

Activity Cards

Play-based activities for
children with and
without disabilities



Acknowledgments

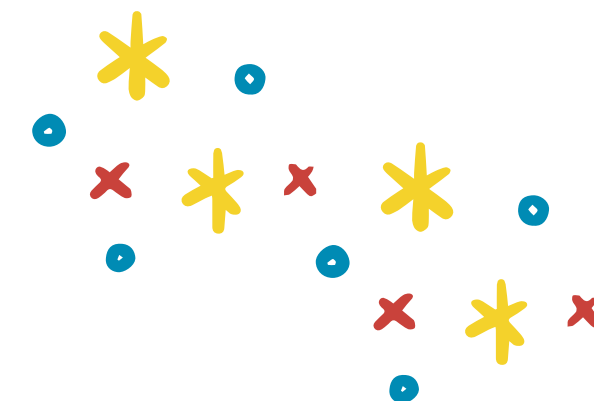
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Overview

The following Activity Cards are an integral part of the 'Toolkit on inclusive community based ECEC' developed for the 'TOY for Inclusion: Access to All' project in Slovakia.

The overall goal of the project is to increase preparedness and access to regular education for young Roma children with and without disabilities

We aim to **promote inclusivity for children with special needs in the local Play Hub and in the other services in the community.**

The Activity Cards were created to be used in the Play Hubs by practitioners to promote inclusive formal and non formal education with young children and their parents, paying special attention to children with disabilities and special needs. However, they can be used and adapted by any other formal and non-formal service.

Overview

The Activity Cards are organised in three groups (color coded as shown below), per age of the child:

AGE GROUP 1
(0-3 years old)

AGE GROUP 2
(4-6 years old)

AGE GROUP 3
(7-10 years old)

Each card also identifies one or more developmental areas that benefit from the activity. The following developmental areas were identified:

Socio-emotional development



Physical development



Cognitive development



Language development



How to adapt activities to children with special needs

Each child you work with is unique.

Be flexible and use your gained knowledge and imagination when adapting activities.

It is important to interact with children with special needs the same way you interact with other children, with **respect, kindness and empathy.**

In these activity cards you will find examples on how to make some simple changes to the way you communicate and play with children.



How to adapt activities to children with special needs

This guide contains activity cards and practical tips on how to make small meaningful changes to the planned activities to make sure that **all children with special needs can participate.**



- Do not be afraid of special needs and disabilities, when you think about adapting certain activities, it is important to think what a child CAN do, instead of what she/he/they CANNOT do.
- It is important to see the child, his/her/their interests, personality, likes and dislikes, instead of only seeing the disability.
- Encourage all children to help and support each other, be kind to each other, and foster positive interactions.

Working with children with special needs and disabilities



- Make sure your **physical environment** is appropriate for children with special needs,
 - i.e. accessible, adaptable, safe and secure.
- Spend some time watching children with special needs while they are playing
 - For instance while they are playing together with other children, with their caregivers or alone.
 - You may notice things that they seem to be good at or enjoy, and things that they find difficult or upsetting.
 - Observe interactions between them and children without disabilities.



Working with children with special needs and disabilities

- Ask children with special needs what support they need in order to join in.
 - They may be the best advisers to tell you how you can adapt an activity so that you include them.
- It is important to be approachable and let the children know they can come to you and you will listen.
- Remain patient, repeat and demonstrate instructions when necessary, and give each child enough time to complete a given task.
- Remember that children learn in different ways, so use lots of different activities
 - e.g. free play, art, music, dancing and singing, story-telling, etc.
- Pair a child with disability and a friend without disability. Let them play together and learn from each other.
- It is important to foster positive kind interactions between children.
- Use clear consistent language
 - Explain the meanings when you introduce new words and make full use of facial expressions, gestures and body language.

Helping children who cannot hear well



- **Use clear consistent language.**
 - Avoid using synonyms.
 - Explain the meanings when you introduce new words
 - Make full use of facial expressions, gestures and body language.
 - Instead of just using words to explain the activity, give a quick demonstration to make it easier for children with disabilities to understand the rules.



Helping children who cannot hear well

- **It is important to have a multi-sensory approach to your activities.**
 - Give children the opportunity to listen to different sounds, investigate and touch a tree or a flower.
 - This method of teaching is particularly important for children with special needs; it can help them to develop their strongest senses and use them to their full extent. It can also be useful for children who have difficulty learning or understanding.
- You can ask the child's parents whether there are any **particular gestures or signs that the child is using to communicate at home**, and learn some of them.
- Always make sure that the child understands your explanations by directly asking the child, and observing him/her/them during your explanations or involving them in a role play or demonstration.
- **Encourage children to work in small groups or pairs**, so that the child who cannot hear very well gets to know other children and they **learn how to be kind to each other, give support and help with communication.**

Helping children who cannot see well



- **It is important to help the child to become familiar with the environment or activity area.**
 - It is important to show them where there are (possible) obstacles.
 - Such as holes, steps, fences, etc.
- Encourage other children to help and support the child who cannot see well, foster positive and kind interactions with children.
- Use various **objects** so that children who cannot see well can **feel the shape and texture, as well as tactile teaching aids.**
- Objects that **make noise** are also encouraged.



Helping children who cannot see well

- If you are writing something or giving children written instructions on paper, always read these aloud for children who cannot see them.
- If you are showing pictures or objects (such as toys), describe the pictures or let the children who cannot see touch the objects.
- You could also ask the other children to describe the picture or object to their friends who cannot see.
- If the child can see a little, make sure he/she/they sits near you when you are demonstrating the activity so that he/she/they can see what you are doing and any objects you are showing.
- **It is important to have a multi-sensory approach to your activities.**
 - Give children the opportunity to listen to different sounds, investigate and touch. This method of teaching is particularly important for children with special needs

Helping children who have physical impairments



- Make sure your activity area is as obstacle-free as possible, so that children with physical impairments can move around more easily and safely.
 - For instance, stones, fallen branches, litter and other items should be cleared from play areas.
- Adapt the activities so that children work in pairs and would be able to help each other to complete the activity.



Helping children who have physical impairments

- Allow **space between furniture and activities** for children who have difficulty walking (walkers, crutches and wheelchair).
- Make sure there is a way for the **child to be on the same level as the other children**. If a child needs assistance in sitting on the floor to play with toys, try to have adapted equipment available: (cut the legs off of a chair with arms and a high back or use a bean bag chair that can be molded to the child's needs).
- **Have all children play on the table if no floor seating is available.**
- **Tape down rugs** or remove them because they can be tripped over.
- If possible, include dolls or toys with disabilities as part of the toys available.
- **Make sure that all areas** (table, chairs, counters, shelves) **can be reached by children who have a physical impairment.**

Helping children who have learning difficulties



- Plan activities and lessons so that children who have learning difficulties are paired with other children and can work together in pairs or groups.
 - It is important to teach children they can help each other with tasks and they can learn from each other too.
- Set up regular schedules and routines, and follow them consistently.
- Watch for behaviour patterns. Observe children and present a new activity when they are calm and in control.



Helping children who have learning difficulties

- Try not to overwhelm a child who has learning difficulties with multiple tasks at the same time or complex activities.
 - Make sure the child is given one task or activity that he/she/they can cope with, so that you can praise them and encourage improvement. Then move to the next task.
- When giving instructions, use simple language.
 - E.g. words that you know the children will understand.
 - Use visual timetables.
- It is important to break each task into small steps and give one line of the instructions, then wait for the children to do that part of the task, and then give the next instruction, and so on.
- Provide a quiet space for times when a child needs a break from other children or activities.

