



Protecting Children. Providing Solutions.

The Importance of Play

Play activities for children aged 0-17 years



Written by Lynda Baxter
Illustrated by Susan Thompson

About Lumos

Lumos is an international non-governmental organisation, set up by the author J.K. Rowling, which works to end the institutionalisation of children around the world. We work to transform education, health and social care systems for children and their families and help children move from institutions to family-based care. We are a founding member of the UN Global Partnership for Children with Disabilities in Development and also a member of the Leaders Council for the Global Alliance for Children, a public-private partnership agency.

Lumos is a registered charity in the UK and has programmes running currently in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

The book **“The Importance of Play: Play activities for children aged 0-17 years”** is part of a series of training and resource materials to be used by practitioners working directly with children.

For more information visit our website wearelumos.org

find us @Lumos on Twitter or email us on info@wearelumos.org

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***A big thank-you to:
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LYNDA BAXTER

Lynda Baxter completed her education at St Joseph's Convent, Sidcup. After some years working for the Wellcome Foundation she trained as a teacher at London University, specialising in Science and Special Education and qualifying in 1974. She has had experience in both mainstream primary schools and primary and secondary special education. She gained a Post Graduate Diploma in Counselling at the University of East London in 1991.

Lynda's career included working with a paediatric team for 15 years at a local hospital to assess young children with complex needs. This work was the foundation of valuable skills and knowledge necessary to understand the needs of children.

Married with two children, she spent time running local groups involved in world development and fair trade for several years.

Since she retired, Lynda has been involved in working with charities, both as a volunteer and as a consultant. This has taken her to Eastern Europe to help with the deinstitutionalisation programme in Moldova, with Lumos, and Transnistria with Hope and Homes for Children.

Recently she has become involved in projects in Uganda and Kenya, supporting children with physical disabilities. This includes running workshops and making paper furniture designed to meet the individual needs for children with disabilities. Her philosophy includes helping people to gain independence and autonomy with sustainability.

Lynda launched a charity in 2012, called 'High Hopes for Children'.



SUSAN THOMPSON

The beautiful hand-drawn illustrations in this book have been created by Susan Thompson.

Susan has had a very varied career, from working for Vidal Sassoon in the early seventies to her recent employment with the NHS in occupational therapy at a local acute hospital.

Throughout her career she has used her artistic skills to illustrate brochures, books and posters. She has also created craft materials for use in hospital by patients.

Susan lives in Kent with her husband Michael and her rescue dog Teddy. She has two grown up children.

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I

Introduction



Play is an essential part of growing up. Through play children explore and learn about their world.

Article 31 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child says: ***“States Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.”***

In this book we will be looking at appropriate activities for different levels of child development and age. This will include activities in the areas of ***fine motor and gross motor skills; language; cognitive, social, emotional and personal skills; self-help skills; and creative and imaginative skills***. These activities aim to stimulate and encourage development and the full potential of the child.

The activities suggested will also enable **all** children to participate. Children with physical, sensory, learning or communication difficulties will need assistance to be included in activities. Their experiences will have probably been restricted by their disabilities.

For instance, a child with cerebral palsy will have difficulty in moving freely and exploring their world, learning about making choices and the qualities and properties of different materials and surfaces. Such a child may have learned to be passive, and so will need assistance to participate.

Children with communication difficulties and/or autism will need individual and specific help with inclusion in activities. Appropriate therapists will need to be consulted when necessary.

Safety issues:

Consider when preparing for a session of play

Small children often put things in their mouths, so be aware of any items that could be a choking hazard.

Make sure toys and equipment are in good working order with no jagged edges or rough areas that could cause harm or injury to children.

For running games ensure there is enough space and remove or cover hard or sharp edges. For example, if a child falls against a radiator, they can be really hurt.

NEVER leave small children unattended; if water is involved there must **always** be a responsible adult present.

II

Areas of development

It is important when choosing activities to know what your intentions are and what you hope to achieve for different children. By looking at the areas of development we are able to say what our aims or goals are; this is especially useful for children with disabilities. Good observations of children and knowledge of the child will help when choosing activities. A child will soon lose interest if an activity is beyond their capabilities; similarly if the activity is too simple the child will get bored very quickly.

Children vary widely in their development and experience, especially if they have additional needs or disabilities.

Fine motor skills: hand skills involving fine movement and hand-eye coordination, picking things up, drawing, eating with fingers or spoon or fork, tying laces.

Gross motor skills: skills and abilities usually acquired during infancy and early childhood as part of a child's motor development. By the time they reach two years of age, almost all children are able to stand up, walk and run, walk up stairs, etc. These skills are built upon, improved and better controlled throughout early childhood, and continue in refinement throughout most of the individual's years of development into adulthood. These gross movements come from large muscle groups and whole

body movement. Individual help is needed for children with physical disabilities and liaison with therapists is essential to help these children join in activities with correct support.

Language: this includes listening skills, receptive skills (ability to understand spoken words or pictures), expressive skills (ability to form words and then construct sentences), decoding ability, auditory discrimination and auditory memory (see appendix for more details and activities).

Cognitive skills: naming and recognising everyday objects and activities, perception, attention, memory, sequencing, decision making, having insight into other people's minds, visual discrimination and visual memory.

Social, emotional, and personal: being able to empathise, cooperate, act appropriately in different situations, inhibit certain reactions and emotions.

Self-help: being able to organise one's own environment, to dress and undress, feed, wash and care for self, to be aware of dangers.

Creative and imaginative: using miniature toys, role playing, using art materials to express themselves, thinking creatively and imaginatively.

Stages of Child Development

With careful observations of children you will be able to choose appropriate activities for their level of development. If a level of development has not been reached it is unlikely that a child will move on until that stage is completed.

Babies and young children

Very early on, within the first few days, it has been shown an infant can recognise his mother's voice. Children with severe or profound hearing loss will first need to understand that sound exists. They may feel vibrations through their body before they are aware of sound through their ears.



Communication between two people involves eye contact. Establishing and maintaining good eye contact is an important social skill. Looking at the speaker's face will also provide information about language through facial expression, gestures, lip patterns and signs. Looking together at things in the environment is another important part of communication. The child looks at an object and the parent follows his gaze and makes a comment. This is the beginning of communication and turn-taking which is needed for the development of conversation. The following activities are suitable and helpful for children with communication difficulties, as well as babies and infants.

III

Play activities for children aged 0-2 years

The following activities should be carried out in a calm environment without other distractions. These activities are also very useful when working with older children with intellectual disabilities or children with communication difficulties to help them reach this stage in development.

Caution: any young child should only be left in safe surroundings and with safe and appropriate toys.

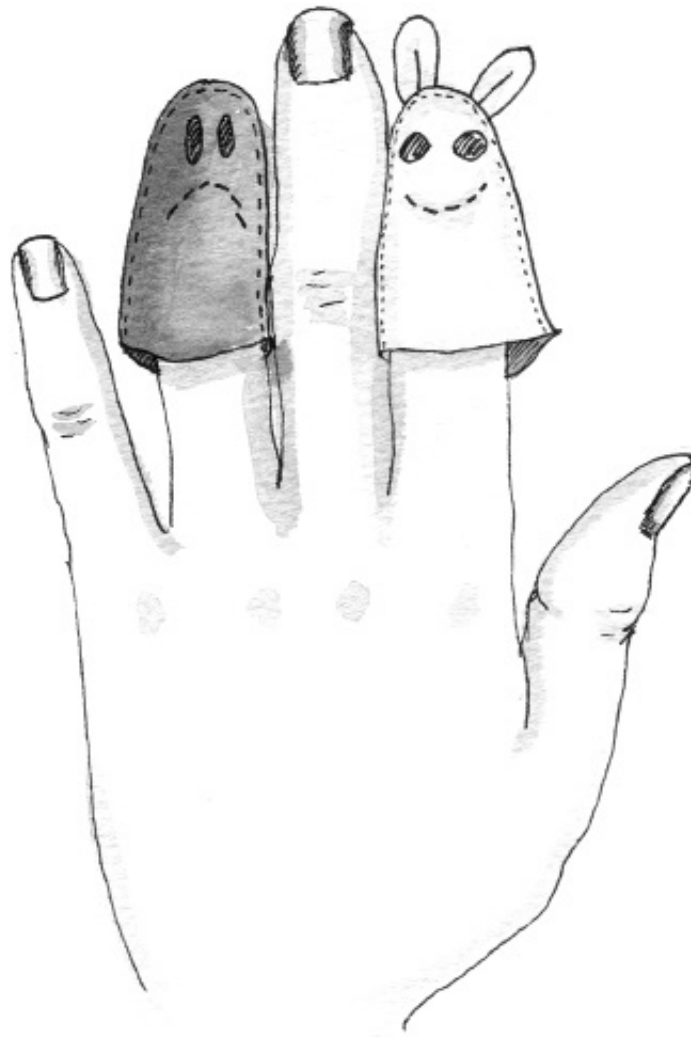


EYE-TRACKING

Babies can learn to follow toys with their eyes (eye-tracking). Balloons, bubbles and puppets on sticks are also interesting for them to watch. These activities can be done by the adult, sitting at eye level with the child; eye contact can be made as the child watches closely for the bubbles, or balloon or hidden finger puppet.

Don't force eye contact; rather, let it happen. Some people have a physical aversion and/or discomfort giving eye contact; for example children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.





Other activities that encourage eye contact include:

- Facing games like holding hands and rocking and singing
- Rolling a ball to each other
- Using a puppet near your face
- Placing a hat or cloth on your head and encouraging the child to take it off
- Sitting together and facing a mirror. The adult can make various actions to encourage the child to look at them in the mirror.



COLOURED FEATHERS

Touch different parts of the child's body with a feather, name the parts, 'fingers', 'head', 'nose' etc.

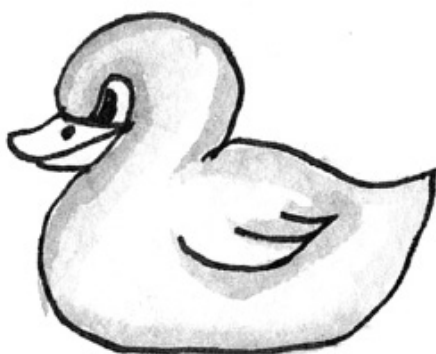
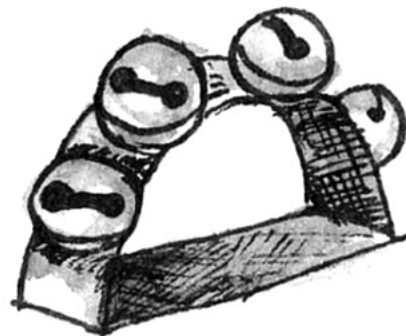
Point to different parts of your face and name different facial features.

Songs such as "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes", and "If you are happy and you know it" are good to help children become aware of different parts of their bodies.



MUSICAL TOYS AND RATTLES

Squeaky toys, rattles, bells and musical instruments can encourage eye contact. Hide the toy and wait for a reaction; the child may learn to ask or indicate 'more' or 'again' for a repeat. The child is also learning to anticipate and wait. They will enjoy experimenting with making the sounds.





TURN-TAKING GAMES

Rolling a ball or car backwards and forwards to a child will encourage turn-taking and anticipation. You can vary the activity to keep the child's interest, hiding the ball or car and putting it in odd places and asking, 'Where is the ball?'



Other activities can include taking turns banging a drum, putting things in a box and patting a balloon to each other.





SONGS AND RHYMES

There are many simple songs for babies in many cultures. Children from an early age can pay attention to simple and repetitive songs and nursery rhymes. They will give children a sense of the rhythm of speech and familiarity with repeated words and sounds.



As the child's ability increases, words can be left out for the child to fill the gaps. It is also a good opportunity to have a child close to you or to bounce them on your lap to the rhythm as you sing.

Songs using fingers and actions are good too as these give another focus for the child. Painted fingers and finger puppets can be used and are easily made using a piece of paper.





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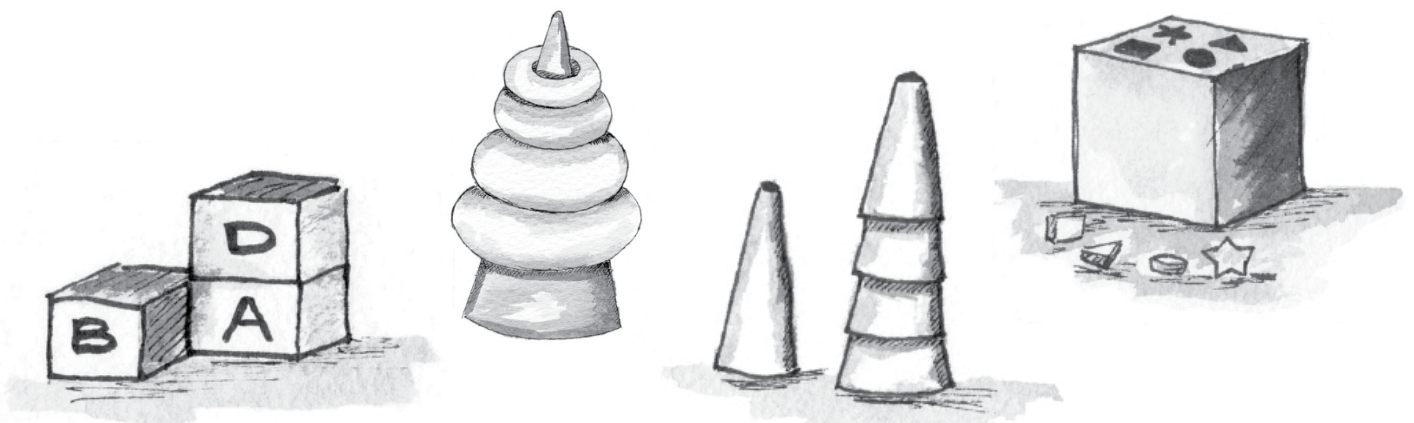
HIDING GAMES AND PEEK-A-BOO

Using your hands cover and uncover your face to say 'Boo' or 'Cuckoo' (words vary with different cultures). A cloth can be used to cover your face or the baby's/child's face for them to pull off and repeat the activity. Again, anticipation is part of the activity; don't keep the child waiting too long or they will lose interest. You can hide a toy under a cloth for the child to find. This is an important stage of development called 'Object Permanence'.



STACKING, BUILDING AND PUTTING OBJECTS INTO CONTAINERS

Use toy bricks or stacking toys. The child can experiment with the objects and learn about their properties before stacking can be introduced. Young children love to put things in and take things out of containers. If they have good skills, then shape sorters can be introduced.





Write down here other ideas



PLAYING WITH DOLLS AND SOFT TOYS

Children as young as 15 months are able to use dolls as pretend people, feeding them, giving them drinks and brushing their hair, usually with some vocalisations and babbling.



