



Model making for younger learners

This activity encourages learners to explore and observe their space, before building a model of it which can be used throughout their Nature Park journey.

Using natural materials, recycled materials or play dough, learners can make a model of their setting or a section of it, as well as modelling what they might like it to look like. The models can provide an ongoing documentation of their Nature Park journey, adding changes and improvements to the model over time.

Teaching time

Up to 1 hour

Learning outcomes

- design a space through play dough or other materials
- listen to each other's ideas and views, and be confident to share their own
- explore, take a closer look and get in touch with the natural world through the senses

Step by step

Spend a few minutes exploring your outdoor space with learners, allowing them to notice and familiarise themselves with different areas.

Ask them questions about how they experience the spaces as you walk around:

- Which areas do they use and how do they use them? How would they get from one place to another? What do they call each area?
- Which areas are interesting to them? Do they use it a lot, or not? What do they like or dislike about the space?

Learners can then gather materials from the site to make their models (sticks and twigs, leaves, stones, pinecones, etc) – or use craft materials, or loose parts.

Note: Remind learners to only use fallen natural materials from the ground, and not to pick any leaves or plants, or break branches from trees! This activity can provide an opportunity to encourage respect and empathy for the nature around them.

Learners can then construct a model individually or in groups of their space – or a section of it. Perhaps they have chosen their favourite area, or their least favourite. They might create a model of what they imagine their space could look like, and what they'd like to see in the future.

This activity can be adapted based on what stage learners are at on their Nature Park journey – it provides a basis for a child-led way of 'mapping' their space, sharing their opinions and ideas, plotting where changes could be made, and thinking about what has changed.

Green Skills



Suitable for

Early Years

Location

Indoors
Outdoors

Season

Spring
Summer
Autumn
Winter

What you'll need

Natural materials, craft or recycled materials, or play dough

Key vocabulary

Map
Nature
Names of features

Step by step (continued)

Here are some suggestions of how this model making activity could be used at different stages of the Nature Park:

- Creating a model of your site at the start of the Nature Park, to help learners familiarise themselves with their surroundings and voice their opinions and experiences – can they share their favourite or least favourite parts of their models?
- Creating a fictional model of their ideal space, to share ideas about what they'd like it to look and feel like – what could it be like for bugs, birds, or hedgehogs?
- Adding or changing their model over time as you learn more about your space, or improvements are made to it
- You could take photographs of learners' models at each stage, and display them to show the changes and difference made to them over time



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