

Learning through play –Marshalswick Pre School and Nursery: Sand and water play

Research shows that the most effective way for children to learn is through play. Play underpins the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity.

At Marshalswick Pre School and Nursery we understand that for children to learn through play they need to feel safe, secure and confident. We provide a fun and stimulating environment which offers a wide range of opportunities to inspire young children in our care. Our continuous development allows children to grow in all areas of the EYFS ensuring they are school ready.

Here are some examples showing how we encourage children to learn through sand and water play:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
Sand and water play is a social activity as children play together. They will work together to solve problems and share ideas and concepts. This type of learning helps children to develop their social and negotiating skills.
- **Physical Development**
Sand and water play helps strengthen children's large muscles as they use these muscles to dig and scoop sand and pour and splash water. As children are pouring the sand and water into containers they are also improving their fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination.
- **Communication and Language**
Sand and water play is great for developing children's language skills as they will learn new words relating to the different objects that have been placed in the trays as well as talking to their friends during their play.
- **Literacy**
Children can make marks in sand using their fingers and other tools that have been placed in the sand tray. Children can also identify different marks made while using water on various materials. This type of mark making supports their emergent writing.
- **Mathematics**
As children pour sand or water into containers they can use mathematical language such more or less. They can also count the number of times they scoop the sand or fill the containers. Weighing scales can also be added to the sand and water trays so children can learn about weight.
- **Understanding the World**
Children's knowledge and understanding of the world will increase as they explore this natural material and how it can be changed. By adding water to sand or freezing water for example, the properties of both will change. Children will begin to question and understand where sand comes from and what other uses it has.
- **Expressive Arts and Designs**
Sand and water play will often lead to dramatic play as children will use their imagination to make things (a house or pool for the small world people or sand

ice creams). As children become immersed in their dramatic play they will take on roles which again help develop social skills