

Information Sheet

Shoe-box Activities

A shoe-box activity is an **achievable** adult-led activity that enables the child to access and complete an adult-led activity based on their individual needs.

This shoe-box activity is immediately followed by an activity that is motivating for the child - their reward.

For this to be successful, both the shoe-box and motivating activities should only be available and 'special' for this activity. If the shoe-box activity or the motivating activity are within the environment, the child could quickly become less interested.

The shoe-box can be **any** box, with a lid, that is approximately the same size as a shoe-box, for example:



Please note: If you do not have any "shoe-box" size containers, the activity can also be stored in other containers/pouches with a similar contents size, e.g. zipped wallets.

Remember:

- When planning a shoe-box activity - always think about the child's interests and their current development stage (not their actual age).
- Be organised - get everything ready in advance.
- Be clear what you want the child to do, and when the activity will be finished/completed, for example: adding the rest of the 4 piece puzzle, pulling all 6 pompoms from the whisk, etc.
- Choose the right moment - think about when would be the best time for this to be successful.
- Use minimal language. Ensure that the language is relevant to the child's level of understanding as well as their current development stage (not their actual age). Use key words, for example: now and next.

- Use Visual Supports alongside minimal language - that is relevant to the child's current development stage (not their actual age). This will be, **real objects of reference, photos of real objects** and/or **symbols**. Use 'Now and Next' or 'First and Then' approach.
- The child will also need warning that this activity is coming up - this is usually 5 minutes notice using visual supports and a sand timer or similar.

For information regarding Visual Supports:

Go to, www.fiveacrewood.co.uk and select the **STLS/OUTREACH** tab.

Scroll down and select **Early Years**.

Scroll down to **Useful Information** where you will find the following list.

- Visual Supports - **1** Using Real Objects of Reference
 - Visual Supports - **2** Using Real Objects to Make Choices
 - Visual Supports - **3** Using Real Objects to support "Now & Next"
 - Visual Supports - **4** Using Photos of Real Objects
 - Visual Supports - **5** Using Photos to Make Choices
 - Visual Supports - **6** Using Photos to Make Requests
 - Visual Supports - **7** Using Photos to support "Now & Next"
 - Visual Supports - **8** Personal Visual Timetable
- These are best viewed in numerical order**

How to:

To start with, the shoe-box activity must be achievable and very short. This may start with as little as 10 seconds, and is slowly increased over time.

A simple way to keep an activity short is for the child to finish an activity that has been partially completed in advance.

For example - use a simple 4 piece puzzle where there is only 1 final piece to add.

- Remember to be clear what you want the child to do, and once the activity will be finished.
- Remember to use Visual Supports and minimal language.
- Once the child has added this final piece, the adult-led activity has been successfully completed - if the child needs adult support to complete the activity, use the hand-over-hand method.
- The adult praises the child and **immediately** gives them the motivating activity. If the motivating activity is open ended and has no obvious end, be clear how long the child will have with their motivating activity. Use a sand timer or similar.
- Before increasing the difficulty of the shoe-box activity, allow the child to be successful on several different occasions to support their understanding and build their confidence - this will depend on the child's current development stage.
- The next step is to make the shoe-box activity longer, for example, leaving 2 final pieces to add to the puzzle, and so on.



Shoe-box Activity Ideas:

Remember: Always think about the child's current development stage and their interests.



Sorting Numbers:

For example, magnetic numbers, foam numbers or cut out of paper or card. Cut out numbered carriages to make a train. Make a number wheel for the child to add the correct numbered pegs.



Puzzles:

This can be as simple as cutting a picture into 2 or 3 pieces. Or by leaving just 1 puzzle piece to add, and increasing this over time.



Shape sorter, playdough activity, instructions on creating with bricks, posting activities, removing pom-poms from a hand whisk with tweezers or fingers, **and many, many more...**

The following suggestions have been created, for you to make a start. These can be downloaded and printed from the Five Acre Wood website:

Go to: www.fiveacrewood.co.uk and select the **STLS/OUTREACH** tab.
Scroll down and select **Early Years**.
Scroll down to **Useful Information** and these are under **Shoe-box activities**.

Matching Activities:



Sorting Activities:

Sorting Sheet

Colours		
blue	red	green

Sorting Sheet

Big and Small

Big	
Small	

Sorting Sheet

Big, Medium and Small

Big	
Medium	
Small	

Remember: Always think about the child’s current development stage and interests.