

Early Years Play Activities

Discovery Treasure Box

What is it?

An activity using a collection of stimulating toys which otherwise may not be found in nursery/school, or at home. It is used to promote attention, concentration and language skills. It may be used in a one to one session, or in a small group.

Benefits for the child

Discovery treasure box will help your child develop:

- Attention skills
- Language skills
- Increased eye contact
- Turn taking skills

When using at home, your child will benefit from quality time with you, and enjoyment while “learning!”

It is also beneficial to promote continuity between home and nursery/school settings, so everyone is working on the same targets.

Resources

- Use a special blanket for ‘special time routine’ (you can also use a table and two chairs) and ...
- A small box, e.g. a shoe box (preferably attractively decorated). A bag or bucket can also be used where appropriate



- A collection of small toys, perhaps including:
 - Visual toys - e.g. Glitter stick, light-up ball/stick, light chaser etc.
 - Tactile toys – e.g. Koosh ball, furry caterpillar etc.
 - Auditory (Sound) toys – e.g. Whistle, mini-drum, harmonica, echo microphone etc.
 - Cause and effect toys – e.g. Wind-up toys, pop-up toys, jumping frog etc.
 - Any other toys that are likely to motivate your child

The discovery treasure box song

(which can be sung to the tune of 'Here We Go Round The Mulberry Bush' like this)



What have we got in the box today? the box today? the box today?



What have we got in the box today? Let's Look and see!

How to do it

- 1) Gather your resources in a quiet area of your home (or other setting) where the child will not be distracted. Turn off television, radio or anything else which may interrupt your session.
- 2) Sit your child opposite you. You may need to show the box to him/her to encourage them to sit down.
- 3) Place the box between you and your child. Where possible DO NOT let him/her touch the box.
- 4) Sing the Treasure box song while tapping on the box.
- 5) On the words "look and see", open the box and take out a toy.
- 6) Name the toy and demonstrate what it does. Use simple language, e.g. pull, twist, shake, etc. Use only single words rather than long phrases or sentences, and do not ask your child questions. Do not insist that your child name the toy.

- 7) While he/she is still showing attention, say “finished”, or “bye bye” (Name of toy), and put the toy back in the box.
- 8) Repeat steps 4 to 7 until all toys have been looked through or the child loses interest.

Points to remember:

- Start small, initially with two toys in the box, and gradually build these up as the child is able to sit/engage for longer.
- If the child has a particular interest in a particular toy (train, car, etc), leave this toy until last as it may distract their attention. You could let him/her play with the last toy as a reward.
- Never teach in a tantrum. If the child is distressed they are learning nothing. Finish the session and try again another time.
- As the child learns the routine, encourage them to tap the box when you are singing the song, and to start choosing the toys (one at a time) out of the box.
- Have fun! If you are enjoying yourself, so is the child.