

Activity: Password



This activity aims to assist children grasp the concept of a password. What is a password and why do people have them? If we can, we may scaffold up to helping children understand passwords in technology. In development of this resource, educators indicated that phone passwords in the form of a PIN were something children understood and could be a point of entry.

There is also the issue of keeping passwords private; however, children of this age do not have their own computer passwords and, in testing, did not demonstrate the ability to understand the concept of keeping them private. You may wish to explore this with older children who may be ready to head to primary school.

Readiness

Children are ready for this activity when they are aware of rules and that keep us safe. Children might already be familiar with passwords or passcodes on their parent/carers' phones or devices and can be encouraged to think about the purpose of these. If children are finding this activity too difficult you could play a 'password' game where children have to say an agreed password to get access into a space.

Description

Part 1: The challenge

Understanding the value of a password and why we use them is something that is always going to be a challenge to teach young children. We want them to understand that there are some things that are personal to us that we don't want many people to have access to. Caught up in this are ideas about privacy, safety, permission and consent. This activity is trying to introduce the idea of a password to young children and to have them apply a password to something important to them, including sharing and using it with a trusted adult (their educator).

Part 2: Set up the activity

At circle or mat time, ask children if they know what a password is. Ask them if they have heard of passwords being used before. You may like to read or tell a story like Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves where the password "Open Sesame" accesses a cave full of treasure. Some children will know about passwords through the PIN numbers on their parents/carers' phones. You want to deliver the message that passwords can be used to keep things safe, including our own personal things that we don't want to share with people all the time.

Part 3: Your own password

Ask each child to come up with a password for something they access at pre-school – their observation book, their own work tray, their cubby hole – something that is just for them. Then, during the week, ask if you can access it and ask them for the password. The password could be a word, it could be hand actions or a short dance. Depending on how well children grasp the concept, you can scaffold this activity to have passwords to access different things in the pre-school. “It is important to try and focus on using a password not just for play, but connected to accessing something important.”

Purposefully-framed play

You can support the learning by:

- Supporting children to practise keeping their password private.
- Helping children choose a password they will remember.
- Having a “Change password” button somewhere in the room where children can change their password and tell an educator what they changed it to.

Prompts

The type of questions you could ask for this activity are:

- Where do people use passwords?
- What types of things might you use a password to keep private?

Learning statement

<Child’s name> has developed the skills and knowledge to identify that we can keep some things private and only accessible by ourselves using a password. They practised creating and using a password to access their own artwork and other personal items at pre-school. They were able to share different places and ways in which they knew passwords were used.

Alignment

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials

- Explore the purpose and function of a range of tools, media, sounds and graphics.

