

Introduction

This booklet is the result of museums and galleries in the North West and South West working in partnership with Early Years practitioners. Practitioners were amazed at how much children got from their experiences in museums and galleries. Through our projects we found that children had unusually high levels of involvement and that their language for thinking and for communication benefited. We discovered that museums could help settings deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage in a creative and exciting way. Parents and carers were genuinely interested and many came along to museums for the first time. We and the practitioners got almost as much from our learning journeys as the children did and we wanted to share what we had found.

We hope this booklet will help you see some of the wonderful learning and development that can come from young children engaging with objects and art works. There is practical guidance on visiting a museum or gallery and a sheet in the back cover helping you identify those close to you. Our projects showed us the value of children starting or continuing their close encounters with culture in their own setting.

The activity ideas included have all been developed by practitioners and work with easy to source objects as well as historical ones.

Virginia Tandy, North West Museums Hub Lead

Contents

Foreword/Introduction	1
Contents	2
Children engaging with objects	3-4
Contributing to the EYFS themes	5-6
Our projects	7-10
In your setting	11-14
Going to a museum or gallery	15-18
Involving parents	19
Notes for parents and carers	20
Useful resources	21
Acknowledgements	22



PHOTO BY JOEL CHESTER-FILDS/WHYNORTH ART GALLERY

Children engaging with objects

Children find objects interesting

Museums collect objects because they have a meaning. They may be things that belonged to famous people or came from interesting places. They might be the first ever of something, or the last of something. They could be ordinary things that help us to understand about people's lives in the past. The things all around us now could one day be in a museum.

For children, being interested in objects is just part of being interested in the world around us. Objects can be useful for sparking off work in all the areas of learning and development.

Objects are relevant to young children

Some practitioners worry that children won't be able to make sense of museum objects and will quickly become bored.

“I would have been wary of taking very young children to the Museum because it might not be interesting to them. Now I wouldn't hesitate to take them.”

Childminder

In fact, children often become fascinated with objects, especially things that are unusual or slightly different from their everyday experience.

“Keanu was interested in the paintings of the sea with the ships on the rocks. He spoke about this when we got to the lighthouse saying: “crashing into stones.” Keanu's learning journey. Keanu is 2



Objects encourage active learners

The Early Years Foundation Stage identifies active learning as the key to early success. It says: active learning occurs when children are keen to learn and are interested in finding things out for themselves.

Active learning gives children real choices and decisions to make. When they are exploring objects children can become highly absorbed, spending a lot of time investigating in different ways. They gain a sense of satisfaction from following their own interest and investigating their own questions.

Objects prompt language for thinking

The Early Years Foundation Stage details how children develop their language for thinking: from early curiosity, to using talk to organise their thoughts. Successful young thinkers demonstrate all kinds of thinking skills, from beginning to think ahead and speculate, to finding, processing and recalling information. Investigating objects helps them use their reasoning, and their imaginations take flight.

“A group of 4 year olds is handling a cannonball. Child: I think it's made out of rock. It's really, really hard. Child: I think it might make your arm ache.”

“Jenna drew a fox at the drawing table, referring to the stuffed fox. Then she went to paint a fox in the painting area. She was self-resourced and created her own space to work. She made up a verbal story about a fox, asking the adult to scribe for her. Then she read herself the previously read fox story, turning pages, pointing at words and carefully looking at pictures and interpreting them.”

Jenna's learning journey. Jenna is 4.



Objects develop language for communication

Practitioners often find it difficult to encourage children to ask their own questions and to talk together. As children investigate new objects, questions seem to come naturally and interesting topics of conversation often emerge.

“Children were asking their own questions and answering each other's. The words came tumbling out. They were almost falling over themselves in trying to get their ideas out.” Early Years practitioner



Contributing to the EYFS themes

A unique child

Children can have their own unique way of relating to different objects. There is a lot that is not known about many objects and has to be imagined. Each child can decide how important, interesting or beautiful something is and opinions will vary. Many museums have world culture collections that could strike a chord with children from a wide range of communities. Objects from the distant past can introduce a kind of living equally unfamiliar to everyone. Investigating objects in this open-ended way, where there are no wrong answers, can help build children's confidence.



