

Teddy in a Bottle

(2-5 years)

Learning objectives

To start conversations with children about how litter is dangerous for wildlife and how we can help.



cadwch keep
gymru'n wales
daclus tidy





Practitioner knowledge:

Litter is defined as waste in the wrong place, and it can be found almost everywhere.

It causes a great deal of damage to our wildlife and environment, the effects of which are often long-lasting and felt far beyond where the litter was discarded.

Litter in our streets can eventually make its way into rivers and streams, blown by the wind or carried by the rain. Many discarded items also find themselves going down the drain and ending up in the marine environment.

The main threats to wildlife from litter include injury and food poisoning. Many creatures find themselves stuck inside littered objects, some dying of starvation or dehydration. Others will eat litter thinking of it as food, making them extremely ill and causing blockages and malnutrition.

Litter is something that most children are aware of from a young age. Unfortunately, it is all around them, but it is an issue that they can do something about, helping them feel empowered. By understanding the problems litter causes, positive action can be taken, protecting animals from the harm of litter is simple!

Make sure our rubbish is disposed of properly, by reusing, recycling or putting it in a bin!



You will need:

A large, clear plastic bottle.

A soft toy animal – ideally a wild animal children may recognise from their local environment (e.g. bird, fox, hedgehog, rabbit or rat).

Preparation:

Place the soft toy inside the bottle. If it fits through the top, insert it that way. If not, carefully cut a small opening in the back of the bottle, just large enough to place the toy inside, and tape it securely closed.

How to use the activity:

Before the children enter the outdoor area, place the bottle where it can be clearly seen. Allow the children to discover it naturally during their play.

As they notice the bottle and begin to comment or ask questions, move closer to listen, observe and gently support their discussion.

Use this resource as a guide to encourage thinking, such as:

How do you think the animal got in there?

How might it feel being stuck?

What could happen if litter like this is left outside?



This visual prompt helps children explore and understand why litter can be dangerous for wildlife in a meaningful and age-appropriate way. If you would like all children to be involved, the bottle can also be introduced during group or circle time to guide a shared discussion.

Teddy is stuck in the bottle!

“Oh no, hedgehog is stuck in this bottle! Why do you think the hedgehog crawled into this bottle?” (Keep warm, looking for food, it smells nice)

“But hedgehog is stuck! How do you think the hedgehog is feeling right now?” (Scared, frightened, lonely, hungry, thirsty)

“What’s going to happen to hedgehog now?” (Won’t be able to drink or eat)

“This bottle was on the floor. How do you think it got there?”
(People dropping it, blew out of the bin)

“Do you think this could happen to other animals too?” (Birds, mice, fish...)

“What can we do to stop this from happening to animals?” (Pick up litter, don’t drop litter)

“How can we remind others not to litter?” (Make posters, share with friends and family)

