

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.

Top tips: Creativity in early years settings

Supporting children's creativity and imagination requires consideration of the range of your creative offer, how resources are used, opportunities for children to engage with the resources and how practitioners develop children's flexible and creative thinking.

Practitioners should be confident to focus on experiences rather than outcomes and create time for babies, toddlers and older children to respond to the things they see, hear and experience at their own level. Use these top tips to help you reflect on your creativity offer.



- Audit your curriculum for all age groups to ensure you provide opportunities for babies and young children to engage in:
 - Music – responding to and creating
 - Imagination and creativity
 - Artistic and cultural awareness
 - Media and materials
 - Awe and wonder.
- Ensure there is a shared understanding from staff about what each of these aspects of creative learning looks like for the age groups they are with. You may wish to refer to curriculum guidance materials such as Birth to 5 matters to encourage staff to reflect on environments, resources and the adult role
- Reflect on the characteristics for lifelong learning and how these relate to creative arts, for example, exploring through role play, being proud of their artistic achievements or testing and refining ideas by thinking critically about a model they created. Encourage staff to reflect on their own characteristics and how these can help to encourage creative engagement and responses to children's experiences. Remember that children's responses may not be what you expect – this should be welcomed, celebrated, acknowledged and noticed, and used for planning ahead
- Review your resources, ensuring that there are adequate materials which inspire children to be flexible and creative, e.g. lengths of fabric and accessories for role play can have more creative potential than standard dressing-up clothes. If using interesting and beautiful found materials, develop a strategy for replacing and renewing these on a regular basis
- Reflect on the quality and variety of what children see, hear, feel and engage with in order to fully develop their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts (verbally or non-verbally)

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- Use technology to bring art works into the setting alongside your other resources – use video, audio and images to encourage children's responses, thoughts, ideas and creativity. Model using language of thinking and critical reflection to encourage children to have the vocabulary they need to share their thoughts
- Consider the cultural richness of your community and identify opportunities, and resources from children, staff and parents. Be aware of local sources of creativity such as temples, museums, galleries, theatres as well as natural areas such as woods or parks. It may be valuable for one or two staff members to be nominated as responsible for liaising with these amenities to find out what opportunities are available for children to visit or explore.

NDNA products to support you with these tips

- Face to face training - [Expressive Arts and Design](#)

And more resources at www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna