

Chapter two: Children's Activities

From:

WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND
FAMILIES

VOLUME 2



A TRAINING MANUAL

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The Family Protection Project

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CHAPTER TWO

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

This chapter provides an overview of children's activities which help promote development and self-esteem. It focuses on the role of the group worker in providing group activities which have a specific purpose.

This chapter will cover the following topics:

- 2.1 Purpose
- 2.2 Free Play
- 2.3 Organised Activities
- 2.4 Child Development Issues
- 2.5 Materials
- 2.6 Planning
- 2.7 Presenting an Activity
- 2.8 Circle time
- 2.9 Activities with a Specific Purpose
- 2.10 Implementation Tools
- 2.11 Summary

2.1 Purpose

Play activities for children are vital in promoting learning, developing skills, and improving behaviours. Play is an essential element in a child's upbringing. Through play children learn to communicate with others, express feelings, think creatively, problem solve, develop self-control and gain confidence in their abilities. Without play children are likely to spend their time watching television or seeking attention from their caregivers by misbehaving. This is detrimental to children's sense of self and healthy development, and results in a significant lack of opportunity to realise their capabilities and to enhance their development.

When children have access to play materials they learn how to organise their own activities. In a school, youth club, or residential setting, children also benefit from organised activities which teach new skills and experiences. This

chapter present ideas for free play, organised play, and activities with a specific purpose.

2.2 Free Play

In any location where a child is spending prolonged periods, having access to play materials brings benefits to the child and carer. Children can focus their attention and learn through the activity, and as a result behave better for the adults around them. In their homes, children should have access to developmentally appropriate activities to play on their own or with others. These may include simple materials such as a ball, colouring items, dolls or figurines, plasticine, or board games. Such free play helps children to become independent, to take responsibility for their own enjoyment, to initiate and develop friendships, and to use their huge capacity for imagination. During play times children are also more able to express themselves and this is therefore an ideal opportunity for adults to develop their relationships with their children by playing alongside. The adult should not take over or give too many instructions or directions. Instead it is enough to comment on the children's choice of play and highlight the skills they are demonstrating in the process. This helps to raise the child's self-awareness and esteem.

In children's centres or schools, an area can be designated for free play. Ideally any activity area should be well lit with ample space for the children to move around safely. It is also important for the room to look inviting and child-friendly, through the use of colours, fabrics, posters, and the display of play materials. To enable free play, toys should be kept in designated areas within easy reach of the children. There should be consistency in the types of materials and their location in order to help the children in planning what they would like to do. Children should be allowed to choose their activity wherever possible. Structure can be built in when resources are limited by stating the time available for an activity and then for all children to swap and choose another activity. The worker should show respect for the child's choices to play or not to play. A quiet area can be added to the room for those children who prefer to sit and read. A typical play area may include the following resources:

- Arts and crafts materials
- Clay and cutters
- Sand tray
- Baby doll and accessories
- Construction toys
- Board games, cards, jigsaws
- Toy animals, figurines, puppets
- Tape recorder
- Reading corner with story books

If a routine time is established for free activities then the children will automatically use the time in play. If the time varies from week to week, or the children do not know what materials are available or how to get them, there will be ample opportunities for children to become bored or annoyed and to act out their frustrations on the worker. It is vital also that children are allowed to be untidy when playing. Cleaning up time should be built into the activity hour.

Older children should also be given some free activity time. This could be spent talking with friends, playing a sport, doing art or creative writing, playing pool etc. In addition teenagers can be invited to help younger children in their activities and in organising games.

2.3 Organised Activities

Schools, youth clubs, and residential homes may not only provide materials for free play but are also in an ideal position to organise activities which enhance learning and develop social skills. Typically such activities include sports, arts and crafts, outings, and workshops in drama, dance, or music.

Such organised activities are opportunities to develop friendships, enhance self-expression, have fun, reduce stress, and to learn new skills. In order to draw out learning the worker should raise the children's attention to their actions and attitudes during the activity and reinforce positive behaviours

through specific praise. For example if the activity is about creativity, the worker should notice any child who is being more adventurous than usual and feed this back to the young person.

Exercise 2a Adult Activities

Even adults play and do recreational activities which reduce stress or provide an outlet for feelings.

Consider the following activities and how they are beneficial to you: sport, walking, meeting friends, dancing, cooking.



Activities have any additional benefit when they specifically target a problem area. The group leader can select games which focus on the acquisition of a specific skill, or to generate a particular mood. This is helpful when it is evident that several children are having similar problems e.g. difficulties expressing anger safely, or when the children are of the same developmental stage and require support e.g. peer pressure in teenagers. When the group are overactive, a well designed activity can have a calming effect, and similarly when the group is low or bored, a stimulating activity can reenergise and refocus.

The following is a list of the potential purposes of activities:

- Fun
- Build friendships
- Develop life and academic skills
- Raise self-esteem
- Increase confidence
- Enhance creativity and problem solving abilities
- Express feelings
- Change mood
- Raise understanding, self-awareness and self-esteem
- Team work and conflict resolution skills

Exercise 2b Skills Development

Consider the following activities.

1. Board game



- 2. Football
- 3. Making a card
- 4. Learning a martial art

- a. What skills would they help to develop in children?
- b. How could the worker highlight these skills further during the activity?

Answer 2b Skills Development

- a. Board Game: team work, counting skills, problem-solving, being able to lose.
 Football: Team work, problem solving, hand/eye co-ordination, fitness.
 Making a card: Creativity, self-expression, sharing materials.
 Learning a martial art: Focus, self-awareness, relaxation, fitness.
- b. Through giving specific praise to those children who are practising the target skills.

2.4 Child Development Issues

When planning, the worker should consider the age and stage of the children. Different age groups prefer certain types of medium. These are as follows (Geldard & Geldard, 1997):

2-5 years	6-10 years
Books and stories	Books and stories
Construction	Construction
Finger painting	Finger painting
Imaginative pretend play	Imaginative pretend play
Puppets/soft toys	Puppets/soft toys
Clay	Clay
Drawing	Drawing
Games	Games
Painting/collage	Painting /collage
Sand tray	Sand tray
Symbols/figures	Symbols/figures
	Miniature animals
	Worksheets
	Visualisations

11-13 years	14-17 years
Clay	Clay
Drawing	Drawing
Games	Visualizations
Painting/collage	Painting/collage
Sand tray	Symbols/figures
Symbols/figures	
Miniature animals	
Worksheets	
Visualisation	

Knowledge of child development also assists in designing activities which enable the child to meet their developmental milestones. For example from 3-5 children tend to progress from playing alone to playing alongside other children. Children at this stage need to learn sharing and turn taking skills. The worker can therefore design an activity which practises these skills e.g. card games and ball games. From the age of 5, children become increasingly social in their play and more aware of other people's feelings. Workers can start circle time activities which promote listening and sharing of feelings (examples of circle time activities are later in this chapter). From the age of 6, self esteem problems are increasingly evident as well as issues relating to making friendships. Activities are useful which promote self-confidence and relationship building. From 10-14 years of age, the body changes that occur can cause confusion and distress. Teenagers are concerned about differences between themselves and others, and their own self-identity. The worker can promote self-awareness and self-acceptance via activities which highlight similarities and differences between people. (Please refer to specialist child development texts for detailed descriptions of each age and stage of development).

The worker should identify the stage of development of the children in the group and highlight those behaviours which require support. Having a clear

aim enables the worker to design an activity with the maximum benefit for the child, and makes the worker's role easier. For example, if a worker wanted to promote sharing skills she might consider using a board game activity. During this activity she could focus on promoting and praising sharing behaviours.