Helping children with autism



- No two children are the same, keep in mind that what works for one child with autism may not work for another. Pay close attention to all the children involved in the activity and decide which adaptations work best.
- Make sure to provide a **visual schedule** of the activity you will be doing. Visual cues can let children know what the next step is going to be. Also, it is important to give a warning when a transition is coming up.
 - Children who may find moving from one activity to another hard will feel more settled if they are aware it is coming up. **Give clear instructions about the transition.**



Helping children with autism

- Some children with autism may be more **sensitive to textures**, consider this when choosing the activity. Observe children while they are doing the activity and contemplate if there is a need to change materials.
- Many students with autism may be **sensitive to noise**. Monitor children for signs of stress from noise and adjust. Minimise background noise and distractions while giving instructions.
- **Some children with autism may need to practise a task many times.**
Give time to practise in different settings (and materials) to help children learn how to use that skill in other situations and places.
- Children with autism can learn by imitating others. **Have children play imitation games** and consider while giving instructions, demonstrating the activity to the group.

Helping children with ADHD



- Try to do a **pre-orientation to the activity** that includes a walk-through of the whole activity.
- Don't be afraid to **adjust the time or number of attempts**. If you do adjust one of these, offer the adaptation to all children.
- Give children **choices throughout the day**, this gives children a sense of control and it is particularly important for children with ADHD. Consider giving them **breaks during the activity**.



Helping children with ADHD

- Use additional visual and tactile signals when possible. Different textures, shapes, and colours can keep children engaged.
- **Praise children for participating.** Children with ADHD may be more used to getting in trouble than not getting in trouble, so **highlight positive activity and behaviour.**
- **Non-verbal redirections** may be useful for some children such as gently tapping the child's paper to remind them to continue writing or pointing to where they should be.
- Allow children to spend time in preferred activities, some examples can be movement breaks, quiet time, drawing, 15 minutes to talk to peers or other activities that don't require a lot of structure or rules. **Talk to the children to find out what is their favourite activity.**
- Phrase instructions and directions in a **positive way** and **use redirection.** **Tell children what you want them to do** rather than what you don't want them to do.
 - For example: "look up here" instead of "stop talking," or "put your pencil down, please" instead of "stop tapping your pencil".

Group 1: 0 - 3 years old





Contents

Activity card 1.1 - The tunnel

Activity card 1.2 - Move in a circle

Activity card 1.3 - Test out sounds and smells

Activity card 1.4 - Create stories

Activity card 1.5 - Naming body part

Activity card 1.6 - Music Activity

Activity card 1.7 - Clap with child

Activity card 1.8 - Rhyme with child

Activity card 1.9 - Float or sink

Activity card 1.10 - Toddler beading

Activity card 1.11 - Body puzzles

Activity card 1.12 - Sort buttons

1.1 The Tunnel



This activity is aimed at improving the ability of children to balance, sit, kneel, and crawl by using different body parts, as well as coordinate their movements and respond to commands.

Activity Guidelines

- Have pairs of children holding hands to make a tunnel in different parts of the playing area.
- Encourage children to crawl through the tunnels.
- Sing a catchy song or turn on music while playing.
- You can also adapt this activity for outdoors if there are suitable conditions



Duration:

10 - 15 minutes.

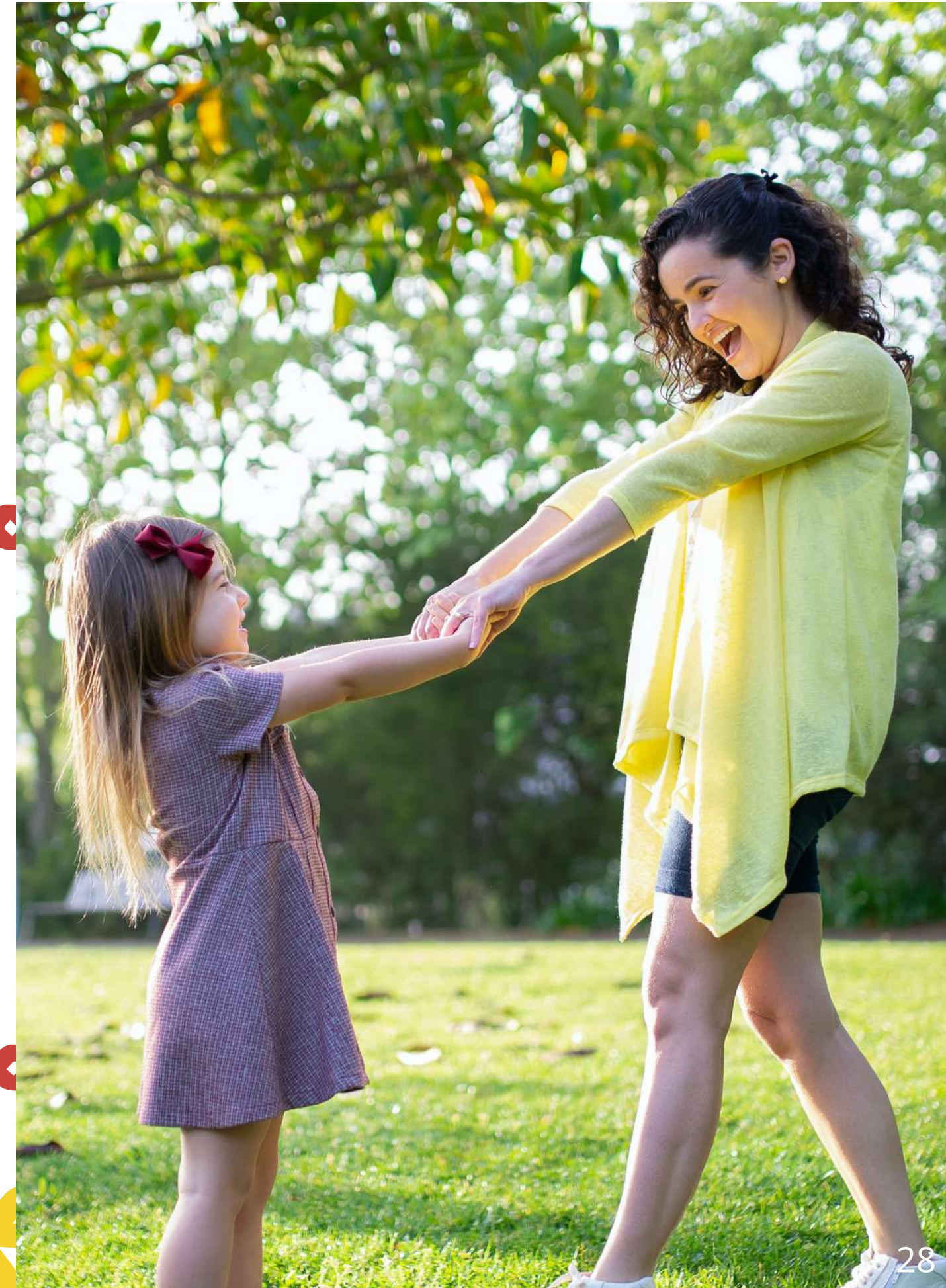


Materials:

Open area indoors or outdoors, either sing a song during the activity or turn on happy music.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- When giving instructions to children with special needs it is important to use gestures, clear facial expressions, articulate your words very well and use appropriate body language. ✕
- Demonstrate how to do this activity instead of using only verbal communication. ◀
- Children who have visual or movement impairment can be put in pairs with children without special needs to create a tunnel as they might find it difficult to crawl inside a tunnel.
- Make sure that the space for this playful activity does not have any obstacles for movement. ◀



1.2 Move in a Circle



This activity is aimed at improving the ability of children to balance, sit, kneel, and crawl by using different body parts, as well as coordinate their movements and respond to commands.

