



### ***Talking Frogs (EL46408)***

**This case study, shared by Dukes and Duchesses Nursery in Liverpool, highlights how the Talking Frogs became a much-loved resource for encouraging language and communication, imaginative play, and outdoor exploration in our setting.**



At Dukes and Duchesses Nursery, the Talking Frogs have quickly become a much-loved addition to our setting. We introduced them in the Spring term, linking them to our seasonal focus on the world around us, changes in nature, and life cycles — particularly tadpoles and frogs.

#### **Learning about the natural world**

The frogs immediately sparked curiosity and conversation, especially outdoors. Children began exploring our environment with fresh interest, wanting to learn more about ponds, wildlife, and other outdoor creatures. The resource naturally extended their learning, encouraging questions, discussions, and investigations into the natural world.

#### **Great for nursery rhymes, songs and music**

One of the nursery rhymes that we had been focusing on was Five Little Speckled Frogs, and the Talking Frogs brought this rhyme to life in an exciting, interactive way. Children were able to splash the frogs into real water, adding a sensory and physical dimension to the rhyme. Staff and children also recorded parts of the rhyme onto the frogs, allowing children to revisit and replay the rhyme during their play, strengthening both memory and engagement. Music also became a key area where the frogs were used. Music is an integral part of life at our nursery, so we loved being able to record not only rhymes and songs but also different types of music onto the frogs. This created easy access for the children to listen and engage at the press of a button.

#### **Imaginative play**

Beyond factual learning, the Talking Frogs inspired imaginative play. Children created small world scenes, using the frogs as talking characters to build narratives and stories. One activity involved using chia seeds mixed with water to represent frogspawn and tadpoles, adding a unique sensory element.

While some children were initially hesitant to put the frogs into the water, thinking they might break, they quickly discovered that the frogs were designed to withstand messy and wet play. This combination of technology and sensory exploration added a whole new dimension to their learning.

### **Supporting communication and language**

A key success of the Talking Frogs was how they encouraged the children to find and use their voices. Supporting communication and language development is a huge priority in our nursery, and the frogs gave the children a new, exciting tool for expression. Many enjoyed recording sounds such as “ribbit!”, while older children recorded words or phrases. In group activities, children placed frogs in the middle of a circle or in a covered box, taking turns to choose a frog, listen to the message, and guess who had recorded it — promoting careful listening and social interaction.

### **Easy to use**

The frogs were very intuitive for the children to use. We encouraged problem-solving by letting the children explore how to record and play back messages through trial and error before offering adult guidance. This approach supported their understanding of cause and effect, as well as skills like turn-taking, following rules, and developing patience.

The design of the Talking Frogs is perfect for young children — they are tactile, easy to handle, and very inviting. The children were naturally drawn to pick them up, listen to recordings, and hear their own voices as well as those of their friends.

### **In conclusion – our final verdict**

Overall, the Talking Frogs have proven to be a flexible and popular resource across multiple areas of learning. What makes them stand out most is their durability — the ability to combine technology with water play without worry. This functionality has opened up so many new opportunities for outdoor, messy, and sensory play, and both staff and children have thoroughly enjoyed exploring all the possibilities they offer.



Many thanks to the staff at Dukes and Duchesses Nursery in Liverpool for sharing this with us.



### ***Talking Frogs (EL46408)***

In this case study, Lisa Nelson, a Reception Teacher from St Edwards RC Primary School, shares with us her thoughts on the Talking Frogs and some of the different ways the children in Reception have used them in their learning.



#### **Intent - Our initial reasons for using the frogs**

With this year's cohort, maintaining focus and attention has been a large focus for us. We have had to do a lot of work on encouraging engaged play as the children demonstrated rather low-level play when they began school. During provision time, we noticed that the children wouldn't engage with resources in a purposeful way and would tend to flit from activity to activity. The outdoor area was popular, so we focused our attention on that space during the Autumn term and will continue to do so during the warmer summer days. Though the children's play had come a long way, as a team we felt like the play in some areas, particularly the water area had become quite repetitive. We decided to try the talking frogs as we knew they would be a useful resource to extend and encourage play outdoors.

