

Practical Manual

on how to involve parents
of children preparing for Grade 1



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INTRODUCTION

The transition from home/ECD centres into the more formal education system in the early grades of primary school is a sensitive and challenging time for young children. This transitional phase requires specific insight and support to ensure that the child feels comfortable with the new demands expected at this higher level. All play an important role who are in a position to prepare for, and later support, the 5-6 year-old child's successful entry and scholastic attainment in primary school.

For a teacher to successfully “build a team of adults around the child”, it is important to empower marginalised parents who, through the training, are encouraged to be effective and engaged role models for better quality education for their children. The result is more skilled and knowledgeable parents who co-operate with teachers, and who positively influence their children's scholastic success.

In this event series, the emphasis is on showing parents that **playing means learning** and that **playing is crucial for school readiness and educational success**.

There is a handout that goes with each of the events. These handouts are full of suggestions for children's play and shall encourage parents to support their children in their playing and learning.

In the last of the four events, forms of cooperation between parents and teachers are discussed and planned.

Supporting templates and exercises are accessible on an offline tablet, together with other tools and instruments; for example: a manual for producing toys and learning/classroom resources, using anti-waste/ found objects, and other locally available material.

Target audience

- Parents of children 5-6 years old transitioning from ECD centres into formal education
- Other educators/teachers at ECD centres who work with 5-6 year olds and their parents



EVENT 1: Logical Thinking through Play

Objectives:

- Understanding the connection between children’s play and the development of logical thinking
- Getting to know examples that can be played at home

Activity	Time	Materials needed
Registration, welcome and introductions	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ registration forms▪ welcome packages (notebook, pen)
Participants’ expectations	15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ paper on the wall/ board/ flipchart▪ marker
Outlook on event 1	05 minutes	
Activity 1: ‘Fire! Fire!’	45 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ something to make music with (e.g. drum, instrument, CD...)▪ orange reflection cards (see annex 1) and something to hang them up with/on
Activity 2: ‘Guess my animal’	30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ green reflection cards (see annex 1) and something to hang them up with/on
Activity 3: ‘Understand handout 1’	45 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ copies of handout 1 for each participant▪ a ball to demonstrate the ball game▪ a domino set to demonstrate (if possible)
Wrap up	30 minutes	
Total	3 hours	

Preparation

You will have to prepare each event very well. However, being well prepared for the first event is particularly important. So, prepare in advance!

In each event, you will introduce different children’s games to the participants. **Try them out beforehand, collect your own experiences with them!** This way you can tell the participants very concretely, why you find a particular game advisable for children or what needs to be taken care of in order for the game to work. If the children’s playing leads to some kind of products, keep them and show them to the participants in the course.

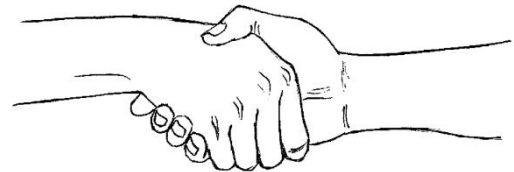
Registration, welcome and introductions

Registration

- At the very beginning, distribute the registration forms and the welcome package (with notebook, pen) and ask the participants to fill in the forms.
- Please make sure everyone registers.

Welcome

Welcome the participants and introduce yourself and your organisation.



Course introduction

Give an outlook on the training course. Briefly discuss the training objectives and explain what the participants can expect from the workshops. This will help everyone to feel secure, become curious and to look forward to the programme. For example, you could start by highlighting the main objective of the course:

- The main objective is to understand why **playing** it actually **learning**, why it is very important for children and how it can be supported by adults.
- The 1st event will focus on 'logical thinking', the 2nd on 'language development', the 3rd on 'creative thinking' and the 4th on the 'prerequisites for success'.
- There will also be a part in event 4 in which the cooperation between teachers and parents will be discussed.

You can also give an idea on *how* you will work during the course:

- Mention that there will be inputs and discussions.
- Mention that you will introduce children's games that can be tried out at home.

It may be helpful to ask the participants right at the beginning

- to please be in time,
- to turn off their cell phone unless it's really urgent.
- ...

Participants' expectations

It is important that the participants can bring forward their own expectations or hopes and fears towards the training course. This helps everyone to feel respected and heard. Not all expectations can be met within one course, but they can give information on what is particularly important to the participants. You could go along the following questions:

- “Before you came, you may have had some expectations towards this course. Is there something that you would like to share?”
- “Is there something that is particularly important to you?”
- “Is there something that you do *not* want to happen?”

While participants give answers, report their statements:

- Write down words or short phrases of what has been said (summarising) on a piece of paper or flipchart that can be seen by everyone
- In the end, read out what you have written
- Thank the participants and inform them that these will be revisited at the end of the course.

Outlook Event 1

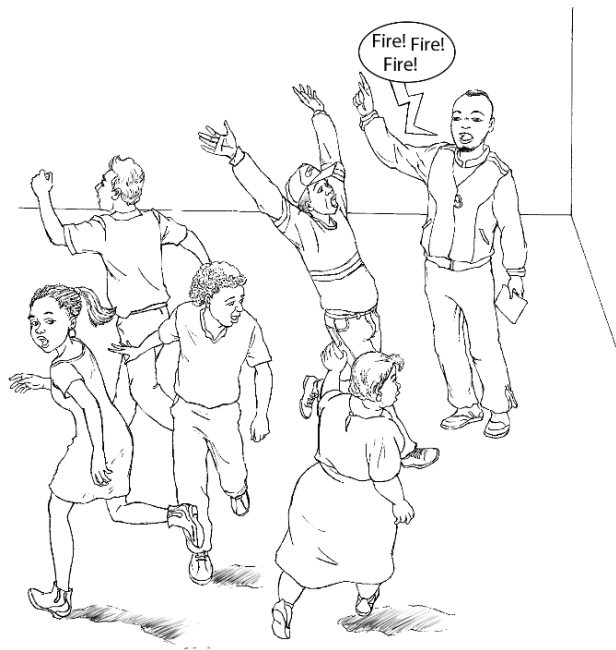
Inform the group briefly about what you are planning to do in this event 1 (e.g. you could follow the list of activities that you find in the box at the beginning of this chapter).

If the participants are well informed about the programme, this will allow them to feel increasingly comfortable and to actively engage in the activities and discussions.

Activity 1: ‘Fire! Fire!’

Playing ‘Fire! Fire!’

- Explain that you (the facilitator) will shout ‘Fire! Fire!’ and the participants should run around randomly as if escaping from a fire. Then you will shout out a number; the participants should stop and form groups with the same number of people as the number shouted out. Do this 4 to 6 times.
- Introduce a new version of the game: Explain that you will play music (by playing an instrument or a drum or by using a CD player etc.) they can move to in any way they like. Then you will stop the music, shout out a number again and ask them to form groups according to the number shouted. Within these groups, they are now asked to shake hands, say hello to each other and to tell each other their names (if they don’t know the names already). Do these 4 to 6 times.



