

WOODWORK

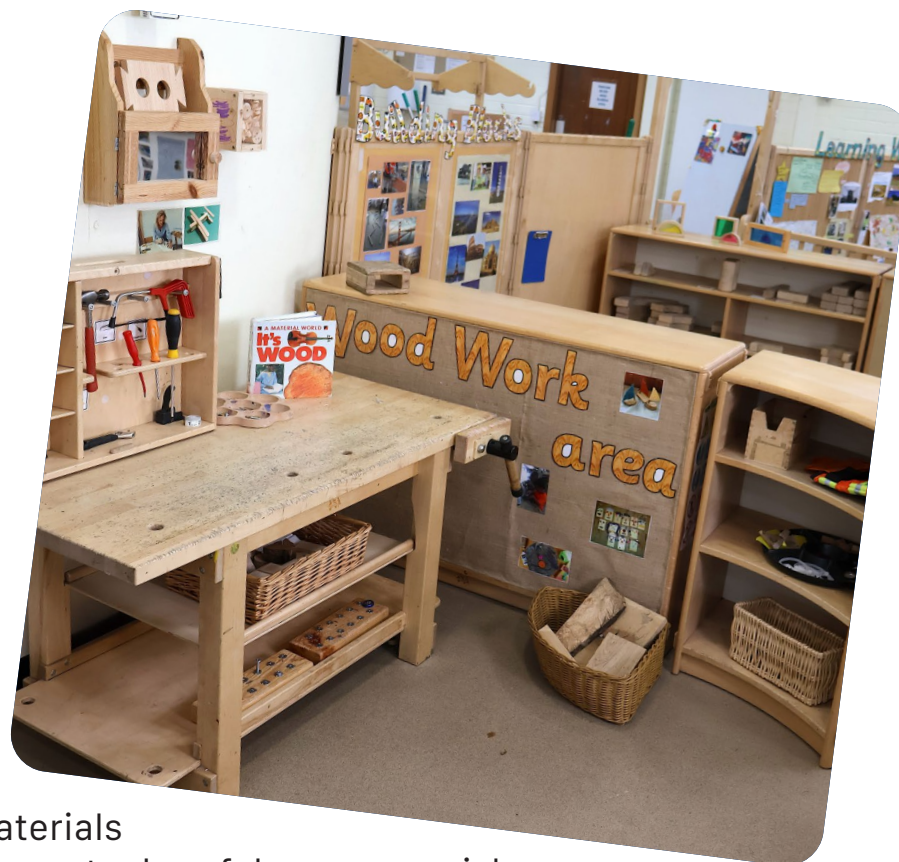
The Woodwork area supports multiple aspects of learning and development across the breadth of the curriculum. It enables children to progress at their own pace, mastering basic skills before moving onto open-ended exploration as they make unique creations.

Using real tools and authentic materials supports children to learn how to use tools safely, manage risks and build essential skills for life that promote confidence and self-esteem.

Woodworking encourages exploration, experimentation, creativity and critical thinking. It empowers children to plan, make choices, problem-solve, and learn through trial and error whilst affording opportunities for deeper engagement.

Working with wood is a highly sensory experience. Children can smell the wood, feel the grain, and hear the sounds of sawing and hammering whilst experiencing the feel of real tools and materials.

Children may not have opportunities to engage in woodworking beyond nursery. Woodworking experiences can expand children's horizons and provide insights into the wider world of work through highlighting different roles, such as joiners, designers, craftspeople and artists.



CURRICULAR & DEVELOPMENTAL

Health & Wellbeing

Using real tools and natural materials supports mastery of new skills and techniques, development of hand-eye coordination, and increased manipulative control, agility and dexterity.

Through holding nails and screws, children can develop fine-motor skills. Actions such as rotation when screwing and drilling or pushing and pulling when sawing, support the development of core strength and gross-motor skills.



Using real tools helps children learn the importance of following rules and being responsible. Through developing understanding of risk assessment and safety, children learn to keep themselves and others safe.

Building skills and developing mastery over tools helps children to experience a sense of achievement alongside increased confidence and self-esteem.

Literacy

Children can expand their vocabulary by naming tools and materials, describing actions, discussing tasks, and using comparative language such as 'smoother/rougher', 'longer/shorter', 'thicker/thinner'.

When collaborating with others, children can discuss and describe their creations, share thinking and ideas, negotiate and problem-solve.

Woodworking typically requires supervision and guidance from an adult, especially with regards to safety when working with unfamiliar tools. As children listen to and follow instructions, they enhance their capacity for sustained concentration and focus.



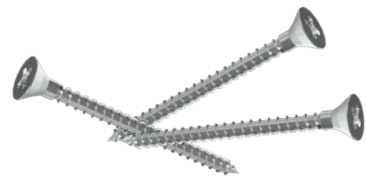
Designing and planning woodwork creations encourages children to express thoughts and ideas through mark-making. Following completion of creations, children may use mark-making to describe and label its features, outline the process and explain how they solved problems.

