

Disability Inclusive Early Childhood Development Kits for Emergencies Guidance

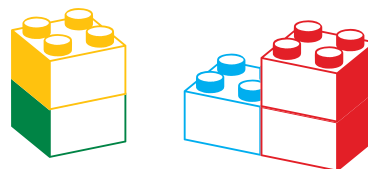


Disability Inclusive Early Childhood Development Kits for Emergencies

Guidance for the East Asia and Pacific Region



Table of Contents



Acknowledgements	4
Background	5
Who is this guidance for?	7
How to use this guidance.....	7
Structure of the guidance	8

Part 1 10

Why is play important for young children?.....	10
Stages of play development.....	10
Creating disability inclusive play opportunities for young children.....	12
General strategies for playing with children with disabilities	15
General strategies and adaptations for including children with different areas of difficulty	18

Part 2 Using the Disability Inclusive ECD Kit 21

What is in the kit	21
Additional items to consider	23
Activity Guides.....	25
About the activity guides	25
1. Board inset puzzles	27
2. Interlocking puzzles	29
3. Board books	31
4. Ball Set	33
5. Shape Sorter.....	35
6. String beads	37
7. Hand puppets.....	39
8. Stacking toys	41
9. Wooden blocks.....	43
10. Vehicle toys	45
11. Plastic building blocks	47
12. Baby rattles	49
13. Beach ball	51
14. Baby dolls	53
15. Musical instruments.....	55
16. Magnetic drawing board.....	57
17. Sensory play tray	59
18. Water/sand play kit.....	61
19. Bubble blowing kit.....	63

20. Fidget tools.....	65
21. Emotions flash cards	67
22. Educational flash cards	69
23. Communication cards.....	71
24. Visual schedule.....	72
25. Noise cancelling earmuffs	74
26. Universal cuff	76
27. Non-slip placemats	78
Activities without toys.....	80
1. Story telling	80
2. Singing.....	81
3. Dancing	82
4. Outdoor exploration.....	83
5. Obstacle courses.....	84
6. Simon Says.....	85
Further Resources.....	86



© UNICEF Philippines/2024/RSalvador

Acknowledgements

This guidance on Disability Inclusive Early Childhood Development (ECD) Kits was developed by Fleur Smith, consultant for UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office with contributions and overall guidance from Lieve Sabbe, UNICEF Disability Inclusion Programme Specialist.

Colleagues from UNICEF country offices and the regional office made substantial contributions to the development of this guidance. Thanks go to: Amina Lim, Resa Salvador, Gina Soriano, Enrico Baloro and Sitti Quin (UNICEF Philippines Country Office, Mindanao Field Office); Aye Aye Yee and Myo Wai (UNICEF Myanmar Country Office); Arnaud Conchon, Ana Maria Rodriguez, Ulziisaikhan Sereeter, Sandipan Paul, Ruth O'Connell, Stephanie Schwarz, Minju Kim and Megan Tucker (UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office).

The piloting of the Disability Inclusive ECD Kits was conducted in Myanmar and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) region of Philippines. The authors extend their sincere thanks to the UNICEF colleagues and partners that supported the pilots. Special thanks to the advisory group members, Humanity and Inclusion in Myanmar and the child development workers and teachers in BARMM who tested the kits and provided feedback.

In BARMM, advisory group members included representatives from the Philippine Disability Affairs Office – Cotobato City, the Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education, Ministry of Social Services and Development, Ministry of Health, Federation of Parents of Children with Disability, Humanity and Inclusion, Office of the City Social Welfare Division, and UNICEF.

In Myanmar, the advisory group members included representatives from Myanmar Christian Fellowship for the Blind, Myanmar Special Education Association, Eden Center for Disabled Children, Panpyoelett Foundation, Humanity and Inclusion and UNICEF.





Early Childhood Development and children with disabilities

Early childhood development (ECD) refers to a child's physical, cognitive, communication, social and emotional development during the first years of life. Providing the best possible opportunities for play, learning and stimulation during this period of children's development helps to ensure they thrive and reach their potential. This is just as important for children with disabilities, who require equal access to these opportunities. Children with disabilities may experience delays or difficulties in different areas of their development. Access to play can help develop them to develop skills, have fun, develop friendships and feel included, while also benefiting children without disabilities by promoting inclusion from an early age.

Disability inclusive ECD in emergencies

In emergency contexts, where disruptions and stressors can severely impact children's well-being and development, the provision of safe spaces for play and learning is just as vital. In development and humanitarian contexts, children with disabilities often face barriers to accessing appropriate play, learning, and social interaction. The barriers they encounter may be exacerbated in crisis situations, increasing their exclusion and limiting their opportunities for development, and support for their well-being and mental health.

Facilitating access to inclusive play opportunities in emergencies that accommodate diverse disabilities and abilities, is important for promoting the development, rights and well-being of all children.

Disability Inclusive ECD kits in the East Asia and the Pacific Region

The UNICEF ECD kits were developed to strengthen emergency responses for children under 6 years by providing access to opportunities for early learning, creativity, self-expression, and positive adult-child interactions. The ECD kits have evolved to be used in both emergency and non-emergency development contexts. In emergency contexts the kits are often used in Child Friendly Spaces (CFS). A guidance on disability inclusion in CFS has also been developed as part of this project.¹

1 <https://www.unicef.org/eap/disability-inclusive-and-accessible-child-friendly-spaces-in-humanitarian-action>

Findings from a global review of the UNICEF ECD kits in 2019 found a significant gap in the use of the kits with children with disabilities. The review also highlighted the importance of localization to ensure kits are culturally and contextually relevant, and a need for capacity building of kit users on play based facilitation when using the kits. This guidance and the piloting of disability inclusive ECD kits are a response to these findings in the East Asia and Pacific (EAP) region.

How the Disability Inclusive ECD Kits and guidance were developed

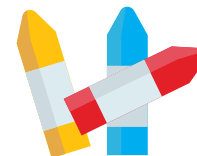
The project to develop and pilot localized disability inclusive ECD kits for emergencies and associated guidance was a collaboration between the UNICEF East Asia Pacific Region Office (EAPRO), the UNICEF Mindanao Field Office in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) of the Philippines, and the UNICEF Myanmar Country Office and their implementing partner, Humanity & Inclusion. Consultations were undertaken with key stakeholders, including parents of children with disabilities, to inform the contents of the kits and guidance, with additional input from local advisory groups in both BARMM and Myanmar.

Findings from the consultations echoed the global review in terms of recommending that books and toys should depict images familiar in the local context, use local language, and include items that are locally available. Findings also highlighted the need for building the capacity of people working in ECD and child protection in emergency programmes, so they are better equipped to support the inclusion of children with disabilities. Consultation findings called for greater inclusion of toys and items in the ECD kits that are suitable for children with diverse needs, including those with vision impairments and sensory processing difficulties.

