

INCREDIBLY

It's child's play!

How **PLAY** can help kids mix





Thank you

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INTRODUCTION

Some people think PLAY is what children do when they have nothing better to do! We know it's more important than that! Play IS the most important thing that children do!

Working with children? Got to be the MOST IMPORTANT job in the world – (and the hardest, and the best FUN, all rolled into one!)

Adults do, children follow! Working with children is a privilege and an opportunity!

The child is the father of the man! If only the adults could learn sometimes from children – they would see the value of looking beyond difference and getting on with it!

I'm sure we can all add to these comments on working with children and young people. One thing is for sure. We are in the business of making memories for children. What they experience has a massive impact on how they live their life – how they feel about themselves, and about other people! If we want children to grow to their FULL potential, we need to make sure that their outlook is not limited by anything – particularly by prejudice.

It is our responsibility as adults to make sure that the world we leave our children is one that respects and celebrates difference. It is our responsibility as adults who work with children to make sure that the children we leave the world have the capacity to embrace this.

So if PLAY really is the thing – and I think we all reckon it is! – then the best way to facilitate good CRED (Community Relations, Equality and Diversity) is to maximise a child's opportunity to play. This is endorsed in the following statement:

...good play provision offers a welcoming space where children can meet on a more equal basis. For this reason play provision can be the starting point for tackling social exclusion, engaging with marginalised families and communities and working to build up their capacity to improve their social, environmental and economic circumstances. (quoted in Best Play 2000)

When you think about it – when children are playing, particularly if they are immersed in play, they are most at their ease and receptive to new things.

This resource will provide you with some of the tools that you can use to help to create that playful state and give children the opportunity to embrace difference and, rather than be afraid of it, to celebrate it!!!

Some adults might see Culture “...as a good excuse for a party!”

For children – it's a GREAT excuse to PLAY!

HOW TO USE THIS PACK

The pack is in TWO PARTS.

The first part gives you a bit of background about PLAY and making play WORK for children who are trying to get to know other kids, perhaps from a different culture or background. It sets the scene for you and underpins the important part YOU and PLAY can play in helping this happen. I think you will find it a useful read in preparation for.....

The second part which contains a range of resources and ideas that you and the children can enjoy. They are good FUN but they are also geared towards helping children to begin to get to know others, and to be enthusiastic about DIFFERENCE.

This includes a planned session that you can guide a group of children through to facilitate their natural capacity to EMBRACE DIFFERENCE.

PART 1

PLAY AND THE PLAYWORK APPROACH

In informal settings, such as after-school clubs and weekly children's groups like Guides and the BB, (as opposed to settings such as School and Nursery), the focus is more on PLAY than DEVELOPMENT. We argue that if you 'Focus on PLAY then DEVELOPMENT will take care of itself'. If children naturally embrace others through their play, it follows then that if we 'FOCUS on PLAY then CRED will take care of itself'!

So, we need to properly understand what we mean by PLAY and think about how we as adults make that WORK for children.

By the way - look out for the 5 'P's and the 3 'F's along the way!



PLAY

play

A common feeling amongst the adult world is that children play because they have nothing better to do. Those of us who have been privileged to witness children at play know that that is certainly not the case. PlayBoard, in 'The Way to Play', state that: **"Children play so something can happen"** and that play is **"...what children do when they are left to their own devices"**

We don't even need to be working with children to know this! When we look back on our own play memories of when we were children it gives us a clear picture of both the IMPORTANCE and NATURE of play!

Take a moment before you read any further and think about your play when you were young, say around the age of 8. What did you play, where did you play, and who did you play with? It's FUN to do this, but it also gives us a good insight into what is good play.

If we remember it - it must have been memorable!!

Invariably our play memories are of play that tends to take place OUTSIDE; has NO ADULTS; has lots of RISK; contains a sense of ADVENTURE and MYSTERY; involves the use of OBJECTS as PLAY PROPS; involves the ELEMENTS; tests and practises a range of PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL skills; incorporates PROBLEM SOLVING; and involves the playing out of a variety of different ROLES!!(and so much more!

So, what do the experts say about play? Catherine Garvey (Play 1990) suggests that PLAY has 5 key components:

- It is pleasurable and enjoyable - i.e. it's FUN!
- It has no extrinsic goals - i.e. it's done for its own sake!
- It is spontaneous and voluntary - i.e. whilst it can be planned and organised, the real play happens when the child gets on board and gets lost in it!
- It involves some active engagement on the part of the player - i.e. the player themselves are not passive, they are mentally and physically involved
- It has certain systematic relations to what is NOT play, - ie it helps children make sense of events in the world that aren't playful!



So when we talk about PLAY – we particularly value CHILD-LED PLAY. Play that gives children the FREEDOM to control the content and the intent of their play. Remember that when we thought about our own play memories, it was play WITHOUT ADULTS that was what we most remembered! It MUST therefore have been the BEST play of all! Think about it like taking your dog for a walk! There are lots of times you need to put your dog on the lead (so that he doesn't run out the gate; so that he doesn't jump on people; because the rules say so; so that he doesn't worry sheep; so that he does 'his business' in the right place!). However other times such as on the beach, or in the park etc. you can let the dog off the lead and he can go and sniff and run and jump and play exactly how he wants! If dogs could talk....., which experience would they vote for!

So child-led play is what we are aiming for if we want to facilitate the best play of all and promote good relations with others.

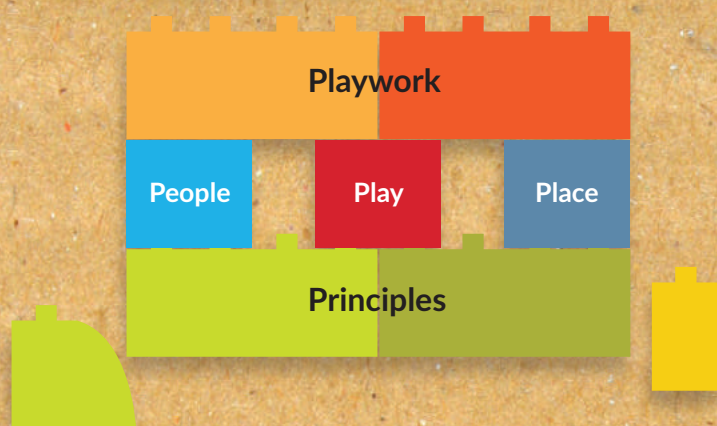
MAKING PLAY WORK

So, if that is essentially what play is, what's the best way for adults to make play work for children? If we get this right, then we will be helping children with their general development, including the development of their understanding of, and relationships with, children coming from other groups and cultures.

When making playWORK for children its useful to think of the 3 PILLARS of PLAYWORK!

Central to making it WORK is of course PLAY.

What does a playworker do?



We have already talked about the nature and extent of play above. Remember when we talk about PLAY, the play with the highest PLAY VALUE is CHILD-LED PLAY.

