

Activity Ideas for Small World Jungle Tuff Tray Mat (AW5)



The Jungle Tuff Tray Mat can be used to encourage children to share, take turns and work collaboratively. Children may start by playing with key adults before moving away to play on their own or with others.

Learning with the Tuff Tray Mat

- Children learn best when they are actively involved and enjoying what they are doing through physical and mental challenges. Small Worlds enable children to experience learning through a multi-sensory approach which can engage and involve children for sustained periods. They provide learning opportunities for a wide range of learning areas, where children can freely explore materials within the confines of the tuff spot.
- There will be elements of consolidation, exploration, investigation, and fun in every activity.
- Children can have independence and control over their learning which keeps their interest and develops their creativity. They can also become absorbed in finding out about the world through their explorations, investigations and questions by using a wide range of resources with the mat.
- Activities can be free play/child initiated, where the children explore independently or adult directed, where children are given specific tasks to undertake.

Activity Ideas

Sensory play and different materials

Create a sensory experience by using materials with the mat e.g. soap flake slime for a swamp (risk assess), foliage and twigs for the canopy, and stones and pebbles for added texture.

Use shiny paper or material for the river and play jungle sound effects to create a rich, immersive, imaginative small world adventure.

Investigating the natural world

Explore and classify the animals by sorting them into groups e.g. mammals, reptiles, birds and insects.

Encourage children to examine patterns and colours, comparing spots, stripes, and textures on the animals and plants.

Like true explorers, use magnifiers to look at details on the mat, sparking discussions about habitats and camouflage.

Creativity

Encourage creativity and storytelling by retelling jungle tales like 'Rumble in the Jungle', or 'The Jungle Book'.

Children can act out scenes, use props and make jungle sound effects with drums, whistles, or homemade instruments such as pan pipes.

Record their sounds ready for future play.

Constructing and creating

Give children leaves, plants, stones, rocks, etc to create their own jungle landscape. Challenge them to build a bridge to cross the river or a boat to sail on.

Make trees and foliage from a range of collage materials. Rocks could be made from play dough and snakes could be made by threading beads etc.

Personal, social and emotional

As children play, encourage collaboration and discuss taking turns and sharing.

Have discussions about caring for and protecting wild animals. These could lead to conversations about zoos and natural habitats.

Think about the things we can do to help to protect the environment.

Physical Development

Develop gross motor skills by moving like animals found in the jungle and on the mat e.g. fluttering like a butterfly, swinging like a monkey or prowling like a leopard.

As children add their creations to the mat to create a 3D landscape, they may use their fine motor skills to place pebbles, position animals or trace/make patterns in the sand/soil.

Communication, language and literacy

Some ideas may include:

- Create a jungle survey to record all the animals they see in their play.
- Leave a trail for someone to follow e.g. from stones or by creating animal footprints.
- Send a postcard home from your jungle holiday describing your adventures.
- Learn the names of different animals that can be found in the jungle and learn different facts.
- Sing rhymes and songs – e.g. 'Never smile at a crocodile', 'Down in the jungle where nobody goes', '5 little monkeys swinging in a tree'.

Maths

Opportunities may include:

Sorting (classifying animals into different types of animals)

Counting (numbers of animals, leaves on a tree, legs,)

Measuring (height of trees)

Comparing (sizes of animals and different plants and trees)

Position (where things are in relation to each other, behind, in front, on top of)

Estimation (how many lily pads in the pond? How many trees in the jungle?)

Other suggested resources:

Various opportunities include:

- *Jungle animals – male, female and young – reptiles, birds and mammals*
- *Jungle camouflage and equipment such as netting, binoculars and magnifying glasses*
- *Mini clip boards and writing implements for mark making*
- *Materials such as sand, gravel, stones, rocks, pebbles, leaves, small branches and logs*
- *Small world characters such as people*
- *Play dough to make creations and stable bases for the trees.*

Other ideas to enrich play:

Children could make their own jungle canopy using camouflage material/netting suspended over the tuff spot so that the children are in their own enclosed world.

Try weaving leaves, snakes, butterflies etc into the canopy – the only limit is your imagination!

Create a jungle atmosphere by adding sound effects or jungle soundscapes that are playing quietly in the background.

Care Instructions

- Use a damp cloth to wipe surface.
- We would recommend that you roll rather than fold your mat after use, with the picture facing outwards.
- Any wrinkles can also be removed by wafting a warm hairdryer over the mat.
- Store in a warm environment to avoid creases.