Activity Guidelines

- Ask the children to hold hands with you in a closed circle.
- Sing a song while you and the children walk together in the circle holding hands.
- In the song, use words that tell the children to sit down, stand up, jump forward, jump backward, turn on the spot, etc., according to their abilities.



Duration:

10 - 15 minutes.



Materials:

Open area indoors or outdoors, either sing a song during the activity or turn on happy music.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- When giving instructions to children with special needs it is important to use gestures, clear facial expression, articulate your words very well and use appropriate body language. ✕
- Demonstrate how to do this activity instead of using only verbal communication.
- If there are children present who have difficulty moving or standing, you can choose to do this activity while sitting and choose simple movements, such as clapping or touching nose, ears, instead of jumping or spinning around.



1.3 Test Out Sounds and Smells



This activity helps children to develop senses like touch, hearing and smell, as well as motor development.

Activity Guidelines

- Hold items with different and pleasant smells gently to a child's nose.
 - "Smell this. We smell with our nose."
- Gather different objects that make distinct noises. Jingle. Tap or shake each for the child. Let him/her/them explore it with their hands.



Duration:

20 - 30 minutes.



Materials:

Different objects that smell, such as food, flowers, as well as objects that produce distinct sounds (e.g. you can fill up the bottles with beans, sand, water).

Adaptations for children with special needs

- This activity is also suitable for children with special needs and does not require significant adaptations.
- It is a highly stimulating activity that can be used for multisensory stimulation and learning. ✕
- Pay attention to each child and decide if this activity will be done with something to smell, touch, hear and adapt. ◊
- It is recommended to have many objects to work with so you can adapt the activity easily.



1.4 Create Stories



This activity is focused on improving children's ability to become emotionally, physically, and mentally relaxed, as well as build trustful and meaningful relationships.

Activity Guidelines

- Encourage children to turn pages while you talk about the pictures in the book and talk to them as much as you can.
- Repeat slowly the words of the pictures and allow them to look at the movement of your lips and the words that you use. Encourage the children to repeat words and sounds.
- Point to a picture and say the associated word together with the child. Ask simple questions about pictures to support their understanding of words.
- You can also make up stories, talk about the colours, shapes, objects and encourage the children to help you.



Duration:



15 - 30 minutes.



Materials:

Book with pictures

Adaptations for children with special needs

- When adapting this activity for children who can't hear well, get their attention by using visual clues. Stay in one place, and keep eye contact when talking.
- Use pre-agreed visual signals for different actions 
 - For example, 'stop!', 'next page'
- Repeat other children's contributions to the group so it's clear what your comment or answer is in reference to.
- When adapting this activity for children who can't see well, use different voices and sounds when reading stories.
- Children might learn better with shared reading activities. Read to the group and interact with them. 



1.5 Naming Body Parts



This activity helps children develop body awareness and linguistic skills.

Activity Guidelines

- Simply point to a body part of the child and name it and point to the same body part in yourself.
- Encourage him/her/them to copy you. Ask them to point to the same body part on their body. If they don't point to it, help them.
- Repeat. Do these same actions with other parts. Remember to say each name slowly and with emphasis.



Duration:
20 minutes.



Materials:
This activity can be done in front of a mirror, but not necessarily.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- It is important to remain patient, repeat and demonstrate instructions or words where necessary, and give each child enough time to complete a given task. ✕
- Use clear consistent language – explain the meanings when you introduce new words and make full use of facial expressions, gestures and body language. ↻



1.6 Let's Make Music Together!



This activity helps children to manage their emotions and feelings, improve their language and social skills.

Activity Guidelines

- In a small group of three, have the children experiment with shaking each of the 6 sound cans.
- Ask, "Do all the cans sound alike?" They may find that some do and some don't.
- Then ask them to try to find those that sound alike. When children match a pair, ask them to describe the sounds. Also ask what they think is making the sounds. Sound cans can be used to create rhythmic patterns or shake out a song



Duration:
30 minutes.



Materials:
Buttons, paper clips, seeds, small plastic containers with lids. In each of 2 identical containers, place the same number of same-sized buttons. In each of 2 identical containers, place the same number of same-sized paper clips. Put lids on all the containers.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- Music is a very powerful learning tool when working with children with disabilities and special needs. Have these activities in a neutral space that is clear of obstacles. Think about lighting and the atmosphere, try to avoid bright artificial light. ✕
- You can use different smells in order to make this activity multisensory and stimulating for all children. Children who have limited hearing are usually able to feel vibrations and 'sense' different sounds and melodies.
- Verbal instructions and loud noises can be overwhelming for children. Try using simple rhythms at first, add a predictable tune or melody. ✕



1.7 Clap Together



This activity helps children develop motor skills, emotional expression, as well as boost their connection with adults/caregivers.

Activity Guidelines

- Show children how to clap and that you are going to play clapping. You can sing a song or laugh to help them relate clapping with positivity.
- Take their hands in your hand and show them how to clap slowly and quickly.
- Mix clapping with other activities. Hold your hands near your face and talk to your baby while clapping – this maintains a single point of focus for them, helping them to see your hands clapping easily.



Duration:

15 - 20 minutes.



Materials:

None (music or songs can be used while clapping, or you can choose to sing a song)

Adaptations for children with special needs

- Give clear instructions. Words such as “this”, “that”, “there” and “here” might not make sense to some children who are blind or low vision. Consider using specific words and statements to direct children during this activity. ✕
- Notice if children are bothered by the noise. If they are, you might consider using an alternative to clapping. You can ask children to do 'stars' with their hands. ✕



1.8 Sing along



This activity helps with boosting children's language development.

Activity Guidelines

- Sing songs with a child/children. You can try singing a song that names body parts or animals. When you say an animal you can make the noise the animal would make.
- You can also listen to songs together while you sing to children.
- Rhymes are easy to memorize and help children to increase their vocabulary.
- Remember to look them in the eyes and smile while singing.



Duration:

20 - 30 minutes.



Materials:

Songs to sing together, music.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- Use different smells in order to make this activity multisensory and stimulating for all children.
- You can use different tactile materials with different surfaces. Children who are deaf or have very limited hearing are usually able to feel vibrations and 'sense' different sounds and melodies. ✕
- Verbal instructions and loud noises can be overwhelming for some children. Try using simple rhythms at first, add a predictable tune or melody.



1.9 Float or Sink



This activity is aimed at stimulation of positive interactions stimulation of language development, creativity, as well as gross motor skills.

Activity Guidelines

- Have children take turns putting different items in a bowl and see what floats or sinks.
- Talk about why the items may sink or float.
- While doing this activity consider these facilitation questions:
 - What do you think will happen?
 - Why do you think that item floated?
 - Why do you think that item sunk?



Duration:

20 - 30 minutes.



Materials:

Warm water, bog bowl, plastic items and items from outside, such as sticks, rocks, leaves

Adaptations for children with special needs

- Get children's attention by using visual clues. Stay in one place, and keep eye contact when talking.
- Give out brief instructions and explain the activity in simple steps. ✕
- Make sure your activity area is as obstacle-free as possible, so that children with physical impairments can move around more easily and safely.