As well as the PLAY being CHILD-LED, we need to ensure that it incorporates a good range. In Appendix 1 you will find a list of 16 PLAY TYPES. Incorporating all of these in the play will ensure that you maximise the child's opportunity to grow and develop and get the most out of their play! In doing so it facilitates their capacity to understand and build friendships with others. Here are some examples of how the different play types can contribute to building relationships between children.

Social play gives children a chance to understand their own identity and feelings, and learn about the consequences of how they interact with others.

Rough and tumble play gives them an opportunity to test their physical contact and strength with others, essential for establishing boundaries with other children.

Communicative play can help children develop means of communicating with other children, particularly important when language is not shared.

Socio-dramatic play acts out situations that have affected them and provides a good preparation for children to begin to make sense of their experiences, and those of others.

Deep play allows them to take risks and develop confidence. It helps them better assess risks themselves and make a better judgement as to how far to go with certain acts of play.

Creative play gives children a chance to use their imagination. To think outside the box. To combine past experiences and ideas together in a FLEXIBLE way to come up with new solutions to old problems and be open to new ideas and cultures.

Explorative play gives children a chance to follow their naturally curious minds; to find out about other people and their cultures; to better understand how the world works; and to PLAY

And, of course, have FUN!

But there is more to making playWORK than just the PLAY itself! We also need to concentrate on the PEOPLE! The relationships we develop with the children are absolutely crucial in helping kids feel safe and supported to get the best from their play. This is especially important if we are encouraging them to do something against the scary or unfamiliar background of playing with children that they don't know, perhaps from a different culture or background.



A few weeks ago I took children from my setting to a different setting. When we got there my kids sat in a wee group and started to eat their lunch! I went over to the host group and started chatting to them. In doing this I was doing 3 things:

1. I was beginning to build a relationship with the new children.
2. I was modelling this behaviour to my own group as well as the hosts.
3. I was seeking out common interests that I could use as initial contacts between the two groups of children.

This would have been of no value if I didn't have the relationship with my own children. Kids look to us for guidance about what to do in strange situations; they trust our judgement on things, - like its ok - they won't bite!!!!; and they know that us being there gives them that security, even if things go a bit belly-up!

Of course, it's not just the children that you need to build relationships with. You need to do this also with parents - so that they are comfortable with the opportunities for play that you help to create for their kids; and with other volunteers - so that you are consistent in the 'they're all right' message that you are trying to present to the children.

So! Making playWORK incorporates PLAY and PEOPLE. It also requires the adult to pay attention to the PLACE! The environment in which the play take place in needs to be conducive to good play. This means it needs to be well resourced - not necessarily with

expensive equipment, but with PROPS that the children can use for play. Cardboard boxes, tyres, blankets, junk can be used for play as well as traditional play equipment. The setting needs to be physically conducive too, with ventilation, light, heat, space to run around and sit and chill; and of course, (judging by our play memories mentioned earlier), needs include some OUTDOOR space too.

When it comes particularly to bringing together groups of children who previously have had difficulty mixing or getting to know each other (or haven't had the opportunity to) a neutral environment or play space is often recommended. In the context of Northern Ireland, it's not just about minimising the potential for contentious symbols, such as murals and flags. It's also about equalising the feeling of power, or more important, sense of comfortableness! Comfortable enough to reduce the potential to distract away from the full potential of play. In other words, a neutral setting reduces the chance of children getting distracted by the adult agendas of things like flags and emblems, and focus instead on PLAY!

As a result the relationships have a chance to develop, and the best experience that children can share - the play experience - can take place unadulterated and uninterrupted by prejudice. The combination of good play and developing friendship is the best foundation for children to begin to explore difference and celebrate it!

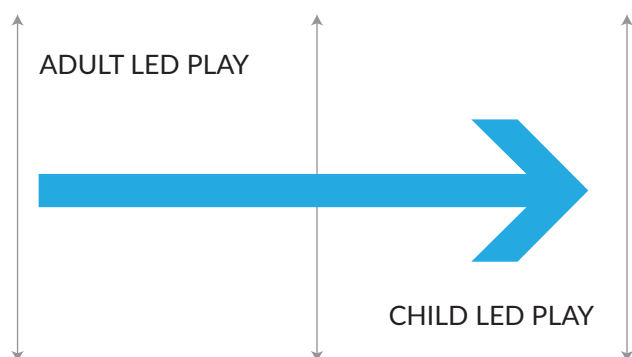
ADULT INVOLVEMENT

So a key factor is how you get involved in the play! We know from our play memories that the best play experiences (the ones that we remember!) tended to have NO ADULT INVOLVEMENT! That's why child-led play has such a high PLAY VALUE. It is something we want as much as possible to promote in the setting. However adult engagement is important as well. In fact there are a number of reasons why an adult might get involved in the play:

- Because the children ASK you to!
- Because you are worried that someone might get hurt – physically or emotionally!
- To act as a gate keeper or broker for a child who is having difficulty getting involved in play with other children.
- To stimulate the play, e.g. to broaden the range of play on offer, or to enhance the current play.
- To resource the play.
- To protect the play when it is being interrupted, perhaps by another child.

Adult involvement is not a YES or NO scenario. It's more like a continuum. To use the earlier dog analogy, you might at times want to put them on a lead and manage their play so that they do something new or different; so that they don't get hurt; or because as well as playing you want them to get something else from the play. Finding out about, respecting and getting to know children from a different group might be one example of that.

Fig 1



So. What if you were bringing two groups of children together for the first time? Child led play with high levels of FUN, FREEDOM AND FLEXIBILITY has the BEST PLAY value. When play comes naturally to children, they are at their most receptive to take on new ideas and concepts – and people! So you will want your direction of travel to move towards CHILD LED PLAY as much as possible. However, you may need to start the process with a fair degree of adult led play – represented by position 1 in the diagram above. (Fig 1)

Ice breakers such as People Bingo, group juggling and name games are good examples of that. As time progresses you may 'loosen the lead' a little, perhaps get the 'extendable lead' out and provide the children with some resources and a general task. This could be a group collage, or a group construction task (where they have to 'build something that moves'), or a themed totem pole. So there is some adult direction, but the content is determined by the kids – represented by point 2 in the diagram. (Fig1)

Whilst these positions include some playful activity it's only when the 'lead is removed' (so to speak) when the activity is almost all child led, around position 3 (Fig1) does the high play value activity take place. Here children might be in an indoor play space with lots of play props (known as loose parts in the playwork world) such as cardboard boxes, white tape, tyres, paint and begin at their own pace and in their own way to build a Den or set up an obstacle course or dress up as a wizard or paint a big mural or.....! In this scenario, the children are truly at ease and their focus is on their play and will naturally relate to those around them as together they build their play experience!

As an adult, you will likely move up and down the continuum! You may, for example, want to explore some ground rules with the kids, or make lunch together. You may introduce some activities that encourage the kids to think about 'who they are'; AND 'who THEY are' using activities like 'All about me', or pen pictures. Whilst these aren't PLAY, you may deliver them and encourage the kids to have FUN whilst they are doing them, and do them in a reasonably PLAYFUL way!

