

NEW
REVISED
EDITION

Here We Go Round

Quality Circle Time for 3 - 5 year olds



*"All early years
practioners will
benefit greatly from
this book."*
Nursery World

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Positive Press

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Introduction

This new edition supports practitioners in promoting the rich and stimulating environment and practice that young children need. The commitment of early years practitioners has emphasised the critical impact of a child's early experiences on later learning and growth. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which became statutory in 2008, is just one legacy of this work and commitment supported by the publication of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Development (SEAD, 2008).

In 2012¹ the EYFS was revised on the recommendations of the Tickell Review. It changed the six areas of learning to three prime areas essential for future learning and development: Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED), Physical Development (PD) and Communication and Language (CL). In addition to these are the four specific areas of learning: Literacy (L), Mathematics (M), Understanding the World (UW) and Expressive Arts and Design (EAD); through which the prime areas are reinforced and applied. Underpinning all of these are the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Good practice as we know never changes. Opportunities for well-planned experiences are still seen as fundamental to ensuring children make progress, experience challenge and, above all, enjoy their learning.

Quality Circle Time is an established and evaluated approach that promotes the skills, knowledge and understanding that help children achieve the Early Learning Goals and be ready for learning in school. It is engaging, motivational and promotes the Characteristics of Effective Learning. The ideas are based on common sense and good practice.

Since the beginning of time, children and adults have gathered together in circles to learn about themselves and others through a rich weave of rhymes, songs and games. This book builds on this tradition by structuring the activities in such a way that the adults and children know what they are achieving by being involved and by having fun. Here We Go Round takes our implicit understanding and makes it explicit in our actions.

¹ Subsequently an updated version of the EYFS was published in February 2014 and came into effect in September 2014. The changes apply to areas within Section 3 on "Safeguarding and Welfare" but no changes have been made to the areas of learning and development, including the early learning goals.



What is Quality Circle Time?

What is Quality Circle Time?

“Quality Circle Time” (QCT) is a model of social and emotional learning that has been with us for many years and can help you establish an emotionally safe and enabling environment which looks after all individuals in your setting—including yourself.

The QCT approach enhances learning across the “Areas of Learning and Development” outlined in EYFS 2012 (revised 2014). The time when children sit and interact with you in a circle in your setting is a rich and powerful opportunity to develop skills, and observe the progress of individual children.

How Quality Circle Time can enrich practice in the early years

Since September 2008 (revised 2012/2014) all practitioners working with the very young have been applying the overarching principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage materials. The four themes are outlined in the table below.

A Unique Child	Every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
Positive Relationships	Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.
Enabling Environments	Children learn and develop well in enabling environments in which the experiences respond to their individual needs.
Learning and Development	Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and interconnected.

These themes have become embedded in everyday practice. They tell us what children need to grow and to develop. Together with the commitments which underpin these themes they have provided a blue print for practitioners. Quality Circle Time principles have been promoting such commitments since the 1980s; celebrating the uniqueness of every child, encouraging and developing each child’s understanding of their peers, creating security and safety in the setting or classroom and ensuring learning; because children have a strong sense of self and embrace the challenges they meet. We all learn from the challenges in life!

The practicalities of meeting the all round needs of every child in your setting can be daunting. Should you concentrate upon the environment, or the relationships, or the learning and development? Most effectively you blend all of the principles by using an approach which supports and meets the needs of every individual; the child and indeed the adult.

QCT is an approach which can underpin the delivery of the EYFS. It has been most closely linked with the Social and Emotional Aspects of Development (SEAD) programme, but the all-encompassing approach supports children across all of their learning, including Every Child a Talker (ECAT) and the Inclusion Development Programme (IDP). The EYFS acknowledges that strong personal, social and emotional development makes for strong foundations of learning in the other areas.

How Quality Circle Time and “A Unique Child” blend together

A Unique Child	Quality Circle Time
<p>Children develop and learn in different ways. They need challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development.</p>	<p>Circle Time is an ideal system in which to enhance self-esteem, deal with problems and topical issues, impart information, motivate the children and encourage self-discipline. However, if it is to maintain its effectiveness, it must remain a time of quality.</p>
<p>Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs.</p>	<p>The rituals of Quality Circle Time, the comfort of the known and the expected ensure that children feel safe and secure. Patterns of games, rounds, songs and rhymes are all part of this. Adults can create this safe and secure environment for children by planning activities at an appropriate level.</p>
<p>Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.</p>	<p>Quality Circle Time celebrates the individual and offers children the opportunity to get to know their peers and value everybody.</p>
<p>Children’s health is an integral part of their emotional, mental, social, environmental and spiritual well-being and is supported by attention to these aspects.</p>	<p>In Quality Circle Time we refer to paying special attention to physical as well as emotional well-being.</p>

Becoming an empathetic individual

How do you know what life feels like for individual children? How do other children know and understand their friends? The only real way is to put yourself into their shoes. Some practitioners take a child's eye view of the room by getting on their hands and knees and experiencing the room from that standpoint. How can we do this when we are thinking about how a child is feeling? Empathy can only be achieved through listening to each child and, most importantly, encouraging children to listen to each other. Only by listening and watching, talking to each other, and to carers, can we become empathetic individuals.

Gradually, through the opportunities that we offer, children experience the values which enable their growth in confidence; allowing them to explore and challenge themselves in their play. You will offer a respectful environment and in turn, children will respect and value each other.

Belonging

The word "belong" comes from the Anglo Saxon meaning "yearning". Knowing this, helps us to understand and empathise with that feeling of not belonging, and not being included. We all need to feel that we belong, whoever and wherever we are.

Listening is the foundation of belonging and feeling valued, and is central to the interactions between practitioners, children and parents. The principles behind the key person approach encourage this; supplementing the relationship between a child and his or her parents.

Think of a time when you felt that you were the odd one out, at a party for instance. Remembering those feelings helps you to empathise with others, especially children when they feel lost and lonely.

Why Personal, Social and Emotional Development/SEAD underpins your work

Children who are unhappy, fearful and troubled can neither readily engage in learning, nor respond to the warm and caring environment that you offer them. Sometimes we have to get to the heart of what may be troubling a young child, or what may be making the very young child uncomfortable and upset, before we can even expect to engage them in activities which we have planned for them to experience. We can do this in the following way:

- Get to know a child better and develop positive relationships with children and their parents.
- Plan appropriate play and learning experiences based on the children's interests and needs, and identify any concerns about a child's development.
- Further develop your understanding of a child's development.
- Develop a systematic and routine approach to using observations.
- Use assessment to plan next steps in a child's developmental progress and regularly review.

Children need trusting relationships to feel safe and secure, and to have their feelings acknowledged and responded to. These features help all children, but most importantly the troubled and anxious child. Listening to them in every way possible is essential. Early years practitioners listen not just with their ears but with their eyes too. They observe children and this informs their understanding of what they need, so that activities and experiences may be planned accordingly. We do this naturally with tiny babies, easing their discomfort, looking for every clue as to the causes of their crying.

How do you notice children who are uneasy and troubled? What are the clues?

When you are troubled, what happens to your concentration? Do you constantly think about the situation? Does it keep popping back into your thoughts? Does it affect your work?

How children learn

Don't forget how important play is to children (and to you). During their play children take risks without the fear and embarrassment of failure. The skill of the practitioner is providing times when children can practise and rehearse in a playful way, such as in a Quality Circle Time.

Children learn through their experiences. They learn best when activities are playful, meaningful, at a level which is accessible to them, engaging and often chosen by themselves. However children can be excited by what adults can offer, by the new, and different, by being close to a warm and comforting adult, by joining in an activity which gives them playful experiences.

Children's individuality and social experiences all contribute to their learning. Children are not passive receptacles of all that we offer. They make their own minds up about what to do and often what and when to learn! Children make choices and have their own interests which drive them on.

Observation, assessment and planning

Knowing how children learn and develop means that we must always be ready to offer the experiences that will enable them to move on in their learning; that will excite them, and provide the challenges they need. The EYFS emphasises formative assessment – observation, assessment and planning – as being at the heart of effective early years practice.

Practitioners should observe children “to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.” 2.1 EYFS (2012)

Observation alone is not enough. We also need to interpret what we observe. Sharing with each other in the settings will support and ensure that we are reflective about our observations.

My own skills

It is important to review the quality of your Circle Time each term to ensure that it has not degenerated into merely a “show and tell” circle, a games circle or a way of filling in spare time. Always have a plan and be clear about the skills that you intend to promote. Ensure that your Circle Times do not become boring and repetitive and that you are fully aware of the skills you need to use during Circle Time – please see the “Skills table” below.

Empathic listening	Listening with an open mind and acknowledging the reality for the child.
Good eye contact	In our society eye contact is essential to developing relationships.
Ability to show emotional warmth	Responding to children in a way which is positive and encouraging.
Ability to recap what children have said and reflect it back	Having listened well to children you will be able to do this.
Ability to respond proactively to negative behaviour	Showing how something makes you feel.
Ability to use effective encouragement	Offering challenges.

From adult to child-initiated

Trying to find the right way to involve children into a planned experience is one of the many challenges of early years practice. Does this fit with the EYFS ethos? Children learn best through a mix of their own self-initiated play and adult guided activity. At first, as you develop your own skills, the Circle Activities are likely to be adult-led and initiated with children opting into – and even out of – the experience. The introductory activities of this book will start this process for you.

As children become more attracted to the activities and more confident they will choose to take part more often. Your observations will tell you who enjoys them most and inform you of those children who may need encouragement. Children are developing skills to make later experiences more valuable, both in taking part in Circle Times and in later stages of education. In the same way the EYFS is enabling children’s natural development and maturity of thinking, their creativity and problem solving, which makes them independent learners as they grow and move on through school.

To make sure that children know that they can take part whenever they want to, always leave an empty space, carpet square or chair in the circle as an invitation for them to join you and the other children when they are ready.

The Five Skills of Circle Time

The children need to be taught the “Five Skills of Circle Time” which are:

- **Looking**
- **Listening**
- **Speaking**
- **Thinking**
- **Concentrating**

The following short routine can be practised in a circle as a game. Once you have explained the skills to the children, you can say the words while they perform the actions and vice versa. Remind them at the beginning of each Circle Time of these skills as part of the introduction.

“In Circle Time we use our looking skills.”

Point to eyes.

“We use our listening skills.”

Point to ears.

“We use our speaking skills.”

Point to mouths.

“We use our thinking skills.”

Place hands on sides of head.

“We use our concentrating skills.”

Clasp hands, place in laps and look at facilitator.

How do I plan for Circle Time?

The EYFS quite rightly emphasises the importance of planning experiences for all children in your care. This does not mean that children’s experiences are all prescribed for them. Child-initiated play is central to your day. Your role is judging when to extend children’s play through a guided opportunity. The Circle Time meeting is one of these opportunities. You will still find that you will be following the preferences of children, which always happens in the best, responsive teaching. However you will be planning activities which act as a springboard for the children. This is similar to when children listen to a story, which then stimulates their play and exploration in a variety of ways throughout the rest of the day, or even the week! Sometimes it is appropriate to start to engage in a Circle Time with a few “ready” children. Then others can come and join you when they feel ready to.



Introducing children to Quality Circle Time

Introducing children to Quality Circle Time

One of the most valuable things about circle times, can be their routine, which children enjoy and look forward to. Having a pattern for your planning is helpful for you too, as when you are just starting off you have a structure which can then allow you to relax a little.

For the young children that you are working with, any time sitting and paying attention is difficult and the skills and attention span need to be built up over time. One of the benefits of Quality Circle Time is that when children are engaged and having fun in their learning, they are able to pay attention to the activities for much longer. To start with you may only want to spend a few minutes sitting in a circle using a singing or story activity.

Children will be at different developmental levels which makes the planning even more complex. It would not be surprising for the developmentally very young to find sitting and concentrating for the same length of time as more mature or older children a challenge, and they may well move away from the circle at first, returning when the activity is more attractive to them.

It is recommended, when you are entering into planning circle times, that you think of it in three phases or "steps":

Introduction	To set the scene for the children so that they know that this is circle time. This may be a warm up activity or even to introduce what is coming next.
Middle phase	You might be giving opportunities for developing a skill through an activity or learning through sharing conversation.
Closing phase	Rounds the session off; allows for reflection and a calming down.

The introductory sessions on pages 28-33 can be repeated and adapted as you see fit and to match the developmental needs of your children. Children will not mind repetition. Indeed they often prefer to repeat the familiar to show how well they have remembered and how improved they are!

Circle sessions are incremental, in that the children will be building skill upon skill, so by rehearsing the Five Skills of Circle Time (Looking, Speaking, Thinking, Listening and Concentrating) you will always be emphasising and sharpening these skills.

To enable effective planning, the charts on pages 20-26 detail the areas of learning relevant to the activities in this book. For each area, the Early Learning Goal (ELG), Aspect of Learning and Development Statement are listed and alongside each statement, the numbers of the activities that support the development. This enables you to choose the ELG and "Aspect" at a glance and

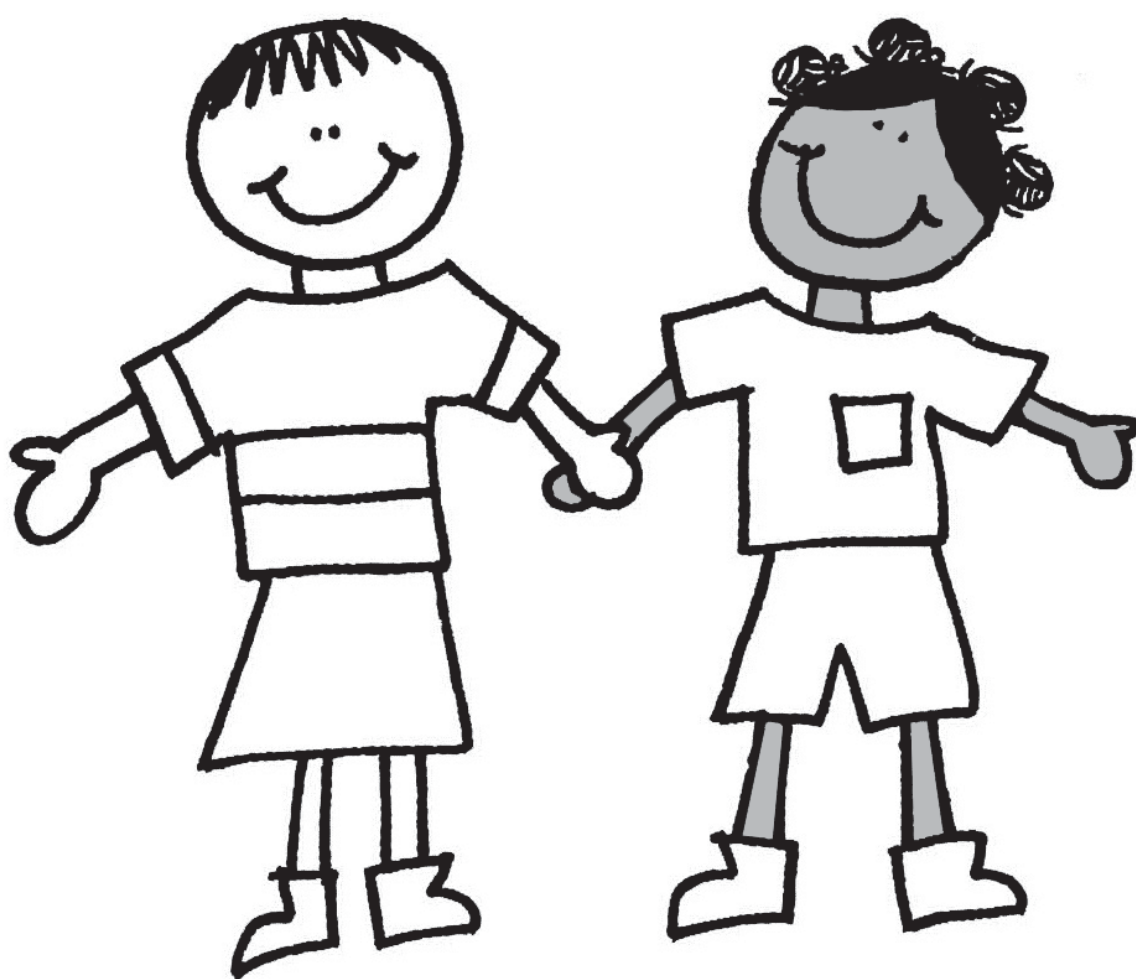
then select the activity you require from those listed. In addition, an index of specific foci, such as sharing, kindness and taking turns, is included at the back of the book.

Each activity shows the areas of learning in the headline and includes a box with further details of the aspects and development statements for each area to ensure you are aware of the learning intentions.

A template for observation notes of selected children and evaluation of the activity is included on page 36, and it is recommended that you photocopy this, and the chosen activity, to include in your planning folder. For the sake of providing an easy-to-read example of a circle session, Introducing Circle Time (1) has the observation and evaluation notes included in the activity.

It is not easy to be facilitating an activity and observing as well. We would always recommend that there are two adults involved; making sure that one of you is able to concentrate upon the organising of the session and the other on noting the children's response. Of course, both adults and children are part of the circle, all taking part and all learning from each other.

To a greater or lesser degree PSED will feature in every Circle Time session that you plan, as the very act of sitting together in a circle, participating, taking turns, listening and speaking develops the skills from this area of learning. However, it has only been listed in the activity if there is a particular focus on an aspect of PSED. Remember that, as with other aspects of children's learning and development, these are the foundations for later learning. Developing their confidence and sense of value early on in their lives is a priceless element that children can take to their later learning.



**Charts of activities related to
Areas of Learning by
Circle Time activity numbers***

Prime Areas

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

Aspect: Making relationships

Early Learning Goals: Children play cooperatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity. They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings and form positive relationships with adults and other children.

Development statements	Circle Time activity numbers
Initiates conversation, attends to and takes account of what others say.	1, 2, 6, 9, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 24, 26, 29, 43, 45, 57, 62
Explains own knowledge and understanding and asks appropriate questions of others.	5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 15, 22, 29, 45, 58
Takes steps to resolve conflicts with other children e.g. finding a compromise.	7, 10, 11, 35

Aspect: Self-confidence and self-awareness

Early Learning Goals: Children are confident to try new activities and say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or don't need help.

Development statements	Circle Time activity numbers
Confident to speak to others about own needs, wants, interests and opinions.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 25, 45, 56, 58
Can describe self in positive terms and talk about abilities.	6, 8, 12, 13, 50

Aspect: Managing feelings and behaviour

Early Learning Goals: Children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class and understand and follow the rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations and take change of routine in their stride.

Development statements	Circle Time activity numbers
Understands that own actions affect other people.	7, 9, 10, 11, 64
Aware of the boundaries set and of behavioural expectations in the setting.	1, 2, 53, 54
Beginning to be able to negotiate and solve problems without aggression.	7, 10, 11

Communication and Language (CL)

Aspect: Listening and attention

Early Learning Goals: Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.

Development statements	Circle Time activity numbers
Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity.	1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 19, 23, 27, 28, 36, 39, 47, 56, 58, 60, 61, 63, 64, 65
Two channelled attention – can listen and do for a short span.	3, 4, 10, 13, 17, 25, 30, 33, 37, 46, 52, 55, 61

Aspect: Understanding

Early Learning Goals: Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer “how” and “why” questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.

Development statements	Circle Time activity numbers
Responds to instructions involving a two-part sequence. Understands humour e.g. nonsense, rhymes, jokes.	3, 4, 5, 10, 13, 14, 19, 24, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 46, 47, 55, 62
Able to follow a story without pictures or props.	25, 64
Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion.	5, 9, 10, 11, 16, 26, 29, 32, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 56, 58, 65

Aspect: Speaking

Early Learning Goals: Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listener’s needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are about to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

Development statements	Circle Time activity numbers
Extends vocabulary; especially by grouping and naming, explores the meanings and sounds of words.	18, 38, 39, 60
Uses language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences in play situations.	6, 20, 24, 57, 62
Links statements and sticks to a main theme or intention.	3, 6, 12, 16, 37, 58, 59, 64
Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events.	6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 23, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 40, 41, 44, 45, 46, 48, 49, 51, 56, 65

Physical Development (PD)

Aspect: Moving and handling

Early Learning Goals: Children show good control and coordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.

Development statements	Circle Time activity numbers
Experiments with different ways of moving.	12, 13, 25, 46, 47, 48, 51, 52, 53, 54, 59
Negotiates space successfully when playing racing and chasing games with other children; adjusting speed or changing direction to avoid obstacles.	8, 38, 48, 53, 54
Shows increasing control over an object in pushing, patting, throwing, catching or kicking it.	1, 2, 4, 35, 49

Aspect: Health and self-care.

Early Learning Goals: Children know the importance of physical exercise and a healthy diet for good health and talk about ways to keep healthy and safe. They manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs successfully, including dressing and going to the toilet independently.

Development statements	Circle Time activity numbers
Shows some understanding that good practices with regard to exercise, eating, sleeping and hygiene can contribute to good health.	14, 55

Specific Areas

Literacy (L)

Aspect: Reading

Early Learning Goals: Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking to others about what they have read.

Development statements	Circle Time activity numbers
Continues a rhyming string.	19
Begins to read words.	22
Hears and says the initial sounds in words.	17
Links sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet.	17
Enjoys an increasing range of books.	21, 23

Mathematics (M)

Aspect: Numbers

Early Learning Goal: Children count reliably with numbers from one to twenty, place them in order and say which number is one more or one less than a given number. Using quantities and objects, they add and subtract two single-digit numbers and count on or back to find the answer. They solve problems, including doubling, halving and sharing.

Development statements	Circle Time activity numbers
Recognises numerals 1-5.	27
Counts actions or objects which cannot be moved.	4
Counts objects to ten and beginning to count beyond ten.	31
Uses the language of "more" and "fewer" to compare two sets of objects.	31
Finds one more or one less from a group of up to five objects, then ten objects.	26
Begins to identify own mathematical problems based on own interests and fascinations.	35

Aspect: Shape, space and measure

Early Learning Goals: Children use everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money to compare quantities and objects and to solve problems. They recognise, create and describe patterns. They explore characteristics of everyday objects and shapes and use mathematical language to describe them.

Development statements	Circle Time activity numbers
Beginning to use mathematical names for "solid" 3D shapes and "flat" 2D shapes and mathematical terms to describe shapes.	28
Selects a particular named shape.	28, 29
Orders two or three items by length or height.	30
Orders two items by weight or capacity.	32
Uses familiar objects and common shapes to create and recreate patterns and build models.	29
Can describe their relative position such as "behind" or "next to".	33
Beginning to use everyday language related to money.	34

Understanding the World (UW)

Aspect: People and communities

Early Learning Goals: Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children don't always enjoy the same things and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions.

Development statements	Circle Time activity numbers
Enjoys joining in with family customs and routines.	15, 41, 43

Aspect: The world

Early Learning Goals: Children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur and talk about changes.

Development statements	Circle Time activity numbers
Looks closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change.	36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 44, 45

Aspect: Technology

Early Learning Goals: Children recognise that a range of technology is used in the home. They select and use technology for particular purposes.

Development statements	Circle Time activity numbers
Finds out about and identifies the uses of everyday technology in the home.	42

Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

Aspect: Exploring and using media and materials

Early Learning Goals: Children sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing them. They safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques; experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.

Development statements	Circle Time activity numbers
Begins to build a repertoire of songs and dances.	5, 6, 7, 12, 14, 26, 33, 36, 61, 63
Explores the different sounds of instruments.	60
Experiments to create different textures.	56
Constructs with a purpose in mind.	58, 65

Aspect: Being imaginative

Early Learning Goals: Children use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role-play and stories.

Development statements	Circle Time activity numbers
Creates simple representations of events, people and objects.	11, 14, 16, 37, 39, 42, 57
Initiates new combinations of movements and gestures in order to express and respond to feelings, ideas and experiences.	46
Plays cooperatively as part of a group to develop and act out a narrative.	10, 23, 24, 25, 42, 44, 62

Introductory Circle Time Sessions

Introducing Circle Time (1)

Indoors/Outdoors	am/pm	Date:	Adult:
Links to areas of learning: PSED CL PD			
Learning intentions: To introduce Circle Time activities, to learn and practise the Five Skills of Circle Time, to take turns and to work as a group.			
Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect	
PSED	Initiates conversation, attends to and takes account of what others are saying. Confident to speak to others. Aware of the boundaries set and of the behavioural expectations in the setting.	Making relationships Self-confidence and self-awareness Managing feelings and behaviour	
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity.	Listening and attention	
PD	Shows increasing control over an object.	Moving and handling	
Resources A "talking object", e.g. Talking Ted and a ball.			
Children for focus <i>Kieran, Lucy, James and Asma: needing to practise taking turns.</i>			
Introduction Go through the Five Skills of Circle Time with the children. Remember to give the children clear feedback, praise and encouragement: "Well done _____ for using good looking skills" Introduce the "talking object", e.g. Talking Ted: "Hello children, I'd like you to meet _____. She would like to know what your names are." Ask each child in turn around the circle to say: "Hello _____ my name is _____" as they pass around the "talking object".			

Middle: "Rolling ball"

Ask the children to sit with legs apart. The children roll the ball to one another after saying:

"Hello _____" (name of receiver)

The child who receives the ball responds by saying:

"Thank you _____"

Closing: "Pass the smile"

Pass the smile around the circle. Begin by smiling at the child to your right. This child then smiles to the child to his right and so on. Encourage the children to make eye contact when they pass the smile on.

Observations

Asma waited for the teddy and said her name, next time I shall try to encourage her to say the whole sentence.

Kieran stayed for the introduction, with the 5 skills and left to play in the water afterwards. I have invited him to play all of the games tomorrow.

