



**Cymru**  
National Day Nurseries Association

# Factsheet



## Foundation Phase Activity - Investigating Wind

Wales

# Foundation Phase – investigating wind and flight

Air, wind and flying are common interests of young children. Jumping off things, spreading arms wide and allowing coats and jackets to billow in the wind is a picture all childcare practitioners can imagine. Centering planning on children's interests can be integral to ownership and engagement within children and can provide a wide range of learning opportunities when looking at wind and flight. There are a variety of learning experiences to be had from blowing bubbles to making simple kites.

Exploring wind and flight within the Foundation Phase can provide a range of learning opportunities across all areas of learning. This can be from: encouraging the development of children's fine motor skills through a wide range of creative activities; improving gross motor skills and co-ordination through investigative work or watching things move through the air to learn more about weather and their immediate world.

Exploring how and why things fly and the effects of wind can also create wonderful opportunities for sustained shared thinking for children. Children may make comments, use new language to make connections and ask questions. You may not have all the answers but these interactions can be the catalyst for children to want to investigate and learn more.

When investigating wind and flight, it may be obvious but it really is best to wait for a blustery day and take the children outside to witness the effects of the wind first hand.

## Learning objectives

- To experience windy weather
- To talk about observations and ask questions about why things happen
- To understand that wind can cause things to move.

## Areas of learning - (range and skills)

### Knowledge and understanding of the world

#### Range:

- Investigate how things change with the weather.

#### Skills:

- Exploring and experimenting

- Seeing links between cause and effect
- Thinking creatively and imaginatively
- Describing what they have found out and offering simple explanations
- Reflecting on and evaluating their own and others' work.

**Literacy** - e.g. describing, listening, reflecting, viewing reference materials etc.

**Numeracy** - e.g. counting, measuring, comparing sizes, calculating etc.

## Resources

- A windy day and an open outdoor space!
  - Make sure that materials are ready so that you can respond quickly to the arrival of windy weather
- Paper 'sticks'
  - Make these from tightly rolled paper - 30cm to 60cm is an ideal length
- Tissue paper / crepe paper / coloured cellophane / ribbon
- Masking tape / sellotape
- Rubber bands
- String
- Scissors
- Chiffon scarves.

## Activity outline

Watching and experiencing the effects of the wind can be mesmerising for children, so starting your discussion next to a large window or outside is crucial. Initially, discuss with the children that although we can't see the wind, we can see, hear and feel its effects all around us on a blustery day. Ask children for their experiences of wind, e.g. garden items blowing over, losing a balloon / hat. Encourage children to suggest ideas for exploring the wind and provide them with the opportunity to make their own discoveries. Supply them with a range of resources within the setting to explore wind and flight e.g. they may suggest hanging items on a washing line.

This activity includes children creating their own wind wand, although the focus is on the way in which the wind makes things move.

Ensure you encourage children to think and question what they see and feel. Possible prompting questions include:

- What happens to the trees when the wind blows?
- Which way is the wind pushing you?
- Can you move to a place where you can feel the wind blowing on your face?
- Can you hear any sound as the wind blows?
- Can you make the same sound?
- How can you tell that it is windy when you are inside?
- What is making the leaves move?
- Why are they making a rustling sound?

## Continued and enhanced provision

- Include reference books in the book area on weather, wind and flight
  - Make sure you try to include non-fiction books as well as fictional stories
- Set up a bubble blowing station with bubbles and bubble wands
  - Encourage talking about how bubbles are formed and when released, are carried along by the wind
- Include planes, helicopters, birds and other flying objects within your small world area
- Consider placing pictures of flying machines, gliders etc. within your construction area along with materials that children could explore when trying to create winged creations
- Provide pictures and step-by-step guides on how to make paper aeroplanes within your mark making area

- Provide outdoor resources that will encourage the exploration of wind
  - Items could include: kites, windsocks, flagpoles and flags, shop bought wind chimes or lengths of copper / plastic piping or disused (safe) kitchen utensils
  - You can hang some items from tree branches or wall brackets or tie ribbons to fencing posts, tree branches and drain pipes
- Provide resources to mimic a washing line with pegs and items to hang
  - Consider the option for children to hang wet items and observe what happens
- Provide a range of windmills in different sizes for children to explore
  - You can blow into them or hold them in the wind outside
  - Consider making paper windmills
- Set up a 'watching station' next to a window or outside if possible with binoculars, different sized tubes, pictures of flying things the children may see in the sky and clipboards.

### Focused task

Ensure a thorough risk assessment has been completed prior to the activity. If the wind is strong, do a safety check immediately before taking the children outside e.g. make sure that open doors are hooked back and that no potentially dangerous items are blowing around the area. Include this check within your risk assessment.

- Take the children outside
  - Encourage them to feel the force of the wind and to move in response to the wind
- With the children, look at branches bending and any leaves being blown around the area
- Draw their attention to sounds created as a result of the wind
- Encourage children to make wind sounds using their own voices, such as 'Whoooooo' and 'Shhhhhhhhhh'
- Give children scarves and streamers to hold and encourage them to watch and talk about what happens to them when the wind blows
- Return indoors to make wind wands
  - Encourage children to select three or four streamers and ribbons to attach to the top of their wind wand
  - Discuss with them the properties and features of the different materials
  - Demonstrate to the children how to make a paper stick and provide them with the materials to make their own
  - Support the children in fixing their chosen streamers to the stick
  - Use opportunities to question the children on what might happen if the streamers aren't fixed well enough.
- Take the wind wands outside

- Ask the children to hold them up and watch what happens to the streamers as the wind blows, again encouraging the use of their senses
- Encourage further thinking and experimenting with questions such as:
  - Which way are streamers on your wind wand blowing?
  - Are the other children's streamers blowing in the same direction?
  - Do they always blow upwards / to this side?
  - Do the streamers make any sound as the wind blows them?
  - Do the paper and plastic streamers make the same sound?
  - What would happen to the streamers if we let go of them?
  - What does it feel like when the wind blows the streamers across your face?
- You may find it useful to note down some of the language and adjectives used by the children, to revisit when you return inside
  - Do not rush the children whilst they are outside - as long as they remain engaged within the activity, allow them to explore
- Explain the purposes of the activity to parents and encourage children to take their wind wands home to continue their investigations and report back to the group.

## Welsh Language Development

gwynt - wind

chwythu – blow

hwrdd – gust

mae hi'n wyntog – it's windy

be fedri di weld – what can you see?

be fedri di glywed ? – what can you hear?

be fedri di deimlo – what can you feel?

gwialen gwynt / ffon - wind wand / stick

cryf – strong

swnllyd – noisy

rhuban – ribbon

### Extension activities

- Investigate kites and dismantle a kite to discover how it has been made
- Kites are popular in many countries such as China, Pakistan and India where there are often kite-flying festivals.
  - Do any of your children have cultural links with kite-flying festivals?
  - Could you invite someone in to talk about them?
- Watch kite-flying festival videos
- Make your own kites
- Flying bought and made kites in an outdoor area
- Could you invite someone in to talk about any aspect of flying, such as an air traffic controller, pilot or an enthusiast for flying model planes?
- There are some flight-tracking apps so that when a child spots a plane flying overhead, you can look it up together to find out where it is going.

### Further support and NDNA resources

- [Risking it outdoors](#) - myNDNA blog post on the benefits of outdoor play and exploration for young children and taking risks
- [Make a sound garden](#) - MyNDNA tip.

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