PART 2

So that's an introduction to play and playwork and the impact it can have on developing good relationships.

The rest of the pack provides you with some ideas about play and playful activities that you may use to help children do what comes more naturally to them – INCLUDE and ACCEPT. It's important we give our children the opportunity to do that, BEFORE they close the door on embracing difference completely!



HOW TO USE THE REST OF THIS PACK

The resource ideas and activities that follow reflect the adult led, child led continuum Fig 1. In other words we'll start with ideas that require a fair degree of adult led activity, and move towards a play session where the children become the bosses of their own play! You can select from this menu of ideas as you wish. This will depend on you; your comfortableness and that of your colleagues; the space that you are using; the resources that you have; your objectives for the session; and, most of all, the KIDS! Remember the play value of child-led play when you do this. The last part of the resources section includes a session called 'More Snakes than Ladders' that you can run with a group of children if you want a structured session that explores difference and how to embrace it, that can be run in a playful way with a group of single identity or mixed identity children.

Remember the importance of a coherent staff team. The children look to the adults for indicators as to how to behave, especially in new situations. As leaders, you need to clearly demonstrate togetherness, consistency and regard for each other and for others. That requires you to talk things through and being committed to the message that:

1. It is your role to help kids develop to their full potential.
2. Limiting ideas about others limits development.
3. PLAY is the best medium for children's development, including the development of good relations.

The **RESOURCE** section contains the following elements:

1. Introductory Activities
2. Who am I? Activities to explore your own identity
3. Who are we? Activities to explore each other's identity and build relationships and group cohesiveness.
4. Play
5. More snakes than ladders. A sample programme plan for a group of children exploring inclusion.



1. INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

ALL THOSE

Here's an opportunity to begin to look at similarity and difference whilst at the same time begin to get to know each other.

1. Players sit around the room on chairs. Leader is in the middle and doesn't have a chair
2. Leader calls out "ALL THOSE WHO..... CHANGE PLACES" (could be have blue eyes, brown hair like pizza etc.). Any player to whom it applies has to get up and find a different seat (from others who have also got up). The leader also tries to find a seat.
3. Whoever is left in the middle without a seat in ON!

Here is a variation of All those:

FRUIT BASKET

1. The children sit in a circle on the floor or on chairs, with one person standing in the middle who is the caller.
2. Participants are equally divided between three (or more) fruits (such as apples, oranges and pineapples).
3. When the caller calls out a fruit (e.g., "apples"), all the apples change chairs, and the caller tries to grab one of the vacant seats and takes on the fruit s/he just called (apple)
4. The person left without a seat becomes the next caller.
5. If a caller says "fruit basket" all participants have to change chairs

HAPPY FAMILIES

1. It's useful to explore the idea of 'belonging'. Happy Families can help you do that.
2. Cards are passed out around the group. On each card is an animal. How many of each animal is determined by the size of the group.
3. The purpose of the game is to find the rest of your animal family by making the noise of the animal. A wee practice of each of the noises to start is a good idea!
4. Players are instructed to swap cards at the start, and keep swapping until the leader shouts FIND YOUR FAMILY!!

The players then look at their card and make the noise of the animal and find the rest of that animal family and stand together in a group. See which animals are the fastest (and the slowest) but you don't need to put anyone 'out' each time!

Variations include: finding your family using actions or using family names.



SNOWBALL FIGHT

Everyone loves a snowball fight – even in the middle of summer (in fact ESPECIALLY in the middle of summer!).

1. Everyone gets a piece of A4 paper. They crumple the paper into a ball.
2. You split the players into 2 or more groups and allocate each group an equal part of the room
3. On the word GO they have a snowball fight! The aim is to have as few snowballs left in your team area at the end of the game, so anytime a snowball lands in your area you need to pick it up quickly and throw it at another team!!
4. Leader calls stop to end game and players in each team count the number of snowballs left in each area!

PEN PICTURE AND SNOWBALL FIGHT

As an extension to the previous activity you can ask the players to draw or write something about themselves on the paper. Examples may include:

- Draw a picture of yourself playing your favourite game
- Answer the questions – 4 things I like/4 things I don't like/
- 2 things I'm good at

Then when the snowball fight is over and the snowballs remaining in each area are counted, then you ask everyone to pick up a snowball. (There should be one each!!). Each person then has to try and match the pen picture to the real person. You can sit in a circle and do this. When the holder of the snowball makes a guess, if the guess is correct, they hand the penpicture back to the person. If they are wrong, the real owner of the penpicture can identify themselves and get their penpicture back!



CAPTURE THE BALLOON

Here is another great activity to introduce or learn something about each other, and have a bit of fun whilst doing it

1. Each child receives a balloon (either inflated or they blow up). Children write their name and decorate balloons with a marker. Put all balloons in a container, box or bag.
2. Release all balloons at once. Play some music as children bat the balloons around and keep them in the air. When the music stops the children 'capture' a balloon and freeze in their position.
3. When everyone has a balloon the leader calls on one child and the child says the name of the person's balloon he/she has. The child whose name is called will then say something about themselves. The topic can be pre-chosen such as: What is the best thing that happened to you this week? ...or, If you could do anything for a day, what would it be? ...or, My favourite thing is ? You may even have the topic/question written on a slip of paper and inserted into each balloon before inflating! So how do you find out what question to ask the person on the balloon?
BANG!!!

GROUP JUGGLE

Here is a great activity that is good fun, breaks the ice AND gives you an opportunity to introduce working together and team work.

Ask the group can anyone juggle! If some can – then give them a wee opportunity to shine. Then confirm with the group that by the end of the session, they will all be able to juggle!!

1. Get the group standing in a circle. This works with groups up to 16, so any more than that – it's probably best to split them!
2. You need to establish a pattern by which the ball is going to be thrown around the group. The ball starts and finishes with you, and each person gets the ball once. So ask the players to raise one hand and then begin to throw the ball to members in the group. Each person only gets the ball once – so to indicate that you have 'had your go' bring your hand down (preferably as the ball is thrown to you – so you can catch it!). People will only throw to those with their hand still up. Emphasise with the group – they need to remember who throws the ball to them AND who they throw the ball to BECAUSE IT WILL BE THE SAME PERSON EACH TIME!!!!
3. Once you have established the pattern of throwing in the group you can practice it a few times. You may want to do it against the clock to see how fast the group can get the ball from start to finish!
4. Suggest to the group then that speed is not always important. Sometimes it's better to focus on getting it right! Emphasise that that is especially important from now on, because instead of one ball – there's going to be THREE!

5. Remind the group that as soon as they throw the ball on, they need to look back to the person who throws it to them!

Start the group off again with the first ball, and then after a few seconds (warn them it's coming) throw the second ball; and then the third after another few seconds!