#### **Implementation - How we used the frogs**

As outdoor play was an area we wanted to develop, we focused the use of the frogs in that area. The fact that the frogs are waterproof and can be used in water is a big benefit and unlike any other recording resource we have used before.

We found that play in our water area was quite repetitive, whilst this has its benefits, we wanted to extend thinking and problem solving for some children. We set up a very simple activity where the adults recorded water challenges on to the frogs e.g. Can you move the water from one tray to another? Can you build a water slide for the duck? When playing in the area, we encouraged the children to catch a frog and carry out the challenge.

We used the frogs in a similar way to enhance the mud kitchen. We had noticed that play in this area was good but we wanted to move it on a bit. In class we had done some work on recipes linked to our topic. We modelled how to use recipe language in the mud kitchen and introduced recipe cards. Once this vocabulary was in place we introduced the frogs and recorded recipes onto them for children to follow. Some children then asked to record their own recipes on to the frogs for their friends.

As an EYFS teacher, when seeing frogs, you immediately think of the '5 little specked frogs' rhyme. We used them as a prop for this during our maths sessions. Knowing they were water safe meant we could make this play more realistic in a water tuff tray. We further used them in our maths to assess children's understanding of number. The adults recorded number clues such as 'this number is one less than 3'. The children caught a frog, listened to the clue and matched to the correct number.



### **Impact and outcomes**

The impact of using the frogs was really positive. In some areas, such as the water challenge and mud kitchen, it meant that there was some adult input and encouragement even without an adult in that area. We saw an increase in children's critical thinking, problem solving and teamwork in the water area. We also noticed that children who previously did not engage with the water area or mud kitchen were keen to have a go.

Being a technological resource, children are immediately engaged and want to try them out. We found that once the children had engaged with what the adults had recorded on there, they soon wanted to have a go at recording their own messages, clues, recipes etc. This resulted in children being keener to demonstrate their abilities and provided us with some assessment opportunities.

They are such a versatile resource that can and will be used in many ways going forward. For us the main advantage is that they provide an opportunity to take technology outside.

### **Thoughts/quotes from our staff:**

"We love that they come in a pack of 10! This is a big advantage as EYFS number work tends to focus on numbers up to 10. Also, in our case it meant they could be used across a number of areas outside."

"What a great way to provide adult input in different areas."

"It was really quick and easy to re-record some scaffolded clues for some children who needed it. They didn't know the game had been adapted so felt very proud of themselves."

"I've never seen so many children wanting to complete a maths challenge! The frogs definitely increased engagement".

"We loved that this resource was designed to be used in water and tended to use it mostly in our outdoor area."

## Examples of activities that we have tried with the Talking Frogs

### 5 Little Speckled Frogs and Composition of Number

We initially used the frogs to sing the 5 little speckled frogs' song, in a dry tuff tray during carpet time and then with water outdoors. In our maths we have been exploring composition of numbers to 5. We used the tuff tray to explore different ways we could arrange 5 frogs e.g. 3 on the log and 2 in the water. To support some children with this, staff pre-recorded the composition of 5 on to a frog, so that children could listen and arrange the frogs, then recount.



### Talking Frogs Water Challenge

In order to encourage children's thinking, problem solving and use of a range of resources, we set up a water challenge tray. Children had to fish out a frog, listen to the challenge e.g. Can you find the fastest way to move the water from one tray to another? The children had to then find different ways of completing the challenges.





## Understanding Number Challenge

As a maths activity, we pre-recorded number clues on to the frogs, e.g. 'This number is 1 more than 2.' The children caught a frog, listened to the clue then matched up the frog to the correct number flashcard.



## Recipe Frogs

We wanted to further extend children's play in the mud kitchen, so introduced recipe cards and also recorded the instructions on to the frogs for children to listen to and follow. We later extended this by encouraging children to develop and record their own recipes for their friends to follow.



Many thanks to Lisa Nelson (Reception Teacher from St Edwards RC Primary School, Bolton) for sharing her thoughts and ideas with us.