The consultations revealed a gap in programming for play and early stimulation for children under three years, both with and without disabilities. Participants identified that current kits have few items for this age group and a need to build capacity of facilitators in supporting children under 3, so that they too can benefit from CFS and ECD programmes for early play and stimulation. The process of adapting the kits has sought to ensure the inclusion of children with all types of disabilities and children of all ages between 0 and 6 years.

Utilizing these findings and those of the global review, the Disability Inclusive ECD Kits and this guidance were developed. These were piloted in child development centres and kindergartens in BARMM during May 2024 and further refined with feedback obtained from facilitators and the advisory groups.

Who is this guidance for?



This guidance is intended to provide guidance and ideas to support the play and inclusion of young children aged 0 to 6 years with disabilities when using the EAPRO Disability Inclusive ECD Kit. The guidance may also be useful for those using the standard UNICEF ECD kit or those without an ECD kit to provide guidance on how to adapt or make toys and other items for children with disabilities in ECD programmes.

This guidance may be used by facilitators, early childhood educators and caregivers, volunteers, parents, child development workers, UNICEF staff and partners, or any other persons using the kits or setting up inclusive ECD programmes.

While the Disability Inclusive ECD Kits and guidance have been developed with ECD emergency programmes in mind, they may also be used in other emergency contexts, such as evacuation centres, or in non-emergency development settings, and by those working in other sectors that support young children and their caregivers, such as health, nutrition and child protection.

How to use this guidance

The guidance can be used in several different ways.

1. Programmes with a Disability Inclusive ECD Kit

This guidance will support the use of the Disability Inclusive ECD Kit and the inclusion of children with disabilities in ECD programmes.

2. Programmes using the global UNICEF ECD Kit

Some items in the disability inclusive ECD kit are the same as those provided in the global UNICEF ECD Kit. Programmes using the global ECD kits can use the relevant information in this guidance to adapt use of those items for children with disabilities.

3. Programmes that do not have access to an ECD Kit

This guidance can be used to guide procurement of items to develop a disability inclusive ECD kit and be used to guide the use of those items.

Structure of the guidance

This guidance is divided into two parts.

Part 1

Provides advice on the importance of play, creating disability inclusive play opportunities for young children, and some general strategies to assist children with different types of disabilities or impairments to participate in your ECD programme.

Part 2

Provides specific guidance on how to use the items in the Disability Inclusive ECD Kit. Descriptions are provided of each item and suggestions given on how to adapt the use of each item for use by children with different types of impairments. Ideas of how to make the items are also provided.

There are links to some additional resources at the end of this guidance for further information and guidance.

Note: The information in this guidance may need to be adapted depending on the context in which it is being used and the availability of resources.



© UNICEF Philippines/2024/RSalvador



© UNICEF Philippines/2024/RSalvador



© UNICEF Philippines/2024/RSalvador



Why is play important for young children?

Play is important for the well-being, learning and development of all children, with and without disabilities. Play helps young children develop their physical, social, emotional, communication, and learning skills. It provides a way for children to process and express emotions, interact with others, build confidence and learn about the world around them. In emergency settings, when children are experiencing a high level of change and disruption, play can provide a sense of comfort and normalcy, and a continuation of learning. Play provides children with opportunities to process what has happened in emergencies or crises and provides opportunities to strengthen their resilience.

Stages of play development

Children begin playing from the earliest age and progress through different stages of play as they develop. In terms of children’s cognitive or learning skills, there are four main stages of play development.

Stage	Typical Age	What this stage looks like
Exploratory and sensorimotor play	0 to 24 months	Child explores objects and their environment by looking, touching, tasting, smelling, hearing, moving their body and manipulating objects with their hands, feet and mouth.
Functional and constructional play	12 months onwards	Begins to use objects to perform actions (e.g., bang together) and to make other objects (e.g., building with blocks). This helps develop problem solving, physical skills, language and learning concepts like size, colour, and shape.
Pretend or symbolic play	18 months onwards	Child begins to imitate or create scenarios where they pretend to be doing an activity (e.g., pretend to drink from a cup) or pretend to be someone else (e.g., pretend to be a doctor). Starts as simple play that copies everyday actions and progresses to acting out more creative and complex stories. This play helps to develop imagination, communication and social skills.

Stage	Typical Age	What this stage looks like
Games with rules	5 years onwards	Play that involves structured games that follow rules and often involves interacting with others. For example, ball games, hide and seek, board or card games.

Socially, children also move through different types of play.

Solitary play is when children play by themselves and do not pay attention to what others are doing. This is how children under 18 months usually play.

Parallel play is when children play alongside each other and might use the same or similar toys as those around them. This usually starts from 18 to 24 months.

Cooperative play is when children join together to do activities and work together to do an activity or make something. This usually starts between 3 to 4 years of age. It might also be making up rules or playing games with rules.

Children with disabilities can move through the stages of play more slowly or differently to other children. Some children with severe disabilities may continue to prefer exploratory sensorimotor and solitary play. It is important to consider a child's play "stage" rather than just their "age" when creating and providing play opportunities.



© UNICEF/UNI358760/ljazah

Creating disability inclusive play opportunities for young children

Creating inclusive opportunities for play for young children involves thoughtful planning and implementation to ensure that all children, regardless of their abilities or needs, can participate and thrive. Here are some things to consider:

Understand that disability is diverse²

When planning play activities and programmes, keep in mind all types of disabilities and the strategies or adaptations you can make to ensure all children are included. Children may experience delays or disability in any area of their development. This includes:

- **Movement:** being able to move and control the different parts of their body. Movement difficulties could affect only some parts of a child's body (e.g., one arm) or may affect many parts of their body (e.g., head, trunk, arms and legs).
- **Communication:** being able to understand information or how well they can express themselves through talking or other ways of communicating like facial expression, or body language.
- **Thinking and learning** (or cognition): This includes being able to concentrate, remember, learn new things, problem solve and use imagination. Difficulties may be in just one area of learning (specific learning difficulty) through to difficulty across many areas that affect learning (intellectual disability).
- **Social:** Being able to play and interact with other people such as sharing and taking turns and showing interest in and respect for others.
- **Emotional:** Understanding and expressing feelings and learning how to manage them in different situations.
- **Vision:** How well a child can see and may involve being able to see but not very well through to being completely blind.
- **Hearing:** How well a child can hear and may involve being able to hear but not very well through to being completely deaf.

2 Terms used in this section and throughout this guidance describe areas or domains of function rather than impairments or specific conditions. For example, 'difficulties moving' is used rather than 'physical impairment'.

- **Sensory processing:** Some children have difficulty with sensory information around them which can affect their behaviour. Sensory information includes touch, taste, smell, noise, vision and movement. Some children might like more of certain types of sensory information than other children and others will like less.