2.5 Materials

Once the worker has defined what behaviours or skills are to be targeted, the activity and materials need to be selected. It is useful for the worker to be aware that different materials also promote certain types of skills. These are:

Clay	Expression of emotions, creativity.
Books/Stories	Insight, understanding, empathy.
Construction	Problem Solving Skills, creativity.
Drawing	Self-expression, creativity.
Finger Painting	Freedom of expression, creativity.
Games	Social Skills, turn-taking, problem-solving.
Visualisation Exercises	Self-learning, self-awareness.
Miniature animals/figurines	Understanding experiences and relationships, use of imagination.
Puppets	Insight, self-expression, empathy, understanding.
Worksheets	Problem-solving skills, self-expression.

2.6 Planning

Activities should be simple enough to be achievable and challenging enough to be stimulating. The right level for an activity is when the child feels competent while also trying something different. This helps to develop self esteem and enjoyment. Additional factors in holding a child's attention are:

Timing: Children are usually only able to concentrate for up to 45 minutes, while teenagers may manage longer activities. If an activity is exciting and fun

children will focus on it and there will be fewer behavioural problems as a result. If you are working with young children, break any activity into 5-10 minute chunks. Please refer to the circle time section later in this chapter for examples of how to do this.

Choice: It is important that children are given flexibility in making decisions within an activity. If children are told exactly what to do and how to do it, this gives no room for self-expression, creativity, or problem-solving.

Specific Praise: Noticing a child's achievements and commenting on them helps a child repeat the behaviour, and raises self-confidence. This is particularly effective if the praise is in line with the target goal of the activity. For example, if the aim is to promote problem solving skills, the worker should encourage any child who is making suggestions and looking at the advantages and disadvantages of them.

Variety: People experience events visually (through what they see), auditory (through what they hear), and kinaesthetically (through what they feel or sense, and through movement). Activities should be varied in terms of which of these 3 modalities are emphasised. For example painting is mainly visual and kinaesthetic; the following day a worker could do a music activity in order to promote auditory senses. No one likes to do the same kind of activity each time. Try to vary activities in terms of materials, groupings, aim, the level of movement, the worker's role, and the location.

The following is an example of a varied one week activity programme for 8 – 11 year olds (the following activities are written in detail later in the chapter):

- Day one** Ready Steady Cook – Cooking competition in teams
- Day two** Mood Painting – Individual paintings to different types of music
- Day three** Flying Inventions– Team construction activity
- Day four** Find the treasure – Outside treasure hunt in pairs
- Day five** Mask making – Individual paper mache activity
- Day six** Trip to local farm – whole group outing

Day seven Praise postcards – Individuals make and write each other postcards about the outing, adding words of praise for the recipients.

Before starting a group activity the worker should ensure that everything is prepared. This includes thinking about what instructions or rules to give, and setting out the materials and the room. Children can be encouraged to take responsibility for helping with activities and organizing them. Before starting the activity, it is worth considering the following questions:

- What is the aim?
- Does the activity meet this aim?
- Is the activity safe?
- Is the activity achievable for the age group and is it stimulating?
- Which children might need support? Who could they be paired with?
- What materials are needed?
- Where will the activity take place (ideally free from distractions)?
- Is there enough time for the activity?
- What is the maximum and minimum number of children needed for the activity to work? Do they need to be in pairs or groups?
- What rules are needed to keep the activity safe and structured?
- What instructions should I give?
- What is the target behaviour that to praise?

The following form can be used to help in planning activities well: (examples of completed forms are given later in this chapter).

Planning Form

Aim	Write the purpose of the activity. What skills do you want the children to practise?
Target Behaviours to praise	What skills should you praise so that the children know they are successful in managing the task?
Age group	From what age to what age is the activity suitable for?
Time	What is the minimum or maximum time needed?
Materials needed	What resources do you need to have ready in order to start the activity?
Rules	Are there any specific rules needed to make the activity go smoother? For examples, outings will usually require more rules than indoor activities.
Instructions	Write step by step instructions. These should be clear enough for other workers to read and understand. Add examples if necessary.
Discussion Points	What issues might arise out of the activity that would be useful to talk about as a group?
Source	Where did the activity come from? Write down the name of the book or the person a worker should talk to if they need more help.



Exercise 2c Activity Planning

Think of a skill you want to develop in the children you are working with. Use the planning form above to enhance your ability to draw out this skill.

Now think of an activity you have done already with the children. Use the planning form to consider how you could improve the activity next time.

2.7 Presenting an activity

When an activity has been planned some explanation will need to be given to the group. The worker should explain each task clearly before starting. The worker should describe any rules or the behaviour that is expected of the group, the purpose of the activity and any instructions. Time should be given for the children to complete the instructions or to ask questions. This is usually done as follows:

1. Explain to the group the purpose and intended outcome of the activity.
2. Give clear and detailed instructions for how the activity is to be carried out, and any flexibility within this. Do not give out materials yet.
3. Indicate what feedback or output will be expected from the children.
4. Outline any rules e.g. stay in the room, keeps hands and feet to yourself.
5. Check understanding - This may be done by asking the participants to repeat back the instruction, or by giving a practical demonstration of the activity with one participant to the whole group.
6. Give the time limit.
7. Put participants in their groupings, or ask them to get in to pairs etc
8. Give out the materials or ask the children to select them.

9. Start the activity.

During the activity make sure to praise all the good behaviours you see and especially the target skill. Support any child who is struggling or invite more able children to assist. The worker can join in with the activity but should not take over.

If all children are misbehaving during an activity then it is likely that the problem is with the activity and therefore the worker should change it. For example, it may be that the instructions are unclear, the materials are not prepared, or the activity is too easy or difficult. Please refer to chapter three for information on how to manage difficult behaviours.

Towards the end of the activity give the group a time warning. Allow for tidying up and cleaning time by the group. Some activities will provide opportunities for discussion. Such discussions can be very valuable in drawing out learning from the activity. Discussions can take place during the play or afterwards, depending on how much attention you need from the group. When children are relaxed and engaged in play they are more receptive to listening and sharing experiences and feelings.

2.8 Circle Time

Circle time is a technique used to incorporate discussions in play in order to focus on a specific learning area in a fun way. It promotes thinking, observing, listening, speaking, and concentrating. Each circle time focuses on one skill such as:

- Sharing
- Self-esteem
- Self-expression
- Keeping safe
- Worries
- Living away from home
- Confidence
- Listening skills

- Feelings
- Being kind
- Friendship
- Solving problems
- Resolving conflicts
- Achieving
- Changes
- Differences

Circle time is commonly used in primary schools with great effects. It can be used daily or weekly, from 15 to 45 minutes. It is important that whatever timetable you use for circle time it should be consistent so that the children know what to expect.

The children are seated in a circle with the worker, either all on the floor, or on chairs. The idea is that all are equal in the circle and everyone should have an opportunity to talk. The worker should not dominate the discussions. A talking object is helpful in limiting responses and in giving everyone a chance to contribute. Some examples are provided below:

1. An object such as a shell is passed around the circle. The child with the object speaks and then passes the object to the next person to talk.
2. A soft ball is thrown randomly around the group. The child who catches the ball is given a turn to speak.
3. 2 spoons of different colours are introduced to the group e.g. red and yellow. The red spoon is the talking spoon. Only the person holding the red spoon can talk. The yellow spoon can be raised to show that you want to talk. On seeing someone holding up the yellow spoon, the person with the red spoon must finish his sentence and then pass the red spoon to the person holding the yellow one. This is particularly useful with teenage groups.
4. A hand puppet can be used with younger children. The child puts on the puppet and speaks through it.

5. An egg timer or stop watch is used to limit responses. This is helpful for groups where some children dominate the discussions.

Once the children are seated, the following instructions are given:

1. Today's circle time is about
2. Let's remember the rules of circle time:
 - Only talk one at a time using the talking object or by putting your hand up.
 - Be kind and do not say anything that will hurt someone.
 - Listen carefully.
 - Talk clearly so everyone can hear you, to the centre of the circle.
3. Remember that you can say pass if you do not want to speak. You will be given a chance at the end of the round to speak if you passed before.