Reflections

- **Reflecting on emotions:** Ask the participants how they felt during the game (maybe they will say, that ‘fire’ triggers more excitement or even fear, and hearing music is more calming, maybe they say that becoming familiar with the other participants feels good etc.)
- **Reflecting on suitability for children:** Ask the participants whether they think that this game could be played with children (they may find the game suitable for children, they may say that the children have to count the group members which helps them learning to count etc.).
- **Using the orange reflection cards:** The orange cards show different aspects to the question “Is this game an appropriate learning opportunity for children?” Show the cards and discuss with the participants whether they would answer them with yes or no. Arrange them accordingly by hanging them up on a *yes*-side or on a *no*-side (or in between, if the answer is ambivalent). There is no right or wrong answer, the goal is merely to actively reflect on the experience.

Here are some thoughts on each card to help you prepare for the discussion and to provide additional information for the participants:

Fun: This is addressing the emotional experience and is a key for learning! If children have positive emotions, they are open for all kinds of playing and learning experiences.

FUN

No fear, no shame: This is very close to the question of fun, just the opposite. It is good to repeatedly realise that fear and shame are real blockages for all playing and learning processes. They can easily happen and it’s important to be aware of them.

NO FEAR
NO SHAME



Engaging (e.g. involving different senses): Are the children just passively doing what they are being told or are they really engaged and interested in the activity? If they are really engaged and keen to experiment and to find solutions, their brain is very active and gets trained very intensely! The intensity is particularly high if different senses are involved (the 5 senses are listening, looking, tasting, smelling, touching). In the case of the game 'fire fire', the different senses are involved at least by listening, looking and moving/touching.

ENGAGING

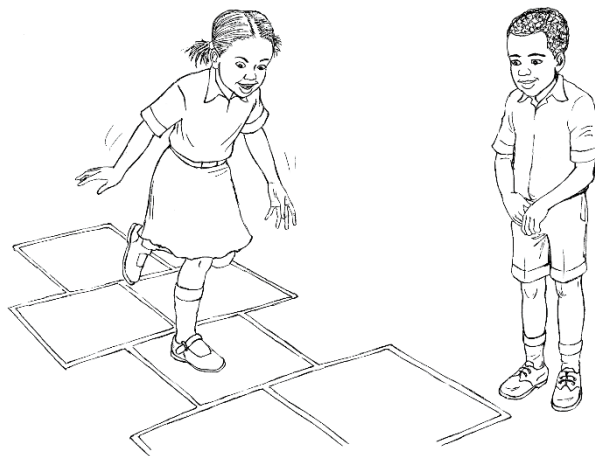
Meaningful: Whether children are ready to take part in a playful situation depends on whether it appears meaningful to them. If they find it completely useless, they will not be very interested. The game 'fire fire' is usually regarded as meaningful as it is socially highly relevant: Children will want to find a group and not be left alone.

MEANINGFUL

Challenging (not too easy, not too difficult): All learning is effective if the situation has a good amount of challenge to it. It should not be too easy as the child will find it boring, and it should not be too challenging as the child will find it frustrating and discouraging. The game 'fire fire' may be appropriate for some children and too challenging for others. Therefore, it is good to know some easier versions of it, e.g. use only small numbers (1, 2, 3), count the group members together or have the older children help the younger children.

CHALLENGING

- **Tell from your own experience:** You have tried out the game with children as a preparation for this course. Tell the participants about your experience: What did the children particularly like about the game? And have you been able to observe learning through playing (e.g. children being actively involved in counting group members)? Let the participants know about your first-hand experience!



Activity 2: 'Guess my animal'

Playing 'Guess my animal'

- Ask one of the participants to volunteer and to think of an animal. Everyone else should then try to find out which animal it is and the volunteering person should only answer with 'yes' or 'no'. The participants will ask questions like 'Does it have 4 legs?', 'Is it larger than me?', 'Does it swim?', 'Does it fly?' etc. The person who finds out what animal it is, gets a rewarding applause from everyone.
- Play again in groups of two or three in changing roles.

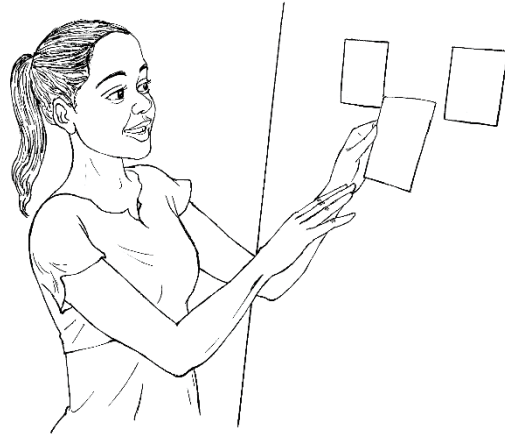


Reflections

- **Use the orange reflection cards again** and ask the question 'Is this game an appropriate learning opportunity for children?' – Ask the participants to answer this question for each aspect that is displayed on the cards and again, hang the cards up on a 'yes-side' or on a 'no-side' (or in between).
- **Tell from your own experience:** You have tried out the game with children as a preparation for this course. Tell the participants about your experience: What did the children particularly like about the game? And have you been able to observe learning through playing (e.g. children being increasingly able to ask these kind of questions)?

- **Use the green reflection cards:** The green cards show each of the main learning areas that will be focused on in the events 1 to 4. They each display aspects to the question: “What is being learnt?”.

Here are some thoughts on the first card. Firstly, try to understand them yourself and then find a way of telling them to the participants. Give a small speech and tell them the reason why this kind of playing helps the children in their development of logical thinking:



Logical thinking: This is the focus in event 1. Why? What do these games have to do with logical thinking? It seems that this is just playing, but in fact, this is much more:

**LOGICAL
THINKING**

In the first case, in the game ‘fire fire’ each child needs to find a group to belong. For this reason, the children quickly have to understand the meaning of the word ‘two’ or ‘three’ that is being shouted out and translate this into counting people. This process is very complex and needs a whole range of brain activities. These activities lead to logical thinking: The children need to understand that there is a logic in counting numbers: “One” means a single person, “two” is double and means a pair, and “three” is one more. There is a logical order that goes from 1 to 2 to 3.... When children get increasingly familiar with this logical order or pattern, **their brain is being trained for logical thinking**, which is highly valuable for educational achievements.

In the second case with the questions on animals, something very similar happens in the children’s brains: Here, they have to build categories in their imagination: One kind of categories may be ‘animals that can swim’ (e.g. a fish), another ‘animals that can fly’ (e.g. a bird) and ‘animals that can run on the ground’ (e.g. a dog). The children are challenged to mentally create a logical system of categories and to find out, which animal fits into which category. These are again extremely intense thinking processes. They build important structures in the brain and train logical thinking.

This kind of training is most intense when the situation is **challenging, but not too difficult and not too easy**.