Difficulties in any of these areas can range from a little bit of difficulty (mild) through to a lot of difficulty (severe). Many children with disabilities will have difficulties in more than one of these areas and therefore require several strategies to enable their inclusion.

Some general strategies on adapting activities and making play disability inclusive are included in the section below. Further strategies specific to the Disability Inclusive ECD Kit are provided in Part 2.

Get to know children's unique needs and abilities

Every child's experience of disability is different. Take time to get to know children with disabilities, their strengths, interests and support needs. Observe to see what sort of toys or play they seem interested in and how much and what type of support they need to enable them to play.

Talk to the child and their parents or caregivers to find out how they usually help their child to play or do other everyday activities, including any use of assistive products. This will help you to understand what you can do to assist the child to play and participate in your programme.

The type of adaptations and support needed to play and participate will vary from child to child. Some children with disabilities will not need any additional support, some may need some small adaptations, while others will need a lot of support. Information about different types of support or adaptations to consider are included in the next section.

Assistive Products are items that improve or maintain a person's ability to function and participate in everyday activities. They include items such as wheelchairs and walking frames, glasses, hearing aids, communication boards, prosthetic limbs, adapted eating equipment and many others.



Make the environment safe and appropriate for young children with and without disabilities to play

- Make sure any furniture and equipment is free of sharp edges and corners and is safe for use with young children, including children with disabilities.
- Provide mats for children to play comfortably on the floor, either seated or lying down.
- Have some cushions available to place behind and beside children who are still learning to sit by themselves.
- Make sure there is enough space for children with assistive products for mobility to move freely between activities or play areas.
- Avoid having too many pictures on walls, objects hanging from ceilings or bright lights. These can be over-stimulating or distracting for some children.
- Ensure all play items are non-toxic, do not have any sharp edges or corners, and are suitable for age and ability of children.
- Keep any items less than 30 mm in diameter away from children under 3 years or children who like to put things in their mouth.³

Maintain hygiene of toys and surfaces

Young children and some children with disabilities are more likely to put objects in their mouths and drool saliva than other children. To prevent the spread of illnesses, ensure all toys and surfaces are cleaned regularly using cleaning products that are suitable for children. A small hygiene kit for cleaning the items in the kit has been included as part of the kit.

Consider additional workers to provide support and supervision

You may need some extra workers or volunteers in addition to usual adult to child ratios to provide the individual support that some children with disabilities need. It might be possible for a family member to attend the ECD programme with their child with a disability to provide this support, but if they cannot this should not prevent the child from participating in your programme. See if there are adults in your community that could provide some extra help for your programme.

You can also refer to the section on Accessibility in the Guidance on Accessible and Inclusive Child Friendly Spaces⁴ for more detailed advice on ensuring play environments, such as in CFS or temporary learning spaces (TLS), are accessible and inclusive.

3 <https://www.productsafety.gov.au/product-safety-laws/safety-standards-bans/mandatory-standards/toys-for-children-up-to-and-including-36-months-of-age>

4 <https://www.unicef.org/eap/disability-inclusive-and-accessible-child-friendly-spaces-in-humanitarian-action>

General strategies for playing with children with disabilities



Children with disabilities love to play and have fun, just like all children. Making sure they can play and participate in stimulating activities does not require specialist skills or training, just an awareness and willingness to provide support if needed. Ensure that activities are not competitive, and allow all children to participate in activities which are psychosocially supportive.

In this section the guidance provides some general advice and strategies that you can use when supporting with children with disabilities to participate in play activities.

You may also like to share these strategies with parents and other family members of children with disabilities to increase their engagement with their child and support play at home.

Keep it fun!

Sometimes play is called ‘the work of children’ because it is how they learn and develop, but play should not feel like hard work. Try to always keep activities playful and fun. Young children love silly songs and noises to make activities fun.

Give lots of praise and encouragement

For many reasons children may avoid trying to do activities that they have not tried before or think they will not be able to do well. Encourage them to have a try at doing activities and praise any attempt even if they have difficulty.

Choose activities for developmental stage not age

Children with some disabilities or delays might be at an earlier stage of development than other children their age (see Stages of Play Development above). This means that items or activities considered as being for younger children, such as those for children under 3 in this guidance, might actually be suitable for older children depending on their developmental stage. For example, a 5-year-old might enjoy exploratory play with baby rattles. This is completely ok. Children are more likely to be interested and motivated to participate in an activity that is at the right developmental age for them.

Be creative

Part 2 of the guidance gives some suggestions about how to use items in different ways for children with different needs, but you can be creative and adapt items or activity suggestions as needed. Children will also have their own creative ideas, follow their lead!

Make it multi-sensory

Many children, including children with all types of disabilities, can benefit from using their different senses in play. This includes touch, movement, sight, sound, smell and, where appropriate, taste. Provide a range of play experiences that provide stimulation for all of the different senses.

Knowing how much support to give

Different children, even with the same type of disability, will need different types of assistance and adaptations. Try to provide the “just right” level of help a child needs so that an activity is challenging enough to keep their interest but not so hard that they don’t want to play. It is good to let them try first and then if they are having difficulty, showing frustration or quickly losing interest then provide some help. For some children, you will know from the start they need some support or adaptations.

Here are some different types of support you can give in order from the lowest level of support through to the most support. You may use some of these in combination depending on a child’s needs, e.g., Demonstration + verbal cues + co-active assistance.

1. Extra time

Some children just need more time than other children to do an activity. For example, a child with cerebral palsy who has difficulty controlling their movements. Where possible give them as much time as they need.

2. Demonstration

Show the child what to do. This is particularly important if it is a new toy or activity for them.

3. Verbal cues or prompting

Use words, or even singing, to describe what they need to do. Keep the words you use clear and simple. For example, when stacking blocks to make a tower you can just say “I put it on!” as you show them what to do. Or you might say to a child having difficulty inserting a puzzle piece “Try turning the piece around a different way”.

4. Visual cues

As well as demonstration, you can also provide some extra visual cues to help guide a child to know what to do. Visual cues can include pointing (e.g., to show where to put a stacking ring), using gestures to model the actions they need to use (e.g., showing the action of rolling a ball as they have a try), having pictures that show what to do, or placing the items a child needs to focus on for an activity within a clearly marked visual space (e.g., on a placemat, or inside a circle marked on the floor with tape).

5. Simplify

Consider how you can make a toy or activity simpler, so it is easier for a child to be successful. For example, reduce the number of pieces of a puzzle or cover some parts of a shape sorter.

6. Set up

For some children it might help to set up an activity so that everything they need is within easy reach or positioned in a way that makes picking them up easier. Or you might place everything needed for an activity in the order they are needed (e.g., arranging stacking cups from largest to smallest). Making adaptations to toys such as adding large handles or tactile elements is also a form of set up.