LARGE EMPTY BOXES

Young children enjoy climbing in and out of large cardboard boxes; these can become cars, buses, tables, ovens or boats in their imaginations. It helps them learn about their own size and the space they occupy. (*Helps Sensory Integration*)





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PUSH AND PULL TOYS

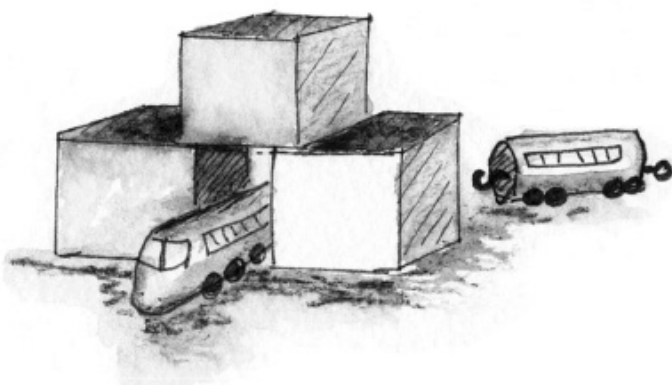
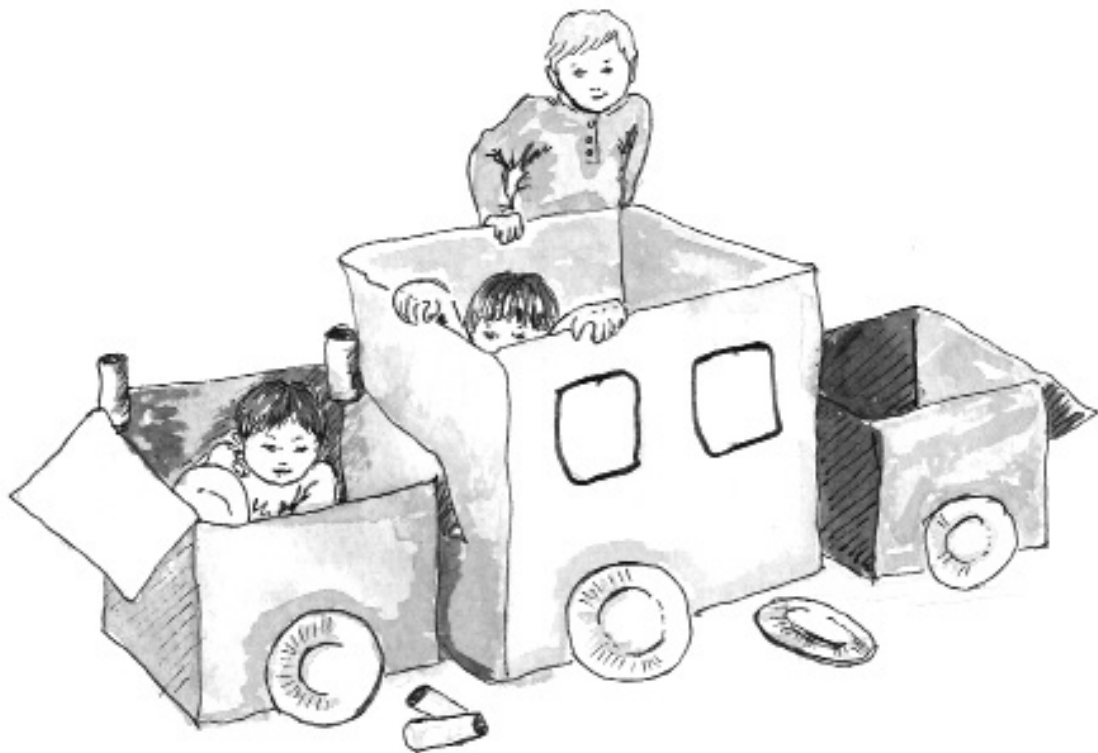
A trolley or pram would help a young child to stand and walk and give them a sense of space, orientation and direction.



CARS AND TRAINS

Endless fun for young boys and girls!
The fun can be added to by making simple tunnels, houses from cardboard or bricks.

You can also make trains and cars from large cardboard boxes.





BALLS OF VARYING SIZES

Children can play alone or with an adult and learn to throw, catch, aim and kick a ball early on. A hoop or box will give a focus for aiming the ball.



WATER PLAY

Young children can learn the properties of water by being allowed to play with some in a shallow tray; they may enjoy washing up or washing dolls clothes. **(Supervision is required as a child can drown in a few inches of water.)**



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SALT DOUGH

Young children can play with small amounts of pastry or dough. They can learn to mould shapes in their hands or cut out shapes with plastic cutters.

Children should be supervised during this activity.



Write down here other ideas



ART ACTIVITIES

Some children may enjoy art activities like drawing with chunky crayons or painting with their fingers.

Activities include:

- Make butterfly pictures by putting 2 or 3 colours on one half of the page, then fold the page, press down and open it to make a new shape
- Print with paint using vegetables, sponge shapes, leaves or hands
- Explore and create with large stickers or large felt pieces on a felt board.

Children should always be supervised when doing art activities.





Write down here other ideas



COPYING ADULT ACTIVITIES

Young children will imitate your actions if given the opportunities, so give them a duster or cloth when you clean or a brush when you sweep the floor.



LOOKING AT AND READING BOOKS

It's never too early to introduce books to babies and young children. As you read point out the pictures and encourage the child to do so as well.





TREASURE BASKET

Fill a basket with safe objects from around the home for babies and young children to explore. Use objects with different shapes and textures.

Select an appropriate sturdy basket which is made from wicker or wood. Include items like whisk, pastry brush, ribbon, keys, egg carton, jar lid, nail brush, sponge.

Treasure baskets are great for exploring and sensory learning. Children should always be monitored when playing with the treasure basket.

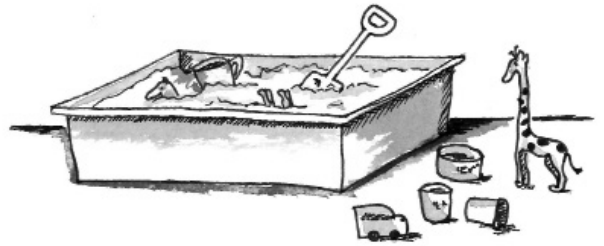


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SAND PLAY

Allow babies and young children to explore the feeling of sand between their fingers and toes. Use wet and dry sand. For older children you can include toys like spades, containers and animals.



Write down here other ideas

IV

Play activities for children aged 2-6 years

Basic rules for the play room or outside play need to be established. Gentle guidance given to the younger child to reinforce appropriate and positive participation will help the child feel secure and give self-esteem a chance to grow. Activities for pre-schoolers need to be varied and interesting. Children develop skills at different rates and it is unwise to expect too much too soon. It is generally accepted that free play and choice are good for early development. Children's social skills need to be taken into account. Very young children usually play alone; this is *solitary play*. They will then play alongside others in *parallel play*. Finally they engage in *co-operative play*.

Varied activities give children the opportunity to develop all areas.

After sessions of play it is good to give children the chance, perhaps in 'Circle Time', to talk to an adult about what they have done; this adds value to the tasks and helps to develop recall abilities.

Children with various disabilities will need to have activities appropriate and safe for their level of play. Advice from therapists is essential when considering what activity to do. Most of the following can be adapted and simplified and made accessible for children with disabilities.



SAND PLAY AND WATER PLAY



Materials

Water and sand trays are simple and safe mediums for children to scoop, measure, pour and experiment with. Cheap plastic cups, bowls, spoons, jugs and old milk containers can be used.

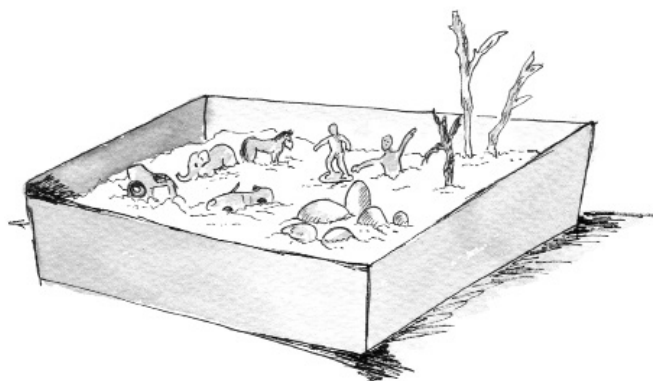


Lentils, rice and dried pasta can replace sand for further sensory experiences.



Activity

The activities can be varied; shells, toys or sequins can be hidden in the sand for the children to discover. The sand tray can be used for imaginative play. Create a miniature world with small plastic animals, cars etc. Smooth stones too can be used depending on the age or abilities of the children and they can be used to represent people.



Children with physical disabilities can be included by having the tray accessible for wheelchairs and standing frames or a small tray put onto a separate table at their level. If a child does not have use of their hands, then the support adult can put a hand over the child's to engage them. Using rice or dried pasta gives further experiences with textures and sensations. The adult can also pour water or sand onto the child's feet or hands so they can experience the sensation. Children should be supervised during this activity.

Water can have safe detergent added and bubbles introduced by blowing through straws or whisking with a whisk; food colouring can also give added interest. Water and sand play are especially beneficial for children with disabilities.



Skills developed

Experimenting with materials and discovering their properties, weighing and measuring, sorting and organising tools and equipment, concentration, mathematical and scientific thinking, questioning and reasoning.



Write down here other ideas



CREATIVE ART



Materials



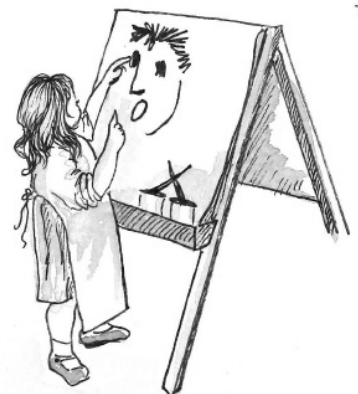
Paints, paint brushes, pencils, paper, crayons, felt tip pens, vegetables such as potatoes or carrots for cutting and printing, old cardboard boxes, toilet roll centres and cereal packets, for creating faces, paper plates, sticky tape, socks, tights, safety scissors and anything else you can think of to be creative with.



Activity

Drawing and painting; creating junk models such as a robot, using cartons or boxes or space craft; hand and foot prints; finger painting; making hats and masks; group collages with themes such as 'A Garden', 'Wild Animals', 'The Shops'. Create a shop with fruit and vegetables or other produce made from junk or papier mache. The children can then use this for role playing going to the shops.

Printing activities are easy and fun. Have some paper, paints and vegetables such as carrots or potatoes. Cut the potato in half and on the cut section carve a shape with a knife. The surface can then be coated with paint and repeated shapes printed onto the paper. The paper can be used then to make cards or wrapping paper for gifts or just decorate a wall with it.



Making puppets from paper bags, socks, finger puppets from pieces of paper or puppets on a stick; children can make up a story or play out a familiar one, individually or as a group.

This is also the opportunity for adults to demonstrate some craft work, e.g. making a pair of binoculars by sticking two toilet rolls together; they can be used for observations in the garden. Shakers can be made by decorating plastic bottles or yogurt cartons and putting some rice or dried pasta inside.



Skills developed

Sharing, helping others, aesthetic awareness and appreciation of others' work, hand-eye coordination, understanding properties of materials, concepts of size and shape, observing, listening to instructions, measuring, matching, sorting, counting, use of tools such as scissors and paint brushes, locating and returning materials to correct place, emotions expressed in art work.

Children are able to express themselves through creative art work; given appropriate materials and a non-judgemental environment, subconscious emotions can be drawn, painted and expressed in various ways which are safe for the child. In this way, these activities can be therapeutic.

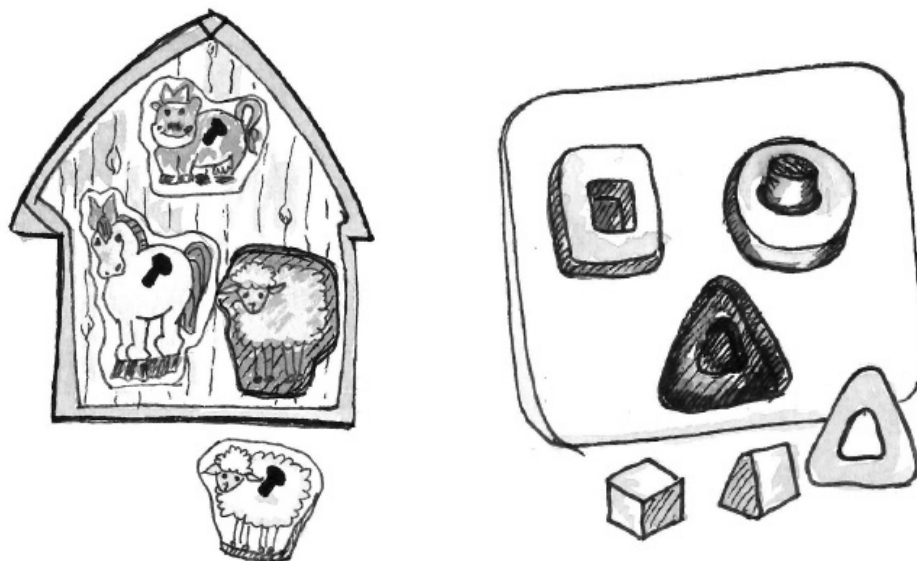
Some children will need adult help with these activities; some backward chaining may be needed. Backward chaining is a technique where the adult allows and encourages the child to do as much of an activity as possible and the adult fills the gaps by assisting the child, not doing it all for them. For the best results you need to know the child well and have done some observations first.



Write down here other ideas



PUZZLES



Materials

Puzzles of varying difficulty so all children are able to participate if they wish. Simple puzzles can be made by sticking pictures from magazines onto card and cutting up into 2, 3 or 4 pieces.



Activity

Some children will get engaged if the puzzle is nearly completed and just a couple of pieces need to be placed to complete it. Some children may need a 2-piece puzzle, putting 2 halves of a picture together. Form boards with large knobs for easy handling are good as a simple and rewarding start for younger children or children with physical challenges. Encourage children by commenting on the pictures in the puzzle. Ask 'Where is the...?' for the child to point and become more engaged.

Materials

Children with visual impairment can have textured puzzles or domino shapes; they have to match them by feeling the shapes and textures.

**Skills developed**

Observing pictures, visual discrimination and looking at shapes, shape and colour matching, fine motor and manipulative skills, testing and finding new strategies, problem solving, co-operating and sharing, concentration and patience, reward and the satisfaction of completion.



Write down here other ideas



CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING



Materials

Wooden and/or plastic bricks, Duplo, Lego, cardboard boxes of various sizes, any other kits that are available. There are many commercial kits but choose safe and durable ones so they last.



Activity

It has been shown that children left to explore materials will benefit because they learn the properties of the materials and the universal laws of nature by experimenting. If instructed too soon they miss out on this opportunity. Once exploration is satisfied then children can follow verbal or picture instructions or copy models from pictures. Boxes can be decorated and painted to make a cooker, boat, car with wheels, or anything that you can imagine. Children will enjoy pushing or pulling each other around in a box; they can pretend the 'boat' is in a rough sea, or it is a 'bus ride, the children having to get on and off when a bell rings'. They will be learning about balance, weight, friction. Children will have hours of fun!



Skills developed

Learning properties of materials, making structures, problem solving, adaptation to others' ideas, requesting adult help when needed, following picture or verbal instructions, language to describe structures and parts

of, symmetry, setting up and putting away, learning to accept failure and achieve success, sharing ideas and space, spatial awareness, recall of how it was made.



Write down here other ideas



MUSICAL ACTIVITIES



Materials

Various musical instruments, drums, xylophones, bells, tambourines, clackers. Make shakers in sealed plastic bottles with various solids such as rice, seeds and dried pasta inserted. You can make them visually more attractive by decorating the outside or by putting in small pieces of coloured paper or tissue or feathers. If the top is really sealed it makes a safe toy or rattle for an infant or child with intellectual disabilities or visual or hearing impairment.





Activity

Children can explore by themselves and then an adult can lead them in making rhythms, responding to singing, joining in at appropriate times. Also words such as 'loud and soft', 'fast and slow' and other musical notations can be introduced. Children can move around the room to a tambourine beating. Alter the loudness and the children can respond by marching for loud sounds and tiptoeing to soft ones, for example. This would be a good activity during Circle Time.

Some instruments or music systems can have simple switches attached so that children with limited mobility and hand movements can switch the sounds on and off and so take part.



Skills developed

Learning to pay attention, responding to instructions, copying sounds and rhythms, recognising a familiar tune, keeping a sequence of sounds in mind, repeating a sequence of sounds, discriminating between sounds, matching sounds, appreciating moods, coordinating hand, eye and ear in use of instruments, care of handling instruments, understanding high, low, loud and soft, working together and co-operating, concentration and self-confidence.



