

Farm-based activities for Early Years Foundation Stage

Early Years Foundation Stage activities that can be carried out before, during or after a school visit.

Curriculum area: Communication and language

Activities:

- Talk session - children give accounts of their day on the farm.
- Recognise pictures of farm animals.
- Naming adult and baby animals from pictures.
- Matching two sets of same animals.
- Game of 'snap' using animal pictures.
- Play games - teacher starts by saying 'I am pink, have a curly tail and make this sound. Who am I?' When confident children can take the lead.
- Practise vocabulary - name farm animals using pictures and emphasise words such as hooves, fur, tails, horns, fleece.
- Ask open questions - 'tell me about your pictures'.
- Play tapes of animal sounds for listening bingo - identify pictures of animals, children cover up picture of animal when they hear the sound of that animal.
- Children listen to a story about a farm read from a book and then discuss.
- Look at non-fiction books about farms, and at the pictures, and discuss.
- Sings songs - Old MacDonald, Five little ducks went swimming one day.

Resources needed:

- Photocopied sets of farm-animal pictures
- Pictures of animals (you can make your own) and the farm stuck onto card
- Tape of animal sounds
- Story and non-fiction books about farms
- Collection of songs

Curriculum area: Physical development

Activities:

- Outdoor play - pretend wheeled toys are farm vehicles, make a farmyard route for tractors to drive around.
- Use trailers or wheelbarrows for children to move items or pretend animals (other children?) from one part of the farm yard to another.
- Separate a corner of play area into a 'field'. Demonstrate how the farmer would plough or harvest a field, driving up and down. Include a gate in the design.

Resources needed:

- Wheeled outdoor toys
- Cones, boxes and items suitable for partitioning, and marking out 'field'

Curriculum area: Literacy

Activities:

- Match picture to word - 'hen' to picture of hen; extend by matching word to word.
- Practise initial sound collections - 'p' is for pig, pen, pink.
- Free, emergent writing about the farm and what they saw or create a simple story board.
- Each child contributes a drawing to a class book of animals seen on farm visit.

- Structured writing - using word cards with pictures or a sentence maker.
- Draw a picture of farm and write a caption.
- Find words for sentences: 'Here is a (farm noun)', 'This is a (farm noun)', 'I can see a (farm noun)'.
- Make a pop-up book and stick in pop-up animals, find the word for the animal in the picture name cards and write it in.
- Make book of animals with names underneath.
- Pictures of animals with speech bubbles - children fill in speech.

Resources needed:

- Letters of the alphabet on individual cards
- Class scrap-book or a few sheets of sugar paper folded in two
- Sentence maker or words on card
- Make folded books with animals cut to pop out or lift up as a flap
- Cards with animal pictures and names
- Folded book
- Pictures of animals with speech bubbles

Curriculum area: Mathematics

Activities:

- Sort: farm animals eg cows/not cows; hens/not hens, limit to two animals to start with and then increase number of animals to sort to three and then four. Develop by sorting animals that have four legs/two legs; animals that go into water/do not go into water; have feathers/do not have feathers/ etc.
- Match: using any sorting apparatus to match *like to like*. Develop by matching two sorts of animals hens/cows; same number/more or less, etc.
- Order: by height eg 'Here is a cow, can you find an animal which is smaller/one that is taller?'

- Sequence: by twos - hens/sheep/hens/sheep, 'Can you copy that line of animals?' By threes - hens/sheep/pigs/hens/sheep/pigs, 'Can you copy this line of animals?' Extend 'Try and make your own line', by colour/number of legs, etc?'
- Counting animals in pictures or on model farm.
- Put toy animals on model farm - count them.
- Put toy animals in fields - ask children to find the field with three sheep or four pigs.
- Put several toy animals into different fields - ask children how many animals in two, three or four fields, and how many animals altogether in all the fields?
- Six egg boxes with different number of eggs (plastic) in each box - ask the children to find the box which has two, four, five eggs in it.
- Can they find one more or less animal from a group?
- Ask children to draw three pigs/one sheep/two cows.
- Use different-shaped fields - ask children to put eg the sheep in the triangle-shaped field.
- Use solid shapes/building blocks - let children investigate building farm buildings with the blocks. Show them pictures of the farm for ideas.
- Use different milk containers in water play and discuss capacity - emphasise comparative vocabulary - biggest, smallest, tallest, shortest etc.; compare different animals for size; put pictures in order of animal size.
- Discuss jobs - what does a farmer do? Sequence the day in order.
- Sequence photos of farm visit. Use vocabulary before and after.
- Class pictogram on favourite animals - children can find a picture of their favourite animal and stick on pictogram. Count out loud the different numbers of animals on the graph. Ask which animal do most children like.
- Sort animals into categories ie types of animals, animals and birds, adults and babies, farm animals, zoo animals, pets.

Resources needed:

- Toy animals
- Model farm
- Farm pictures
- Egg boxes, plastic eggs or playdough eggs

- Animal cut-outs/models
- Photographs of the day
- Card for fencing which can be bent into shape or pieces of construction toys laid out in shapes
- Solid shapes, small boxes
- Large graph drawn out, pictures of animals to stick on graph

Curriculum area: Understanding of the World

Plant Activities

Activities

- Rubbings of bark, leaves.
- Make plaster casts of bark, leaves, press into plasticine, make card collar for plasticine and pour in plaster of Paris.
- Observing and sorting seeds - stick a few of each sort of seed on cards - have two cards for each type of seed, and label only one card with the name of the seed - children match the pairs.
- Make seed packets out of folded paper envelopes - look at real seed packets, children draw plant/flower on front, write on back, put seeds inside (could just be a few lentils - nothing expensive) and seal up.
- Plant seeds in compost/beans in a jar with blotting paper - then replant into a growing bag - discuss what plants need to grow.
- Place a potato in one end of a shoe box with a lid. Make a hole at the other end from the potatoes and then place some dividers into box so that potato, as it grows and reaches towards the light has to zig-zag around dividers.
- Make observational drawings of plants.