You can also display the other cards and let the participants know that these will follow in the events 2, 3 and 4:

Language development: Will be the focus of event 2.

LANGUAGE
DEVELOPMENT

Creative thinking: Will be the focus of event 3.

CREATIVE
THINKING

Prerequisites for Success (*joy, self-esteem, curiosity etc.*): Will be the focus of event 4.

PREREQUISITES
FOR SUCCESS

Activity 3: Understanding handout 1

Distribute the handout for event 1 to the participants.

- On this handout, different playing opportunities are suggested which are more or less challenging. Ask the participants to choose at least 3 of them and try them out at home. Ask them to choose those that are challenging, but not too challenging for their child.
- All of them contribute to logical thinking.



Explain all 6 points:

- 1 and 2 are the ones that have just been done together.
- 3 and 4: Explain it and demonstrate it with one of the participants.
- 5 and 6: Explain it and if possible, show an example.

Tell from your own experience:

- You have tried out the games with children as a preparation for this course. Tell the participants about your experience: What did the children particularly like about these games? And have you been able to observe learning through playing?

Invite the participants...

- to ask questions if they have,
- to share their own experiences and make further suggestions for playing opportunities.

Emphasise as take-home message:



Wrap up

Invite the participants...

- to share their main insights of this event
- firstly, in groups of 2 or 3
- secondly, telling the whole group
- to show their general satisfaction with the event: thumbs up or down?



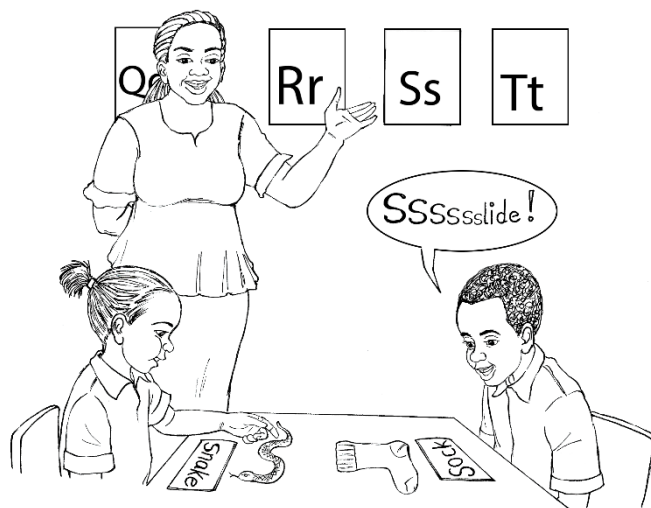
Outlook and closing

- Until next time: Please **try out at least 3 of the games on the handout**
- The next event will be focusing on 'language development'
- **Please bring a simple sock with you.** It needs to be a sock of an adult so your hand fits in it – we will experiment with socks as puppets...
- Goodbye...

EVENT 2: Language Development through Play

Objectives:

- Understanding the connection between children's play and the development of language
- Getting to know examples that can be played at home



Activity	Time	Materials needed
Welcome and recap	15 minutes	
Outlook on event 2	05 minutes	
Activity 1: Sock puppet	40 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a simple sock puppet (maybe even one that a child has made, see description on the handout of event 2) ▪ some socks ▪ orange reflection cards and something to hang them up with/on
Activity 2: Role play	30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ green reflection cards and something to hang them up with/on
Activity 3: Story telling	60 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a story
Activity 4: 'Understand handout 2'	15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ copies of handout 2 for each participant
Wrap up	15 minutes	
Total	3 hours	

Preparation

Again, please prepare yourself well in advance.

Remember to try out all the activities with children beforehand. Reflect on your own experiences and let the participants know about them. If possible, bring examples and products that you can display or use for demonstration and discussion.

Welcome and recap

Welcome

Welcome the participants.

Recap

Ask them to

- build groups of 2 or 3 and to tell each other, what they remember from the last event
- share some of their insights with the whole group
- ask questions if something needs to be clarified for them

Outlook Event 2

Inform the group briefly about what you are planning to do in this event 2 (e.g. you could follow the list that you find in the box at the beginning of this chapter and say a few words about each of the activities).

Activity 1: Sock Puppet

Playing with a sock puppet

- **Introduce your sock puppet:** Use a simple sock puppet (maybe one that a child has made) to get into a fun conversation with the group, e.g. like this: Put it on your hand and slowly take your hand out of a box or bag and let the puppet appear. Invent a name and a little story that the puppet can tell about itself and talk a little bit with the audience.
- **Inventing sock puppet figures:** Ask everybody to get out the socks they have brought with them (offer a sock to those who don't have one): In groups of 2 or 3, experiment with the socks, invent little personalities.



Reflections

- **Reflecting on emotions:** Ask the participants how they felt listening to and playing with a sock puppet.
- **Use the orange reflection cards again** and ask the question 'Is this game an appropriate learning opportunity for children?' – Ask the participants to answer this question for each aspect that is displayed on the cards and again, hang the cards up on a 'yes-side' or on a 'no-side' (or in between). And again: There is no right or wrong answer, the goal is merely to actively reflect on the experience.
- **Tell from your own experience:** You have tried out the sock puppets with children as a preparation for this course. Tell the participants about your experience: What did the children particularly like about it? And have you been able to observe learning through playing (e.g. children daring to speak more freely through the puppet)? Maybe you have observed that children invent little theatre plays by letting several puppets appear from behind a chair or so? Share these experiences as they might help parents in supporting their children to follow their own ideas.

Activity 2: Role Play

Talking about 'Role Play'

- This time, please start with your own experience and tell the participants: What kind of role plays do you observe among the children (e.g. children playing being a mother with a baby or being a teacher talking to pupils or being someone cooking and serving a meal etc.)? Which role plays do the children particularly like? What do you do to encourage them for this kind of play? Do you use any simple tools/ materials (a baby doll, some toy cooking utensils etc.) to support the children's ideas? Tell the group as concretely as possible, use examples and show materials if they are available to you.



- Ask the participants to share their experiences with children's role plays.

Reflections

- **Use the green reflection cards again** and ask the question ‘What is being learnt?’ This time, the card **Language development** is being focused on.

Here are some thoughts to this card. Firstly, try to understand them yourself and then find a way of telling them to the participants. Give a small speech and tell them the reason why this kind of playing helps the children in their development of language:

Role play seems like a very simple children’s game, while in fact the learning opportunities are immense, especially in the field of language development. When children take on different roles, they are no longer themselves, but they imagine to be a mother, a father, a teacher, maybe a shop keeper, a doctor or a taxi driver or maybe a particular animal, depending on the situation and story that is being imagined. They imitate what different people would say and **experiment with different ways of speaking**, using words and phrases they wouldn’t normally use. They try out different formulations, have a lot of fun doing it and at the same time, develop their language. **This kind of language development is a crucial prerequisite for all kinds of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills** that will follow.