1.10 Toddler Beading



This activity helps children develop fine motor skills, as well as cognitive development.

Activity Guidelines

- Find some objects with holes through them (tubular pasta, big wooden beads, empty spools, empty paper rolls etc.) and some shoelaces (or a string).
- Show the children how to put the chosen objects on a thread, for example, thread macaroni onto a string or large buttons. It is possible to pierce a hole into flowers or leaves and make a nature necklace or thread cereal loops to make an edible bracelet.



Duration:
20 - 30 minutes.



Materials:
Objects with holes through them and some shoelaces or a string.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- This activity helps children work on physical and motor skills while doing something fun.
- If it is difficult for a child the first time, you can take their hands in your hand and show them how to do beading.



1.11 Body Puzzles



This activity is aimed at creating a sense of belonging, team and cooperation, stimulation of positive interactions, as well as boosting creativity of children.

Activity Guidelines

- Provide picture pieces, construction paper, and glue stick for the children. Cut the pictures into strips, separating head, torso and legs; you may want multiple sets of pictures.
- Have children arrange a body out of the pieces provided.
- Offer pictures of animals (e.g., give them the legs of a duck) and ask, "how they like the picture?".
- Have the children glue their picture to the construction paper.
- For this activity, you can divide the children into pairs.



Duration:
30 minutes.



Materials:
Picture pieces (e.g. animals, human body), construction paper, and glue stick.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- To promote cooperative learning, facilitate the following questions for the entire group:
 - Who is that picture of?
 - What part of the body is that?
 - Does that body part go with that person?
 - What's that body part for?
- When adapting this activity for children who can't see well, you can cut the picture in the animal shape and add different materials so they can guess the animal. You can also ask other children to make animal noises, so the activity will be multisensory and stimulating for all children.



1.12 Sort Buttons



This is a fun activity that helps with visual skills and self-confidence of the child.

Activity Guidelines

- Arrange buttons or safe and small objects with various sizes and colours and ask the child to arrange them.
- Communicate with the child during the process of sorting by asking questions such as
 - "What colour is this?"
- If the child has some numeracy skills, you can also ask the child to pile the buttons in amounts.
- You can have a little box or piece of paper to group things together, to add an extra layer to the activity.



Duration:
20 minutes.



Materials:
Buttons, containers to sort the buttons.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- If it is difficult for a child the first time, you can take their hands in your hand and show them how to do the sorting.
- When adapting this activity for children who can't see well, instead of asking them to sort buttons based on the colour, you can ask them to sort them based on the size of the button or texture.
- You can also use different shaped objects and ask children to sort them in various ways.



Group 2: 4 - 6 years old





- Activity card 2.1 - From my heart to your heart
- Activity card 2.2 - Deep breaths
- Activity card 2.3 - The puppet or toy
- Activity card 2.4 - Butterfly hug
- Activity card 2.5 - Belly breathing
- Activity card 2.6 - Playing with (handmade dominoes)
- Activity card 2.7 - Fishing
- Activity card 2.8 - Modelling with clay
- Activity card 2.9 - Web of connections
- Activity card 2.10 - The secret bag
- Activity card 2.11 - Pretend play
- Activity card 2.12 - I spy with my little eye
- Activity card 2.13 - Bubble fun
- Activity card 2.14 - Little helpers

2.1 From My Heart to Your Heart



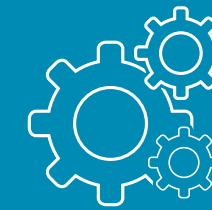
This activity focuses on connecting children, building peer relationships, and promoting a sense of community, belonging, kindness and positive support.

Activity Guidelines

- Divide the children into pairs. Using a partner, demonstrate to the children how they should act out the words as they speak to each other. Begin by saying, “From my heart to your heart, I wish you well”, while pointing to your own heart and then pointing to your partner's. Take turns saying it to each other. Give the children time to do it. Then try with other connections.
 - “From my shoulder to your shoulder, I wish you well”. “From my toes to your toes, I wish you well”; “From my hand to your hand, I wish you well”; “From my knee to your knee, I wish you well”.
- Ask the children how it feels to have someone wish them well.



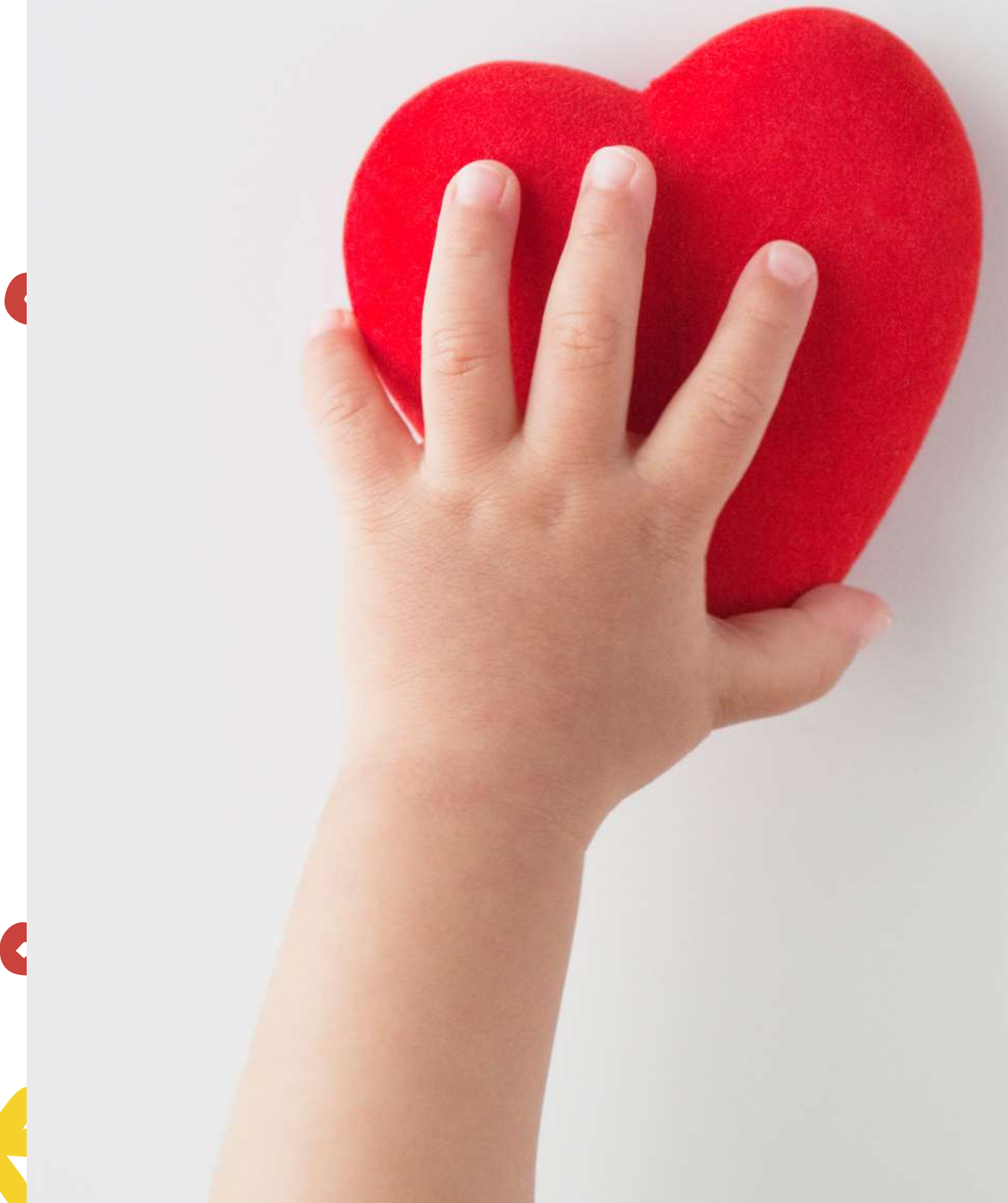
Duration:
30 minutes.