For circle time to be successful, the worker needs to pay attention to the following guidelines, (Mosley, 2003):

- Take a few moments to calm yourself before circle time. Resolve to be as positive as possible. Revive your noticing and praising skills.
- Do not say anything negative.
- Praise every child showing any desired behaviours.
- Lower your voice; speak slowly and calmly.
- Accept and thank every contribution.
- Do not interrupt a child – use a talking object.
- Do not dominate the discussion – allow children to use the talking object.
- Listen to the children, use eye contact, and show empathy.

Circle Time Process

Each circle time session follows a set format in order to balance talking with playing time. This enables the children to apply what they learn in their play to the discussions. Since each part lasts only 5 – 10 minutes, the children are able to hold their attention for the whole circle time session. The process of circle time is as follows:

- a) Warmer game – this is a fun activity which sets the mood for being in the circle. E.g. if the children are over-excited it is useful to do a calming game.
- b) Main activities. These are all related to the aim of the session.
- c) Open discussion. This is when the children talk about the topic and how it relates to them.
- d) Ending game – this is a fun activity to help children close circle time and to resume their normal activities.

Circle Time Activity Ideas

The following activities can be used exactly as written, or adapted to suit the needs of your group.

Aim	Listening skills
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to instructions and each other • Turn taking • Not interrupting • Using the talking object • Responding to other children's ideas
Age group	5 – 9.
Time	30 – 45 minutes.
Materials needed	Talking object, keys, drum and drum sticks, instrumental music cassette.
Rules	Circle time rules.
Instructions	<p>Activity 1 Where are the keys?</p> <p>The children sit in a circle. One child is chosen to stand, blindfolded in the centre. A bunch of keys or some other noisy object is passed from child to child around the circle, as quietly as possible. The child in the centre must listen, try to identify where the keys are and then shout 'Stop' and point in that direction. When a correct guess is made another child takes his place in the centre.</p> <p>Activity 2 Marching</p> <p>The children stand in a circle. The worker or child bangs a drum and the children march in rhythm in a clockwise direction to the drum beats. The</p>

	<p>drummer varies the tempo. The volume may also be varied; quiet beats could mean walking on tiptoes, fairly loud beats walking normally and very loud ones stamping their feet.</p> <p>Activity 3 Musical day dream The children sit or lie with their eyes closed while the worker plays a piece of music. The children are asked to imagine a scene as they listen to the music.</p> <p>Activity 4 Round and discussion Using a talking object, the children talk about the scenes they imagined. The worker can ask them what type of sounds suggest certain things and why.</p> <p>Activity 5 Open discussion What noises frighten us or make us happy?</p> <p>Activity 6 Ending – Chinese whispers The children sit in a circle. One person whispers a sentence to the person to the right. The whisper is passed around the circle until it reaches the person to the immediate left of the originator. This child says the sentence aloud and the originator says the first sentence aloud to see how they compare.</p>
Discussion points	Sounds and how they affect us.
Source	Mosley (2003)

Aim	Feelings
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to and accepting other people's feelings • Self-expression • Recognising differences in people's feelings
Age group	5 – 9.
Time	30 – 45 minutes.
Materials needed	Talking object, different types of music.

Rules	Circle time rules.
Instructions	<p>Activity one – five pins</p> <p>The children sit in a circle. The worker selects five children as pins. They stand in the middle. At the command, ‘pins down’, any or all of the five pins may return to their seats, but they must be replaced by other children so that there are always five pins standing. If there are more than five, some children must sit down again. This game can be chaotic to start with, but once the children get the idea it works well.</p> <p>Activity two – Faces 1</p> <p>The children sit in a circle. The worker names a feeling and the children have to put on an appropriate face; for example, happy, angry, disappointed, embarrassed, sad, nervous, lonely, good.</p> <p>Activity three – Round; ‘I feel nervous when...’</p> <p>The children sit in a circle. Using the talking object, each child in turn completes the sentence, ‘I feel nervous when...’</p> <p>Activity four – Open forum</p> <p>Everyone has feelings. Do people always feel the same way? The worker can illustrate this by using an example such as the following. A child falls over in the playground. One child can’t help laughing at the sight, another feels sympathetic and rushes to help, a third feels anxious and stands watching with a worried expression. Children may use the talking object to give examples of their own.</p> <p>Activity 5 – Ending game. Musical feelings</p> <p>The children either sit or lie with their eyes closed. The worker plays different types of music and asks them to imagine what type of feeling each piece of music suggests. An alternative is a round of ‘I feel happy when...’</p>
Discussion points	<p>Recognising what feelings different experiences raise.</p> <p>How people express their feelings.</p>

	Understanding that people may feel differently to you.
Source	Mosley (2003)

Aim	Being Kind
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praising other children • Self expression • Supporting other children's responses • Understanding that being kind is important • Asking for help with a problem • Offering help to a child with a problem
Age group	5 – 9.
Time	30 – 45 minutes.
Materials needed	Talking object, music.
Rules	Circle time rules.
Instructions	<p>Activity 1 – Oranges and lemons</p> <p>All the children sit in a circle. They are alternately labelled 'orange' or 'lemon'. The worker or chosen child calls out 'oranges', 'lemons' or 'fruit basket'. Children in the named category change seats; 'fruit basket' means all change. Without realising it, many of them will now be sitting next to a different person. Very quickly go round the circle, labelling half the children A and half B.</p> <p>Activity 2 –Kind Comments</p> <p>Each A and B pair question each other so that they can each give three positive statements about their partner. For example:</p> <p>'Ahmad is good at football. He can run really fast. He helps his dad at work.</p> <p>'Iman has lovely soft hair. She is always polite. She is good at drawing.'</p> <p>Activity 3 – Something kind</p> <p>The children sit in a circle. Using the talking object, each child completes the sentence, 'Something kind I did was....'.</p>

	<p>Activity 4 – Open Forum</p> <p>The worker asks the children to consider how they felt when someone was kind or unkind to them. She then asks how they felt when they were kind or unkind themselves, and encourages the responses that everyone benefits from kindness, but no-one benefits from unkindness. Does any child have a problem with someone being unkind to him that he would like help with? Don't forget the ground rule that a child must not name another child in a negative way, but say 'someone', or 'some people'.</p> <p>Activity - Ending – Musical statues with mime</p> <p>All the children stand in a circle. The worker gives them a task they must mime to music– for example, washing a car, or hanging out clothes on a washing line. When the music stops they must freeze. Anyone who moves is out and sits down.</p>
Discussion points	<p>Being kind or unkind has consequences for yourself and others.</p> <p>How can we show kindness?</p>
Source	Mosley (2003)

Aim	Friendship
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to and accepting other children's comments • Recognising that being different is OK • Finding things in common • Supporting each other • Asking for help with a problem • Offering help to a child with a problem
Age group	5 – 9.
Time	30 – 45 minutes.
Materials needed	Talking object, inkpad, 1 white card per child.
Rules	Circle time rules.
Instructions	<p>Activity 1 – We are all different and that's ok</p> <p>Each child is given a piece of white card. They sit in a circle while 2 children take an ink or paint pad around. Every child presses his thumb onto the coloured pad and makes a print on the white card. The children</p>

	<p>then pass the prints round to see that every one is different and unique.</p> <p>Activity 2 – Round: ‘I like...’</p> <p>Each child finishes the sentence, ‘I like...’. This can include favourite food, hobbies or clothes, but not people. The other children can say ‘yes’ if they also like the same thing, but are not allowed to say ‘no’ or ‘yuk’ or even use negative body language.</p> <p>Activity 3 – Open Forum</p> <p>The worker asks the children to think of other ways in which they are different – for example, body differences, hobbies, clothes, food preferences. The worker then asks in what ways people are similar – for example, we all need food, we all need to sleep. Encourage the children to reach the idea of similar emotional needs – we all need to be liked, cared for, and approved of and so on. Does anyone want some support, either for himself because he feels different, or so he can try to be kinder to someone else who is different?</p> <p>Activity 4 – Ending – mirrors</p> <p>The children are split into pairs (A and B) and each face the other. B is the mirror and has to copy all A’s gestures. Tell the A’s to begin very slowly until the B’s have become competent. The pairs then reverse roles, so that the A’s become the mirrors.</p>
Discussion points	<p>Similarities and differences in people and how they affect friendships</p> <p>Our common needs despite differences in appearance etc</p>
Source	<p>Mosley (2003)</p>