Write down here other ideas



ROLE PLAY



Materials

Dressing up clothes, scarves, hats, adult clothes cut down or altered to fit young children, a home corner area which can be made from cardboard boxes, tea set, dolls and teddies, bed, doctors and nurses' kits and any available items to help children imagine they are carrying out an adult or imaginary role.



Activity

Children are allowed to play freely and interact with respect for the toys and each other. Some may need an adult to model what to do if the children are lacking in experience. This is an opportunity for the adult to 'play' too. Using salt dough or baking biscuits, cakes and simple foods such as preparing sandwiches or making jelly will add to the children's life skills and make play very enjoyable and rewarding too.



Skills developed

Sharing, allocating roles, negotiating, acting out problems, emotional release, interacting with others, experimenting with new roles, recalling and acting out past experiences, predicting what might happen, empathy, pretending and substituting objects, language and communication, matching, counting and mathematical concepts, fine motor and manipulative skills, gross motor skills, self-help with dressing up.



Write down here other ideas



CIRCLE TIME AND GROUP ACTIVITIES



Materials

A comfortable area to sit in a circle, use carpets or individual mats if available or chairs. Some children may benefit by having a specific area to sit in; you can create this by using coloured tape on the floor. To hold the children's interest have objects hidden in a bag; you will need an object to pass around the group such as a wooden spoon or teddy bear for taking turns. Also use books, musical instruments, things collected from the woods or outdoors and other objects of interest.



Activity

The ideas for circle time are endless. Your imagination is important to keep the time alive, enjoyable and fresh to the children. This is an adult led activity. The younger the children, the smaller the group should be; 6-8 children if they are 3 or 4; 12 to 14 children if they are older. Keep the sessions short, 10 minutes for younger children. Everyone needs to feel physically comfortable. There are simple rules; each child is allowed a turn to talk or take part, but doesn't have to. Everyone listens to and respects each other; only one person (the one holding the spoon/bear) speaks at a time. It can be used as time for reflection and recall, each child telling others what they have done or plan to do. Children may have news or concerns they want to share.

Circle and group activities include:



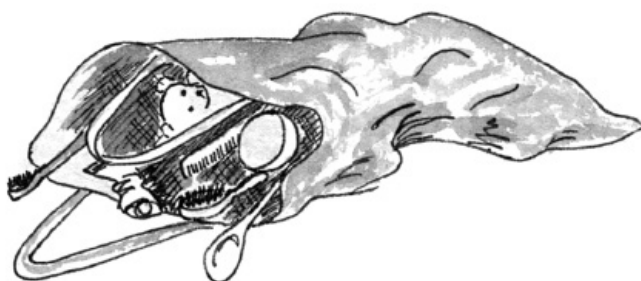
Welcome ritual

Have a song or other ritual to sing to settle the children and to help them feel part of the group. Sing, 'Hello (name) how are you? How are you today?', or make up your own words to a familiar tune.



What's in the bag?

The leader can have objects hidden in a soft bag or pillow case. Children take it in turns to hold the bag and take out an object. They can feel the object first and try to describe it before revealing it from the bag. Real objects such as fruit or vegetables can be passed around to feel, smell and even taste.



The Magic Wand

The adult has a wand and raises it and lowers it, can make commands, and the children respond; they can take turns with the wand.



Who am I?

One child covers their eyes; another stands close and asks, 'Who am I?' The child tries to guess.



When the Warm Wind Blows

Children bring chairs to the circle, leader removes her/his chair and stands in the middle. The leader says, 'If you like blue, change chairs when the warm wind blows', or 'If you like ice cream, change chairs when the warm wind blows', and so on. When they change chairs one person will be without a chair so stays in the middle to call the next change. Children in wheelchairs can get their turn too. Discuss how the children need to be polite and thoughtful when changing chairs.



Parachute games

Younger children can enjoy using a small parachute or large piece of fabric to create waves by standing around the edge and raising and lowering their arms, or creating a mushroom by all raising or lowering their arms at the same time. It aids cooperation and real fun can be created. Whilst the parachute is in the air the children can take it in turns to say 'Hello', or to ask a question of another child. Ask the children to all hold the parachute with their left hands and walk around in a circle, then change to go the other way. (See later section for more ideas)





Hula Hoop games

Have Hula Hoops placed a small distance apart and encourage the children to hop, skip or jump from one to another. You can make races from this as the children gain skills.

You can put hoops in corners of the room or play area with a coloured ribbon or piece of different coloured card in each. Call out a colour and all the children have to get into that hoop.

Everyone stands in a circle holding hands, two children break the hold and a Hula Hoop is inserted and they hold hands again, the hoop is then taken around the circle without anyone letting go! You can time them and see if they can improve on their time. Great for problem solving and cooperation!



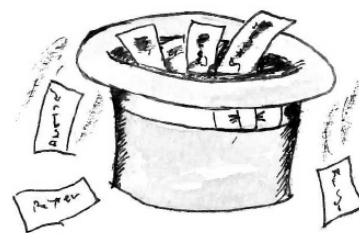
Sentence starters

'Something I do well is.....', 'Something I am getting better at is....', 'I am different from... because....', 'I am proud that....'



Names in a Hat

Have children's names on pieces of paper and put into a hat or tin, pull out a name and the child gets to choose their favourite activity. Make sure different children get chosen each day so everyone gets a turn.



Swapping places

Give out pairs of picture cards, call out one of the pictures. Those holding the matching pictures swap places.



Story-telling

This is a time for repetitive stories. Children can be encouraged to participate with actions, movement and saying parts of the story which are repetitive. The adult can make story bags with objects and toys which feature in the story which the children can then see and hold.



Singing

Circle time can also be a time for singing and information giving and sharing.



Skills developed

Turn taking, listening, appreciating others' needs, organising thoughts to express to others, awareness of rhythm in stories and music, anticipation and patience, confidence building, acquisition of knowledge including culture and traditions, co-operation, game rules.



Write down here other ideas



SENSORY AND MESSY PLAY



Materials

Jelly, shaving foam, rice, dried pasta, thinned paste, cooked spaghetti and oil, food colouring, corn flour to make gloop, treasure basket with everyday safe objects.



A jelly can be made with pieces or objects hidden inside for the children to explore, feel and discover using their hands.

A small amount of shaving foam can be squirted onto a tray on a table top, children will love to smear it, shape it and draw shapes and faces with it.

Dry rice or dry or cooked and coloured pasta can be placed on a table for children to play with.

A basket can be a good place to put various everyday items such as safe kitchen utensils, ribbons, fabrics and things collected from the garden and woods, such as pine cones, leaves, stones and twigs. Children can explore and investigate, and gain experience of different things and learn about their uses and qualities.

Observe children carefully to note if they are avoiding certain textures or experiences. Allow them to withdraw without fuss if needed.



Write down here other ideas



OUTDOOR PLAY



Materials

Bikes, scooters, old tyres, swings, slides, gardening equipment, an area for planting and watering, pots for sowing seeds, plastic magnifying glasses, balls, skipping ropes, hoops, chinks, paint, water and paint brushes and large scale objects for building and constructing, blankets or sheets to build a tent or 'house'.

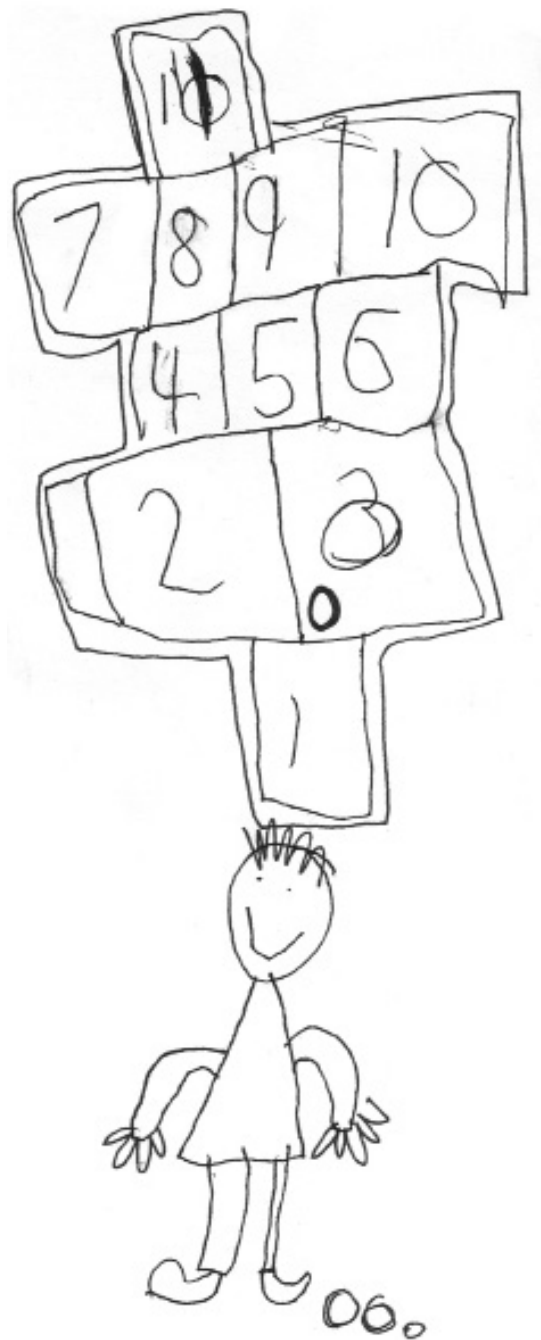


Activity

Children can have free play outdoors but also they can be introduced to observing and caring for and respecting wildlife, being detectives in the garden! Young children are able to appreciate the wonder of nature, growth and change.

Challenges can be set up for the children, throwing balls or bean bags into a bucket or hoop is fun. A mini-Olympics with balancing, running, throwing, catching, jumping and skipping can be arranged.

Play ball games with children in a circle. They can roll, throw or bounce the ball to each other. You can use a target in the middle of the circle for them to aim the ball at. Group activities such as parachute games, copying the instructor's movements or 'follow the leader', races and obstacle courses can be introduced by the adult (see next section on 6 to 10 year olds for more ideas).



Skills developed

Gross motor, negotiating, control of body, fair play, learning rules of games and engagement, following instructions, throwing, catching, aiming, running, rolling, concepts of distance and speed, swinging, sliding, lifting, planning, testing, awareness of needs of others, investigating properties of materials, soil, mini-beasts and natural materials.



Write down here other ideas

V

Play activities for children aged 6-10 years

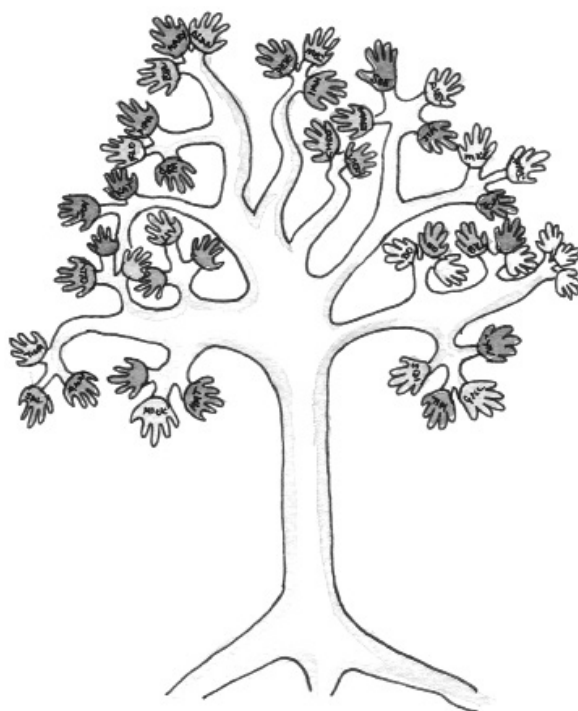
As with younger children rules for appropriate behaviour need to be established. With adult supervision older children are able to construct their own rules of engagement. These are sometimes stricter than those adults might devise.



INDOOR ACTIVITIES



GROUP TREE COLLAGE



Aim of the activity

To develop cooperation, individual expression, develop sense of self and being part of a group.

Materials

Large and small sheets of paper, pencils, crayons, paints and paint brushes, sticky tape, glue, scissors.



Activity

Each child is given a piece of paper and shown how to draw around their hand with crayon or pencil. They can colour this and decorate it, write their names or something about themselves on it, if able. Then cut out the hand carefully.

Tape a few sheets of the larger paper together and draw and paint a large tree with trunk and branches. The hands (leaves) can be stuck on by the children and the tree displayed on a wall for all to see.

Children can write something about themselves on the leaf, or it can be a wish or remembrance message.



Real leaves can be used and rubbings on paper made with crayons as an alternative activity. The rubbings are then cut out and stuck on the drawn tree.

Children with physical disabilities may need some assistance to achieve this; however it is important to encourage them to do as much as possible by themselves.



Write down here other ideas



GROUP TAPESTRY OR COLLAGE



Aim of the activity

Cooperation and belonging to a group, individual self-expression, fine motor skills, learning new skills such as sewing, following instructions, thoughts given to safely carrying out tasks.

Materials

Sewing materials, hessian or other suitable materials for sewing, needles, wool and threads, scraps of different materials, buttons, sequins etc. scissors and glue.



Activity

Each child is given a small piece of material about 20cm square. Give some time for the children to discuss designs and what they would like to sew or stick on their square and how they will achieve this. It could be an opportunity to express something that is important to the child, a favourite animal, sibling or food item.

This activity may take some time to complete. Individual assistance will be needed especially if the children are new to sewing. Cutting and sticking pieces may be more suitable for some children. *Adapt as necessary.* As the pieces are completed they can be sewn together or stuck onto another piece of material to make one large collage. For some children the adult can have pre-cut pieces of paper, pictures or material, e.g. flowers, faces, toys etc.

An alternative activity could be to use old magazines, coloured paper, plain paper, coloured pencils and paints and scissors.

Children create individual pictures; you can use a theme of plants, animals or people. These are then stuck onto large sheets to create a single group picture.



Write down here other ideas



MAKING THINGS FROM PAPIER MACHE



Aim of the activity

Cooperation, fine motor development, creative development

Materials

Newspaper, wheat flour, hot water and bowl. (See appendix for method.) Lots of ideas on the internet!



Activity

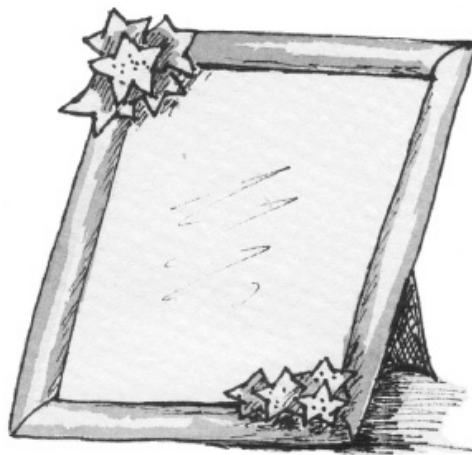
Papier Mache can be used in many ways to make models, animals, to decorate boxes or picture frames.

- **Animals:** blow up a balloon and use this as the base for the body shape. Cover with layers of Papier Mache and join in pieces of toilet roll for the legs and screwed up paper for a head. Attach with strips of Papier Mache.

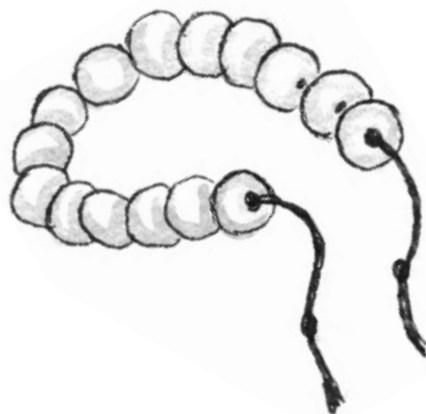
- **Masks:** To start get the children to draw and design a mask. They can then cut some card for a base and start to put on Papier Mache to build and mould the required shape.