Materials:
Space to stand and play.

Adaptations for children with special

- Use consistent language vocabulary and short simple sentences when explaining this activity, refrain from using synonyms.
- It is important to use gestures, clear facial expression, articulate your words very well and use appropriate body language. ✕
- Instead of just using words to explain the activity, give a quick demonstration to make it easier for children with disabilities to understand the instructions.



2.2 Deep Breaths



This activity can be used to facilitate and encourage children to feel present in their bodies and learn activities that will help them to feel relaxed, calm and comforted.

Activity Guidelines

- Teach children how to become aware of their breath and to breathe deeply while also using their imagination.
- While sitting or standing, ask each child to make a fist with his/her/their right hand and imagine it is holding a sweet smelling flower, fruit, or favourite food.
- Next, ask each child to make a fist with his/her left hand and pretend it is holding a candle or fire.
- Direct the children to inhale deeply the smell of the flower/fruit/food in their left hands and then blow out the candle and fire in their right hands.



Duration:

15 - 20 minutes.



Materials:

Open space within which to lie down or stand as a group.

It can be done indoors or outdoors.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- This activity does not require specific adaptations for children with special needs, other than your way of communicating the instructions.
 - Use clear gestures, clear facial expressions, articulate your words very well and use appropriate body language. ✕
- It is important to remain patient, repeat and demonstrate instructions where necessary, and give children enough time to complete the activity.
- You can teach children to use these techniques when they feel scared, anxious, sad, angry, or worried.
- You can also teach the skills to the child's guardians and encourage using them at home to release stress. ✦



2.3 The Puppet or Toy



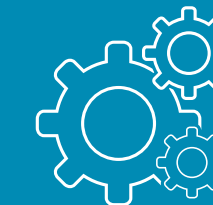
This activity can be used to facilitate and encourage children to feel present in their bodies and learn activities that will help them to feel relaxed, calm and comforted.

Activity Guidelines

- Explain to the children that sometimes it feels good to pretend to be a doll or puppet and have loose arms, legs, hands and feet.
- Start by shaking your legs together, then your arms, your neck, your shoulders, and your torso. Encourage the children to be as silly as needed as they relax their bodies to move like a puppet.
- Ask the children to notice if any part of their bodies feels more tight or stiff than other parts.
- Invite them to pay extra attention and care to shaking and releasing that part of their bodies.



Duration:
15 - 20 minutes.



Materials:
Puppet or toy. Use the puppets or toys as examples when teaching this exercise. Open space within which to lie down or stand as a group.
It can be done indoors or outdoors.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- This activity does not require specific adaptations for children with special needs, other than your way of communicating the instructions.
 - Use clear gestures, clear facial expressions, articulate your words very well and use appropriate body language.
- You can teach children to use these techniques when they feel scared, anxious, sad, angry, or worried.
- You can also teach the skills to the child's guardians and encourage using them at home to release stress.
- Children and adults of any age can benefit from these relaxation activities.



2.4 Butterfly Hugs



This activity can be used to facilitate and encourage children to feel present in their bodies and learn activities that will help them to feel relaxed, calm and comforted.

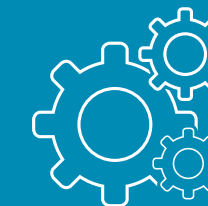
Activity Guidelines

- Cross your arms across your chest (your left hand on your right shoulder and right hand on your left shoulder). Ask the children to imitate you. Keep your arms crossed and alternately tap each of your hands on the shoulder it is touching. Tapping one side at a time is the most important part of this exercise.
- You can tell the children that the tapping of their hands is like the wings of a butterfly moving up and down. One wing moves up and comes down, and then the other wing moves up and comes down. Ask the children to tap for one minute, and then stop, take a breath, and notice how they are feeling.
- Ask them: How do you feel while doing these 'butterfly hugs?'



Duration:

15 - 20 minutes.



Materials:

Open space within which to lie down or stand as a group. It can be done indoors or outdoors.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- You can do this exercise for as long as you and the children feel comfortable.
- This activity does not require specific adaptations for children with special needs, other than your way of communicating the instructions.
 - Use clear gestures, clear facial expressions, and articulate your words very well and use appropriate body language.
- You can teach children to use these techniques when they feel scared, anxious, sad, angry, or worried. You can also teach the skills to the child's guardians and encourage using them at home to release stress.



2.5 Belly Breathing



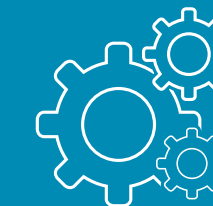
This activity can be used to facilitate and encourage children to feel present in their bodies and learn activities that will help them to feel relaxed, calm and comforted.

Activity Guidelines

- Have the children lie on their backs and put their hands on their stomachs.
- Direct them to take a slow deep breath in through the nose and let it out through the mouth with a gentle “a-h-h-h-h-h” sound. Tell them they should feel and see the hand on the stomach move up and down as they breathe in and out. Direct them to breathe in slowly through the nose and out through the mouth like they are trying to move a feather up in the air.
- Breathe in slowly to the count of 2, 3, 4, and out 2, 3, and repeat several times.




Duration:
15 - 20 minutes.



Materials:
Open space within which to lie down or stand as a group.
It can be done indoors or outdoors.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- Use clear gestures, clear facial expressions, and articulate your words very well and use appropriate body language.
- It is important to remain patient, repeat and  demonstrate instructions where necessary, and give children enough time to complete the activity.
- You can teach children to use these techniques when they feel scared, anxious, sad, angry, or worried.
- You can also teach the skills to the child's guardians and encourage using them at home to release stress.



2.6 Playing with Dominoes



This activity helps children to develop number sense and simple math skills, as well as to start matching, sorting and classifying objects.

Activity Guidelines

- Let the children look at the different domino pieces. Point out the dots on both ends. Mention that the dots represent a number. Ask them to count the dots and identify the number.
- Sit in a circle with a small group of children. Give each player 5 domino pieces and put the rest in a pile in the middle of the circle. The first player puts down 1 of his 5 dominoes pieces. The next player must attach a domino to the 1 in the middle that matches the number of dots/fruits. If the player can't make a match, invite them to take a new domino piece from the pile.
- Repeat the process with the next player and continue playing until 1 player is left.



Duration:
30 minutes.



Materials:
Dominoes (which can be handmade by using think cards and printed pictures glued on them).

Adaptations for children with special needs

- It can also be an excellent game to develop tactile skills (exploring through touch) in young children and children with special needs. In order to adapt the activity make the dominoes divided into two but without dots – use different tactile materials on each half of the dominoes ✕ so instead of matching the dots, the children match what they feel; smooth to smooth, rough to rough etc.
- Always use clear, simple instructions when explaining the activity and demonstrating it.
- You can let children with special needs work either with you or with other children to facilitate positive and kind interactions and create opportunities for mutual learning from each other. ◆



2.7 Fishing



This activity helps children to develop their language skills through playful learning.

