



Wet and Dry Sand Area

The wet and dry sand areas are an essential part of the Reception environment as they provides rich, hands-on opportunities for children to explore, investigate and learn across all areas of the EYFS. Through open-ended play with sand and water, children develop their physical skills as they scoop, pour and manipulate materials, while also building early mathematical understanding through measuring, comparing and exploring capacity. The area supports communication and language as children describe what they observe and create narratives, and it encourages personal, social and emotional development as they collaborate, share ideas and persist in their play. In addition, sand play enables children to explore scientific concepts such as movement, change, cause and effect, while fostering imagination and creativity as they represent their ideas and experiences.



Wet Sand Area

Resources

- Small broom, dustpan and brush nearby
- Set of graded buckets
- Set of graded beakers
- Set of graded cups
- Selection of sand tools including spades, rakes, trowels, scoops
- A set of sand moulds
- Natural materials such as shells, stones, pebbles, pinecones, wooden logs, poles and corks
- Small world sets such as wild animals and dinosaurs
- Set of small world people and construction vehicles
- High quality texts or images displayed nearby

Storage and Organisation

- Distinct area with non-slip flooring
- Large sand tray with resting board or tray
- Shelving to display resources accessibly
- Collections of small resources and natural materials sorted and displayed in plastic trays
- Items placed individually on shelves with silhouettes to support shape recognition and tidying up routines
- Graded beakers, cylinders and jugs organised by height order
- Measuring cups and spoons organised by size
- Photographs and text for labels linked to the name of the resource
- Some labels identifying the size or number of items

Intended Experiences Autumn

- Explore sand through filling, pouring, digging and transporting, developing sensory awareness
- Develop gross and fine motor control through repeated use of tools such as spades and buckets.
- Use and develop simple vocabulary during play, supported by adults (e.g. fill, empty, big, small)
- Follow simple instructions when accessing and using resources.
- Begin to understand and use basic mathematical language (full/empty, more/less) linked to early number and comparison
- Engage in parallel play, beginning to share space and resources
- Explore early problem solving, cause and effect through actions such as pouring, tipping and moving sand

Intended Experiences Spring

- Use a wider range of tools with increasing control and coordination.
- Follow two-step instructions and sustain engagement for longer periods.
- Use expanded vocabulary to describe actions and processes (e.g. heavier, lighter, full, half full)
- Begin to engage in collaborative play, taking turns and sharing ideas.
- Develop early mathematical understanding of capacity, comparison and quantity.
- Combine actions to achieve a goal (e.g. fill → carry → pour), demonstrating early problem solving
- Use sand play within imaginative contexts, linked to stories and experiences

Intended Experiences Summer

- Independently select and use resources with confidence and control
- Sustain longer periods of play and concentration, developing own ideas and projects.
- Use rich vocabulary to explain processes, describe outcomes and share ideas, creating narratives.
- Apply mathematical understanding through measuring, comparing and estimating quantities.
- Work collaboratively, sharing ideas, negotiating and problem solving.
- Demonstrate increased physical control and coordination when using tools and equipment.
- Show responsibility for the environment by maintaining organisation and tidiness.
- Play imaginatively, creating stories and responding creatively to experiences

Dry Sand Area Resources:

- Small broom, dustpan and brush nearby
- Set of sand tools, forks, spades and scoops
- Set of graded buckets, different shapes and heights
- Set of graded jugs and beakers
- Set of graded funnels
- Selection of sand wheels
- Selection of transparent tubing of different lengths and widths
- Natural materials such as stones, shells, pebbles, cones, wood
- Small world sets such as desert animals
- Small world vehicles and people
- High quality texts or images displayed nearby

Storage and Organisation

- Distinct area with non-slip washable flooring
- Large sand tray, can be deep or shallow
- Shelving to display resources accessibly
- Collections of small resources sorted and displayed in plastic trays
- Items placed individually on shelves with silhouettes to identify where they go
- Graded buckets, jugs and funnels displayed in size order
- Photographs and text for labels linked to the name of the resource
- Some labels identifying the size or number of items