James and Lucy both stayed for all activities (15 minutes in all) and were passing the smile to their neighbour sensibly.

Evaluation

I was encouraged by the children's response to these games. Tomorrow I shall invite the same children to see if they remember any of the skills. It might be best if we all sit on little chairs.

I found it difficult to always see if children were eye contacting but I shall keep trying with this.

Introducing Circle Time (2)

Indoors/Outdoors	am/pm	Date:	Adult:
Links to areas of learning: PSED CL PD			
Learning intentions: To learn and practise the Five Skills of Circle Time, to take turns, to work as a group.			
Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect	
PSED	<p>Initiates conversation, attends to and takes account of what others are saying.</p> <p>Confident to speak to others.</p> <p>Aware of the boundaries set and of the behavioural expectations in the setting.</p>	<p>Making relationships</p> <p>Self-confidence and self-awareness</p> <p>Managing feelings and behaviour</p>	
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity.	Listening and attention	
PD	Shows increasing control over an object.	Moving and handling	
Resources			
A "talking object", e.g. Talking Ted or other relevant object, a bunch of keys or tambourine.			
Introduction			
Go through the Five Skills of Circle Time and remember to reinforce good practice. Pass a smile around the circle.			
Middle			
Introduce Talking Ted. Explain to the children that when they hold "Ted" they can talk and no one can interrupt them: they will all have a turn to hold him. Passing "Ted" around the circle, each child says:			
"Hello my name is _____."			
Closing			
Children pass the keys/tambourine around the circle as quietly as possible.			

Introducing Circle Time (3)

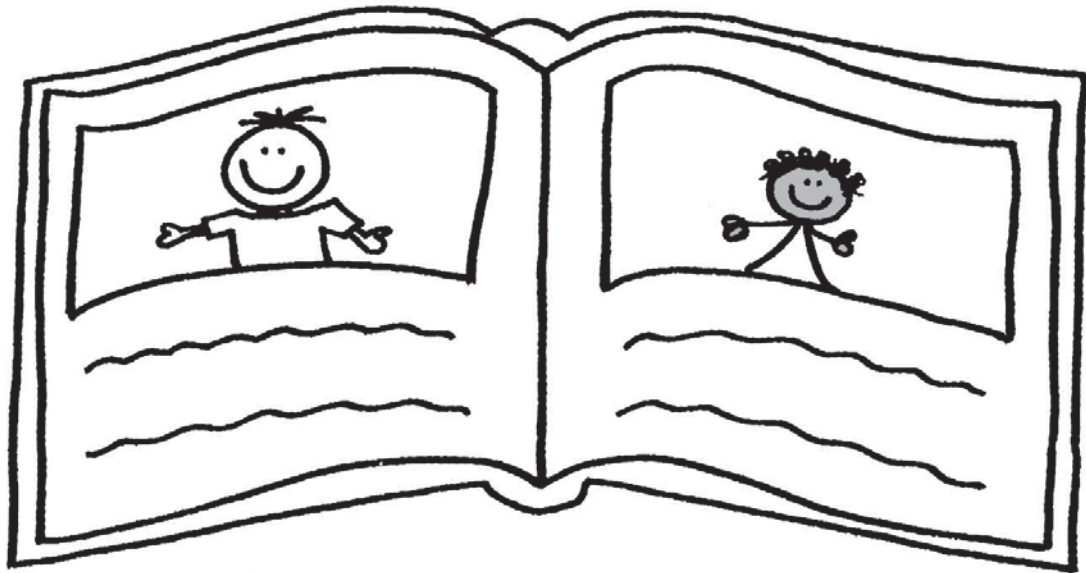
Indoors/Outdoors	am/pm	Date:	Adult:
Links to areas of learning: PSED CL			
Learning intentions: To learn and practise the Five Skills of Circle Time, to take turns, to work as a group.			
Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect	
PSED	Confident to speak to others	Making relationships	
CL	Can listen and do for a short span.	Listening and attention	
	Responds to instructions and understands humour.	Understanding	
	Links statements and sticks to a main theme.	Speaking	
Resources			
Talking Ted or another object which is relevant to the children at the time.			
Introduction			
Go through the Five Skills of Circle Time. Ask the children to hold hands around the circle. Emphasising the need to be gentle, send a hand squeeze around the circle from child to child. Tell the children that they must not send the "squeeze" on until they have received it. If you think your group will find this activity difficult let the children hold hands around the circle then raise and lower arms together.			
Middle			
Ask the children to copy you as you mime getting up in the morning, getting dressed, washing, cleaning your teeth and brushing your hair. Talk the children through your actions while you are performing them. Try and make it interesting and fun, e.g.			
"Oh! I've lost a sock."			
Pretend to look for it:			
"I've got something sticky in my hair. It's very hard to comb. Ooh! Ouch!"			
Closing:			
Using Talking Ted, end with a round of:			
"In the morning I _____."			

Introducing Circle Time (4)

Indoors/Outdoors	am/pm	Date:	Adult:
Links to areas of learning: PSED CL PD M			
Learning intentions: To practise the Five Skills of Circle Time, to take turns, to work as a group.			
Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect	
PSED	Confident to speak to others about own interests.	Self-confidence and self-awareness	
CL	Can listen and do for a short span.	Listening and attention	
	Responds to instructions.	Understanding	
PD	Shows increasing control over an object.	Moving and handling	
M	Counts actions.	Numbers	
Resources			
A ball.			
Introduction			
Remind the children of the Five Skills of Circle Time. The children sit with legs apart. They roll the ball to each other. Each child who receives the ball says:			
“My favourite toy is _____.”			
Once a child has had a turn he closes his legs to indicate that he is no longer able to receive the ball.			
Middle			
Explain to the children that they must listen very carefully as you are going to clap instructions to them.			
One clap means stand.			
Two claps mean sit.			
Three claps mean jump on the spot.			
With younger children practise each instruction in turn until they are able to respond correctly.			
Closing			
Send a gentle hand squeeze around the circle.			

Introducing Circle Time (5)

Indoors/Outdoors	am/pm	Date:	Adult:
Links to areas of learning: PSED CL EAD			
Learning intentions: To learn and practise the Five Skills of Circle Time, to take turns, to work as a group.			
Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect	
PSED	Explains own knowledge and understanding. Confident to speak to others.	Making relationships Self-confidence and self-awareness	
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly. Can listen and do for a short span. Responds to instructions. Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others.	Listening and attention Understanding	
EAD	Begins to build a repertoire of dances through exploring rhythm in clapping.	Exploring and using media and music	
Resources			
A large "busy" illustration.			
Introduction			
Ask the children if they would like to lead the Five Skills of Circle Time. Ask for volunteers to say and demonstrate each skill.			
Say to the children that they must listen very carefully as you are going to clap a rhythm for them to copy. Do this several times starting with a very short and simple rhythm.			
Middle			
Show them the illustration and ask them to look at it very carefully. Ask them questions about it, making them more open ended as you continue. Tell the children they must put their hands up if they know the answer, as you will only choose children who have their hands up and are sitting quietly. Remember that children will need thinking time to compose their responses; some children needing longer than others.			
Closing			
Pass a squeeze around the circle, first in a clockwise direction then in an anti-clockwise direction. Remind the children that they must wait for the "squeeze" to reach them before they can pass it on.			



Adult-led Circle Time Observation Plan*

*On the following page is a sample action plan format for you to photocopy. Use in your own planning, alongside a photocopy of the intended activity. Complete the information at the top of the page and circle the learning areas involved.

Adult-led Circle Time Observation Plan

Indoors/Outdoors	am/pm	Date:	Adult:			
Links to areas of learning: PSED	CL	PD	L	M	UTW	EAD
Children for focus:						
Observations:						
Evaluation:						

Circle Time Activities

Feeling Happy (6)

Learning Intentions: To have a developing awareness of their own needs, views and feelings and form good relationships with peers.	PSED CL EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Attends to and takes account of what others say. Explains own knowledge and understanding. Confident to speak to others about own needs. Can describe self in positive terms.	Making relationships Self-confidence and self-awareness
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity. Uses language to recreate experiences. Links statements and sticks to an intention. Uses talk to clarify feelings.	Listening and attention Speaking
EAD	Begins to build up a repertoire of songs.	Exploring and using media and materials

Resources

A "talking object".

Introduction

Ask the children to look at you. Make a happy face and ask them to guess how you are feeling. Repeat with a sad face. Ask them to make sad/happy faces.

Middle

Ask the children what sorts of thing make them happy or sad. Using Talking Ted, have a round of:

"I am happy when _____."

Closing

End by singing together:

*If you're happy and you know it clap your hands/stamp your feet/shout, "I am."
If you're happy and you know it and you really want to show it ...
If you're happy and you know it ...*

Further Ideas

Have a special "happy cloak/hat" that children can wear if they are feeling sad. Everyone must be kind to the wearer to cheer her up.

Make a collage of "Things that make us happy" to display on the wall.

Golden Rules (7)

Learning Intentions: To maintain attention, concentrate and sit quietly, work as part of a group, understand that there need to be agreed values and codes of behaviour and to understand what is right and wrong and why.	PSED CL EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Explains own knowledge and understanding. Takes steps to resolve conflicts. Understands that own actions affect other people. Beginning to be able to negotiate and solve problems without aggression.	Making relationships Managing feelings and behaviour
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity. Uses talk to clarify feelings and events.	Listening and attention Speaking
EAD	Begins to build a repertoire of songs.	Exploring and using media and materials

Resources

Two glove puppets. A display poster of the Golden Rules (these are the moral values that you wish to promote and can be pinned up on the wall).

The Golden Rules advocated by the Jenny Mosley Quality Circle Time Model are:

- **Be gentle, don't hurt anybody.**
- **Be kind and helpful, don't hurt people's feelings.**
- **Be honest, don't cover up the truth.**
- **Work hard, don't waste time.**
- **Look after property, don't waste or damage things.**
- **Listen to people, don't interrupt.**

If you feel that the wording is too difficult for the children to understand, then just concentrate on the first three, including the others gradually.

Please see "Training and Resources" page at back of book for information on how to obtain resources such as Golden Rules posters.

Introduction

Introduce the two puppets to the children by name, e.g. Harry Hedgehog, Rosie Rabbit. Tell the children that Rosie wants to talk to them. Rosie says:

“Harry Hedgehog is making me feel very sad. He hits me and calls me nasty names. He won’t share anything with me and he breaks my toys. I don’t think he knows how to be kind.”

Middle

Using hands up to answer, ask the children if they think that Harry Hedgehog should be doing these things. Ask the children why. Discuss with the children how Harry Hedgehog should behave. What could they do if Harry Hedgehog didn’t know how to be good – perhaps they could tell and show him? Display the poster of the Golden Rules for everyone to see. Go through each one to make sure that the children understand them. Tell the children that if everyone follows the Golden Rules in your setting, it will be a happy place for all of them.

Closing

Ask the children to hold hands around the circle and sing with you (to the tune of “London Bridge is Falling Down”):

***We will keep our Golden Rules, Golden Rules, Golden Rules.
We will keep our Golden Rules, to make our nursery/school happy.***

Further Ideas

Divide the children into small groups and let them role-play situations in which they can practise being kind and helpful, e.g. pretend that you are a child that has been hurt, a child who feels sad, or a child who has no one to play with. Help them with the dialogue they might use.

Photocopy the Golden Rules for each child and ask them to colour in the background using “happy” colours. They can then take their copies home.

All About Me (8)

Learning Intentions: To have an awareness of their own views and feelings, personal affirmation.	PSED CL PD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Can describe self in positive terms.	Self-confidence and self-awareness
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity.	Listening and attention
	Uses talk to organise feelings.	Speaking
PD	Negotiates space successfully, changing direction to avoid obstacles.	Moving and handling

Resources

A box with a mirror placed inside. A “talking object”.

Introduction

Say to the children that you have a box and when you look inside you can see someone special. Ask if they would like to see the special person. Say to the children that they must keep very quiet as they pass the box around and not say who the special person is until everyone has had a look.

Ask the children who the special person is. When they answer “Me!” tell them that they are right, they are all special.

Middle

Play a game of changing places by category, e.g.

“Anyone who has a dog, likes ice cream, likes the colour blue” etc.

Closing

Using Talking Ted, end with a round of:

“I am good at _____.”

If a child cannot think of anything, invite the other children to offer a suggestion.

Further Ideas

Create a special "Golden Chair" by painting a chair gold and placing a cushion on it. Choose a different child each week to sit on the chair. Keep a good piece of work completed by the child to show to the other children. The other children can make positive statements about the child in the chair such as:

"Sasha is good at running, she likes playing with other children, she smiles a lot, she is helpful at tidying up..."

Photocopy a shield for each child with various headings and help them fill it in. Display the shields on the wall.



My Friend (9)

Learning Intentions: To have a developing awareness of their own needs, views and feelings and be sensitive to the needs, views and feelings of others. To form good relationships with peers.	PSED CL
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	<p>Initiates conversation, attends to and takes account of what others say.</p> <p>Explains own knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Confident to speak to others about own opinions.</p> <p>Understands that own actions affect other people.</p>	<p>Making relationships</p> <p>Self-confidence and self-awareness</p> <p>Managing feelings and behaviour</p>
CL	<p>Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others.</p> <p>Uses talk to clarify ideas and feelings.</p>	<p>Understanding</p> <p>Speaking</p>

Resources

Two photographs of friends of yours. Two soft toys or glove puppets. A “talking object”.

Introduction.

Show the photographs to the children and tell them that they are your friends. Ask the children if they have friends. Ask them what is nice about having friends. Ask the children why it is good to be friendly to others.

Middle

Introduce the puppets or toys to the children:

“Hello children, I’d like you to meet Harry Hedgehog and Maisie Mouse. They are friends. What sort of things do you think they might do together?”

E.g. play with toys together, share sweets, go for a walk, give each other a hug etc. Mime the

activities with the toys talking through the actions. The children can also mime the activities with a partner in the centre of the circle.

Closing

Using Talking Ted, end with a round of:

"I like friends because _____."

Further Ideas

Encourage the children to work with different partners so that they get to know each other. It is also a good idea for them to sit by different children in the circle.

Encourage friendliness by giving stickers or a certificate to a child who has been friendly to another, stating "You are a kind friend".

Ask the children to draw a picture of their friends.



Sharing (10)

Learning Intentions: To have a developing awareness of the needs and feelings of others, to respond to significant experiences, showing a range of feelings when appropriate.

PSED
CL
EAD

Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Explains own knowledge and understanding. Takes steps to resolve conflicts with other children. Understands that own actions affect other people. Beginning to be able to negotiate and solve problems without aggression.	Making relationships Managing feelings and behaviour
CL	Can listen and do for a short span. Responds to instructions involving a two-part sequence. Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others.	Listening and attention Understanding
EAD	Plays cooperatively as part of a group to develop and act out a narrative.	Being imaginative

Resources

Two glove puppets. A small selection of toys.

Introduction

Introduce the puppets to the children, e.g. Harry Hedgehog and Sita Squirrel. Sita Squirrel has a pile of toys in front of her. Play out the following dialogue with the puppets:

You: *Harry Hedgehog, why are you looking so sad today?*

Harry: *Sita won't let me share the toys with her. I've got nothing to play with.*

You: *Sita, why won't you share the toys with Harry Hedgehog?*

Sita: *Because I had them first.*

You: *But Sita, you can't play with all the toys at once and poor Harry Hedgehog has no toys.*

Ask the children if they think that Sita is right. What should Sita do? Why should Sita share?

You: *Sita, you have heard what the children have said, now what do you think?*

Sita: *I think they are right. It is kind to share and I want to be kind. I will let Harry Hedgehog have some.*

Sita gives some toys to Harry.

Middle

Tell the children that they are going to pretend to do some sharing.

They are to imagine that they have their very favourite sweets in a bag. Think about taking one of these delicious sweets and popping it into their mouth. Imagine the lovely taste.

Now they are going to be kind and pretend to offer their sweets to other children. (Each child has a turn to offer to two other children). Remind children to say thank you when they have taken a sweet. They then pretend to eat and enjoy the sweet.

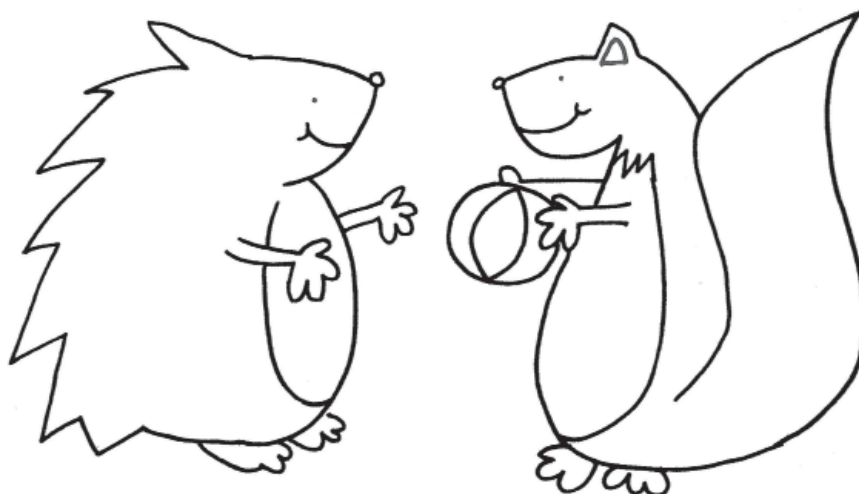
Closing

Pass a hand-shake around the circle.

Further Ideas

Make a point of emphasising the idea of sharing and turn-taking when opportunities arise. This also applies to sharing jobs such as tidying up.

Draw round a child's hand and use it to write any sharing that a child might demonstrate. This is called a "Helping Hand".



Being Kind (11)

Learning Intentions: To be sensitive to the feelings of others, consider the consequences of their words.	PSED CL EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Explains own knowledge and understanding Takes steps to resolve conflicts with other children. Understands that own actions affect other people. Beginning to be able to negotiate and solve problems without aggression.	Making relationships Managing feelings and behaviour
CL	Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others. Uses talk to clarify ideas and feelings.	Understanding Speaking
EAD	Creates simple representations of events	Being imaginative

Resources

Two glove puppets or soft toys. A “talking object”.

Introduction

Introduce the toys, e.g. Daisy Doll and Teddy. Tell the children that Daisy is crying because Teddy has called her a nasty name. Ask the children if they think Teddy was right to do that. *Why not?* Establish with the children that saying unkind things hurts people’s feelings. What should Teddy do now? *Say that he is sorry.* Act this out with advice from the children as to what Teddy should say.

Middle

Ask the children to tell you actions that are kind e.g. sharing, helping someone when they are hurt, saying nice things to people etc.

Choose two or three of the suggestions and let the children mime the actions in the middle of the circle with a partner.

Closing

Ask the children to think of one kind thing that they could do for someone e.g. helping mummy, letting a brother/sister share toys etc. Using Talking Ted end with a round of:

“I will be kind and _____.”

Further ideas

The “Kindness Tree”. Plant a bare twig into a pot. Make cut-outs of leaves and when a child has done something kind, write the child’s name and the deed on a leaf and attach it to the twig.

Make a wall chart with the children under the headings Kind/Unkind. Use gold backing behind the kind words, but a dull background for the unkind words. For example:

KIND	UNKIND
Share	Kick
Take turns	Push
Help	Call names
Friendly	Bossy



Head to Toes (12)

Learning Intentions: Work as part of a group, take turns, learn and practise body parts.	PSED CL PD EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Initiates conversation, attends to and takes account of what others say.	Making relationships
	Confident to speak to others about own interests.	Self-confidence and self-awareness
	Can describe self in positive terms.	
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity.	Listening and attention
	Links statements to a main theme.	Speaking
PD	Experiments with different ways of moving.	Moving and handling
EAD	Begins to build a repertoire of songs.	Exploring and using media and materials

Resources

A "talking object".

Prior to Circle Time, make a recording of each child saying a few sentences about something they like doing.

Introduction

Use the traditional rhyme:

Tommy Thumb, Tommy Thumb, where are you?

Substitute the first two words (repeated) for each child's name. The child replies:

"Here I am, here I am."

To which you respond:

“How do you do!”

Continue around the circle until all the children have had a turn.

Middle

Play the recording of the children’s voices. Ask them to guess who each one is. They must put up their hands to guess, no shouting out.

Closing

Placing both hands on the body parts named, say the following rhyme with the children:

*Heads and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes,
Heads and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.
Eyes and ears and mouth and nose,
Heads and shoulders, knees and toes.*

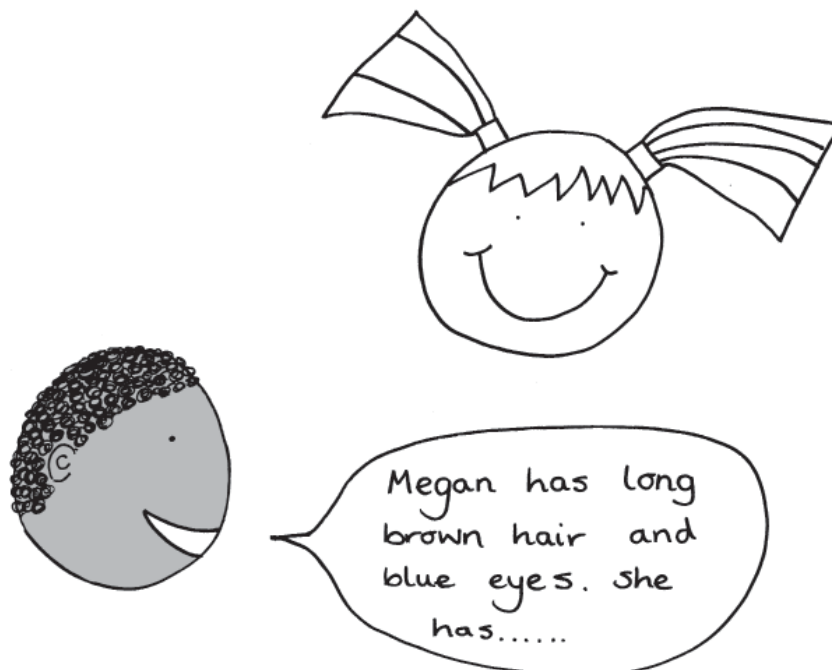
Using Talking Ted, end with a round of:

“I like my _____ (name one body part).”

Further Ideas

On a large sheet of paper, draw round the body shape of each child. Let the children draw in hair, face etc.

In pairs, the children study their partner’s features and describe them to you, e.g. colour of hair, eyes, shape of face, length of hair etc.



Body Movements (13)

Learning Intentions: to work as part of a group, learn about body parts.	PSED CL PD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Can describe self in positive terms and talk about abilities.	Self-confidence and self-awareness
CL	Can listen and do for a short span. Responds to instructions.	Listening and attention Understanding
PD	Experiments with different ways of moving.	Moving and handling

Resources

None.

Introduction

Read the following extract to the children and act out each body movement:

Heads nod

Eyes blink

Mouths snap (open and shut)

Necks bend

Shoulders lift

Arms raise

Fingers wiggle

Waists turn

Hips sway

Knees bend

Feet jump

Middle

Ask the children what they use various body parts for. The children respond by saying and miming an appropriate action, for example:

I use my eyes to see with.

I use my feet to walk, run and jump.

I use my hands to play with.

Closing

Read the following extract to the children and act out each body movement ending with the children being still and quiet.

I wriggle my fingers

I wriggle my toes

I wriggle my shoulders and I wriggle my nose

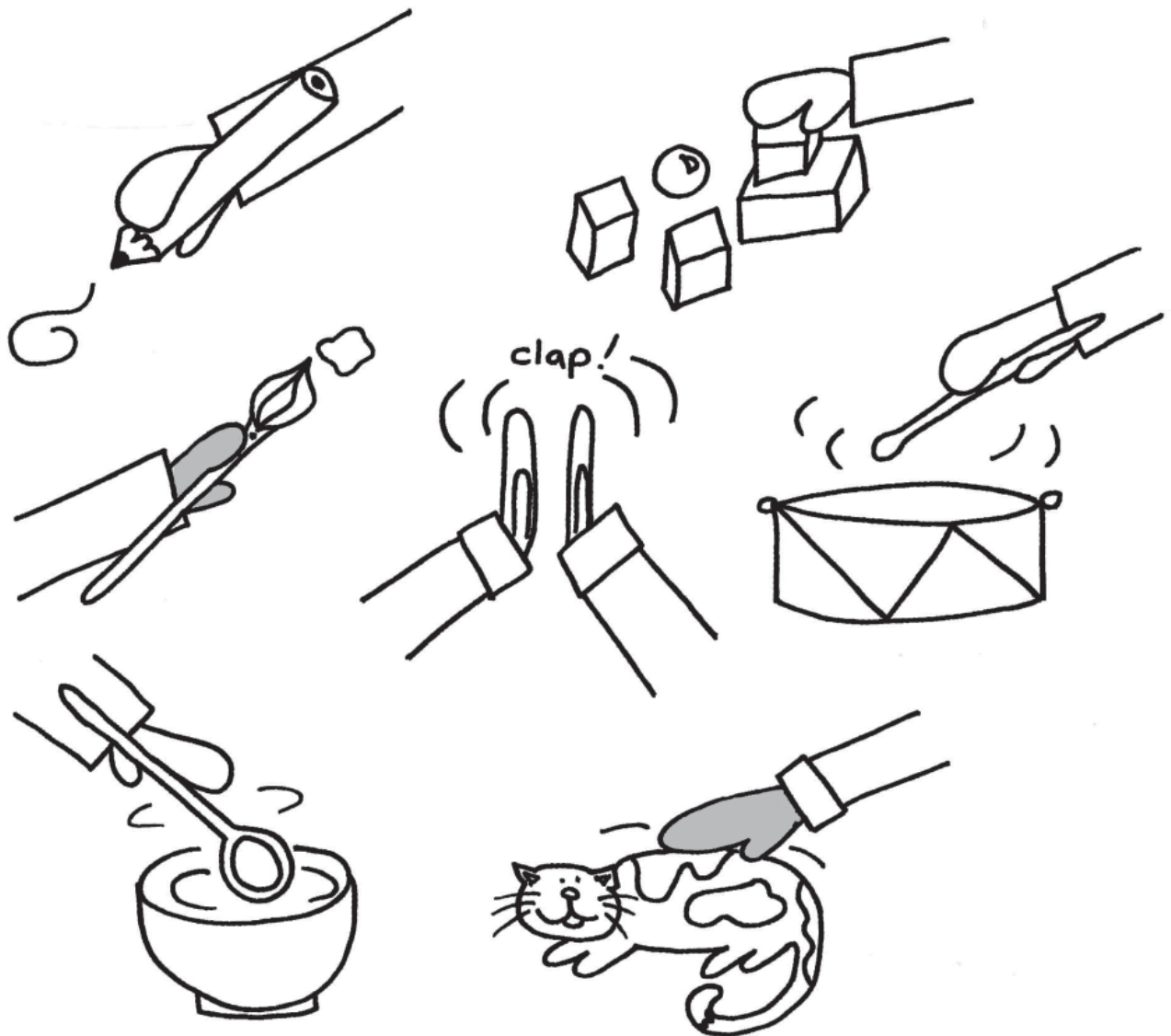
When there are no more wriggles left in me

I am as still as I can be.

