

Ideas and Inspiration for the Rechargeable Stage 1 Remote Control Clever Cats

Clever Cats (EY06338)

Rechargeable Stage 1 Remote Control Clever Cats – Supporting Learning in the Early Years and Beyond

The Clever Cats are one of those resources that children tend to pick up and explore straight away. With just one large round button to control movement, they are simple enough for younger children to experience early programming concepts without becoming overwhelmed by lots of controls or instructions.

As children experiment with pressing, holding and releasing the button, they begin to notice how their actions make something happen. Alongside this early understanding of control technology, the cats naturally encourage talk, collaboration problem solving, imaginative play.



Skills developed with the Rechargeable Stage 1 Remote Control Clever Cats

Motor Control and Coordination

Using the remote control helps children practise a range of physical movements and can support with the development of their muscles.

Children develop hand strength and coordination as they:

- Press and hold the large button.
- Release the button to stop movement.
- Reach, crawl or walk after the moving cats.

Some children may use both hands at first before gradually gaining enough control to use one hand independently. Others may experiment with pressing gently or firmly to see what happens. The cats can also encourage whole-body movement as children follow them around the room, crawl after them or reposition the cats to guide them through spaces.

Understanding of Cause and Effect

The Clever Cats provide immediate feedback when touched, either by a meow sound or the eyes changing colour. This helps children to understand that their actions create an outcome.

Children begin to notice:

- Pressing the button on the remote makes the cat move.
- Releasing the button makes it stop.
- Changing direction alters where the cat travels.
- Stroking the cat creates a response.

This kind of instant response helps children make important connections between actions and results. Repeated opportunities to test ideas help children to build confidence in trying things out independently.

Early Programming and Directional Awareness

Although very simple to use, the Clever Cats introduce children to early programming ideas in a practical, playful way.

Children begin to:

- Predict where the cat might move to.
- Think about direction and position.
- Adjust their actions when something does not go to plan (debugging).
- Work out how to guide the cat towards a target.

They may start experimenting with moving forwards, turning, navigating around objects and correcting mistakes.

These early experiences help lay foundations for later computational thinking and problem solving.

Communication and Language

The cats naturally encourage conversation as children describe movements, explain ideas, collaborate and play together.

Children may begin using vocabulary linked to:

- Movements – forwards, turn, stop, fast, slow.
- Position – next to, behind, under, around.
- Direction – left, right, this way.
- Problem solving – try again, stuck, nearly, move it.

Educators can support language development by modelling and extending vocabulary naturally during play. Examples may include:

- “Your cat is turning around the chair.”
- “Can you send your cat forwards towards your friend?”
- “I noticed it stopped when you let it go.”

The cats can also become a useful prompt for storytelling, conversations about pets and imaginative role play.

Problem Solving and Critical Thinking

As children experiment, they begin solving practical problems through trial and error.

Some examples might include:

- “How do I get the cat around the box?”
- “Why did it stop?”
- “How can I make it reach the brown cat?”
- “What do I have to do to get my cat to go in the opposite direction?”

Children may adapt their approach independently, particularly when working collaboratively with others.

Imagination, Small World and Cooperative Play

The Clever Cats can be used independently but work especially well in pairs or small groups and naturally encourage shared play.

Children may:

- Take turns controlling the cats.
- Help each other navigate obstacles.
- Create shared games and storylines.
- Talk together about what the cats are doing.

The matching controllers also encourage children to notice similarities and differences as they identify which controller belongs to which cat. The cats can also become part of imaginative play experiences. The children may:

- Build homes for the cats.
- Create journeys and adventures.
- Design obstacle courses.

Adding fabrics, tunnels, cardboard boxes and natural materials can help extend play even further.

Ideas for the Rechargeable Stage 1 Remote Control Clever Cats

Let Children Explore Freely

One of the best ways to introduce the Clever Cats is simply to place them within provision and allow children time to investigate independently. Children quickly begin experimenting with pressing the button, noticing how the cats move and working out how to change direction.

Build Obstacle Courses

Children often enjoy creating obstacle courses for the cats to travel around. Using blocks, tunnels, cushions, crates or loose parts, children can build pathways and challenges before attempting to guide their cat through them. Some children may design increasingly complicated courses with bridges, corners and barriers. As they experiment, children begin adjusting their movements and thinking carefully about direction and control.

Colour Hunts

The different coloured cats naturally lend themselves to colour matching games and hunts around the environment. Children can move their cats towards objects that match its colour, searching for items that are grey, white, black or brown. Some children may begin counting how many matching objects they can find, while others may compare which cat discovered the most items.

Create Small World Adventures

The Clever Cats fit well into small world play. Children might build homes for the cats using blocks and fabrics, create roads and pathways or invite them into the home corner as the family pet or take them to the vets.

Design Homes for the Cats

Providing open-ended materials such as cardboard boxes, baskets, fabrics, wooden blocks and natural materials encourages children to design sleeping areas, shelters or homes for the cats. After moving around the environment, children may enjoy guiding the cat safely back home. Some children may even begin assigning names, personalities and routines to the cats as part of the day

Follow the Path

Educators can create simple pathways using masking tape, chalk, or ribbon on a tuff tray or on the floor. Children may start off by keeping the cat on the line but may begin to adapt and refine their movements or the complexity of their line patterns as they become more confident. Maybe you could create a 'Kitty Prowling Test' for them to pass.

Conversations about Real Cats

The Clever Cats can act as a wonderful conversation starter. Children may begin discussing pets they have at home, what real cats look like, how cats move or what they eat. Some children enjoy deciding on names for the cats or inventing stories about where they live and what adventures they have been on.

Collaborative Games

As children become more familiar with the controller, they often begin creating games together. They may race their cats, work together to complete a route or attempt to rescue or move all the cats to the same destination.

