

Africa

Stimulate your child's senses and encourage their creative skills with fruits, wildlife and fabrics from Africa

'Africa' is an exciting theme for young children to explore and can be used to initiate an extensive range of interesting play and craft activities. Encouraging children to recreate the distinctive sounds and rhythms associated with the vibrant African culture can help to enhance their appreciation of music from other

cultures. Painting pictures of animals that are common to Africa such as giraffes, elephants, ostriches, zebras and antelopes can help to develop children's creative skills, and comparing flags from different African countries can encourage their observational skills.

Fruity facts

Help your child to find out where familiar fruits originate. Encourage them to name and identify a selection of fruits that grow in Africa, for example, bananas, pineapples, mangoes, oranges and lemons. Buy some of these fruits for your child to examine and compare. Talk about the different smells, shapes, textures and tastes of the fruit. Which do they like best? Use information books to help your child find out how the fruits grow. Help your child to use the fruits to make a healthy fruit salad.



Invite your child to paint a 'still life' picture of the fruit before it is used in the fruit salad. Frame the picture and hang it in the kitchen as a colourful keepsake.

Beautiful birds

Take your child to visit the local library to find out about some of the exotic and colourful birds that live in Africa, for example, parrots, eagles and hornbills. Suggest that you make a textured collage to represent an imaginary exotic bird. Help your child to draw a large bold outline of a fantasy bird on a sheet of card, then decorate it together with colourful collage materials such as fabric, tissue, braid, sequins, paper, glitter, feathers and lace.



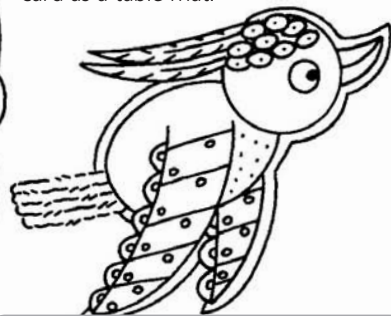
Encourage your child's language skills by helping them to make up an exotic name for their beautiful bird.

Fabulous fabrics

When you are out with your child, visit fabric shops, large department stores, market stalls, museums, exhibitions, libraries and bookshops to help your child gain an awareness of traditional and contemporary art, fabrics and artefacts from Africa. Look at and talk about the variety of interesting designs and patterns that are seen on clothing, fabric and furnishings, then invite your child to become a 'designer' by decorating a piece of plain fabric with colourful fabric paints or fabric pens.



Help your child to turn their decorated fabric into something for the home, for example, place it in a frame to hang on the wall, use it to make a small cushion or glue it on to card as a table mat.



Useful books and resources

- *Handa's Surprise* by Eileen Browne (Walker Books).
- *Mama Panya's Pancakes* by Mary and Richard Chamberlin and Julie Cairns (Barefoot Books).
- Children's Globe and Children's Atlas, available from Early Learning Centre, tel: 08705 352 352 or visit www.elc.co.uk
- Visit www.positive-identity.com for a range of products such as dolls, toys, games and puzzles from a variety of backgrounds and cultures.

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