- **Picture frames:** Cut card to the size of the frame, build and mould shapes and decorations around the frame, let it dry, decorate, paint and varnish. Cut out a back and support foot from strong card and attach. It is then ready to put in a favourite or special photo or picture.



- **Beads:** Papier Mache can be rolled into a ball until smooth, a cocktail stick or straw can be pushed through the middle and then left to dry. Paint and varnish and they are ready to make a necklace or bracelet. Other items of jewellery can be made like broaches, badges and pendants.



- **Eggs:** Make a shape of an egg with crunched up newspaper, cover with layers of Papier Mache and mould until you have a good shape, let it dry then paint, decorate and varnish. This is a good activity for Easter; attach some ribbon and the eggs can be used to decorate an Easter tree.

- **Bowls and Plates:** You might need a bowl or plate to give the initial form. Use a thin layer of petroleum jelly to make it easier to separate the Papier Mache when it has dried. Use layers and leave to dry. Paint, decorate and varnish.

- **Puppets:** Puppet heads have been made from Papier Mache for centuries in Indonesia and China. Use your imagination or look up ideas on the internet.

- **Fruit and Vegetables:** Make fruit and vegetable shapes; these can be used by the younger children in their playhouse or in their pretend play; older children will enjoy playing shops with these, too.



Write down here other ideas



"ALL ABOUT ME" BOOKLET



Aim of the activity

To make a book with details of the individual, colour of hair, eyes, likes, dislikes, friends and relatives etc. Through this work a child can gain a better sense of self, dignity and respect and confidence.

Materials

Paper, books or files for recording and keeping art work and writing. Pencils, crayons, pens, paints, paint brushes, other craft items if available for decorating pictures, mirrors.



Activity

There are many ways of doing this and how you do it will depend on the time and number of children in your group.



Body Image

Using a mirror the child can carefully look at their face and details of eye colour, hair colour and type. Each child can draw a picture of themselves. They can draw around their foot and/or hand, then colour, cut out and stick it in the book. Children can do this in pairs and draw each other, naming parts of the body, measuring heights. This is helpful if there is a child unable to draw for whatever reason. These activities give a record of the child at that stage. It is fun to draw around each other and cut out the shapes. Children can compare and contrast their heights, hair colour etc. This activity helps disabled children to be more aware of the whole of their body. It is easy for a disabled child to ignore a part of their body that has no feeling or movement.





Writing and drawing

Children can draw and write about themselves. They can include their likes and dislikes, favourite foods, places to go, people, best friends, pets, favourite activities and things they don't like. They can illustrate with pictures. They can write stories about school, a favourite visit or some exciting activity they have done.



Feelings page

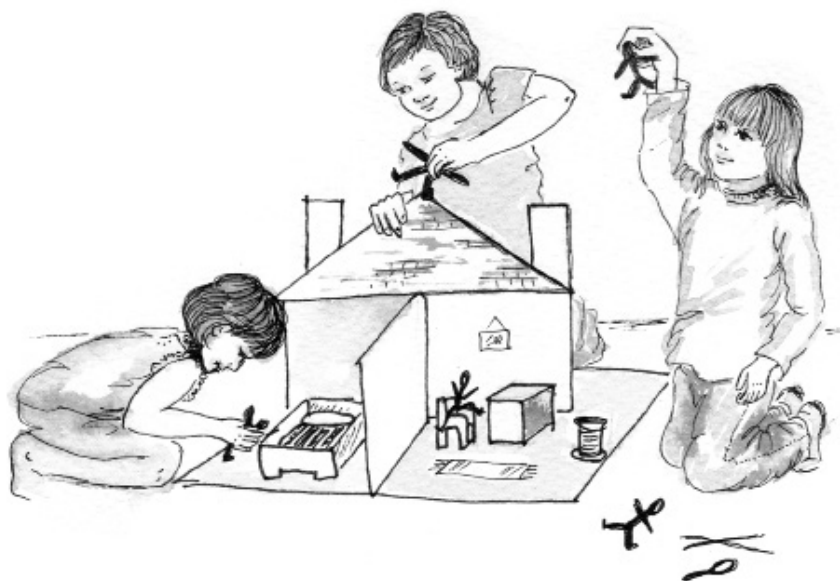
Children can draw simple faces with different expressions thus enabling them to talk about their feelings and to be able to identify them.



Write down here other ideas



MAKING A CARDBOARD HOUSE



Aim of the activity

To create a house and give children the opportunity to express some of their emotions, thoughts and creative ideas about the past, present and future around home life or being in care.

Materials

Corrugated cardboard, sharp knife, paints, paper, pipe cleaners, glue, scissors, pencils, old scraps of material.



Activity

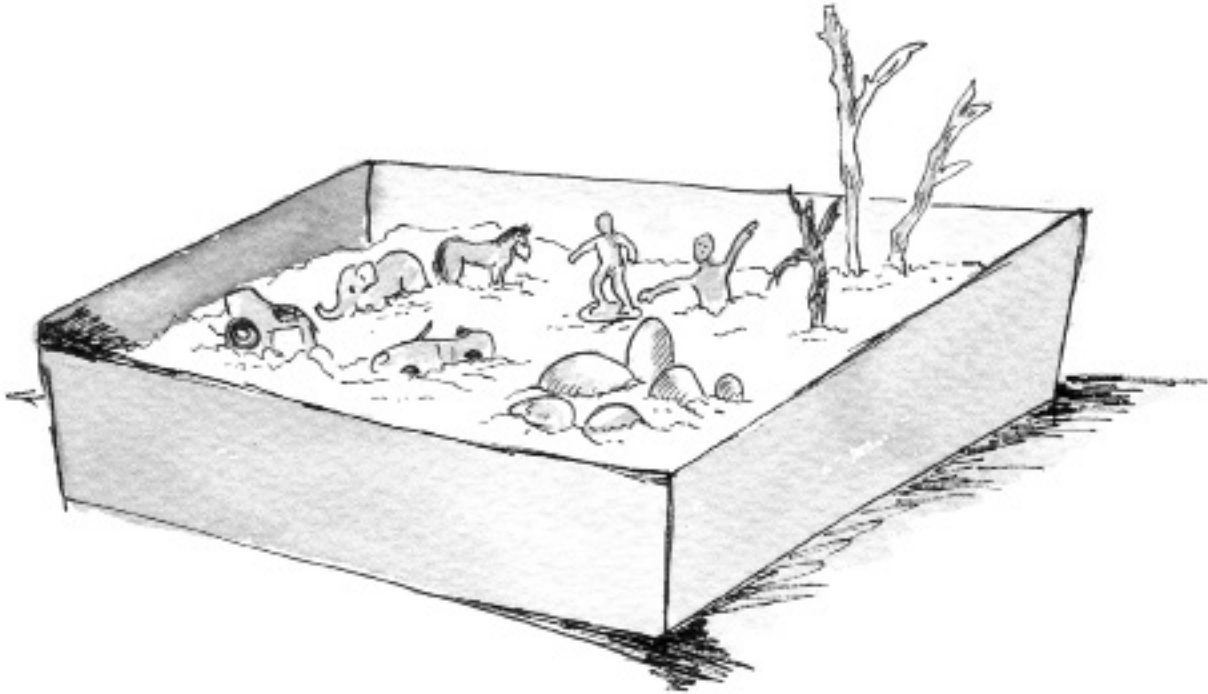
Older or more able children or an adult will need to cut out the house, but the other contents and furniture of the house can be made by everyone using small boxes and scraps of cardboard. People can be made from pipe cleaners, lollipop sticks, pieces of card, salt dough models etc.



Write down here other ideas



FREE PLAY WITH MINIATURES



Aim of the activity

For beneficial individual play and therapeutic work. Children can create their own worlds in miniature. They can enact and process positive and negative emotions such as happiness, fear, anxiety. The adult can observe and understand what is going on in the child's mind. *(Acknowledging some of the emotions in a non-judgemental way can be helpful to the child.)*

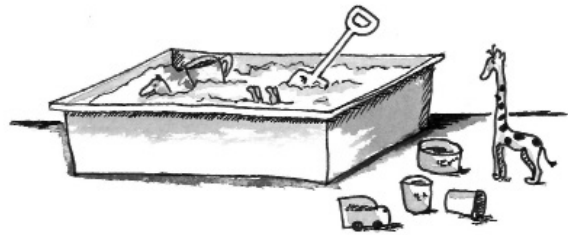
Materials

Cars, people, animals, stones, twigs, sand tray.



Activity

Free play. Some children will benefit from regular play with the sand.



Write down here other ideas



DRAMATIC ROLE PLAY



Aim of the activity

To help children at different levels of development to enact and pretend to be doctor, nurse, mother, father, firefighter etc. or significant figures in their lives. The children can act out the various roles to become accustomed to them or act out previous experiences. (Needs to be done in a non-judgemental environment but with boundaries)

Materials

Dressing up clothes, scarves, hats, area for play and acting out roles, cardboard boxes made into various domestic items like ovens, sinks or boats, cars and whatever takes your imagination.

Simple clothes can be made from old sheets, a nurse's apron with a red cross and head band; a large white shirt for a doctor's coat.

A play area can be constructed from sheets hung to form separate areas, or large boxes decorated to create a kitchen area or spacecraft. A bed area is useful for playing hospitals, or putting baby to bed.



Write down here other ideas



TRUST GAMES



Aim of the activity

To build trust and friendship between the children and between staff and children.

Materials

Blindfold, rope



Trust walk

Blindfold a child, lead them around some chairs or furniture. This can be done out of doors and around buildings. Can be done in pairs, or in a line holding pieces of rope.



Paired interviews

In pairs, take it in turns to ask questions, like, what do you like to eat? What animal would you be and why? If you could be anyone in the world who would you be? What do you hate most in the world? Then each person feeds back to the whole group about what the other person has said. This is good for listening skills and learning about each other.



Write down here other ideas



SOCIAL GAMES AND CIRCLE TIME



Ball games

Have everyone in a circle, throw the ball to someone saying their name and something nice about them. This continues around the group.



Clap ball

Sit the children in a circle, have a suitable ball. The children take it in turns to throw the ball in the air and clap before they catch it. This can be increased to two claps if they are really quick! In a larger group use more balls.



Skittles

Make skittles from some plastic bottles with screw tops by putting a little water or sand in the bases, being careful not to make them too heavy. Bottles can be decorated or numbers stuck on. The children take it in turns to knock down the bottles and they can score, too, to see who gets the highest score.



Blow ball

You need table tennis balls and drinking straws. The game can be played on a table or on the floor. Children can play in opposing pairs or in two teams depending on the numbers. The idea is to get the children to blow the ball into the opposing goal.



Making badges

Decide on a name for the 'group'; give the children a piece of card or sticker to write the name of the group on and to decorate. This can be made more permanent by sticking a safety pin or a peg on the back.

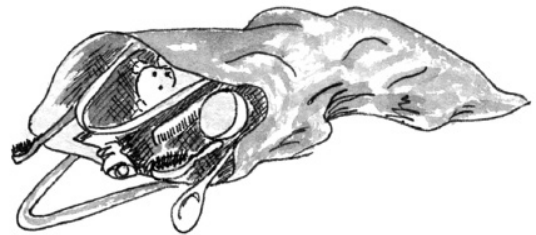


What's in the bag?

Have a bag with various items in it. It could be personal items of the children in the group or household items. Children take turns to pull an item out. The person to whom it belongs then says why that is important to them; it can be a photograph, a toy, some work etc.



Guessing what is in the bag is fun and each child can have a turn at feeling the bag to discover for themselves. You could use fruit and vegetables and then cut them up afterwards and let the children feel, smell and taste the fruit or raw vegetable. Disabled children will especially enjoy this as they may have had fewer opportunities to explore like this.



Telling stories

Children sit in a circle; the adult can start a story with a sentence or two. Everyone takes a turn to add a sentence and so the story builds. 'I went shopping and I bought...' Familiar repetitive stories are good, especially if they have actions. 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt', 'The Ginger Bread Man' or any fairy or folk story well known to the children. They can be encouraged to join in or to put in the missing word the adult deliberately leaves out.



Write down here other ideas



FACE PAINTING



Aim of the activity

To build trust and relationships between children and adults.

Materials

Mirror, face paints or make-up, cleansing wipes or cloth.



Activity

Have a mirror. One person makes a mark on the other person's face with face paints. They take it in turns to 'paint' each other. Continue until the faces are completed. You can do this with themes, characters, animals etc.



BALLOON ACTIVITIES



Balloon Grab

Blow up lots of balloons and scatter them all over the floor. Give the children two minutes to gather up and hold on to as many balloons as they can. The winner is the person holding the most balloons when the timer stops.



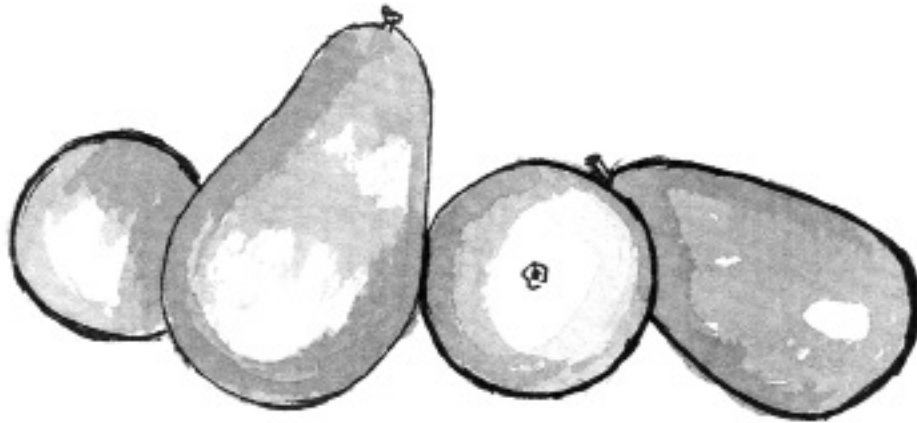
Up and Away

All in a circle and throw a balloon up in the air, see how long you can keep bouncing it up, count the number of hits. Can be done in two teams in rows as a competitive game.



Hot Balloon

Have your children sit in a circle and bat a balloon around as you play some music. When the music stops, the last person to have hit the balloon (or the person who is actually touching it) is out. The last person left in the circle wins.



Popping Race

Divide the children into two teams and line them up at one end of the room. At the other end have two boxes filled with balloons, making sure there is one for every child. On the count of three, the first child in each team runs to the other end of the lounge, chooses a balloon, and pops it by jumping, stomping or sitting. They then run back to the team and tag the next person to continue the race. The first team to pop all their balloons wins. This is best done at the end of balloon activities! If you like, you could put a small prize in each balloon, so the child gets something to keep when it pops. **Please note this game will not be suitable for children with sensitivity to noise.**



Balloon Treasure Hunt

Blow up different coloured balloons (one for each child) and wrap up the same amount of prizes in different coloured papers to match the balloons. If you don't have enough different coloured papers, you could just write the colour on the wrapper, or attach a coloured ribbon. Hide the balloons around the house and send the participants to find a balloon each. The colour of balloon they find indicates the coloured parcel they receive at the end of the game.



Balloon Stomp

This is a great way to burn off some energy and works well if you have a large space. Poke a few sweets or treats into balloons before blowing them up and tying the knot. Tie a piece of string to each balloon and then tie one balloon to the ankle of each child. Everyone then runs around trying to stomp on other people's balloons, while at the same time trying to protect their own. This game could potentially end in lots of stomped feet, so it's a good idea for everyone to remove their shoes first.



Water Balloon Toss

Divide the children in pairs and give one person in each pair a balloon filled with water. The pair stand about one metre apart and then toss the water balloon between each other, and back again. If they can make the throw without the water balloon hitting the ground, they then take a step back and throw again. The partners continue to get further and further apart, until finally they drop the catch or end up with water all over themselves. The pair which makes the longest successful throw wins. (Probably better done outdoors!)