“A child with English as his second language was totally engaged with exploring an egg slice. He said something in Russian about it and when his mother arrived he went straight to her saying: “I did that by myself”. Practitioner observation

Positive relationships

Investigating objects can involve parents. Museum objects can form a bridge to home experiences. Older relations may own something similar or remember when they used one. Children connect objects to things they've seen at home.

“A child aged 4 investigated a bottle opener. He talked about home and the kitchen and his mum. “My mum has one of those. That takes the lid off beer”.

Enabling environments

Museum and gallery buildings can provide new environments to explore, stimulating children and bringing a sense of awe and wonder.

“The children explored the museum space carefully by shining their torches on the walls, ceilings and floors. “Look at the state of that up there”. Molly, aged 4.

Objects and artworks can help make the learning environment more stimulating and exciting. They might spark off investigations indoors or outdoors. In one setting, exploring a museum's woodland collection led to an outdoor adventure with soft toys.



“The children spent a lot of time thinking about where the animals could live. They wandered about placing them under the trees, on branches and in various dens.

Learning and development

Objects, artworks and stories are a great resource for children's active learning. Whether they are incorporating them into their play, representing them, exploring them or talking about them, children can develop at their own pace and in their own way.

Investigating

Investigating comes first. Children ask questions and gather information using all of their senses.



Communicating

Children begin to express their ideas and feelings through words, sounds or signs. They listen, apply their reasoning and offer explanations.

“Macion is touching a tapestry.
Macion: It's soft!
Adult: Yes, it is soft, it's made of wool.
Adult picks up toddler so she can touch it too.
Adult: It's soft Grace. Grace:(smiling) Aahh!
Macion aged 2.5 yrs, Grace aged 17 mths

Representing

Children quickly move to representing their ideas. They might choose to draw or make, to play imaginary games, sing songs or make up stories about an object.



Recalling

Encounters with objects can provide potent memories for children to recall and share. A museum visit can produce plenty to talk about, and objects back in the setting can encourage exploration to continue.

“Izzy loved it. She told my gran all about the animals and the Exeter Puzzle Jug.
Parent of child aged 3

Our projects

Across the North West, Museums and Galleries have been working in partnership with a variety of settings, early years professionals, artists and parents to develop practice and resources to engage young children with their buildings and collections. Much of this practice has been developed through small projects, which have included:

- exploratory and child initiated activities
- regular visits to museums and galleries and outreach visits
- documentation of children's learning journeys through observation, video footage, photographs and work back in their setting – some of which are in this publication.

Within the projects children were highly motivated and excited about their experiences. The children developed their skills for active learning, language for thinking and language for communication. The outcomes from the projects demonstrate the intensity of the learning that can be achieved through engaging with museums and galleries and the breadth of the areas of learning and development that can be covered. These case studies of good practice form the foundations of this document. The following pages give an overview of some of the projects we have been undertaking. Not all museums, galleries or settings can take part in projects like these, but many have resources they could contribute, people who could come to your setting or interesting buildings and collections to visit. Pages 16 and 17 give some ideas of exciting things you could do with your children in a museum or gallery even if they don't have any targeted provision.

Bolton Museum and Art Gallery / Clarendon Primary School

Two nursery classes spent a day visiting Bolton Museum, Aquarium and Archive.



The children had the opportunity to visit the different buildings and areas of the collection. In the Aquarium, the children looked at a variety of fish from around the world and participated in the feeding session. Their communication, language and literacy skills were developed through playful discussion, stories and rhymes, whilst sat on an imaginary blue ocean. The children also used their Numeracy skills when counting and playing number recognition games linked to their new experiences of the Aquarium.

A fun time was had by all, with many opportunities for the children to experience different learning styles and engage in varied activities. The Nursery class teachers are eager to take part in future early years sessions.

Manchester Art Gallery / St Peters Children's Centre

Manchester Art Gallery have been working with children aged 3-5. The project is still underway, but is exploring ways of working together to support children's creativity and reach parents.

The aim for the gallery is to encourage children to return with their parents. The project is helping shape the development of new activities and resources for families with under 5s at the gallery.

As a result they will be able to enjoy a specially designed family art club when it launches in May and redeveloped activity bags which will be completed later in the year.