Aim	Co-operation
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to and accepting other children’s ideas • Sharing • Working as a team • Having patience • Compromising

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping each other
Age group	5 – 9.
Time	30 – 45 minutes.
Materials needed	Talking object.
Rules	Circle time rules.
Instructions	<p>Activity 1 – share a lap</p> <p>The children stand in a circle, then make a quarter turn so that each child faces the back of the child in front. Make the circle move inwards, then ask each child to grasp the waist of the child in front. All try to sit on the lap of the child behind until all children are seated on a lap. The group can have several goes until this is achieved. If the children find this difficult, ask them what would be helpful – for example, silence, sitting one at a time, etc.</p> <p>Activity 2 – share a chair</p> <p>In pairs, the children have to devise as many different ways as possible of both occupying one chair with their feet off the ground. If you have the time, you can ask the pairs to select three of their most inventive positions and to show the others.</p> <p>Activity 3 – Problem solving</p> <p>The children are divided into groups of 4. Each group is given a prepared story problem, which they have to solve with every member of the group playing a part. The following are suggested stories.</p> <p>You are out playing together in an unknown area. One member of the group falls down a cliff and is injured.</p> <p>You are at the seaside. You are walking along the beach when you hear someone crying for help. You see another child stranded on a rock by the incoming tide.</p> <p>Activity 4 – ending – Wink statues</p>

	The children sit in a circle. A detective is chosen and leaves the room. A wizard is then chosen. The detective returns to stand in the centre of the circle. The wizard then winks at a chosen child, trying to do so unobserved by the detective (e.g. winking when the detective's back is turned). The child must "freeze" until the end of the game. The game continues with more "victims" until the detective identifies the wizard.
Discussion points	How can people support each other? Why is it often better to work as a team? What is real team work?
Source	Mosley (2003)

Aim	Solving Problems
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to other people's ideas • Offering ideas • Considering the advantages or disadvantages of an idea • Working together to find a solution
Age group	5 – 9.
Time	30 – 45 minutes.
Materials needed	Talking object, 1 jigsaw per 4 children.
Rules	Circle time rules.
Instructions	<p>Activity 1 – Duck, duck, goose</p> <p>The children stand in a circle. One child is chosen to walk around the outside of the circle. She taps each player on the shoulder, usually saying 'duck'. When the child taps a player gently on the shoulder and says 'goose', both children run around the outside of the circle in opposite directions in order to try to reach the vacant space first. The child who is last becomes 'it' and the game continues.</p> <p>Activity 2 – something is wrong</p> <p>The children form groups of 4. The worker gives each group a simple jigsaw to put together. However, in each case, one piece of the jigsaw has been swapped with a piece from another group's puzzle. After a few minutes the worker asks how they are getting on. When it is clear to the children that they cannot complete their puzzles, the worker asks what is</p>

wrong. Once all the groups realise what the problem is, the worker asks each group to hold up the piece that does not fit so that the other groups can find their missing piece and complete their jigsaws.

Activity 3 – open forum

The children sit in a circle. The worker introduces problems to the group, who discuss the effect that the problem will have. Examples:

-Children are playing a game; one child has got the rules wrong.

-A supply teacher comes in on a lesson where the children are in groups practising plays; the teacher thinks they are messing around.

-A child is sent to the shops to buy some apples, but forgets and spends the money on other things instead.

Does any child have a problem or worry that she needs help with?

Activity 4 – stop, think and go

The worker introduces the idea of brainstorming to find possible solutions to a problem. An example is used to give unworkable solutions as well as sensible ones so that the children can see that solutions have to be realistic. For example:

Amy is babysitting her younger sister one morning. The sister is bored. What can Amy do? The worker asks for possible solutions (e.g. put on video, help the sister make a card, tie the sister up, play with the sister and her toys, put the sister to bed, play dressing up, do some jigsaw puzzles, lock the sister in the garden shed). The children identify which of the suggestions are not ok and why.

The worker can then ask the children to brainstorm ideas for given situations and discuss which are practical and realistic (e.g. a foreign child can only spend one day in this country and wants to learn as much as possible about typical Arabic life; what could the children do to show this?).

	<p>Activity 4 – Ending – electric squeeze</p> <p>All the children and the worker stand in a circle and hold hands. The worker squeezes the hand of the child on her right, who squeezes the hand of the child on his right, and so on round the circle until the ‘squeeze’ comes back round to the worker. This may be done several times to see how fast the ‘squeeze’ can travel around the circle.</p>
Discussion points	How do we find solutions? How does brainstorming help?
Source	Mosley (2003)

Aim	Resolving Conflict
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to other people’s responses • Relating to and accepting other people’s feelings • Offering possible solutions • Thinking through the advantages and disadvantages of an idea • Recognising that aggression does not solve conflict • Asking for help
Age group	5 – 9.
Time	30 – 45 minutes.
Materials needed	Talking object.
Rules	Circle time rules.
Instructions	<p>Activity 1 – Dracula</p> <p>The children sit in a circle. One child is chosen to be Dracula and stands in the centre. Dracula points to and names a seated child and walks in his direction. The victim must point to and name another child before he is touched by Dracula. If he does not do this in time, he becomes the new Dracula.</p> <p>Activity 2 – Someone else’s shoes</p> <p>The children form pairs. They find something that one likes and the other dislikes. It should be the same thing e.g. Muna loves cats, but Mohammad doesn’t like them. They then swap roles and try to think of all the reasons why they have difference views, trying to feel as their partner would, e.g. Mohammad tries to think what Muna loves about cats.</p>

	<p>Activity 3 – Open forum</p> <p>The worker asks the children to think of all the reasons why people disagree (e.g. different points of view, different likes and dislikes, stubbornness, unkindness, some children are more adventurous or outgoing than others, selfishness). The worker asks the children how they feel when they are in conflict with someone else (e.g. angry, hurt, tearful, vengeful, unhappy). Is any child unhappy because he is involved in a conflict and needs help to resolve it?</p> <p>Activity 4 –Arbitration</p> <p>The worker asks the children what the best way is to deal with conflict (i.e. find a solution). The worker then asks the children to give examples or instances of situations where they conflicted with someone. They must not name another child in a negative fashion. The other children can put forward possible solutions until an acceptable one is found.</p> <p>Activity 5 – ending – word game</p> <p>The children play word association around the circle with two claps in between – for example , tree, clap clap, leaf, clap clap, flower, clap clap, yellow, clap clap, sun and so on. If anyone is stuck and the rhythm is broken and he begins with a new word.</p>
Discussion points	How conflict affects people’s feelings. How to resolve conflict successfully.
Source	Mosley (2003)

Exercise 2d Circle Time Practise



Choose a developmental stage. Consider the materials you have available and which would suit the age level of your group. Develop a circle time activity - what goal will it have? Design the warmer, main activity, discussion, and ending game. Use the planning form (in 2.6) to record your idea.

2.9 Activities with a Specific Purpose

The exercises in this section are all designed to promote a specific life-skill. The learning comes from the process of the activity. The worker helps raise the children's self-esteem and development during the activities via:

- Specific praise
- Allowing the children to make choices
- Respecting children's choices
- Initiating discussions around learning points
- Modelling empathy, kindness and respect towards others
- Supporting creativity rather than expecting conformity
- Encouraging children to try new experiences and risk taking
- Promoting learning from making mistakes

The activities below can be incorporated into circle time, used on their own, or combined with other games. Please refer to the aim and the age group when deciding if the activity will work with your group.