Target Practice

Give everyone a different coloured balloon to blow up, but ask them to hold on to the neck rather than tie it in a knot. Place a target in the middle of the floor and, on the count of three, have everyone let go of their balloons. Have a target such as a box, a Hula Hoop, or mat. You can play this game for as many rounds as you like, by giving points for bullseyes or 'closest to the mark'. After several rounds, the person with the most points wins.



Round up the Sheep

Divide the children into two teams, and provide each team with a big cardboard box to act as their sheep pen. Release lots of balloons; ask the teams to 'round up their sheep' with their hands behind their back. They will have to work together to find the best strategies and you will be surprised by some of the techniques they come up with. The team that gets the most sheep in their pen wins.



Relay Games

There are lots of relay games you can play with balloons and, of course, the last member of the team gets to pop the balloon to finish. Example relay games include:

- Running with a balloon between your legs
- Passing the balloon down the team line – over and under, over and under
- Passing the balloon to each other in a line – tummy to tummy, or between your legs
- Jumping with a balloon between your ankles
- Batting or kicking a balloon through an obstacle course.



Write down here other ideas

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES



PARACHUTE GAMES



Merry go Round

The children turn sideways on around the parachute so that the parachute is held with only one hand. Then walk, hop, jump, skip around holding the chute. It looks like a merry-go-round. Children can take it in turns to call out the next action.



Popcorn

Place a number of beanbags or balls on the chute. Children shake the parachute to make them rise like popcorn. Try not to let any fall off.



Snakes

Place a few skipping ropes on the chute. By shaking the chute, the children try to shake them off.



See-Saw Pull

The children sit on the floor, they pull the chute back and forth in a see-sawing motion.



Making Waves

While gripping the parachute, everyone moves their arms up and down to make small and large waves.



Ball Roll

Have the children try to roll balls into the hole in the centre of the parachute, if there is one. This can be done in teams, one team trying not to let the ball go through the hole whilst the other tries to get it through the hole. Have a set time, then switch.

If the parachute does not have a hole then the aim can be to get the ball off the chute. Someone keeps the score.



Chute Lift

Ask the children to lift the parachute high over their heads and down again. Talk about the soft sounds and breezes that are created. Move the parachute faster and notice the different effects.



Mushroom

From a standing position, lift the parachute from the ground to waist height, counting one (lift) and two (lift). On three (lift), have everyone raise the parachute high over their heads and then crouch down, pulling the parachute tightly behind them. A mushroom effect is created as the parachute settles.



Parachute Tag

Lift the parachute high overhead. Call one child's name and have her run (skip, hop, twirl or crawl) to the other side before the parachute comes down and tags her. A child in a wheelchair can self-propel or be pushed through.



One Hand Run

Have each child hold the parachute with one hand, extending the opposite arm out for balance. Run around in one direction, then change and run around in the other direction. A variation would be to use music as the cue for changing direction (i.e. direction can be changed every time the music stops). This is good for listening skills, too.



Team competition games

Place one ball in the centre of the parachute and let two teams work to try to make the ball fly off the opposite side. Assign colours of balls to each team and have them try to send their colour down the hole in the centre.



Roller-ball

Everyone holds the chute taut. Place a large ball near the edge. Try to make the ball roll around the edge of the chute. To do this someone starts the ball rolling. As it comes towards you, you lower the edge you are holding, and as it goes past you raise your edge. When all the players do this in synchronization it creates a wave going round the edge, pushing the ball round in front of it in a smooth, steady circle. It cannot be done without concentration and cooperation. However, it is very rewarding for the group to eventually achieve a smooth, continuous motion. Once you have done this try speeding up - or change direction.



Running by Numbers

If the chute is a large one the children can run underneath and switch places with others; you can number them around the circle and then call out a number, or say 'those wearing blue, switch' or give the children numbers, names or colours.



Write down here other ideas



TEAM GAMES AND RACES



Over and Under

Organise children to stand in lines in equal teams. The team leader has a ball and has to pass it over their head to the person behind; they then pass it over their head and so on until it reaches the last child. They take the ball and run to the front. They then pass it through their legs and so on to the last one. They run forward and pass over their head. This continues until a team finishes and sits down to indicate this.



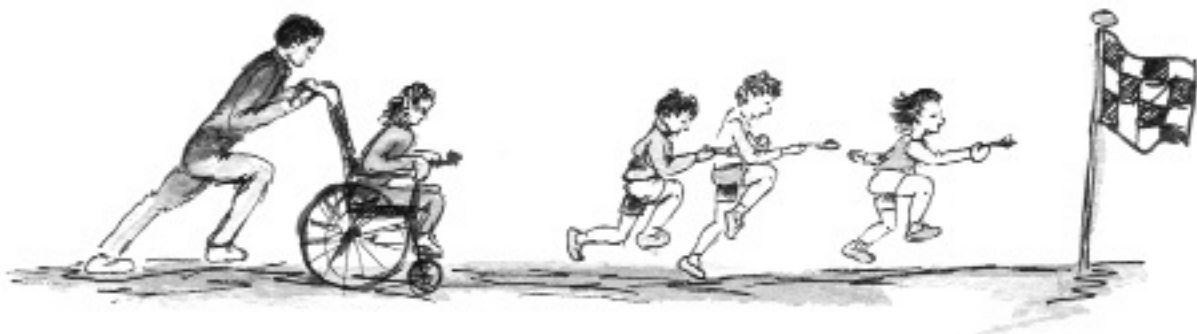
Potato race

Have the children in equal teams. Have several potatoes or bean bags and the same number of buckets as teams. Place the potatoes at equal distances in a line between the children and the bucket. The object is to get the potatoes in the bucket one at a time, then run to the end. The next child does the opposite and replaces the potatoes one at time. This continues until one team has finished and puts their hands in the air to show this.



Spoon Race

Have spoons and stones or potatoes. Place the children in teams. The first children in the teams have a spoon and balance the stone/potato on it. They then have to race a given distance and back without touching or dropping the stone/potato and hand the spoon and potato to the next child and so on until the race is finished.





Chocolate Dinner

You need a scarf, gloves and hat, knife and fork and a wrapped bar of chocolate. The children sit in a circle and then they take turns by using a spinner with numbers or dice or passing an object around the circle; use music to keep the object passing around and stop at intervals. The person holding the object then has to run to the middle, put on the scarf, hat and gloves and try to unwrap the chocolate with the knife and fork. The game goes on until the chocolate gets eaten! You can have a supply of sweets so everyone gets a reward.



Write down here other ideas



CHALKING AND PAINTING



Provide areas where children are safe to paint or chalk on the pavement, hard ground, walls or on fences. Children can work in pairs or individually to create a picture; this can have a theme or can be open ended. To make the activity competitive the works of art can be judged and commented on in a positive way.

The children could also find stones to paint; again this can have a theme such as making a face or creature or just letting the children's imaginations take over for their own creation.



Write down here other ideas



CREATING A HOME IN THE GARDEN



Children usually enjoy creating a house or home in the garden. A sheet or blanket can be suspended from a horizontal line to create a tent or private area for play with some cardboard boxes. The sides of the tent can be kept down by placing large stones or bricks around the edges.

A garden shed is even better if funding allows for this. A few plastic/cardboard plates and some cups, a small table with a few cushions give a hideaway for those who need this.



GARDENING



If space allows then children can have a patch of ground to tend and grow their own plants.



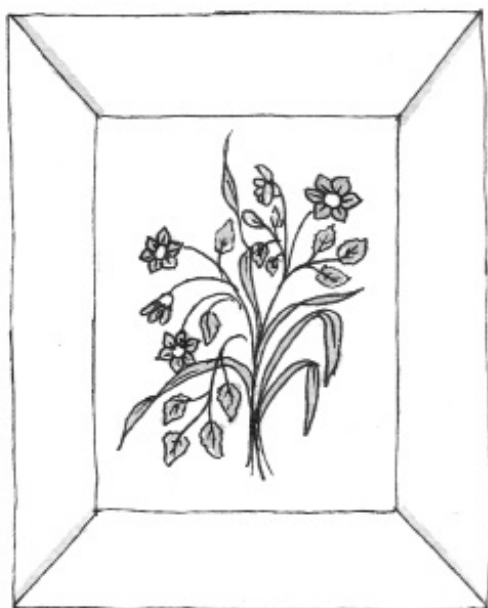
Write down here other ideas



LISTENING AND GATHERING WALKS



Take the children on a walk and get them to focus on what they hear. You can narrow this down to birds or traffic or people talking. If they are able then they can listen to the quiet rustling in the leaves and try to spot the small creatures. You could get the children to record their findings by drawing individual pictures or one together.



On gathering walks you could have a list of things you want the children to collect and give each child a bag for the collection. Have different ways of creating a list e.g. something for each letter of the alphabet, or someone's name. This helps the children to focus and observe whilst exercising. On their return, the children can compare and count their findings. This can be done in pairs, groups or individually.

Grass can be collected and flowers

picked and pressed between sheets of newspaper. When dry, pictures can be made by carefully sticking the petals or grass onto card. If you have a laminator you can make bookmarks or cards which are more permanent. These can be useful as gifts for children who may be leaving, or invitations to friends for tea.



Write down here other ideas



PARK ACTIVITIES

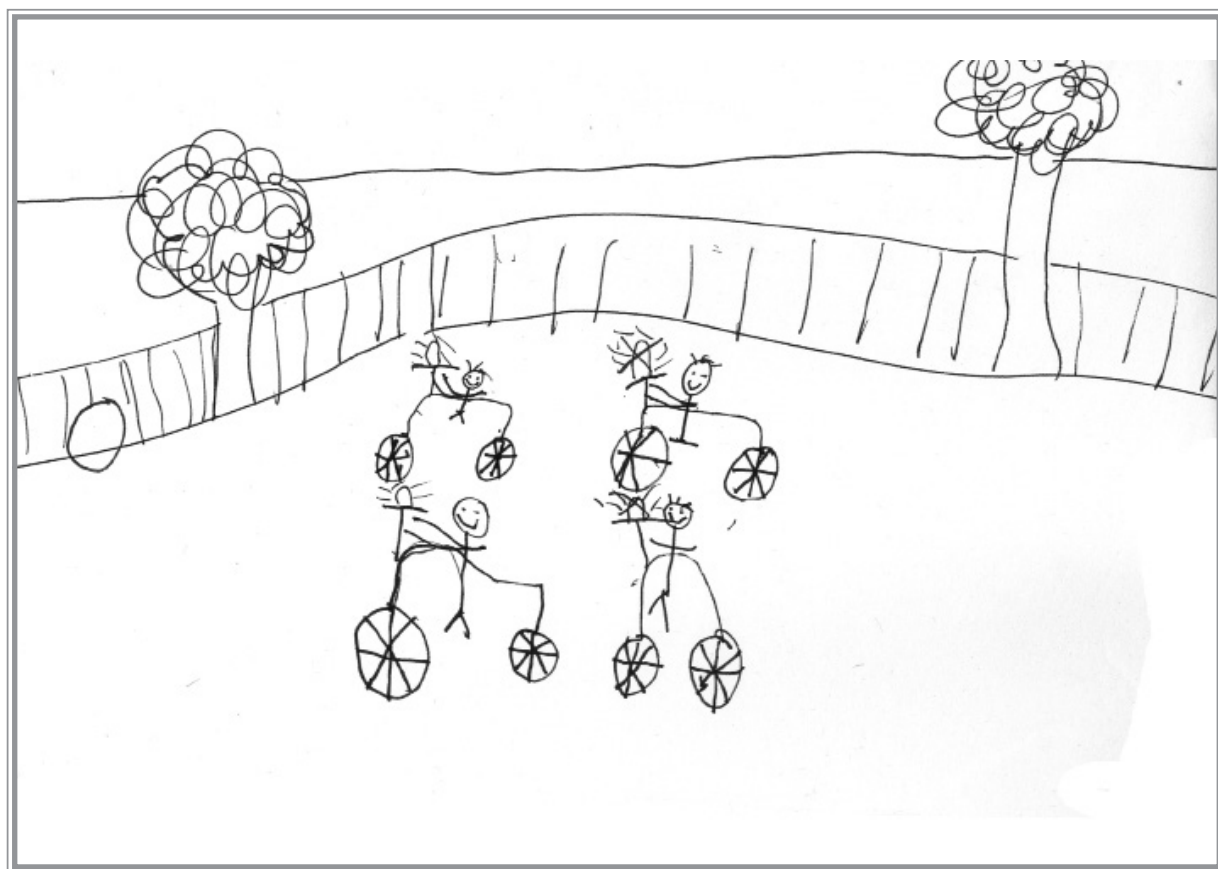
Take balls, bean bags, skipping ropes and organise the children to play team games or races as previously mentioned.

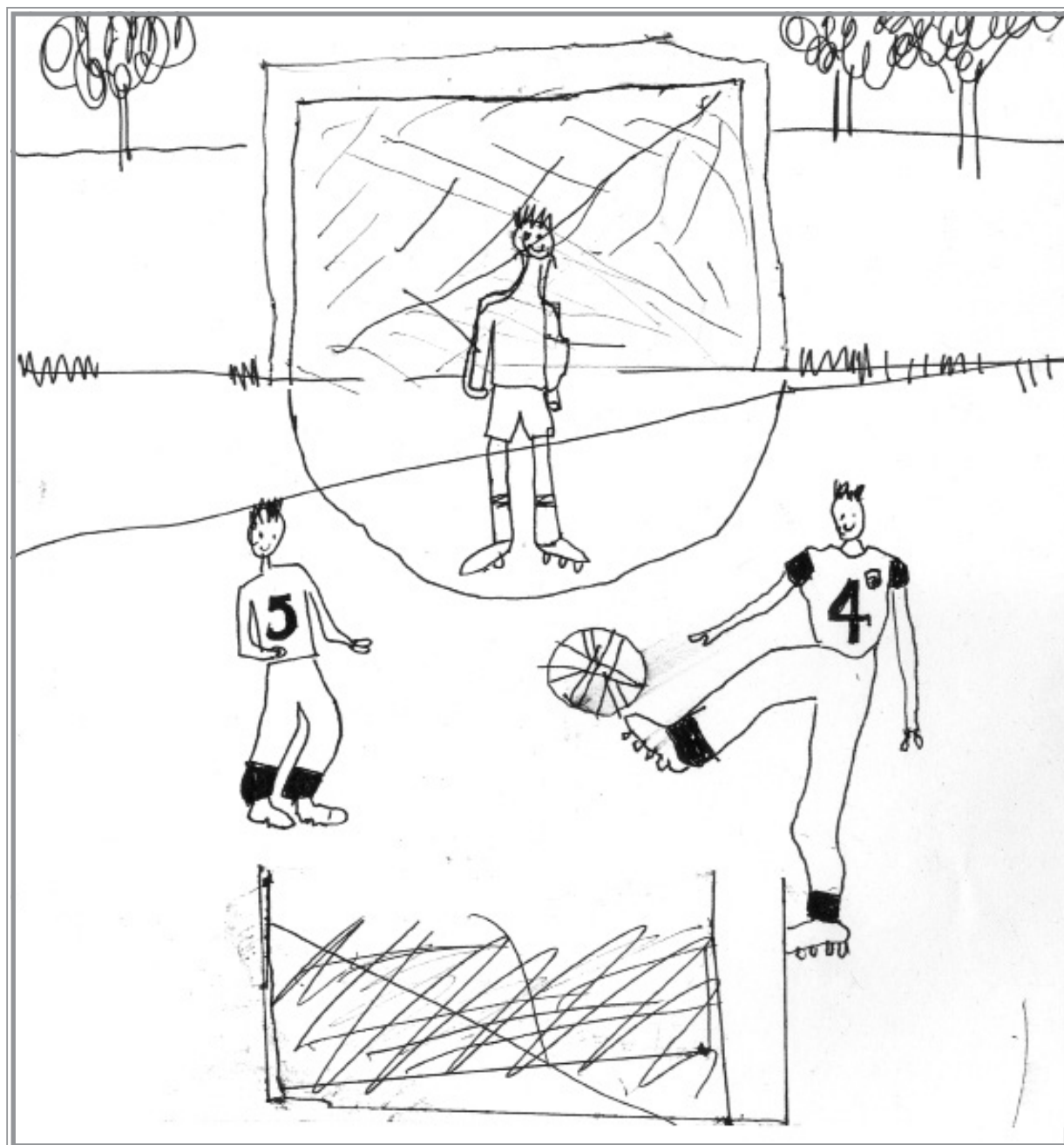












VI

Activities for children aged 10 to 17 years

Most of the previous activities will be appropriate for older children. What you choose will depend on the abilities of the children you are working with.