Further Ideas

Have a brainstorming session with the children to see how many activities they can think of which involve using their hands.

See how many different ways they can think of moving their feet, e.g. walking, running, shuffling, on tip-toe, jumping etc.



This is the Way we Brush our Hair (14)

Learning Intentions: To practise dressing and undressing independently, manage personal hygiene.	PSED CL PD EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Confident to speak to others about own needs.	Self-confidence and self-awareness
CL	Responds to instructions. Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify events.	Understanding Speaking
PD	Shows some understanding of good practices with regard to hygiene.	Health and self-care
EAD	Begins to build up a repertoire of songs Creates simple representation of events.	Exploring and using media and materials Being imaginative

Resources

Dressing up clothes – you will need three to four items for each child. Choose these according to age and ability of the children.

Introduction

Tell the children that they are going to mime getting up and getting dressed. Ask them to tell you what they do and in what order, then talk them through the mimes.

Middle

Put the dressing-up clothes into the centre of the circle. Specify to the children what they have to find and put on, e.g. a hat, a jumper, skirt/trousers and a jacket. Tell the children that you want to see how quickly they can find and put on the items.

Closing

Sing with the children and mime the actions to:

Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush

Include actions such as:

This is the way we wash our face.

This is the way we brush our hair.

This is the way we clean our teeth.

When the children are “ready”, they sit down very quietly with arms folded and legs crossed.



Further Ideas

Have a selection of fasteners for the children to practise on, e.g. zips, buttons, Velcro, laces etc.

Play a game with the children where they take their shoes off and put them in the middle of the circle in a pile. Let each child, in turn, go into the centre and select their shoes from the pile.



Different Faces (15)

Learning Intentions: To understand that there are people with different views and cultures from their own which need to be treated with respect and to understand that they can expect others to treat their views and cultures with respect.	PSED UW
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Area of learning	What the children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Explains own knowledge and understanding and asks appropriate questions of others.	Making relationships
UW	Looks closely at similarities and differences.	People and communities

Resources

Masks of different ethnic groups, e.g. African, Chinese, Eskimo, Asian, Nordic, etc. (you can make these yourself by pasting magazine illustrations onto card). A mirror. A suitable book from the library in your setting about the life of a child in another country, e.g. "One big family" by Ifeoma Onyefulu (published by Frances Lincoln).

Introduction

Let the children pass the "faces" around and look at them. If any children want to, they can try on the masks and look at their reflections in the mirror.

Middle

Ask the children what differences there are between the faces, e.g. hair, skin colour, shape of eyes. Tell the children that there are lots of different people living in the world. What else might be different about them – food, language, clothing, houses? Older children may consider religion and culture.

Ask the children what is the same about all people, e.g. they all need food, somewhere to live, friends and family. They all have feelings. Prompt the children to recognise that in some ways all people are the same.

Closing

Read your chosen library book.

Further Ideas

Try and arrange for visitors of different races and cultures to come in and talk to the children and bring in items of interest such as different food, costume, religious artefacts.

Toy Tales (16)

Learning Intentions: To use language to imagine roles, respond to stories, work with a partner, speak clearly and audibly and listen attentively.	PSED CL EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Initiates conversations, attends to and takes account of what others say.	Making relationships
	Confident to speak to others about own interests and opinions.	Self-confidence and self-awareness
CL	Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others.	Understanding
	Links statements and sticks to a main intention.	Speaking
EAD	Creates simple representations of objects.	Being imaginative

Resources

A selection of story books about toys, e.g. Noddy, Paddington Bear, Sooty, Winnie the Pooh, enough to share one between two children.

Introduction

Arrange the children in pairs. Share the books out. Let each pair look at their book together and tell each other if they know anything about the character. You can demonstrate how to do this with your partner (a helper).

Middle

Tell the children that you are a magician and you are going to turn them into various toys. They can mime the actions of each toy in the centre of the circle. Tell them that when you clap twice they must stop and stand still until you turn them into a different toy, e.g. train, toy dog, robot, ball, puppet, toy mouse.

Closing

Using Talking Ted end with a round of:

“If I were a toy I would be _____ because _____.”

Further Ideas

Create a toy shop in the class room. The children can take turns at being a customer or a sales assistant. This circle session can be repeated using animal stories instead.

Using available costumes, make up a play in which the children pretend to be toys in a playroom. They come alive at night and go back to sleep at daylight. The children could perform their play to other classes or their parents.

The Letter “D” (17)

Learning Intentions: To hear and say initial sounds in words, link sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet.	PSED CL L
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Attends to and takes account of what others say.	Making relationships
CL	Can listen and do for a short span.	Listening and attention
L	Hears and says the initial sounds in words. Links sounds to letters.	Literacy

Resources

A selection of objects or illustrations beginning with the letter “D”, e.g. dog, doll, drum, dish, duck, dinosaur, donkey, deer, doughnut.

A large piece of card showing the letters “D” and “d”.

Introduction

Show the visual aids to the children. Ask them to name each item. Ask them if anyone can say the beginning sound of each word – repeat the name several times if necessary emphasising the beginning letter sound.

Middle

Ask if any child knows the name of the letter that makes this sound. Show the letter card. Ask the children if they can think of any other words beginning with the letter “D”. Lay out the cards in the middle of the circle. Invite each child to go into the circle, choose a card and say:

“I like the letter “d” _____ because _____.”

Closing

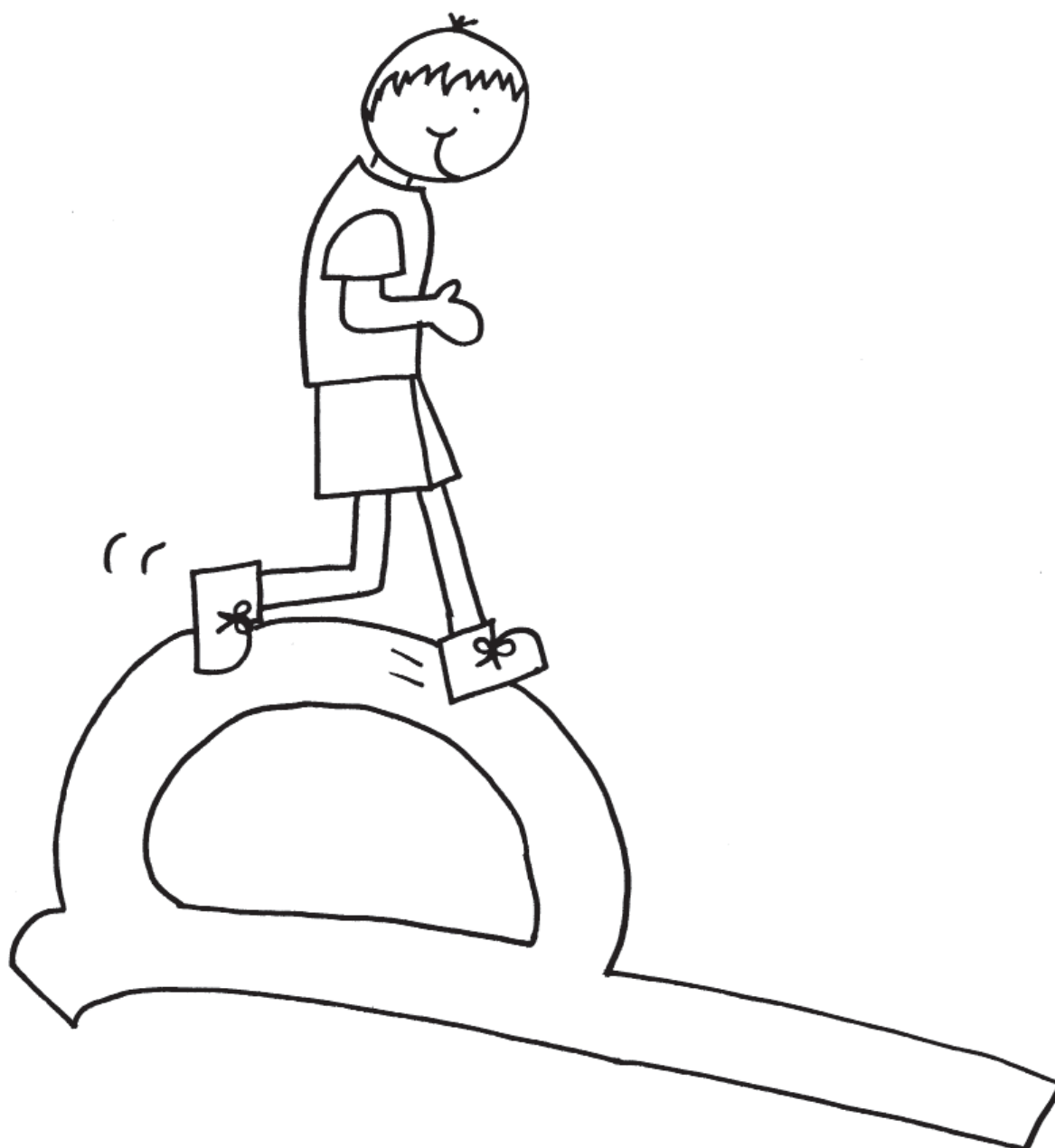
Tell the children you are all going to say some words beginning with the letter “D”, e.g. Daisy Doll dances, Daffy Duck likes doughnuts. The children repeat after you.

Say together the nursery rhyme:

*Diddle, diddle, dumpling, my son John,
Went to bed with his trousers on;
One sock off and one sock on,
Diddle, diddle, dumpling, my son John.*

Further Ideas

Think of as many ways as possible for the children to “write” the letter “D” or “d”, e.g. by joining dots, with blocks on the floor, using large brushes and paint, chalk large letters on the floor or use large cut-outs for the children to walk round, in the sand tray etc. Make a display table of objects beginning with the letter “D”. The children can bring in items from home as well. Repeat with other letters.



Interesting Objects (18)

Learning Intentions: To speak clearly and audibly, organise ideas, extend descriptive vocabulary and listen attentively.	PSED CL
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Confident to speak to others about own opinions.	Self-confidence and self-awareness
CL	Extends vocabulary, exploring the meaning and sounds of new words.	Speaking

Resources

Enough interesting objects for one per child and one for your self. Choose items for their colour, texture and shape, e.g. a shell, a pine cone, tree bark, brightly coloured beads, some moss. Put all the objects into a box.

Introduction

Ask each child in turn to come and take an object from the box and take one yourself.

Middle

Explain to the children that you want them to think of words which tell you about their object. Describe yours first as an example. You can prompt the children with appropriate questions so that you get responses like:

“Hard, soft, shiny, fluffy, bright, prickly, long, thin, etc.”

Encourage each child to think of two words to describe their object and then ask the other children if they know any more. You can then introduce some new descriptive vocabulary.

Closing

Depending on the objects that you have chosen, select a few categories that some, but not all of the objects will fit into, e.g. anything that is soft, hard, round, brown etc. Call out a category. If their object fits into that category the children can stand up and hold them out for all to see. They then sit down again and a different category is called.

Further Ideas

Make a display table of contrasting objects e.g. soft/hard, dull/shiny.

Go out on a walk and collect interesting natural objects to talk about. Place several items on a plain coloured tray and show them to the children. Ask the children to close their eyes then remove one item and ask the children to guess what is missing.



Nutty Nursery Rhymes (19)

Learning Intentions: To encourage the children to listen attentively, respond with spoken language and retell narratives in the correct sequence.	PSED CL L
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Confident to speak in front of others about own opinions.	Self-confidence and self-awareness
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity. Understands humour.	Listening and attention Understanding
L	Continues a rhyming string.	Reading

Resources

A book of nursery rhymes, e.g. "The Puffin Book of Rhymes" or the "Ladybird Book of Rhymes".

Introduction

Tell the children that you are going to read some favourite nursery rhymes, but you sometimes get them wrong and you need their help. Choose two or three familiar rhymes and say them a line at a time inserting incorrect words. For example:

Humpty Bumpy sat on a chair ...

Jack and Jill went up a mountain ...

Allow the children to correct your mistakes for you. Then say the rhyme correctly together with the children.

Middle

Ask if any of the children would like to stand up and say a nursery rhyme to the others. Allow the children to prompt if anyone needs help.

Closing

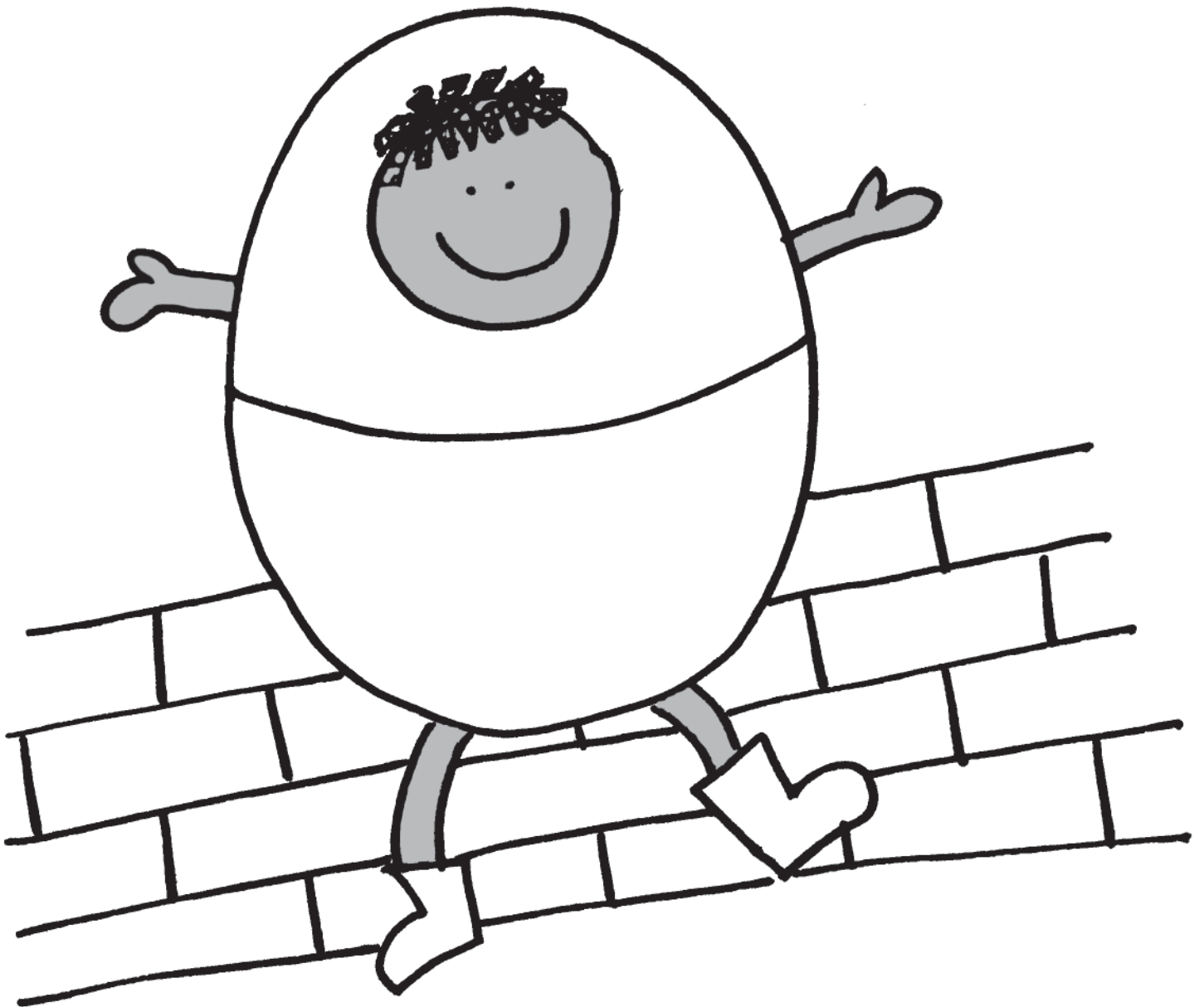
Read two or three more familiar rhymes. Leave words out for the children to supply, and then say them together with the children. For example:

"Baa baa _____ sheep have you any _____."

Further Ideas

Divide the children into small groups of four or five with an adult supervisor to each group. Allow the children to choose a nursery rhyme and mime actions to it while a child or practitioner says the rhyme. They can discuss the appropriate actions between themselves. Each group can perform their rhyme to the other children.

Work with rhyming words, e.g. matching words on cards which rhyme, thinking of words which rhyme with a given word.



Show and Tell (20)

Learning Intentions: To use talk to organise, sequence and clarify ideas, sustain attentive listening and take turns in speaking. To speak clearly and audibly.	PSED CL
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Attends to and takes account of what others say. Confident to speak to others about own interests.	Making relationships Self-confidence and self-awareness
CL	Uses language to recreate experiences.	Speaking

Resources

Ask each child to bring in a favourite object (this can be a toy, DVD, game, etc). Make sure you inform the parents about this request to avoid children being left out because they have forgotten or could not find anything suitable. It might also be a good idea to ask parents to talk about the object with the child prior to the Circle Time. Ask the practitioners to bring in a favourite object too. It may be a good idea, especially for younger children, to divide the class into smaller groups so that the activities do not take too long and become boring.

Introduction

Ask each child in turn to show their object and say why they like it. It might be a good idea if an adult has the first turn to demonstrate what to do. Two or three sentences will suffice. After each child has spoken, make a positive comment such as:

“That looks great fun.”

“That looks very interesting.”

“What a lovely colour! ”

Say to the children:

“Now we would all like to say thank you _____.” (Insert child’s name)

Middle

You now show your favourite object and ask the children to try and guess why you like it; using hands up to answer. You can add further reasons to the ones they suggest.

Closing

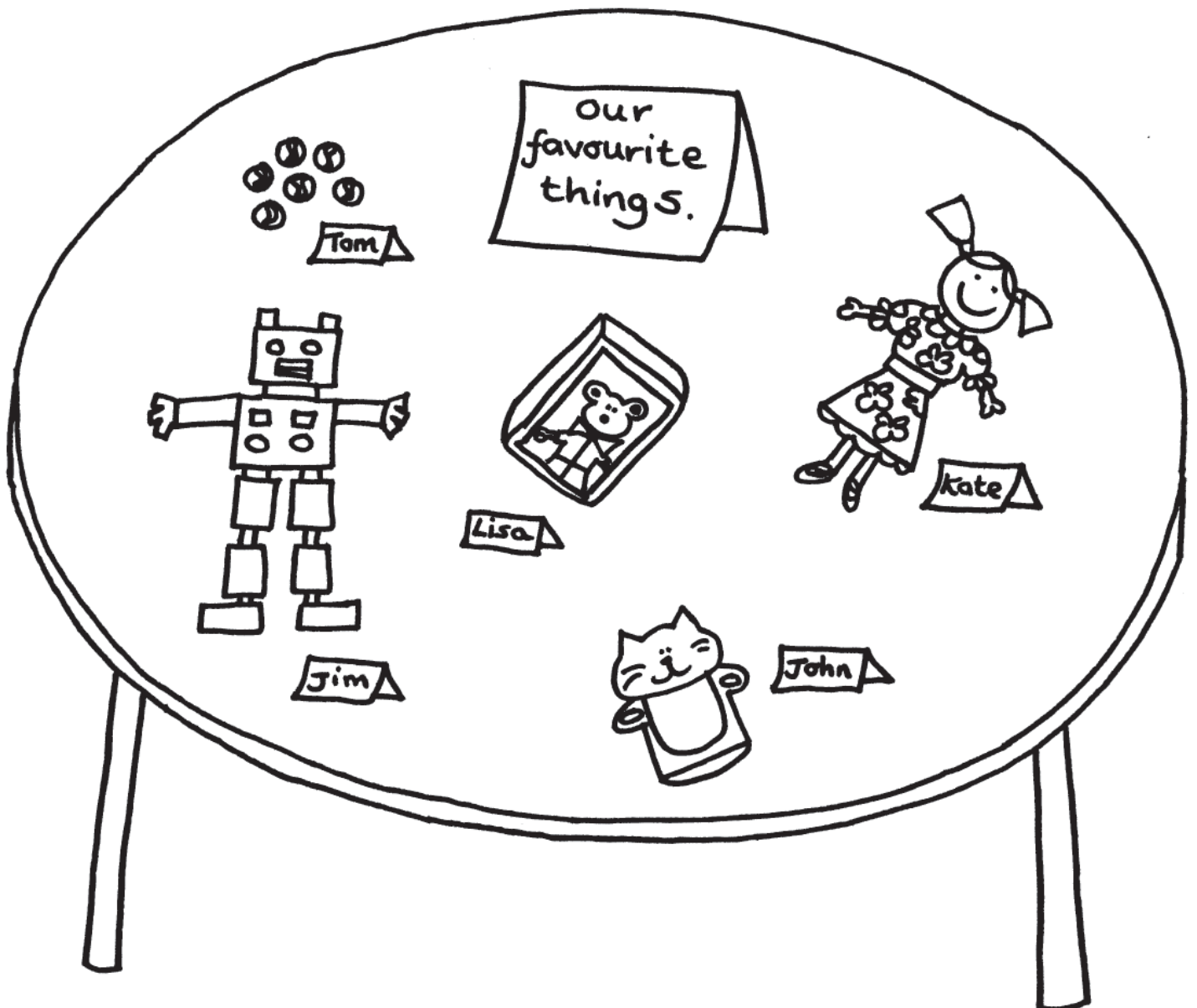
Ask the children one at a time to put their objects in the centre of the circle. Join hands around the circle and walk around the objects as you say in a slow, measured rhythm:

“We’ve brought in / all our favourite things / to share with everyone. / Thank you everybody / for making it / good fun.”

The children can then say the rhyme with you.

Further Ideas

Make up a display table of everyone’s favourite things with their names alongside. Invite parents, other classes and supervisors to come and look at it. Make models, collages or drawings of other favourite things.



My Favourite Book (21)

Learning Intentions: To discuss stories, respond with relevant comments and listen attentively.	PSED L
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Attends to and takes account of what others say. Confident to speak to others about own interests.	Making relationships Self-confidence and self-awareness
L	Enjoys an increasing range of books.	Reading

Resources

Ask the children (with prior prompts to parents) to bring in a favourite book from home. If a child fails to do this, ensure that an adult who is familiar with the child helps the child to choose a book he or she has enjoyed from the library in your setting. Also bring in a suitable favourite book to read to the children. It may be a good idea, especially with younger children, to divide the class into smaller groups for the introductory phase.

Introduction

Ask each child in turn to show the book he or she has brought in. Ask the child why he or she likes the book. Ask if any of the other children have read the book and what comments they have. Try to make a positive comment about each book such as:

“That book was very exciting/funny.”

“The pictures in that book are very good.”

“I liked the bit where _____.”

Middle

Show the children your favourite book and then read it to them.

