

‘Hands on’ learning in
the environment

Why did I select this topic?

I chose to research "learning through play/hands-on learning" in my career development because of the diverse abilities and needs within my SEN classroom. At the beginning of the year, I observed that my students thrived during carousel activities but struggled with worksheets and maintaining concentration during longer inputs. To address this, I restructured my classroom to include songs, brief instructional sessions that modelled activities, and opportunities for both group and individual work. Drawing from my experience in a mixed Year 1/2 setting, I aimed to create a play-based provision tailored to be age-appropriate, fostering an engaging and effective learning environment for all my students.

What does it mean?

Hands-on learning, also known as experiential or active learning, involves engaging students directly in the learning process through practical experiences and activities. This approach allows students to manipulate materials, conduct experiments, collaborate with peers, and apply theoretical concepts to real-world situations, thereby enhancing their understanding and retention of knowledge (Teach Simple) (Online Proctoring system | ProctorEdu)

‘Play comes naturally to children, and at each stage in their development you will find them playing in the way that is best suited to the tasks that must be learned’
Play and learn, Dr Dorothy Einon, pg 7.

Inspired my aims create an environment to promote choice and independence.

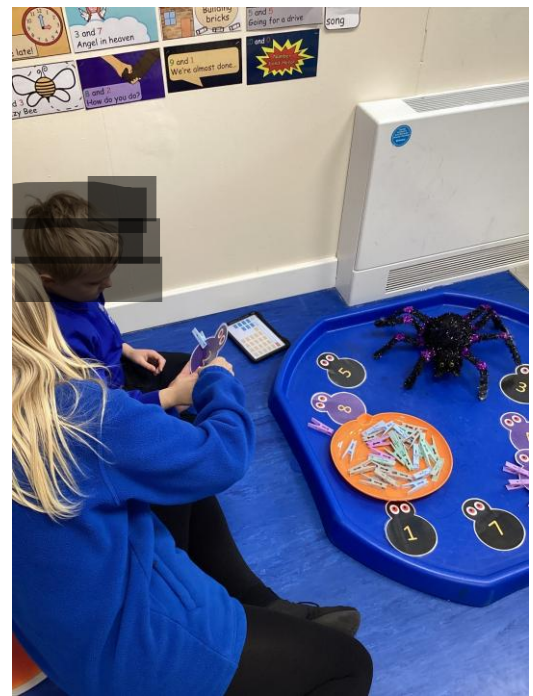
‘Play is self paced and freer than formal learning, but that does not mean it lacks structure or familiar elements. Often play is simply repeating the same task over and over again. Practice turns the behaviour into a skill and makes it automatic’
Play and learn, Dr Dorothy Einon, pg 7.

Inspired my aims to foster a creative learning environment.

‘A child’s motivation to participate in an activity is one of the most important factors in determining successful engagement. Successful engagement is the first step to learning’ **101 games and activities for children with Autism, Asperger’s and Sensory processing disorders, Tara Delaney, M.S. OTR, pg ix.**

Inspired my aims to create engagement and curiosity.