	THE ROSEBUSH
Aim	Self expression
Praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity • Attention to detail
Age	8 to late teens.
Time	30 – 45 minutes.
Materials	Paper, coloured pens and pencils.
Rules	Do not criticise other people's pictures. Do not talk during the visualisation exercise.
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask the children to sit in a comfortable position on the floor or on chairs. Make sure the room is quiet and there will be no disturbances. 2. Do a short relaxation exercise with music (see relaxation exercise later in this chapter). 3. Ask them to close their eyes and imagine they are a rosebush. <p>In a calm voice and at a slow pace, ask the group the following questions. The children should form a picture in their mind. Insert short pauses after each question.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of rosebush are you? • Are you very small? Are you large? • Are you fat? Are you thin? • Do you have any flowers? If so, what kind? What colour are they? Are they few or many? Are you in full bloom, or do you only have buds? • Do you have leaves? What kind? • What are your stems and branches like? • What are your roots like? Are they straight, or long and twisted? Are they in deep? • Do you have thorns? • Where are you? • Are you in a pot, or growing in the ground? • What's around you? • Are you alone? Are there other trees, plants, people, animals? • Is anything around you like a fence? • What's it like to be the rosebush? • How do you survive? • Does someone take care of you? • What's the weather like for you right now? <p>3. Ask the children to work alone and to write about their rose bush as if it could talk, e.g. I am a rose bush, I am tall with short branches...</p> <p>4. Invite any child who wants to read out their story. The other children should listen and notice any similarities with their pictures.</p>
Discussion points	<p>How we feel inside and how we look on the outside.</p> <p>How are you like the rosebush?</p>
Source	Oaklander (1978)

	FLYING INVENTIONS
Aim	Problem solving
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity • Team work

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operation • Persistence • Patience • Trying out ideas
Age group	8 – early teens.
Time	45 to 90 minutes.
Materials needed	A range of craft materials e.g. box, cardboard, paper, string, straws, feathers, paints, scissors, sellotape, plastic cups. Each team should have identical materials.
Rules	To only use the materials given. The team with the object that stays in the air longest, is the winner.
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Put the children into teams of 3. 2. Advise that the purpose of game is for each team to make an object that can fly. The team with the object that stays in the air the longest is the winner. Advise of the time limit. 3. Hand out the materials. 4. Give warning of the time available throughout the activity. 5. At the end of the time, ask each team to demonstrate their flying object. Each team gets 2 shots at flying. The flight time is recorded. 6. The team with the longest flying object are the winners. Prizes can be given. <p>Note: this activity can be adapted to make other inventions e.g. the tallest object, the strongest object, an animal, an item you can wear etc.</p>
Discussion points	<p>How did you solve the problem?</p> <p>How did you work together?</p> <p>What skills did you use?</p> <p>How can these be applied to school work or personal issues?</p>
Source	Louise Melville

	MYSTERY OBJECTS
Aim	Exploring senses and feelings
Target behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having the courage to touch the object

to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-expression • Making associations between the senses, feelings, and experiences • Encouraging and supporting others
Age group	5 to early teens.
Time	20 - 40 minutes depending on the number of objects and the size of the group.
Materials needed	Blind fold. Plates with different materials on each e.g. sand, stone, cotton wool, cream, orange peel, spaghetti, toothpaste, mint, coffee granules, tea bag. An alternative is to have a closed box with the object inside and with a hole cut at the top of the box for the child's hand to go in.
Rules	Try to keep the objects on the plates. Be kind to each other. Do not shout out what the object is unless it is your turn.
Instructions	<p>1. One child volunteers to start. The others sit in a circle. The child is blindfolded and invited to put his hand on the plate in front and to guess what it is by touching the object or smelling it. After 3 guesses the child takes off their blindfold and describes what the object felt like and if he liked the texture or smell. Encourage association with nice experiences. The plate can be passed around as people share thoughts.</p> <p>2. This continues around the group with a new child and a new plate.</p>
Discussion points	<p>The association of smells and memories.</p> <p>How we know if something feels nice or bad</p> <p>How to say no if something doesn't feel nice e.g. unwelcome touches</p>
Source	Louise Melville
	RIGHT OR WRONG?
Aim	To stop stealing behaviours, emphasise with the feelings of others, understanding right from wrong
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting hand up to answer • Listening to others • Concentrating • Respecting others opinions • Showing empathy for the main character • Identifying stealing as being wrong

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sitting still • Creativity in making role-plays • Team work in role-plays
Age group	5-9 years.
Time	Min 30 minutes.
Materials needed	3 characters e.g. superheroes, soft toys, Barbies. Bag with a sweet or other belonging inside. Additional characters and objects for the children's own role-plays.
Rules	To listen to the play.
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select a child who has had problems with stealing to help you on their own with the story by choosing and naming 3 characters. Choose one as the main character, one as a kind toy and one as a naughty one. Ask him to hold onto the kind toy for the first part of the story. 2. Ask the children to sit in a circle. Ask the targeted child to introduce the 3 characters. Place the bag around the main character and ask the children to guess what is inside. Elicit why this belonging is important to the child. 3. Tell a story of the main character walking to school one day and make it do various actions. Describe what he sees and does on the way. The naughty toy then runs up and steals the object from inside the bag and runs away. The main character stops. Elicit how he feels; was it ok to steal from him? What should the kind toy do? Encourage the target child holding the kind toy to comfort the main character. Elicit from the group what the naughty toy should do. 4. Discuss stealing and whether it is right or wrong. 5. Ask the children to develop other stories about stealing to act out to the others. Discuss each afterwards and encourage elicitation of what the kind and naughty characters should do.
Discussion points	Stealing and how it affects people.
Source	Neall (2002)

	MY TURN, YOUR TURN
Aim	To encourage turn taking

Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn taking • Patience • Giving the card to their pair • Keeping calm if losing • Creativity in making materials • Politeness in asking for materials
Age group	5 – 9.
Time	20 minutes for playing, 40 minutes for board making.
Materials needed	<p>2 boards with 9 squares draw on them. In each square there should be a picture. Copy the pictures onto individual cards so that each child has a board and a set of 9 cards with the same pictures. Make a variety of different picture boards and sets (or ask the children to make the boards in one session and to play with them in the next).</p> <p>Glue, scissors, cardboard, coloured pens, sets of stickers/ photographs/ pictures for the children to make their own boards and matching cards.</p>
Rules	To take turns and to give up your picture if it fits on the other person's board.
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pair the children. Ask them to sit opposite each other with their boards and cards. Both sets of cards should be mixed in a bag. 2. Ask the children to take it in turns to pick a card and place it on the corresponding picture square. If the child does not have the same picture on his board they should pass it to his partner. The next child then does the same. 3. The game is completed when one board is completely filled. 4. Once completed ask the children to make their own board and card sets.
Discussion points	<p>Why taking turns is important.</p> <p>How it feels to not have a turn.</p> <p>Winning and losing gracefully.</p>
Source	Neall (2002)

	CO-OPERATION GAME
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Aim	Sharing
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polite requests • Sharing • Helpfulness with others • Creativity • Patience
Age group	5- teens.
Time	45 minutes.
Materials needed	Any materials needed for the task but limited in number.
Rules	To be polite and to share.
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain that each person in the group has to do the same activity e.g. draw a still life, make a collage, bake a cake, but that there are not enough materials for each person to have their own set. 2. Elicit how the group will solve this problem e.g. by sharing the materials, using polite requests, working on a separate part of the task if materials are occupied.
Discussion points	<p>Managing frustration</p> <p>How to be patient</p>
Source	Neall (2002)

	ONE FINE DAY
Aim	Concentration and listening skills
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening skills – being able to continue where one child left off • Imaginative answers • Talking clearly and confidently
Age group	Limited number of children e.g. 6.
Time	15 minutes.
Materials needed	None.
Rules	To listen to each other.
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seat the children in a circle. Tell the children they are going to make up a group story and have to listen very hard to each other. 2. Start the story with one fine day, I went for a walk. I saw a... Invite