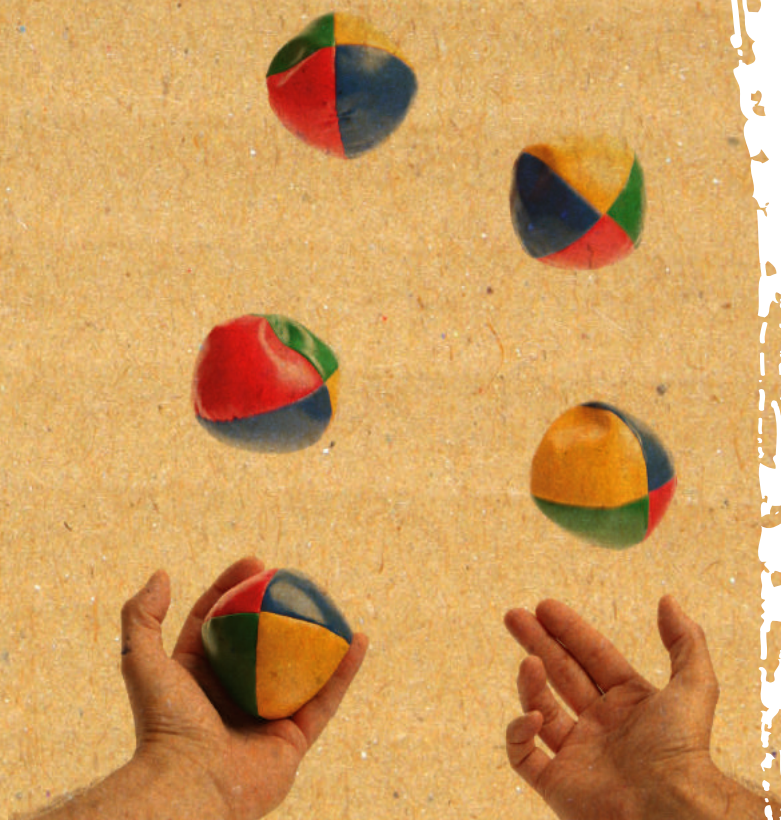
6. If things go well – there will be 3 balls in the air at any time. When each ball comes back to you, keep the balls going by continuing to throw them to the next person!

YOU ARE JUGGLING!!

7. To finish catch each ball and set it down until all three are back

Emphasise the similarities between that and working together to complete a task that individually may be difficult to do, but collectively can be achieved!! (and have fun at the same time)!

Variation: as a wee fun variation, instead of a third ball, you can introduce something else! I've always found a rubber chicken gets a good laugh!



PEOPLE BINGO

Is a Vegetarian			Loves a curry
	Has brown eyes	Can tell you which year it is in Chinese calendar	
Supports Man UTD			Has been to Australia
Goes to Worship once a week		Rides a bike	
	Has been to a concert		Likes to fish
Can use sign language		Has gone camping	

1. Circulate around the WHOLE group
2. Find someone who ONE of the characteristics apply to
3. Ask them to sign that square (only ONE square allowed at a time!!)
4. Move on to fill all the marked squares
5. Shout BINGO when you do!

2. WHO AM I?

VIVE LA DIFFERENCE

Here's a good activity to further explore that there are differences between us – but that that's ok! It's also a good run around game for the kids. So play it somewhere you have a bit of space to move around!

All players start in the middle of the room each time. Ask the players to go to different ends of the room, depending on which of the categories applies to them. If they are unsure, they should stay in the middle of the room. The pace for the game should be fairly quick and of course, FUN!

Call out divisions according to the group and indicate which end of the room each division relates to. Examples can include:

- Exercisers and non-exercisers
- Vegetarians and non-vegetarians
- Brussel sprout lovers and non-brussel sprout lovers
- Snorers and non-snorers
- Cat lovers and cat haters
- Nail-biters and non-nail-biters
- Male and female
- Catholic and protestants
- Can do splits and can't do splits
- Remember jokes and can't remember jokes
- Juggle and can't juggle

After each division bring people back into centre. You may want to stop at various times and ask participants about either the group they belong to, or the other group (or the fact that they are in neither) and how it feels.

EXTENSION

This is a great format for encouraging participants to display their attitudes or beliefs on issues and topics. You may want to come back to this later this time looking at the notion of continuums instead. Examples of these might be:

Tall – Small

Rich – Poor

Funny – Serious

Optimistic – Pessimistic

Old - Young

As the kids place themselves along the continuum you can have a chat about why they feel they place themselves where they do.

This can then be further extended with 4 choices in each corner of the room. YES, NO, SOMETIMES and NOT SURE and ask the participants to choose and go to a particular corner in response to statements such as:

- Man Utd are the best football team in the world
- Children with downs syndrome should go to their own School
- If you find £20 you should hand it in
- 16 and 17 year olds should be allowed to vote
- Homework should be banned
- Parents should not be allowed to smack their children

SPIDER WEB OF FRIENDSHIP

This is a great play activity to begin to 'weave friendships' into a new group! You will need a ball of yarn.

1. All the children stand or sit on the floor in large circle.
2. You start by selecting a person to roll the yarn to. When you choose a person, you must:
 - say your name and/or
 - say their name before you pass it on.
3. The person who receives it -- holds on to a corner of it--- before passing it on to who they choose.

At the end, it looks like a large web of diversity! You can rewind by calling the name of the person and rolling/throwing the ball back in the same sequence. (roll the yarn up as you go!)

As a variation of this game you could be that you say something nice about the next person (or whatever you decide the topic will be).

CREATE A 'ME' COMMERCIAL

1. Have children write a two- to three-minute television commercial. The topic is why someone should give them a job, or get membership of your club!
2. After they work on these, they either present their commercials to the rest of the group, or film them to watch together.

Variations. A group of five to create a commercial for each one, and then present this to the rest of the group. Younger children might want to create a commercial about what is nice about their "friend." For a fun way to present it--get an appliance box/large box; cut an oblong hole in it to represent the screen and the kids stand behind the "screen" and present on T.V.!



ALL OF ME!

Here is an activity where children get to think a wee bit about who they are, and then share it with others

1. Discuss with children the fact that they fill many different roles in their families. Point out that a girl may be a daughter, a sister, a niece, and a granddaughter, while a boy may be a son, a brother, a nephew, and a grandson. Ask children to tell about the different roles they fill in their families. Record their answers on the board or on chart paper. Then ask children to think about what roles they fill in the community. Point out that they are schoolchildren, and ask them what else they do. For example, are they on a football team or go to youth clubs, Girl Guides or the BB? Add their responses to the list.
2. Have the children draw pictures to show some of the different roles they fill in their lives (some children may need more than one sheet). Children can refer to the list created earlier for help in labelling their pictures.
3. When children are finished, have them share their pictures with the group. You may want to mount the pictures on an All About Me bulletin board or a big Collage – ALL ABOUT US!

ALL ABOUT ME

Here is an exercise that gives the kids an opportunity to move from 'What makes me the same as others', TO 'What makes me different from others'. It is best done in small groups, after they have got to know each other a bit.

