

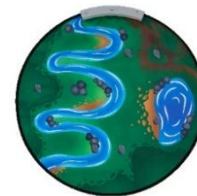
Ideas and Inspiration for the TTS Recordable Small World Scape Mats (EL47856, EL46831, EL46832, EL46833, EL46834)

In this download, you'll find a collection of engaging activity ideas to help you get started with your Recordable Small World Environments Mats.

Each mat features **six recordable sound buttons**, identified by specific rocks in the scene. Children can record their own voices, sound effects, music or additional environmental sounds onto each button. Each button has up to **10 seconds recording time**.

By adjusting the switch on the sound unit, you can change modes so that the same buttons (rocks) can also play **six built-in environmental sounds** for that habitat. This gives you the flexibility to move between the children's recordings and the pre-recorded sounds.

Use the recordable feature and built-in sound effects to introduce new vocabulary, support listening skills, encourage storytelling and support imaginative small world play. Whether children are exploring independently or creating stories together, the mats provide opportunities for language, communication and creativity.



Different Places to use your Recordable Small World Environment Mats

The Recordable Small World Environment Mats can be used in a range of ways depending on the age of your children, your available space and how you plan to use them. Each set up offers different opportunities for exploration, movement, imaginative play and communication and language.

Placing the mat on the floor

Using the mat on the floor gives babies and toddlers plenty of space to explore. It encourages natural movements such as reaching, rolling, crawling and stretching as they move towards different areas on the mat and the interactive sound rocks.

As they grow, they can kneel, crawl or move around the mat as they build small world scenes, press the sound buttons and interact with their creations. The movements made during play, help to develop balance, coordination and core strength.

Placing the mat on the floor also provides room for the children to spread out small world figures, loose parts and other materials that they may use when building their scenes.

In a tuff tray or on a low table

Using the mat in a tuff tray creates a defined play space, helping to keep loose parts, figures and other small world resources organised and contained.

The raised edges of the tray provide a clear boundary that some children find reassuring, while the increased height encourages reaching and leaning. The mat can be made more accessible for wheelchair users, or for those that prefer or need to stand during play by using it alongside a wheelchair accessible tuff spot stand and tray.

Creating a multi-mat world

Where space allows, two or more mats can be placed side by side to create connected scenes, extended story plots or as a comparison of different habitats. Switching between the children's own recordings and the built-in environmental sounds, as they move between the mats, adds variety and encourages language and communication, while deepening their understanding of different environments.

Learning Benefits with the Recordable Small World Environments Mats

The mats support inclusive, immersive play experiences that appeal to a wide range of learning preferences whilst developing different skills.

- Perfect for creating multi-sensory small world experiences.
- Capture and hold children's attention through interactive elements such as sound effects and recordable capability.
- Create engaging, immersive small world scenes.
- Versatile as can be used on the floor, table or in a tuff tray.
- Two play modes: Children can either use the built-in sounds to enhance their small world experience or record their own sound effects or narratives.
- Children make decisions and take control of their play with the different features.
- Support or scaffold play by recording key vocabulary, questions or prompts for the children to use and respond to.



Using the Recordable Small World Environments Mats with Babies and Toddlers

From tummy time to first words, the mats support early senses, movement, communication and exploration.

Babies and toddlers may:

- Turn their head to look at or follow the sounds.
- Widen their eyes, smile or coo when they hear a sound.
- Reach, pat or tap the mat or maybe even reach for the part of the mat that the sound came from.
- Explore the mat and resources used with their hands and maybe even mouth!
- Look closely at the colours, shapes and other resources on the mat.
- Listen to and respond to familiar voices and sounds that have been recorded.
- Begin to notice differences between sounds or show a preference for certain ones.

Safety First

- Always supervise babies on the mat.
- Use the mat on the floor, in a tuff tray or on a low table.
- Check the mat regularly and keep clean by wiping down with a damp cloth.
- Do not use the mat near or in water.
- Adjust the volume of the sounds according to the environment and child.
- Safety tested from birth upwards.

Things to try:

Tummy time discovery

Place your baby on their tummy on the mat. Get down to their level. Show them an item such as a soft toy lion and press the sound rocks to activate the sounds you have recorded. Create wonder about what you can see and hear.

Reach and explore

Encourage children to reach towards the sounds or toys on the mat. As they get older, encourage them to have a go at finding and pressing the rocks to hear the different sounds.

Sound surprises

Press a different sound rock and pause. Watch and listen for their reaction. Repeat their favourites and encourage them to make the sounds.

Voice play

Record a short message from a familiar person, a short line from a song or even the child's voice. Play it back and listen to it together. Try recording familiar, everyday sounds too.