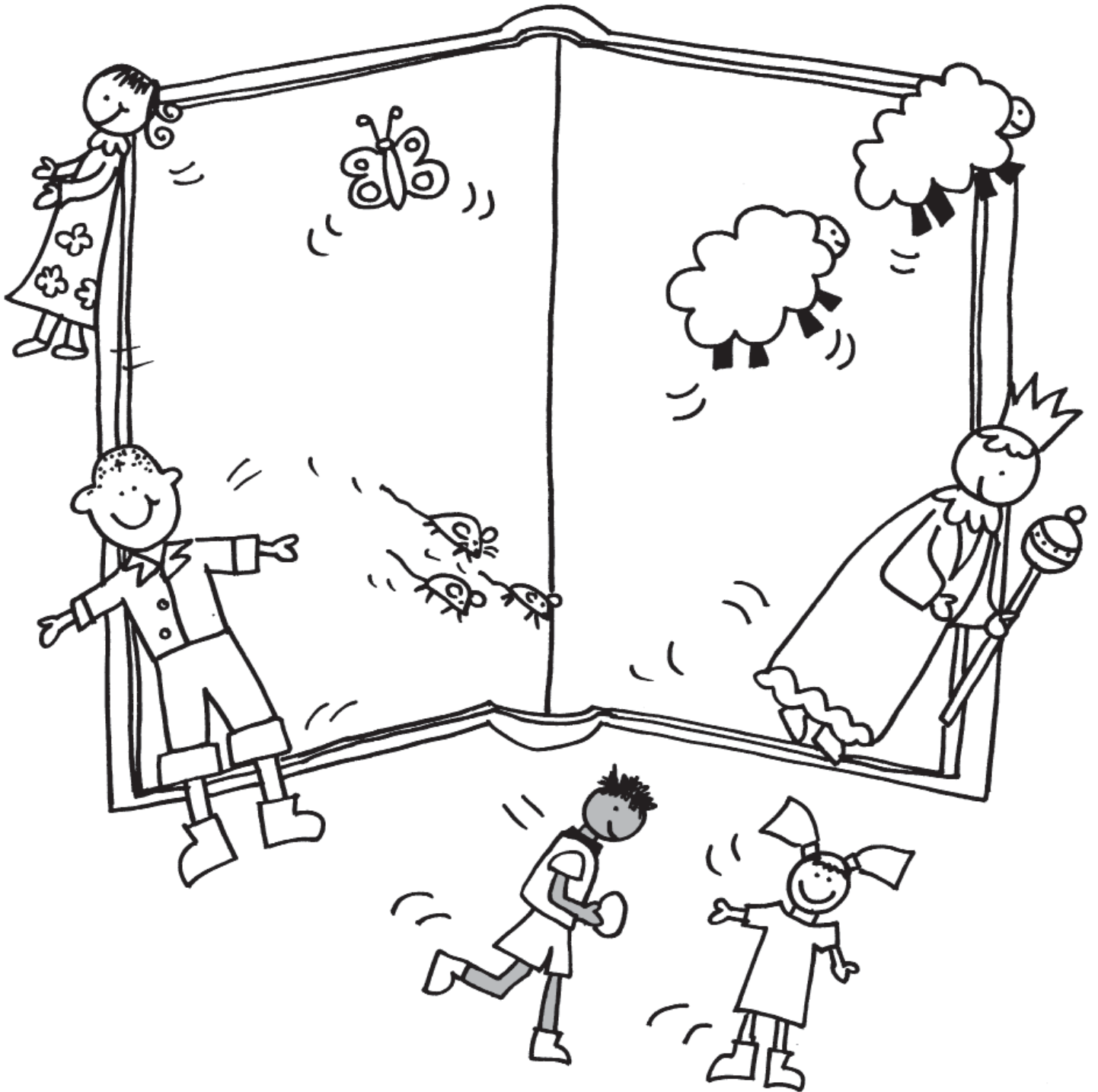
Closing

Ask the children to put up their hands and say why they thought you really liked that book. You can add further reasons to the ones they suggest.

Further Ideas

The children can paint or draw a picture from their chosen books.

They could have a dressing-up day and come to nursery/school in the costume of a book character. The other children could try to guess who they were. Get in touch with your local library to arrange a visit with your class. Alternatively, some libraries have a scheme where the librarian will visit your premises to talk to the children.



We're the same (22)

Learning Intentions: Link sounds to letters, read a range of familiar and common words. Work cooperatively.	PSED L
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Explains own knowledge and understanding and asks appropriate questions of others.	Making relationships
L	Begins to read words.	Reading

Resources

A selection of simple common nouns with corresponding illustrations, e.g. cat, dog, ball, cup, car, bag. Slips of card to cover the name (these can be fixed with sticky tack). Two sets of cards with a noun printed on each card to match the illustrations. A bag or covered box.

Introduction

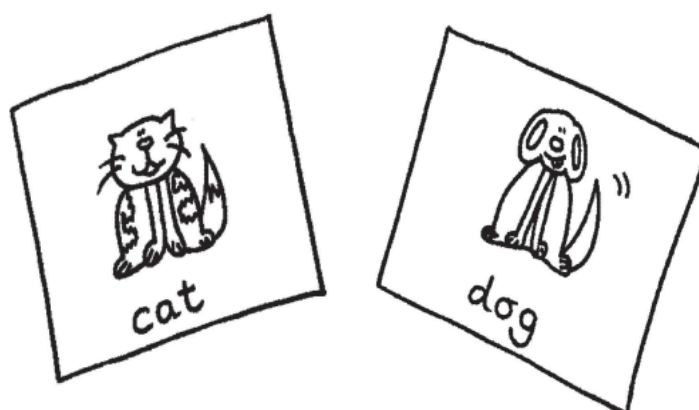
Put the two sets of cards into the bag/box and give them a shake. Display the visual aids, using three to six depending on the age of the children, for all the children to see. Invite each child in turn to select a card from the bag. The child shows the card to the other children and, if able, says the word. If not, the other children are invited to try. Then read the word to the children and ask them to repeat it. The child then places the card next to the correct visual aid.

Middle

Return the cards to the bag. Cover up the noun on the illustrations with your card slips. Invite the children to repeat the previous activity and see if they can place their cards by the correct illustration. The other children can offer help where necessary.

Closing

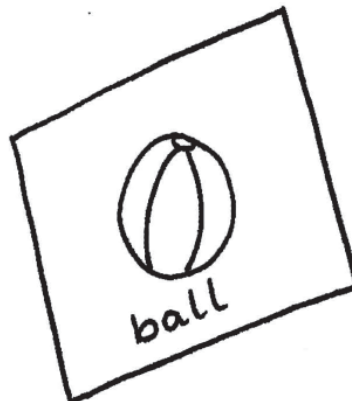
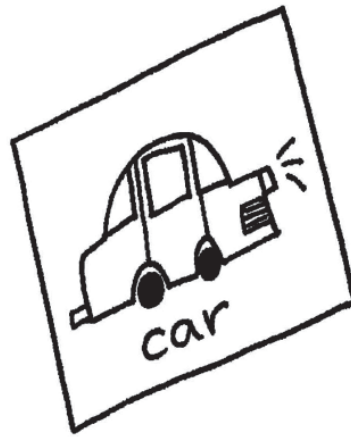
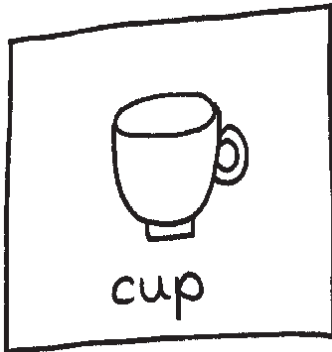
Collect in the cards again and select enough pairs to go around the circle, i.e. six children, three pairs of cards. If there are an odd number of children, retain one card for yourself. Distribute the cards face down to the children ensuring that pairs are not with consecutive children. Ask the children to look at their cards and find their partners with matching cards. When they have found their partners, they can show and say their words together to the rest of the circle.



Further Ideas

Older children can copy some of the words.

Build up the words together from the individual letters. Older children can try independently.



Magic Moments (23)

Learning Intentions: to use language to imagine roles, use talk to sequence ideas, sustain attentive listening, interact with others, speak clearly and audibly and show awareness of the listener.	PSED CL L EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Confident to talk to others about own opinions.	Self-confidence and self-awareness
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity. Uses talk to sequence and clarify ideas.	Listening and attention Speaking
L	Enjoys an increasing range of books.	Reading
EAD	Plays cooperatively as part of a group to develop and act out a narrative.	Being imaginative

Resources

A witch's/wizard's pointed hat. A wand.

Introduction

Tell the children that today they are going to think about magic and wishes. Begin with a game of "Winnie Witch Says" (played as "Simon Says") during which you wear the witch's/wizard's hat and hold the wand.

Middle

Discuss with the children how wonderful it would be if they could wish for nice things for everyone; for example:

"I wish it was always warm and sunny at the weekend."

"I wish everyone had a sweet tree in their garden."

"I wish no one was ever ill."

Ask the children if any of them would like to wear the witch's/ wizard's hat and hold the wand and make a nice wish for everyone; (they can only make one wish at a time). After each wish say with all the children:

"Thank you _____ for your kind wish."

Closing

Select a suitable book from your library with a magical theme to read to the children, e.g. one of the "Mog" books by Helen Nicoll and Jan Pienkowski (published by Picture Puffin).

Further Ideas

The children can make and decorate wizards' hats to take home.

See if you can organise a magician to come in and do a show for the children.



Shopping Day (24)

Learning Intentions: Use language to imagine roles, use talk to sequence ideas, respond to what they have heard by relevant comments, interact with others, take turns in conversation, speak clearly and audibly.	PSED CL EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Attends to and takes account of what others say.	Making relationships
CL	Responds to instructions involving a two part sequence.	Understanding
	Uses language to imagine and recreate roles.	Speaking
EAD	Plays cooperatively as part of a group to develop and act out a narrative.	Being imaginative

Resources

A small coffee table for the centre of the circle. Twenty grocery items, e.g. vegetables, fruit, cereals, toiletries. These can be real, from the nursery playhouse resources or cut-out adverts pasted onto card. A shallow cardboard box.

You may wish to split the class into groups of four to six for the first two phases. If you feel that these activities would be too difficult for your group, you can just ask the children to name items with you and then say what they would like to buy if they went shopping.

Introduction

Place the grocery items in the centre of the circle, along with the box. Child One goes to the centre, selects an item, places it in the box, returns to her seat and says:

"I went shopping and bought a _____" (*name of item selected*).

Child Two repeats this action and names her item plus the one already in the box. Child Three repeats the action and names her item plus the two already in the box, and so on. Any child who cannot remember all the items can look in the box. At the end, say with all the children:

"We went shopping and bought _____" (*naming all the items*).

This game can be played several times, beginning each game with a different child and new items.

Middle

Place the table in the centre of the circle. Tell the children they are going to pretend to go shopping.

Decide with the children what the shop will be, e.g. a bakery. Discuss what items would be in a bakery: loaves, rolls, cakes, pies. One child will be the shopkeeper, e.g. Mr/Mrs Bun the Baker, the others will be customers. The baker stands on one side of the table and each child in turn goes to the baker's to buy one to three items depending on age. The customer says:

“Please Mr Bun may I have _____.”

Mr Bun mimes getting the items and putting them in bags saying each item as he hands it to the customer. The customer mimes paying the money and says:

“Thank you Mr Bun. Goodbye.”

The customer returns to his seat and the next child goes shopping. It may be a good idea to demonstrate the procedure to the children with a helper. You can change the shopkeeper or type of shop as you wish.

Closing

The following story has four cue words repeated in the text:

Hello Mr Bun ... I have a very long shopping list today. I'd like a brown loaf ... and a white loaf ... and six currant buns ... a nice big vegetable pie ...and a small cottage loaf ... Now let me see. What else do I need? Oh yes, four plain buns ... a large cream cake ... a crusty loaf ... and one of your delicious apple pies ... Please can you make me a birthday cake ... for Danny next Tuesday and save me a sliced loaf ... and a savoury mince pie ... That's all. Thank you Mr Bun ... Goodbye.

Each time a cue word is read the children have to respond with a particular action:

Bun	Put hands on head.
Loaf	Tap knees twice.
Cake	Stand up, turn round, sit down.
Pie	All move one seat to the right.

Choose two to four cues depending on age. Use helpers to prompt the children with the correct actions. Rehearse the words and actions a few times. Pause briefly after each cue word.

Further Ideas

Arrange a visit to several different types of shop with small groups of children e.g. a butcher's, a newsagent's, a greengrocer's.

Try and arrange to take the children to a bakery to see how bread, cakes etc. are made.

Set up a type of shop in the play area using nursery materials and items brought in from home.

Fantasy Journey (25)

Learning Intentions: To imagine and create role-play, sustain attentive listening, responding with relevant actions.	PSED CL PD EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Confident to speak to others about own opinions.	Self-confidence and self-awareness
CL	Can listen and do for short span. Able to follow a story without pictures or props. Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others.	Listening and attention Understanding
PD	Experiments with different ways of moving.	Moving and handling
EAD	Plays cooperatively as part of a group to develop and act out a narrative.	Being imaginative

Resources

None, but part of this session will take place outside the circle.

Introduction

Tell the children that they are going to play a game. Each child in turn says:

“Car”, “bus” or “lorry”

... in that sequence around the circle. The children stand up to play the game. If any child gets the sequence wrong, he or she is out and must sit down. Practise saying the words in the correct sequence a few times with the children. See how fast the children can say the words.

Ask the children if they enjoy going on journeys. Ask them where they have been and how they have travelled.

Tell the children that today they are going on a pretend journey. You will tell them all about the journey as they go along and they must mime the appropriate actions.

Middle

Read the following extract:

Before we go on our journey we must make sure that we have everything that we will need. We will start by packing our backpacks. Put your backpack on the floor and open it up. Now we will put in some food and drink, a torch, our sleeping bags and a thick jumper in case it gets cold. Pick up your backpacks and put them on your backs.

Right, off we go. We are going to walk across a field, but first we have to climb over a stile. Be careful where you tread in the field — there are stinging nettles and you don't want to get stung. It's starting to get very hot and the heat is making you feel tired and thirsty. You begin to walk slower and slower, slower and slower.

Suddenly you see a stream. You take off your backpacks, sit down by the stream, take off your shoes and socks and dip your feet into the cool water; then you take your food and drink out of your backpack and have a picnic.

Time to carry on. Put on your socks and shoes, pick up your backpack and off we go again. We're walking through a wood now. There are fallen trees to climb over and sometimes the branches are low and you have to duck down to go under them. Carefully move the prickly brambles out of your way. The bushes are so thick now that you will have to get down on your hands and knees to crawl through them.

At last you are out of the wood. It's getting dark and cold. You will have to get your jumpers out of your backpacks and your torches. Shine your torches in front of you so that you can see where you are going. There is a big hill to climb. It's so steep you are puffing and panting. You climb higher and higher. Your legs are very tired. You are at the top of the hill and here is your camp site. You take your sleeping bags out of your backpacks and lay them on the ground. Then you climb in; close your eyes and go to sleep.

Use adult helpers to lead the children and demonstrate the mimes outside the circle.

Closing

Ask the children to return to the circle. Using Talking Ted, end with a round of:

"The part I liked best was _____."

Further Ideas

Use chairs to make a bus. All sit on the bus and sing the song "The wheels on the bus go round and round".

Make a wall display of all the different modes of transport, e.g. car, bus, lorry, train, plane, boat.

Let's Count Together (26)

Learning Intentions: To practise counting, use vocabulary involved in subtraction, practise naming colours.	PSED CL M EAD
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Area of learning	What the children will be learning.	Aspect
PSED	Attends to and takes account of what others say.	Making relationships
CL	Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others.	Understanding
M	Finds one less from a group of five objects.	Numbers
EAD	Begins to build a repertoire of songs.	Exploring and using media and materials

Resources

Make some play-dough or card currant buns. The number of buns you require will depend on the age of the children and how far you can expect them to count, between three and ten. The same number each of red, yellow and blue bricks in a bag.

Introduction

Lay out the currant buns in the centre of the circle. Count with the children how many there are. All say the traditional rhyme:

***(Five) currant buns in the baker's shop
Big and round with a cherry on the top
Along came (Joe) with a penny one day
Bought a currant bun and took it away.***

Choose a child to remove one bun. Tell the children that there is now "one less", then count together how many are left. Repeat with different children until there are no buns left in the centre.

Middle

Pass round the bag and let each child take out one brick. Put the bricks, one at a time, in colour sets, in the centre of the circle, naming the colour each time. Count how many bricks are in each set.

Closing

Say the traditional counting rhyme:

One, two, buckle my shoe etc.

Mime the actions and encourage the children to say the numbers with you if they are able.

Further Ideas

Teach the children other traditional counting rhymes such as:

Ten fat sausages sizzling in a pan.

Five little ducks went swimming one day.

One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive.

Use counting in practical or play situations, e.g. laying out plates and cups, counting a given number of jumps, taking a given number of steps.



Helping Sita (27)

Learning Intentions: To recognise numerals.	CL M
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Area of learning	What the children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity.	Listening and attention
	Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others.	Understanding
M	Recognises numerals in number line.	Numbers

Resources

A glove puppet. A large number line, say three to nine numerals, depending on the age of the children.

Numerals on cards which correspond to the number line.

Introduction

Introduce a puppet such as Sita Squirrel to the children. Sita shows the number line to the children. She asks them what it is and what is written on it. Sita says she would like to learn the numbers and asks the children if they would help her.

Read the numerals on the number line twice with the children. Sita would like a go. She makes some mistakes and forgets some numbers, allowing the children to prompt with the correct answer. Sita asks the children to read the number line with her once more.

Middle

Put the number line in the centre of the circle. Give each child a number card. The children take turns to look at their number, say it aloud then place it on the number line. Sita has a turn and asks the children to help her.

Closing

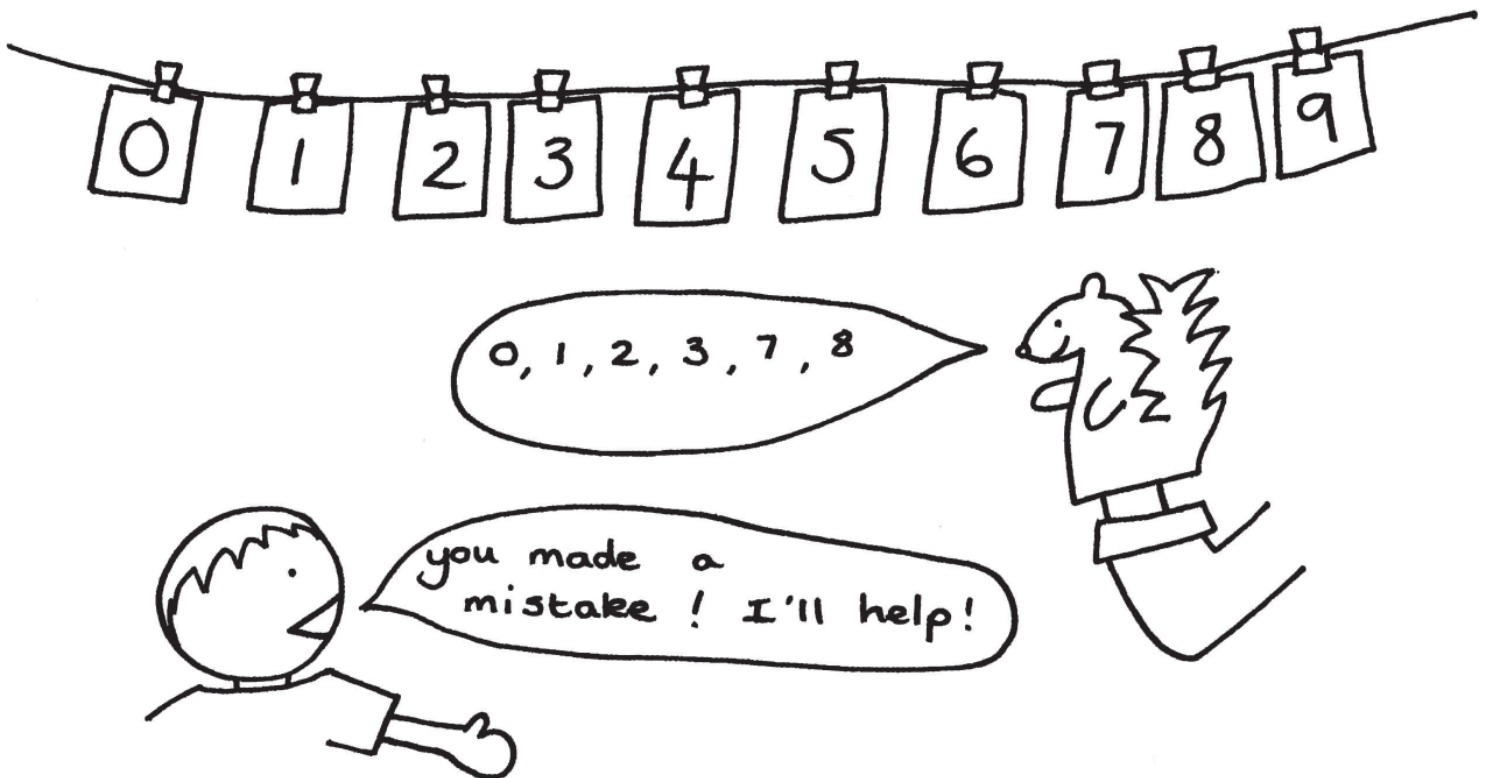
Play a game as you put the cards away. Choose a child and clap a number such as three. The child must pick up a card with the numeral **3** on and put it away. Continue like this until every child has had a turn and all the cards have gone.

Further Ideas

Create opportunities to recognise and practise numerals. Walk round large numerals on the floor, paint inside the outlines of numerals, show a different numeral each day at the beginning and end of the day.

Put numerals in random sequence. Ask the children to put them in the correct sequence first using a number line, then without.

Make and eat gingerbread numerals.



Circles, Squares and Triangles (28)

Learning Intentions: Use language to describe shapes, practise names of colours.	CL M
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Area of learning	What the children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity.	Listening and attention
	Responds to instructions involving a two part sequence.	Understanding
M	Beginning to use mathematical names for 2D shapes. Selects a particular named shape.	Shape, space and measure

Resources

Circles, squares and triangles in sets of different colours printed onto cards. One large card with the three shapes.

Introduction

Place the card with the three shapes in the circle for all the children to see. Ask the children if they know what each shape is called. Practise saying the names together. Call out different shapes at random. The children can volunteer to point to the correct shape on the card. Do this two or three times for each shape.

Middle

Give each child a shape card. The children take turns to show their card, name the shape and place it on the corresponding shape on the large shape card in the circle.

Closing

Put away the shapes by calling out the colour and name, e.g. blue square, red circle.

Further Ideas

Make up a wall or table display of these shapes in the environment:

Circle Sun, plate, ball, watch face.

Square Book, paper, television screen.

Triangle Roof, "Toblerone" chocolate, half a slice of toast etc.

Play snap with the shape cards. Construct things with small building bricks in the shapes of triangles, squares and circles.



Shapes and Patterns (29)

Learning Intentions: Use language to describe shapes, create sets, and create simple patterns.	PSED CL M
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Area of learning	What the children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Attends to and takes account of what others say. Explains own knowledge and understanding.	Making relationships
CL	Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others. Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking.	Understanding Speaking
M	Selects a particular named shape. Uses common shapes to create patterns.	Shape, space and measure

Resources

At least five different coloured sets of circle, square and triangle cards (three different colours will be enough for younger children). A CD player and a music CD.

Introduction

Shuffle the cards and give them out; one to each child. Ask the children to hold up their cards if they have a circle, then square, then triangle. Create different sets in the centre of the circle by either shape or colour categories, e.g. "any blue shape", "any coloured square". The older children can decide on the different sets themselves.

Middle

Let the children make simple repeating patterns with their shapes. They could begin with all circles then perhaps circle, square, circle, square, then two of one shape and one of another. See how inventive they can be.

Closing

Play musical shapes on the same principle as musical statues. When the music stops, whoever moves is out. Instead of calling the child's name call the shape that they are holding, e.g. blue square, red triangle.

Further Ideas

Let the children make up their own patterns using potato prints of the three shapes. Begin some simple sequences on paper for them to continue.

Put coloured bricks or beads in a given sequence.

Bigger and Smaller (30)

Learning Intentions: To use language to compare size.	CL M
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Area of learning	What the children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Can listen and do for a short span. Responds to instructions. Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking.	Listening and attention Understanding Speaking
M	Orders items by height.	Shape, space and measure

Resources

Six objects of varying sizes.

Introduction

Ask the children to crouch down on the floor, tuck their heads in and make themselves very small. Tell them that they are gradually going to grow bigger – uncurl, stand up and then stretch up their arms above their heads and grow bigger and bigger. Then they are going to get smaller and smaller and smaller again until they are very small.

Middle

Place the objects in the circle. Pick up two and ask the children which one is bigger. Repeat with two more and ask which object is smaller.

Ask the children to help you put the objects in order of size. Say as you do this, “small, bigger, bigger, bigger” etc. Then, looking at the objects from the largest, say:

“Big, smaller, smaller, smaller etc.”

If the children are able, also use “biggest” and “smallest”.

Closing

Choose two children. Ask “Who is bigger?” Say “Tom is bigger”. Repeat with “Who is smaller?” Do this a few times. Put the children in order of height. Older children can say:

“I am bigger than _____ and smaller than _____.”