	<p>the child on the left to repeat your sentence and continue it with a short phrase or sentence.</p> <p>3. Invite the 2nd child to repeat the story from the beginning and add another sentence. Go round all the children this way.</p> <p>4. Invite the children to help each other.</p>
Discussion Points	How you can help yourself concentrate. How you know if someone is listening. The benefits of being a good listener.
Source	Neall (2002)

TREASURE CHEST	
Aim	Team work, creativity, self-confidence
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to each other's ideas • Praising others for good ideas • Taking turns to speak • Use of imagination • Working together • Showing patience • Presentation skills • Sharing
Age group	7 to 10.
Time	45 – 60 minutes.
Materials needed	A large box that can be a pirate's treasure chest. Collection of props e.g. map, compass, sword, bandages, glass bottle with letter inside, gold and money.
Rules	Children should share props. During the plays, no contact fighting is allowed.
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The children examine all the props and work in small groups to come up with a story of what happened to the pirate. 2. Write or act out the story using the props.
Discussion points	<p>How did you agree on the final story?</p> <p>What things did people do in your group that helped you work together?</p>
Source	Neall (2002)

BODY SHAPES	
Aim	To build relationships
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operation • Listening skills • Expressing feelings and ideas • Being kind
Age group	8 – 10.
Time	30 – 45 minutes.
Materials needed	Large sheets or role of paper (large enough to draw the outline of a body). 1 sheet per child. Colouring materials.
Rules	Draw each other in a complimentary way.
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In pairs children lie on floor and take turns drawing round each other. 2. Each completes the drawing of the other person, adding features, hair, clothing etc. 3. The children take turns to lie inside each others drawings. 4. Both brainstorm what they need to do to be a good friend to the other e.g. listen, help, notice if feeling upset, be kind etc. They write these on post-its and stick on the drawing. The drawings can then be displayed on the wall. 5. Once all pairs have finished, all the post-its can be gathered and placed on a separate poster entitled 'being a good friend'. In a group the children can discuss how they know when people do the qualities listed on the post-its e.g. You know someone is listening when.....
Discussion points	<p>How to make and keep friends.</p> <p>How to look after each other.</p>
Source	Louise Melville

TEAM PAINTING	
Aim	Team work and creativity
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respecting other people's space • Creativity • Working together • Being polite

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praising other people's art work
Age group	9 to late teens.
Time	45 minutes. Can take several sessions.
Materials needed	Variety of art materials e.g. coloured pencils, paints, glue, glitter. Large sheet or paper. Soft music.
Rules	Do not criticize each others pictures. You can add to another person's work, but you cannot erase or go over it. Work on your own area, empty or finished areas. Two people should not be working on the same area unless both have agreed to do this.
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell the children that they are going to work together to produce one painting. Ask the children to choose the theme of the painting e.g. feelings, hobbies, cartoon characters, scenes etc. 2. Advise them to choose a part of the paper to work on. They can add to each other's pictures but not erase or go over them. They should work on an area on their own unless another person has asked for help. 3. Invite the children to choose any of the available materials. 4. Continue into additional sessions if agreed by the children <p>NB. Music can be played during this activity.</p>
Discussion points	<p>Discuss what it is like to have your work added to.</p> <p>The experience of working on your own but to a team project.</p> <p>Managing each other's space.</p>
Source	Louise Melville

	INSIDE-OUTSIDE BOX
Aim	Being non-judgemental towards people's appearances
Target behaviours to Praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-judgemental comments • Self-expression • Empathy towards others
Age group	8 to late teens.
Time	20 minutes.
Materials needed	1 large box with a rotten banana inside. It should be closed and decorated expensively with wrapping paper. 1 small box with something beautiful inside e.g. a flower. This box should be closed and look very

	old and ugly.
Rules	Use talking object.
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask the children to sit in a circle. Place the 2 boxes in the centre of the circle. 2. Discuss which box they prefer and why and which one they would like to open. Discuss what they might find in each. Use a talking object to enable all children to participate. 3. Invite one student to open the beautiful box and another to open the ordinary box. Elicit from the children how these boxes might represent people, i.e. that a person may look ordinary, dirty, poor, rich or beautiful on the outside but this does not show what is on the inside. 4. Hold an open discussion about how different people see them e.g. their friends compared to their parents. A good follow-up activity is the box of me exercise which follows.
Discussion Points	<p>Taking the time to know people.</p> <p>Not making too quick judgements.</p>
Source	Louise Melville

	BOX OF ME
Aim	Self-awareness, creativity
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity • Use of symbolism • Self-awareness and self-discovery • Praising each other's work
Age group	9 to late teens.
Time	45 minutes. Can take several sessions.
Materials needed	Art materials e.g. paint, felt tips, glitter, glue, scissors, cotton wool, bubble wrap, newspapers, egg boxes etc. Magazine pictures of places, scenes, people, food. 1 Cardboard box per child.
Rules	To share materials where possible e.g. scissors.
Instructions	1. Invite the group to make a box that represents who they are. It can include their moods, hobbies, likes and dislikes. Ask them to consider if the box is open or closed, what is on the inside, what they want to show

	<p>on the outside.</p> <p>2. Each individual takes a box and uses any of the materials available to decorate the outside and the inside of the box.</p> <p>3. At the end of the session, the boxes can be displayed around the room. Children can be invited to describe their boxes.</p>
Discussion points	<p>How people may be different on the outside to the inside.</p> <p>First impressions.</p> <p>Finding similarities with others.</p>
Source	Adapted from Khalsa (1996)

Emotional Puppets	
Aim	Exploring Emotions
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity when making the puppets • Ability to name emotions • Ability to express emotions • Respect for other children's reactions
Age group	5 – 8.
Time	45 – 60 minutes.
Materials	Puppet making materials e.g. socks, plastic eyes, thread, needles, scissors, glue.
Rules	Share materials. Listen to each other.
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invite children to make puppets. 2. Get them to name and describe their puppets e. g boy/girl, shy, loud 3. Put into small groups. 4. State that the puppets are feeling happy – how might they interact with each other in a positive way? How might they interact in a negative way? Consider their personality i.e. If shy, quiet, loud. In groups the children role-play what their puppets might do or say under each emotion. 5. Ask each group in turn to elicit an emotion for the groups to act out. E.g. lonely, sad, angry, excited.
Discussion points	<p>When do you feel sad, happy, angry, lonely etc?</p> <p>How do you act when you are happy? Sad? Angry?</p>

	If you are feeling sad what can you do to feel better?
Source	Neall (2002)

THE SQUIGGLE	
Aim	Building friendships, creativity
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn taking • Use of imagination • Praising each other
Age group	7 to 10.
Time	20 minutes.
Rules	To take turns. Do not say negative things about each other's drawings.
Materials needed	Paper, colouring pens or pencils.
Instructions	<p>1. Put the children into pairs with someone they do not normally socialise with.</p> <p>2. Child A should start by drawing random line shapes on the page. The worker shouts change. Child B should now transform any of A's shapes into a simple picture e.g. if child A had drawn a circle, child B might make it into a balloon and add a child who is holding it by string. Child B should then add sentence about the picture e.g. It's the boy's birthday and he got a balloon, so he went to the park to play with it. Shout change again. Child A should try to change another line into a new drawing and give a sentence about it. E.g. A might turn the balloon into a happy face and state that the circle is happy because it got top marks in school.</p> <p>3. Continue changing roles until no more drawings can be added. If the children want to continue they can start a new piece of paper, or swap pairs.</p>
Discussion points	<p>What did you learn about each other?</p> <p>How did people show creativity?</p> <p>Did you and your partner think of the same pictures and stories to make?</p>
Source	Adapted from Winnicott (1964)

MIRRORING	
Aim	Self- awareness

Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relating to other people's feelings • Showing empathy • Volunteering to be mirrored • Offering support
Age group	13 – 17.
Time	20 minutes.
Rules	Be kind towards each other.
Materials needed	None.
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invite one child to adopt a position and facial expression they frequently find themselves in. E.g. a child who often feels bored might stand with shoulders hunched, head to one side, staring out the window. The other children in the group should adopt the same position and relate to how the other person might feel in this stance. 2. The group should be invited to talk as if they are the original child e.g. I feel bored; I want to be outside playing with my friends. 3. The original child should comment on which statements they relate most to.
Discussion points	<p>Why is being aware of ourselves important?</p> <p>How do we express ourselves through our body language?</p> <p>How would you like to be seen by others and what body language would express this? E.g. being confident might be shown by standing tall with shoulders back.</p>
Source	Louise Melville

CIRCLE OF HANDS	
Aim	Team work, building friendships
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation in drawing round hands and in putting them on the wall • Giving ideas on how to be part of a group • Listening to each other • Praising each other
Age group	5 to 12.
Time	20 minutes.