1. The kids complete the worksheet on their own first.
2. Then they share it with 1 other person in a pair.
3. Then share with the whole group.

1. **THREE** things about **ME** that are the **SAME** as everyone else in the group.

2. **TWO** things about **ME** that are the **SAME** as **SOME** people in the group, but **NOT** everybody.

3. **ONE** thing about **ME** that is **DIFFERENT** to everyone else in the group.

3. WHO ARE WE?

PEN PICTURES AND A GIANT PAPER DOLL CHAIN

Ok. You all know the paper chains that you put up for decoration at Christmas etc.? Well this is a BIG version of it! It is a good way of moving from WHO AM I? to WHO ARE WE?

You will need large sheets or rolls of paper, and markers/paints.

1. Split the children into pairs (or small groups).
2. Give each child a piece of paper that is large enough for them to lie down on and draw around. Get them to hold their arms and legs out (like a snow angel!).
3. Ask their friend to draw around them.
4. When each child has their outline get them to paint them, putting clothes, facial features etc.
5. When finished and dry, stick them together with masking tape and hang them up – LIKE A GIANT PAPER DOLL CHAIN!

FRIENDSHIP TOWER

Here's one that's good for team building.

1. Divide the group into teams of four or five children.
2. Distribute paper/cardboard and tape to each team. Explain to the teams that they will have ten minutes to build the tallest tower they can---WITHOUT TALKING. They can use only the given supplies.
3. At the end of ten minutes ask each team display their tower and discuss whether it was easy or difficult to build and why.

HANDS TREE

Well it's really a bush, but 'Hands Tree' has a more familiar ring about it. Again it is an activity that builds group identity and is the sort of shared task that can help to build relationships and identity within a group.

1. Present an outline structure of a tree or bush. This could be drawn on a large sheet of paper or made out of part of a large inner heavy duty cardboard tube, like the one carpets are wrapped up in.
2. On other paper get the kids to draw an outline around their hands. (It's often easier to get a friend to do this!).
3. Cut the hands out and paint them. They can put names on the hands, a picture of them, their favourite holiday place, anything you (or they) like. Then attach them to the tree/ bush.





Variation 1

A WELCOME BUSH

Languages are an important part of culture. Children can put hello in a different language on each hand as a great inclusive welcome to their club. The following might help you here!

Arabic: Marhabah (mar-ha-bah)

French: Bonjour (bone-joor)

Hebrew: Shalom (shah-lome)

Irish: Dia dhuit (gee-a ditch)

Italian: Buon giorno (bone-zhee-or-no)

Mandarin Chinese: Nea how (nee-how)

Russian: Priviet (pri-vee-et)

Spanish: Hola (oh-la)

Makaton:

Swahili: Jambo (zham-boh)

Variation 2

HAND ON HEART

1. Give children peach, white, brown, black, and orange paint (add soap to make it stain proof). Have them mix what they perceive their skin colour is.
2. Then have a friend paint their hand and then put a print on a heart shaped piece of paper. You can put these on a bulletin board with the heading, "Hand on heart!"

Variation 3

THE HANDY DOVE

This is a great way to explore cultural unity. You can adjust the handprint colours for different occasions.

You will need: Paint in various skin-tone colours. If you have brown, yellow, red and white you can mix your own colours. Children enjoy experimenting with mixing colours. Try these combinations: Small amount of red + small amount of yellow + white; brown + white; yellow + small amount of brown.

Paper, Scissors, Glue

1. Make between 9 and 12 in various skin tone colours by dipping hand in paint and stamping it on the paper. Let it dry.
2. To make the DOVE:
 - a. Glue on a beak from orange construction paper or draw one on with orange marker.
 - b. Draw on a wing and an eye with black pencil crayon or marker.
 - c. Cut out the skin tone hands and glue them together in a circle to form a wreath.
 - d. Glue the dove onto the back of the wreath (so the wreath acts like a picture frame).
 - e. Trim the edges of the paper the dove is on.



CULTURE PROJECTS

Learning about other people and cultures promotes understanding and acceptance. Themed projects can help children learn about our differences and similarities and appreciate cultural diversity.

- Study other cultures.
- Learn the flags from other countries.
- Have cooking projects of special foods from around the world.
- Explore how we all have the same basic needs.
- Have items from other cultures available to explore.
- Older children can do research and reports of countries and their people.
- Explore the cultural challenges within our own nation.

4. PLAY

OK. So we have looked at up to now are a range of activities that are primarily adult led, but which are both FUN and help children think about and act on INCLUDING other children in their clubs and everyday lives.

As we mentioned earlier, the most natural way for children to develop is through PLAY. By PLAY we mean opportunities for children to lead and direct their OWN PLAY. It goes without saying then that the best way for them to develop an understanding of others and build a relationship with others is through CHILD LED PLAY.

It is important to include as many opportunities for CHILD LED PLAY within a programme of the more structured play activities included in Sections 1-3. This gives the children the chance to naturally assimilate some of the experiences and thoughts they have had around INCLUSION and knock them around a wee bit in their minds whilst focused on something else – PLAYING! Remember what we said – FOCUS ON PLAY AND DEVELOPMENT WILL TAKE CARE OF ITSELF.

So here are some pointers that can help to facilitate child led play. Help create the opportunity and the permission to do it, and let it flow!

1. Consult. Check with the kids the sort of things they like to do. You could create an ideas tree and give the kids their own blank leaves (cut out of paper). Ask them to write their ideas on the leaves and stick them to the tree. Then when they are wondering about what to play – they can check out their ideas tree!
2. Create the environment and resource it. In 2008 the STICK was voted in to the National Toy Hall of Fame. As well as the standard resources that you will have to support play – balls, Frisbees, arts and crafts, board games etc.; child led play can be enhanced by providing a whole range of things that

the children can use as props for play. Appendix 2 has a list of these “loose parts”, but they include cardboard boxes, tyres, sticks, barrels, materials, wool, dressing up clothes, guttering, cardboard tubes etc. Make these available to the children and let them use their own creative playful minds to incorporate them into their play.

3. Range of play types. Appendix 1 has a list of 16 play types. For the play experience to be the best – you need to be covering them all. Use it as a checklist when you are observing the children’s play to see what is there, and what is missing. Remember of course that one play episode can cover several of the play types. If the children are building dens there could be some symbolic play in there building a home; some social play as the kids negotiate design; creative play with different uses for materials; communicative play as they work out their telephone system; exploratory play where the kids explore the use of the materials; and locomotor play moving around gathering resources.
4. Themes. We have explored how you can integrate child-led play into a structured programme. You may also want to integrate the theme of inclusion into child-led play. This could involve pitching a theme or suggestion to the children about what they might do. For example, talk to the kids in groups about creating a world or a city with the materials that you have provided them with. As they build their city they can think about the rules they would have in place for people who came for other cities and how they would include them if they came to stay! But remember – it’s THEIR city, and it’s THEIR play. Follow THEIR direction as much as you can and GO WITH THE FLOW!