7. Co-active physical assistance

In co-active assistance you physically assist the child while they still physically perform some of the task. For example, you might assist a child to catch a ball, or help them to hold a block steady while they stack another block on top.

8. Full physical assistance

For some children with severe disabilities, you may need to physically perform the task for them, but find ways to keep them involved by making sure they can see and talking to them about what you are doing.



General strategies and adaptations for including children with different areas of difficulty

Remember that many children will have difficulties in more than one area. For these children you may need to combine several strategies from the sections below.

Children with difficulty moving

- Think about the best position for a child to be in to play with a toy or participate in an activity. Is it sitting or lying on the floor? Is it sitting on a chair or in a wheelchair?
- Make sure they are not isolated away from other children.
- If in a sitting position, make sure their trunk/body is well supported so they can maintain their balance.
- If sitting in a chair or wheelchair, make sure their feet are supported.
- Make sure their position allows them to move arms and hands freely.
- If one side of their body is more affected than the other, position toys or other objects towards their stronger side.

Children with difficulty thinking and learning

- Reduce distractions around the child as much as possible so they can focus on the activity. This could be moving to a quieter area where there are less children or removing items that are not needed for the activity.
- Break each activity down into small steps by giving one instruction at a time.
- Use visual and verbal cues.

Children with difficulty communicating or hearing

Many children with disabilities have difficulty with communication for different reasons, so it is important to think about how you can best communicate with them, and how they can communicate with you.

- Ask their parent/caregiver about their child's usual ways of communicating.
- Get down to the child's level when communicating and make sure they can see your face.
- Make sure you have the child's attention before you speak.
- Keep words simple and sentences short.
- Use visual cues such as facial expression, pointing and gesture to add meaning to what you are saying.
- Use visual communication cards and visual schedules to support verbal communication (see items 23 and 24).
- Please also refer to the section on Disability Inclusive Communication in the [Guidance on Disability Inclusive and Accessible Child Friendly Spaces](#) for more detailed suggestions.

Children who have difficulty seeing

- Spend some time helping the child become familiar with the play space.
- Allow them time to explore toys and activities with their hands.
- Provide verbal descriptions of the surroundings and what other children are doing.
- Remove unnecessary items from play surfaces like the floor or table tops.
- Place toys on an un-patterned surface that contrasts to the toys. You may want to use one of the non-slip placemats (see item 27).

Children with sensory processing difficulties

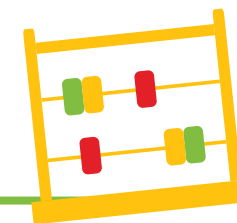
- Sensory avoiding: Some children are easily overwhelmed by some types of sensory stimulation. You might notice them remove themselves away from activities or other children, avoid doing some activities, cover their ears if it is noisy, or become upset by certain noises, smells, being touched, or even bright light.
- Sensory seeking: Other children have a higher need for some types of sensory stimulation than other children and will seek out more of it. You might notice them wanting to touch objects or people a lot, putting objects in their mouth, moving around more than other children, making a lot of noise, or watching objects intently.
- Some children may be both sensory seeking and sensory avoiding. For example, a child may avoid noise but seek touch.
- For both sensory avoiding and sensory seeking children, the key strategy is to try to understand their behaviours and allow them to seek or avoid in a way that is safe.
- Provide a quiet or calm space for sensory avoiding children to go to if they are overwhelmed.
- Encourage children who are sensitive to noise to try using the noise cancelling earmuffs as needed (see item 25 in Part 2).
- Provide sensory seeking children with play opportunities that involve movement, noise, touch and visual stimulation.
- A quick activity like dancing or doing some simple exercises like jumping jacks can be helpful for children who seek a lot of movement when they are trying to sit still for an activity. These are sometimes called “movement breaks.”





© UNICEF Philippines/2024/RSalvador

Part 2 Using the Disability Inclusive ECD Kit



What is in the kit

The Disability Inclusive ECD Kit contains the items listed in the table below. The table also indicates which ages items are most suited to and the key developmental skills that items can be used to promote.

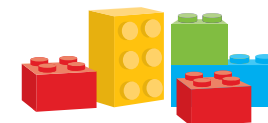
If you do not have access to the Disability Inclusive ECD Kit, you may be able to find some of the items listed in other kits, in local shops or markets, or you can make them yourself using the suggestions provided.

Item	Age*		Skills supported						
	Under 3 years	3-6 years	Physical	Learning	Social	Emotional	Communication	Vision	Hearing
1. Board inset puzzle	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
2. Interlocking puzzle		✓	✓	✓			✓		
3. Board books	✓	✓	✓	✓					
4. Ball set	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
5. Shape sorter	✓	✓	✓	✓					
6. String beads		✓	✓	✓					
7. Hand puppets	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
8. Stacking toys	✓	✓	✓	✓					
9. Wooden blocks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
10. Vehicle toys		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
11. Plastic building blocks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Item	Age*		Skills supported						
	Under 3 years	3-6 years	Physical	Learning	Social	Emotional	Communication	Vision	Hearing
12. Baby rattles	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
13. Beach ball	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	
14. Baby dolls	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		
15. Musical instruments		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
16. Magnetic drawing board		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
17. Sensory play tray		✓	✓		✓	✓			
18. Water/sand play kit		✓	✓	✓	✓				
19. Bubble blowing kit	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	
20. Fidget tools		✓	✓			✓			
21. Emotions flash cards		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
22. Educational flash cards	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
23. Communication cards		✓		✓			✓		
24. Visual schedule		✓			✓		✓		
25. Noise cancelling earmuffs		✓				✓			✓
26. Universal cuff	✓	✓	✓						
27. Non-slip placemats		✓	✓					✓	

*Remember that some children's play may be at a different developmental stage to their age. Choose items for developmental stage rather than age.

Additional items to consider



While items in the kit have been selected to provide a range of developmentally appropriate play opportunities and experiences for children with and without disabilities aged 0 to 6 years, you may wish to add additional items.

Some items you might like to consider having available for your programme:

1. Local toys, musical instruments or story books suitable for children under 6 years.
2. Objects from the local natural environment that could be used for sensory play or creative activities, e.g., seed pods, leaves.
3. A locally made mat for children to play on the floor.
4. Parachute from the UNICEF recreation kit for group games.
5. Weighted blanket for use by children who need help to feel calm.

Weighted blankets are small blankets that are designed to be heavier than regular blankets without being too hot. Children who are very active or anxious may find the heavy weight helps them to feel calm and focused.

Important!

