

What shall we make today?

Cardboard boxes, tubes, plastic bottles and other recycled materials are enjoyable in their own right (as containers to fill up with sand, water or other materials; as props for play) and also provide for rich creative experiences, creating models that have a special meaning for the child. Box-modelling can be a powerful medium for exploring the imagination and developing narratives.

During modelling work, children can practise and develop their skills in cutting, gluing and sellotaping, exploring the property of materials by finding out what you can (and can't) glue together, and how strong sellotape joins can be.

Model-making as a context for development and learning in the EYFS

Model-making supports children's **personal, social and emotional development** by providing opportunities to make choices, show curiosity, develop new skills, develop confidence and autonomy, make choices and sometimes become involved for long periods of time. It can be challenging, and can therefore give children a powerful sense of satisfaction and pleasure in their increasing skills and independence, and a context to learn about tackling problems and managing possible dangers, turning to adults for help when necessary.

Children's **communication, language and literacy** are supported as they vocalise, make sounds, talk about what they are doing and collaborate with others. Children will sometimes need to listen carefully and follow instructions, in order to learn new skills and to work safely.

Children can develop their **problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy** by exploring size and shape as they select materials, sometimes counting and sorting by size or properties, and experiment with joining them together. Many problems have to be solved: applying the right amount of glue, cutting off the right amount of sellotape, sorting resources into sizes, and measuring and cutting accurately. Children gain experience in fitting shapes together.

Modelling also provides a context for children to expand their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, exploring the properties of materials (what sticks, and what does not; the properties of wood). Children can explore cause-effect relationships, for example when they hammer into soft materials or wood, and can develop skills and knowledge about the function and use of tools. They can learn how to select the right tool for the job, or the right material to make a join.

Their **physical development** is enhanced with opportunities to develop large and small motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination, keeping safe when they use tools and equipment

Their **creative development** is supported as they use their imagination to create objects, sometimes talking through their ideas and plans and reflecting on the final product. Children can explore materials, shapes and colours in two and three dimensions. They can make props out of resources to support their imaginative play.