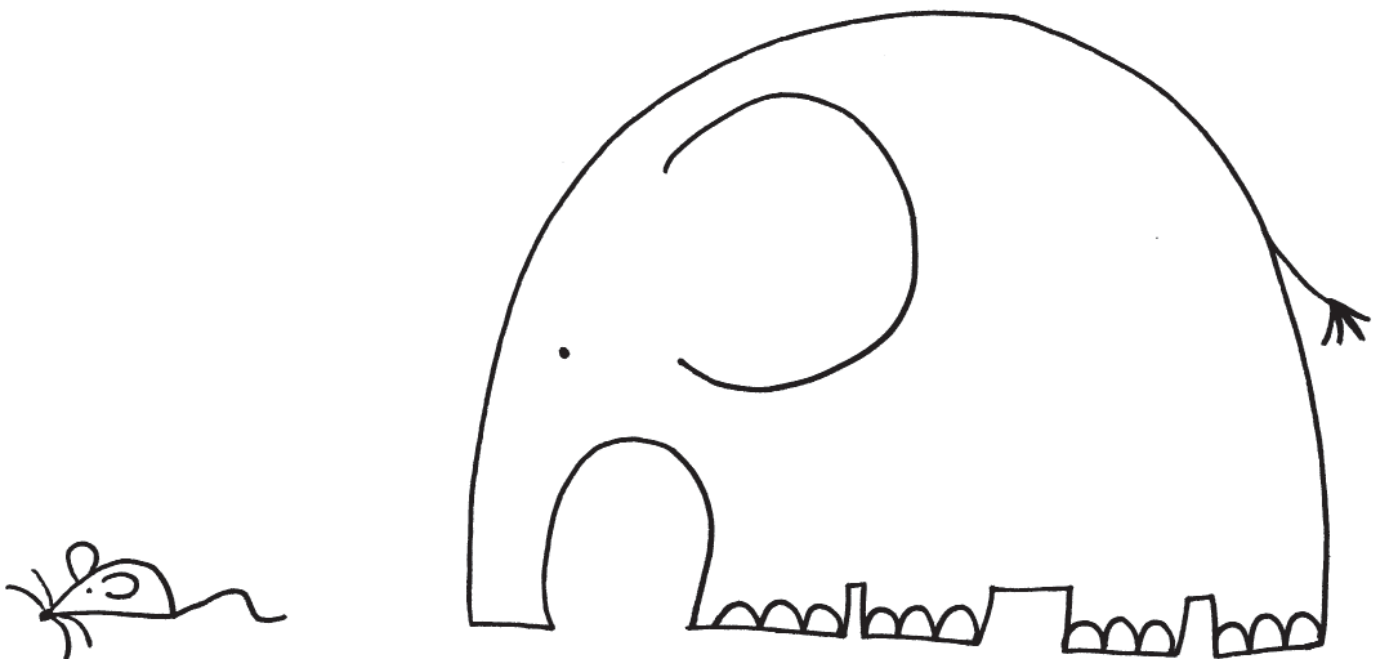
Further Ideas

Make up two headings of bigger and smaller. Give the children sets of illustrations to place under the correct headings, such as: mouse, elephant, shed, house, fruit, tree etc.

Ask the children to draw bigger and smaller, e.g. a big balloon, a smaller balloon, a small person, a bigger person.

Make a wall chart plotting the heights of the children at various times during the year.

Ask the children to make bigger and smaller shapes with play-dough.



More or Less (31)

Learning Intentions: to use language to compare two numbers or quantities, practise counting.	CL M
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Responds to instructions. Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking.	Understanding Speaking
M	Counts objects to ten. Uses the language "more" and "fewer" to compare two sets of objects.	Numbers

Resources

Choose up to ten items that the children are interested in, e.g. wrapped sweets, you can use fewer for younger children. Two soft toys, e.g. a doll and a teddy. Building bricks. Items suitable for the closing phase activities.

Introduction

Say to the children that you are going to give the teddy and doll some sweets. Make two piles of sweets in front of the toys; giving the teddy three sweets and the doll seven. Say to the children:

"Let's count the sweets."

Ask the children who has more sweets. Say together:

"The doll has more sweets."

Then ask the children who has fewer sweets and say together:

"Teddy has fewer sweets."

For younger children, just use "more".

Middle

Give two children a different number of bricks to build a tower. Count the bricks in each tower and ask the children whose tower has more bricks. Ask them to say with you:

"_____ 's tower has more bricks and _____ 's tower has fewer bricks."

Repeat this with different children and a different number of bricks.

Closing

Think of ways of getting the children to respond with the words “more”, “fewer” or “less”, e.g. share a drink between teddy and the doll giving one only a very small amount and ask the children if that is fair.

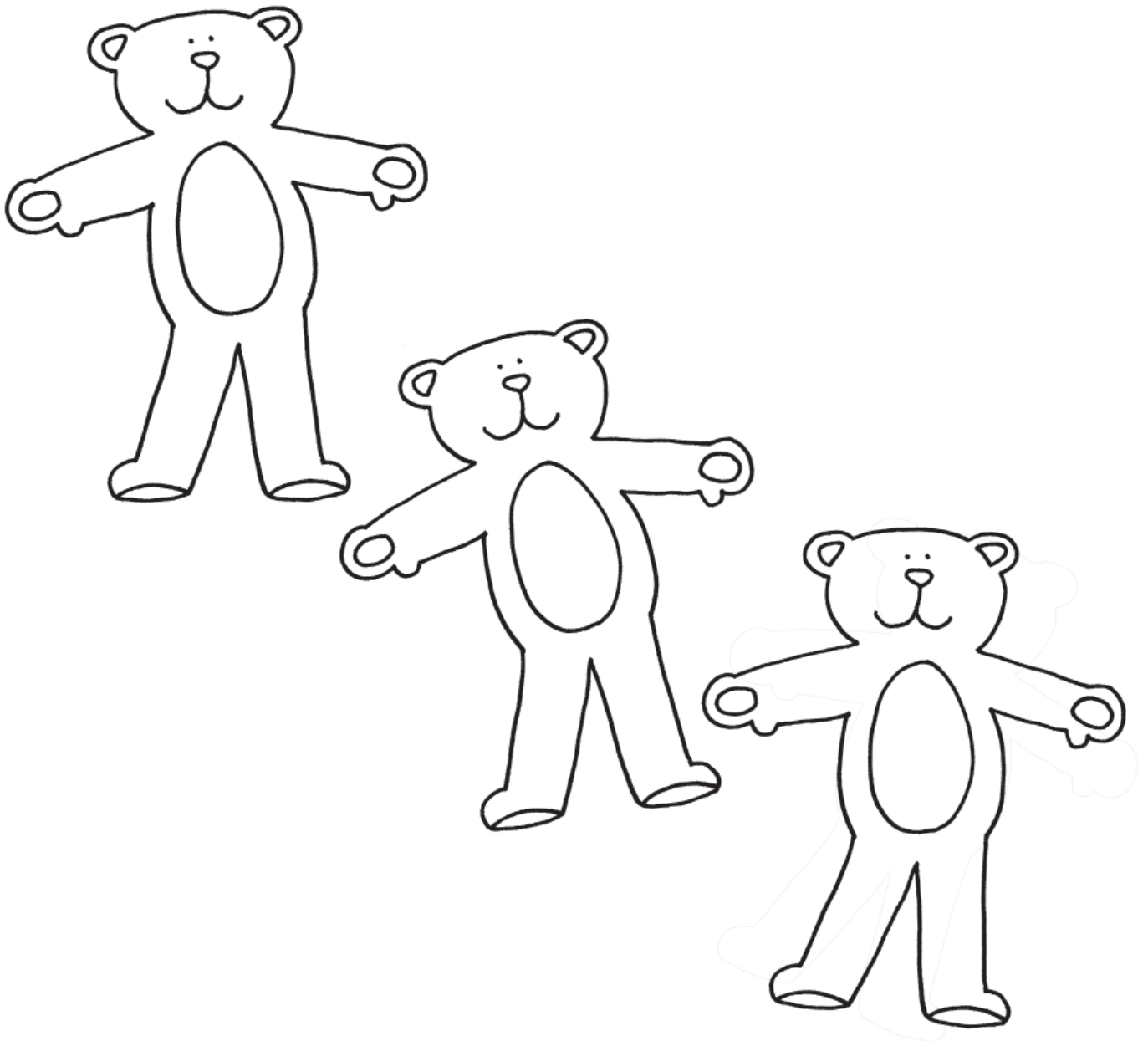
Prepare a packed lunch for either toy giving one much more etc.

Further Ideas

Ask the children to divide objects into groups of more and fewer.

Use addition and subtraction language with older children, e.g. begin with two groups of equal amounts and say:

“If I take one away / add one, which group has more / fewer?”



Heavier and Lighter (32)

Learning Intentions: To use language to compare objects.	CL M
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Responds to instructions.	Understanding
	Listens and responds to ideas.	
	Uses talk to organise and clarify thinking.	Speaking
M	Orders two items by weight.	Shape, space and measure

Resources

A selection of small objects of different weights. A set of balancing scales. Two bags of lentils of equal weight. Additional lentils. A glove puppet.

Introduction

Place the scales and objects in the circle (on a low table if you prefer). Introduce the puppet, e.g. Harry Hedgehog. Harry looks at the scales; he asks the children if anyone knows what they are for. Harry talks to the children as he places different objects on the scales and watches them go up and down. He asks the children if they can think of the reason why this happens — the side that goes down is heavier and the other side lighter.

Middle

Ask a child to choose two of the objects and place them on the scales. Which object is heavier and which is lighter? Say this with the children. Repeat several times with different children. Put the two equal weights of lentils on the scales. Tell the children that they are the same. Add some lentils to one bag and ask the children why the scales have gone down. Then ask the children how you could make the other side heavier.

Closing

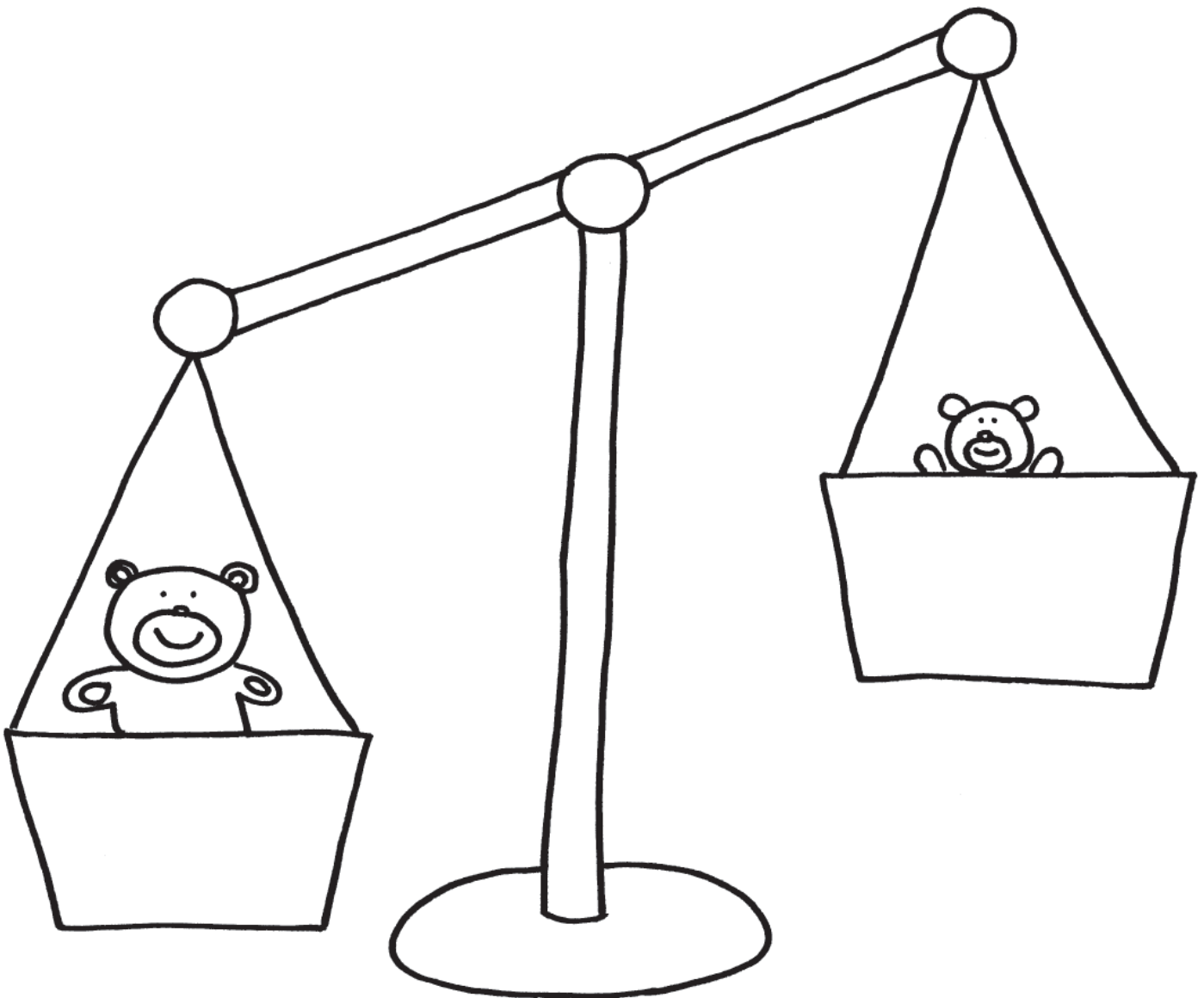
Let the children put the objects away by choosing two to weigh and discarding the lighter object each time.

Further Ideas

Let the children work in pairs with objects to weigh on the scales. Ask them to guess first which is heavier/lighter and then use the scales.

Use containers with sand on the balancing scales. Ask the children to see if they can make them balance. While they are working use the language of heavier/lighter.

Play a game filling a bag with items and see which child can lift the heaviest weight.



Under and Over (33)

Learning Intentions: Use everyday words to describe position.	CL M EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Can listen and do for a short span. Responds to instructions. Uses talk to organise and clarify thinking	Listening and attention Understanding Speaking
M	Can describe their relative position.	Shape, space and measure
EAD	Begins to build a repertoire of songs.	Exploring and using media and materials

Resources

A box, a cup, a bag, a chair, a teddy and a sweet.

Introduction

Play Simon Says with the children using positional words – in, on, under, behind, in front of, up, down, above, e.g.

Simon says put your hands behind your head.

Simon says put your hands under your knees.

Simon says stretch your arms up above your head.

Simon says kneel down.

Middle

Using the objects place them in different positions and ask the children to tell you where you have put them, e.g. put the sweet under the cup, put the teddy inside the box. Ask the children to place the objects where you tell them, e.g. put the teddy on the chair, put the cup beside the box.

Closing

Say with the children the following rhyme:

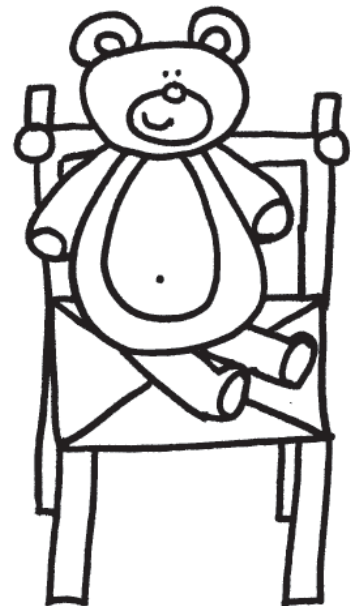
*Teddy bear, teddy bear turn around,
Teddy bear, teddy bear touch the ground,
Teddy bear, teddy bear reach up high,
Teddy bear, teddy bear touch the sky.*

Further Ideas

Use apparatus such as chairs, benches, tables, large boxes, tunnels. Tell the children to take up positions inside, under, behind, in front of, etc.

Use positional words to tell the children where to put things when they tidy up.

Let the children use positional words to tell you where to put things.



Money Matters (34)

Learning Intentions: To recognise 1p, 2p and 5p coins. For very young children just use 1p coins and base the activities on what they can manage.	CL M
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking.	Speaking
M	Beginning to use everyday language related to money.	Shape, space and measure

Resources

Use a number of 1p coins corresponding to the children's counting abilities, and some 2p and 5p coins. A selection of objects to buy, e.g. food from the playhouse, books, pencils etc. – with prices up to 5p.

Introduction

Look at the coins together. Ask the children if they know what they are – money. Ask the children if they know what their Mummy uses money for.

Talk about the size, colour, shape of the coins and look at the heads and tails pictures and the number depicting the value.

Middle

Tell the children that the coins are called pennies. This is shortened to “p” when written. Ask the children if they can think why this is. Put down two pennies and count them with the children then show them that the 2p coin has the same value. With older children, repeat this for the 5p.

Using the priced objects ask a child to choose something to buy. If, for example, the object costs 3p ask the children to tell you what coins you will need. Older children can suggest different combinations of coins for the same value.

Closing

Play a game of “Heads and Tails” with the children, asking them to guess which side the coin will land before you flip it. You could count how many times the coin lands on either side, by asking a child to stand on your right if it lands on heads or on your left if it lands on tails.

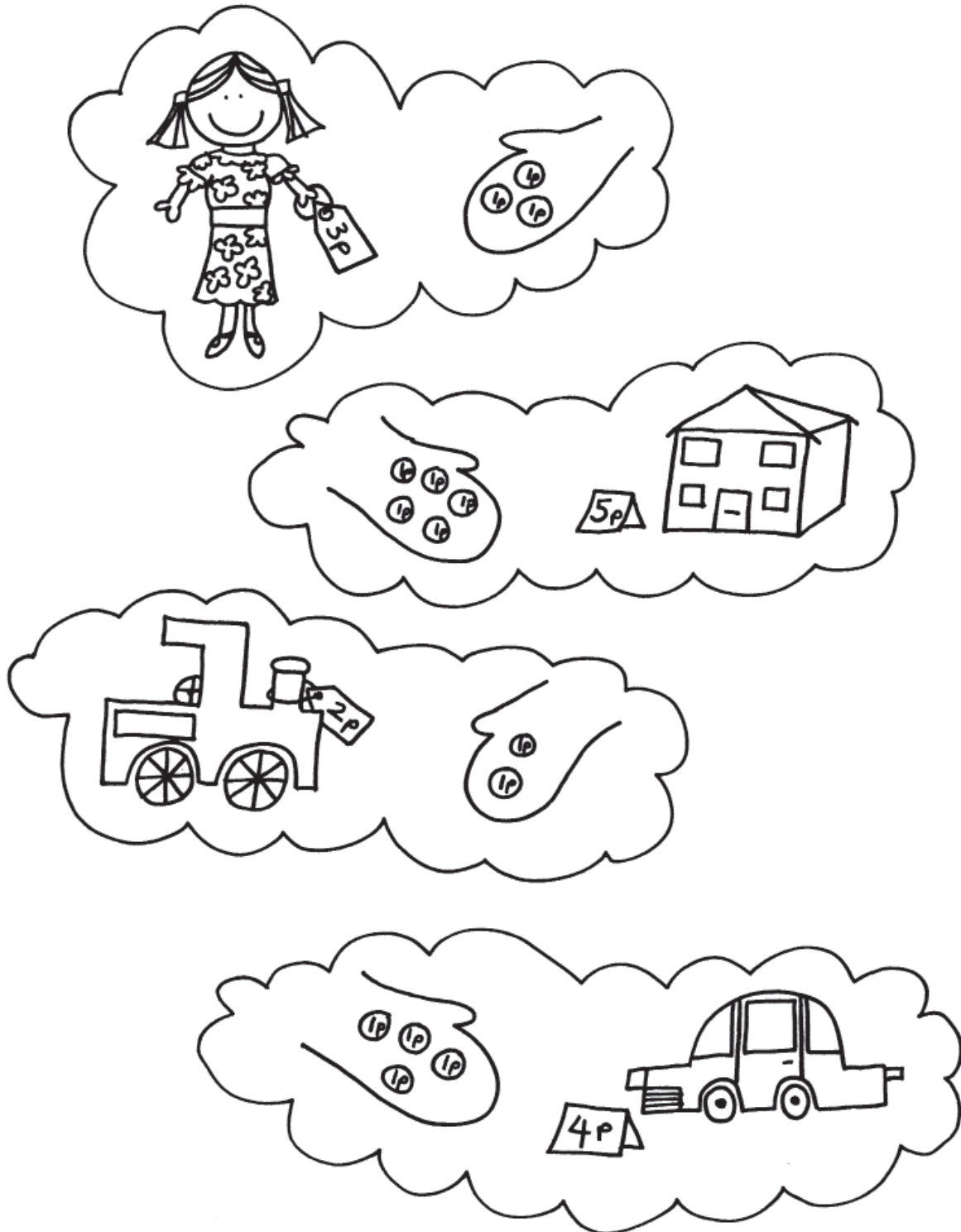
Further Ideas

Do some simple adding or subtracting of 1p from given amounts.

In small groups, with an adult helper for each group, let the children suggest some prices for items and then work out the correct coins needed to buy them.

With the parents' consent, organise a sweet shop with sweets priced from 1p to 3p. Let each child have five pennies and buy from the sweet shop.

Make rubbings of the coins using paper and wax crayons.



Let's Work it Out (35)

Learning Intentions: To use developing ideas and methods to solve practical problems.	PSED CL PD M
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Takes steps to resolve conflict.	Making relationships
CL	Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others.	Understanding
	Uses talk to clarify ideas and feelings.	Speaking
PD	Shows increasing control over an object.	Moving and handling
M	Begins to identify own mathematical problem.	Numbers

Resources

A doll. A teddy. Eight pretend cakes or similar treats. Two carrier bags and items to put into the bags. Two balls.

Introduction

Tell the children that you have a special treat for the doll and teddy. In front of the doll place five cakes and in front of teddy place three. Pretend that teddy is talking to you, and then tell the children that teddy says it is not fair because the doll has more cakes than he has. Ask the children to count the cakes and then ask them what you could do to make it fair.

Middle

Put all the items into the centre of the circle and tell the children that you are going to put them into the two bags for teddy and the doll to carry. Make one bag much heavier and give this one to the doll. Pretend to listen to the doll then tell the children that the doll has said it isn't fair. Ask the children if they know what the doll means by this and how to make it fair. Let the children sort out the items into the bags making them more equal weights.

Closing

Let the children sort themselves into two teams of equal number. Each team forms a circle and on the command "go" the children pass a ball round the circle. First team to finish wins. If the circles are too small, use helpers.

Further Ideas

Present the children with practical problems they can work on in pairs: dividing items into equal sets, choosing categories to place items in, problems using positional language such as how to reach a high object or move a heavy one.

Set up an obstacle course with the children. Let them go from A to B (this could be where the treasure is hidden) and then describe how they got there.

Baby Faces (36)

Learning Intentions: To look at and think about age-related changes.	CL UW EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity.	Listening and attention
	Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others.	Understanding
UW	Looks closely at change.	The world
EAD	Begins to build a repertoire of songs.	Exploring and using media and materials

Resources

Ask the parents to provide a photograph of each child as a baby in an envelope with the child's name on.

Introduction

Show the children each photograph in turn. Tell them that if it is their photograph they must not say. Ask the children to guess who each baby is.

Middle

Ask the children how they have changed since they were babies – they have grown, have hair, have teeth, can walk, feed and dress themselves etc.

Closing

Children sing and mime the actions to:

Rock-a-bye baby, on the tree top

Further Ideas

Make a table display of baby items, e.g. bottle, bib, rattle and teething ring.

Make a wall display of the baby photos. The children's names can be written under a flap so that people can guess the identities before looking at the names.

Discuss with the children some of the simple age-related changes of adulthood and old age.

Everything Grows (37)

Learning Intentions: to introduce the idea that living things need their own “food” to grow.	CL UW EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Can listen and do for short spans. Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others. Links statements and sticks to a main theme.	Listening and attention Understanding Speaking
UW	Looks at similarities and differences in living things.	The world
EAD	Creates simple representations of events.	Being imaginative

Resources

A pot plant.

Introduction

Let the children look at the plant. Ask them if they know what plants need to help them grow. Tell the children that the plant needs three things:

- Sunshine
- Rain
- Something special in the air that they can't see (called carbon dioxide) – let the children breathe the air in and out.

Choose four children to be “plants”. They will crouch down in the centre of the circle and be small plants. Tell the other children that they will help the small plants grow into big, strong plants. First they will be the sunshine. Mime a large circular movement with both arms to represent the sun coming out. The children copy this movement as you say;

***Our little plants are in the ground,
Out comes the sun so warm and round.
It shines on the green leaves all day long,
And helps our plants grow big and strong.***

Tell the small plants that they can grow just a little. Now the children mime the rain falling by moving their arms up and down in front of them and wiggling their fingers while you say:

***Our plants in the ground are thirsty I think,
Down comes the rain and they can drink.***

The little plants can grow a bit more, until the children are now standing upright. The other children blow gently to mime the air while you say:

***There's something special in the air
You can't touch it or see it you know,
But our plants can't live if it is not there
Because all of them need it to grow.***

The plants now stand up tall and stretch their arms and fingers above their head. Thank the children for helping the little plants to grow big and strong.

Middle

Ask the children if you planted them in the ground would they grow big and strong. Ask them what they need to grow.

Closing

Using Talking Ted, end with a round of:

"My favourite food is _____." (No sweets)

Further Ideas

The children collect differently shaped leaves and make pictures or do leaf prints.

You could look at a plant more closely with the children in small groups. Talk about the stem and what colour the leaves are and how a plant "drinks" through its roots.

Take a plant out of its pot and show the children the root system. Older children could be introduced to the idea of plants producing fruit to reproduce.

Fruit Basket (38)

Learning Intentions: To investigate objects using their senses, find out about some features of living things.	CL PD UW
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others.	Understanding
	Extends vocabulary by naming.	Speaking
PD	Negotiates space successfully, changing direction to avoid obstacles.	Moving and handling
UW	Looks closely at similarities and differences.	The world

Resources

A selection of different fruit – including some unusual types – e.g. apples, oranges, bananas, kiwi fruit, star fruit, pomegranate. Some illustrations of the shrubs and trees where the fruits grow.

Introduction

Allow the children to feel, look at and handle their own piece of fruit. Put the fruit into the middle of the circle and see if the children can find their piece of fruit again.

Middle

Ask the children if they know the names of the fruit. Ask them if they know where fruit comes from. You can show the children the visual aids and tell them that some fruit comes from other countries in ships or in aeroplanes. Discuss with the children the origin of the fruit from trees and shrubs. With older children, you might like to introduce the idea of the purpose of fruit to the tree.

Closing

Give each child the name of a fruit e.g. apple, orange or plum, around the circle. Tell the children that you will call a fruit and the children with that name must stand up and change places. Ensure that the children do know which fruit they are. You can give them a green, orange or red circle if they are young. If you call "fruit basket" all the children stand and change seats. Warn the children that they must not bump into each other. Use adult helpers where you think prompts might be needed or to ensure sensible behaviour.

Further Ideas

Cut up the fruit that you have brought in and let the children look at and discuss the insides then taste the fruit. They could make a chart to see which was the most/least popular.