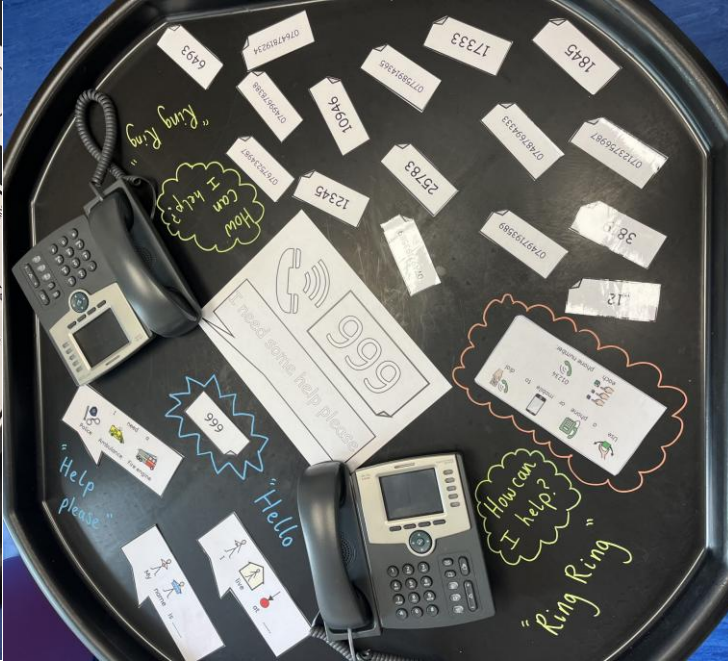
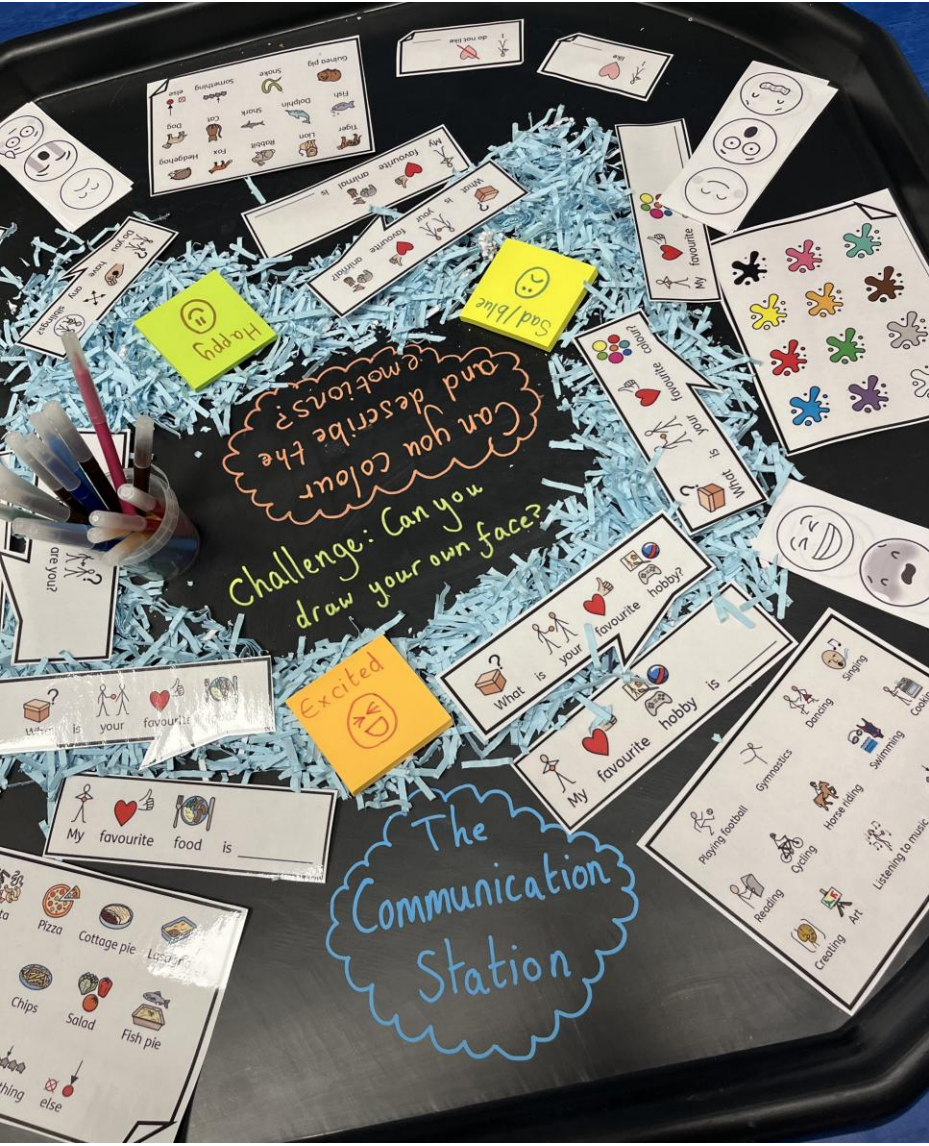
Start of the year:

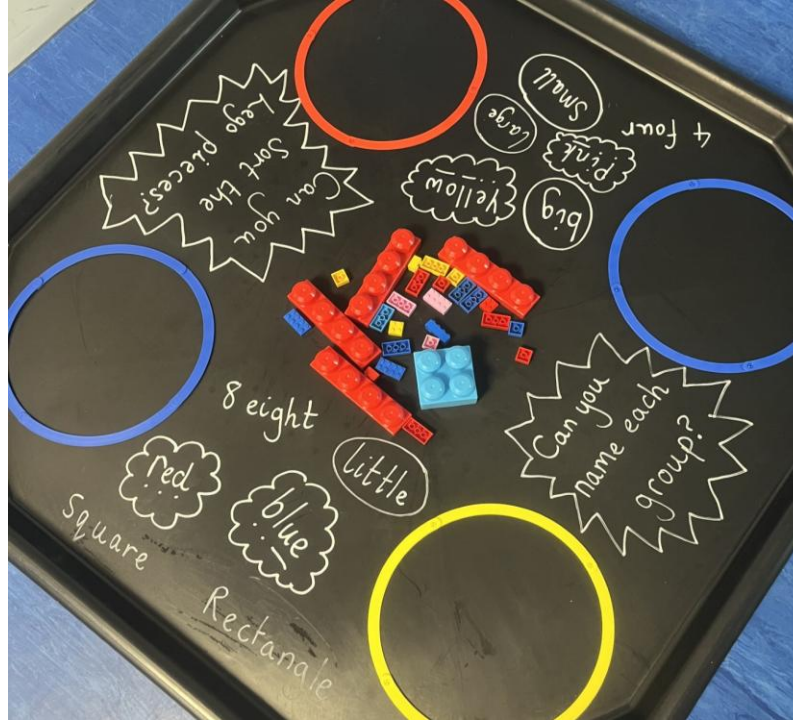


Learning barriers:

- To much time at tables.
- The flow of the classroom still felt adult led and structured.
- Hit and miss with engaging the children at all times.

Now:





Example:

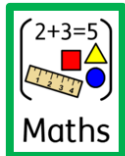
Maths-

Sequence

of lessons

Bar

charts



Maths



We are learning to:



I can sort objects by one criteria in various ways e.g., hoops.



Bronze:

I can choose a criteria to sort objects by, size or colour.



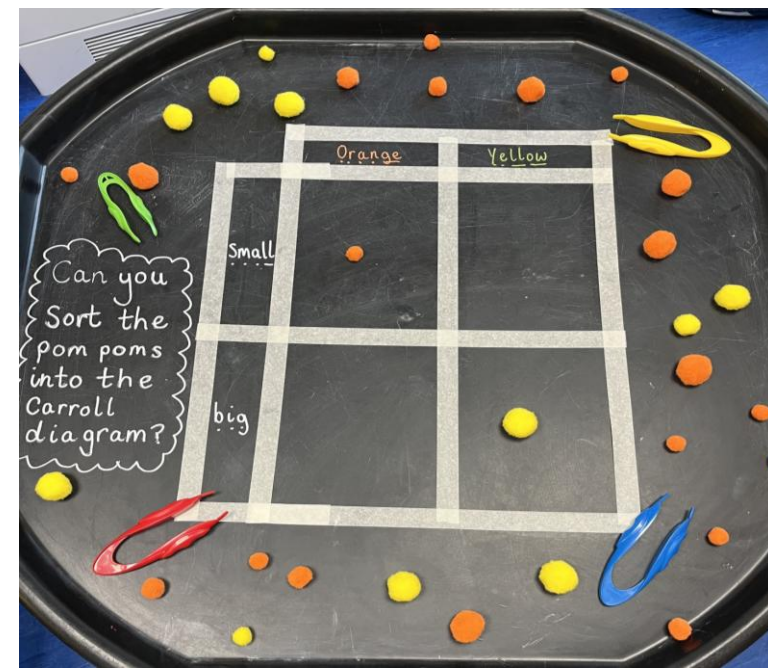
Silver:

I can gather objects that fit into a specific criteria.



Gold:

I can arrange objects in different orders based on a chosen criteria.

