

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Dancing round the maypole

This English tradition to welcome May can be celebrated with the children and families with a dance around a maypole.

Learning aims

- British values – begin to learn about customs and traditions
- Singing – remember and join in a new song
- Physical development – learn to skip
- Self-confidence – take part in a performance
- Fine motor skills – cutting, taping, painting.



Resources

- Maypole (see idea below if you don't have a maypole already)
- Music player, with speakers loud enough for outdoors.

Activity outline

- Make a maypole using a large parasol with a heavy base. Tightly tie the parasol. Add eight holes to a round plastic sweet tub around the top edge. Tie long lengths of ribbon to each hole. Tie the ribbons at the bottom to make hand holds. Screw the tub to the top of the parasol, making sure the tub moves freely
- Teach the children how to skip, practicing hopping on each foot on the spot, then hopping forward on one foot, then hopping on alternate feet
- Watch videos of traditional maypole dancing so children know what happens. You may find a tune or song to use for your own May day dancing
- Share your chosen tune for dancing round the maypole. You could choose something of your own, with a steady beat to skip along to. If there are words for the song, teach them to the children so they can sing while they dance. For example:
 - Dancing round the maypole, dancing all the day
 - Dancing round the maypole on the first of May.
 - Dancing round the maypole, what a merry bunch

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Dancing round the maypole 'til it's time for lunch
Dancing round the maypole, shouting out with glee
Dancing round the maypole 'til it's time for tea
Dancing round the maypole, blue and white and red
Dancing round the maypole 'til it's time for bed.

- Invite families to come and join in the fun. When their child takes a turn to dance, the parents can dance around the maypole as well, skipping around the maypole while holding a ribbon
- Children and families who are waiting to take a turn can clap and sing along and have crepe paper shakers made by the children (lengths of crepe paper strips taped onto painted cardboard tubes).

Extension ideas

- Take photographs of the children with their family members and make these into a book or display so the children can talk about and recall the event with others.

NDNA products to support you with this activity

- [EYFS expressive arts and design](#) - face to face course
- [Outdoor play](#) - publication