Additionally, role plays - and particularly puppet plays - have an especially precious side to them, that sometimes seems like magic: Shy children suddenly start talking freely. As it is the puppet who is speaking and not they themselves, **they are much less afraid to make mistakes**. If they do make mistakes, it feels like it was the mistake of the puppet and not theirs! **This can be immensely freeing and opening to a joyful way of learning**.

If this effect is to happen, there is one important condition: The children need to feel free and not afraid to speak. This way, they can discover their own speaking resources. If we want to support this discovery and the courage and openness that comes along with this kind of playing, us adults, **we should orient on the children’s interests and strengths**, not so much on their mistakes or weaknesses.

Activity 3: Story telling

Listening to a story

- **Please tell or read an intriguing little story** to the audience and let them simply enjoy it.



Reflections

- **Give some additional information:** Children love stories. It may look as if they were passive and not learning anything, but the opposite is the case: They are often very strongly involved, benefit emotionally and learn immensely from this intensive kind of exposure to language. Don't make the language too simple, children often understand more than we think. And stories are one of the most effective forms for language development!

Sharing ideas

- **Finding nice stories** can be challenging for busy parents. So ask everyone to contribute with their own ideas and experiences and help each other: What kind of nice stories do you know? Where can good stories be found?
- Collect these ideas in groups of 2 or 3.
- Share some of the ideas with the whole group.
- Maybe there are some volunteers that are ready to tell a story to everyone?



Activity 4: Understanding handout 2

Distribute the handout for event 2 to the participants.

- On this handout, all the suggestions of this event are listed.
- Ask the participants to choose at least 2 of them and try them out at home.
- All of them contribute to language development.

Invite the participants...

- to ask questions if they have.

Emphasise as take-home-message:

- ✓ As adults, we need to **orient ourselves on the children's interests and strengths** (not on their mistakes and weaknesses) if we want to give them support in their playing and learning.

Wrap up

Invite the participants...

- to share their main insights of this event.

Outlook and closing

- Until next time: **try out at least 2 of the suggestions on the handout**
- The next event will be focusing on 'creative thinking'
- Goodbye...

EVENT 3: Creative thinking through Play

Objectives:

- Understanding the connection between children’s play and the development of creative thinking
- Getting to know examples that can be played at home

Activity	Time	Materials needed
Welcome and recap	15 minutes	
Outlook on event 3	05 minutes	
Activity 1: Thinking out of the box	20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ pen and paper for each participant
Activity 2: Own creative moments	30 minutes	
Activity 3: Children’s creative moments	75 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ (colour) pens and paper for each participant▪ A place to display the pieces of paper, something to hang them up with▪ green reflection cards and something to hang them up with/on
Activity 4: ‘Understand handout 3’	20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ copies of handout 2 for each participant
Wrap up	15 minutes	
Total	3 hours	

Preparation

Again, please prepare yourself well in advance.

Remember to try out some of the activities with children beforehand. Reflect on your own experiences and let the participants know about them. If possible, bring examples and products that you can display or use for demonstration and discussion.

Welcome and recap

Welcome

Welcome the participants.

Recap

Ask the them to

- build groups of 2 or 3 and to tell each other, what they remember from the last 2 events
- share some of their insights with the whole group
- ask questions if something needs to be clarified for them

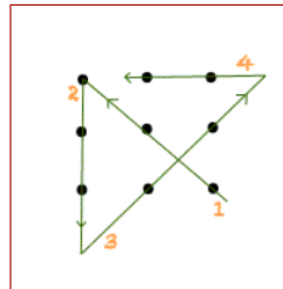
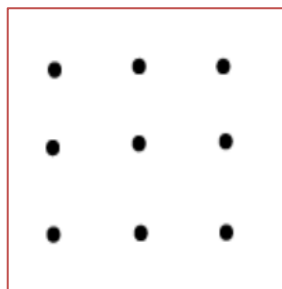
Outlook Event 3

Inform the group briefly about what you are planning to do in this event 3 (e.g. you could follow the list that you find in the box at the beginning of this chapter and say a few words about each of the activities).

Activity 1: Thinking out of the box

Thinking out of the box

- **Solving the nine dot problem:** Distribute pen and paper and ask everyone to draw nine dots as shown below. The challenge is to draw 4 straight lines that go through all 9 dots without taking the pen off the paper. Each line must start where the last line finished.



Reflections

- **The need for creative thinking:** This riddle is often very hard for people to solve, because most people try to remain within the square of the nine dots. Only when you go beyond this square ('out of the box') it becomes possible to find a solution. The ability to leave the box is a quality of creative thinking. Creative thinking is very important if solutions need to be found. Accordingly, it is crucial for educational success.

Activity 2: Own creative moments

Recalling own creative moments

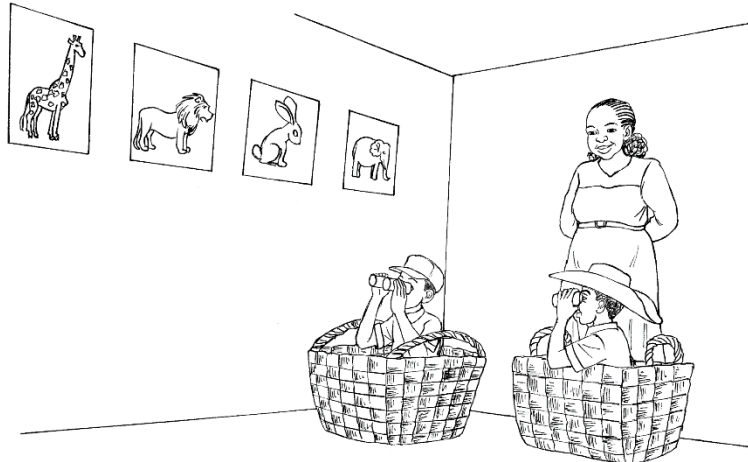
- **Everyone is creative now and then:** Ask everyone to think of moments in which they were creative. They may have found a solution to a problem, invented something new in housing, gardening or business, or created something beautiful with colour, form, music, clothing or home decoration. The memories can range from something that happened just recently to events that go back into one's own childhood.
- Share these experiences in groups of 2 or 3.
- Share some of the experiences with the whole group.
- Add your own experiences.

Reflections

- **Reflecting on emotions:** Ask the participants how they felt when they had a creative moment (usually, it feels really great, relieving or fulfilling).

Activity 2: Children's creative moments

Recalling children's creative moments



- **Children can be amazingly creative:** Ask everyone to think of moments in which they observed children being creative, discovering new things, experimenting with materials or colours or movements etc.: What were the activities that made children be creative?
- Share these experiences in groups of 2 or 3. For each activity, draw an illustration or pictogram on a piece of paper (e.g. a child constructing a tower, painting, singing, climbing, playing with water etc.)
- Hang all pieces of paper up on a wall.
- Each small group: please comment your own illustrations to the whole group.
- Add your own experiences and ideas of how creative playing can be supported.

Reflections

- **Use the green reflection cards** and ask the question ‘What is being learnt?’. This time, the card **Creative Thinking** is being focused on.