5. MORE SNAKES THAN LADDERS!

OK. Here's a session that puts some of this together in a programme that can help children build an understanding of other kids and encourages them to think about how they might include them in their play. How you use it, over what time, and what else you can integrate into it, will depend to some extent on YOU, but primarily will depend on the KIDS!

REMEMBER whilst this session is very structured, and the activities included are **PLAYFUL**, they need to be supported by proper PLAY – ie where the children choose it, lead it and do it! So make sure as much as possible you intersperse this plan with space and time for child led play. Get those play props out! Let the kids dress up! Get that big roll of paper on the wall and let the kids graffiti! Bring in the big (and small) cardboard boxes and watch the kids build cardboard city! Add big sheets of material and dens will grow! Water and leaves and grass and twigs and stones and sand and mud make for great messy play. This is where the ideas you explore in the structured play get a chance to be thought through and applied in the REAL world – the CHILD'S real world that is – the world where they PLAY!

Of course, when it comes to exploring **IDENTITY**, language is important. So I have framed the programme around a bit of “Norn Ireland” slang!

1. 'BOUT YE!

Some icebreakers or introductory activities for the kids to get to know each other

2. 'BOUT ME!

Starting to get into identity work where the kids begin to think a wee bit about who they are, and share it with others

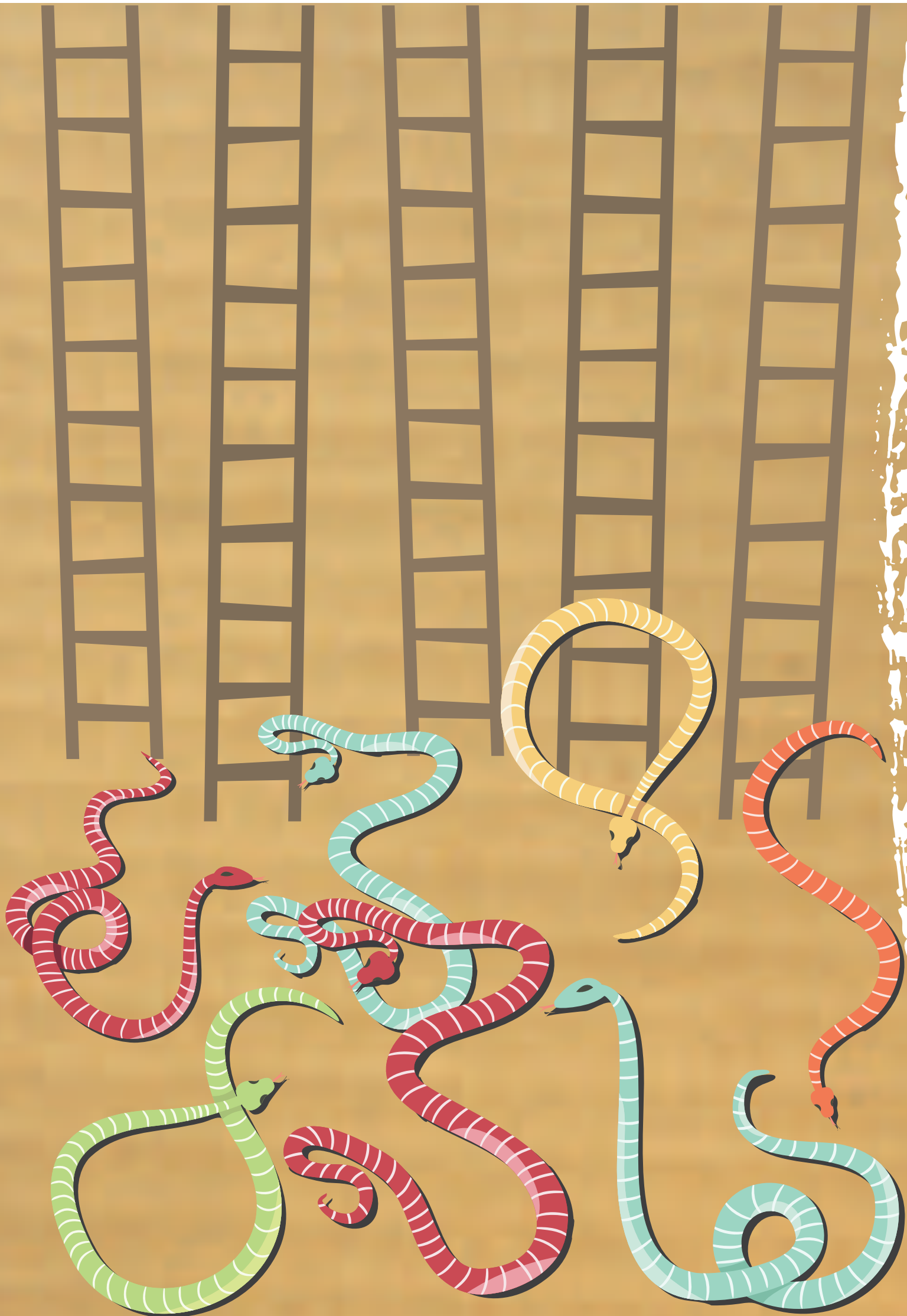
3. 'BOUT YOUS!

Thinking about kids from other groups who might be a bit different, and the experiences they might have

4. 'BOUT TIME!

For children from these, often excluded groups, there tend to be MORE SNAKES THAN LADDERS! So what can we all do to better get to know those children, and INCLUDE them in our play?





1. 'BOUT YE!

Children (and adults) need to feel comfortable with each other, and just like everything else – PLAY is a great way of doing this! Here are some great ice-breakers

- a. **GROUP JUGGLE.** This is a great starter activity because it is good fun, and you can draw from it what can be achieved by working together!
- b. **ALL THOSE.** We are already beginning to think about difference and similarity here. It's a really fun way of ending up sitting beside someone different, AND beginning to talk in front of the rest of the group
- c. **HAPPY FAMILIES.** This is a great fun way of beginning to move into the idea of belonging, but doing it in a safe way because its groups of animals, not people!



2. 'BOUT ME

So hopefully the ice will be broken a wee bit. Let's now start to think about who we are and what makes us tick – our identity! Then we can share it with others!

- a. **PEN PICTURES (Appendix 3).** This gives the kids a chance to think about themselves and what makes them tick in the most important thing that they do – PLAY! Use different colours of blank paper for this exercise – you'll see why in a minute!

Once they have drawn their pen picture and their play – then have a riot! Split them into two teams and have a snowball fight with the pen pictures! After a time, they can play detective and find the identity of the pen picture they are left with!

But of course – to do that they need a bit more information!

So.....