Make a wall display of "Our fruit basket" with a large card basket filled with fruit the children have painted.



Wild Animals (39)

Learning Intentions: To find out about and identify some features of common wild animals in Britain.	CL UW EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate action.	Listening and attention
	Listens and responds to ideas of others.	Understanding
	Extends vocabulary by naming.	Speaking
UW	Looks closely at similarities and differences.	The world
EAD	Creates simple representations of animal movements.	Being imaginative

Resources

Illustrations of wild animals, e.g. mouse, rat, fox, badger, squirrel, rabbit, snake, hedgehog, frog.

Introduction

Ask the children if they have pets at home and what they are. Discuss with the children that some animals aren't kept as pets, but live on their own. Ask the children if they know of any animals that live in the countryside.

Middle

Show the children the visual aids. Ask if they can name the animals. Discuss with the children where the animals might live, e.g. underground burrows, hollow tree trunks, disused buildings, holes in banks, trees. What sorts of thing might these animals eat? Have any children seen any of these animals? Let the children pretend to be some of the animals and mime their actions.

Closing

Choose an animal story from your library to read to the children, e.g. "Little Tang" by Sally Grindley and John Butler (published by Orchard Books).

Further Ideas

Using cut-out illustrations and art materials, make a collage of wild animals. Make hedgehogs from clay, with twigs or brown craft matchsticks as bristles. Display the hedgehogs on a table of dried leaves.

Make "hedgehog" cakes using chocolate sponge mix and chocolate Matchmakers for the spines.

In small groups let the children choose a different animal to do a project on.

This and That (40)

Learning Intentions: To look at objects and identify if they are natural or man-made materials.	CL UW
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others. Uses talk to clarify ideas.	Understanding Speaking
UW	Looks closely at similarities and differences.	The world

Resources

A selection of different objects, e.g. an item made of wood, an item made of stone, a metal object, a plastic beaker, a china cup.

Introduction

Let the children look at and handle the objects; taking care with anything breakable. Discuss with the children the idea that some materials are naturally found in the world around us and some are made by people. Ask them to guess which are made from natural and which from man-made materials (this may be too difficult for younger children). Make two piles in the centre of the circle for the two different categories.

Middle

Discuss with the children where some of the natural materials come from, such as wood from trees, metal from under the ground. With older children you may like to go into further detail of how trees are cut down and sawn into planks, or how metal is mined from the ground and has to be smelted before it can be made into goods. You can act out with the children the story of a tree: planting a tree, the tree growing, cutting it down, sawing it into planks etc.

Closing

Using Talking Ted, end with a round of:

“My favourite thing was _____ because _____.”

Further Ideas

Try and a visit a timber yard or anywhere local for children to see natural Resources being turned into consumables.

Make a project with the children of how a tree is turned into a table.

My Family (41)

Learning Intentions: To think about and discuss “family” units, but be aware that this may be a sensitive issue for some children such as those with divorced parents.	CL UW
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Uses talk to organise feelings and events.	Speaking
UW	Enjoys joining in with family events.	People and communities

Resources

Ask the children (with prompts to the parents) to bring in photographs of those they live with, including pets.

Introduction

Split the class into small groups of four or five, with an adult to supervise each group. Under the direction of the adult, each child shows their photographs and tells who the “family” members are. Allow a set time of up to ten minutes for this phase.

Middle

Re-form the class into its usual Circle Time group. Explain to the children that they are going to play a game of changing seats when you call out certain categories such as:

Anyone with a younger brother/sister.

Anyone with an older brother/sister.

Anyone with a cat/dog/rabbit.

Anyone whose Mummy has black hair.

Anyone whose Daddy wears glasses / has a beard etc.

Anyone who has a “nan”.

When you call out a category, all the children who can say “Yes” to that category stand up and change seats. Use your knowledge of the children to make sure that everyone has a go.

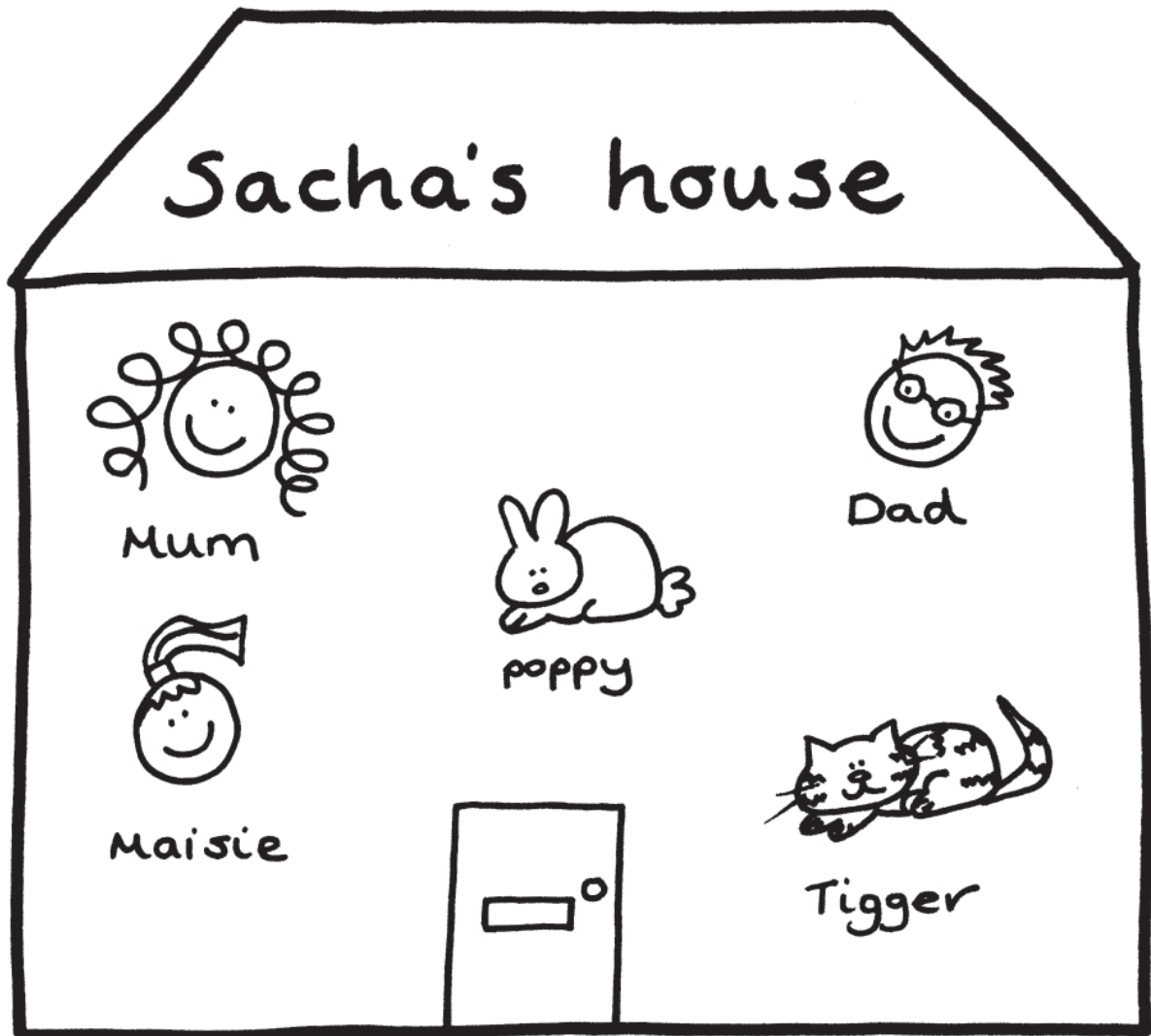
Closing

Using Talking Ted, ask the children what they like about their families, e.g. parents to look after them, cook their meals, take them out, buy them toys, siblings to play with, pets to look after, etc.

"I like my family because _____."

Further Ideas

Provide each child with a simple cut-out of a house. The children can stick photographs or draw family members on their house. Either the children or an adult writes on the names of the family. On the roof the children can write whose house it is, e.g. Sacha's House. The houses can be mounted as a wall display.



Whizz Chug Whirr (42)

Learning Intentions: To find out about and identify the uses of everyday technology in the home.	CL UW EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others.	Understanding
UW	Children recognise that a range of technology is used in the home.	Technology
EAD	Creates simple representations of events. Plays cooperatively as part of a group to develop and act out a narrative.	Being imaginative

Resources

Photographs or other illustrations of machines used in the home, e.g. vacuum cleaner, dishwasher, washing machine, food processor, sewing machine, telephone, computer.

Introduction

Show the visual aids to the children. Ask them if they can tell you what each machine is called and what it does. Explain to the children that machines are made to help us.

Middle

Using an example of one machine e.g. washing machine explain to the children how Mummies in the past had to spend all day washing clothes by hand.

Using miming actions, say the poem:

***Washing day, oh washing day, all I do is scrub.
Mummy's, Daddy's, children's clothes, rub, rub, rub.
Rinse them out, wring them out, peg them on the line.
Oh dear! There's a grey cloud in the sky, I hope it will stay fine.***

Repeat this with the children copying the actions. Then say and mime actions to the following poem:

***Now I have a washing machine and it's so easy – look.
I put the clothes in, press the switch, then I read my favourite book!***

Repeat this again as before.

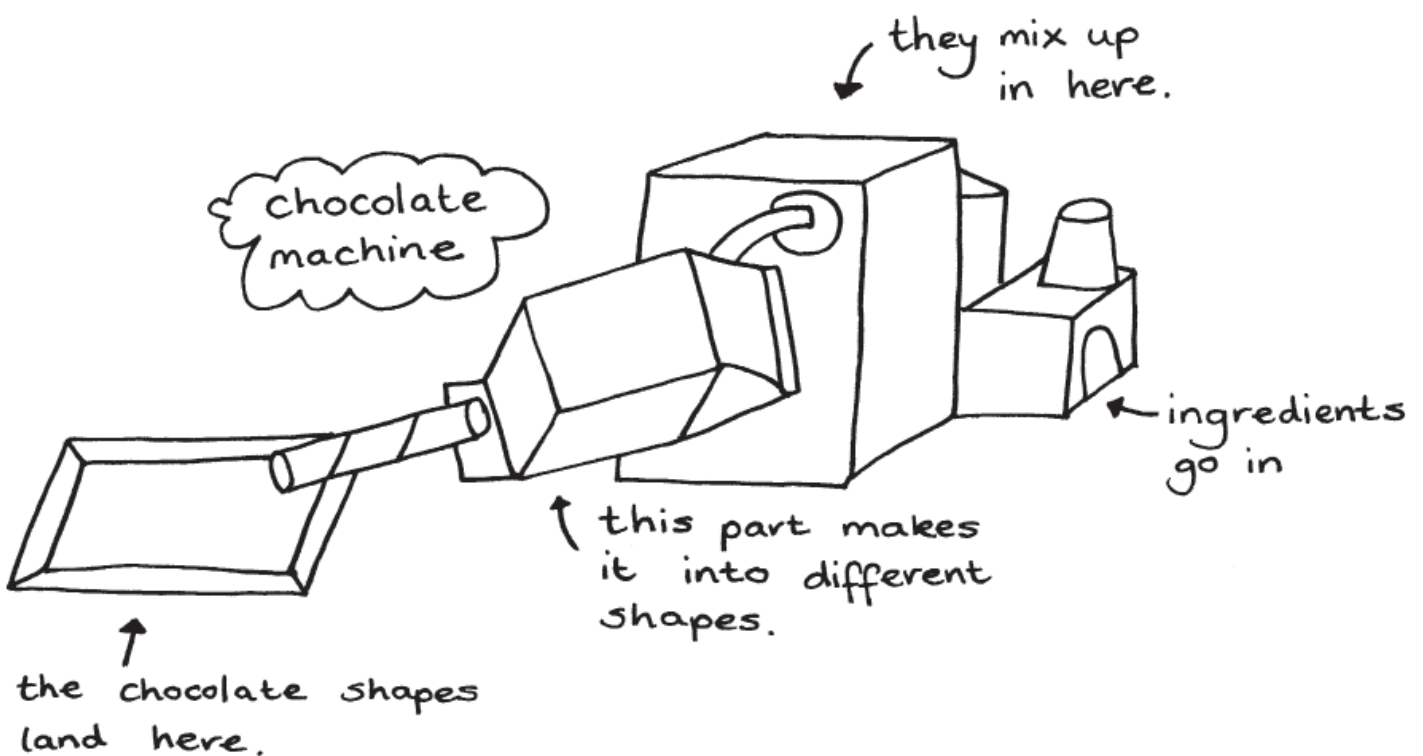
Closing

Put the children into two rows facing each other. Tell them that they are parts of a car washing machine. Let each child "go through" the machine pretending to be a car, while the other children gently wash them. Ask the children for ideas of machines they'd like to help them — a machine for tidying their room, a machine to help them get dressed etc.

Further Ideas

Using cardboard boxes, tubes and other art materials the children can make a machine. Ask the children to decide what the function of the machine is and what each part does. This activity can be done in small groups if you prefer.

In groups of four or five the children mime a machine working. Each child is a different part of the machine and performs a different action. Talk through with the children what the machine does and what each component part is for. The children can also make machine noises.



People from Near and Far (43)

Learning Intentions: To look at and learn about different ethnic groups.	PSED CL UW
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Attends to and takes account of what others say. Explains own knowledge and understanding.	Making relationships
CL	Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others.	Understanding
UW	Looks closely at similarities and differences between people from other countries.	People and communities

Resources

Photographs of people from different ethnic groups, some in different costume, e.g. Eskimo, African, Indian, Chinese. A small selection of foreign bric-a-brac; if you ask around, most parents, other staff or friends will have some foreign souvenirs. A suitable age-related book about the life of a child in a foreign country, e.g. "Children Just Like Me: A Unique Celebration of Children Around the World" by Anabel Kindersley, Barnabas Kindersley and Sue Copsey (published by Dorling Kindersley).

Introduction

Ask the children if they all look the same. What are the differences in hair colour, skin colour, height etc? Let the children look at the visual aids. Tell them that the people shown all come from different countries. Discuss with the children how the people look. Ask the children if they can think of any other ways in which the people differ, e.g. the food they eat, the types of houses they live in or the language they speak. Ask if any of the children have been to another country. What was it like?

Middle

Show and discuss with the children the souvenirs that you have brought in. Encourage them to make comments and initiate discussion.

Closing

Read the story that you have chosen about the child from another country.

Further Ideas

Develop an art activity such as mask-making or a shell picture from an item of bric-a-brac.

Look at the life of a child from another country in more detail. Encourage the children to make comments on what is different and what is the same as in their own lives.



Around the World (44)

Learning Intentions: To find out about and identify features of different geographical locations.	CL UW EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others.	Understanding
	Uses talk to clarify ideas.	Speaking
UW	Looks at how environments might vary from one another.	The world
EAD	Plays cooperatively as part of a group to develop and act out a narrative.	Being imaginative

Resources

Three or four large illustrations of different geographical locations, e.g. jungle, desert, wide plains, mountain area, arctic region.

Introduction

Look at the illustrations with the children. Ask them to comment on what they can see. Do they have such an area near to where they live? Do they know what such an area is called? Encourage the children to think about and offer suggestions as to what each area might be like, e.g. the temperature, rainfall, animals, buildings, people who might live there.

Middle

Choose one of the locations. Tell the children they are going to pretend to be there and mime their actions. They can do this activity in the centre of the circle. Talk the children through what is happening. If the location is a jungle you might say:

“It’s very overgrown; push aside the creepers that are hanging down. You have to stoop down a bit to get under some of them. Now climb over a fallen tree trunk. Listen, what is that noise? Hissssss, I think it is a snake in the tree. Can you hear it? Hisssss. Look over there. I can see yellow and black stripes through the trees. It looks like a tiger. Be very quiet; walk on tip-toe. We don’t want to disturb it.”

If the location is a desert, you might say:

“You are walking on the sand. There is sand everywhere you look. It is hard to walk on the sand as your feet sink in. You have to pick up your feet very slowly and each

time you take a step, you feel your feet sinking. The sun is very hot. It is making you feel very hot and tired. You are walking slower and slower. You would like a nice cool drink of water. You are so hot and tired that you have to crawl on your hands and knees, very slowly. At last you find a pool of water and you have a long drink."

The children can also offer suggestions.

Closing

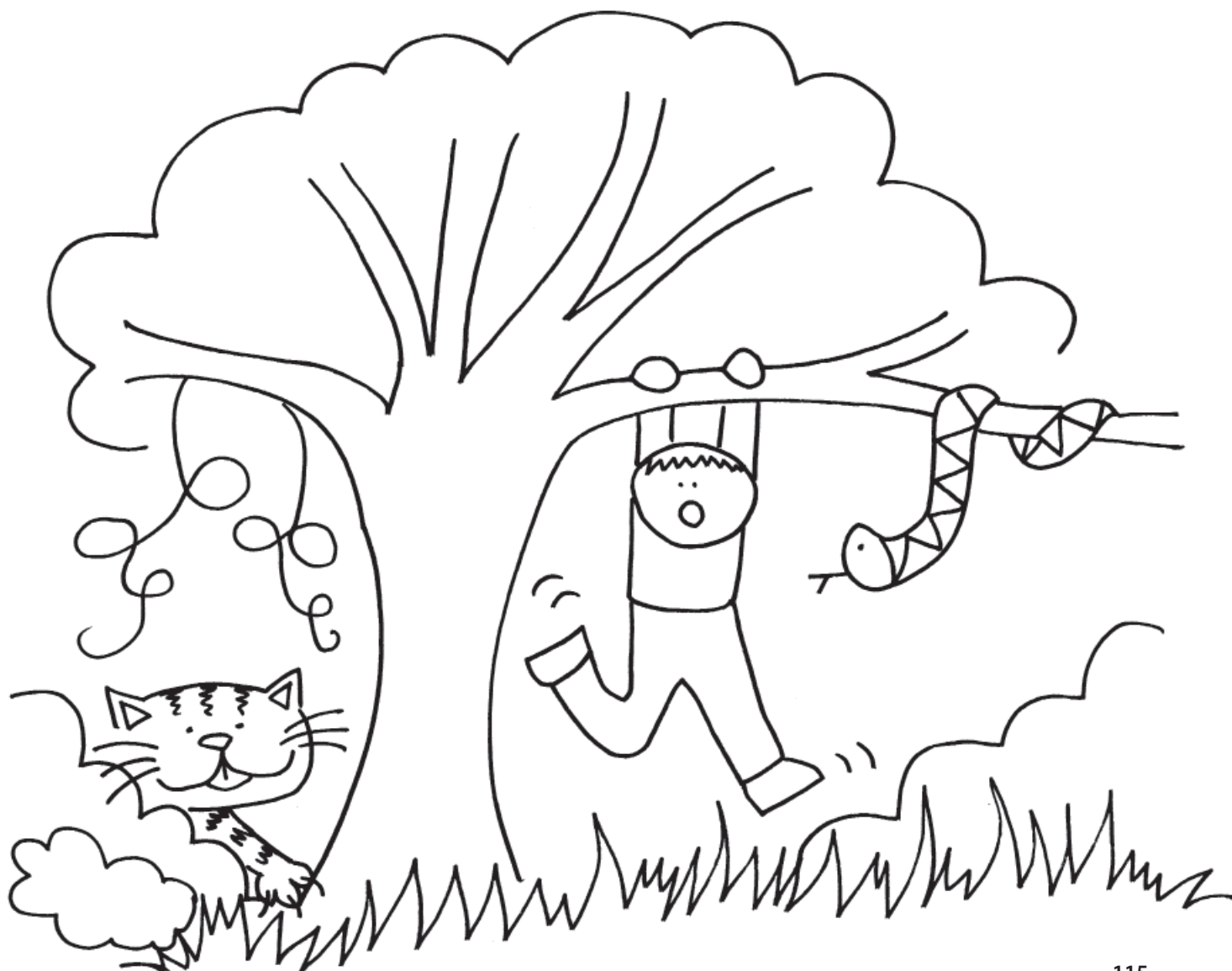
Look at the locations with the children again. Using Talking Ted, end with a round of:

"The place I like best is _____ because _____."

Further Ideas

Turn the classroom into a jungle, making hanging creepers, big leaves and bright flowers, cut-out models of animals and birds.

Make a mountain range from a chicken wire and scrunched up newspaper base covered in DIY filler.



Town and Country (45)

Learning Intentions: To learn about different environments and talk about features they like/dislike.	PSED CL UW
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Attends to and takes account of what others say. Explains own knowledge and understanding. Confident to speak to others about own opinions.	Making relationships Self-confidence and self-awareness
CL	Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others. Uses talk to clarify ideas.	Understanding Speaking
UW	Looks closely at similarities and differences in relation to places.	The world

Resources

Some books and illustrations of town and countryside, e.g. "Tilly and Milly. The Story of the Town Mouse and the Country Mouse" by Kate Summers and Maggie Kneen (published by Orion Children's Books).

Introduction

Ask the children if they live in the town or the countryside. Let them spend some time looking at the books and illustrations. Ask what sorts of thing they might see in a town, e.g. houses, shops, library, cinema, factory, and what they might see in the countryside, e.g. houses, barns, woods, fields, lakes. Discuss with the children the types of animal they might see in either location. Ask them what they think are the good and bad things about living in either location.

Middle

Read the story of "The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse", to show that there are different preferences.

Closing

Using Talking Ted, end with a round of:

“I think I would like the town/country best because _____.”

Further Ideas

The children could make a collage of a town or the countryside using art materials and cut-out magazine illustrations or drawings.

Arrange a trip to a town centre and a countryside location then discuss with the children what they saw

Musical Movements (46)

Learning Intentions: To move with confidence and imagination.	CL PD EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Can listen and do for a short span. Responds to instructions. Uses talk to clarify thinking and ideas.	Listening and attention Understanding Speaking
PD	Experiments with different ways of moving.	Moving and handling
EAD	Initiates new combinations of movement in order to express ideas.	Being imaginative

Resources

A CD of different short musical excerpts and a CD player.

Introduction

Ask the children to watch and copy you as you perform a series of simple movements to the tempo of the music. Tell them to concentrate really hard on keeping in time to the beat.

Middle

Choose a musical excerpt and decide beforehand what the music suggests to you, e.g. a circus, a storm, a hot summer's day. Discuss with the children the sorts of thing they might do in that situation. Play the excerpt again and let the children mime activities to the music. If there is sufficient time repeat the exercise with a contrasting piece of music.

Closing

Tell the children to sit with their eyes closed and listen carefully as you play a different piece of music. Tell the children to consider, while the music is playing, what it makes them think of. When the excerpt has finished ask the children for their thoughts.

Using Talking Ted, end with a round of:

"The music made me think of _____."

Further Ideas

Work out a short exercise or dance routine to music with the children.

Play any favourite pieces of music the children bring in.

Pirates and Giants (47)

Learning Intentions: To move with control and coordination, move with confidence and imagination.

CL
PD

Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity.	Listening and attention
	Responds to instructions.	Understanding
PD	Experiments with different ways of moving.	Moving and handling

Resources

Ball, plastic hoop, something to represent the giant's dinner and a blindfold.

Introduction

Tell the children that they must watch you carefully and copy your movements. Clap twice and touch a body part such as the head with both hands. Continue in this manner:

Clap, clap — touch ears

Clap, clap — touch knees

Clap, clap — touch shoulders

Clap, clap — touch feet.

As the children become more proficient, speed up the actions.

Middle

Game of "The Pirate's Treasure". Place the ball (the pirate's treasure) on an island (inside the hoop) in the centre of the circle. Choose a "pirate" to guard the treasure. The children move into the circle and try to capture the "treasure". If the pirate tags a child he/she must return to his/her seat. If a child succeeds in capturing the treasure he/she becomes the new pirate.

Closing

Game of "The Giant's Dinner". A "giant" sits on a chair in the centre of the circle wearing a blindfold. In front of him is his "dinner". One at a time, children creep into the circle to try and steal the giant's dinner. If the giant hears them he shouts:

"I hear someone in my castle"

... and points in the direction of the sound. If the giant is correct, the intruder returns to his/her seat and another child has a go. Obviously, the children must stay very quiet during this game.

Further ideas

Another similar game is "The Giant's Garden". A "giant" is chosen to guard a garden in the centre of the circle. Card flowers are placed on the floor near the giant. In groups of four or five the children enter the circle and try to capture a flower. Any child tagged by the giant must return to his/her seat at once.

The children can role-play being giants or pirates, making an appropriate set from equipment in the nursery, e.g. a giant's castle or a pirate's ship.

The children could paint a picture of the giant's garden.



Slow and Fast (48)

Learning Intentions: To move with control and coordination, show awareness of space, of themselves and of others.	CL PD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Uses talk to clarify feelings.	Speaking
PD	Experiments with different ways of moving. Negotiates space successfully, changing direction to avoid obstacles.	Moving and handling

Resources

None.

Introduction

The children stand in a circle and then crouch down on hands and knees. They must crawl slowly forward until they reach the other side of the circle. The object of the game is that they must not touch anyone else and must take avoidance action if anyone gets in their way. Any child who bumps into another is out.

Middle

The children walk quickly in a clockwise direction pretending to be cars. They may overtake other cars, but not change direction. At the spoken signal "red light", all cars must stop and look at you. Any cars that fail to do so, or who bump into other cars must go into the garage for repairs and miss a turn.

Closing

Using Talking Ted, end with a round of:

"I liked going fast/slow best because _____."

Further Ideas

In a large outdoor space, make up a more complex traffic system for the children to pretend to be cars on. Include areas where they must halt, two way and one way roads, roundabouts etc.

Have a snail race to see who can move the slowest without actually stopping.

Have other animal races e.g. kangaroo-jumping, bunny-hopping.