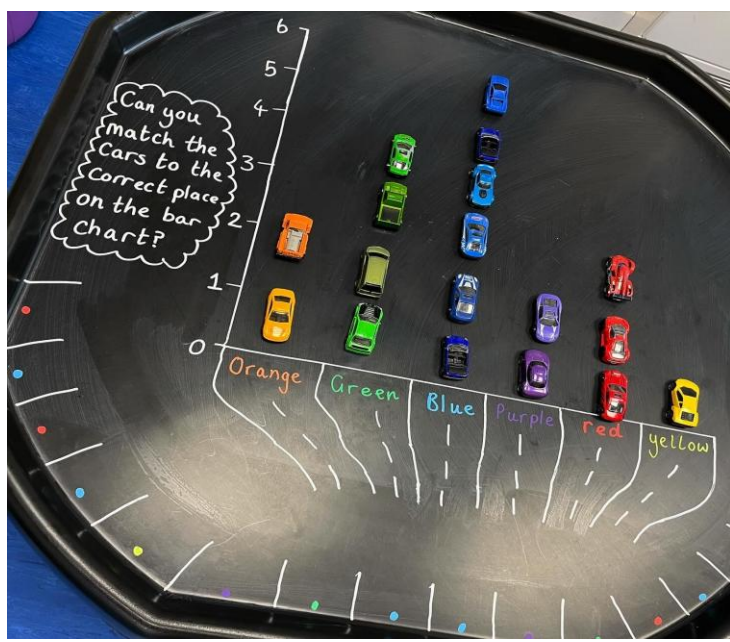
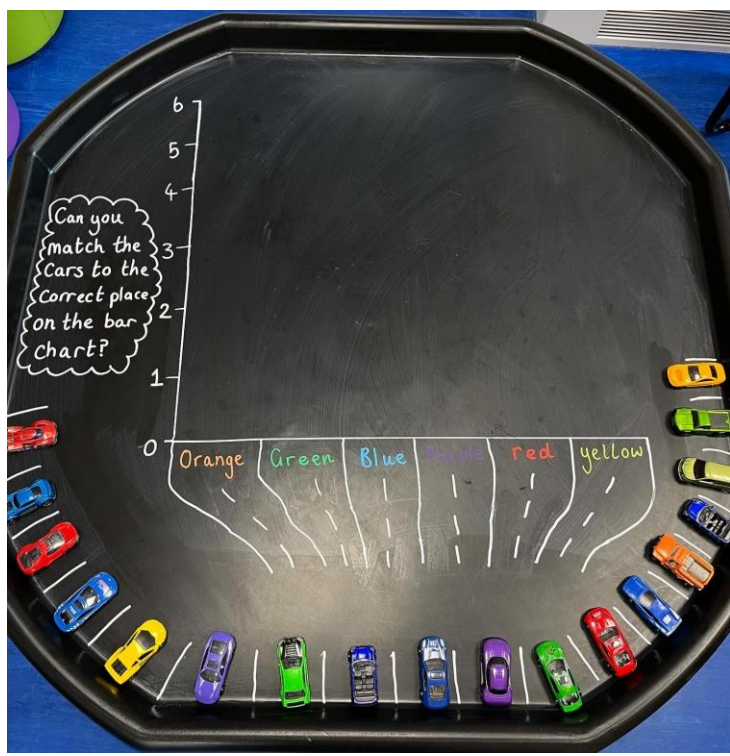
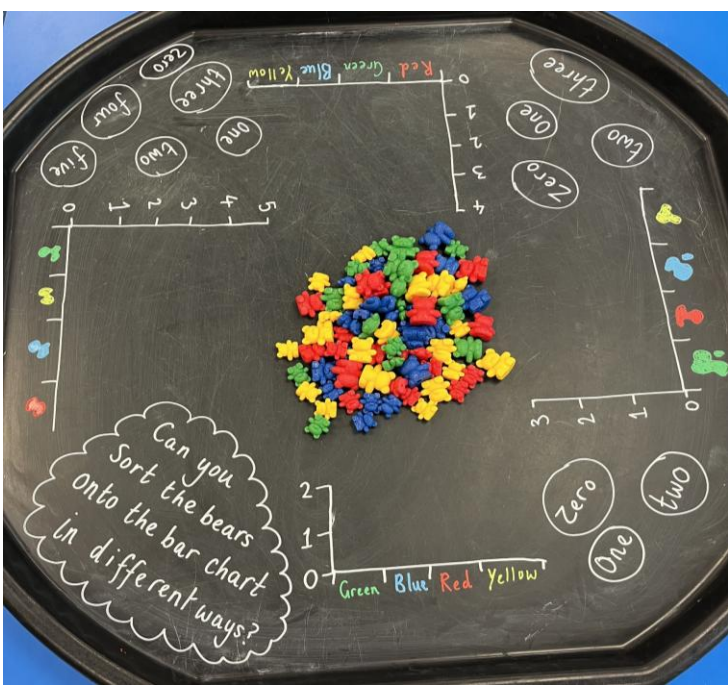