- b. **PAPER CHAIN.** Ask the children to hold on to their snowballs for a minute and 'Let's make the world's biggest **PAPER DOLL CHAIN.** Get the big pages out and get the kids to do body outlines. When they are lying on the paper for their team member to draw round they need to be in the same pose as they would be for their favourite play. (So if they were riding a bike they would be lying down sideways with their knees bent and their hands outstretched!). They can add as much detail to the picture as they want (or you have time to!) but get them to write 4 likes on 1 side and 4 dislikes on the other. Then stick them together and hang them up as a group paper doll chain!

Now it is time to match the pen picture to the person. There are two ways to do this:

- (i) The less risky way is that everyone has a bit of blu tak and looks at all the paper dolls and sticks the penpicture on the paper doll that they think it matches to. Encourage them to read the statements about the person's likes and dislikes to get more clues as to who it is!

OR

- (ii) If the kids know each other a bit better and are ok to talk a wee bit in front of others. Get the kids to stand in front of their outline. Then 1 group at a time they can see if they can identify who's pen picture they have. Make sure this is a bit of FUN rather than a tough task for people. Encourage kids to claim the picture if the holder of the picture gets it wrong! (Remember – the picture might belong to someone in their own group!)

Everyone can then go back to their own paper doll and see if the pen picture that has been stuck there is right! Go around the group and check. Ask them to read out their likes and dislikes (or you read them, or a combination of the two – depending on the child). Ask them if the pen picture is in the right OR wrong place. If it is CORRECT big praise to the person who got it right! If it's not the right one – ask who's it is, and go and stick it there!

- c. **ALL ABOUT ME.** Now the kids have their own pen picture back on the coloured paper. Ask them to now go into the group of the paper colour of their own pen picture. The 'All about me' exercise gives them a chance to think about what they have in common with other people in the group, and what is different. How light or heavy this is, depends on you and your reading of the children. Remember it's just about recognising similarity and difference, and sometimes that can take you by surprise! You might want to have some examples of that to illustrate that point!

Remember - **PACE MEANS SPACE TO PLAY**

You need to work at a PACE that is comfortable for the children. Whether they know each other or not, the age of the kids, the level of difference and similarity in the group will all be factors here. Don't forget the importance of giving the kids time and space to PLAY!. This might be a good time to get the play props out and let them consolidate what they have done and build friendships around the bits of knowledge they now have about others in the group

3. 'BOUT YOUS

OK. By now the children will have shared a little about themselves to the other kids in the group, and in doing so have begun to find out about the each other. The extent of this will depend of course on the diversity of the group. The ideal is that children from a range of backgrounds are present, and as a result the understanding that the kids will have begun to pick up from each other will be quite varied. On the other hand, if the group is more homogeneous, the children may feel a little more comfortable about the process and the relationships may well develop quicker!

This next session gives them a chance to build on these relationships and apply their understanding to other children, particularly children who for a variety of reasons, tend to be left out/excluded/treated poorly (say it whatever way you feel is best) by others in society.

- a) **PEOPLE BINGO.** This will help again to build the notion that finding out something about other people can be good fun! The version that is included in the pack is a written one. Depending on the children you may want to change it to pictures, e.g. with picture of Brussel sprouts, or a picture of a bike etc. Make sure you have prizes for a line, a full house and, of course, BINGO!!
- b) **ISLANDS.** This variation of the islands game takes the 'what we have in common / 'what is different' theme a bit further and moves the children into groups. The idea of course is that the pieces of newspaper you have on the floor are islands and you want the children to 'populate them'. Have as many islands out as you want to have groups in the next session (ie If you want the big group of 30 to work in 6 groups of 5, then have 6 islands). You may not use them all each time – but that's ok! In this version, don't eliminate the people who fail to make it on to an island – everyone is welcome. The usual way to play is you call out the number of people on each island and let the kids find their island. You can also call for islands for:

- eye colour
- football teams
- schools
- ages
- birthdays
- height

And so on! For the last time call the number FIVE and lo and behold you have 6 groups of for the next session!



- c. To get the children thinking about inclusion and exclusion, get the children in each group to nominate 1 person or volunteer. Ask them to stand to the side, then ask the rest of each group to stand close together in a circle, shoulder tight to shoulder. Then tell the volunteers that their job in 10 seconds is to get into the middle of the circle. Don't invite any questions here, and don't give them time to think. Just give each group enough time to get tight together as they inevitably will try to do. After 10 secs shout 'GO!!!' and the groups will automatically try and prevent the volunteer from getting into the group. You don't have to keep this going for long! Perhaps 10 or 15 seconds, by which time some of the volunteers will have made their way into the middle of the group, and some won't! You can have a chat with them then about what it was like trying to get in, or keeping them out.

THEN ask the question to those in the circle **WHY DID YOU NOT LET THEM IN?** Inevitably they will say that you told them not to let them in/keep them out. (Make sure that you didn't do this!!) Explore this a bit further and relate it to the observation that often when someone comes along and tries to get into a group, our automatic reaction is to STOP them! This is particularly true if the person is a bit **DIFFERENT!**

- d) Explain that you are now going to look at this in the context of the clubs that the children go to. 'Now we get a chance to think about other children 'who might want to come and visit us on our island (or in our club!). Let's think about what it would be like for them to do that'.
- e) Give each group a short pen picture of a child who wants to come and visit them (p 32). In their groups, they have to think about what it might be like for that particular child, not just coming to the club, but life in general.

Two things to focus on:

What are the things that you think might get in the way of that child having fun in your club? Come up with FOUR BARRIERS!

What are the things that you could do to HELP that child have fun in your club? Again – think of FOUR AIDS!

BARRIERS

AIDS

Record these on a flip chart and put them up on the wall for all the groups to see during the break!

4. 'BOUT TIME!

Having had a bit of a break, and hopefully having given the children a chance for some PLAY, get the children back into their groups again. Re-affirm with them that:

- ALL children should be able to come to our club
- It's 'BOUT TIME we made sure this happens!

Bring the groups back to their posters with AIDS and BARRIERS on them. Give them an opportunity to share these with the other groups. Show them a picture of a snakes and ladders board (or make an outline of one with masking tape on the floor in the middle of the room). Suggest to the kids that the barriers and the aids that they have identified on their sheets are a bit like snakes and ladders on 'the snakes and ladders board of life'!!

With the masking tape provided ask them to create their own snakes and ladders board on the floor. The number of squares and snakes and ladders will depend on how much time you have to play. If possible, make the board so that the squares are big enough for the kids to stand on so that they can be their own counters. With the tape insert up to 4 snakes and 4 ladders on the board and on each write out one of the barriers and helps that the group identified. Give each group a big DICE and give them time then to play snakes and ladders! Ask them when they come to a snake or a ladder to read out the AID or the BARRIER. If time permits, get the groups to swap and play a different board.

Following the game have a general discussion with the children about what they could do to HELP include kids in their setting.

To conclude, ask them to each to pick one thing and write it down on a piece of paper. Emphasis this is only for them! No-one else will see this. Give the children an envelope and ask them to write their name; and the name and address of their club on the envelope; and insert their paper in it, and seal it.