Ball Games (49)

Learning Intentions: To use equipment, show awareness of space, of themselves and of others.	CL PD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Uses talk to clarify ideas.	Speaking
PD	Shows increasing control over an object.	Moving and handling

Resources

Large and small balls. Balloons.

Introduction

The children sit on the floor with legs apart. Stand in the centre and roll the large ball to each child in turn. Call the child's name as you roll the ball. The child then rolls the ball back to you.

Middle

The children stand in a circle and pass the ball or balloon round, first in a clockwise then in an anti-clockwise direction. Stand in the centre and throw the ball/balloon randomly to the children, calling the child's name first.

Using a small ball for older children and a large ball for younger children, the children roll the ball across the circle trying to make it leave the circle through any spaces. The other children try to keep the ball in the circle, using their legs and hands.

Closing

Using the ball as the "talking object", end with a round of:

"If I was a ball, I could bounce as high as _____."



Further Ideas

The children can work singly or in pairs trying to bounce and catch a ball.

Play skittles with the children. The children could make their own set of skittles from empty plastic bottles.

Stepping Stones (50)

Learning Intentions: To move with control and coordination, use a range of equipment, travel over balancing and climbing equipment.	PSED PD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Can describe self in positive terms and talk about abilities.	Self-confidence and self-awareness
PD	Travels with confidence and skill around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment.	Moving and handling

Resources

Low-level climbing equipment, e.g. blocks, benches, pile of mats, bean bag seats; arranged in a continuous circle. Make sure that there is adequate adult supervision.

Introduction

The children follow each other round the circle using the apparatus to climb and walk on. They must try not to step on the floor.

Middle

Ask the children if they can think of other ways of moving along the apparatus, e.g. crawling, bottom shuffling. Let them try out different ways under adult supervision.

Closing

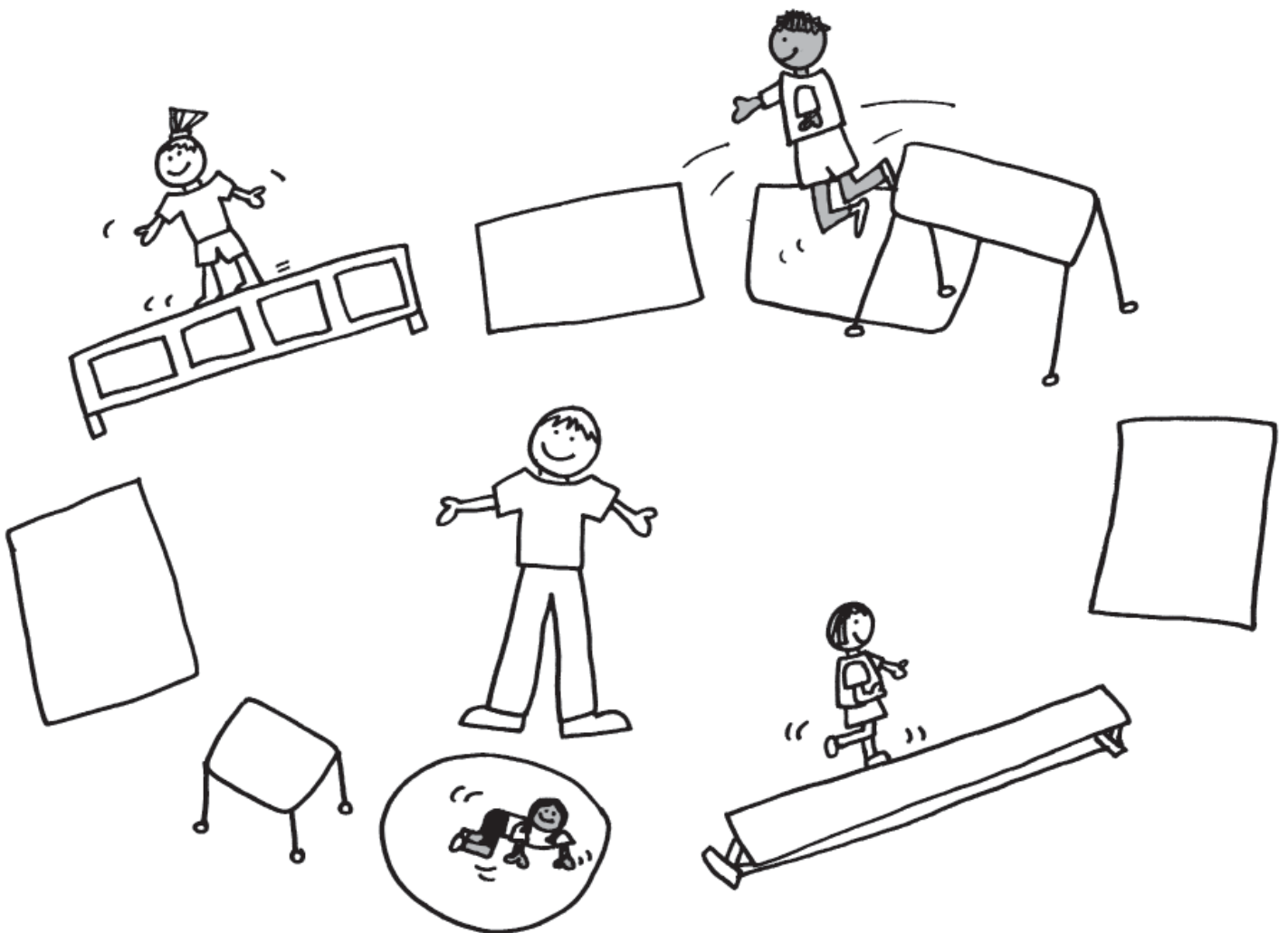
Ask the children if anyone would like to show the others their different ways of moving. The other children sit around the circle and watch. After each child has demonstrated say:

“Well done _____.”

Further Ideas

Build up skills and confidence on other climbing apparatus.

Let the children in groups of five or six make their own obstacle courses using low-level climbing apparatus, tunnels etc.



Animal Antics (51)

Learning Intentions: To move with imagination, control and coordination, show awareness of space, of themselves and of others.	CL PD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Uses talk to organise and clarify ideas.	Speaking
PD	Experiments with different ways of moving.	Moving and handling

Resources

None, but make sure that the children have enough space to do the activities.

Introduction

Tell the children that they are going to play some animal games. First, they are going to pretend to be different animals and move like each animal, for example:

Bears	<i>Walking on all fours, keeping limbs straight.</i>
Frogs	<i>Jumping in a crouched position, using hands and feet.</i>
Kangaroos	<i>Jumping in an upright position.</i>
Worms	<i>Lying down and wriggling forwards.</i>
Birds	<i>Flapping arms.</i>

Middle

Game of "Fishes in the Sea". The children stand in an inward-facing circle and are named "cod", "haddock" or "plaice" (just use two names with young children). When the name of a fish is called out, all the children with that name move in a clockwise direction around the outside of the circle and back to their places. They are instructed how to move by various commands. Use as many different commands as you think the children will remember:

High tide	<i>Walk quickly.</i>
Low tide	<i>Walk slowly.</i>
Tide turns	<i>Change direction.</i>
Fishermen about	<i>Crawl on hands and knees to avoid nets.</i>
Sharks	<i>Walk backwards.</i>
Rocks ahead	<i>Jump.</i>

Closing

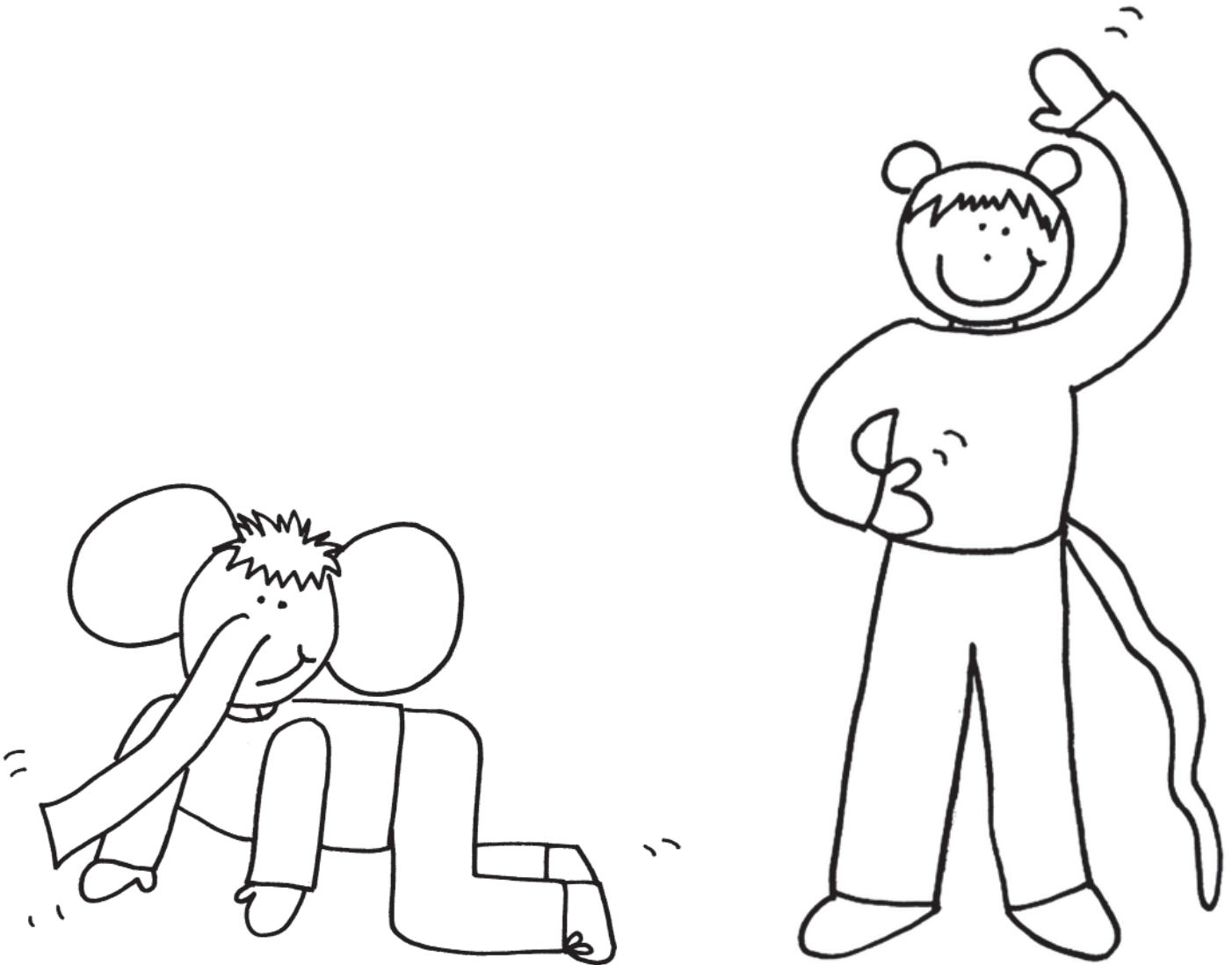
End with a round of:

"If I were an animal I would be _____."

Further Ideas

The children could make up a "zoo" in which pairs of children pretend to be different animals. Discuss each animal's environment, what they would eat, what they would do etc.

Make a fishing game using cut-out card fish shapes which the children colour in. On the front of each fish attach a metal paper clip then make a fishing line from a wooden spill, cotton and magnet.



Fidgety Feet (52)

Learning Intentions: To move with control and coordination, show awareness of space; of themselves and of others.

CL
PD

Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Can listen and do for a short span.	Listening and attention
PD	Experiments with different ways of moving.	Moving and handling

Resources

None. The children work barefoot. Make sure that they have sufficient space to do the activities.

Introduction

Tell the children that today they are going to do some activities with their feet. Ask the children to look at their feet. What are they like? What do they use them for?

Middle

Ask the children to see if they can stand on tip-toe. Up then down again. Repeat this several times. Can they balance on one foot – then the other? Repeat. Stand with feet together – jump and land with feet apart. Repeat several times. March on the spot – count time for them.

Closing

Tell the children that they are going to pretend to walk around the circle on different surfaces. Mime the actions for them to copy.

Walking on squelchy mud *Feet are stuck and have to be pulled out at each step.*

Walking on a hot pavement *On tip-toe, lifting each foot as quickly as possible.*

On sand *Wriggle toes in sand.*

On a balancing beam *One foot in front of the other, arms out to keep balance.*

On a plank *Step sideways and move one foot up to the other.*

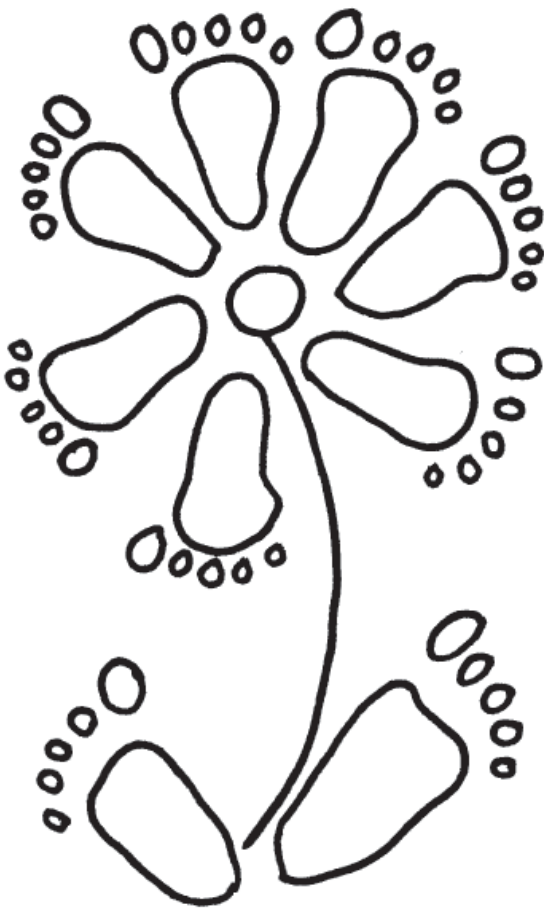
Close the activities by asking the children to sit on the floor with their legs stretched out in front of them. Together, they say:

“Well done feet for working hard! Now you can have a rest.”

Further Ideas

Make feet prints and display them on the wall. Label each one _____'s foot; (you can depict wet sand when foot painting by mixing sand with yellow paint).

Draw around the feet, cut-out the shapes and make pictures with them, e.g. a flower with "feet" petals, a bird with "feet" wings etc.



Parachute Games 1 (53)

Learning Intentions: To move with confidence, control and coordination, show awareness of space, of themselves and of others, use equipment.	PSED PD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Aware of the boundaries set and behavioural expectations.	Managing feelings and behaviour
PD	Experiments with different ways of moving. Negotiates space successfully.	Moving and handling

Resources

A suitably sized parachute for the group you are working with (it may be possible to borrow a parachute from your local Under Five's Resource Centre or buy one from the Positive Press catalogue/webshop).

Introduction

Make sure that you have sufficient adult helpers to control the parachute. The children stand around the parachute, holding it at waist height. On the count of three, they raise their arms to make the parachute "mushroom" and shout "Hello" at the opposite player.

Middle

Game of "Deliver a Parcel". The children stand around the parachute, holding it at waist height. A small, light box is placed in the centre and all the children work together to ripple or tilt the parachute so that the box is moved to a named child.

Game of "Make a Tent". The children crouch down around the parachute, holding it with both hands. On the count of three, they raise their arms to make the parachute "mushroom", step forward under it, then pull it down behind them and sit on the edge of it. Someone can stand in the centre to be the tent pole.

Closing

Game of "Row the Boat". The children sit cross-legged around the parachute; holding it with both hands. Tell the children that they are going to pretend that the parachute is a special round boat that has been made just for them. They all make gentle rowing movements and sing:

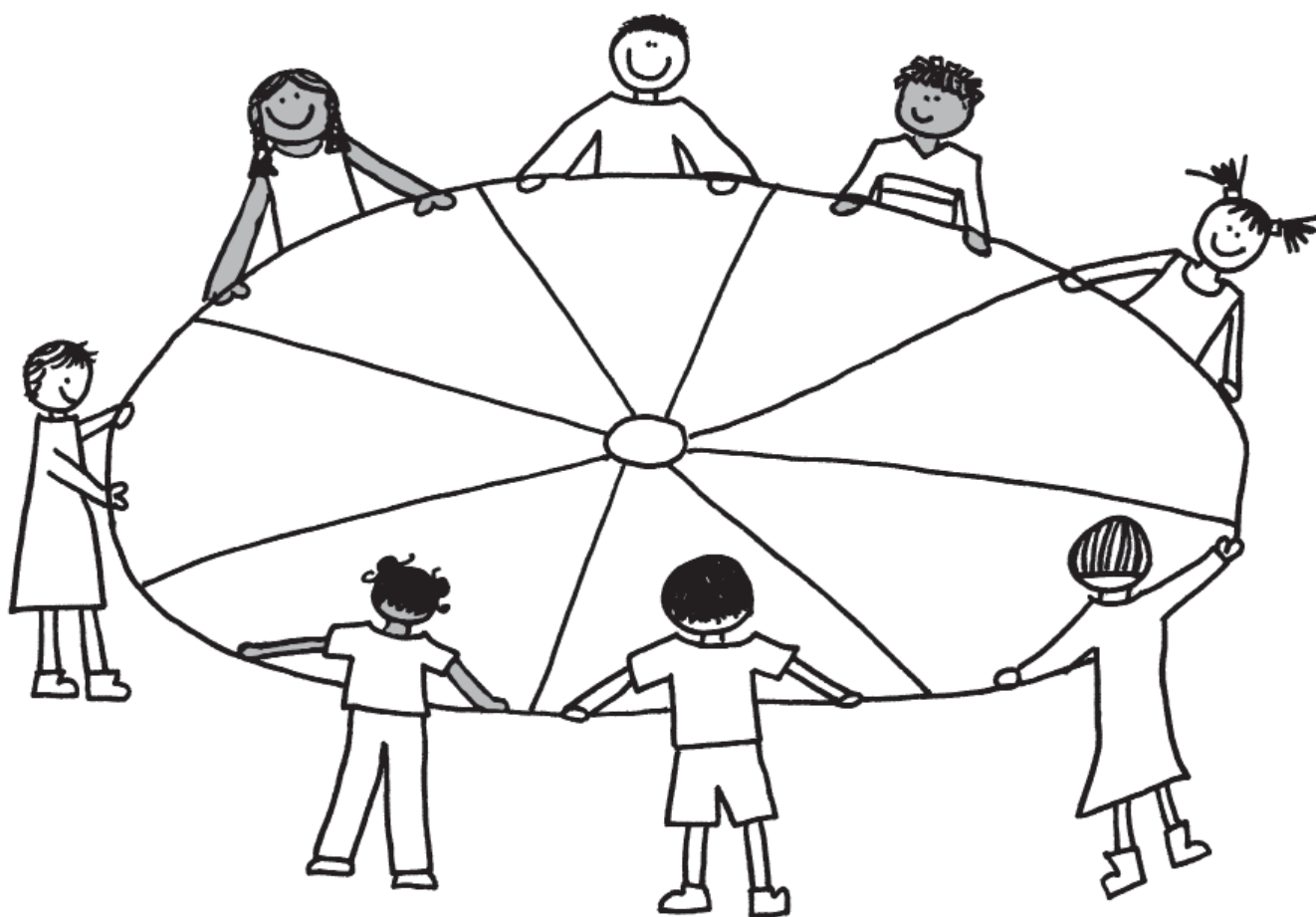
Row, row, row the boat, gently down the stream

Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream.

Tell the children to imagine that they are getting out of the boat to lie down on the grass and close their eyes and rest.

Further Ideas

See end of Parachute Games 2.



Parachute Games 2 (54)

Learning Intentions: To move with confidence, control and coordination, show awareness of space, of themselves and of others, use equipment.	PSED PD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Aware of the boundaries set and behavioural expectations.	Managing feelings and behaviour
PD	Experiments with different ways of moving. Negotiates space successfully, changing direction to avoid obstacles.	Moving and handling

Resources

See Parachute Games 1.

Introduction

“Greetings Game”. The children stand around the parachute, holding it at waist height. Two children from opposite sides are chosen to perform a greeting ritual e.g. hug, shake hands. On the count of three the children raise their arms to make the parachute “mushroom”. The two children run under the parachute and greet one another, then go back to their places. Repeat with two different players until all the children have had a go.

Middle

“Changing Places Game”. The children stand around the parachute, holding it at waist height. Call out different categories, e.g. anyone with black hair, anyone whose name begins with “J”. Decide with the children before they carry out the action, who fits into the category you have called. On the count of three, the children make the parachute “mushroom” and those children in the named category run underneath and change places.

Game of “Storm at Sea”. A few children at a time lie on top of the parachute, in the centre. They pretend they are in a small boat at sea. The other children sit around the outside, holding the parachute in both hands. Tell them to make gentle sea waves then talk them through a storm, increasing the wave movements. Gradually reduce the wave movements after the storm until the sea is calm again.

Closing

Game of "Underground Tunnels". The children sit or crouch around the parachute, which is on the ground. One or more players are chosen to name a child on the other side of the circle. The children then crawl under the parachute and tunnel in the direction of the named child. The other children gently ripple the parachute.

To close the activities, ask the children to sit quietly by the parachute with hands in laps. Tell them to breathe in (to the count of five) then out (to the count of five). Do this several times.

Further Ideas

Try different objects on top of the parachute to see if they move differently, e.g. a ball, a feather, a flat tray.

The children could make flat card boats to sail across the parachute sea.

Make card cut-outs of parachutes. Ask the children to bring in a photograph of themselves that can be cut up. Let each of the children paint a parachute in bright colours, then cut out the figures of the children from the photographs and attach them to their parachutes with cotton. Make a wall display with a blue sky background and a few white clouds and attach the parachutes.



Keeping Fit (55)

Learning Intentions: To recognise the importance of keeping healthy, to recognise changes that happen to their bodies when they are active.	CL PD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Can listen and do for a short span.	Listening and attention
	Responds to instructions.	Understanding
PD	Shows some understanding that good practices with regard to exercise can contribute to good health.	Health and self-care

Resources

None, but make sure that the circle is big enough to do the activities.

Introduction

Send various actions around the circle, e.g. wiggle fingers, tap knees, touch toes, to warm up the children.

Middle

Stand in the centre of the circle and do some simple keep fit exercises for the children to copy, e.g. stretching, bending, swinging arms, jumping.

Closing

Ask the children to tell you how they feel when they exercise – hot, out of breath, sweaty etc. Depending on the age and understanding of the children, you can talk to them about their hearts beating faster and how sweat is produced to cool them down. Discuss with the children how exercise makes the heart and muscles stronger and this is good for keeping healthy.

A good way to calm down after exercise is to mime being a melting snowman. Do this with the children, explaining that they must slowly and gradually become smaller until they are a “puddle on the floor”.

Further Ideas

Divide the children into groups of four or five and let them devise their own exercise routine.

The children could do a project on health looking at exercise, food etc.

The Feely Game (56)

Learning Intentions: To explore texture and shape.	PSED CL EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Confident to speak to others about own opinions.	Self-confidence and self-awareness
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity. Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others. Uses talk to clarify ideas.	Listening and attention Understanding Speaking
EAD	Looks closely at different textures.	Exploring and using media and materials

Resources

Collect enough objects for one per child which have interesting textures and shapes and are safe to handle, e.g. a sponge, a hairbrush, a smooth pebble, a bean bag etc. Put all the objects into a bag. A blindfold.

Introduction

Invite each child in turn to put on the blindfold and take an object from the bag. Warn the other children in advance not to call out what the object is. Ask the child to describe what the object feels like. Encourage the children to use a variety of words like, hard, lumpy, prickly, smooth, knobbly, soft, squishy. When the child has described the object, invite the other children to volunteer more words. The children take their objects back to their seats.

Middle

Ask the children to look at and describe the shape of their object. Again encourage the children to use as many different words as they can, e.g., short, fat, thin, round, square, twisty, pointy, curly etc.

Closing

Ask the children to put the objects into different categories like hard/soft, rough/smooth. Suggest two and then invite the children to think of some different ones. You could place two different coloured boxes or carpet squares on the floor to help younger children.

Further Ideas

Make up a display board of small squares of differently textured materials, e.g. cloths, sandpaper, rubber etc.

Give the children a “shape” of play-dough and work with them on making different shapes from it.

Collect natural items like leaves and fruits and look at all the different shapes.

The Magic Cloak (57)

Learning Intentions: To use imagination in role-play and communicate ideas.	PSED CL EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Attends to and takes account of what others say.	Making relationships
CL	Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others.	Understanding
	Uses language to imagine roles.	Speaking
EAD	Creates simple representations of events.	Being imaginative

Resources

A cloak. A cauldron or box to represent a cauldron. A wooden spoon or stick.

Introduction

Introduce the “magic cloak” to the children and tell them that they are going to pretend that anyone who wears the cloak can do magic. In the first game, the “magician” can turn the other children into anything he chooses, for example:

“I turn you into babies/giants/tigers/worms etc.”

The other children perform a suitable action until you call “Stop”. Then a different magician is chosen.

Middle

Game of “Making Spells”. For this game you need a “magician” and an apprentice. The magician thinks of a good spell, e.g. the sun will shine, a cheering-up spell. The children volunteer appropriate ingredients to go into the cauldron. Encourage the children to think of different things for each spell and to make them related. To make the sun shine they might use yellow flowers, hot coals, oranges etc. A cheering-up spell could require a joke book, a cuddly toy, some sweets etc. The apprentice mimes collecting the ingredients from the children and putting them into the cauldron. The magician stirs the ingredients together with the wooden spoon, while everyone chants:

“Stir them round and stir them thick, our magic spell will do the trick.”