Creative
Thinking

Here are some thoughts to this card. Firstly, try to understand them yourself and then find a way of telling them to the participants. Give a small speech and tell them the reason why this kind of playing helps the children in their development of creative thinking:

When children play creatively, it may seem chaotic and not very goal-oriented. However, children do have a goal and a logic they follow. They wonder and have questions which they are trying to answer, e.g. what happens if I let go of the ball, does it roll down the hill? And if I put it on water, does it sink or swim? If I stack these wooden blocks on top of each other, do they stay or fall? What does it look like when I mix these colours? How can I manage to make a little human figure out of this piece of cardboard?... Children are full of curious questions and keen on finding answers. If a child repeatedly makes the experience that he or she is able to find answers to questions, he or she can develop a lot of **self-confidence!**

This ability is highly important when solutions to problems need to be found. If it is trained over and over again, the brain gets really flexible in its structure. This brain structure is particularly developed at young age, so giving opportunity to creatively finding solutions, gives the children a very important precondition for all learning that will follow.



However, creative playing and learning does not always happen. Adults tend to have their own idea of what a solution should look like. We easily interrupt the child’s process, so that it does not trust its own solutions anymore. If we want to support children in being creative, it is best to be **very attentive to their own interests and ideas and to let them find their own solutions and answers.**

For example, if a child becomes really interested in drawing pictures of the family, we can provide paper and colour pens, encourage the child to draw and let the child follow his or her *own* ideas. When the drawing is finished we should not criticise what we find imperfect, but rather ask an interested and open question about the child’s own perspective, something like: “Tell me your picture, tell me all about it.” Often, children will be very happy to tell the whole story of what they have imagined while drawing their picture.

Creative thinking can grow best, if we provide an appreciative and supportive space for it, in which children can follow their own ideas and find their own solutions.

Activity 3: Understanding handout 3

Distribute the handout for event 3 to the participants.

- On this handout, you find a lot of suggestions of how creative activities can be provided.
- Ask the participants to choose at least 2 of them and try them out at home. Ask them to observe whether the child finds a creative space in them or not.
- All of the activities can contribute to the development of creative thinking.



Invite the participants...

- to ask questions if they have.

Emphasise as take-home-message:

- ✓ Creative thinking can grow best, if we provide an **appreciative and supportive space** for it, in which **children can follow their own ideas and find their own solutions.**

Wrap up

Invite the participants...

- to share their main insights of this event.

Outlook and closing

- Until next time: **try out at least 2 of the suggestions on the handout**
- The next event will be focusing on 'prerequisites for educational success'
- Goodbye...

EVENT 4: Prerequisites for Learning

Objectives:

- Understanding the connection between children’s play and the development of different prerequisites for learning
- Getting to know examples that can be played at home
- Plan activities of school-family partnership

Activity	Time	Materials needed
Welcome and recap	10 minutes	
Outlook on event 3	05 minutes	
Activity 1: Ha! Ha!	30 minutes	
Activity 2: Using 5 senses	60 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a range of objects for the touching game, e.g. a sock, a cup, a feather, a pen, a rubber etc. ▪ a bag to hide an object ▪ some objects for the listening game, e.g. a piece of newspaper, 2 little rocks, 2 pieces of wood ▪ something for the smelling game, e.g. a piece of banana ▪ something for the tasting game, e.g. a nut (if possible, one for everybody) ▪ green reflection cards and something to hang them up with/on
Activity 3: ‘Understand handout 4’	15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ copies of handout 3 for each participant
Activity 4: Family-school-partnership	45 minutes	
Wrap up	15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ paper with the participants’ expectations from event 1
Total	3 hours	

Preparation

Again, please prepare yourself well in advance.

Remember to try the activities out with children beforehand. In this case, try out the activities on using the 5 senses (activity 2). Reflect on your own experiences and let the participants know about them.

Welcome and recap

Welcome

Welcome the participants.

Recap

Ask the them to

- build groups of 2 or 3 and to tell each other, what they remember from the last 2 events
- share some of their insights with the whole group
- ask questions if something needs to be clarified for them

Outlook Event 4

Inform the group briefly about what you are planning to do in this event 3 (e.g. you could follow the list that you find in the box at the beginning of this chapter and say a few words about each of the activities).

Activity 1: Ha! Ha!

Playing the game 'Ha! Ha!'

- Begin by having all the participants sit in a circle.
- Tell them to remain as solemn and serious as they can throughout the game.
- Pick one player to start the game by saying 'Ha' once.
- The person next to them then says it twice: 'Ha, ha'.
- Following this pattern, the third person says it three times: 'Ha, ha, ha'.
- As the game progresses, eliminate any participants who laugh or make a noise when it is not their turn. The person who avoids laughing and remains serious throughout the game is the winner.



Reflections

- **Reflecting on emotions:** Ask the participants how they felt during the game (maybe you can get into a little conversation on how fun games can open up and make everybody feel good and ready to participate. The same applies to children!).
- **Reflecting on suitability for children:** Ask the participants whether they think that this game could be played with children (probably everyone will agree that this would be fun to play with children. Maybe children will need a little help in counting the amount of 'ha' they are supposed to say).

Activity 2: Using 5 senses

Experimenting with 5 senses

- **Playing with touching:** Ask a participant to volunteer. Put an object into a bag and ask the volunteer to put his or her hand into the bag and guess what it is (e.g. a sock, a cup, a feather, a pen, a rubber...).

Ask the participants to play in groups of 2 or 3: One closes his or her eyes and guesses the objects that are being put into their hands (alternatively, the eyes can remain open and the objects are given into the hands behind the back). Provide some objects, use whatever is easily available.

Inform the participants that this is fun to play with children: Just use objects that are familiar to them.

- **Playing with seeing:** Display a range of objects on a table and let everybody remember them. Ask them to close their eyes and remove one object. Who finds out which object has been removed? Ask them to close their eyes again, leave all objects on the table, but exchange 2 of them in their position. Who finds out which 2 have been exchanged?



This is also a fun game for children! The kind and amount of objects can easily be varied according to the abilities of the children. And the roles can also be exchanged: the adult closes his or her eyes, the child prepares the riddle...

- **Playing with listening:** Ask everybody to close their eyes again. Use the same objects that you have on the table and make a noise with them (e.g. crackling with newspaper,

clapping with 2 little rocks, banging 2 pieces of wood together etc.). Who can guess what the noise has been made with: Can you come forward and repeat the noise?

This is another game that works well with children. And the roles can also be exchanged!

- **Playing with smelling:** Ask someone to volunteer and close his or her eyes. Then hold something nicely smelling under his or her nose, e.g. a piece of banana. Can it be guessed?
- **Playing with tasting:** Ask everybody to close their eyes and to open their hands. Bring each person something small to eat (e.g. a nut) and let them enjoy it. Who can tell, what it is?



Needless to say that the last 2 also are also great to play with children.

