Trails

Setting up trails using signs, clues and directions

Resources: sticks, stones, gravel, chalk, saw dust or other biodegradable materials.

Trails can be made from various materials – depending on what is available in the space you are using e.g. long grass tied in a knot, mini stone stacks or arrows made from sticks in natural settings.

In an urban setting ask the children to devise their own environmental clues using non-permanent makers e.g. chalk or saw dust.

You can set a trail up for children to follow or ask one group to make a trail for others to follow.

Things to consider when making natural trails;

- What is the purpose of the trail?

  - to guide people to a specific place
  - to practice way-finding
  - to complete challenges along the trail

- How easy will the markers be to find? Will they blend with the environment? Does this matter?

- Will the clues be left undisturbed to allow them to be found by the way-finders?

Mathematical scavenger hunts

Resources: Bag or bucket for holding the collection, a measuring stick or ruler/tape if undertaking a measurement scavenger hunt.

Set up a trail (as described above) but along the way set maths challenges according to the ability of the children.

E.g. at particular points along the trail ask the children to collect a particular number of objects which can be found there differentiated according to their ability.

- collect 3 leaves
- collect 3 leaves shorter/longer than a measuring stick they have been given
- collect 3 leaves which are twice as long as their measuring stick
- collect 3 leaves which are exactly 5 cm long

A songline trail

Resources: an outdoor space

Songlines are used in some indigenous Australian belief systems for route finding. The songlines are recorded through traditional songs, stories and paintings. Those who know the songlines can navigate across the land by repeating the words which describe key landmarks.

Using a known tune; in groups children can devise their own songline to guide others on a route around an outdoor space.

Things to consider;

- Which key features within the space being used should be included in the songline?

- How to teach another group the songline?

- Should the songline be written down?