The Manchester Museum / Gorton South Sure Start Children's Centre

Six children aged 2 to 4 years, visited the Manchester Museum regularly over a period of six weeks. The children explored the different spaces and objects within



the museum using torches and magnifying glasses. They enjoyed following a trail linked to Polar Bear Polar Bear and rifling through a treasure chest linked to the gallery. The staff used digital cameras and observations to document the children's learning journeys. The children were enthused and inspired by their visits and in response a 'Story Room' was developed back at the centre. A magic key allows children to enter the room, and in there they can read and listen to a range of stories and explore the movement and sound of

the animals using different materials, tools and instruments. The children hope the polar bear from the museum will visit them soon!

People's History Museum / Higher Blackley Children's Centre

Parents and children have worked together to create a mixed media map of the journey to the museum's temporary home at the Museum of Science and Industry. The children will explore the galleries recording their experiences with a disposable camera. The group will then have the opportunity to respond creatively to their experiences. We hope that the project will encourage



Our projects

parents as partners in their child's learning and encourage visits to the museum in the future. Most importantly we hope that everyone involved will have fun!

The Peoples History Museum is temporarily housed at the Museum of Science and Industry while it is being redeveloped. The partnership has provided an exciting opportunity to develop our practices and influence the redevelopment of the museum.

The Whitworth Art Gallery / Slade Lane and Broom Avenue Children's Centre

The project began with an initial visit to the Gallery, with twelve children aged 2-4 years and some parents. Children were given torches and cameras to record their discoveries around the gallery, exploring sculpture, textiles, wallpapers and paintings. It was the physical space however, that really captured their imagination, in particular, a small, dark room, playing music. Inspired by an artwork they had seen earlier, children decided that a dragon might live in such a space. The three subsequent sessions, both at the gallery and the centre, elaborated on this theme, incorporating den-building, modeling dragon food, story-telling and art activities.



Museum of Science and Industry

When working with new groups, we like to visit them in their own setting before they visit the Museum. In this project with a Sure Start Carer and Toddler group, we were able to visit Merseyside Maritime Museum as well! The children were fascinated by the water, boats and creatures. After visiting Xperiment, our hands-on science centre, the carers wanted to develop some interactives on the theme of water. The next few weeks involved lots of watery craft, investigations, singing, and boat building which resulted in the creation of a wonderful under 5's area in our Community Exhibition gallery. The activities created opportunities for the children to develop their skills in language, exploration and observation and helped to improve confidence and raise self-esteem amongst the adults.



Preston Museums Group

Museums across Preston, Lancashire, are working in close partnerships with Children's Centres to provide exciting resources for early years and their families. The museums have developed 'Treasure Boxes' of wonderful objects and activities for children and their families to use in centres. Activity trails are also available for young children in museums across the city.

Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery

The 'Artyfacts' programme run by Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery, was developed in collaboration with the LEA Foundation Stage Advisory Team. It comprises two elements – boxes and bags of activities linked to pictures, objects and areas of the galleries making the Museum more fun and friendly for the 3-5 year age group. Activities include discussion, observation and interaction with the objects, paintings and related areas and suitable activities linked to the themes of the session which include rivers, trains, owls and butterflies. We also run Tullie Toddlers, a regular, fortnightly open-session for under 5's, which provides a unique opportunity to introduce young children to the Museum through hands-on activities in a friendly, accessible space.



Children's First Forum Merseyside

National Museums Liverpool leads the Merseyside Children First Forum which is a multi-agency partnership approach to engaging young children with museums, galleries and other arts and cultural venues. The forum aims to share and celebrate the variety and depth of children's creative and cultural learning across Merseyside, strengthen its roots and build its legacy. The forum's work involves developing projects aimed at improving access to galleries and collections for very young children and their families. It also provides CPD opportunities for Early Years practitioners - www.liverpoolmuseums.org/learning/childrenfirst/.

In your setting

The things you can see in museums or galleries are usually more “awe inspiring” than the everyday objects around us. However, a lot of the skills needed to understand objects can be developed in your own setting, using objects loaned from a museum or things you’ve collected.

Where do I get objects?

- from your local museum or schools’ loans service (see insert in back cover)
- at an antique shop, car boot sale, on ebay, or even your loft
- ask children to bring things from home or from older relatives
- the resources page (p.21) has ideas on where to buy replicas or investigation tools

Remember to risk assess everything you give children to investigate. Name and take care of anything loaned to you by children’s families. This is a good opportunity to show children how to care for other people’s things.

