



Thank you to the ELSA Support Facebook group for some fab ideas. I love to use everyday objects to support children and when you give enough thought to something it is amazing what you can come up with. Here is a long list of things you can do with a feather! YES a feather! Many years ago I did Sociology at night school and our first lesson was on thinking skills. We had to come up with 20 uses for a brick. I can't tell you how incredibly powerful that lesson was to me. I have remembered it to this day – 30 years later! Sometimes all we

need is imagination and thinking skills. Thinking outside of the box sometimes. I put a post up in the ELSA Group and we all worked together to create this long list. If you want to join our group then please do! You can access it here [ELSA HEALTH AND WELLBEING GROUP](#)

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- Ask two children to sit opposite each other and ask them to take it in turns to paint each others faces with their feather. How does it feel? The child being painted could close their eyes and really feel the feather lightly brushing their face.
- Use the feather as a talking stick during circle time. Pass the feather to the next person when it is their time to talk
- Try dropping the feather from different heights and watching as they float down. Use this for mindfulness practice. Concentrate fully on the feather floating downwards.
- Compare the feel of a feather to how kinds hands would feel.
- Read '[Feathers for Phoebe](#)' (affiliate link) a story about being yourself
- Mindful activities such as blowing it across the table with a straw. Really good for anger management, Deep breathing and distraction.
- Teaching about breathing control by blowing the feather with a straw. Turn it into a game by trying to blow the feather off the side of a table, or into a 'goal' etc!
- Have different objects including the feather on your table and use them to describe feel how our anger rises ie a nice calm Soft feather to a hard heavy stone and anything in between including water to show how and what's happening to your body as your temper grows.
- Feather football. Helps with eye contact and a good ice breaker. A game you can't help but smile playing.
- Use feather to demonstrate breathing – so when we are upset, angry or anxious our breathing is short, sharp or in bursts and we can't control the feather but when we relax we can etc. We practice our breathing a lot on feathers and then when the children relax and understand this I give them a bottle of bubbles as a sort of graduation gift. They also get a feather as that is something that can always stay in their pocket so it is a constant tactile reminder to help them control their emotions. Works well – so far.
- Keeping the feather afloat, breath control.
- Make a dream-catcher with feathers and talk about how the web catches all the bad things and nightmares and how the feathers help to deliver all the good things to your sleeping brain.
- Put in a sensory box along with other sensory items.
- A memory tree. Each feather could represent a pet or a family member lost. They could make a little note to attach to the feather.
- Put the feather in different places, on the table, on the floor in the corner, blow it in the air, drop it from a height... how does the feather feel? Why? What might the feather be saying/thinking? If you were the feather where would you be? Do the same with other objects ie: a stone or pine cone. They all went on the same

journey but did they react the same? You too could choose a different reaction to your journey!

- Look at different types of feathers from different birds. Why are they different? What do they need feathers for? Discuss how all birds are birds but all their feathers are different.
- Look at a peacock feather and discuss how the peacock shows off. How can they show what they are proud of?
- Feathers keep birds warm and insulate their nests. What helps them to feel warm inside and out?
- Use feathers for painting pictures using lots of colour. What would happy look like? What would sad look like? What would angry look like?
- Birds of a feather flock together – what does this proverb mean? Compare to friends having common interests.
- Make a paper feather and use scissors to snip the edges carefully. Mindfulness, calming activity and also fine motor skills. Write calming activities on the feather. Download template from here [feathers template](#)
- The white feather which is a belief that when you see a white feather a deceased loved one is here. The story is angels send white feathers to let you know.
- You could do a touchy feely box where you don't know what you are touching to build up the children's confidence and resilience to just do it and be brave to have a go and one of the items could be a feather that they have to touch!
- Use peacock feathers playfully balancing them on your hand and then moving to a finger. It's a good distraction activity, but you can also talk about the difficulty of balancing your emotions and how balancing the feather and your emotions both take practice.
- Make a dream catcher with the feathers with each feather representing a positive thing about them/something they want to aim for
- In circle time, blow the feather from your hands to the next persons hands. You have to say something nice to them first though!
- Children could write a wish on them and then make some sort of display with them.

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