Simple stories

Add age-appropriate resources to tell stories. Talk about who they are and what they are doing. Keep it fun and repeat!

Ideas for Play with the Recordable Small World Recordable Mats in the Early Years

Storytelling and Imagination

Can you find the recordable rocks?

Before showing children how the mats work, let them investigate. Can they work out which rocks are recordable? What clues do they notice? Once they've found and identified the built-in sounds, encourage them to experiment with recording and playing back their own. Children often love discovering how something works for themselves.

Tell a story together

Choose a familiar story and record different parts onto the rocks. As children move around the mat, they can listen to different parts before acting them out with figures, loose parts and small world resources. Can they remember what comes next in the story? Or perhaps they'll decide to change the ending completely.

Be the storyteller

Instead of listening to someone else's story, encourage children to become the author. They could record their own adventure, create different character voices or invent a completely new world to explore. Playing their recordings back often inspires even more ideas.

Add the soundtrack

Sometimes it's the little sounds that make a story memorable. Record animal calls or weather sounds onto the rocks and let children decide when to use them in their narratives. Suddenly a simple story becomes much more dramatic.

Join in!

Think about stories with repeated refrains or memorable character sayings. Record these onto the rocks so children can press the buttons and join in together. Before long, you'll hear them repeating the phrases even when the mat isn't being used.

Listening and Communication

Who's left the message?

Record secret messages onto the different rocks. They could be from a woodland creature, a pirate, an explorer or even a penguin depending on the mat you're using. Children love listening carefully to work out who's speaking and what they need to do next.

Can you solve the riddle?

Instead of giving answers, record clues.

'I'm thinking of an animal that lives in the water and has scales.' 'I'm nocturnal and can see well in the dark.'

Children naturally begin talking and creating scenes together as they solve each challenge.

Listen before you move

Record simple instructions for the children to follow. For example, 'Put three animals by the river' or 'Can you find or build somewhere safe for the baby penguin in the habitat?' As children become more confident, make the instructions longer or ask them to record their own for a friend to follow.

Descriptive language

Record new vocabulary that you want the children to learn and use in their play onto the recordable rocks. Alternatively, why not record sounds for the children to listen to and describe using descriptive vocabulary, for example, is the sound a fast-flowing babbling brook or a ferocious, whooshing, howling wind.

Maths and Problem Solving

Build what you hear

Record simple building challenges. For example, 'Can you create a woodland with five trees?' or 'Put two animals in the river and four beside it.' Children listen first, then create the scene, often checking the recording again if they need a reminder.

Understanding Habitats and Animals

Let the habitat do the talking

Rather than reading facts from a book, bring them to life by recording them on the mat. These could be things such as 'Polar bears have black skin under their white fur' or 'Some frogs are amphibious; this means they can live on land and water.' Children discover information naturally as they play, often leading to more questions, conversations and embedded learning.

Where would it live?

Gather a collection of animals and figures and invite the children to decide where each one belongs on the mat. For example, 'Where would the fish live?' 'Where is the best location for a house?' There isn't always just one answer, so encourage children to explain their thinking. If using more than one mat, can the children sort objects or images according to match the different environments

What's making that sound?

Switch the mat to the built-in environmental sounds and simply listen together. What can they hear? A stream? Waves? Birds? Wind? How are the sounds similar or different? Can they use the image on the mat to justify their reasons? Children will often notice different things, making this a lovely way to start conversations before play begins.

Whose voice is that?

Record different animal sounds or character voices onto the rocks. Can children match each sound/voice to the correct animal/character? Afterwards, challenge them to recreate the sounds using their voices, instruments or objects from around the setting. Can they record their own sounds onto the rocks for someone else to guess and use in their play?



Inclusive Play Ideas

Not every child approaches small world play in the same way. Some children jump straight into creating stories, while others enjoy listening, watching or exploring before joining in. The recordable mats offer different ways for children to take part, making play more accessible, engaging and meaningful.

The mats can be used to:

- Record simple prompts to spark an idea, such as 'Who lives by the river?' or 'Can you help the lost penguin find his family?'
- Add clues, questions or instructions for children to listen to and follow as they play.
- Record familiar voices from home or the setting, favourite story phrases or rhymes that children enjoy joining in with.
- Create sound effects to bring stories to life, whether they're made by the children or chosen from the built-in environment sounds.
- Take turns to record, listen and respond, giving every child the chance to contribute their own ideas.
- Choose between children's own recordings and the built-in sounds to see how each changes the direction of the play.
- Allow children to show their understanding by following the instructions or prompts on the mat and demonstrating their knowledge with actions.

For some children, hearing spoken prompts or environmental sounds can make it easier to begin, sustain or revisit their play.