Materials needed	1 piece of card per child, colouring materials, tacks or tape for the wall, scissors.
Rules	Share materials.
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Put the children into pairs and ask them to make an outline of their partners hand by drawing round it onto card. 2. Each child should cut round the outline of their hand and write their name on their hand in any way they like. 3. An area should be made on the wall to mount the hands. Each child is invited to put their hand shape on the wall, one by one. The cards should be placed as if holding hands with another hand, to form a large circle of joined hands. 4. Invite the children to discuss what it is like to be part of a group, and how they can help each other.
Discussion points	<p>Being part of a group.</p> <p>Responsibilities to other group members.</p> <p>How to show support for each other e.g. through listening, not interrupting, not criticising, encouraging and praising.</p>
Source	Khalsa (1996)

SILENT PUZZLE	
Aim	Team work, noticing skills
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation skills • Co-operation in giving each other pieces of the jigsaw • Following the rules • Constructive feedback from the observers
Age group	8 to 14.
Time	10 minutes.
Materials needed	One jigsaw puzzle per group. One envelope per child. Divide up the pieces of the jigsaw.
Rules	There should be no talking or gesturing once the activity has started.
Instructions	1. Put each group into teams of 4. One of the 4 should be the observer who should not participate in making the jigsaw, but should sit to the side and notice how their team communicate with each other. The other 3 are

	<p>each given an envelope with several pieces of their team's jigsaw.</p> <p>2. Each person tries to complete the jigsaw with their pieces, in silence. In their teams they should notice if another member needs their piece to complete the area they are working on. They are not allowed to tell the person or gesture for the piece. All communication is done via observing and offering pieces. You cannot take the piece of another member but wait for them to notice that you need it.</p> <p>3. The winning team is the one that finishes first without having talked or gestured.</p> <p>4. The observer should feedback on how skilful their team was in working silently together.</p>
Discussion points	<p>How we communicate verbally and non-verbally.</p> <p>The importance of observation in successful team work.</p>
Source	Adapted from Khalsa (1996)

QUESTIONNAIRES	
Aim	Being polite and friendly, self-confidence.
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together to design useful questions • Confidence in approaching and talking to people • Being polite and friendly • Listening to responses • Presentation skills
Age group	10-14.
Time	60 -90 minutes.
Materials needed	Notepaper, pens, 1 clipboard per pair.
Rules	Do not leave the designated area without permission from the worker.
Instructions	<p>1. Ask the children to get into pairs or three's.</p> <p>2. Each pair should design 3 questions to ask the general public as part of an opinion questionnaire. The questions may be based on a topic, for example music, sport, eating habits. The children should aim to gather data to show people's preferences or beliefs on a subject. For example, if the subject was health the questions might be:</p> <p>- What is more important: a healthy diet or regular exercise?</p>

	<p>- How often do you exercise?</p> <p>- What food do you consider to be best for health?</p> <p>3. When all the groups have written their questions and these have been checked by the worker to make sure they are appropriate, the groups are invited to ask their questions to as many people as possible, and to record the answers. Where possible, the children should have access to people outside of the class. In a school this may be done in co-operation with other classes. The children may be able to stand on a street (under close supervision by the worker) and ask passers by. In a youth club, the children can ask other staff and children. A time limit should be set by the worker.</p> <p>4. At the end of the time, all the children should return to the activity room. In their groups they should compile the answers to see how many people gave the same or different answers.</p> <p>5. The teams then present their findings to the rest of the group.</p> <p>5. As an extension, the teams can also research the answers on the internet or via books to find facts on their subject.</p>
Discussion points	<p>What helped in getting people to answer the questions?</p> <p>What are communication skills? (Listening, positive body language, reflection of feelings, summarising information, minimal responses, responding with more than yes/no answers, being polite, clear voice, good pace etc).</p>
Source	Louise Melville

PRAISE POSTCARDS	
Aim	To raise self-esteem
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing compliments • Receiving praise by saying thank you
Age group	7 to 13.
Time	45 minutes.
Materials needed	Real postcards, or card and magazine pictures or pictures cut from travel brochures, glue, scissors, pens.
Rules	Only state nice things.

Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each child makes a postcard from the materials available. 2. The worker puts all the children's names into a hat and asks each child to take one. The child should write a postcard to the person whose name they have selected. In the postcard the child should write as many nice things as they can think of about that child. This may include their skills, personality, looks etc. 3. When all the children have finished they should give their postcard to the worker. The worker or another child delivers the postcards. 4. The recipients should thank the senders for their kind words. 5. This can be repeated with new postcards to different children. 6. The children can take their cards home with them.
Discussion points	<p>Why it is nice to give and receive compliments.</p> <p>What makes us feel good or bad about ourselves?</p>
Source	Louise Melville

MOOD PAINTING	
Aim	Self-expression
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity • Use of symbolism • Depicting feelings • Talking about feelings or experiences • Listening to and respecting other people's responses.
Age group	8 to late teens.
Time	45 minutes.
Materials needed	Different sizes and colour of paper, a range of art materials e.g. crayons, felt tips, water colour, oil paints, coloured pencils. Water, palettes, and brushes for the paints (1 per child). CD's or tapes of different types of music e.g. classical, opera, jazz, instrumental, oriental, pop etc.
Rules	Art materials should be returned to the centre after use.
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All children should be seated within easy reach of the different materials. This is usually best done with everyone on the floor with the paper and art materials in the centre. It is advisable to start with a relaxation exercise (see relaxation exercise later in this chapter).

	<p>2. Advise that the children will hear a range of different pieces of music. For each piece they should take a leaf of paper and any of the art materials they feel like using. They should depict on paper any feelings they have or images they see in their mind, on the paper. This may be a scene, or simply shapes or colours on the page. When the music changes they should stop where they are and take a fresh piece of paper.</p> <p>3. Play each type of music for approximately 3 minutes. Alternate slow pieces with faster ones. Have a short pause between each piece (e.g. 30 seconds). Four to five pieces of music may be played in one session.</p> <p>4. In pairs, invite the children to describe what they experienced while listening and to talk about their pictures.</p>
Discussion points	<p>How does music affect mood?</p> <p>What other creative ways can people express themselves?</p> <p>What do our pictures say about who we are?</p>
Source	Louise Melville

READY, STEADY, COOK!	
Aim	Team work, creativity
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team work • Creativity • Keeping to the time limit
Age group	8 – late teens.
Time	45 – 90 minutes
Materials needed	<p>Ideally 1 kitchen per team. If only 1 kitchen is available, the food should require minimum preparation.</p> <p>A range of food items per team. This is usually easiest if dessert items are selected e.g. ice-cream, jelly, chocolate, marshmallows, bananas, eggs, sugar, etc. Each team should be given a bag of 5 different ingredients (only a small amount of each ingredient should be given). Cooking utensils.</p>
Rules	Not to use an oven without adult supervision.
Instructions	1. The children are put into teams of 4. Advise that they will be given a