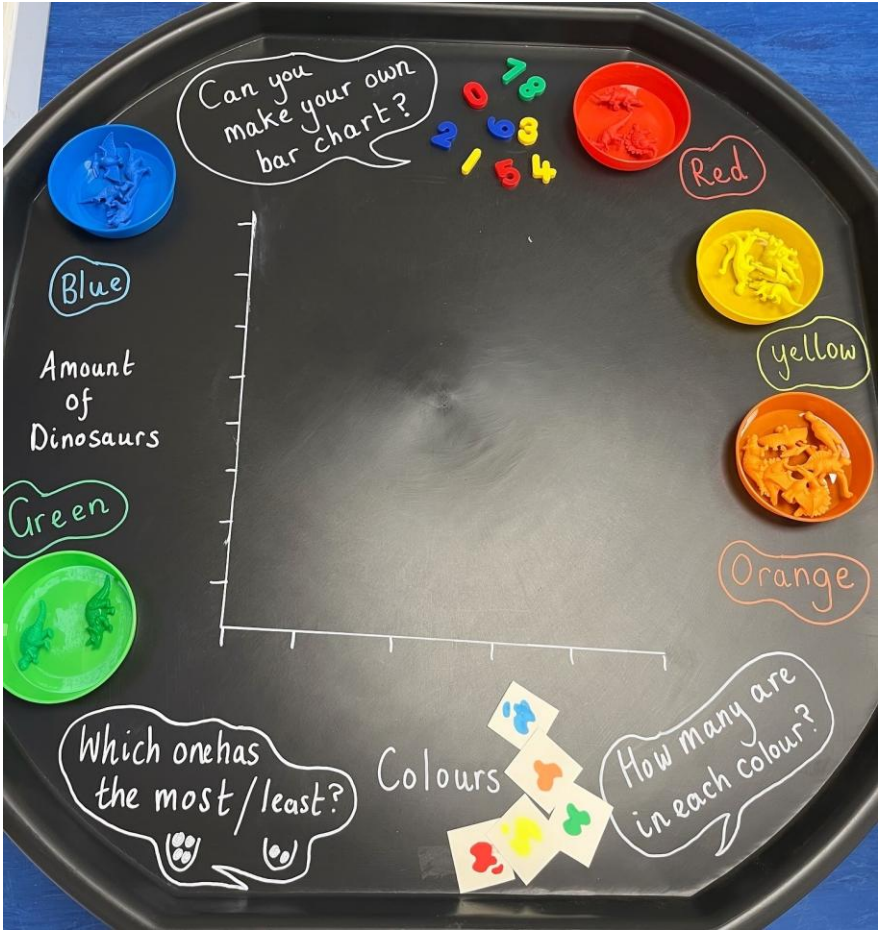
$2+3=5$

Maths

First	Then
Bucket	Lots of $2+3=5$ Maths activities



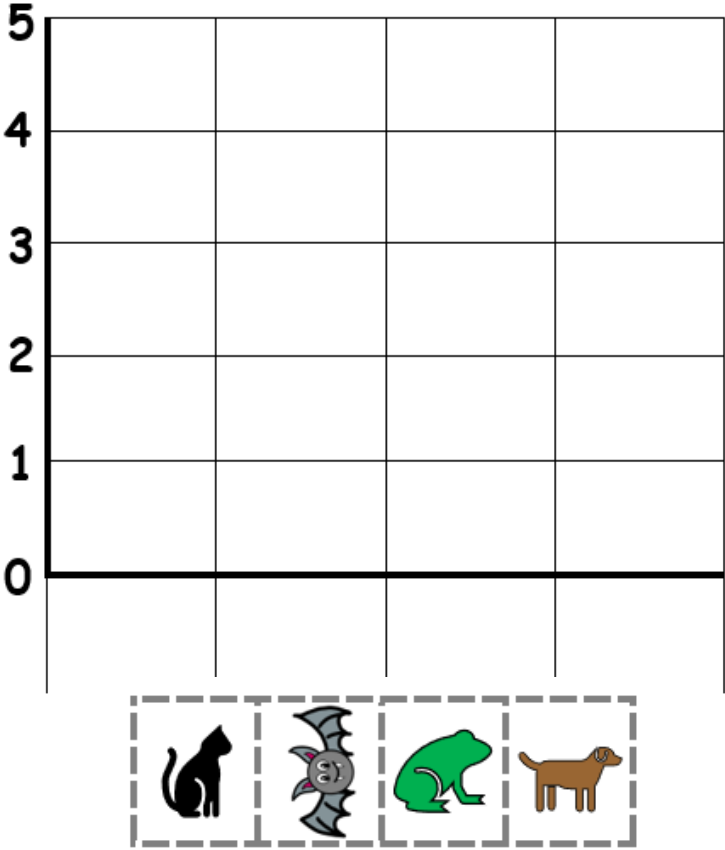
End goal:



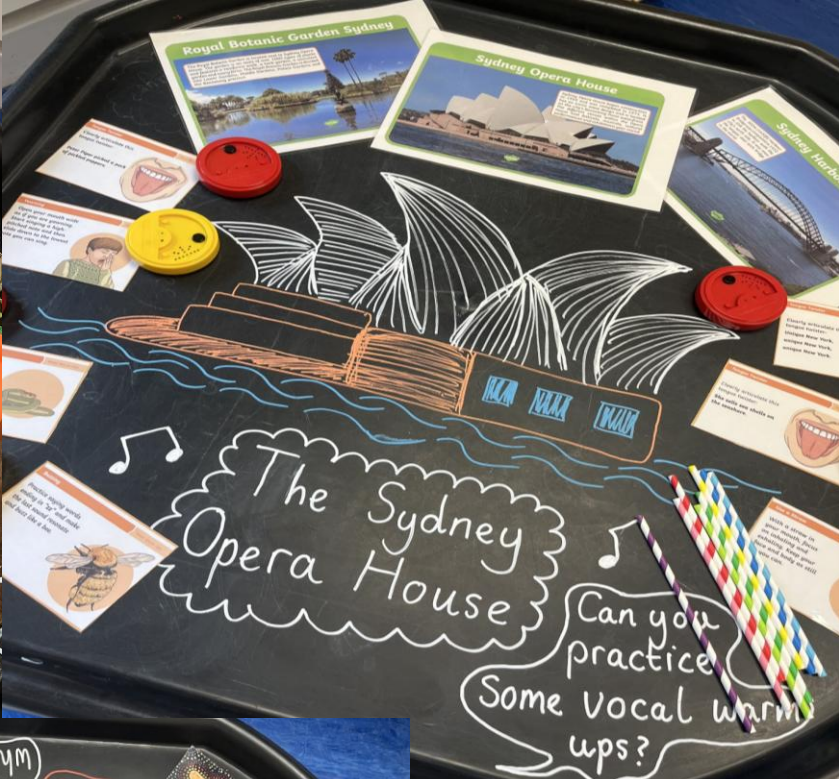
Walt: represent data in a block diagram.

Said: I can create a bar chart and label each block with the name of the category or group it represents with some support.

