

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.

Activity: What's in the bag?

Unleash the magic of sustained shared thinking where curiosity is fuelled by collaboration. Through encouraging open-ended discussions, exploring ideas and sharing of and building upon each other's thoughts, sustained shared thinking creates a rich, collaborative and interactive environment that gives you valuable insight into children's thinking.

Learning aims

- Communication and language – effective interactions between adults and children, expression of thoughts and ideas, vocabulary expansion
- Enhance respect and listening skills
- Critical thinking – promote curiosity, investigation and stimulate problem-solving and reasoning
- Social skills – collaboration, turn-taking and shared experiences.



Resources

- A 'mystery' box or bag
- Various fruits or vegetables (include fruit with interesting textures, shapes, smells, sounds and colours, e.g. kiwi, ginger, pineapple, broccoli, lychee etc.).

Activity outline

1. Introduce the 'mystery box' to the children. Ask, "What do you think might be inside?" Encourage the children to share their predictions and, if they can, explain the reasons for their answers
2. Demonstrate the activity by reaching into the box/bag and feeling one of the fruits/vegetables. Describe, in detail, what you can feel and any aromas that are released as you touch it, e.g. "It feels spiky, it's a kind of ball shape and it smells sweet."
3. The children then reach into the box/bag and as they explore the fruits/vegetables encourage them to describe their item in detail and problem-solve what it might be and why they think that

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4. Ask open questions, e.g. "Can you tell us how it feels/sounds/smells?", "Why do you think it feels/sounds/smells that way?", "What do you think it's used for?", "What do you think you could make with it?", "Did you find anything surprising, if so, what?"
5. Encourage other children to respond to each other's observations and reflect on each other's responses and ideas
6. Once the fruits/vegetables have all been revealed, see if they can name them. Explore them further such as what they are used for, where/when they are used/eaten, where they are from, what would happen if they ..., what they could do with them now that they are out of the box, what they smell like, how they could be tasted, wondering how they grow, etc. Let the children lead and follow their own lines of thinking and suggestions
7. Ask the group if they'd like to create another 'mystery box' for other children to explore. Let them decide what goes in the box and encourage them to explain the reasoning behind their choices.

Extension ideas:

- Use open questions when joining in with other activities to encourage children to think critically about what they are doing, express their ideas, listen to each other and problem-solve solutions together.

NDNA products to support you with this activity:

- [Speech and language multipack deal](#) – online courses