

Continuous provision:
Sensory table

Nursery
Age 2-4

Title: Herb crushing

Child-led exploration

Materials were placed on the sensory table to promote exploration. For example, herbs and spices like rosemary, lavender, thyme or cloves were provided, to be crushed with pestle and mortar or cut with scissors (one or two herbs at a time). Adding salt for extra texture and sound when grinding also worked well.

Children noticed and explored the smells of the different herbs. They had the opportunity to learn new vocabulary such as pestle, mortar, crush, grind and learn a new technique to grind, realising that it was easier to grind when standing up so that they could push down with more force. There were also taught how to 'rub' the rosemary to release its smell.

The children commented on the smell of the herbs and some made links to home by recognising that their parents used herbs at home. Some children learnt to use the mortar and pestles correctly and others were more interested in pulling bits off the herbs and tipping and scooping the salt to make a 'mixture' or 'perfume'.

Possible future provision/next steps

Planting, growing and cutting herbs outdoors. Adding herbs to baking. Make 'perfume' pots. Could add water and see if it changes colour as you add in some berries etc.



Learning outcomes include (Birth to 5, The World):

Range 3: *Explores objects by linking together different approaches: shaking, feeling etc.*

Range 4: *Notices detailed features of objects in their environment.*

Characteristics of effective learning:

Playing and exploring: *Using senses to explore the world around them.*

Thinking creatively and critically: *Making links and noticing patterns in their experience e.g. where else they have seen herbs and spices.*

Example from Noah's Ark Pre-school, Bristol