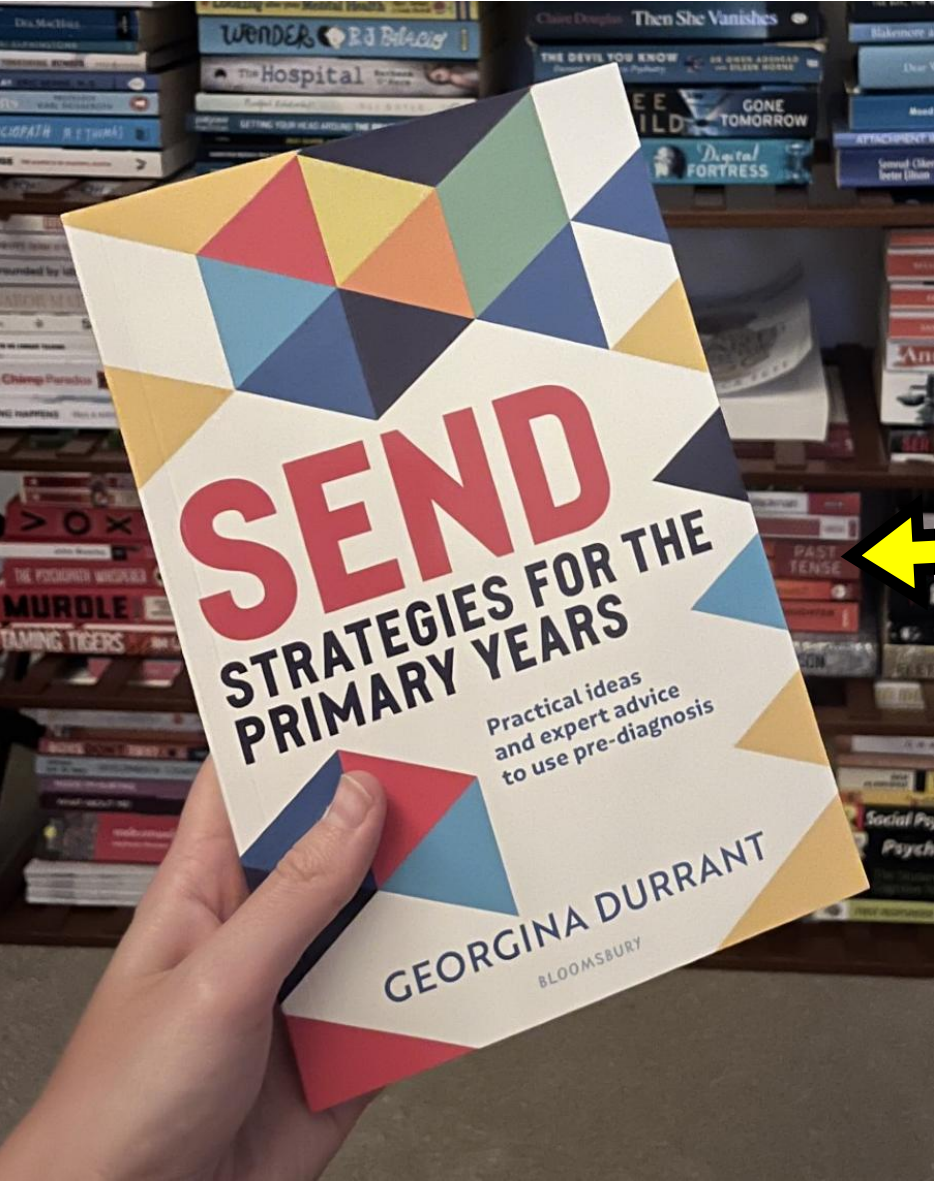
Animals				
Total	2	1	0	5



Example: Australian Theme Morning:



Recommendation:



3. SIGHT WORD SPLAT

Write down on a large piece of paper the key words children are currently learning to read by sight. Choose a word and read it out. The children have to splat the word on the paper either with their hand or with a 'splatting hand' that they can make.

Scan the QR code to see how to do this activity in practice.



HOW DOES IT HELP WITH LITERACY SKILLS?

- ▶ This can be a lovely way of learning to recognise sight words through repetition.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT HELP WITH?

- ▶ Gross motor skills.
- ▶ Hand-eye coordination when hitting the words.
- ▶ Social skills, if playing with others.