Reflections

- **Reflecting on emotions:** Ask the participants how they felt during the game.
- **Reflecting on suitability for children:** Ask the participants whether they think that this game could be played with children. As you have tested these activities before the course, share your experiences with the participants: What did the children particularly like? Do you have some recommendations in how these activities can be carried out by the parents?
- **Use the green reflection cards again** and ask the question 'What is being learnt?'. This time, the card **Prerequisites for learning** is being focused on.

PREREQUISITES
FOR SUCCESS

Here are some thoughts to this card. Firstly, try to understand them yourself and then find a way of telling them to the participants. Give a small speech and tell them the reason why this kind of playing helps the children in their learning:

Learning can take place under conditions which are easier and conditions which are harder. Learning is much easier if it is based on joy and fun: **Laughing opens us up and makes us ready to learn new things, to be positive and curious.**

Openness and readiness are not only attained by being happy. It is also attained by being open with all our senses. When we are involved by looking, listening, smelling, tasting and touching, we are very available for all kinds of learning. And when we learn with all our senses, this learning is very sustainable: We remember what we learnt for a long time. **For children, being happy and open with all their senses is essential for all kinds of learning.** We can foster this openness by involving different senses wherever it is possible, e.g. by playing games like the ones above.

Most importantly: Happiness and openness come from feeling loved. Everything we do when we play and learn with children, is a chance to let them feel our deep appreciation and love. What could possibly be more important than that?

A child that feels open, self-confident and loved, can learn particularly well.

Activity 3: Understanding handout 4

Distribute the handout for event 4 to the participants.

- Ask the participants to do these activities at home.
- All of the activities can contribute to crucial prerequisites for learning.

Invite the participants...

- to ask questions if they have.

Emphasise as take-home-message:

- ✓ A child that is **open with all its senses** and that feels **self-confident, appreciated and loved**, can learn particularly well.

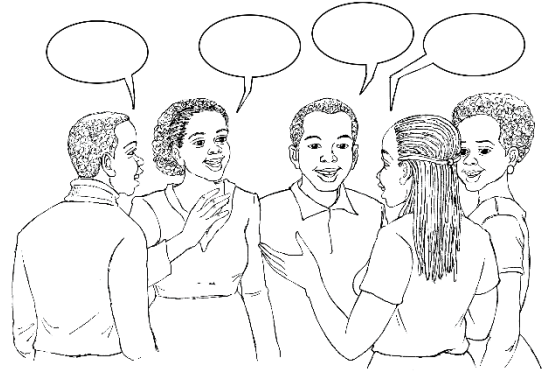
Activity 4: Family-school-partnership

Reflections on the importance of family-school-partnerships

- A well-functioning partnership between family and school is truly precious for the children' educational success. Studies have shown that children are more successful if parents and teachers cooperate well with each other. Hopefully, these 4 events have contributed to this aim.
- Additionally, the transition from home/preschool into the primary school can be overwhelming for the young child. There are many more (older and much older) children, more teachers/adults to respond to, a larger and more confusing building structure to negotiate, and a more formal and disciplined expectation of behaviour, such as standing quietly in line, raising one's hand to ask/answer a question, waiting one's turn. It is necessary to prepare children for this new and stressful situation; that way they enter primary school without overwhelming anxiety and insecurity.
- Let us work together and find more and new ways to cooperate...

Collecting ideas / making plans for parent-teacher-cooperation

- Where can we find opportunities for more cooperation? – have a group discussion on this question.
- (maybe it would be good to provide a whole range of possibilities and ideas that can be displayed as pictograms and discussed with the participants, e.g.:
 - Come and be with us
 - Help playing!
 - Tell or read a story to the children
 - Tell the children about some interesting work you do
 - Tell the children about something interesting you know about
 - Come and support us in supervising / distributing meals / gardening...
 - Accompany a trip
 - Help in fund-raising activities
 - Help making toys
 - Help repairing or maintaining toys, infrastructure etc.
 - ...
- Plan future activities together...



Wrap up

Invite the participants...

- to reflect back on the 4 events and share their personal highlights or insights
- to recall their expectations from the beginning (display and read them out again)
- to give feedback: Are there things to improve for future courses?
- Thank you and goodbye...

Annex 1: Reflection Cards

Produce / write the following cards in large size (large enough to be able to hold them up in front of a group, e.g. size A3 each) and use 2 different colours (whatever colour is available to you).

Set A of cards (orange) on the question: "Is it an appropriate learning opportunity?"

CHALLENGING

*not too easy
not too difficult*

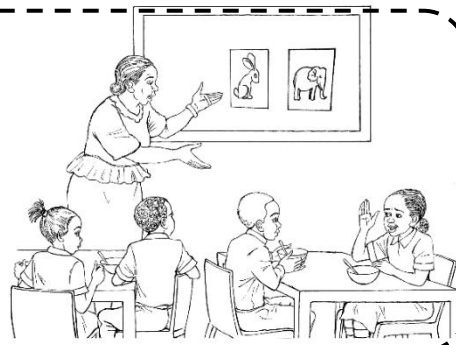


ENGAGING

e.g. involving different senses



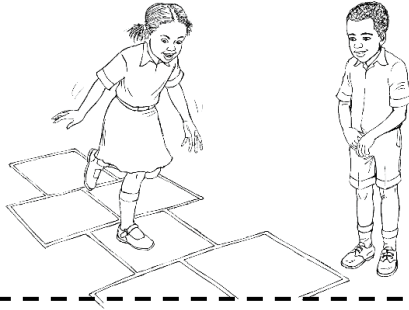
NO FEAR NO SHAME



FUN



MEANINGFUL

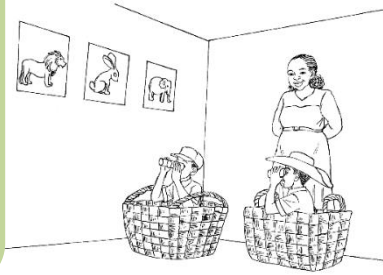


Set B of cards (green) on the question: "What is being learnt?"