- Weighted blankets should only be used with children aged 3 years and above.
- Weighted blankets must weigh no more than 10 per cent of a child's total body weight. For example, if a child weighs 15 kg, the blanket must weigh no more than 1.5 kg.
- Weighted blankets must always be used with adult supervision.
- You must ensure that the blanket is well constructed and that filling items cannot come loose as these may be a health or choking hazard.
- Check the blanket regularly for wear and discontinue using if there is any risk of filling coming loose.
- Using for short periods (up to 20 minutes) is most effective.



© UNICEF Philippines/2024/RSalvador



© UNICEF Philippines/2024/RSalvador



About the activity guides

On the following pages, an activity guide is provided for each of the items in the kit. Each activity guide includes the following:

Recommended age ranges for using each item.

These have been grouped into under 3 years or 3-6 years but remembering that items can be used flexibly to meet children's individual needs and developmental stage if they are used safely and any objects smaller than 30 mm are not given to children under two years (see 'Choose activities for developmental stage' above).

Skills supported

These are the skills or areas of child development supported by using each item:

- Physical (fine and gross motor, tactile)
- Social
- Emotional
- Learning (Cognitive)
- Communication
- Vision
- Hearing

What is it for?

A description of what the item is typically used for, but you and the children attending your programmes may have many other ideas.

How to use it with...

- This section provides some tips and strategies for how to use the item with children with different difficulties or how to use with children under 3 years. You may need to combine strategies for children with multiple areas of difficulty.
- These are suggestions only. Always let children try first and check if they need any adaptations before assuming that they do. They may have their own ways of playing and as you gain experience in playing with children with different disabilities you will develop your own ideas.

Use in a group activity

These are suggestions of how you might use an item in a small group activity.

'Make it yourself'

There may be situations where items in the kit get broken or go missing or there are just not enough items for the number of children attending your programmes. This section provides instructions for adults to make items that provide opportunities for play and stimulation in a similar way to the corresponding item in the kit. You may also like to share these ideas with parents so that they can make items for their children to play with at home.

Notes

This is space for you to make notes from training or your own play ideas.

1. Board inset puzzles



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Physical (fine motor), learning, communication

What is it for?

This type of puzzle allows children to develop their problem-solving skills and fine motor skills by matching and manipulating the pieces to fit in the correct holes in the board. You can also use it for language development by talking about the pictures and naming them.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Ensure the board and pieces are on a stable surface and within reach of the child.
- Allow the child plenty of time to attempt to insert the puzzle pieces.
- Provide some physical assistance to help the child insert the pieces but let them do as much as possible on their own.

Children with difficulty thinking or learning

- Demonstrate how to do the puzzle.
- If the child is having difficulty, try giving them 1 or 2 pieces at a time.
- Cover some of the holes (with your hand or a card) that don't match the pieces they are trying to insert so they have less holes to choose from.
- Give verbal prompts as needed, e.g., "try turning the piece around the other way".

Children with difficulty seeing

- Encourage the child to use their hands to feel one piece at a time and then feel for the corresponding hole.
- If necessary, cover some holes to help them find the right one.
- Ask the child to describe what they think the piece is, give them some clues if needed.

Children under 3 years

- Young children may like to hold and explore the pieces with their hands even if they can't yet insert them in the board.
- Encourage them to take pieces out of the board.
- For babies lying on the floor, tie pieces to string and suspend above them so they can look at the pieces and try to reach with their hands (see Picture 1).



Picture 1: Child playing with suspended toys⁵

Use in a group activity

- Put all pieces into a small box or bag.
- Have children take it in turns to take a piece, describe the picture and put it into the board.

Make it yourself

- Take 2 pieces of thick cardboard (e.g., cardboard packaging cartons) the same size.
- Draw some simple shapes on one piece (e.g., circle, square, triangle, diamond), making them large enough that they will be suitable as puzzle pieces.
- Colour in the shapes different colours and cut them out using a sharp knife, leaving the piece of cardboard intact except for the cut out shapes.
- Glue the piece of cardboard with the cut-out holes onto the other piece of cardboard so that their edges line up.
- Glue bottle tops onto each of the shapes to be used as handles.
- Push the shape pieces into their matching holes.
- Pop shapes out to play again.

Notes

⁵ Picture credit: Werner, D. (1987), *Disabled Village Children: a guide for community health workers, rehabilitation workers and families*. The Hesperian Foundation.

2. Interlocking puzzles



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Physical (fine motor), learning, communication

What is it for?

This type of puzzle allows children to develop their problem-solving skills and fine motor skills by manipulating the pieces to arrange them correctly to fit together to make a picture. You can also use it for communication development by talking about the picture.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Ensure the board and pieces are on a stable surface and within reach of the child.
- Allow the child plenty of time to attempt to insert the puzzle pieces.
- Provide some physical assistance to help the child insert the pieces but let them do as much as possible on their own.

Children with difficulty thinking or learning

- Demonstrate how to do the puzzle then remove all the pieces.
- Insert one piece to help the child get started.
- If the child is having difficulty, give them 1 or 2 pieces at a time.
- Give verbal prompts as needed, e.g., “try putting that piece at the bottom of the picture”.

Children with difficulty seeing

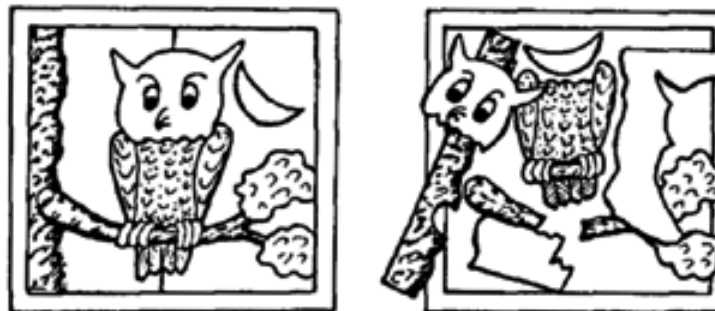
- Encourage the child to feel the outline of the shape and guess what the picture is. Give them some clues if needed.
- Give the child plenty of time to feel the pieces and complete the puzzle.
- Give verbal feedback, e.g., “yes that is in the right place” or “try putting it in a different place”.
- For older children you could introduce the concepts of right and left to help describe the location of pieces.

Use in a group activity

- Put all pieces into a small box or bag.
- Have children take it in turns to take a piece and put it in the board.
- Once the puzzle is complete, talk about the picture, make up a story about it or sing a song.

Make it yourself

- Draw a picture suitable for young children on a piece of paper or cut out a picture from a magazine.
- Glue the picture onto a thick piece of cardboard (e.g., from packaging cartons) that is the same size as the picture.
- Turn the cardboard over and draw lines from each side of the cardboard so that the lines intersect to form shapes.
- Cut along these lines so the picture is now in several pieces.
- Arrange the pieces to put the picture back together.



Picture 2: Example of homemade puzzle⁶

Notes

⁶ Picture credit: Werner, D. (1987), *Disabled Village Children: a guide for community health workers, rehabilitation workers and families*. The Hesperian Foundation.

