Babies and where they come from

This section starts with basic activities that build towards an understanding of human reproduction. It is recommended that this section be delivered to children in year 2 and upwards, but teachers may choose to cover this information earlier if it is appropriate to the children's needs, or to repeat it if there is a need to reinforce the learning at a later stage. It is split into separate activities covering aspects of the topic. Teachers can choose which to use at which stage of the children's development, as appropriate for their needs.

Learning Intention:

- To learn that humans produce babies, which grow into children and then into adults.
- To learn about how they have changed and developed since they were babies.

Learning Outcome:

- To know that adults have babies that develop into children and then into adults.
- To know some changes they have gone through from when they were babies to now.

Resources:

- Various seeds/nuts and pictures of what they grow into (or images of both)
- Photographs of babies and children
- Pictures of adults at various life stages from magazines or the internet

Teacher introduction:

We going to start thinking about how living things make new versions of themselves. This means we will learn about how our bodies change as we grow up, and how adult bodies are able to make babies.

In this lesson we will need to be mature and respectful, so we will start by reminding ourselves about our Group Agreement. Do we need to change anything in our agreement before we start?

Activity 1:

Discuss with the children where they think flowers and trees come from. When the children have said seeds, show them some pictures of seeds and some pictures of what the seeds are going to grow into. Ask them to match the seed to the plant it will grow into. Include some things that are not often thought of as "seeds," such as acorns or sycamore keys.

Introduce the idea that it takes time for seeds to grow into fully grown living plants. Show pictures of mature plants and trees. Ask the children to guess how long it takes for the seed to grow into the plant and arrange the pictures in order of the time taken – for instance a sunflower grows and dies within one season, a rose bush can live for 30 years, and an oak tree can live for hundreds of years.

Activity 2:

Using photographs of babies and children, and pictures of adults at various life stages from magazines or the internet, children will order the pictures and discuss the different stages of life.

Primary science curriculum link: Children should be taught to notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults.

Activity 3:

Ask the children where they think babies come from. Be prepared for some 'myth' answers – the stork or under the gooseberry bush – or for children whose parents have recently had another child to be well informed. Make a list of all their answers.

Discuss how babies begin with a little part of the man (a sperm) and a little part of the woman (an egg) and that a baby grows in a special place called the womb (inside the mother).

Also useful for: CF, NCS

Activity 4:

Ask the children what they think the baby does in the womb. Make a list of all their ideas. Ask them to think about what they themselves can do now, and to consider whether the baby in the womb would be able to do any of those things. Clarify what the baby can and can't do.

Ask the children to touch their tummy buttons. Explain that its proper name is a navel. Ask if they can guess why everybody in the world has a navel.

Explain that a baby in the womb does not eat and drink in the way people do once they have been born. Instead the baby gets its food through a special cord that attaches the baby to its mother. The things the mother eats provide nutrition for the baby.

When the baby is born the cord is cut off and we are left with our navel to show where it once was.

(Note: children who are looked after or adopted may question why their birth mothers did not keep them or may ask what the difference is between an adoptive and birth family. "Tell Me Again About the Night I was Born" is a useful resource to use with adoptive or foster children).

Activity 5:

Ask the children to list things that babies can't do – for instance, talk, walk, feed themselves. Then ask them to list the things that they can do that babies and toddlers can't. Mark these milestones on a timeline to show how children generally develop:

- Smile - 2 months
- Hold up head - 3 months
- Roll over – 5 months
- Crawl – 8 months
- Walk – 18 months
- Knowing when they need a wee – 2 years

Ask the children to think about what their parents or carers can do, that the children can't. Scribe a list – ensure that having babies is included.

Discuss why adults can do more things than children. Include both emotional and intellectual abilities, and social attitudes, as well as physical development, in the list of answers. So for instance, adults can buy more things because they are old enough to have finished school and started work where they earn money. However they also have to pay bills and do all the cooking and cleaning.

Also useful for: CF, NCS

Plenary:

Remind the children what they have learnt:

• That adults have babies which grow into children and then into adults.

• That a baby needs a part of a man/male (a sperm) and a part of a woman/female (an egg) to grow.

• A baby grows in the womb until it can be born.

• Babies can't do as many things as children can, and adults can do even more things than a child.

Debriefing activity:

Give each child a piece of paper with a stem sentence, 'When I was a baby, I could do… but now I am 6, I can do...'

Ask the children to complete the sentence, to celebrate all that they have learned to do. Allow a minute's quiet reflection on how wonderful our bodies are, then end the lesson.

Differentiation for SEND:

Some children may have been born with disabilities or conditions which developed in the womb, or which are a result of maternal behaviours such as excessive drinking (foetal alcohol syndrome). Others may have developmental delay which means they have not yet reached some milestones. Teachers will need to be sensitive to these issues when covering the topic and should adapt the

activities to meet the needs of these children – for instance, by ensuring that all the milestones discussed are ones that the whole class has passed.