Activity Guidelines

- Spread out the fish on the floor, with the picture sides facing down. Have the children take turns to 'fish' for a fish with your help and name the picture. Then look at the pictures together with the children, describe the pictures and discuss them. You can also name the colours.
- When you have finished the game, you can sing songs or recite nursery rhymes related to the pictures.
- You can vary the game by hiding the items in the room and let the kids find them by using your clues.



Duration:
30 - 40 minutes.



Materials:
A fishing rod (Stick and glue, small magnet); pictures of animals, food and/or objects and corresponding items; fish made from cardboard in different colours; paper clips

Adaptations for children with special needs

- The idea of this activity is to get the children to name familiar words and expressions. As you look at the pictures and talk about them, the children have an opportunity to identify details and describe the pictures.
- When giving instructions to children it is important to use gestures, clear facial expression, articulate your words very well and use appropriate body language.
- Demonstrate how to do this activity instead of using only verbal communication.
- Use consistent language vocabulary and short simple sentences when communicating, refrain from using synonyms.



2.8 Modelling with Clay



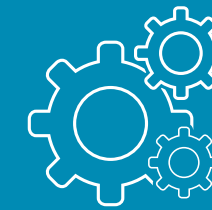
This activity is aimed at fostering the creativity of children, manipulation (touching) of materials, and the ability to create figures and shapes.

Activity Guidelines

- Put a box of colourful modelling clay out for the children and let them create shapes and figures and play freely. Encourage children to explore the new material.
- Encourage children to experiment by combining the clay with natural items, such as shells, leaves and small twigs.
- Stage a story. Invite the children to use the clay to reproduce the characters of their favourite story, and use them to create dialogues engaging the clay-made characters. The clay can also be used to model cars, trees, and houses, to support the narration of the story.





Duration:
40 - 50 minutes.



Materials:
Modelling clay, as well as natural materials, such as leaves, nuts, seeds, shells and twigs.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- If there are children with developmental disabilities or special needs (such as visual or hearing impairment), then this activity can be particularly useful for stimulating tactile senses through touching (manipulation) of materials. 
- Simply allow children to feel the clay with their hands.
- Provide clear verbal instructions and use clear facial expressions and gestures when communicating with children.
- Demonstrate how to play with clay in addition to giving verbal instructions. 



2.9 Web of Connections



This activity promotes the connection and positive interactions between children, as well as improves their interactions with adults or their caregivers.

Activity Guidelines

- Sit together in a circle. Toss a ball to any child in the circle while saying his/her/their name out loud. That child will then toss the ball to another child while saying the other child's name out loud. Repeat this until every child has caught the ball and the ball has been returned to you.
- Do the exercise again—in the same order. Ask the children to try to repeat the pattern; to try to move the ball from child to child in the same order, while saying the names out loud. Repeat the exercise a few more times.
- You can also add emotions or feelings to the ball, like it is a slow, fast, hot, cold, sad, or happy ball.



Duration:
40 minutes.



Materials:
A ball or a soft puppet and space to sit as a group

Adaptations for children with special needs

- When giving instructions, use simple language (e.g. words that you know the children will understand). It is important to break each task into small steps and give one line of the instructions, then wait for the children to do that part of the task, and then give the next instruction, and so on. ✕
- You can use objects that make sounds, so children who can't hear well can participate in this exercise.
- In order to make this activity multisensory and stimulating for all children, use objects with different textures, colours and sounds.



2.10 The Secret Bag



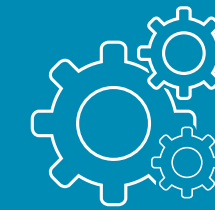
This activity helps children to recognise and identify new words and terms, as well as memorise them and integrate them in their active vocabulary.

Activity Guidelines

- Place the pictures in a bag and hand out one object to each child. Take one picture out of the bag and state its name: I've got a horse. Who's got the horse?
- The child who has a similar object holds it up and repeats with you I've got the horse: Put the picture and the object on the floor where everyone can see it. The children can sing a song about a horse. Once you have looked at all of the pictures and objects, and sang the songs linked with the picture, the children can help to put them back into the bag and name each item as it is put into the bag.



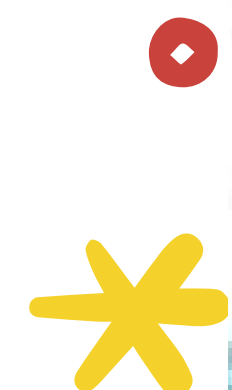
Duration:
30 - 40 minutes.



Materials:
Set of pictures, set of similar objects. Ideally the items could be familiar from nursery rhymes and songs.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- During the activity you should talk about the items, pay attention to children's interests, fill out the children's sentences, repeat the words and use them in your conversation.
- Do not say "this is wrong" do not correct them, just ✕ repeat the correct word.
- Use clear articulation, gestures and body language when explaining the activity.



2.11 Pretend Play



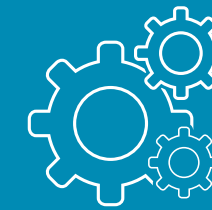
Pretend play helps with children's creativity, language skills, self confidence, as well as emotional and social skills.

Activity Guidelines

- Play is vital to a child's development, it gives the children the skills they need for the future like emotional intelligence, creativity and problem solving. To play is to learn.
- Examples can be pretend grocery store, pretend veterinary, pretend school teacher etc.
- Encourage your child by providing with materials that might help with the pretend play. Play with them.



Duration:
30 - 40 minutes.



Materials:
No materials are needed but it will depend on the chosen pretend play activity.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- Use clear consistent language.
 - Explain the meanings when you introduce new words and make full use of facial expressions, gestures and body language.
- It is important to have a multi-sensory approach to your activities, for example, give children the opportunity to listen to different sounds, investigate and touch a tree or a flower. Encourage this during pretend play.
- This method of teaching is particularly important for children with special needs; it can help them to develop their strongest senses and use them to their full extent.



2.12 I Spy with my Little Eye



This activity helps with bonding with children, and also with their language development.

Activity Guidelines

- Tell the children you are going to play “I spy with my little eye”. The person who is the spy has to select an object and the other players need to guess it. The spy can give a clue.
- Pick an object and think of a few features about it. Provide the hint to the children and let them guess what you spy. You can start by saying ‘I spy with my little eye... and then the clue’.
- Provide another hint if it’s necessary.
- After the children guessed, let them be the spy.



Duration:

20 - 30 minutes.



Materials:

No materials are needed. Pick an object and think of a few features about it. Pick your first hint to give to the children, colour, height, texture, first letter, material, etc.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- 'I spy with my little eye' can be particularly challenging for children who have a visual impairment. It is important to adapt this activity to give all children a chance to participate.
- You can adapt/change the activity to 'I hear with my little ear' and provide a hint to the children and let them guess what you hear. ✕
- Demonstrate how to do this activity instead of using only verbal communication. ◊



2.13 Bubble Fun



This activity is aimed at stimulation of positive interactions, cooperation and teamwork, motor skills.

Activity Guidelines

- Select a large enough space that children can move freely to pop bubbles; this is a great outdoor activity.
- Adults and children pair up.
- Encourage adults to blow bubbles while children try to catch them.
- Have adult and child pairs switch roles, allowing children to blow the bubbles while the adult participants watch and try popping bubbles.