The following activities are more appropriate for older children and will help to prepare them for an independent life.

Life skills including cooking and shopping

Children living within a family and experiencing family life will have many opportunities to practise life skills of cooking, shopping, sewing, cleaning, taking responsibility for pets etc. We need to support the children who are in care to master these skills so they can become independent and capable in their adult lives.



COOKING



Simple cakes

Everyone has their favourite recipes, some simpler than others. Children could start by making cakes that need no cooking.



You need

Bowl, spoon, cake cases, chocolate pieces and a cereal such as rice pops, cornflakes.

Melt the chocolate carefully over hot water, add the cereal and spoon portions into the cake cases. Leave to cool.

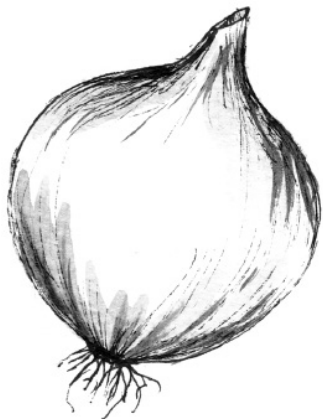
Allow the children to clean up after themselves.



Vegetable Soup:

You need

Vegetables, onions, leeks, tomatoes, cabbage or what is available, seasoning, knives and chopping boards.



The children will need to chop the vegetables; some may need supervision using a knife. If the children are allowed in the kitchen they can cook the soup themselves or give it to the cook to finish.

As the children gain confidence they can plan a menu for a meal; they can be responsible for making a shopping list of ingredients and go shopping with a budget.

This can be expanded and children can invite friends from school for tea or a meal. They can be involved in planning, writing invitations and preparing the meal and home for the visitors.



Write down here other ideas



THEMED DAYS

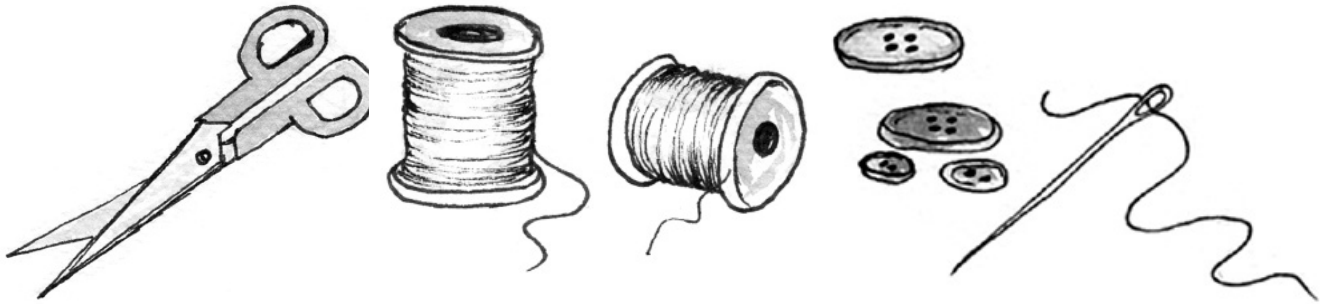
These can follow on from planning menus. Children can create a day to celebrate a birthday or festival or just create a special day. Children could make simple decorations and costumes or masks for the themes. What you choose to do may depend on local traditions and customs.



Sewing and making clothes

Sewing skills are always useful to mend torn clothing or to sew on buttons or making new items of clothing. A good place to start is to make aprons for the cooking.





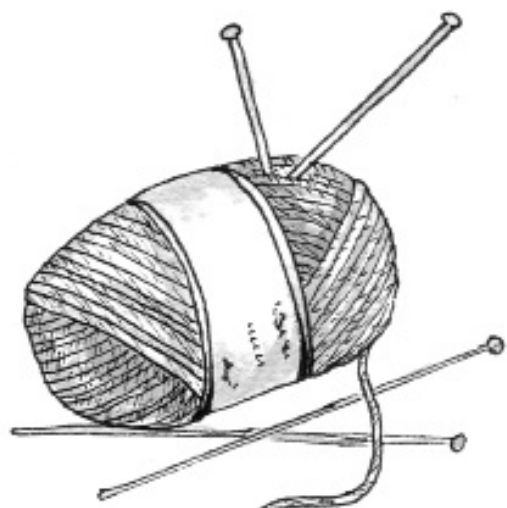
You need

Some material from the market and ribbon or tape for the ties. A pattern can be cut from newspaper. The aprons can be individualised by sewing on pockets of different colours or initials embroidered on the front. There is no reason why the boys should not do this activity.



Knitting or crochet groups

There may be someone who can teach these skills to the children. A group could meet in the evenings after school to develop this hobby. Once children can engage in these crafts they can do them by themselves.





Write down here other ideas



MAKING TOYS AND EQUIPMENT FOR THE YOUNGER CHILDREN

Simple toys can be made by older children for the younger ones.

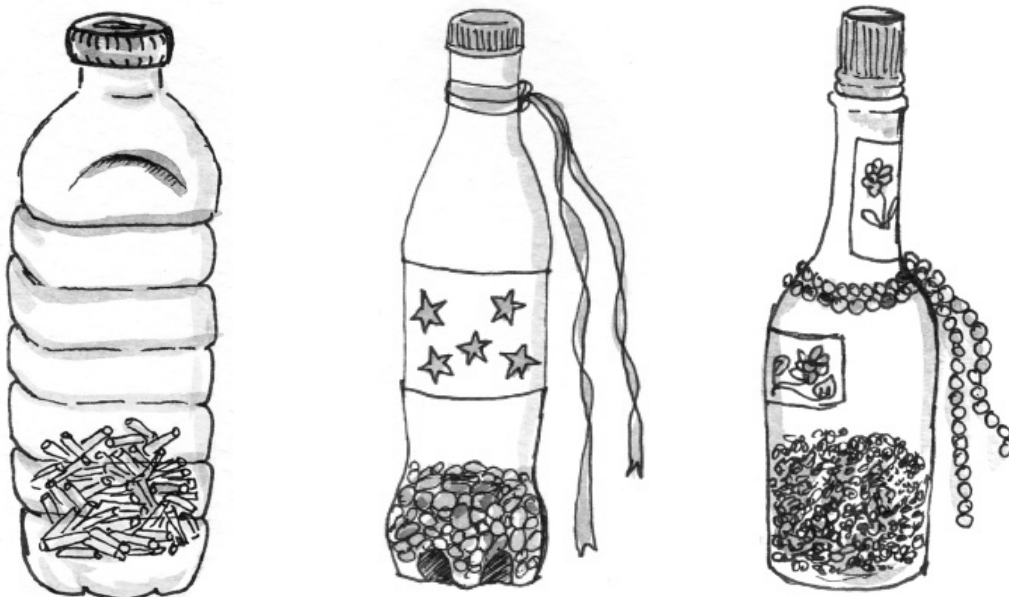
Large plastic bottles

Large plastic bottles can be cut in half separating the top and bottom. The top becomes a funnel and posting hole. Place the funnel inverted into the base; small table tennis balls or objects can be posted into the funnel. This is an enjoyable activity for a young child/toddler; or a child with a disability needing to improve their skills to grasp and release objects. The base of the bottles can be used for storage of small objects. Ensure the edge is taped so there are no sharp bits.



Shakers

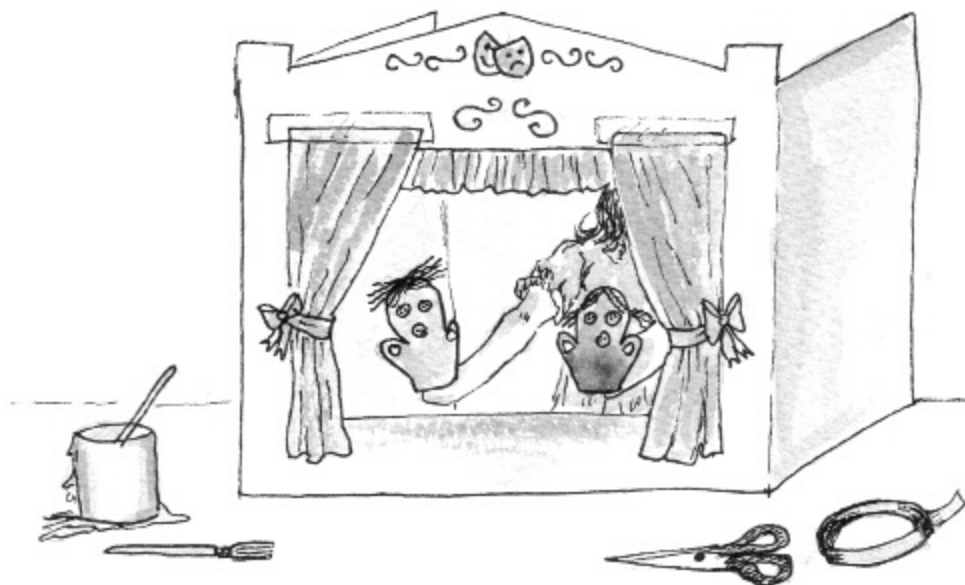
Add dried pasta, rice or lentils to small plastic bottles to make shakers. The bottles can be decorated outside and sequins, buttons, feathers can be added inside to provide visual and auditory stimulation. The lids can be stuck with some glue to make the shakers safe. These are useful for the younger children or children with a disability as interesting and stimulating objects and to help visual tracking with eyes.





Making puppets

Making puppets from cardboard, old socks or ladies' tights is easy and fun. Use scraps of material to make noses, ears, wool for hair, buttons for eyes. Animals, people and props can be created to make puppet shows to entertain others including the younger children. The puppet theatre can be made from a cardboard box. It can be decorated and curtains can be designed from materials.

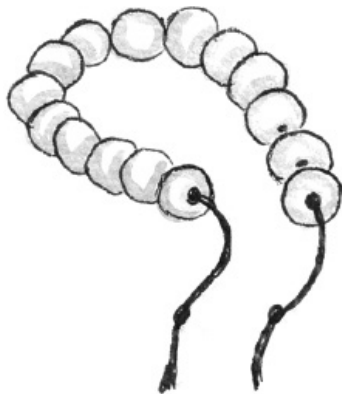




Write down here other ideas



FRIENDSHIP BRACELETS



Children like to give gifts to friends and this is especially important when children leave to a new placement.

Friendship bracelets can be made by plaiting or hand weaving different coloured threads together to form a bracelet; they can be finished off with a loop and pretty bead or button to make a clasp. Children often like to make two the same so that they keep one and give the other as a sign of their friendship. Patterns can be found on the internet.



Write down here other ideas



DANCING, CHOIR AND MUSIC



Children often enjoy preparing for and taking part in concerts and entertainment. The children can prepare songs, dances or music for special occasions. If there are local groups then those interested can be encouraged to join them and socialise outside of the care home. Some children may want to join local dance or choir groups– a great opportunity to socialise in the community.



Write down here other ideas



READING, MAKING AND FOLLOWING MAPS OF LOCAL AREA



Children brought up in institutions may not have had opportunities to learn skills required for independence. Living in new areas or moving to new schools can be very daunting for them. Getting them to make maps of the home or local area can help. Placing the home, school, shops, church and other important places on the map is important, so that they get a sense of orientation and can get to the shops or church by themselves, if old enough. If they need an adult accompanying them then the child can do the directing. Bigger maps of the country and world can be introduced and will help give the child a sense of their own place.



Write down here other ideas



COMPUTER SKILLS

If available the children can learn to use computers in special sessions. They can be shown how to access the internet and look up information. If this is not available in the home then they can be taken to an internet cafe on a regular basis with an adult, to ensure that children are not accessing inappropriate information.



Write down here other ideas

VII

Activities for children with additional needs



CHILDREN WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES



Supporting children with cerebral palsy

Cerebral Palsy (CP) is a group of disorders that can involve the brain and the nervous system functions such as movement, learning, hearing, seeing, and thinking.

There are several different types of Cerebral Palsy, including spastic, dyskinetic, ataxic, hypotonic and mixed. Children with these conditions need specialist support from physiotherapists and occupational therapists. These conditions may sound confusing but the therapists should consult with you so you are clear about each child's needs. They will advise regarding seating and positioning the child for comfort and long term benefits of development. They will help the child to gain better balance and coordination. When children are positioned correctly they are better able to use their hands and look at what is in front of them. They can then engage in activities more easily. The role of the carers is to devise activities to enable the children to take part in, and be included in, as much as possible. With thought, we can enable the children to have fun, to learn and to develop to their full potential. Always carefully observe the children in your care and note their responses to your interventions.

Some children with Cerebral Palsy have primitive reflexes which in normal development disappear but persist in some CP cases. For example, some children have the 'startle reflex' and with any sudden noise or movement made around them they respond with arms and head flying back; so gentle and quiet interventions are needed to avoid these responses.



Supporting children with epilepsy

Epilepsy is a condition that affects the brain and causes repeated seizures. A seizure happens when there is a sudden burst of intense electrical activity in the brain which causes a temporary disruption to the way the brain normally works.

The severity of seizures differ. Some people may experience a strange feeling with no loss of awareness, or may have a 'trance-like' state for a few seconds or minutes. Others may lose consciousness and have convulsions.

Many children with cerebral palsy experience seizures.



Supporting children with Spina Bifida

Spina Bifida or split spine is a condition that may cause mobility difficulties, bladder and bowel problems and, in more severe cases,

paralysis below the affected part of the spine. Disruption of the nervous system depends on how high up the spine the problem lies and how well the spinal cord below the defect works.

Always consult with an occupational therapist and/or physiotherapist before starting activities when a child has physical disabilities. Each child is different and their needs will also be different. Often in children with Spina Bifida there is no or only partial sensation in the lower limbs. Care must be taken when positioning as frequent changes may be needed to avoid pressure sores and also care is needed in moving the child as they will not be able to indicate if you are hurting them. Children with little or no sensation in their lower limbs will not notice when shoes rub or when they knock themselves. Always visually check to see if the child is all right.



Some general guidelines:

- Always make sure the child is comfortable and positioned well. This may be in a chair, wheel chair, specialist chair, standing frame or prone position.
- Always make sure the child can see, hear and take part in the activity as much as possible. They need to feel part of what is going on. With a little thought there is more often than not a way of including every child.
- Always communicate with the child before moving or repositioning them. Approach from the front so they can see you. If the child is visually impaired, then gently touch them and speak to them first about what you intend to do.
- Remember children with physical difficulties may tire more quickly and lose concentration.
- You may need special equipment to assist the child or communication pictures to help the child understand what is going on.
- Extra adult help may be needed to include all the children in activities. If this is not possible then plan well before the session so everything is in place and some extra attention and assistance can be given.



Some play activity ideas include:

- Provide easy grip toys which are lightweight and easy to hold.
- Stabilise toys on the floor or hang toys so that they don't get knocked out of reach.
- Provide play activities that encourage the child to use both hands, for example, banging a drum, clapping hands, threading large beads, or catching a ball or balloon.
- For children who have limited movements, introduce toys that are colourful and interesting to look at and make interesting sounds.



