

Should we wear glass shoes?

A sequence of activities to help EYFS children understand the properties and uses of glass

BRIGHT IDEAS TIME...

Begin by showing the children a picture of a glass shoe. Ask them, "Who would like to wear a shoe made of glass?" and provide lots of opportunity for children to share their ideas. Ask: "What about a glass hat or coat?" You could use the terms 'Plus', 'Minus' or 'Interesting' (PMI) to help children to think about why glass might be good, bad or interesting to use for the object.* Find any familiar kitchen object (such as a pan or utensil) and repeat the PMI questions, considering whether this object should be made of glass.



*For more information about using PMI questions, visit the PSTT website here: tinyurl.com/mr2b2mw4

For nursery children, you might find it simpler to use smiley and sad faces to replace 'plus and minus' vocabulary.

Enhancements in continuous provision

TO FAMILIARISE CHILDREN WITH OBJECTS MADE OF GLASS...

You need: areas set up as a kitchen and a ballroom, costumes and props

Play, observe & ask:

- Support children to act as if they are wearing glass shoes in their play.
- Although the glass shoe or kitchen object will not actually be made from glass, encourage children to use this vocabulary in their play. A discussion about why shoes are not made from glass could arise; this is fine, as it feeds into a later discussion.

Key vocabulary: relating to the properties of glass – transparent, smooth, rigid, fragile, hard

TO ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO UNDERSTAND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GLASS...

You need: glass objects in many shapes and colours (e.g. vases, jars, bottles, beads, marbles, ornaments, drinking glasses, jugs), magnifying glasses, torches

Play, observe & ask:

- Encourage children to look at, and feel, the glass. Talk about textures and transparency.
- What happens if you shine a torch through coloured glass? What effects can you make?
- Why do we need to handle glass carefully?

Key vocabulary: relating to the properties of glass – transparent, smooth, rigid, fragile

TO CONSIDER THE MATERIALS USED IN FOOTWEAR...

You need: a collection of footwear (as wide a variety as possible, but this could include trainers, wellington boots, sandals, sparkly party shoes, cowboy boots, flippers)

Play, observe & ask:

- Who might wear this shoe?
- What is it made from? Why?
- How is it similar/different to the shoes you are wearing?

Key vocabulary: relating to the properties of glass – transparent, smooth, rigid, fragile

Adult-led activities

BE A GLASS DETECTIVE

- Walk around the room/building/local area looking out for objects made from glass.
- Take photographs so that conversations can continue back in the setting. Some photographs could be made into cards for sorting or matching activities.
- Talk about what kind of things are made from glass and why.
- Use the information from this activity, and children's observation work in continuous provision, as a basis for discussing what they now know about glass.

IS GLASS A GOOD MATERIAL TO MAKE SHOES FROM?

- Based on all the knowledge they have gained, ask children to think of reasons why glass would or would not be a good material for shoes.
- The results could be recorded on a class chart to show that there are different points of view.
- Vote – is glass a good material for shoes?
- Ask – Would glass be a better material for making something else? Why is it a good material in this instance?