What are the learning outcomes?

Objects from the past and present are an important source of information for us. Children need the opportunity to investigate them. As children notice the materials things are made of, they begin to build their understanding of the world around them. As they explore how objects work, they develop a sense of simple technology. As they hear stories about objects and make up their own, they begin to understand the connections and differences between their lives and other people’s: past and present.

Through objects children can start to develop a sense of time, find out about materials, develop observation skills and learn to sort and group things. They investigate, ask questions and build communication skills. They can make connections with their lives outside the setting and develop their creativity as they imagine what an object is, does or who it belongs to. Thinking about special objects, memories and feelings can support personal, social and emotional development.

Activities to try

Use the following activity ideas to introduce children to objects or change the way they think about them. Museum visits, or objects brought into your setting, can fire the imagination so be prepared for children to have some activity ideas of their own.

How does that work?

Learning outcomes: interested and motivated to learn • language for thinking • exploration and investigation skills

You will need: a set of safe objects to explore and things to do with them: e.g. kitchen gadgets such as whisks, egg slicers, blunt knives and forks, a range of spoons, sieves, mixing bowls, mortars and pestles and herbs, oats, lentils etc.

Younger children: observe children investigating the objects independently, e.g a range of different material and size of spoon. Give them further objects or materials depending on their interest. Tins and pans if they are keen to explore sound, bowls and safe materials like home-made playdough if they would like to explore mixing or stirring.

Older children: hand around objects at circle time to introduce children to them. Ask children what they think about each object. Listen to their ideas. What questions do children want to ask? Let them explore the objects independently and help them find out about them if asked.



Telling Tales

Learning outcomes: interested and motivated to learn • creative thinking • interacting with others • speaking confidently • responding to stories and making up their own

You will need: ‘It’s The Bear’ by Jez Alborough (or another favourite story), related props, e.g. Mum’s hat, a picnic basket, a large box to hide in, a small teddy.

Younger children: read the story, but pause at crucial moments to let children join in. Let children wear the hat, or open the picnic basket, connecting story pictures with 3D, concrete experiences. You could wear the hat or carry teddy yourself to bring Mum or Eddy to life.

Older children: what will Mum say when Eddy says he doesn’t want to go into the woods? Let different children put on the hat and pretend to be Mum. What’s in the picnic basket? Let children peep inside and pretend to see the picnic.

Take it further: Have a ‘story things’ box or even a ‘story room’. Include objects that have links to familiar stories, like the three bears’ wooden bowls or a basket that could have been Handa’s. Add things like an old wooden box, a large key, an old shawl or a large cooking pot. Encourage children to use things from the story box in their imaginary games or tell stories to each other, or to ask an adult to write for them.

In your setting

Make Connections

Learning outcomes: interested and motivated to learn • reasoning skills • creative thinking • similarities and differences • materials and their properties.

You will need: objects such as keys, natural things like fir cones and shells, unusual kitchen utensils like mortars and pestles, egg whisks, pots or plates made of different materials, e.g. plastic, enamel, wood, stainless steel.

Younger children: let children use their senses to explore the objects. Group things together yourself, explaining your reasons and watch to see if children make any connections. Give children an object and see if they can 'find another one like it'.

Older children: Encourage children to sort and group objects however they want to and in lots of different ways. What groups and connections do they make? You could offer a range of containers or special boxes to support their sorting. Put different coloured paper onto the table top to suggest sorting, or let children use it to make labels. Offer children mirrors and magnifying glasses to explore the objects.

Take it further: take photos of children's object groups and let them dictate a label. Encourage children to talk together about the groups each child made and to tell parents and carers about their thinking.

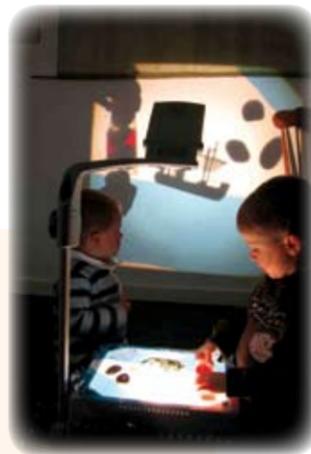
Shadow Play

Learning outcomes: creative thinking • problem solving • reasoning skills • interacting with others • materials and their properties • responding to stories and making up their own.