Write down here other ideas



CHILDREN NEEDING A SENSORY INTEGRATION PROGRAMME

Sensory integration is an important consideration when working with children with Sensory Processing Disorder or sensory processing problems; many children on the Autistic spectrum have sensory integration difficulties. Sensory processing is the ability of the brain to correctly integrate information brought in by the senses. Some children perceive colour, shapes, tastes, smells, textures and sounds differently to others and this can cause problems, sometimes with behaviour and socialisation. Children who are tactile defensive need a special approach. They will not want to feel or touch certain items. We cannot know what they are experiencing but we need to respect their need for avoidance as it is certainly unpleasant for them. There are ways to overcome or assist and these ways need to be taught by a trained specialist therapist. Each child will need an assessment as individual needs vary greatly.

Some children appear to be 'clumsy'; they need help with body awareness and their position in space. Some children get sensory overload from sensory stimulation. This is a specialist field and needs input from therapists who will give some activities which can help with sensory integration.

It is a complex field of work and advice is needed when working with children who experience these difficulties. Never force a child to do something they are resisting. This will only increase their inhibitions and refusal to take part in the future.

Observe children carefully and allow them to withdraw from activities if they have problems tolerating environments, noises, lights or sensations.



SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS



Visual impairment is when a person experiences some degree of sight loss that cannot be corrected by glasses or contact lenses.



Some general guidelines:

- Make sure the environment is safe for them and assist them by keeping areas the same so they can get a measure of where everything is.
- Have sharp edges covered with a soft material.
- Different textured surfaces can be used for the child to find their way around independently - e.g. sand paper can be cut into pieces and stuck at hand level along a wall for the child to feel.
- Help the child to feel secure by making equipment available and within easy reach - e.g. potty.

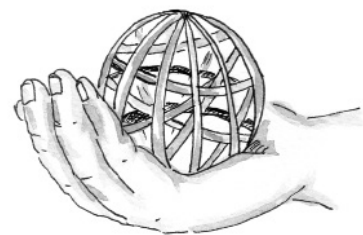
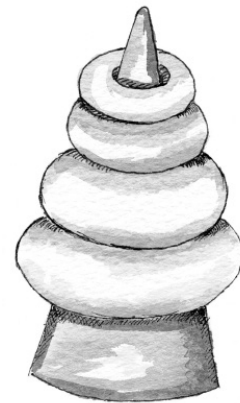
- Develop activities to promote spatial awareness of themselves and of things around. Let them explore safely and discover for themselves.
- Some visually impaired children can develop extraordinary skills in echo location and can identify objects by the sound that echoes back to them.
- Be careful when moving the child from a bright or dark area to the opposite.
- Describe to the child what is happening around them, use colours and real descriptions.
- Give them activities where they have some control - e.g. a switch to turn music on or off.
- They will not be able to see your face but they will learn to recognise emotions by feeling your face or hearing your voice.
- It is important to know how much a child can see; often light and dark can be distinguished.
- Always communicate clearly to the child so they know what will be happening during the day.
- Also, say the name of the child first, communicate to the child when approaching or guiding them or changing the activity. Have one person at a time communicating with the child to avoid confusion.
- It is also important to be consistent and use similar routines especially when working with deaf/blind children.
- Use objects of reference to communicate - for example, use a cup to say it is time for a drink – allow the child to touch or hold the cup. This is very important for deaf/blind children.



Some play activity ideas include:

- A sensory basket is useful. Collect everyday objects which are safe, so the child can explore their textures and begin to recognise and identify objects by their texture and feel. For example, ribbons, pine cones, shells, stones, materials, spoons, plastic cups or mugs, bells, plastic bottles with tops to fit on, textures, smells and shapes.
- Plastic bottles can be secured with different sounds in them; rice, dried pasta, sand or stones will make different sounds and the child can pair

- and match the similar sounds. The objects can be organised differently on occasions to give variety and stimulus and to add to learning.
- Trays are useful as they keep equipment and toys contained for the child.
- Dried pasta, sand, soil, cooked spaghetti, gloop/ jelly, shaving foam or water are fun for play and exploring.
- Choose toys that have a good colour and tone contrast such as yellow edging to make the different shapes obvious.
- Choose toys that attract the child's attention and keep their interest like toys with flashing lights or push button/switches and sound making toys (toy pianos).
- Rolling a ball/car with a bell/sound – encourage child to move to find the toy. If the child does not try to find the toy once it moves out of their reach, then you can try to take the child to the toy rather than bringing the toy back to the child.
- Thread beads of different shapes so the child can choose different shape beads.
- Posting boxes with different shapes to explore/ring stacker/cup stacker with different sizes.
- Toys that are interesting to twiddle and fiddle and have different textures – like click clacks, bendy dolls, stretchy and squozy toys, material books.
- Artwork using paper with different textures – use thick card so the child can easily feel the edge of the paper for filling, use art materials with interesting textures.
- Gross motor activities like playing on a rocker, swinging (hammock) or swings, pushing trolleys or prams, tricycle.





- Keep toys within easy reach – this might mean attaching toys above a child lying down or keeping toys in a tray or box to keep them stable (in one place).
- Allow plenty of time for the child to explore new things. It takes longer to understand how a toy works by exploring with touch.
- The adult working with the child could use a personnel identifier – for example a particular bracelet/ ring or particular song they may sing.
- Use hand over hand to encourage children to explore or to learn new tasks, like building a tower.
- If the child does not like to use their hands to explore, allow opportunities for them to explore using their feet, mouth or other body parts
- Provide games and toys with different tactile surfaces, matching surfaces, raised surfaces with letters and numbers. These can be made using card, sandpaper, corrugated card and glue.





Write down here other ideas



SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

Children who cannot hear will be able to learn other ways of communicating. Sign language can be started early. Makaton signing and pictures are used in the UK. Pictures (Boardmaker) can be used to convey meaning and to give instructions. Picture time tables are useful for everyone to remember the order of activities in a home. These may change from day to day and if fixed on a chart with Velcro or Tac they can be easily altered. The child with hearing loss will need specialist attention and may be given hearing aids to support them. Batteries will need to be checked and spares kept so the child does not miss out. These children will need extra coaching to help them respond in a socially appropriate way to others. During activities their needs must be taken into account to ensure they have understood what to do. If sign language is not being used then introduce gestures and try to be consistent.



Some general guidelines:

- Sit in front of the child so they can learn to lip read and gauge your facial expressions and body movements. Make sure the child is in the best position to see when instructions are given to the group; check they know what to do.
- Music may be experienced through their feet or bodies; so do not exclude them from this.



- Don't walk around or move your head while talking to make sure your face is easy to lip read.
- Encourage only one child to talk at one time so the child can follow the conversation and feel included.

- Avoid seating a child with a hearing impairment in a noisy part of the room, for example noisy equipment or radiators.
- For a child who has difficulty with concentration, do short activities with lots of breaks, as lip reading can be very tiring.



Some play activity ideas include:

- Games and activities to encourage eye contact are good to encourage the child to observe facial expression and lip read and watch the adult use signing, gestures; you can use puppets for this.
- Facing games – like holding hands and rocking and singing, rolling ball, taking turns to build a tower, or putting toys in a box.
- If the child has some hearing toys that make different sounds, this will encourage the child to use their hearing.
- Water bottles with matching sounds will encourage the development of sound discrimination.
- It is important to respond to the child's attempts to communicate so they understand the effectiveness and importance of communication. If a child points to an object of interest, you can point to it to indicate that you have understood and are listening.



Write down here other ideas



SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Children with intellectual disabilities can often easily take part in activities which have been modified. Older children with disabilities can enjoy activities which are normally associated with younger children. The materials used may need to be chosen with age in mind; for example an older child may not want to look at books suitable for babies. Many of the activities described in the first and second sections of the manual are very suitable. As mentioned earlier children will only achieve success if the activity is at the right level. Careful observations will help everyone get it right. Repetition of instructions may be necessary, especially if a child has epilepsy as this can severely affect memory.



Backward chaining

Break activities down into small and easy steps and don't expect too little or too much from a child. The adult can do part of the activity and the child can complete or do part of it. For example, complete a puzzle but leave one or two pieces out for the child to complete and get a sense of achievement. Draw a face and allow the child to cut out pieces for eyes, ears and mouth and to stick them on.

Encourage children to wash themselves or clean their teeth or any other self-care activities. They may need support for part of this, perhaps turning on the tap or putting paste on the brush. Leave as much as possible for the child to do but do not let them become frustrated. The children get a real sense of achievement and this can be built on as motivation increases with success.



Portage Programmes

Portage programmes are used in many countries and are specific for children with a learning disability. Home workers help families by working on various skills in small steps and stages. As progress is achieved new skills are worked on. This gives a good focus for all concerned with good results. You can look up Portage on the internet.



Write down here other ideas



SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS

Autism affects mainly three areas of development to varying degrees in each child. The areas are **communication, social interaction and imagination**. They may display repetitive behaviours and hypersensitivity. Many children on the spectrum have sensory difficulties. These manifest themselves in different ways in each child. Some children have great difficulty giving eye contact. It can be a painful experience and we should never force a child to give eye contact. It can be encouraged, though, and the early interaction activities suggested in the first part of the manual are very beneficial. The lack of eye contact and awareness of others means that the child does not pick up on social cues and facial expressions as others do. The 0 to 2 years activities can be used with older children if they are severely affected and have not had early interventions. Always work with the child's strengths and not their weaknesses. Children with autism are often, but not always, visually very strong.

Pictures are then a good way to communicate. Board Maker is a system of pictures used for communication with children with autism and other children with communication difficulties brought on by physical disability. Communication can be built up by introducing picture cards that are meaningful. 'Drink', 'eat', 'play' are good ones to start with as the children are motivated by these. More can be introduced as the child understands the concept. Feeling picture charts will help children identify how they feel. Timetables made from moveable pictures give children a security about what will happen next and can be changed day to day. This is important as these children often have difficulty with a sense of time and what will happen next. The children may also experience sensory overload as they have problems filtering out what is important to focus on.

Again this is a specialist area and all children on the spectrum will have different needs and no two children are the same. Individual programmes are needed for each child for them to benefit and develop. There are many websites on the internet for more information.



Some general guidelines:

- Never force a child to give eye contact.
- Get to the child's level so they can see your face when you speak to them. Sometimes children can accept this in a mirror or through transparent material.
- Use simple and very few words to communicate; children often have problems decoding language and may get confused by too many words. One person at a time will be enough to give instructions or guidance.
- Structured activities are good and open ended activities can cause these children to be confused. Say how long and give a warning a few minutes before the end to help them prepare to leave the activity. Sudden changes may trigger a difficult behavioural problem.
- Make the steps of an activity or programme for the day clear by using illustrations or a picture timetable (Boardmaker is good for this).
- Look out for what triggers difficult behaviours and responses and avoid these in the future. The behaviours may be a response to sensory overload.
- Do not assume you know what someone is feeling; they may process sensations differently from you.
- Some children are tactile defensive or hate noisy or crowded areas. Observe to see if this is the case and respect their reactions and allow them to withdraw.



Some play activity ideas include:

Many children with autism spectrum disorders prefer toys like Lego, bubbles, pop-up toys like jack in the box, trains, picture lottos, torches, shape and colour matching games, jigsaw puzzles, DVDs, and books with flaps.

Outside play activities that some children may enjoy include swings, trampoline, slide, sandpit, paddling pool and basketball net.

Some children may find having a familiar object or toy to hold and play with reassuring, for example, bendy stretchy toys, blue tack or a piece

of string or material. Loss of a familiar object can be extremely distressing and it may be a good idea to keep a spare identical object or toy to replace a favourite object if it gets lost.



Write down here other ideas

VIII

Appendix

RESOURCES

Collect newspapers, cardboard, plastic bottles, bottle tops, magazines, old clothing, scraps of material, wool, sewing threads, buttons, needles, cardboard boxes of all shapes and sizes.

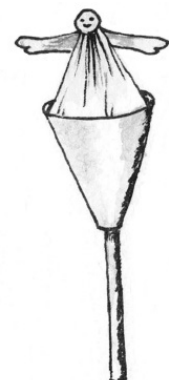


MAKING A POP-UP PUPPET

You need

A food can or plastic cup, a stick, some material, glue, scissors, rubber bands, paper and crayons

Wash and tape the can to cover any sharp areas. Make a hole in the base and insert the stick. Place rubber bands on the stick inside and outside the can to prevent the stick pulling through up or down. Stick a sleeve of material onto the can with enough to cover the base and sides and ensure extra material at the top to create the puppet figure. Cut out a face and glue to the stick. Tie the material to the top of the



stick creating a neck. You can add cardboard arms and just glue to the material. Your puppet is now ready to surprise any child. As you pull the stick up and down the puppet pops up and disappears back into the can. This is very good for the element of surprise and will help to gain a child's attention.

Caution This is not a safe toy to leave with a young child or baby. It is only for the adult to hold and control. Older children can make their own for puppet shows etc.



MAKING THINGS WITH WATER AND MILK BOTTLES

You need

Some empty milk bottles or water containers, scissors, sticky tape, feathers, rice and dried pasta. Rattles and shakers, water and sand scoops, funnels and containers can be easily made.

Method

Wash and clean the bottles.

Scoops: The milk bottles can be cut to make sand and water scoops.

Shakers and rattles: Water bottles can be dried and sequins, feathers, strips of coloured paper, rice or dried pasta inserted. The lid will need to be glued on to make the shaker safe.

Funnels and containers: Water containers can be cut in half and the neck end inserted into the body of the bottle to create a funnel for easy pouring. Large bottles are useful for children to use as containers. The edges can be taped for safety.



PAPIER MACHE RECIPE

The flour needs to be mixed with a little cold water until a smooth paste is formed. Gradually add very hot/boiling water whilst mixing vigorously. This needs to be done by the adult. The glue then needs to cool down before it can be used safely. The newspaper can be torn into small pieces or strips. There are various ways of making the Papier Mache. Some put the paper in the glue to soak and then squeeze it to mash the paper; others just apply glue to the paper to make it sticky. There are very many ways of using Papier Mache. It can be used to make models, animals, covering balloons, decorating boxes, jewellery and beads, picture frames. What can be achieved will depend on the ingenuity of those setting up the activity. There are numerous ideas on the internet too.



SALT DOUGH RECIPE

Ingredients

- 1 cup salt
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup lukewarm water

Directions

1. In a large bowl mix salt and flour.
2. Gradually stir in water. Mix well until it forms a doughy consistency.
3. With your hands form a ball with your dough and kneed it for at least 5 minutes. The longer you kneed your dough the smoother it will be.

Store your salt dough in an air tight container and you will be able to use it for days.

Many different things can be moulded and shaped if the consistency is good. You will need to have a little extra flour to stop the dough from sticking as it is moulded; pastry cutters are good for making simple shapes and are more suitable for some children. When they are dry you can **paint** the creations with acrylic paints and seal with varnish or polyurethane.

You can let the salt dough creations air dry, however salt dough can also be dried in the oven. **Bake** at 200 F or 100C until the creations are dry. The amount of time needed to bake the creations depends on size and thickness; thin flat ornaments may only take 45-60 minutes, thicker creations can take 2-3 hours or more. You can increase your oven temperature to 350 F or 180C; the dough will dry faster but it may also brown, which won't matter if you are painting your entire creation (you can also cover your dough in the oven before it turns brown).