The magician sprinkles the spell over the other children and they mime a suitable response, pretending the sun is shining, pretending to be cheerful.

Closing

The wearer of the “magic cloak” can transform himself or herself into any animal; miming appropriate actions and making relevant sounds such as a cat on all fours saying “miaow”. The other children have to guess the animal. The child who guesses correctly then becomes the magician. Younger children may need some whispered prompting to suggest what to mime.

To end the activities, you become the magician and tell the children that you are going to turn them into sleeping lions. They must all lie down, close their eyes and pretend to sleep.

Further Ideas

The children can make cloaks from crepe paper and glue on tin foil stars and moons.

Talk to the children about ingredients in cooking and make up a batch of gingerbread dough. Let the children use star and moon dough cutters, then cook the biscuits for them to take home.



Dream Bedrooms (58)

Learning Intentions: To use imagination in art and design.	PSED CL EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Explains own knowledge and understanding. Confident to speak to others about own opinions.	Making relationships Self-confidence and self-awareness
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity. Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others. Links statements and sticks to a main theme. Uses talk to clarify ideas.	Listening and attention Understanding Speaking
EAD	Constructs with a purpose in mind, using a variety of resources.	Exploring and using media and materials

Resources

None.

Introduction

Talk to the children about their bedrooms. Ask them for details, e.g. do they have cabin beds, bunks? What designs are on their curtains, pillows and duvet covers? What furniture is in their rooms? What do they like about their rooms?

Ask the children what they would have if they could choose their dream bedrooms. Encourage fantasy, e.g. a bed made of chocolate, a bed like Captain Hook's pirate ship, a jungle painted on the walls, a round soft bed like a marshmallow. Talk about colours they would like and accessories.

Middle

Play a game of "Sleeping Dogs". The children lie down and pretend to be asleep. You can tell jokes or say things to make them laugh and move. Any child who moves is out. The last child left "asleep" is the winner.

Closing

Divide the children into small groups of four or five with an adult supervisor for each group. Discuss with the children the bedroom they will make and what will go in it.

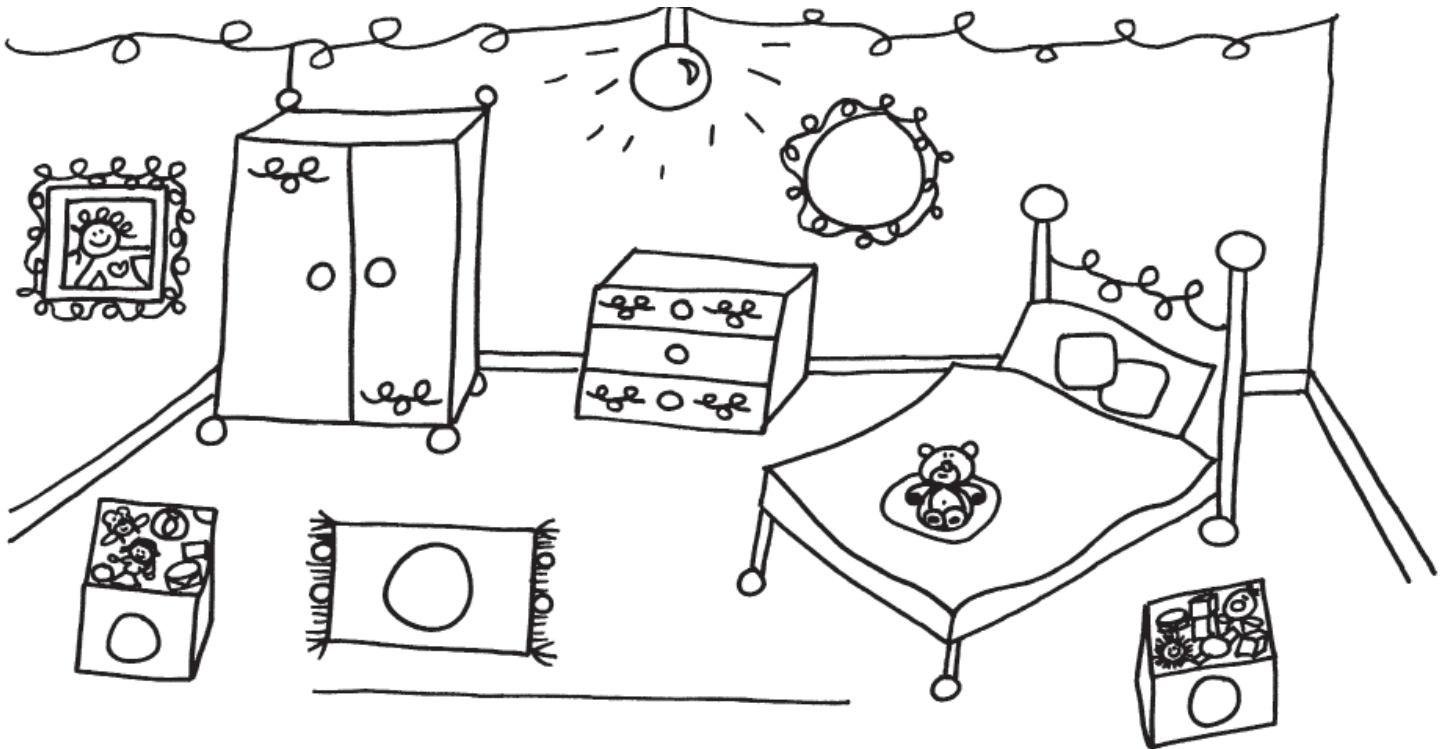
End with a round of:

"In my bedroom, I would like _____."

Further Ideas

Allow the children to construct a model of a bedroom in a large cardboard box with the front cut away. They can do this in small groups, pairs or individually depending on the level of adult help that you have. They can construct simple furniture from boxes and cartons and cut-out illustrations from magazines. Ask the children to think carefully about what they would need in a bedroom.

Talk to the children about the purpose of each room in a house and what is needed in a particular room – kitchen, dining room, bathroom, lounge and so on.



Dance Steps (59)

Learning Intentions: To match movements to music, use imagination in dance.	CL PD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Links statements and sticks to a theme.	Speaking
PD	Experiments with different ways of moving.	Moving and handling

Resources

A CD of music suitable for the activities. A CD player.

Introduction

Use a set dance for this phase, either a country dance or one that you have made up. For example:

Hold hands in a circle.

Take six side steps to the right followed by six side steps to the left.

Move into the centre of the circle, arms raised, back out again. Repeat.

Hold hands crossed with a partner and circle on the spot.

Parade with partner around the circle.

Practise this routine with the children. You can simplify it for younger children by just using the first four movements or devise your own routine. When you feel that the children are ready, play a suitable piece of music for them to dance to.

Middle

Creative dance. Play a piece of music and ask the children to dance like giants, fairies, old people, string puppets, robots etc.

Closing

Using Talking Ted, end with a round of:

"The dancing I liked best was _____ because _____."



Further Ideas

Allow the children to organise a disco where they can wear special clothes and bring in their own music to play and dance to.

Try and obtain a DVD of different types of dancing, e.g. ballet, flamenco, street, ballroom. Show this to the children and discuss it with them.

Arrange a dance "show" performed by the children for other classes/parents.



Making Music (60)

Learning Intentions: To explore and recognise sounds, respond to what they hear and touch, express ideas using musical instruments and to explore how sounds can be changed.	CL EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity.	Listening and attention
	Extends vocabulary by naming.	Speaking
EAD	Explores the different sounds of instruments.	Exploring and using media and materials

Resources

A selection of percussion instruments, such as: triangle and beater, maracas, tambourine, castanets, cymbal, drum – enough for one per child. A large cardboard box placed on a table.

Introduction

Introduce the instruments, telling the children the name of each one. Ask them to repeat the name after you (you can simplify the names if you wish, e.g. shaker for maracas). Put three or four of the instruments into the box on the table and, ensuring that the children can't see your movements, make a sound with one of the instruments. Ask the children to guess which one it was. Show the children the instrument then repeat this procedure with another instrument.

Middle

Hand out the instruments so that each child has one. It may be easier to keep them in different sections, e.g. all tambourines in one part of the circle. In turn, play each different instrument. Ask the children what they think each one sounds like. Maracas could sound like rain, cereals in a box etc. Sing together a familiar song or nursery rhyme and ask the children to beat time with their instruments while you conduct – with older children you can add "volume control", using your hands (palms inwards). As you move your hands apart the volume increases, as you bring your hands together the volume decreases. To turn the volume "off" turn palms outwards towards the children.

Closing

Collect in all the instruments except for one. Ask the children to see if they can pass it around the circle very carefully without it making a single sound.

Further Ideas

Ask the helpers or parents if anyone plays an instrument that they could bring in and show/play to the children.

Set up a sound workshop day with the children divided into small groups. Each group can look at a different instrument sound; make instruments and/or experiment with producing different sounds.

For string instruments: stretch some elastic bands, or tie lengths of string, over a tissue box. Experiment with different thicknesses of rubber band and “string” lengths to produce different sounds.



For wind instruments: use a set of similar bottles with different levels of water inside to produce sounds of varying pitch by blowing across the opening.



For percussion: make drums with different skins e.g. leather, cloth, cling film, paper. Use chopsticks or spoons as beaters. Children also love to bang with spoons on a selection of kitchen utensils tied to a “washing line”.



The children can make maracas by covering a slightly blown up balloon with papier maché. Leave to dry, remove balloon, paint and varnish. Fill with lentils, insert doweling and secure with tape.

Song Time (61)

Learning Intentions: To recognise and explore how sounds can be changed and sing simple songs from memory.	CL EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity. Can listen and do for a short span.	Listening and attention
EAD	Begins to build a repertoire of songs.	Exploring and using media and materials

Resources

None.

Introduction

Tell the children that they have to watch very carefully as they will have to copy the sounds that you make. Sing different single notes in a variety of ways, e.g. high, low, soft, loud, short, long, with mouth wide open, with mouth nearly closed. Ask the children to repeat each note after you.

Middle

Choose some familiar songs to sing together which are suitable for a circle, e.g. "Ring O' Roses", "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush", "In and Out the Dusty Bluebells" etc.

Closing

Choose a song with actions, e.g. "My hat it has three corners". Sing the song through with the accompanying actions. Then repeat several times leaving out additional words each time, but performing the appropriate actions.

My _____ *it has three corners*
My _____ *it has* _____ *corners*
My _____ *it has* _____ *etc.*

To end on a calming note, sing the complete song again in a whisper.

Further Ideas

Choose a familiar song which the children can dress up and mime actions to.

Use an occasion such as Easter or Christmas to make up a simple song with the children and sing it to a familiar tune.

Let the children take turns to choose a song that they like for everyone to sing together.



Picnic Time (62)

Learning Intentions: To use imagination in role-play, express and communicate ideas.	PSED CL EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Attends to and takes account of what others say.	Making relationships
CL	Responds to instructions. Uses language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences in play situations.	Understanding Speaking
EAD	Plays cooperatively as part of a group to develop and act out a narrative.	Being imaginative

Resources

Two glove puppets.

Introduction

Introduce the puppets to the children, e.g. Ritzy Rabbit, Hiccup Hedgehog and then continue with the following dialogue:

Ritzy Rabbit: *What a lovely day it is today Hiccup. The sun is shining, the sky is blue and there's not a cloud in sight.*

Hiccup Hedgehog: *It's so nice Ritzy that we ought to do something special.*

Ritzy Rabbit: *We could go out somewhere for a walk.*

Hiccup Hedgehog: *That would be good, but I'd like to do something even more special.*

Ritzy Rabbit: *I know Hiccup, let's have a picnic.*

Hiccup Hedgehog: *Ooh yes. I love picnics, but what shall we take?*

Ritzy Rabbit: *Let's ask the children to help us think of all the things we need to take.*

Prompt the children to tell you the necessary items, e.g. chairs, rug, table cloth and what food you could include. The puppets can join in with comments like:

“That’s a good idea. I really like marmite sandwiches.”

At the end of the discussion, the puppets thank the children for their help.

Middle

Tell the children that they are going to pretend to have a picnic. Divide them into groups of four or five with an adult supervisor for each group. They prepare the “food”, “drinks” etc and place everything into an imaginary basket. The adult helper talks them through the mimes, for example:

“Now let’s make some sandwiches. We need two slices of bread then spread the butter on each slice. What will you put in your sandwich? I’m going to have ham in mine. Put the two slices together and cut them into four. Now we’ll put our sandwich in a bag and put it in the picnic basket.”

When the “picnic” is ready, decide with the children where they would like to have it, e.g. by the sea, in a wood, in a park. Pick up the picnic basket and tell the children to follow you as you walk to the “picnic site”. There the children pretend to unpack the picnic basket and eat the food. Encourage the children to join in with comments and ask them questions like:

“Is your sandwich delicious, Sanjay?”

“What would you like next Rosie?”

Finally, “pick up all the litter” and “pack everything away”.

Closing

Bring the groups back to the circle. Using Talking Ted, end with a round of:

“One thing I would take on my picnic is _____.”

Further Ideas

Arrange a real picnic for the children, even if it is an indoor event.

Let the children use puppets or bring in teddies to stage a picnic.

Make a wall display of a picnic. The children can draw or cut out magazine illustrations of the food.

Teach me a Song (63)

Learning Intentions: To sing simple songs from memory.	CL EAD
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity.	Listening and attention
EAD	Begins to build a repertoire of songs.	Exploring and using media and materials

Resources

A glove puppet.

Introduction

Introduce the puppet to the children. Tell them that the puppet really likes to sing and would like them to teach him a song. Do the children know one that they could sing to him?

Middle

Once you have agreed on a song, sing together while the puppet listens or “dances” to the song. Let the puppet clap the children and say well done to them.

Closing

The puppet tells the children that he is now going to teach them a new song. Would they like that? You can choose one from your own selection or use the one below, sung to the tune of “Cock-a-Doodle-Do, my dame has lost her shoe”.

***Cock-a-doodle-doo, my clock says half past two.
I won't be back in time for lunch, whatever shall I do?***

To end on a calm note, ask the children to close their eyes and think about their favourite lunch.



Further Ideas

Arrange a singing session with a difference e.g. play a DVD of nursery rhymes that the children can watch and sing along to.

The children could have a karaoke session of singing to a CD of nursery rhymes.



The Helping Genie (64)

Learning Intentions: To use imagination, express and communicate ideas through role-play.	PSED CL
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Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
PSED	Understands that own actions affect other people.	Managing feelings and behaviour
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity.	Listening and attention
	Able to follow a story without pictures or props.	Understanding
	Links statements and sticks to a main theme.	Speaking

Resources

None.

Introduction

Tell the children that you are going to tell them a story about a genie. You want them to close their eyes and try and picture in their minds what is happening in the story. Now read out the story below.

Middle

Imagine that you are a genie whose special job is to help people. One sunny day you are sitting in your garden looking at your beautiful flowers and listening to the birds sing.

A little boy comes into your garden and taps you on the arm. He looks very sad and you ask him what the matter is. The little boy tells you that he comes from a nearby village. It's a lovely village; the people are good and kind and everyone has always been very happy. However, now something dreadful has happened.

Every time the little boy and all the other children go out to play they hear a terrible rumble and the earth shakes. There are loud noises – clump, clump, clump – and then a big giant the size of a house appears over the hill. All the children are frightened that the giant wants to eat them and they run indoors. Now they are too scared to go outside at all.

You tell the little boy that you will help him and decide to visit the giant in his castle.

It's a long way to the castle. The road is steep and winding. Think of yourself as you trudge slowly up this road. Your legs feel more tired and heavy with every step you take. But you are a genie with magical powers so you decide to turn yourself into a bird and fly instead.

At last you reach the castle gates. They are very big, think of them reaching up into the sky. You turn yourself back into a genie and creep through the gates.

Imagine how quietly you tip-toe through the castle. The rooms are huge, as big as a field, and each step is as big as a table. Think of how you will manage to get up the steps.

You creep into the giant's parlour. On the table is the giant's breakfast. What does he have for breakfast? Think how much food he would eat.

Suddenly there is a loud "clump, clump, clump". The giant is coming. You must use your magical powers to turn yourself into something so that the giant will not see you. What will you turn yourself into?

The giant strides into the room and sits down in his chair. There is a loud snuffling noise, then a splashing noise. You can't believe your eyes. The giant is crying great, big salty tears which run down his nose and plop with a splash onto the floor.

Now, you are a helping genie and you don't like to see anybody sad, even giants. You decide to speak to him and find out what is wrong, but how will you do this?

The giant tells you that he is lonely and has no friends. He has tried to make friends with the children in the village, but they just run away every time he appears. You explain to the giant why the children are afraid, but then tell the giant that they are kind children and if you talk to them they will not be afraid of him as long as he is gentle with them. The giant agrees and soon he is happily playing with the children and joining in their games.

You can adapt the story or talk it through as you read, for younger children.

Closing

Ask the children to think of the games that the giant could play with the children. End with a round of:

"My favourite game is _____."

Further Ideas

Let the children role-play the story. They could begin by pretending to be the village children, and then take the role of the giant taking big strides etc. They could think of all sorts of helpful things the genie might do.

The children could work in small groups to paint a big picture of the giant.

A Strange Land (65)

Learning Intentions: To use imagination, explore colour, to express ideas using a range of materials in art and design.	CL EAD
--	-----------

Area of learning	What children will be learning	Aspect
CL	Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity.	Listening and attention
	Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others.	Understanding
	Uses talk to organise ideas.	Speaking
EAD	Constructs with a purpose in mind, using a variety of resources.	Exploring and using media and materials

Resources

A variety of art materials: coloured paper, glue, scissors, cut-out magazine illustrations, paint etc. Part of this session will take place outside the circle.

Introduction

Tell the children that they are going to think about visiting a strange and magical land where everything is different. They must close their eyes and try to picture in their heads what it looks like. Now read out the story below.

Middle

First of all I will tell you about the trees and flowers. The trees are a funny colour; they have red, blue and purple trunks and all sorts of different coloured leaves. The flowers are different too and have strange shapes like spoons or curls. Some have spots or stripes of different colours.

There are birds in the trees; they are making very odd noises. Can you think what sorts of noise they might make? They do not look like the birds you see in your garden. What do you think they could look like?

Some little furry animals come up to you. They are not dogs or cats or rabbits. They are different from any of the animals that you know. What do you think they are like and what colour are they?

This is a very strange land. Even the sky, rivers and sea are different colours. Think about

what colours they might be. Do you think you would like to live in this strange land?

Closing

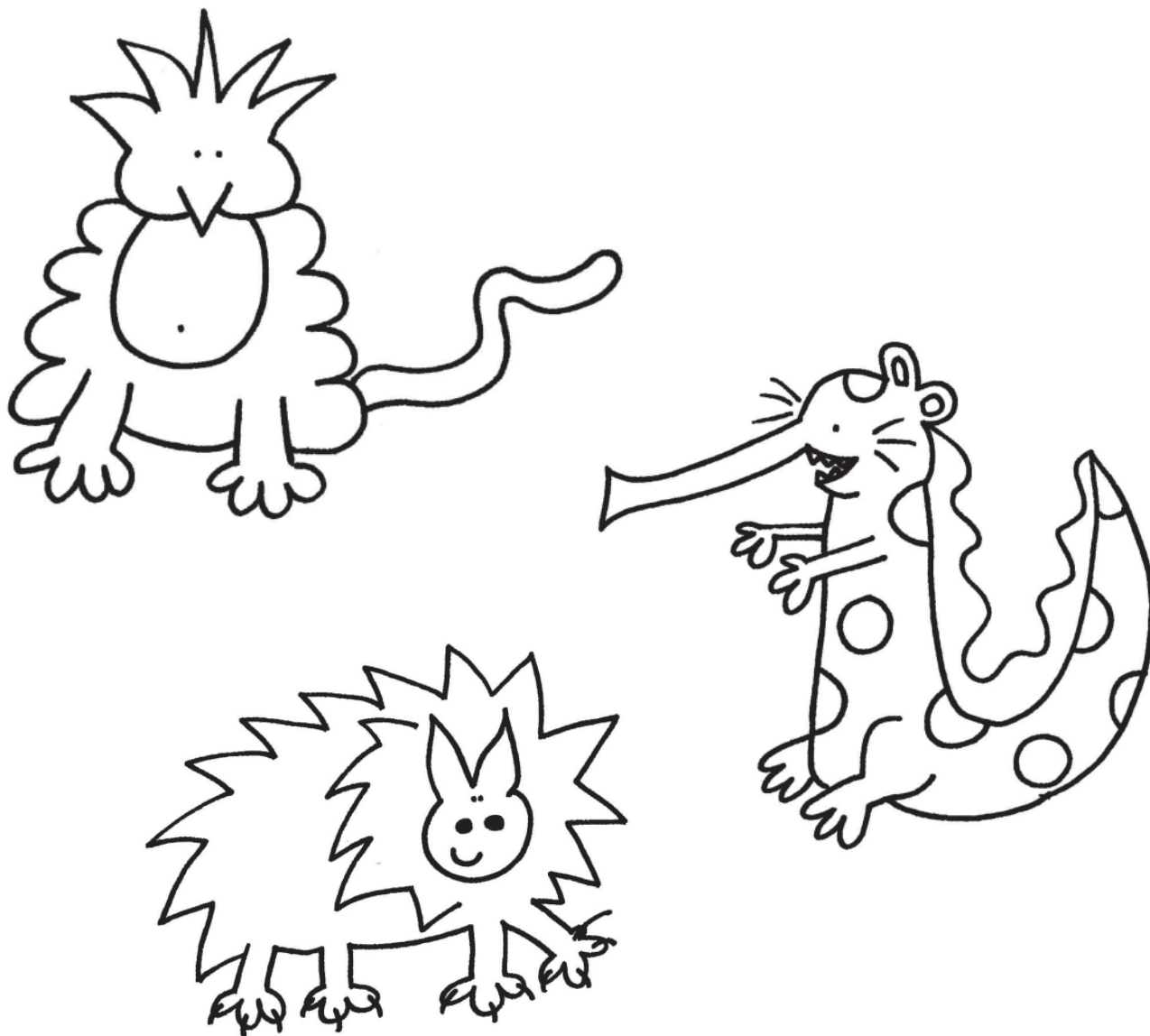
In groups of four or five and with as many helpers as possible, the children discuss and make a collage of a strange land. Encourage really fantastic ideas, e.g. a bird could be made up of a bird's body with a car front for a head and a bunch of flowers for a tail. The object of the exercise is to use imagination and have fun.

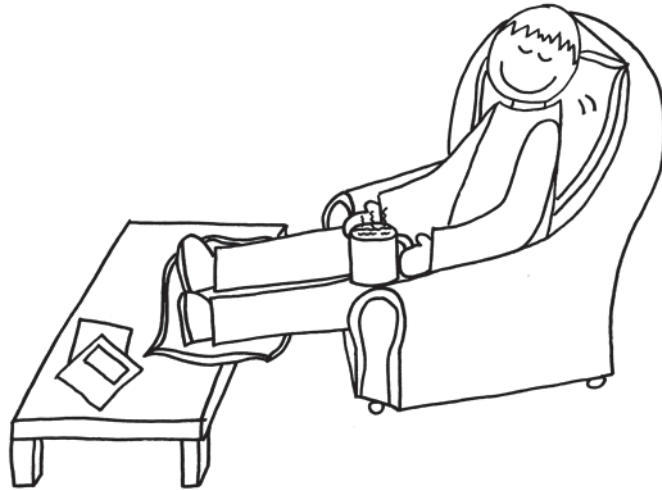
Further Ideas

Talk to the children about "strange lands" in stories like "Alice in Wonderland".

The children could role-play being strange birds and other animals, making funny noises.

Look in books for a few strange plants and animals that do exist and which would fascinate the children, e.g. insect-eating plants, a duck-billed platypus.





A last word...

Remember to consider your own energy levels!

Trying out new ideas and being creative, warm and positive all the time with young children can be exhausting.

You do need to look after yourself!

Have a "Golden Moment" whenever you can – make a hot drink, put your feet up, relax with slow breathing, and reflect on all the positive things that have happened.

Index of Activities

Index of activities (related to a specific focus by activity number)

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Training and Resources

Training and Resources

Jenny Mosley runs courses and conferences for many different types of settings from nurseries, Children's Centres, pre-schools to larger groups and affiliations of Early Years practitioners and she is happy to tailor courses to meet the specific requirements of individual schools and settings.

Jenny Mosley Consultancies are able to offer a wide range of courses within the framework of the "Whole School Quality Circle Time Model". The Quality Circle Time Model is very motivating when introduced to toddlers and early years children because at this young stage children can benefit enormously from experiential learning of social skills, communication skills and the associated games and routines. Training for Early Years practitioners brings the model to life, shows the benefits of working with children in a circle and empowers delegates to make a positive difference within their setting.

Training

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Resources

Jenny Mosley has a catalogue and web shop brimming with books and resources to bring all these wonderful ideas to life.

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For more information

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Here We Go Round

Here We Go Round introduces *Jenny Mosley's Quality Circle Time* to the under-fives and this new and revised edition is clearly set out and contains a wealth of suggested activities, all suitable for this age range. By linking Circle Time to the four themes outlined in the *Early Years Foundation Stage* materials, this essential text will support practitioners in promoting the rich and stimulating environment and practice that young children need.

"In my practice as an Educational Psychologist I am constantly referring to how children learn as being equally important as what they learn. This new edition of *Here We Go Round* is a brilliant resource for EYFS planning. It helps practitioners identify children's characteristics of learning and enrich the journey in building children's resilience, resourcefulness and collaboration."

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