Re-affirm for them how important it is to make sure everyone who wants to be is included in the play and in the club, and encourage them to DO what they said they would DO.

Acknowledge however, that sometimes we need a little reminder to do things that we say we'll do. So, in one month's time you will send them that reminder in the post!!



Appendix 1 Play types

These play types were developed by Bob Hughes and are used by adults to help describe the different ways children play. They can be used to help plan for play, recognise play preferences and possible gaps in provision being offered. This is not an exhaustive list of play types.

Symbolic Play – enables children to access experiences, play out scenarios enabling gradual exploration and increased understanding without the risk of being out of one's depth. For example, using symbols to represent people, playing house.

Rough and Tumble Play – close encounter play which is less to do with fighting and more to do with touching, tickling, gauging relative strength, discovering physical flexibility and the exhilaration of display. For example, play fighting, chasing, tumbling.

Socio-dramatic Play – the enactment of real and potential experiences of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature. For example, playing mummy and daddy, going to the shops, having a conversation on the phone.

Social Play – play during which the rules and criteria for social engagement and interaction can be revealed, explored and amended. For example, board games, conversations, team games.

Creative Play – play which allows children to be creative, to explore lots of different creative mediums and tools. For example, explore colour combinations, self-expression through any medium i.e. paints, materials, loose parts, textures.

Communication Play – play using words, nuances, dual meaning, languages, facial looks and gestures. For example, mime, jokes, play acting, mickey taking, singing, debate, poetry.

Dramatic Play – play which dramatises events, situations and ideas can be structured into a presentational form. For example, dramatization of a TV show, a funeral, a conversation.

Deep Play – play which allows children to access risky experiences, to engage in activities with a real element of fear or danger which can help to develop survival skills and experience the conquest of fear. For example, tree climbing, jumping over a stream.

Exploratory Play – play to support exploration of an object, an area or a concept. Supporting curiosity by using things in new and novel ways. For example, exploring objects, handling, throwing, building, exploring puddles, fire, water and earth.

Fantasy Play – play which rearranges the world in the child's way, a way which is unlikely to occur. Children engaged in situations that are products of their imagination. For example, making up things, being a dragon or a super hero, dressing up.

Imaginative Play – play where the conventional rules, which govern the physical world, do not apply. For example, pretending to be something, patting a dog that isn't there, singing into a non-existent microphone.

Locomotor Play – movement in any or every direction for its own sake. For example, chase, hide and seek, climbing, running, jumping

Mastery Play – play that supports the learning and mastery of how to do something. Enables children to experience control. For example, building dens, digging holes, blocking drains, growing things.

Object Play – playing with objects, repetitive and focused play that supports discovery of uses and functions. For example, playing with a ball, with a game boy, with a tool.

Role Play – provides opportunity to explore identity, roles, language and culture. For example, being mummy, daddy, doctor, police man, batman.

Recapitulative Play – play that allows the child to explore ancestry, history, rituals, stories, rhymes, fire and darkness. Enables children to access play of earlier human evolutionary stages. For example, being a Viking, using weapons, fighting in a war.

Appendix 2

Loose Parts/ Resources

Natural: water, conkers, insects, stones, sand, leaves, wind, mud, fur, sponge, fire, straw/hay, animals, coal, fir, cones, shells, wax, flowers, snow/ice, fungi, acorns, sunlight, bugs/worms, feathers, berries/ seeds, dust/ ashes, plants/weeds.

Paper: cardboard boxes, sheets, cards, loo roll tubes, newspaper, magazines, egg boxes, tissue paper, paper cups/plates, blotting paper, wrapping paper. Foodstuffs: flour, lentils, rice, cereal, breads, fruits, spices, compost, pumpkins, nuts, pasta, potatoes, eggs, chocolate, onions, herbs, food colouring, cornflour, icing sugar, vegetables, beans/pulses.

Plastics: yogurt pots, milk crates, bin liners, film canisters, bubble wrap, tarpaulin, barrels, milk cartons, wrappings, straws, shoes, inflatables, moulds, perspex, lino, cups, cotton reels, sheeting, piping, bottles, buttons, beads, buckets, cellophane, cutlery, acetate sheets.

Fabrics: clothes (dressing up), football kits, cotton wool, tents, hats, material, aprons, wool, canvas, netting, sheets, string, bibs, blankets, sacking, jersey strips, curtains, rugs/carpets, cushions, parachute, tights/socks.

Identity: wigs, shoes, glasses, mirrors, uniforms, make up, jewellery, belts, cloaks, scarves, masks, hats, camera, video camera, puppets, dressing up clothes, face paints, props, hair accessories, large pieces of material, sun glasses, cultural props.

Wood: logs, pallets, garden canes, poles, boarding, sawdust, branches, sticks, trees, bamboo, planks, posts, benches, doors.

Tools: hammers, saws, screws, tape, drills, chisels, rollers, sieves, spoons, scissors, markers, glue, pegs, clips, grips, rake, hole punch, shovels, screw drivers, nails, craft knives, nuts/bolts, needles, string/ rope, measures, cutters, staples, brushes, blu tac, drawing pins, spirit level, fork/spades, pliers, mallet, pick axe, lighter/ matches, crowbar.

Vessels: jars, bowls, buckets, trunks, skips, bottles, boxes, watering cans, jugs, plant pots, sponges, baskets, pans, oil drums, pods, crates.

Objects: chairs/sofa, tables, wheel barrow, ladders, trolleys, torches, bricks, clothes horse, blocks, brooms, wheels, bales hay/straw, fans.

Metal: bottle tops, pots/pans, tin cans, containers, magnets, shopping trolley, paper clips, nails, chains, key/ key rings, car shells & bits, wire, curtain rings, circuit boards, chicken wire, coat hangers, dustbins, shovels, zips, bicycle frames, padlocks, ball bearings, springs, BBQ, wire wool, foil.

Rubber: tyres, hose, gloves, tiles, willies, shoe soles, balls, elastic bands, balloons, mats.

Appendix 3 Pen pictures

1. SIJID

Sijid is an Indian boy aged 8 who has been living with his family in Northern Ireland now for 5 years. He has a younger sister who is 6. He is a prolific reader!

2. SEAN

Sean is 7 years old and is profoundly deaf. He is pretty good at lip reading and uses two handed sign language to communicate. He has very little speech. He is very fond of playing computer games.

3. SARA

Sara is a member of the travelling community. Her 2 big brothers used to come to the club too, but don't any more. She is 9 years old and is really into art.

4. JOAN

Joan has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair to get around – that's when she's not pushing herself around on the floor! She can move short distances with a walking aid. Her speech is sometimes hard to follow, especially if she is tired! She is 10 and plays basketball.

5. DAVE

Dave has Downs Syndrome. He is 10 years old. He wears glasses and attends a Special School. He loves rugby and is a member of a tag rugby team.

6. ALISON

Alison is partially sighted. She has some peripheral vision which helps her see things that are enlarged and close up. She is 9 and loves to dance.

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