Welcome to the second issue of the Early Years Magazine. Thank you for all the positive comments you've sent in about the first issue. This is a great time to get in touch and tell us what you would like to see featured.

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In this issue, we look at snow - and how to make the most of it!
From the editor

Welcome to the second issue of the Early Years Magazine. Thank you for all the positive comments you’ve sent in about the first issue. We’ve put together a shorter interim issue while we look at all the fabulous suggestions we received at a wonderful Early Years Working Group meeting on 10 December 2009. Given the time of year, lots of people are taking a break now so it will take time to pull things together and begin the development (read a report of the day in this month’s Focus on...there are exciting times ahead!)

For that reason, there is no Maths to share - CPD section this month. If you want to do some exploring, take a look at some of the Maths to share – CPD in the Primary Magazine Archive. These two are particularly relevant to the Early Years:

- Issue 12 Using games in mathematics
- Issue 13 Involving parents.

You can also revisit last month’s piece on Rich Tasks.

Have you considered setting up a small research project? Funding is available to give release time, thinking time or whatever you think would be useful for your project. Take a look at the NCETM Funded Projects Scheme. You can participate at a level that is right for you, with a Mathematics Knowledge Network (MKN), a Teacher Enquiry Funded Project (TEFP), or through the Regional Projects Programme (RPP). There is a new round of funding in January and your regional team will be happy to help you. They can arrange support for you as your project develops, too.

Do the computers your children use have internet access? If they do, then you need to know about the UK Council for Child Internet Safety. Order or download their recent publication Click Clever Click Safe: The first UK Child Internet Strategy and The Digital Code.

Another useful publication from the DCSF is ContactPoint Lessons Learned from the Early Adopter Phase. ContactPoint was developed in response to the enquiry into the tragic death of Victoria Climbié. The enquiry found that information exchange between different agencies working with children needed to be improved. ContactPoint is an online directory that provides a quick way for authorised practitioners to find out who else is working with the same child. Download the report to find out how the project is developing. The DCSF website has more information.
Focus on
Our Early Years Working Group

Some months ago, after a trawl of the portal revealed that there was little on the site specifically for the Early Years, a decision had to be taken. Should we just accept the situation and focus on other areas, or should we tackle the issue? Thankfully, it was decided that we should indeed do something about it.

Early Years contacts from a range of settings were approached and invited to a meeting to discuss the way forward. We wanted to bring together a group of interested people who would be prepared to do as well as advise, so we included practitioners, headteachers, consultants and advisors from around the country.

On the day, 18 very enthusiastic people turned up. There was a great can-do atmosphere throughout the whole day. Inevitably, we had to get out the large bits of paper and pens to brainstorm and several people ended up on the floor, where there was more room! The group came up with lots of wonderful ideas for new or improved sections of the magazine, as well as feedback on the portal itself and much more. Here are the magazine ideas, in no particular order:

- Ideas Box – to include a downloadable card for an area (sand, water, etc), suggestions for nursery rhymes, songs, maths through stories etc
- Research – split into two sections, one action research being carried out in the classroom, one more long term, larger scale research
- Mathematics Outdoors
- Indoors/Outdoors
- case studies – a variety, including child, practitioner or setting. Including following one or more children from before birth to aged 5 and perhaps beyond
- The Big Issue – topical issues
- babies and toddlers
- at home – for parents, childminders etc
- CPD – support for managers and Senior Leadership Teams who sometimes know little about the Early Years
- mathematics subject knowledge – filling in the gaps
- requests.

There is huge potential here and we need to take time to liaise with the portal team to see what is feasible. Then we’ll need to give people time to write or research what they’ve offered, so there is likely to be a gradual development of the magazine over the next few months. You’ll just have to keep coming back to see what’s new, and if you have any thoughts to add, we’d love to hear from you.
The Research Informed Practice Site (TRIPS) provides digests of studies from research journals. Publication in such journals means that the studies have already been scrutinised for academic rigour. The studies are checked by the DCSF to ensure that they provide strong evidence directly relevant to practice in schools and settings.

There are several themes, one of which is Early Years. There are currently six digests in this area of the site. Learning from their mistakes investigates problem-solving skills in children from 30 to 36 months, using two related tests to reveal their symbolic functioning. Reading it on screen is a little irritating as each page is very short. Download the whole document (5 pages) by clicking on Word doc 50KB or printer friendly. It’s short but interesting and thought-provoking.

One of the tests involved placing a token in a pocket on a small teddy bear and seeing if the child used this prior knowledge to help them find the token on a larger teddy bear. There was a clear difference in the behaviour of children at different ages.
Case Study
Rain, Rain, Come and Play

This month’s case study is Rain, Rain Come and Play. Find out how a small nursery school developed their outdoor area over three years. Children’s mathematical achievements have improved as they create their own opportunities for creative mathematical problem solving. There’s also a photo gallery on the NCETM portal.
Resources in action
Snow

If it does indeed snow, let’s make sure we make the most of it! There is a wealth of activities that you can enjoy with this scarce resource. Here are some ideas to get you started:

### Outdoors

- lie down and make snow angels. Which is the biggest? Which is the smallest? Can you tell who made each one?
- have fun simply exploring the snow using **all** your senses
- make a snowman family. Use language such as big, bigger, biggest, tall, taller, tallest and so on
- make snow scenes, including igloos or snow caves, with small world play resources. Cut some lolly sticks in half and glue to the feet of play people for skis. Number the play people and have a race. Soak in warm water to remove the skis.

### Indoors

- fill some identical containers with snow. Place in different areas around the room. Which one will melt first? Which one will melt last? How will you know? How will you record what you see? Set a timer to go off at agreed time intervals to check the containers
- share the rhyme *Ten White Snowmen*, by John Foster. Find the rhyme and more details of some of these activities in *Number and Calculating (Belair – Early Years)* by Cherri Moseley ISBN-10: 0947882758
- draw the outline of ten snowmen on a strip of white paper and photocopy. Ask the children to number the snowmen and dress each one differently. Have some props, such as carrots, sticks, scarves, hats, buttons and a pipe, for support
- make ten snowmen from salt dough. Bake until hard. Paint them white. Number the snowmen from 1 to 10 and leave the children to order them. Hide one somewhere else in the room. Can the children tell you which snowman they are looking for? Can they find him? Use 1 to 3 or 1 to 5 for all the activities if more appropriate
- Issue 4 of the Primary Magazine has a wonderful ‘**Dress the Snowman**’ game for the Early Years in the **Starter for the Month**
- **Whipped Snow recipe and ideas.**