In the 

I need a 

to  at 

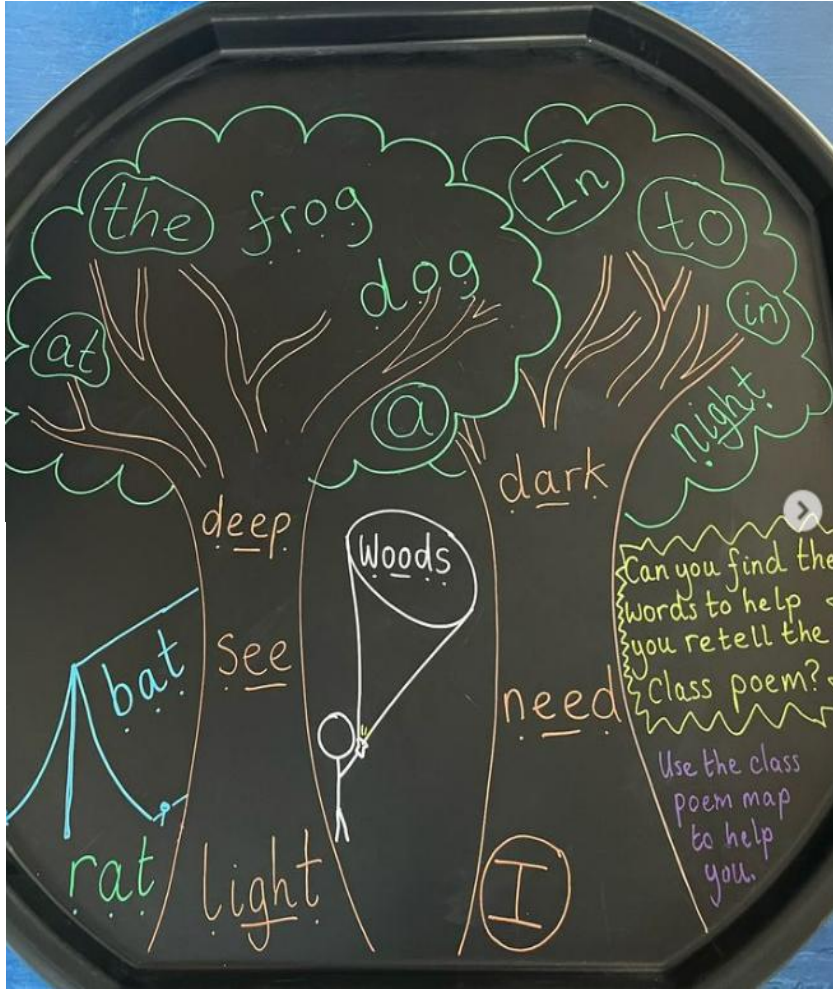
I  a 

I  a 

I  a 

I  a 

In the   

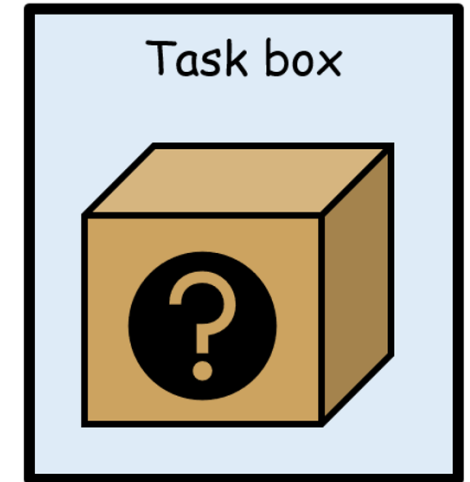
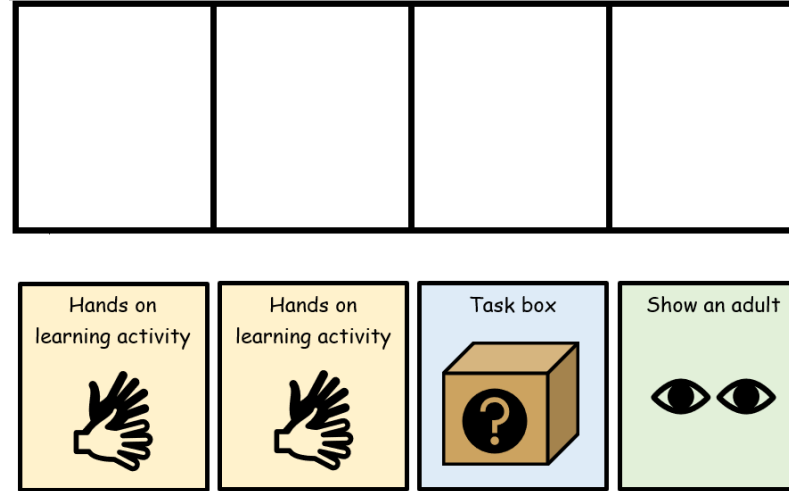


Moving forward:

Cabin in the Woods



TEACCH Method



Self-Assessment

Using VR technology

- Habitats
- Space
- Zones of Regulation
- Kings and Queens- Castles