You will need: A darkened space, an overhead projector, white screen, board or pale wall, coloured cellophane, torches, objects that cast interesting shadows, instruments.

Younger children: Let children handle the objects, then give them torches to examine them. Use your torch to make a shadow on the wall and point it out if children don't notice.

Older children: Ask children to find out how to make their object shadows bigger and smaller. Try laying cellophane on the overhead projector surface and then adding objects. Make up stories to go with the objects and use instruments to make the story sounds.



Treasure Hunt

Learning outcomes: creative thinking • problem solving • similarities and differences

You will need: a basket or 'feely' bag, a set of small objects, a set of pictures of the objects, pegs.

Ask children to peg pictures of objects around your setting, indoors and outdoors. Ask other children to choose an object from the basket or feely bag and take it round to find the matching picture. Other hunts might include: plastic animals and pictures of animals from a museum, old and new versions of the objects, or objects themselves hidden and picture clues as to their whereabouts. Older children could use a digital camera to make the picture clues.



Imaginative Play

Learning outcomes: imaginative language • language for organising ideas • creative thinking • reflecting on experiences • interacting with others • designing and making

You will need: what you make depends on what has inspired children on their visit, for example a kitchen with old-fashioned cooking equipment, a clock maker's workshop with tools and bits of clocks, children's own art gallery with picture frames, a prehistoric cave with 'dinosaur bones' and cave painting, or animals in their habitats.

Following a museum visit, give children the chance to revisit their experiences and build on them creatively together through your role play area or outside. Involve children in choosing what to put in the area and in making props and costumes.

Mini Museum

Learning outcomes: a sense of family and identity • other people's cultures • other lives past and present • understanding memories and feelings • language skills

You will need: children's objects from home, display space and materials, your own interesting objects, e.g. something from an overseas holiday or another culture, natural things like a large shell or old things like a game or old photos.

Ask if any children could bring in an interesting thing from home to make a mini museum. Have some of your own objects ready to make up numbers. Let children display the objects, working in pairs or groups if possible. Write out any labels that children might want to add, explaining why each object is interesting.

Going to a museum or gallery



PHOTO BY JAN NETTLETON/MARTENSCHOF SURE START CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Objects and artworks in museums and galleries are usually bigger and much more exciting than anything that could come to a setting. Many museum and gallery buildings are amazing places that children find fascinating.

A visit is a great opportunity to involve parents and carers and to get children out exploring their local community.

“For many, coming to a museum environment was a new experience. It fired their imagination and developed their confidence.” Nursery creative collaborator

Getting there

Check out your nearest museum or gallery. It may be within walking distance or a short bus ride away. Even the journey itself can be exciting for children, as this journey map drawn by a 4 year-old illustrates.

If travel really is impossible, contact a local museum or gallery to see if they can come to you. The sheet at the back of this book will help you find what is nearby.



Planning the visit

The museum or gallery will want to help you. Get in touch and see what they can offer. Some museums and galleries have specific programmes for younger visitors such as hands-on experiences or storytelling. Someone may be able to help you plan your trip. Many museums are free but some may charge.

Bringing a small group can be easier and can have benefits for the children. It may also mean children can make more than one visit.

“Being a small group had benefits – it was a quality experience with individual support for each child. We were able to follow the interests of the children within the galleries due to the adult: child ratio.” Practitioner

Planning exciting things to do

Even if a museum or gallery doesn't have a specific Early Years programme or resources, there's plenty you can do to ensure that any museum or gallery will be a place of wonder and excitement for children.

Why not:

- take along torches, magnifying glasses, mirrors, even accessories like capes or hats and ask them to be explorers
- give them digital cameras to photograph the most interesting things they see
- give them photos of objects, artworks or parts of the building to find. Older children may be able to match photos of small details or unusual views of objects or paintings
- give them a trail that asks them to find the scariest thing in one area, the largest in another, the funniest, prettiest etc
- tell children the bare bones of a story that takes place in the museum or gallery. Ask them to find out more detail so you can make up the whole story together when you get back
- provide drawing equipment and let children choose what inspires them



PHOTO / ROYAL ALBERT MEMORIAL MUSEUM, EXETER

Going to a museum or gallery

Exploring the building

Remember that children will be just as interested in the museum or gallery building as they are in the displays, so why not include a structured chance to explore. A simple map with photos of one or two things to spot in each space could help children begin to feel at home in the new environment.