Maths & Numeracy

As children bring their plans to life, they have opportunities to explore 'measure' in depth, ranging from simply measuring comparatively to using a measuring tape to estimate where they need to saw.



Children can develop understanding of matching, sorting and grouping. For example, grouping nails according to size or matching screws with the appropriate screwdriver.



As children craft and construct their designs they encounter positional language, placing the saw 'on top' of the wood and moving their arm 'backwards and forwards' to saw.

The woodwork area provides rich opportunities to engage with number. For example, figuring out how much of something is required to complete a creation supports exploration of the concepts of 'one more' or 'one less.'

"How many more nails do I need to make my model strong? One more?"

Other

Working with wood helps children develop understanding around sustainability, supporting them to appreciate where wood comes from, to consider its potential uses, and to recognise the importance of taking responsibility for the environment through the reduce, reuse and recycle approach.



Woodworking requires children to solve complex problems, encouraging them to investigate issues and engage in critical thinking as they explore different viewpoints and test potential solutions.

The area offers rich possibilities for children to explore STEAM, helping them to investigate how things work and make sense of the world as they engage in different stages of the plan, design and create process.

As a tactile material, children can investigate the properties of wood through touch, smell, sound and sight.

ROLE OF THE ADULT

Woodwork

It is essential that staff possess a shared understanding surrounding a risk-benefit approach, maintaining awareness of how their attitudes or apprehensions surrounding woodworking can impact children's confidence.

The practitioner helping children in the woodwork area should be supported by the wider staff team to ensure that they have capacity to remain attentive to children's needs and questions, to scaffold learning, engage in high-quality interactions and maintain health and safety.

Practitioners should check the woodwork area regularly throughout the day, ensuring that tools are in good working order and that there is a sufficient supply of resources to support children's choice, thinking and creativity.



Given that children may be unfamiliar with tools and materials, practitioners should model appropriate uses and techniques, demonstrating a positive and resilient attitude towards woodworking that promotes perseverance.

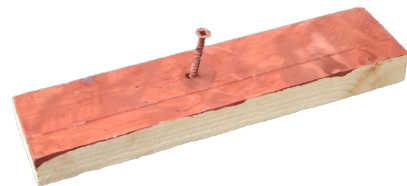
It's important that practitioners reflect on the weight of tools being provided and children's capacity to control these. Remember, sometimes short-handled hammers can be heavier compared to some longer-handled hammers.

Staff should have a consistent approach towards supporting children to assess and consider whether their model is complete and safe enough to take home, or whether these require further work and adjustments.

For example, if there are exposed nails, conversations may evolve around actions children can take to make these safe.



ROOM STRUCTURE & LAYOUT



Ideally, the woodwork bench should be in a place that is easily observable and not situated on a walkway. Woodwork can be an extremely noisy area; therefore, it shouldn't be positioned alongside quieter provision areas, such as the Quiet Space or Book Area.

Due to the creative nature of woodworking, children may want to extend their creations. Therefore, the woodwork bench can benefit from being close to the art area.

There should be a space where children can store models they are working on and a place to display their completed creations.



The area should be decluttered, with tools and resources clearly labelled and organised. For example, using silhouettes or images of tools. It's important that there is a clear system to ensure tools can be stored and accessed safely.

Whilst there are no limits on the number of children using the area at any one time, consideration should be given to the quality of experience that children can have. Notably, children can't use larger movements or engage fully with the equipment within a confined space.

Practitioners can help guide the capacity through the number of resources on offer. For example, providing 2 pairs of appropriately sized safety glasses as opposed to 4.

Remember!

It's important to ensure that saws are well maintained and sharp! Blunt saws pose greater danger than sharp ones.



RESOURCE IDEAS

- Woodwork bench that is sturdy and of suitable height, with a vice
- Real, appropriately sized and weighted tools: saw, hammer, screwdriver, spirit level, pliers, hand-drill, plane, pincers and set square
- Various types/shapes/sizes/lengths of wood, soft enough to saw
- Nails and screws, tacks of different sizes, widths and lengths
- Appropriately sized safety glasses
- Paper, pencil, cardboard, ruler, measuring tape
- Sandpaper and block (course and fine), wood glue, elastic bands
- Loose parts: bottle tops, washers, corks, yoghurt pots, buttons
- Reference and story books
- Stimulating images of wooden objects and real-life objects made from wood
- Log for hammering nails into

REFLECTION POINTS



- The woodwork bench can sometimes provoke concern from parents. In what ways can practitioners support parents to understand a risk-benefit approach and the learning opportunities?
- Are there opportunities for children to deconstruct items? What are the learning opportunities that can come from this?
- What steps can practitioners take to promote an inclusive approach to woodworking? Through promoting opportunities for all, practitioners can help address gender bias, supporting children to recognise potential future possibilities within the wider world of work.