Duration:
15 minutes.



Materials:
Bottle of bubbles.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- Demonstrate how to play with bubbles and help those children who find it difficult.
- You can choose to pair a child with a disability and another child 'buddy' without a disability. Let them play together and learn from each other. This will allow you to observe interactions between children and foster positive kind interactions between them.
- Use the following facilitation questions while doing this activity:
 - Can you help _____ catch bubbles?
 - Can you show _____ how you blow bubbles?



2.14 Little Helpers



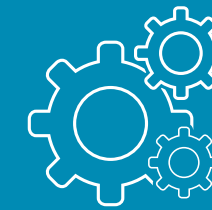
This activity is aimed to create a sense of belonging, enhance children's self-confidence and autonomy, and help develop common responsibility.

Activity Guidelines

- Define different tasks that children can help with.
 - For example: water the plants, welcome participants who are arriving, empty the bin, etc.
- On a wooden stick or a paper sheet, write down these tasks and put them together in a jar.
- At the beginning of the day, ask children to withdraw a stick from the jar and during their stay, they will be in charge of this task and activity.
- Make sure to celebrate every child and make this an opportunity for them to contribute.



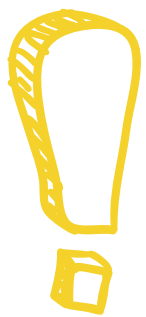
Duration:
15 minutes.



Materials:
Wooden sticks or pieces of paper, a glass jar.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- Use consistent language vocabulary and short simple sentences when explaining this activity, refrain from using synonyms.
- It is helpful to demonstrate to children what the activity is about and explain the instructions. ✕
- When communicating it is important to use gestures, clear facial expression, articulate your words very well and use appropriate body language.
- Note:
 - Tasks should never be used as a punishment. The opposite, the responsibility of this task is given as a fun activity that should make them feel important. ⬆



Group 3: 7 - 10 years old





Activity card 3.1 – Nature art

Activity card 3.2 – Drawing using reference pictures

Activity card 3.3 – Hour circle of hands

Activity card 3.4 – Container of worries

Activity card 3.5 – Mystery drawing

Activity card 3.6 – Chain of strengths

Activity card 3.7 – Kind friends

Activity card 3.8 – Free drawing

Activity card 3.9 – Fold a story

Activity card 3.10 – Collective drawing

Activity card 3.11 – Treasure hunt

3.1 Nature Art



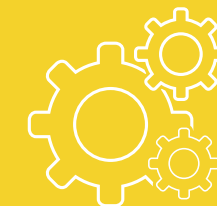
This activity helps children develop fine motor skills, creativity, and emotional expression, as well as connect with the nature.

Activity Guidelines

- Go outside with children and look together for different objects you can forage. It can be twigs, leaves and dry flowers. Encourage them to find unusual things to make art, like small stones and long branches.
- Now that you have all the items, place them in front of him/her/them and ask what they want to make. You could stack them together to build a sculpture or do a collage of leaves.
- This activity can follow the seasons and be used as an opportunity to discuss the changes that come with the seasons and the different events of each season.



Duration:
30 - 40 minutes.



Materials:
Twigs, leaves, dry flowers, etc.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- Get children's attention by using visual clues. Stay in one place, and keep eye contact when talking.
- Give out brief instructions and explain the activity in simple steps. ✕
- Make sure your activity area is as obstacle-free as possible, so that children with physical impairments can move around more easily and safely. ◊



3.2 Drawing using Reference



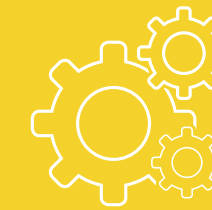
This activity is aimed at improving imagination of children and their ability to draw and colour.

Activity Guidelines

- Sit in a group and display a board book, pictures of the puzzle blocks or a jigsaw puzzle in front of the children.
- Ask them what they see in the cardboard book or in the images you provided.
- Invite the children to describe the picture in details.
- Ask them to tell a story about the pictures.
- Ask the children to draw about the story using the crayons and paper.



Duration:
40 - 50 minutes.



Materials:
Cardboard book, puzzle blocks or a jigsaw puzzle, paper, crayons.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- When you plan an art activity with children who cannot see well, it is important to give very clear simple verbal directions and instructions. Particularly it is important to provide pens and pencils with contrasting colour and use reference pictures that have good contrast in general. ✕
- If the visual impairment is too strong, you can help the child and ask him/her/them to feel the object and then try drawing it. This will foster the development of tactile senses.
- It is important to use gestures, clear facial expressions, articulate your words very well and use appropriate body language. ◊



3.3 Our Circle of Hands



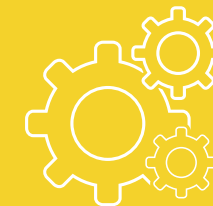
This activity is aimed at improving the imagination of children and their ability to draw and colour.

Activity Guidelines

- Invite the children to sit in a circle and sit with them. Explain that this is a safe space. Give each child and adult (including you) a paper hand. Invite them to decorate their hands.
- Once finished, sit back in a circle. Say your name while placing your paper hand on the floor in front of you towards the centre of the circle. Ask the child next to you to introduce his/her/their name by saying out loud, “My name is:”, while placing his/her/their paper hand next to yours. Once everyone has introduced their names, there should be a circle of connected paper hands.
- Ask: How does it feel to see all of our hands connected?



Duration:
30 - 50 minutes.



Materials:
Drawing paper, crayons, coloured pencils, scissors, glue, tape. Draw the outline of your hand on a piece of paper and cut the drawing of the hand out of the paper so you have a life-sized paper hand. Cut enough hands for every participant.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- It is a highly stimulating activity that can be used for multisensory stimulation and learning. Provide materials with different colours and textures. It is recommended to have many objects to work with so you can adapt the activity easily.
- Talk to the children about how we all use our hands to greet each other and help each other. Ask them to share other things for which we use our hands. Use the glue to permanently connect the hands together. The circle can be used to decorate the learning environment.
- Message to convey to the children:
 - Like the circle of hands, we are all connected. We can use our hands to show care and kindness, and to give and receive help from others.



3.4 Container of Worries



This activity is focused on helping children identify things that are troubling them, while also encouraging and providing them a way to remember what to do to feel better.

Activity Guidelines

- Begin a discussion with the children about sharing things that they are worried about. You can start by giving an example of a less severe worry, like being late for school. Ask them to think of solutions.
- Ask the children to draw the problem on one side of the paper, and the solution on the other side. Before each child puts their worry inside the container, discuss their worry and solution as a group.



Duration:
40 minutes.



Materials:
A4 paper, scissors, pens, pencils, a container that can be closed. Cut the coloured paper into smaller pieces.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- Encourage other children to help and support children who cannot see or hear well, **foster positive and kind interactions with children.**
- Use simple language (e.g. words that you know the children will understand). It is important to break each task into small steps and give one line of the instructions, then wait for the children to do that part of the task, and then give the next instruction, and so on.
- Message to convey:
 - It is normal to have difficult thoughts, feelings and emotions, and it is important to be able to express them and think of solutions to feel better. Their worries and solutions are being heard and are being kept safe by an adult.



3.5 Mystery Drawing



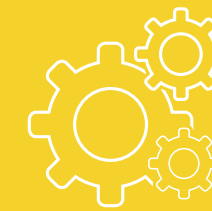
This activity is aimed at enhancing children's self-confidence and autonomy, as well as developing children's empathy towards each other.