You could:

- get adult helpers to ask children what they like about each new space they enter
- encourage children to move in different ways on different floor surfaces or in different spaces, e.g. tiptoe on the tiles
- use the pattern of 'going on a bear hunt' to explore the different 'rooms' and architectural features
- give children digital cameras and encourage them to take photos from unusual vantage points, e.g. balconies, looking up huge staircases
- use a story like 'Peepo' to encourage children to look around. You could even give them cut-out 'Peepo' holes to use as they explore.



Before you go

Most organisations encourage planning visits. These are often free, even if a museum or gallery charges. On your planning visit:

- ask staff if you can take photos to help with your planning, to turn into activities or to use as talking points with children ahead of the visit
- check out the facilities. Where are the toilets? Is there space to leave coats or have a snack? Are there stairs or is there a lift?
- do a risk assessment, staff there may be able to help with your paperwork
- ask if someone from the museum or gallery can come and meet the children.

Make sure you have photo permissions in place and pack a digital camera on the day.

At the museum

What to expect:

- excited faces
- time to adjust to the new setting
- lots of exploring, talking and questions
- some quieter children coming out of their shell



PHOTO BY STEVE DENNIN/THE MANCHESTER MUSEUM

It's a good idea to try to note down the things children do and say on a visit. If adult helpers are confident they could be given note pads or a camcorder. These records of the visit are great for assessing learning, informing planning and can be a useful tool in helping children reflect on and revisit their experiences.

“ Museums and galleries can offer the resources that 'spark' the imagination of young children and encourage their enthusiasm to extend their learning whilst having fun together in an exciting venue. Children's Centre Manager

Back in your setting

Give children the chance to talk about their experiences at the museum or gallery. Let them represent the things they were interested in through drawing, painting, modelling and imaginary play. Challenge children to build a museum or gallery with blocks and use small world figures as the visitors. Make maps so children can show where they went in the building. Use the internet to help any children who want to find out more about the collections.

Why not make a scrapbook to share the children's learning journey?

- put in pictures of children in the museum or gallery
- add photos children took on the visit
- write in things children remember
- send postcards home for parents'/carers' memories and then stick those in

If you have an interactive whiteboard or computer you could make a rolling presentation and share it with children and family adults who couldn't make that trip.

When you evaluate your visit, think about giving feedback to the museum or gallery. They will find it really useful in developing their services.

Involving parents

Going to a museum or gallery is a great opportunity to involve parents and carers. To get them interested in coming along, why not:

- explore intriguing objects in your setting so that children talk about them at home.
- make sure family adults come across the objects when they drop children off or pick them up
- arrange for someone from a museum or gallery to come and talk to children and family adults before asking for volunteers for a visit
- let parents and carers know what everyone will be doing on the visit. Reassure them no expert knowledge or experience is needed. Try a poster on your notice board. The page opposite is designed to be photocopied for parents and carers

“ *The visit to the Museum was a real adventure and it was wonderful to see parents and children working so closely together, harvesting the children’s language and observations.* Children’s Centre Senior Teacher

At the museum or gallery

Encourage family adults to really get involved with their group. Ask them to:

- listen to children
- encourage children to talk together
- notice what children are interested in and chat about it with them

After the visit

Make a book about your visit back in your setting and ask parents who came to contribute their thoughts about the trip and any photos.

“ *We made a museum book back in the centre. Children wrote detailed, super sentences as captions for pictures. This then sparked interest at home and many children visited the museum with their parents. It also encouraged conversation and sharing experiences.* Children’s Centre Manager

Ask the museum or gallery if they have information for families that could be sent home. Why not invite family adults to a mini museum, an exhibition of children’s art or a presentation about the visit?

Notes for parents and carers

It’s great that you’ve volunteered to come on this visit.

What should you do when you’re there?

Here are three top tips for having a successful trip.

Keep children safe

Make sure you keep an eye on children you are looking after, even if they go to the toilets or the shop.

They may want to explore and find things that interest them, so make sure you do that as a group.

Chat with children

Museums and galleries are exciting places for children.

They will be full of comments and questions.

Listen to all their ideas and chat about the things you see.