3. Board books



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Cognitive, social, emotional, communication, vision, physical (fine motor)

What is it for?

Board books provide visual stimulation for young children while also helping them learn concepts and develop communication. The thick pages let them practice using their hands to turn the pages.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Ensure child is positioned with their head and trunk supported so they can see the book easily.
- Place the book on a stable surface or hold it within reach of the child so they can try turning the pages. Help them to turn the pages if needed.

Children with difficulty thinking or learning

- Remove any other distractions so child can focus on the book.
- Keep words clear and simple when talking about the pictures in the book.
- Point to pictures as you talk about them.
- Give the child plenty of time to name pictures or repeat words that you say.

Children with difficulty seeing

- Use 'touch and feel' (tactile) books where possible, ensuring they can be cleaned.
- Add tactile elements to books by gluing fabric, cardboard, sandpaper or other textured materials to pictures.
- Describe the pictures on each page as you read the book.

Children with difficulty hearing

- Ensure the child is positioned so they can easily see the book and the face of the person reading it to them, if being read to.

Children under 3 years

- Position book so babies lying on their stomach can look at pictures.

Use in a group activity

- Read or look at books with a group of children.
- Encourage children in pairs or small groups to read books to each other.

Make it yourself

- Draw pictures suitable for young children, get children to draw pictures or cut out pictures from a magazine.
- Glue each picture onto separate thick pieces of thick cardboard (e.g., from packaging cartons).
- Add tactile elements to pictures using fabrics or other available materials.
- Punch 3 holes equally spaced down the left side of each picture.
- Stack the pictures in a pile so that holes line up.
- Thread string through holes and tie up so that pictures are joined together like a book and pages can be turned.

Notes

4. Ball Set



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Physical, social, learning

What is it for?

This set of balls can be used for children to play individually or in groups. Ball games help children develop their physical (fine and gross motor) skills by controlling their bodies to hold, catch, throwing, roll or bounce balls. Playing with other children in a group lets them develop their social skills like taking turns.

General play ideas

- Roll or throw ball to and from another child or adult.
- Throw balls into a 'target' such as a large box or other container.
- Roll balls to knock over empty plastic bottles.
- Use in water play.


How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Place balls in a large bowl or other container so they can't roll away and position so child can reach them. Allow them time to explore the various textures.
- For target throw games (e.g., throw to container or knocking over bottles), set up activity so child is close to target and can achieve success. If too easy, gradually increase difficulty by moving them a little further away from target.
- Make a cylinder out of cardboard for child to roll ball through to hit target.
- Provide physical assistance for them to hold and throw ball if needed.

Children with difficulty seeing

- Allow child to feel the textures of the different balls.
- Use balls with bells inside where possible.
- When doing target-throwing games use a target that will make a sound when ball hits it, e.g., metal container (ensure no sharp edges).
- Position something near the target that makes noise to guide the child where to throw or if they are throwing to a person the catcher should talk to them.
- Allow child to get close to target to see or feel it more easily.
- Tie string around ball and loop other end around child's wrist so they can pull it back to them after throwing to have another turn.

	<p>Children under 3 years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow young children to hold and explore the texture of different balls in lying or sitting positions. • Roll ball gently toward child and see if they can follow it with their eyes and try to bat at it with their hand.
<p>Use in a group activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play catching, rolling, target throwing games in pairs or small groups with children taking turns. 	<p>Make it yourself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make balls of various size and texture using locally available materials. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Scrunch up paper or fabric to the size of a tennis ball or baseball and wrap with tape to make a ball shape. Put a bell inside if available. o Fill a small bag with uncooked rice, sand or similar, to an amount about the size of a tennis ball. Tie knot in bag up to make a ball. Place this inside a piece of fabric or small sock and tie or wrap tape around to secure in place and make a ball shape. (Picture 3)  <p style="text-align: right;">Picture 3: Small ball made from locally available materials⁷</p>
<p>Notes</p>	

⁷ Picture credit: Veerman, A. & Christianen, C. (n.d.), *Making toys by yourself using low-cost and waste materials*. Holy Family Center, Monze Zambia & Enablement.

5. Shape Sorter



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Physical (fine motor), learning

What is it for?

This toy allows children to develop their thinking and learning skills and fine motor skills by manipulating the shapes to fit into the correct hole in the toy. You can also use this toy to learn about different shapes and what they are called.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Ensure the shape sorter and shapes are on a stable surface and within easy reach of the child.
- Allow the child plenty of time to attempt to insert the shapes into the holes.
- Provide some physical assistance if needed to help the child turn the shape sorter and insert the shapes but let them do as much as possible on their own.

Children with difficulty thinking or learning

- Demonstrate how to insert shapes into the shape sorter.
- If the child is having difficulty, try giving them 1 or 2 pieces at a time.
- Cover some of the holes (with your hand or a card) that don't match the pieces they are trying to insert so they have less holes to choose from.
- Give verbal prompts as needed, e.g., "try turning the piece around the other way".

Children with difficulty seeing

- Encourage the child to use their hands to feel one piece at a time and then feel for the corresponding hole.
- If necessary, cover some holes to help them find the right one.
- Ask the child to describe what they think the piece is, give them some clues if needed.

Children under 3 years

- Let babies and toddlers hold and explore the shapes with their hands and mouths. Make sure pieces are large enough that they cannot be swallowed.
- Put shapes into a bowl or other container without lid so children can tip them out and put them back in (see Picture 4).



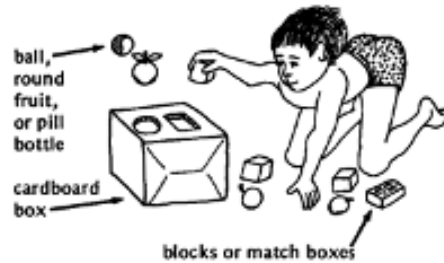
Picture 4: Dropping items into a container⁸

Use in a group activity

- Put all shapes into a small box or bag.
- Have children take it in turns to take a piece, name the shape, and put it into the shape sorter.
- Talk about other things that are the same shape, e.g., “what other things are a square?”

Make it yourself

- Take a cardboard box or a plastic container with a lid (e.g., from food packaging).
- Cut some holes of simple shapes (e.g., circle, square, rectangle) in the top or lid.
- Find everyday items that can be used as the “shapes” for children to post into the holes (e.g., bottle lids, empty match boxes, seed pods, small balls, wooden blocks).



Picture 5: Homemade shape sorter⁹

Notes

8 Picture credit: Werner, D. (1987), *Disabled Village Children: a guide for community health workers, rehabilitation workers and families*. The Hesperian Foundation.

9 As above.

6. String beads



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Physical (fine motor), learning

What is it for?

