

# Outdoor resource box... car wash

Providing the chance to work at a 'car wash'. By *Lyndsey Gardner*

## THEME

Our car wash box was created following the success of another of our outdoor boxes – 'the garage'. As well as enabling children to engage in purposeful play using the much-loved bicycles and tricycles in our nursery school, the box opened up opportunities for cross-curricular learning focusing on teamwork, communication and physical development.

## CHOICE

We provided the children with a varied assortment of resources including sponges, buckets, cloths and sprays. We made use of the garden tap and supplied plenty of washing-up liquid to ensure the car wash was in full operation!

We provided chalks and numbers to enable the children to create parking bays and engage in meaningful mark-making. And to develop the children's knowledge of number and mathematical concepts, we supplied notepads, receipt books and Post-it notes, as well as a cash register.

## OBSERVATIONS

All the children demonstrated:

- a keen interest in the box and its contents
- high levels of involvement
- an ability to play happily alongside each other



our staff team to support, extend and develop children's interests.

## LEARNING

It was clear through the high levels of engagement of all children that this outdoor resource box promoted 'active learning' through purposeful outdoor play. Children's critical thinking skills were challenged through the decision-making process of what materials and which process would be best to wash each of the bicycles and tricycles, dependent on their size.

All children relished the chance to engage in real-life 'adult' experiences, taking great pride in achieving what they set out to do. Children were then provided with lots of opportunities during both circle times and key-worker times to recall and reflect on their play and learning. ■

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**The children used a range of books as well as the internet to research a variety of methods for washing cars**

- excellent communication skills when playing together.

While some children took on 'leadership' roles, organising the car wash and its resources, others demonstrated a keen desire to undertake the operational role of washing the 'cars' and then organising the vehicles into the parking bays, depending on whether the 'car' had been cleaned or was in the queue to be washed.

## INDOORS

The children used a range of fiction and non-fiction books as well as the internet to research a variety of methods for washing cars – manual and mechanical.

With adult support, they researched what materials they would need to establish a successful car wash and demonstrated meaningful early mark-making through designing their own registration plates for the 'cars'.

## AVAILABILITY

The car wash box is available for all children to access and engage with when playing outdoors. It is now stored in one of our outdoor containers, but can be accessed at any time by any member of



## ON THE LIST

- Buckets, bowls and other receptacles
- Spray bottles
- Washing-up liquid
- Sponges and cloths
- Laminated numbers
- Chalks
- Notepads, receipt books and Post-it notes
- Mark-making utensils
- Cash register