**LOGICAL
THINKING**



**CREATIVE
THINKING**

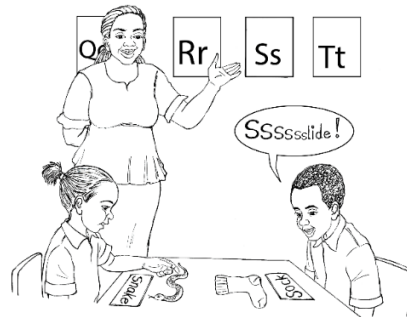


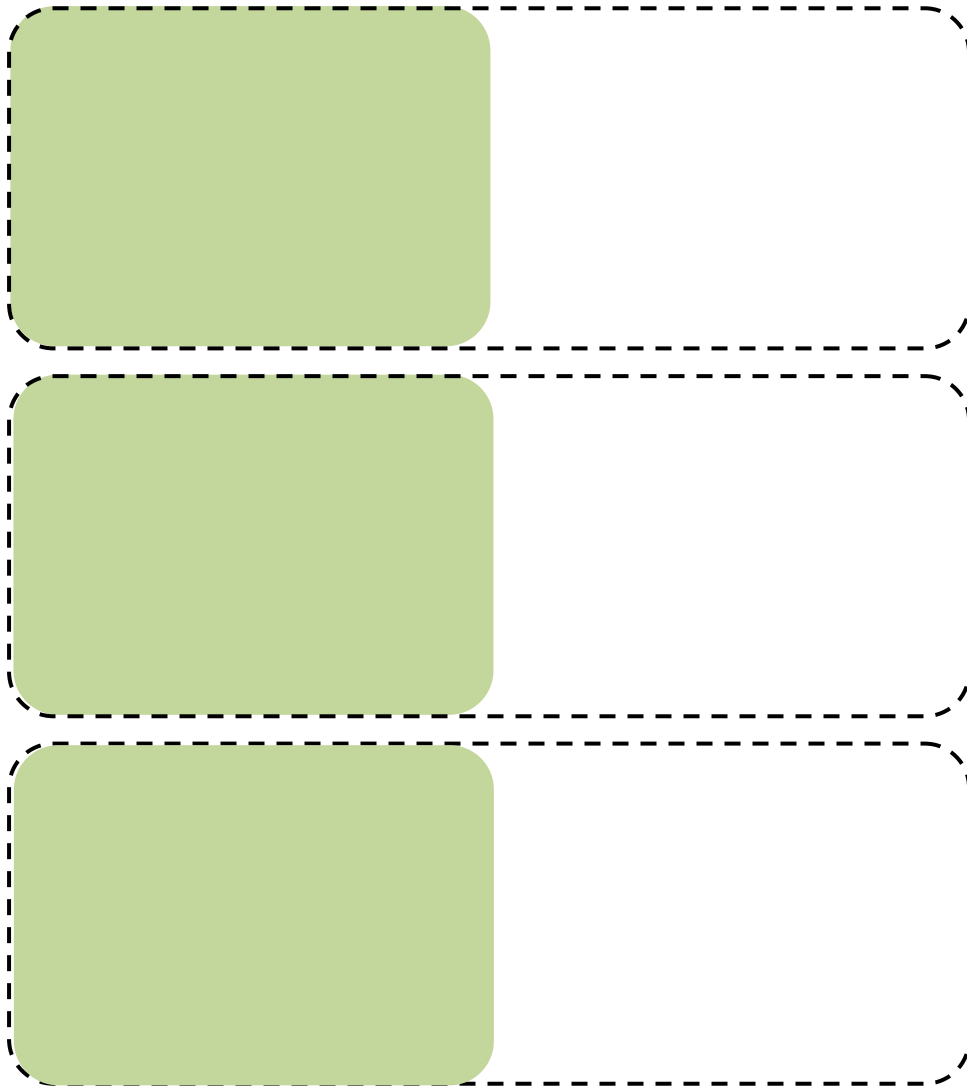
**PREREQUISITES
FOR SUCCESS**

e.g. joy, self-esteem, curiosity



**LANGUAGE
DEVELOPMENT**





Handout Event 1: Logical Thinking through Play

1. Group-making

- Play music, sing a song or beat a drum to which the children can dance.



- Shout '3!' – the children stop dancing and form groups of 3.
- Repeat with different numbers.



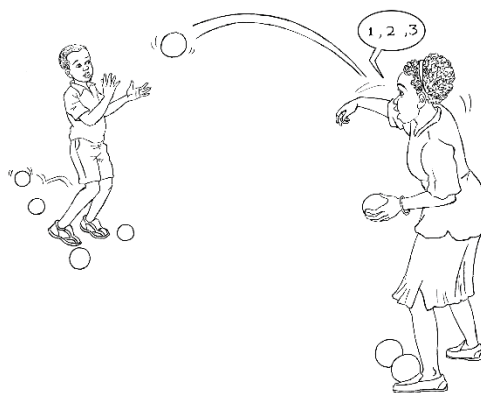
2. Guess my animal

- Ask the child to think of an animal but not to tell it.
- Tell the child to only answer with 'yes' or 'no'.
- Ask questions like 'does it have 4 legs?', 'does it swim?', 'is it larger than you?' etc. until you find it out.
- Change roles: You think of an animal and the child asks the questions.



3. How often can you catch the ball?

- Ask: How often can you catch the ball when I throw it to you? Count together until the ball falls to the floor.
- Ask: How often can you throw the ball up in the air and catch it again? Count together until the ball falls to the floor.



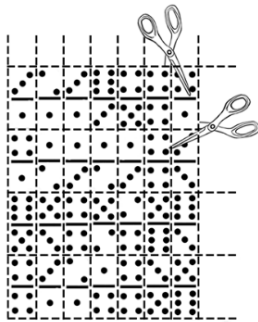
4. How many little stones do I have in my hand?

- Hide some little stones in your fist. Let the child guess how many there are.

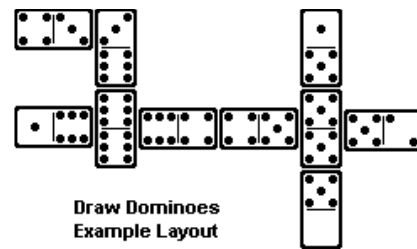


5. Domino

- Cut and draw domino pieces according to the picture. You can use pieces of cardboard or other materials.

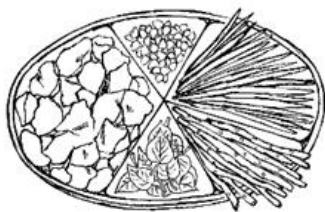
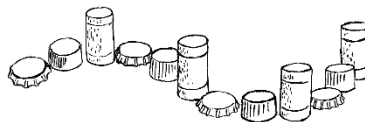


- Let the child build a 'snake': Always the same numbers go together (see picture)



6. Logical patterns

- Help the child collect materials (from nature, recycling materials etc.).
- Animate the child to create beautiful patterns.
- Don't forget to praise the child for his or her creation.



Handout Event 2: Logical Thinking through Play

1. Sock puppet

- Make a sock puppet
- Let it 'come alive', give it a name, let it tell a story of itself and get into a fun conversation with the child
- Support the child in making one and let him or her play with it creatively.

How to make a Sock puppet

Purpose
To use puppets for children to enjoy, respond to and develop imagination

What you need

- a sock
- scrap material for nose and mouth
- 2 buttons that are the same for the eyes
- needle and thread
- scissors
- the pattern on page 80 for the ears and nose

What you do

Step 1
Cut out the ears, nose and tongue from material scraps using the pattern on page...