Resources needed:

- Thick paper, wax crayons
- Plaster of Paris, bark, leaves, plasticine, card in strips
- Seeds, card, glue
- Folded paper envelopes, lentils or rice

- Compost, jars, blotting paper, yogurt pots, growing bags, large seeds eg beans
- Shoe box with lid, card for dividers, potato (preferably one that has already sprouted)
- Variety of different plants
- Drawing materials

Curriculum area: Understanding of the World

Animal Activities

Activities:

- Look at animal covers - skin, fur, scales, wool, feathers.
- Discuss products from animals ie food, clothing.
- Pictures of animals - encourage talk about body parts - head/body/legs/ tails; legs - number; feet - hooves/paws/ webbed.
- Label big, simple drawing with card words to match part of body.
- Look at similarities and differences between humans and animals.
- Match parent to child using pictures. Human families, animal families, baby/parent.
- Sequence pictures of animals growing up from baby to adult.
- Needs - shelter/food/care.
- Fresh eggs - break open eggs - draw/name different parts. *NB - employ all the standard safety procedures relating to raw eggs.*
- Cook eggs - compare hard boiled with soft boiled with raw. Discuss differences.

Resources needed:

- Pictures of farm animals
- Drawing materials
- Large drawing of animal, names of body parts on card
- Pictures: human - baby; hen - chicken; pig - piglet
- Selection of pictures of different animals from baby to adult

- Eggs and containers

Curriculum area: Understanding of the World

Environmental Activities

Activities:

- Make a nature collection in an egg box - put cotton wool in each section and find something from the farm to put into each section e.g. fleece, leaves, stones, grain.
- Farm table - collect and display on table interesting items from farm or rural area. Encourage children to add to the collection from things they might find in their local area.
- Discuss what they liked, disliked about the farm.
- Look at contrasting pictures of old and new farming e.g. milking a cow. 'What is the same?', 'What is different?'
- Feelie box - containing different natural items - fleece, stone, wood.
- Extend children's vocabulary - 'Is it hard, soft, squashy, scratchy?'
- Sort items found in different ways - hard, soft; by colour etc.
- Build model farms from natural materials.
- Roll tractors in paint to look at the different tracks they make.
- Build animals that can stand, have one moving part, pop-up animals etc
- Make model farm from junk boxes, make fences out of strips of corrugated card.
- Design and make a cosy house for an animal and discuss what it needs - 'What would be good materials to use?'
- Computer programs - sorting/design/pictures/texts.
- Tape recorders - stories/poems/songs.
- Make a map of the farm.
- Show picture of farm and ask questions about position - 'What is next to the barn/what is behind the barn/what is in front of the barn?' Extend using farm pictures - 'Where would you expect to find the tractor/cows/chickens, etc.?' Children answer and place pictures in appropriate place.

Resources:

- Egg boxes and cotton wool
- Table in classroom put aside. Items to start it off brought back from teacher visit to farm
- Finds from the farm
- 'Feelie box'
- Items from farm, rural location or school environment
- Construction kits with wheels
- Assorted junk/masking tape. Junk boxes/corrugated card/large piece of thick paper/card as base, paints
- Small medium and large boxes
- Toy animals of assorted sizes
- Different materials - cotton wool, off cuts of different materials, straw, wood shavings
Some contrasting ie obviously not appropriate materials
- Appropriate software
- Story tapes, farm-animal sound tapes
- Pictures of past and present farming activities

Curriculum area: Expressive arts and design

Activities:

- Make collages out of natural materials collected on farm visit or rural walk.
- Make prints of animals and farm. Use different objects to create different effects e.g. sponge for sheep's wool, corrugated card for fences.
- Make hand-span print of a hen. Use paint prints of hand spans to make feathers.
- Use playdough or plasticine to make own model animals for model farm.
- Provide red and white paints. Can they make a pink pig? Provide red and green. Can they make a brown cow?

- Give a variety of boxes and covers. Let children construct a farm yard.
- Structured play - 'on the farm' using farm outfits and a farm play set.
- When children have had time to practise improvisation in the structured play area have them give a short play using the farm play set.
- Drama - acting-out the journey, interviewing farmers, interviewing each other, asking favourite/least favourite/funniest part of the journey to the farm.
- Extend by acting-out familiar storyline.
- Make shakers with different seeds. Tape sounds. Can they match the shaker to the sound on the tape?

Resources needed:

- Collage materials collected on farm or similar area
- Paint, printing tools such as sponges, card, objects around classroom
- Paint, selection of hands
- Playdough, plasticine
- Paint - powder or mixed
- Boxes, cardboard and wooden covers, tyres
- Wellies, overalls, toy tractor and stuffed toy animals, signs, labels, farm play set, boxes with sides cut out for barns, pens - anything that will help create a farm
- Arrange chairs to resemble coach seating, toy microphone, coat/hat/wellies for farmer
- Dressing-up clothes
- Stiff paper or card, paper fasteners, glue, sticky tape Seeds and plastic containers with lids to make shake.



Activities

URL: www.visitmyfarm.org/teachers-resources/304-farm-basedactivitiesforearlyyearsfoundationstage





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