You don’t need to be a history or art expert to have something interesting to say.

Enjoy yourself

Join in with children as they explore. Get involved in their activities.

Enjoy having some special time together.



Useful resources

Stockists and suppliers

MIND STRETCHERS - www.mindstretchers.co.uk

A great source of multi-sensory materials, investigative tools, natural resources and objects.

EARLY EXCELLENCE - www.earlyexcellence.com

Ready made treasure baskets and interesting wooden objects are available by mail order.

EARLY YEARS RESOURCES - www.earlyyearsresources.co.uk

An educational supplier with a good range of investigative tools.

TOBAR - www.tobar.co.uk

Not just for Early Years but they offer a wide range of traditional toys, investigative tools and interesting objects.

TTS - www.tts-group.co.uk

Their Early Years resources are fantastic! Look also at their ICT resources and investigation tools. e.g 'Explorer' set and 'Easi-Speak' robust MP3 recorder.

PUPPETS BY POST - www.puppetsbypost.co.uk

A fantastic range of puppets of all sizes, including animals and figures.

SCRAPSTORES - www.childrensscrapstores.co.uk

For a nationwide list of stores you could join.

Try high street stockists like **AU NATURAL**, **IKEA**, **CARGO**, **PIER** and **LAKELAND** for treasure. baskets, chests and interesting objects e.g. kitchen utensils.

Resources

THE STANDARDS SITE - www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk

Interesting case studies on ways to use ICT in Early Years settings

THE SURE START SITE - www.surestart.gov.uk

Exciting case studies on developing children's creativity.

LTS SCOTLAND - www.ltscotland.org.uk

Lots of shared practice for Early Years settings, including ideas for active learning.

SIGHTLINES - www.sightlines-initiative.com

The UK contact point for the Reggio Children Network.

THE LITTLE BOOK OF... series, very practical and useful, especially on role play, prop boxes for role play and investigations. ISBN:1904187668

Lots of story books can be used to prompt exploration of a museum or gallery building. 'Katie' books e.g. **KATIE'S PICTURE SHOW** ISBN:1843623978 • **HARRY AND THE DINOSAURS AT THE MUSEUM** ISBN:0140503846 • **GOING ON A BEAR HUNT** ISBN:0744523230.

Acknowledgements

This publication was developed and written by Jo Graham from Learning Unlimited and edited by Jo, Elaine Bates and Amanda Shore from Manchester Museum.

We would like to thank the staff from the following venues for their involvement in creating this publication:

Manchester Art Gallery

Museum of Science and Industry

Peoples History Museum

Whitworth Art Gallery

Manchester Museum

Bolton Museum and Art Gallery

Preston Consortium of Museums

Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery

Children's First Forum, Merseyside

Gorton South Sure Start Children's Centre

Martenscroft Nursery and Sure Start Children's Centre

Saint Peters Children's Centre

Higher Blackley Children's Centre

Slade Lane and Broom Avenue Children's Centre

Clarendon Primary School

We would also like to thank:

The Early Years Steering Group from The North West Hub

The South West Hub Museums

The Early Years Team from The South West Hub

Jane Fletcher North West Hub Education Development Manager

Pam Tideswell Head of Sure Start, Manchester

Stephanie Metcalfe Children's Centre Teacher

Sue Good Primary Phase Consultant, Museums and Galleries

Sarah Murray Foundation Stage Consultant

Terry Gould Foundation Stage Consultant

Virginia Tandy North West Museums Hub Lead

museums for changing lives

Renaissance is the Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) Council's £150million programme to transform England's regional museums. For the first time ever, investment from central government is helping regional museums across the country to raise their standards and deliver real results in support of education, learning, community development and economic regeneration. A network of 'Hubs' has been set up in each English region to act as flagship museums and help promote good practice. Alongside the Hubs, MLA Regional Agencies and Museum Development Officers are providing advice and support, Subject Specialist Networks have been set up, and national museums are sharing their skills and collections to ensure Renaissance benefits the entire museums sector. Renaissance is helping museums to meet people's changing needs - and to change people's lives

For more information and further copies of this report, please visit the Renaissance pages of the MLA North West website:

www.mlanorthwest.org.uk/museumslibrariesarchives/museums/renaissancenw

Published by Renaissance North West, March 2008.

RENAISSANCE
NORTH WEST

