Learning Experience: Making Passports

Setting: Bansha Pre-school, Bansha, Co. Tipperary

Setting type: Sessional

Age group: Young children

Theme: Communicating

Aim 3: Children will broaden their understanding of the world by making sense of experiences through language.

Learning goal 5: In partnership with the adult, children will have opportunities to use a variety of mark-making materials and implements in an enjoyable and meaningful way.

One of the children, Charlie, told us he was going on holidays. This opened up a great discussion. We talked about the things you need to bring with you and the children came up with all sorts of items for their list including clothes, phones, chargers, money, sun-cream, towels, swimming togs and so on. One little boy mentioned having to bring your passport. A couple of the children didn’t know what a passport was so we explained what it looked like and why you needed it.
The following day I brought in my own passport to show the children. I explained the different pieces of information on it such as my passport number, the expiry date and my signature, and I showed them my photo. We had a great discussion about not being able to smile in the passport photo and why this was important. I also brought in passport application forms that I picked up at the post-office.

We set up an area to take photographs and the children filled in their passport forms. Over the coming days the children made their passports once the appropriate checks were carried out and the application forms were signed by the Garda!
Ideas to extend the children’s learning

- Add props to the pretend area to make an airport with a security-desk. Provide string, paper and pens for making name tags and boarding passes and a stamp for the passports. Include a scales for weighing suitcases.
- Gather information from the children about where they’ve been on holidays. Make a simple pictogram (using objects and pictures to show this information).
- *Do pets need passports?* Ask parents, grandparents, the local vet. Gather information on the internet.

This experience also links to:
*Communicating, Aim 3, Learning goals 3 and 4*
*Exploring and Thinking, Aim 3, Learning goals 1, 2 and 3*
The play leader’s reflections

The children really enjoyed this experience and it was particularly valuable for children who had never been outside the country on holidays.

Charlie’s mum sent us a card from their holiday in France telling us how Charlie brought his pre-school passport with him on the trip along with his real passport. The mum told us afterwards that she thought the passport activity was a really good idea.

All the children were engaged in this experience even the ones who aren’t particularly interested in writing and drawing. I think it was using the real application forms that appealed to them.