This toy helps children to practice using their hands in a controlled way to thread the beads onto a string. You can also use the beads to learn about colours by naming the colours or sorting the beads into colours.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Use large beads and thicker, stiffer items for string (e.g., plastic string, drinking straw, fuzzy strings) to make it easier for children with difficulty controlling the movements of their arms or hands.
- Use non-slip placemat on surface in front of child to stop beads rolling around.
- Provide some physical assistance if needed, e.g., help hold the string steady while the child places the bead onto it.

Children with difficulty thinking or learning

- Demonstrate how to thread a bead onto a string.
- Give verbal prompts as needed, e.g., "push the string through the hole".

Children with difficulty seeing

- Add tactile markings to beads to differentiate between different colours, e.g., dot for red beads, cross for blue beads.

Make it yourself

- Use locally available materials or objects for the “string” or the “beads”.
 - Examples of strings: smooth sticks, chopsticks, thin pieces of bamboo.
 - Examples of beads: cut drinking straws into short lengths, poke holes into plastic bottle lids, dried corn cobs cut into pieces with holes drilled through.

Notes

7. Hand puppets



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Social, emotional, communication, learning

What is it for?

Puppets can be used in many ways with young children to support their social and emotional skills, their communication and imagination. Use the puppets to tell stories, sing songs, act out situations, practice social skills and communication, or talk about feelings.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Assist the child to put a puppet on their hand if needed.
- Place the puppet over an empty drink bottle and sit it within reach of the child so they can move it around without it being placed over their hand.

Children with difficulty seeing

- Use puppets with contrasting colours and features to help children with low vision.
- Give them the opportunity to feel the puppets, talking about each one so they know who the characters are.
- Describe what the puppets are doing.

Children with difficulty hearing

- Use visual aids/picture cards if needed to help the child describe what the puppet is doing, saying or feeling.
- When watching others using puppets, ensure the child is positioned so they can easily see the puppets and the faces of people communicating with the puppets.

Children under 3 years

- Let babies and toddlers touch and look at puppets for tactile and visual stimulation.

Use in a group activity

- Encourage children to use puppets in pairs or small groups to tell stories, sing songs or have conversations.

Make it yourself

- Join two pieces of paper together along 3 sides using glue or staples so that side has an opening where a hand can be inserted.
OR
- Take an empty cardboard or plastic container that is big enough to place over one hand. Glue a piece of paper on one side.
- Draw a face of a person, animal or character on the paper, plastic or cardboard “puppet”.

Notes

8. Stacking toys



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Physical (fine motor), learning

What is it for?

Stacking toys like these rings and cups help children to develop their fine motor skills and thinking and learning skills by stacking them in order of size. You can use the cups in lots of ways, for example in pretend play, for sorting small toys into colours, or use them in water play or sand play as small buckets.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Ensure the toys are on a stable surface and within easy reach of the child.
- Allow the child plenty of time to stack the toys.
- Provide some physical assistance if needed but let them do as much as possible on their own.

Children with difficulty thinking or learning

- Demonstrate how to stack the cups or place the rings on the stick.
- If the child is having difficulty, stack the first one or two cups or rings for them and then get them to try the next ones.
- Give lots of encouragement and praise.

Children with difficulty seeing

- Let the child feel the toy to understand how it works.
- Use hand on hand assistance if needed to help them stack the first one or two cups or rings so they know what to do then let them do the rest.

Children under 3 years

- Let babies and toddlers hold and explore the cups or rings with their hands and mouths.
- Encourage or assist them to hold a ring or cup with two hands or bang two rings together.
- Put shapes into a bowl or other container without lid so children can tip them out and put them back in.

Use in a group activity

- In a small group, ask the children to identify which object should go first, next and so on.
- Have them take it in turns to stack one cup or ring.
- For cups, children can take turns to roll a ball to knock the stack of cups over.

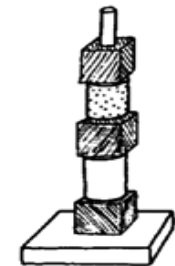
Make it yourself

For stacking cups:

- Collect empty plastic drink bottles of various sizes.
- Use scissors or a sharp knife to cut the bottom 4 inches off each bottle. Ensure no sharp edges.
- Turn upside down and stack one on top of the other to make a tower, starting with the largest.

For stacking rings:

- Take a block of wood or small box or carton turned upside down.
- Take a smooth stick or piece of bamboo.
- Make a hole in the wood or box and stand the stick up in the hole.
- Fix the stick in place with glue or tape.
- Make "rings" out of pieces of wood or plastic lids by making a hole in them.
- You could also make "rings" by cutting up a cardboard cylinder (e.g., from foil or food wrap) into sections.
- Paint the "rings" to make them colourful and fun.



Picture 6: Homemade stacking ring¹⁰

Notes

¹⁰ Picture credit: Werner, D. (1987), *Disabled Village Children: a guide for community health workers, rehabilitation workers and families*. The Hesperian Foundation.

9. Wooden blocks



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Physical (fine motor), learning, social, emotional

What is it for?

Wooden construction blocks can be used to promote many areas of children's development. They help to develop hand control (fine motor skills) by placing blocks carefully. They can be used to learn about colours, shapes and numbers. They can also be used to develop imagination and social-emotional skills by using blocks to create different and objects and scenes for pretend play.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Make sure child is seated in a well supported position within reach of the blocks.
- Use non-slip placemat on surface in front of child to stop blocks moving around.
- Provide some physical assistance if needed to place or position blocks.
- Use blocks that join together or add Velcro so blocks can be joined where possible.

Children with difficulty thinking or learning

- Start with making a tower and getting child to knock it over, then get them to build a tower to knock over.
- If child is having difficulty thinking of ideas to make with blocks make some simple constructions for them to copy, e.g., tower, pyramid, house, car.
- Give verbal prompts to help break down the steps of making something. E.g., For making a house "What does a house need? Does it need walls? Ok, let's make walls. What else?"

Children with difficulty seeing

- Ensure blocks are within reach of child and on plain coloured surface.
- Use blocks with tactile markings or add these for added interest for children with difficulty seeing.
- Make a simple construction and get child to feel it and try to copy it. Give verbal cues as needed.

Children under 3 years

- Encourage babies and toddlers to hold blocks with either hand, two hands, or bang two blocks together.
- Put some blocks into a bowl or other container without lid so children can tip them out and put them back in.

Use in a group activity

- Use blocks to practice turn taking, getting children to take turns to place a block to build a tower until the tower falls over.
- Encourage small groups of children to work together to create a scene or story out of the blocks (e.g., a village).
- They might like to also use the vehicle toys from item 10 to add to their construction.