Activity Guidelines

- Hand children a piece of paper. Secretly assign to each child another child in the room.
- Tell them that they have to secretly draw this child. Give them time to draw.
- After they are finished, let them present their drawings and let children guess which child is represented in the drawing.
- Ask questions such as:
 - What things stood out for you from that person? What did you learn about this person? And to the person being drawn, asked them how they felt about the drawing. Did they feel represented?



Duration:
15 - 20 minutes.



Materials:
Colorful paper, pens, decorations for paper, glue

Adaptations for children with special needs

- Before and during the activity, remind children that these drawings should be kind, meaning that they should not make fun of each other. While children draw, go over the room and talk to each of them, to see if the drawing is being represented in a respectful way. ✕
- For children who cannot see well, it is important to give very clear simple verbal directions and instructions. Particularly, it is important to provide pens and pencils with contrasting colour and use materials that have good contrast in general.
- When communicating it is important to use gestures, clear facial expression, articulate your words very well ◊ and use appropriate body language.



3.6 Chain of Strengths



This activity is aimed to create a sense of belonging and to develop children and family's self-confidence.

Activity Guidelines

- Tell children that we all have strengths and ask them to think of one strength they have
 - (for example: curiosity, artistic skills, resilience, sports skills, etc.)
- Tell them to write it down on a sheet of paper and decorate it as they want. Tell children that, even though we all have individual strengths, we are all stronger together and we'll create a chain from our papers and hang it on the wall. Ask them to create a ring with their paper sheet. Combine the rings in a big chain with glue.
- Let children share the strengths they wrote down while they are added to the chain.



Duration:
20 minutes.



Materials:
Colorful paper, pens, decorations for paper, glue. Before starting, take a piece of paper, divide it in 6 parts and cut 6 strings of paper from each sheet.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- This activity can be challenging for certain types of disabilities, you can pair children with special needs with other children. It is important to teach children they can help each other with tasks and they can learn from each other too. ✕
- When giving instructions, use simple language and avoid synonyms.
- It is important to demonstrate the activity step by step, instead of only using verbal instructions. ◊



3.7 Kind Friend



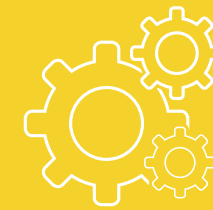
This activity is aimed at creating a sense of belonging, enhancing children’s self-confidence and autonomy, as well as develop children’s empathy towards each other.

Activity Guidelines

- 'Kind friend' consists of giving a present to a randomly chosen person and, in turn, receiving a gift from someone while not knowing who it will be.
- Take a piece of paper (each child), where the name of the person to whom you must give a gift will appear.
- Let children create a gift for their kind friend. It can be made out of anything. Think of materials that children can find in the Play Hub or outdoors. Let their imagination run free.
- At the end of the activity (or the day) let children exchange their presents for their 'kind friends'.



Duration:
30 - 40 minutes.



Materials:
Colorful paper, pens, container or bag/box. Write down on a piece of paper the list of every child who will participate in the activity and then cut them out. Fold the papers or form balls to place them in a container, glass, bag, box, etc.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- It is important to stay approachable and let the child know that you are ready to help and assist in any way.
- It is important to teach children that they can help each other with tasks and learn from each other. ✕
- When giving instructions, use simple language and avoid synonyms.
- It is important to remain patient, repeat and demonstrate instructions where necessary, and give the child enough time to complete the activity. ◊



3.8 Free Drawing



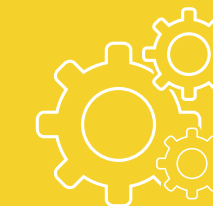
This activity is focused on giving children space and time where they can express their thoughts, emotions, ideas, stories, worries, experiences, fears and dreams.

Activity Guidelines

- Explain to the children that they can draw anything they want. This is a time for them to enjoy drawing freely.
- When they are finished, hang the drawings on the wall and ask them to walk around and look at their peers' drawings.
- Begin by asking them if anyone would like to share a story about their drawing. Sometimes children do not want to share or talk about their artwork. This is fine. The act of drawing helps them even if they do not talk about it.
- Make sure you write the child's name on the back of every drawing. This helps the children take ownership of their drawing.



Duration:
40 minutes.



Materials:
White or coloured drawing paper, coloured crayons, coloured pencils.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- Younger children and children with special needs may be in the process of learning about their emotions and how to recognise the difference between sadness, anger, happiness, fear, joy and other feelings both within themselves and in others. ✕
- As a child shares a story about his/her/their drawing or speaks to you, be aware of the expression on his/her/their face and body language, and then help him/her/them find the words to describe the feeling experienced.
- Use words to label the emotion for the child. ◊



3.9 Fold a Story



This activity is aimed at creating a sense of belonging, develop imagination, work together and foster positive interactions among children, as well as develop reading and writing skills.

Activity Guidelines

- Let children sit in a circle and give them a sheet of paper.
- Explain to the children that they are going to write a collective story using the same sheet of paper.
- Let children write one sentence.
- Fold the paper so only the last word of your sentence shows
- Pass the paper to someone next to you to continue the story.
- Continue until the sheet is full.
- Unfold the sheet of paper and read the story.



Duration:
15 minutes.



Materials:
Pen and paper.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- This activity can be challenging for certain types of disabilities, you can pair children with special needs with other children or initially make children work on this activity together in pairs in order not to make children with special needs feel that there are 'different' and not like others.✕
- It is important to teach children that they can help each other with tasks and learn from each other.
- When giving instructions, use simple language and avoid synonyms.
- It is important to demonstrate the activity step by step, instead of only using verbal instructions.◊



3.10 Collective Drawing



This activity is aimed at fostering a sense of belonging, cooperation to build on the ideas of others and to develop children's empathy towards each other.

Activity Guidelines

- Explain to the children that they are going to draw someone collectively. It can be a person or an animal.
- Let children draw the head. Fold the paper so only the neck is visible. Ask them to pass the paper to the child on the right and receive the drawing from the person left to them.
- Let children draw the chest and fold the paper so only the waist is visible.
- Pass the paper again and ask them to draw what's next.
- Keep going until the drawing is complete. Unfold the sheet of paper and reveal the collective drawing.



Duration:
30 minutes.



Materials:
Paper, pens, and pencils.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- When you plan an art activity with children who cannot see well, it is important to give very clear simple verbal directions and instructions. Provide pens and pencils with contrasting colour and use reference pictures that have good contrast in general. ✕
- When giving instructions it is important to use gestures, clear facial expression, articulate your words very well and use appropriate body language. ◆



3.11 Treasure Hunt



This activity is aimed to stimulate positive interactions and communication, language development, creativity and reflection.

Activity Guidelines

- Divide the children in pairs.
- Give each pair (of children or a child-adult pair) a map of space.
- Talk about how they need to work together to find hidden objects.



Duration:
30 minutes.



Materials:
Hidden objects around the room, map of the space with some hints on a path to the 'treasure'.

Adaptations for children with special needs

- Give out brief instructions and explain the activity in simple steps. Use gestures, clear facial expressions, articulate your words very well and use appropriate body language.
- Make sure your activity area is as obstacle-free as possible, so that children with physical impairments can move around more easily and safely.
- You can choose to pair a child with a disability or special needs and another child without a disability. Let them help you together and learn from each other. This will allow you to observe interactions between children and foster positive kind interactions between children.



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