

Ways to use the Metallic Elephants

Discover ways to use the TTS Metallic Elephant and Number Counting Set (EY06519) with ideas and inspiration from Sarah Brown, an experienced Early Years teacher and leader.



Small World Play

Create a small world set up and place the elephants inside it encouraging children to discuss what they can see within the small world. Why not add the elephants to a small world continuous provision shelf in a basket or in a row for the children to explore freely and use within their play.

Curriculum Links:

- Communication and Language
- Expressive Arts and Design

Treasure Basket

Find a medium open basket and add shiny items such as spoons pans, chains, keys bangles, silvery/shiny material and an elephant or two. Spend time discussing the items in the basket and feeling them, exploring their texture, size, shape and look. (do not leave small items unattended with children and make sure items are suitable for the age of children).

Why not ask these questions;

- What do you notice?
- Is there anything that's the same about the items?
- What is different about the items?
- What do we use the item for?
- What could we use the item for?
- How does it feel to touch?

Curriculum Links:

- Communication and Language
- Expressive Arts and Design
- Personal Social and Emotional Development
- Understanding the world

Kims Game

Place the elephants on a tray or on the ground. Hold a towel or sheet over them and remove an elephant, then remove the sheet showing all but the missing elephant. Ask the children to say which elephant is missing and why. You could make it tricky by adding more elephants, starting off with just 4-5 and building up to all 10. Challenge the children to say why they think that elephant is missing e.g. they might say "I can't see the red elephant" or "I think the blue elephant is missing because I can't see it anymore."

Curriculum Links:

- Communication and Language
- Expressive Arts and Design
- Personal Social and Emotional Development
- Maths

Research Festivals or Elephants

Use for an Asian Inspired tuff tray to encourage talk and discussion around items and objects used to celebrate festivals across the region such as Holi, Diwali. Provide information or ways to research information about the festivals such as iPads or computers with adult guidance to support researching.

Alternatively, there are three different types of elephants in at least 5 countries, Asian Elephants, African Elephants, Borneo Elephants, Indian Elephants and they all have different features although far away they look very similar. Provide opportunities to research the different types of elephants and discuss how they are the same and different.

Curriculum Links:

- Communication and Language
- Personal Social Emotional Development
- Expressive Arts and Design
- Understanding the world

Colour Sorting

Select and gather an assortment of different colour objects that are similar or the same as the elephants. Support the children to match the colours into the groups and discuss why some objects maybe similar but not the same such as where orange could go if you only have red and yellow to match objects too.

Curriculum Links:

- Communication and Language
- Expressive Arts and Design
- Personal Social and Emotional Development
- Math

Colour Hunt

Give each child an elephant, naming the colour and then ask them to go on a colour hunt to find objects that are the same colour as the elephant. You could provide the children with a hoop, area, mat or basket to collect or bring their items too.

Curriculum Links:

- Communication and Language
- Expressive Arts and Design
- Personal Social and Emotional Development
- Maths

Matching Numerals to Amounts

Each elephant has numbers and dots on them. Provide a set of number cards for children to match to the correct numeral on the elephant then use counters or gems to count and match the number of items to the numeral on the elephant and card.

Challenge children to do this in and out of order.

Curriculum Links:

- Communication and Language
- Personal Social and Emotional Development
- Maths

Many thanks to Sarah Brown for writing this content.

About the Writer... Sarah Brown is an experienced Early Years teacher and leader with expertise in inclusive practice, SEND, communication and language development, and evidence-informed teaching across Nursery, Reception and KS1 settings in London and Manchester.

She is passionate about creating communication-rich, inclusive environments where all children can thrive, particularly those with SEND, EAL and speech and language needs. Her work focuses on high-quality interactions, early language development, self-regulation and practical strategies that support children, families and educators.

Sarah is the founder of [@thedyslexicleader](https://www.thedyslexicleader.com), a professional platform where she shares accessible ideas, book recommendations and inclusive teaching approaches with educators and families. She regularly contributes to wider professional conversations through webinars, podcasts and speaking engagements, including presenting at the Nursery World Big Day Out 2026.