

This set of stone animals will help to develop children's listening and speaking skills as they work together to use the stones to tell stories. Such small world adventures will enable children to explore story structure and use vocabulary learned from other stories. The set can also be used as a springboard for learning more about these amazing sea creatures and the challenges they face. Set contains: blue whale, clown fish, dolphin, octopus, orca (killer whale), seahorse, shark and turtle.



Key vocabulary

- Blue whale, clown fish, dolphin, octopus, orca (killer whale), seahorse, shark and turtle
- Ocean
- Sort
- Compare
- Similarities
- Differences
- Different from
- Similar to
- Mammal, fish, amphibian
- Swim, blow, tentacles, shell, flipper, fin, tail

Activity ideas

- Create play dough versions of the animals by stamping them into the dough and cutting them out. Extend this by encouraging the children to make other ocean animals with the dough.
- Create small world play habitats for the children to use the figures in, discussing what they are doing as they engage with the resources
- Make available resources for the children to make their own habitats, working cooperatively as they do so.
- Feel-a-fish: Bury some of the stones in a tub of sand. Invite a child to find one. When they have, they need to see if they can guess what it is by feel alone. If they are correct, when it is removed, they continue. If not, play moves on to the next child. The game ends when all the figures have been removed.
- Paper plates are a handy resource for this theme. Attach fins to a plate and you have a puffer fish to decorate. Use parts of the rim for a seahorse. Attach streamers to the base to make an octopus. Do the same with half a plate to create a jellyfish. Such art activities will help children explore the natural world.
- Jellyfish can also be made using shower caps
- Prepare some cut out starfish. Paint some bubble wrap on the raised side. Press this side onto a starfish to create a textured pattern. This activity provides a good opportunity to practise following instructions.
- A similar effect can be achieved by dipping the end of a celery stick into paint and using this to create scales on a paper fish. Ask the children what they think will happen.
- Flapping fish: Place a number of cut out fish on the floor: one per child. Have a race, with the winner being the first person to flap their fish across the finishing line using a piece of card to create the airflow.
- Repeat the game, allowing each child to design a flapping fish that they think will win the race.



Extending the learning

- Use a plastic container to create an ocean habitat. Half fill it with coloured water and replace the lid. When tilted, children can watch the motion of a wave. This is a language rich activity.
- Discuss the ways in which the stones are different/similar to each other, and how they might be sorted.

Children's books about oceans and their inhabitants

Commotion in the Ocean by Giles Andraea and David Wojtowycz

Over in the Ocean: In a Coral Reef by Marianne Berkes and Jeanette Canyon

Sharing a Shell by Julia Donaldson and Lydia Monks

The Snail and the Whale by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler

Tiddler by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler

The Wanderer by Peter Van Den Ende

Children's Guide to Sea Creatures by Jinny Johnson

Fish Don't Sneeze by Kirstie Watson and Nina Khalova

Flotsam by David Wiesne

Wish For a Fish: All About Sea Creatures by Bonnie Worth

