

# Activity Ideas for Small World Prehistoric Dinosaur Mat (AW8)



The Small World Prehistoric Dinosaur 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 and develop their own learning independently.

## Learning Opportunities with the Mat

- Children learn best when they are actively involved, enjoying what they are doing, through physical and mental challenges. Active 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 through using a wide range of resources with the mats.
- All the 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

### Using materials and media

Incorporate a range of materials to create the scene e.g. soap flake slime for the swamp; foliage or bark for the trees, stones/rocks to create the landscape, the dinosaur nest, the volcano or wallpaper paste made up with blue food colouring for the meandering river.

### Classifying living things

Learn about the extinct creatures. Discuss the similarities and differences and research with the children the different dinosaur names.

Learn about the different dinosaurs and classify them into groups – flying/walking, fast/slow, carnivores or herbivores.

### **Learning new vocabulary**

Learn about different places and environments using a range of vocabulary such as volcano, forest, river, rocks, riverbank, mountains, swamp. Challenge the children to create landscapes by placing foliage, rocks, branches, sand into the tray. Learn about and explore natural resources e.g. wet and dry sand and the different types of foliage etc.

### **Why things happen and how things work**

Giving children time for exploratory play as well as directed tasks. Why not make a volcano from paper mâché by placing a yoghurt pot in the centre containing bicarbonate of soda. Gently pour a small amount of vinegar on top and stand back!

### **Creating and making**

Give children leaves, plants, stones, rocks, etc to create their own Jurassic Park where they can 'walk with dinosaurs'.

Make scenery e.g. trees from junk materials, rocks from play dough, dinosaur nest can be made from sand, play dough, twigs. The eggs could be made from clay.

### **Past and present**

Introduce the children to chronological language – in the past, long ago, extinct. Have discussions with the children about creatures from the past and present day. Make a set of creatures you would see today and those you would have seen long ago. Discuss similarities and differences.

### **Problem solving and Maths**

**Sorting** (classifying animals into different groups)

**Counting** (numbers of animals, numbers of legs)

**Comparing** (sizes of animals – long, tall, weight - heavy, light)

**Prepositional Language** - behind, in front, on top of, across, under, in)

**Matching** (discuss what is the same, what is different between the dinosaurs)

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

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

Discuss the differences between the dinosaurs and their behaviours. Why is the T-Rex seen as the scary one?

Sometimes the T-Rex is made out to be the bully. Discuss this with the children.

### **Creativity**

Encourage children to use their imagination by creating different role play scenarios.

Observe as children introduce a storyline or narrative into their play.

Make sound effects for the rumbling volcano as it erupts (thunder tube, wobble a piece of cardboard, musical instruments or voices).

### **Communication, Language and Literacy**

Encourage the children to use different vocabulary e.g. describe the dinosaur – fierce, sharp teeth and scaly skin.

Incorporate early mark making by making tracks or footprints in the sand.

Scribe the children's stories for them or provide recordable devices so that they can record them and share with others.

### **Physical Development**

**Develop fine motor control** – make tracks through the sand, roll the dough to make the eggs or position the animals in their play.

**Gross motor control** – make the flying creatures swoop and soar. Can the children move like the different creatures on the mat? Can their friends guess which creature they are pretending to be?

### **Other suggested resources:**

Giant and mini dinosaurs

Dinosaur eggs

Coloured sand

Rocks and pebbles

Malleable materials – dough, slime etc

Improvise by making your own resources from junk or everyday materials.

### **Care Instructions**

- Use 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.