

Shape and space: Spatial awareness and location – Suggestions for the learning environment

IDEAS FOR THE CLASSROOM

- Display relevant vocabulary, signs and symbols around the classroom and make reference where appropriate, e.g., *when exploring maps in SEE; discussing journeys outside of the school such as nature walks or school tours; in orienteering activities.*
- Play the game 'Where is teddy?' by placing a teddy in different positions and asking the children to describe the position, e.g., *Teddy is under the table/on the chair/behind the table.*
- Construct and re-tell (through drama, art, play, etc.) stories that feature journeys, e.g., *'Rosie's Walk', 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt', 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz'.*
- Design travel guides with maps for real or fictional places.
- Laminate pictures relating to children's interests (e.g., *sports, music concerts, animals*) and challenge children to find, mark and measure types of lines and angles (e.g., *parallel lines, intersecting lines, acute angles*).
- Design a pirate treasure map and provide directions on how to find the treasure.
- Use digital games and technology such as robotics or coding toys and provide opportunities for the children to program the robots to follow directions.
- Take part in dances that incorporate the language of spatial awareness and location, e.g., *the Hokey Pokey, the Cha Cha Slide.*
- Use children's own life experiences and curiosities as stimuli for mapwork and route planning, e.g., *when you travel to the match in Dublin at the weekend, what direction will you travel? What towns/counties might you pass through? If you want to avoid the roadworks in ____, how might you change your route?*
- Highlight and locate towns, cities, etc. around Ireland and cities, countries of the world as they arise in children's learning and discuss their relative location using appropriate language (e.g., *close, far away, north, south*).



IDEAS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

- Design and organise a scavenger hunt in the school yard.
- Design and/or engage in orienteering challenges and activities.
- Design, build and complete obstacle courses in the school yard, encourage other classes to take part.
- Make explicit reference to spatial vocabulary when playing games such as 'I spy', rounders, soccer or 'Where in the world?'
- Engage in yoga stretches and warm up activities to support children in recognising the movements of their body parts in relation to each other, e.g., *stretch your right arm across your body and hold it with your left arm, bend your knee at a right angle, sit cross-legged and rotate your torso to the left, looking over your shoulder.*

