

Delivering activities at Rainbow



1. **Differentiation** – how to make the activity relevant and appropriate to all children who will take part
2. **Approach** – Whether the activity will be delivered as Adult Led, Adult Initiated or Independent and whether the activity will be open-ended or set.
3. **Use of Language** – What vocabulary will be introduced or emphasised and how
4. **Scaffolding** – What role the practitioner will play in supporting the children undertake the activity
5. **Learning intentions** – what is the ‘aim’ of the activity, and what do you intend for the children to learn

It is essential that you have considered all these points before starting the activity. This means that you need to check-in with your team leader early in the morning, or the day before, to check which activities you will take responsibility for. A few hours before the activity is due to start, or first thing in the morning, you should consider the resources you need, and pull them all together, so that when your activity is starting, you can pull them down, and start.

Differentiation

Differentiation is usually about how you adapt your **practice** to meet different children’s needs. This could be to extend and challenge some children, to provide additional support or a more simple or straightforward tasks with the same (or similar) learning aims, to enable children to access the activity at the right level for them. The **process** can be adapted – this is how the designed for different children. You can also differentiate **products**; *these are* the kinds of work products that you ask children to complete (end products). **Content** could be the resources (or other input such as visual stimulus) that you use, this could be different for different children. The **assessment** is how you measure what children have learned during the activity, your approach to this could be different for different children. The way that you **group** the children could be different, for example colour groups, or mixed colour groups, children with specific interests or similar abilities.

Approach

Adult Initiated – There is limited support and interaction from the practitioner. Children are free to explore the activity within the framework you have provided. The practitioner will support in providing materials, helping children when they need it, and helping them to get started, and round off if required. The adult will provide ongoing supervision.

Adult Led – This is an activity, which is dependent on the practitioner’s on-going input to lead and guide the activity. It may often be an activity with different stages

or sections. There could still be freedom for children to explore and create, but an adult led activity will usually have a more specific planned outcome.

Independent – This is an activity, which has been set up by an adult, but then left largely unsupervised for the children to play with and explore independently, without adult intervention or support. Sometimes an adult may visit a child or group of children at an independent activity to provide some guidance, remind them of ground rules, or extend their learning, but such interventions will usually be short and periodic.

AND...

Open-ended – Children will come and go from an open ended activity. There is no clear beginning or end, and children will usually work on open ended activities individually, rather than needing to participate in a group, but this may not always be the case. Essentially they can join and leave at any point (eg – painting)

Set – A set activity has a planned beginning, middle and end. Set activities are usually delivered to small or large groups, and could last between 10 minutes and much longer (up to 40 minutes). The children would need to start at the beginning, and stay with the activity through to the end to get its full benefit. A set activity is more likely to have direct teaching input from a practitioner.

Use of Language

Thinking carefully about how you can use language, and selecting a range of formats to present, reinforce and introduce language when undertaking activities with children is essential. This can be as simple as deciding on a few key pieces of vocabulary that you wish to introduce (eg **Float** and **sink**), the kinds of questions that you will ask (open ended, instructive, suggestive, closed) to support children's thinking. Where and how you could introduce written words, for example on white boards, chalk boards or windows/tables. How and where could books be included in the activity?

Scaffolding

Scaffolding is carefully crafted support that a practitioner provides to the child in the zone of proximal development. (ZPD is the distance between what a child can achieve independently, and what they can achieve with support). Scaffolding could take many forms, which may include demonstrating, questions, use of narrative, verbal suggestions (why don't you try...), or helping (eg holding something still for a child whilst they perform another operation). The scaffolder (or facilitator) must have a **shared goal** with the child, so that they are working at achieving the same thing. The scaffolder should provide **on-going diagnostic and adaptive support**; this means responding and reacting to what the child needs, as their needs change – and providing the right amount of support – never too much, and not too little, and

adapting support provided where the child is struggling. **Dialogues and interactions** are key. The child needs to be an active participant and a partner in deciding the direction of the interaction and not just a passive recipient. A good facilitator will know when to **fade and transfer responsibility to the child**; once the child is able to practice or master the skill to the extent that they are able to try for themselves, the scaffolding should be reduced, and withdrawn at the right pace to hand control fully to the child.

Learning Intentions

The **learning intention** is a statement, which describes clearly what the practitioner wants the children to know, understand; or be able to do. Children learn best when they understand what they are learning and what is expected of them. There should always be a clear learning intention in mind, when you deliver an activity. This may be a different learning intention for different children or different groups, or it may be the same. Identifying appropriate learning intentions for each activity, will enable you to support the children in making progress towards meeting the developmental milestones set out in the EYFS.

Practical guidance

Here are some key take away points to consider when delivering activities:

- **Prepare it** – Ensure that you are well prepared. Ideally look through the plans the day before, and agree with the team leader which activities you will be responsible for. Check in advance that all the resources and materials that you need are available, and if not take action! Arrange to get the resources or think through and agree substitutes, or if required adapt the activity, or if REALLY required, swap the activity for something you have all available resources for.
- **Allow and encourage freedom** – Try not to be too prescriptive with how you want the children to take part, but let them play and experiment as much as possible within the framework you have given.
- **Process over product** – Focus on the process, and don't worry too much about the child's product. Allowing them to take part, explore and play within the general theme of the activity can be much more beneficial, than trying to 'force' a children to complete an activity in a specific way.
- **Use all the time available – don't rush to pack away** – Take your time, let the children feel a sense of calm, allow them to revisit the activity a second or third time if they wish and if its possible – watch their confidence grow! If the activity is Open ended, and scheduled for an hour, stay at the activity station for the full hour, even if children are not there all the time.

- **Think about use of space... on the floor, at tables, in the sleep room, outside –** Not all activities need to happen on the 'same' rug or table all the time. Think creatively about how and where would be the best place to set up the activity, where both you and the children have enough space to move around and access it properly. Think about using spaces in the nursery, which are unusual for that use or time. Think about the spaces, which will provide the right kind of 'protection' during the activity, to minimise disruption.
- **Pacing, and introducing bits as you go –** Keep the activity moving along! Don't ask the children to wait, or rely too heavily on turn taking. Ensure that there is plenty to do at the activity to keep all the children active and busy for the entire time that they are scheduled to be with you.