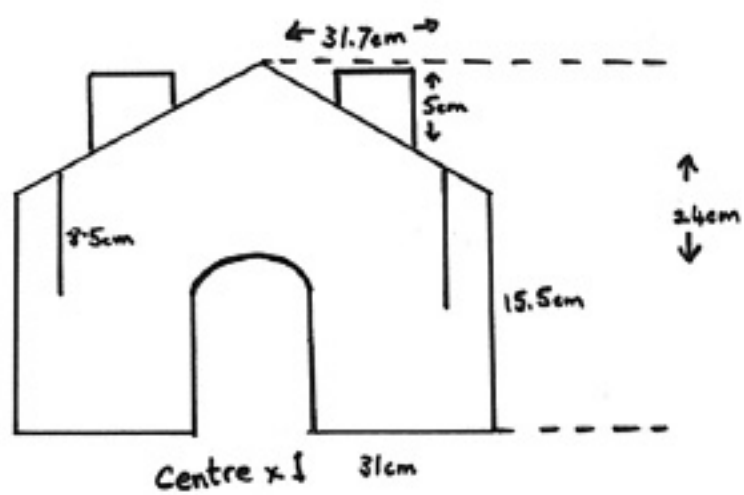
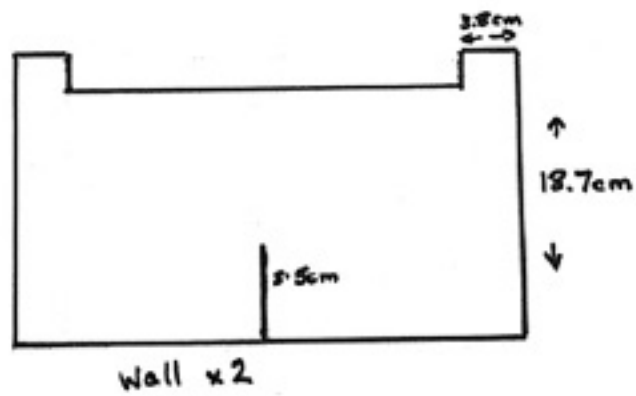
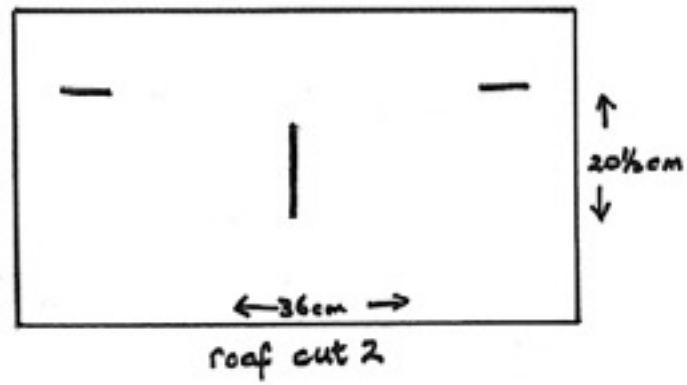
There are a few options to colour your salt dough: **1.** Add powdered tempera paint to your flour, **2.** Add food colouring or paint to the water before you mix it with the salt/flour, or **3.** Add natural colouring like instant coffee, cocoa, or curry powder.



PATTERN FOR CARDBOARD HOUSE

Directions

- a) Using the pattern provided draw the shapes onto a large piece of corrugated card.
- b) Using a sharp craft knife and ruler, cut out the shapes.
- c) Cutting out the narrow strips is important as this is where the walls slot into each other and give the structure stability. The same is true of the roof slots. Be careful not to cut out too much as this will cause wobbling.
- d) There may need to be some slight adjusting to make the house pieces all fit together.
- e) The house can be decorated or painted by the children.
- f) Furniture can be made from scraps of cardboard, beds, chairs and tables.
- g) Characters can be made using pipe cleaners, lolly sticks and material.
- h) Rooms can be painted or decorated to suit.
- i) You can make your own house and add more rooms; this is just a simple idea to get you started.



CHILD DEVELOPMENT

The Importance of Attachment

Understanding attachment is a necessary step towards understanding the normal stages of child development. Attachment refers to the deep emotional bond established between a child and his/her primary caregiver, such as a mother, father, or grandparent.

Attachment is instinctual; we are all born with the instinct to attach to a protective and loving person who will take care of us, guide and support us. It is an important process, as children's physical, emotional and psychological development depends on attachment formed to parents or carers. Children form strong and healthy attachments through getting their needs met on a continuous and consistent basis.

Throughout a day a baby or young child experiences lots of different needs such as for food, for sleep, for a changed nappy or for a cuddle. The child expresses this need in different ways but often by crying and when they have a sense of distress the caregiver responds by meeting this need and the child feels relaxed and safe and is able to carry on playing and exploring their world. This cycle is repeated thousands of times during the child's early months and through the consistent response of their caregiver the child develops a sense of security. The child knows the caregiver is dependable, which creates a secure base for the child to explore the world and through this exploration to learn and develop.

Research over the past 50 years has shown that children raised in institutions are at greater risk of developmental delay and disorders including mental health disorders, and this is likely to be in part because they have been unable to form healthy attachments. Within an institution it is not possible for a child's needs to be consistently met. Sometimes it is necessary to have a regulated routine when children are changed, fed and sleep at the same time rather than when the child requires. The staffing ratios mean that it is not possible to respond to the individual needs of all the children as they arise. Many children remain in a state of discomfort for long periods of time. This has a dramatic effect on their ability to focus on anything other than their discomfort – the child may be hungry, wet or in pain – limiting their potential for exploration, play and development. In addition, children require stimulation and interaction from adults in order to develop, which they often will not receive.

Group and individual play can give children some of these opportunities and experiences. Close observation of the children and understanding of their behaviour are essential for a good outcome.

Child Observations

Careful observations of children can shed light on the triggers for certain behaviours. It is good practice to observe for a set amount of time, for example 10 minutes in different situations. The observations need to be done objectively and without judgement of or comment to the child.



CHILD DEVELOPMENT: BABIES AND CHILDREN 0 TO 6 YEARS

Please note: This is only a guide and does not cover everything a child will learn to do; children's development varies enormously.



Birth

A baby is now said to be able to recognise his or her mother's voice from very early days; this may start in the womb. So long as all the senses are intact, babies will quickly recognise the smells of their mother/carer. They will be able to start to focus on their mother's/carer's face and can turn their heads towards a light. They can make eye contact and cry to alert others to their needs. They are startled by sudden noises; they can distinguish taste, touch, temperature and feel pain. Babies show a marked interest in the human face. This is an important time to foster bonding with the child.

They usually hold their hands in a tight fist with the thumb held under their fingers.

Babies are totally dependent on their mother/carer. They will need feeding every few hours and through the night, about 8 times a day. They will normally sleep 20 hours in 24.

Babies have a number of primitive reflexes. These are important as their absence shows problems in the central nervous system.



1 month to 3 months

At this stage the baby may need fewer feeds, about 6 a day, and sleep a little less. By now babies are beginning to smile in response to others and show an interest in sounds, light or moving objects by turning their heads. They can follow moving objects with their eyes and have better focus. This is a good time to promote development by talking to your baby, singing, gently massaging, holding bright toys or using mobiles to stimulate.



3 to 6 months

A baby now needs about 5 feeds a day and will be starting to have some solids and finger feeds by 6 months; this will vary from child to child. He/she can now hold his head and lift it when lying on his/her tummy. Babies become aware of their fingers and toes and can be seen putting them into their mouths. They may be able to roll over. They can laugh and are beginning to vocalise and copy sounds. A baby may get distressed when the carer/mother disappears.



6 to 9 months

At this stage babies will grasp toys with both hands and be able to transfer from one hand to another. They will be able to sit up for increasing periods of time. They will have more control of their limbs and hands. They will enjoy interactive play with an adult.

Feeds will be down to about 4 a day with milk and solids being given. Baby may sleep through the night.



9 to 12 months

Baby will now be able to pull up to sit, pull up to stand and start to crawl about, usually on all fours. He/she will be able to point to objects and use thumb and index finger in a pincer grip. He/she will be making recognisable sounds such as 'dada', 'mumum', and can understand 'no' and wave, 'bye bye'. He/she may be curious and explore by crawling and cruising around the furniture.

Feeds will be similar, 4 a day. They will need a couple of sleeps in the

day and may sleep 12 hours at night. This is similar for their second year as well.



12 to 18 months

The child's mobility increases and he/she will now be able to crawl up stairs and walk. They will be able to use everyday objects such as a hair brush or spoon appropriately. They enjoy putting objects in and out of containers, stacking and building bricks and generally manipulating toys.

They are beginning to feed themselves with a spoon. They will understand and obey simple commands and to say a few words.



18 months to 2 years

Gross motor skills: at this stage a child can walk steadily and unaided, can stoop to pick up toys from the floor and kick a ball. **Fine motor skills:** he/she will be able to scribble with a simple tripod hand grip. He/she will be beginning to have some control over his/her bladder and bowel movements. **Cognitive and language skills:** their vocabulary will be increasing rapidly and they will be saying short phrases. They will be able to turn pages in a thick or cloth book and point to pictures. They will demand objects by pointing.



2 to 3 years

Gross motor skills: a child is now much more physically able, can climb stairs putting both feet on each step, kick and attempt to throw a ball, squat, propel a tricycle with feet on the ground and climb a small slide.

Fine motor skills: children will be able to copy simple shapes and lines holding a crayon with an improved tripod grasp; they will be able to manage a small spoon or fork when feeding themselves and drink from a cup with fewer spills.

Cognitive and language skills: they will be using short sentences to communicate, will be naming things and asking, 'What's that?'. They will be curious about the world around, learning and exploring all the time.

Play and social skills: at this stage a child will usually play alongside other children – parallel play or play alone – solitary play. Their play can show how they are thinking and small objects or miniature toys can be used to represent the real world – pretend play. This means a child is

thinking and using items symbolically and imaginatively. A child will be able to show empathy at this stage, cuddling dolly or teddy when they are 'crying' or needing feeding; they will show affection and sympathy to their carers too. They are beginning to dress and undress themselves and have usually mastered bowel and bladder control during the day and some at night also.



3 to 4 years

Gross motor skills: children have greater motor control and have mastered jumping, climbing, balancing, hopping and running. They can bounce, catch, kick and throw a ball, and can ride a tricycle.

Fine motor skills: a child can now copy circles and lines and a figure resembling a head or person. They can copy simple patterns of bricks, complete simple jigsaws, thread large beads and use a large paint brush.

Cognitive and language skills: children will be learning colours, shapes, beginning to count and to recognise letter and number shapes. They will be able to sort objects and notice differences. They will be learning to recite numbers in order and can recite poems, rhymes and songs. They can remember the past and talk about the future. Their vocabulary increases hugely and they can listen to conversations and understand. They will ask lots of questions and ask, 'Why?', 'What?', 'Where?' and 'When?' They will have grasped much of the grammar.

Play and social skills: children can now play cooperatively with each other and learn to share; they can act out roles in pretend play. They can also be possessive.

They are more able to turn take in play. They will also enjoy periods of playing alone. They can start to use the toilet independently.



4 to 5 years of age

Gross Motor skills: by now most children will have gained good balance and can transfer their weight, hop, skip and run on tip toes. They are competent on stairs and can manage one foot per step.

Fine motor skills: children can hold a pencil with a tripod grip, can copy letters and shapes and form recognisable shapes and forms. They can copy diagrams to build and construct bricks and items, for example, large Lego or Mobilo.

Cognitive skills: children at this stage can colour sort and match, object sort and match and match pictures. They can complete jigsaws with several large pieces. They can count and are beginning to recognise numbers and letters and may be able to recognise their written name. They may recite their address, poems and rhymes. Their language ability and vocabulary is increasing.

Play and social skills: they will be able to dress and undress by 5 years. They are more able to organise their play and involve themselves in different types of play. They begin to take a pride in what they achieve and are mostly dry at night. They can use a knife, fork and spoon competently. They understand the basic difference between right and wrong.



6 year olds

Gross motor skills: by now children are becoming more confident in their skills and are gaining strength and agility. They can move in time to music using both feet and arms and are more coordinated and can copy complex movements and sequences of movement. Their balance is better and they may be able to ride a bicycle.

Fine motor skills: children are now expected to be able to write their names and to be able to draw and copy. They can build complex structures with bricks and copy diagrams of construction. They may be able to write a simple story. They will be able to manage buttons and tying laces more easily.

Cognitive and language skills: children generally are developing concepts of size, weight, distance and time at this stage and are able to know qualities of materials. They are observant of the world about them and can notice things such as sinking and floating objects. They are able to communicate their needs and converse at length. They may be able to repeat a story or tell a new one.

Play and social skills: they will know the rules of games and be keen to have them enforced! They can engage in complex role play, leaders and followers can be noted. They understand about fairness. They may be able and willing to carry out some household tasks such as washing up or dusting and tidying.



Child Development 6 to 9 years

Gross motor and physical: they are physically capable and well developed and develop quicker reaction times. With opportunity they will learn to ride a bike, climb and swim. They generally have lots of energy!

Fine Motor: their writing becomes clearer and neater and they can draw pictures with details. They know left from right.

Cognitive and Language: they usually have begun to read and tell the time. Their language is more complex and they usually use tenses appropriately. They can recall events and describe happenings from the past.

Play and social: children of this age understand there are rules of games and relationships and can adapt to these. They may need some support from adults to negotiate these rules of engagement. They are beginning to be more responsible. They are starting to understand another person's point of view and beginning to develop empathy. They may tell lies to cover up. They may not have a complete sense of right and wrong.



Child development 9 to 12 years

Gross motor and physical: they are aware of their sexual identity and will begin the process of puberty. Girls can be two years ahead of boys in the latter. Because of this they can be self-conscious and want to fit in with a group. They have more stamina. Children go through growth spurts and physical change; girls become more rounded and start development of breasts; boys' muscle bulk may increase. Both begin to develop pubic and underarm hair.

Fine motor: they are able to engage in hobbies and use fine motor skills to sew or do woodwork etc. They can draw with great detail.

Cognitive and language: they are increasingly able to deal with abstract concepts and scientific thought.

Social and emotional: they will join groups for dance, choir, music, cadets, sport and drama etc. They are becoming aware of their appearance and possessions. They can be sensitive both with empathy and being hurt. Children of this age are growing in independence and commonly have friends of the same sex. They can be reflective about themselves and learn to problem solve.

But children vary enormously in their rates of development and carers need to be sensitive to the child's perceptions of themselves.



Child development 12-17 years

Physical, gross and fine motor: some children will have reached puberty whilst others still have a way to go. Some of the physical changes include growth spurts, weight changes, bone growth and mineralisation, development and maturation of the internal organs and systems. The rapid body changes may redefine their identities. They may revert to childish behaviour or try to be adult. They may experience mood swings and extremes of emotion as hormones change their bodies and cycles.

Cognitive and language: they begin to develop their own ideas and value system. They can grasp complex and abstract ways of thinking. Given the opportunity they can master the art of discussion, persuasion and argument. This will be important in their ability to study books and write essays; to be critical and analytical but also balanced.

Social and emotional: the physical changes have a great effect on them socially and emotionally. They begin to realise adults are not perfect. They feel invisible and behave in this way and can be very daring and carefree; others maybe fearful and shy. They may begin to be socially conscious and concerned for others' welfare. They are generally in mixed peer groups and they are affected by the attitudes of the group. Later they tend to stay with their own sex unless dating.

The young adult now needs to gain autonomy and independence but still needs the back up of reliable adults and a secure home.

"The way a society treats children reflects not only its qualities of compassion and protective caring but also its sense of justice, its commitment to the future and its urge to enhance the human condition for coming generations."

Quote from Perez de Cuellar, UN Secretary General, September 1987.

UK Websites

Autism

www.autism.org.uk

Portage

www.portage.uk

Cerebral palsy and physical disability

www.scope.org.uk

Visual and hearing impairments

www.sense.org.uk

Learning disability

www.mencap.org.uk

Board Maker

www.inclusivetechology.co.uk

Communication pictures

www.do2learn.com/picturecards

www.widgit.com

Epilepsy Action

www.epilepsy.org.uk

For more information visit our
website wearelumos.org

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