	<p>bag of ingredients and they will be given 5 minutes in their team to come up with a recipe e.g. banana split. Advise that if they desperately need another ingredient to make their recipe they can negotiate with other teams to swap or share ingredients. They must be able to make their recipe in 20 minutes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Give out the bags of ingredients. 3. After 5 minutes write up what each team is planning to make. 4. Give 20 minutes for food preparation with lots of reminders of the remaining time available. 5. After 20 minutes make sure all teams have stopped and that their dish is on the table. 6. Ask each team to taste and secretly rate the dish out of 10. If there are only 2 teams, an adult from another class can ask to be judge. When the tasting is over. The teams should give their results. The team with the most points is the winner.
Discussion points	What helped or hindered working as a team?
Source	Louise Melville (based on a UK television programme)

RELAXATION EXERCISE	
Aim	<p>To promote relaxation and creativity</p> <p>This exercise is particularly useful in calming groups and preparing them for self expression activities</p>
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sitting still • Following the instructions
Age group	5 to adult.
Time	20 minutes.
Materials needed	Calming, instrumental music. Quiet room.
Rules	Keep hands and feet to self.
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lower the lights in the room and make sure there will be no outside disturbances. Play soft music. 2. Invite the children to choose an area of the room to sit where they feel comfortable. This can be on the floor or on a chair. If on the floor the children should lie on their backs with legs outstretched. On the chair the

	<p>children should sit with both feet on the floor and with their arms resting on their laps.</p> <p>3. Tell them to close their eyes if they feel ok doing so. Give the following directions in a calm voice at a slow pace:</p> <p>Take a couple of moments and notice how your body feels. Are you holding your breath, or do you breathe evenly? Notice if you feel any tension or stress in any part of your body. Now you're going to relax your body as you relax your breath.</p> <p>Take a deep breath in, making sure your stomach expands as you do so, now breathe out, noticing how your stomach flattens. Now take another deep breath in - stomach out, and exhale – stomach in. Do that 2 more times.</p> <p>Now let your breathing relax and allow yourself to let go of any thoughts or worries. Gently continue to breathe in... and...out...and focus your attention on your feet. Just your feet, nothing else. Notice how they feel. Now, as you take a deep breath, tense or squeeze the muscles in your feet...hold it....and now release the tension in the muscles of your feet as you breathe out. And now continue to breathe gently and calmly. (Pause)</p> <p>Repeat for legs, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, arms and hands, jaw and facial muscles, and forehead.</p> <p>And now focus your attention on your breath...breathing gently and calmly....and enjoy the relaxation of your body. (After a minute) Now bring yourself back to full waking consciousness as I count to three. Open your eyes at the count of three. One...two...three.</p>
<p>Discussion points</p>	<p>Compare how your body felt before and after.</p> <p>What are the benefits of relaxation?</p> <p>What are ways can people relax?</p>

Source	Adapted from Murdock (1987)
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	VISUALIZATION - FRIENDSHIP ON A DESERT ISLAND
Aim	To promote relaxation and creativity
Target behaviours to praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sitting still • Following the instructions
Age group	11-17.
Time	20 minutes.
Materials needed	Calming, instrumental music. Quiet room.
Rules	Keep hands and feet to self. No talking.
Instructions	<p>1. Lower the lights in the room and make sure there will be no outside disturbances. Play soft music.</p> <p>2. Invite the children to choose an area of the room to sit where they feel comfortable. This can be on the floor or on a chair.</p> <p>3. If there is enough time, it is helpful to start with a relaxation technique (see previous activity).</p> <p>3. Give the following directions in a calm voice at a slow pace: "Find a position that you can maintain for several minutes, and close your eyes. Focus attention on your breath. That's right, just relax and be aware of letting go of the tension in the muscles of your body with each breath you take. Breathe in...and...out....inand....out. Now continue breathing in this manner, letting go of any thoughts, feelings, and worries you might have at this time. Just listen to your breath as you gently breathe in ...and out.....</p> <p>In this exercise you will choose a friend to go with you to explore a deserted island. Notice what it is about this friendship that you value.</p> <p>Imagine that you are travelling through space and time, with a friend of your own choosing, to a deserted island. The two of you arrive and begin to explore this island, noticing its vegetation, animal and birdlife, climate, smells, colours, textures, and tastes. You have chosen this friend to accompany you for a particular reason. What is it about this person that</p>

	<p>you like? Notice how you interact with this person. Notice what it is about this friendship that you value. You will have three minutes of clock time equal to all of the time that you need to explore this island together. Begin. (pause 3 minutes)</p> <p>Now take one last look around the island before you leave, noticing the smells, sounds, and textures. (Pause).</p> <p>4. Invite the children to draw or write about their vision.</p> <p>5. Now gently bring your attention back into this room... In a moment I will count to ten. Join me at the count of six, opening your eyes at ten, feeling refreshed and alert with full memory of your experience. One...two...three...four...five...six...seven...eight...nine...ten.</p>
Discussion points	<p>Why did they choose this person, and what do they value about his friendship?</p> <p>What did they learn about themselves when they are with this person?</p> <p>Do they act differently with this friend than they do with others?</p>
Source	Adapted from Murdock (1987)



Exercise 2e Activities with a Purpose

Consider the following skills. Brainstorm some activities which would fulfil this goal.

1. Creativity
2. Teamwork
3. Confidence
4. Expressing feelings
5. Changing the mood from bored to excited
6. Changing the mood from over-excited to calm
7. Raising self-esteem
8. Relationship building

Answer 2e Activities with a Purpose

1. Box of me
2. Flying Inventions
3. Questionnaires
4. Rosebush

5. Ready Steady Cook
6. Silent Puzzle
7. Praise Postcards
8. Body Shapes

2.10 Implementation Tools

All workers benefit from evaluating themselves and having colleagues observe them, particularly when trying a technique for the first time. The following table is useful for the worker to complete after an exercise. It charts the type of activity, the materials used, and the results. It is helpful not only in assessing how well an activity worked, but also in noting what types of play have been carried out in order to ensure that activities are varied in terms of aim, materials, and groupings. The worker should also refer back to the activity planning sheet and make any necessary changes to the activity, the rules, or instructions.

Activity Planning and Evaluation Form

DATE	ACTIVITY	MATERIALS	GROUPING	RESULT
01.05.03	Box of me	Arts and crafts	Individual work	Enjoyed activity – more time needed.

Exercise 2f Planning

Consider the children you are working with and their needs. Select those activities which will meet these needs. Make a timetable to try them. Ask a colleague to observe you and to complete the form below.



All workers benefit from support from colleagues via sharing ideas, working together, and providing constructive feedback. When trying a new activity it is helpful to have a co-worker observe or facilitate the session. This allows for

more reflection on what worked well and how to adapt the activity in the future. Below is a feedback form that an observer can complete.

Activity Observation Form	
Planning	Comments
Are there sufficient and suitable materials?	
Has the worker organized the activity in terms of timing, grouping, staffing?	
Presentation	
Does the worker explain the purpose of the activity, the process, and any rules?	
Are instructions given before the activity?	
Do the children understand?	
Activity	
Is the activity stimulating?	
Does it have a clear purpose?	
Is the activity age-appropriate?	
Do all the children have an opportunity to participate and succeed?	
Communication Skills	
The worker gives individual attention to all children.	
The worker provides specific praise on the target skills.	
The worker listens to the children.	
The worker gives the children space to create and develop their own ideas.	
The worker gives clear and positive	

instructions.	
The worker provides support and encouragement where needed.	

2.11 Summary

Providing play opportunities and activities for children is an essential task for anyone working with children. It enables children to develop mentally, emotionally, socially, and physically. Play helps to promote self-expression and to foster a positive sense of self. Activities also provide stimulation and boundaries for positive behaviour management. The worker is able to focus on praising and encouraging good behaviours, and this in turn supports children in learning how to make the most of their environment and their relationships. Workers can target activities to meet specific milestones for a child, or can simply provide the materials and a supportive environment for children to play alongside others. Ideally, a combination of both is best to enhance independence and team work.

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