

Toybox

The photographic images on this poster feature different toys to encourage discussion and for the children to think about which toys they enjoy playing with

Activities to support the Early Years Foundation Stage framework

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Ask the children to read the poster title 'Toybox'. What is a toybox used for? Where do the children keep their toys? Talk about different storage systems, such as boxes, shelves, cupboards and drawers. Discuss the importance of tidying toys away, both at home and in the setting.
- Invite the children to choose the two poster toys that they would most like to take to bed with them, or to cuddle when they feel sad. Why would a rolling pin or drum be unsuitable? Encourage the children to describe their own comfort toys and what is special about them.

Communication and Language

Literacy

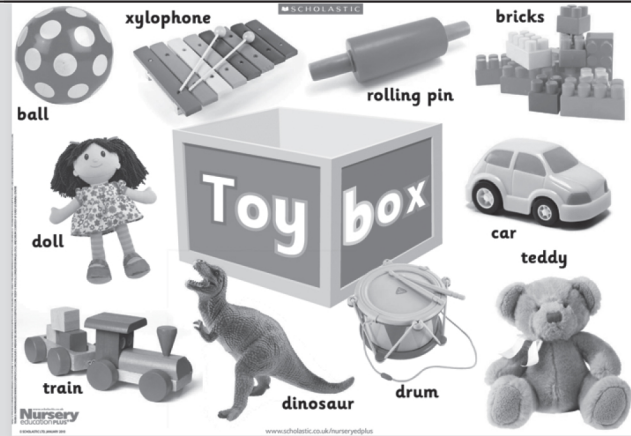
- Display the poster on a screen and hide similar toys behind it. Label a lidded container 'Toybox' and put it with the toys. Invite the children to sit in front of the screen. Let them take turns to go behind the screen and choose a toy to put in the box. Ask a question in turn about the toy in the box until someone guesses which one it is.
- Read the words beside the toys and ask questions to encourage close observation of letters, for example, 'Which two words end in 'll'?', 'Which word has 'll' in the middle?', 'Can you find a long/short word?'.

Mathematics

- Make up a song to the tune of *Five Currant Buns*:
'Ten lovely toys in the box one day,
Waiting quietly ready to play,
Along came (*name of child*) with a smile one day,
Chose the (*name of toy*) and took it away.'
- Sing the song and ask each child to choose their toy from an appropriate selection arranged around the poster on the floor.
- Explain that similar toys to those on the poster are hidden around the room and need to be put back in the empty toybox on the floor. Encourage the children to take turns to follow directions to a toy, for example, 'Look under the pink chair' or 'Open the blue cupboard door'. Ask them to bring the toy back, put it in the toybox and put a tick beside the name of the toy on a list attached to the side.

Understanding the World

- Explore the poster and ask if the children know what each toy is made of. Spread four hoops on the floor with the words 'wood', 'plastic', 'fabric' or 'mixture' in each one. Provide a selection of similar toys for the children to sort into the hoops.
- Discuss how the poster toys and similar real ones work, for



How to use the poster

Support close observation and early reading skills by displaying the poster on a low board with a table alongside it. Arrange a selection of toys that match those in the poster on the table. Include a set of word cards to match the poster words. Encourage the children to match the toys to their images on the poster, and to find the same words among the cards to put with the toys.

example, by pulling, pushing, connecting, beating and rolling. Which toys are best for pretend games?

Physical Development

- Invite the children to pretend to be the poster toys, for example, rolling over and over like a rolling pin, roaring and stamping like a dinosaur or bouncing like a ball. They could also pretend to beat a drum or xylophone as they march along.
- Explore the poster and suggest that the children play a team game using similar toys. Arrange the toys in two piles of five at one end of the room. Invite two groups of five children to sit at the other end. Encourage them to take turns to retrieve a toy and bring it back to the group, moving as instructed, for example, hopping, jumping, walking, crawling or moving on tiptoe.

Expressive Arts and Design

- Ask the children to decide which two toys on the poster can be used to make or accompany music. Can any of the other toys be used to make sounds? Try tapping with a rolling pin, pushing a car on a bumpy surface or clacking two building bricks together as you sing a song.
- Create a role-play toy stall called the 'Toybox'. Hang the poster at the front and sell similar toys to those displayed on it. Use Blu-Tack to attach prices to the toys.

Jean Evans is an early years consultant and author.

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