Introduction

ICT without a PC

ICT without a PC is one of a series of books containing 'outside the box' ideas for practitioners working with children in the early years. The activities in this series are written with children's interests and joy for life at their very heart, bearing in mind that children love to be doing, investigating, making, creating and solving problems. They are designed to excite and stimulate children as they learn through using their senses, being active and thinking for themselves.

But why ICT without a PC?

The computer immediately comes to mind when we think of embedding the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum and it is, of course, a vital tool with many applications. We may, however, overlook the myriad of other ICT appliances and toys that are readily available in the early years setting that support and enhance children's learning, giving them the opportunity to be independent users of ICT in exciting situations, on the move, inside and outside.

The world of ICT is fastmoving, with new products constantly expanding the market and opening up new possibilities. The carefully planned activities in this book are designed to widen children's experiences, making the use of ICT an integral, stimulating element of everyday activities and role-play areas. The ideas and suggestions can be adapted according to the range of equipment available in a particular setting.

Wanting to use ICT

Children are surrounded by the use of ICT, in their homes, in the early years setting, in shops and in the street. Given the right opportunities, they very quickly become proficient users of ICT, finding that it opens up new avenues that they just cannot wait to explore. The activities in this book are designed to excite and inspire children to think for themselves and use ICT creatively and independently.

How the book is organised

The book is organised in three sections:

● Chapter 1: 'Making things happen' introduces children to the dazzling world of ICT as they find out how to press buttons, move switches and turn dials to operate a wide variety of toys and appliances. The activities range from using a digital camera to photograph 'the three bears' in different hiding places, to programming a robot dressed as Mummy Duck to find her babies, or controlling remote-controlled cars on a rally course.

● Chapter 2: 'Using ICT in role play' involves the children in creating role-play areas that provide many varied opportunities to use real and play ICT equipment. Children take on the roles of builders, using mobile phones and battery-operated tools; they become elves checking the on/off switches and functions on toys in Santa's workshop; or they audition for a pop group, using keyboards, guitars and microphones as available.

● Chapter 3: 'Using our senses' introduces children to the idea that they use their senses to find out information in many different ways. They play a game in which sounds convey information, they use their sense of touch to distinguish between different textures and find that people and photographs can provide information. They use digital cameras, camcorders and tape recorders to record images and sound.

The activities
Planning and learning objectives
Links to the Stepping Stones and Early Learning Goals for Knowledge and Understanding of the World (KUW), in the QCA document *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* are shown for each activity to aid planning. The activities are all cross-curricular and the main link to one of the other Areas of Learning is also shown.

Support and extension
Each activity has suggestions for practitioners to adapt or extend the activities

according to children's needs and stage of development.

Assessment
Practitioners can assess children against the Stepping Stones and Early Learning Goals shown for each activity. Most of the activities are designed for small groups, enabling practitioners to observe individual children's progress and aid assessment to inform future planning.

Further activities
These provide more suggestions for developing lively activities linked to the main activity.

Play links
Ideas for play linked to the main activity are given to continue the theme into other Areas of Learning, such as opportunities for investigations or role play.

Home links
In order to promote and foster a partnership with parents or carers for the benefit of the children, a suggestion is given in each activity to link the learning in the setting to that in the home.

Health and safety
Ensure that cables are stored safely so that children cannot trip over them. Follow the Health and Safety guidelines in place for your particular setting or local authority. Check that children do not have any food allergies or particular dietary requirements before tasting foods. Also check for any plant or perfume allergies before introducing real plants or scents to your setting.

Abbreviations
References to Areas of Learning in the QCA document *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage:*
● Personal, social and emotional development **(PSED)**
● Communication, language and literacy **(CLL)**
● Mathematical development **(MD)**
● Knowledge and understanding of the world **(KUW)**
● Physical development **(PD)**
● Creative development **(CD)**