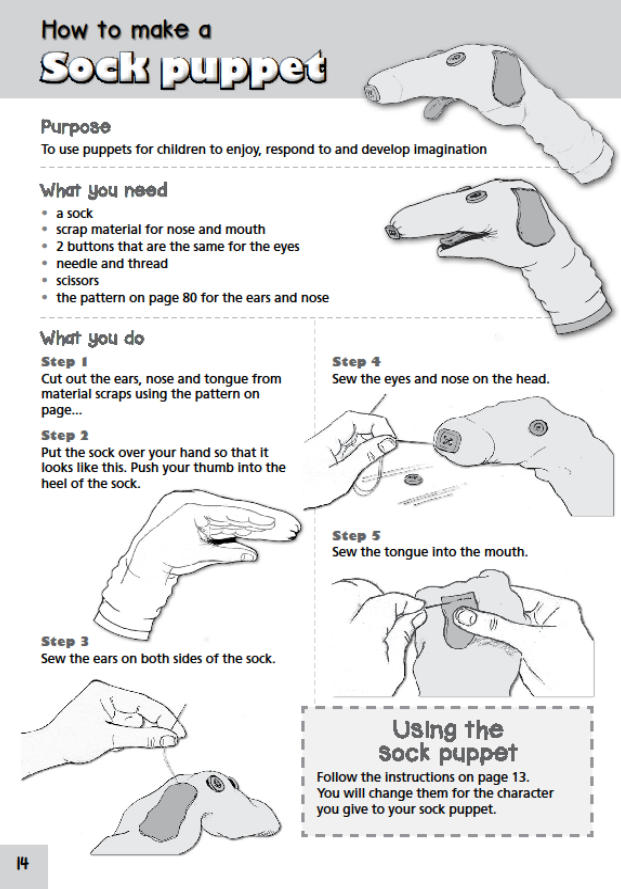
Step 2
Put the sock over your hand so that it looks like this. Push your thumb into the heel of the sock.

Step 3
Sew the ears on both sides of the sock.

Step 4
Sew the eyes and nose on the head.

Step 5
Sew the tongue into the mouth.

Using the sock puppet
Follow the instructions on page 13. You will change them for the character you give to your sock puppet.



2. Role play

- Support the children's idea, enable and encourage them to invent their little role plays.
- Take part in it yourself.



3. Story Telling

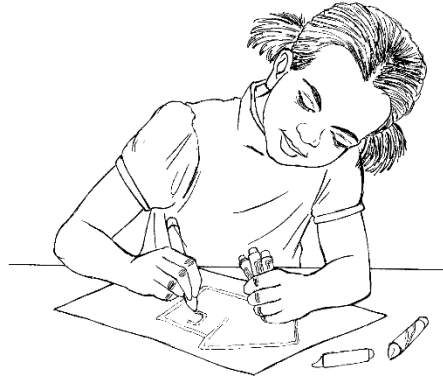
- Tell stories!
- Enjoy it!

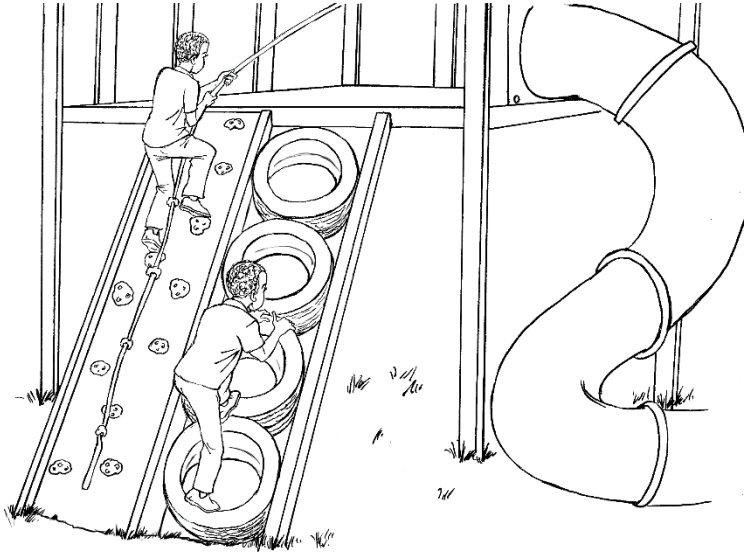


Handout Event 3: *Creative Thinking through Play*

All these activities support a child in the development of creative thinking.

It's important to let the child follow its own interest and to find its own solutions. Only then will it be able to develop creativity.





Handout Event 4: Prerequisites for learning

1. Ha! Ha!

- Sit in a circle.
- Try not to laugh!
- Pick one child to start the game by saying 'Ha' once.
- The child next to it then says it twice: 'Ha, ha'.
- Following this pattern, the third child says it three times: 'Ha, ha, ha.'
- As the game progresses, eliminate any participants who laugh or make a noise when it is not their turn. The person who avoids laughing and remains serious throughout the game is the winner.



2. Playing with 5 senses

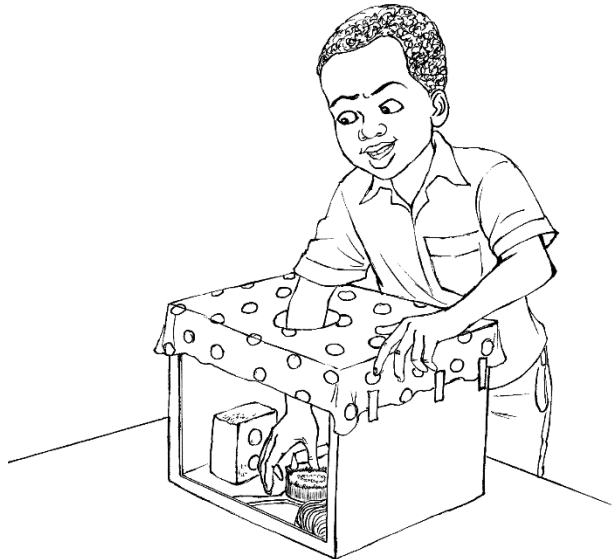
Touching

- Hide an object in a bag or under a piece of cloth.
- Let the child feel and touch it.
 - *What is it?*
- Change roles: the child hides something, you guess...



Seeing

- Put different objects on a table.
- Let the child close his or her eyes. Remove one object.
 - *Which object has been removed?*
- Let the child close his or her eyes. Exchange 2 objects.
 - *Which ones have been exchanged?*
- Change roles: the child prepares the riddle, you guess...



Listening

- Let the child close his or her eyes and turn the back to you.
- Make a noise with the objects (e.g. crackling with newspaper, clapping with 2 little rocks, banging 2 pieces of wood together etc.)
- Let the child open his or her eyes and turn around.
 - *Do you know what I have done, can you repeat this noise?*
- Change roles: the child prepares the riddle, you guess...



Smelling

- Blindfold the child.
- Hold something smelly under its nose
 - *What do you smell?*

Tasting

- Blindfold the child.
- Give it something small to eat.
 - *What is it?*



Freely Bag/Box

Children have to feel the objects in the box by using their sense of touch. Once the box is made you can put any small objects in the box for the child to guess.