Make it yourself

- Collect small boxes from food packaging, match boxes, etc.
- Tape openings and edges closed.
- Glue coloured paper, fabric, pictures from magazines to the sides of boxes.
- Use to build as you would with blocks.

Notes

10. Vehicle toys



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Physical (fine motor), learning, social, emotional, communication vision

What is it for?

Vehicle toys can be used for pretend play where children act out stories using the vehicles. Pretend play promotes communication and social skills and allows them to express emotions. Children who seek visual stimulation might like to watch the vehicles moving and can be used to develop hand skills by picking up and manipulating the toys.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Place vehicle toys on a flat surface within easy reach of the child.
- Place a barrier around the play area to prevent the vehicles rolling out of reach or onto the floor. You might like to use the sensory play tray (see item 17).
- Provide physical assistance to drive the vehicles if needed.

Children with difficulty thinking or learning

- Provide verbal prompts to help the child develop a story with the vehicles. For example, "Where is the truck going? Oh, is he going across the bridge? What happens when the truck gets to the other side of the bridge?"
- Look at pictures or videos that include vehicles and prompt the child to copy what the vehicles were doing.

Children with difficulty seeing

- Give the child time to feel the different vehicles and talk about what they are before starting to play with them.

Children with sensory processing difficulties (visual seeking)

- Use a board or thick piece of cardboard like a ramp and let the vehicles roll down for the child to watch.

Use in a group activity

- Encourage small groups of children to work together to create stories using the vehicles.
- They might like to use the vehicles with the blocks to create bridges, roads, buildings, etc.

Make it yourself

- Use small boxes from food packaging or plastic drink bottles as 'vehicles'.
- Attach bottle lids as wheels using tape or by pushing a stick through the box/ bottle and making holes in the bottle lids.
- Add cardboard "wings" instead of wheels for planes.



Picture 7: Car made from plastic bottle¹¹

Notes

¹¹ Picture credit: Veerman, A. & Christianen, C. (n.d.), *Making toys by yourself using low-cost and waste materials*. Holy Family Center, Monze Zambia & Enablement.

11. Plastic building blocks



Under 3 years **3-6 years**

Skills supported: Physical (fine motor), learning, social, emotional, communication

What is it for?

As for wooden blocks, plastic building blocks can be used in many ways to develop children's skills and are great for developing their imagination, learning and communication. These blocks have the added benefit of joining together which can be helpful for children who have difficulty controlling the movements their hands and find it hard to play with the wooden blocks.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Make sure child is seated in a well supported position within reach of the blocks.
- Use non-slip placemat on surface in front of child to stop blocks moving around.
- Provide some physical assistance if needed to place or position blocks, letting the child do as much as possible or instructing you what to do.

Children with difficulty thinking or learning

- If child is having difficulty thinking of ideas to make with blocks make some simple constructions for them to copy or prompt them to look at what other children are making.
- Give verbal prompts to help break down the steps. E.g., For making a house "What does a house need? Does it need walls? Ok, let's make walls. What else?"

Children with difficulty seeing

- Ensure blocks are within reach of child and on plain coloured surface.
- Make a simple construction and get child to feel it and try to copy it. Give verbal cues as needed.

Children with sensory processing difficulties (tactile seeking)

- Use blocks in water play.

Children under 3 years

- Put some blocks into a bowl or other container without lid so children can tip them out and put them back in.

<p>Use in a group activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In pairs, get one child to build something for the other child to copy.• Use in small group activity as for wooden blocks.	<p>Make it yourself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make block out of small boxes as described in item 9 or use small pieces of wood cut into different size blocks.• Add adhesive Velcro to some surfaces of each block, using a mix of hook Velcro and loop Velcro.• Use Velcro to join blocks together in play.
<p>Notes</p>	

12. Baby rattles



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Vision, hearing, physical, social, emotional

What is it for?

Baby rattles can be used to provide stimulation of hearing and vision. They also encourage young children to use their hands to hold onto or move their arms or whole body to reach the toys. You can use rattles to encourage social interaction by shaking them to get the child's attention and encourage eye contact. They may also be helpful to calm or soothe children who are upset. Some older children may enjoy playing with rattles, especially those with learning or sensory processing difficulties.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Place or hold rattles within easy reach of child and encourage them to reach for them by shaking them.
- Use universal cuff (provided in kit), Velcro or cloth strap to assist with holding, where useful.
- Place ring shaped rattle onto child's wrist and encourage them to try shaking their arm.
- For children who cannot sit, you can also hang rattles for them to reach and look at from a reclined or lying down position (see picture).¹²



Children with difficulty seeing

- Shake rattle to get child's attention and then touch it to their hand so they know where it is and encourage them to explore it with one or both hands.
- Keep watch to check if rattle moves out of child's reach and move it back if needed.

Children with difficulty hearing

- Make sure rattles are placed in a position where child can see them.
- Get their attention by shaking rattle where they can see it and encourage them to reach for the rattle and explore the different parts of it with their hands.

¹² Picture credit: Werner, D. (1987), *Disabled Village Children: a guide for community health workers, rehabilitation workers and families*. The Hesperian Foundation.

Make it yourself

- Put some rice, seeds or small stones into a small plastic bottle or container. Ensure the lid is tightly closed and sealed with tape to ensure young children cannot access the contents of the bottle.
- Add colour by painting seeds or stones different colours or use food colouring to colour rice.

Notes

13. Beach ball



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Physical, social, vision

What is it for?

A light-weight, inflatable beach ball is useful for playing ball games with young children indoors. It can be used to learn catching, rolling, throwing which help children develop their physical and visual. By using it in pairs or small group games it also helps to develop social skills.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Consider which is the best position for the child to be able to participate, ensuring their body is well supported so that they can keep their balance.
- Being seated on the floor with their back against a wall or supported by you is a good position for rolling games.
- Use co-active support to help them catch, throw and roll the ball as needed.
- For a child seated in a wheelchair or other chair, you could use large sheets of cardboard from packaging to make a “ramp” for them to roll the ball down.

Children with difficulty seeing

- Use ball with a bell inside if possible.
- When doing target-throwing games allow child to get close to target to see or feel it more easily.

Children under 3 years

Roll ball gently toward child lying on their stomach or sitting on the floor and see if they can follow it with their eyes and try to reach out for it with their hand.

Use in a group activity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use ball with groups of children to practice throwing or rolling to each other or taking it in turns to throw or roll ball to a target (e.g., into a cardboard box).	Make it yourself <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use balloons for gentle, indoor ball games if available.• Scrunch up paper and loosely fill a pillowcase or bag and tie up the end to use for throwing and catching games.
Notes	

14. Baby dolls



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Social, emotional, communication

What is it for?

Playing with dolls and acting out everyday activities like feeding, bathing or putting the doll to sleep is a common form of early pretend play for all children, boys and girls. It helps children develop their social and emotional skills by interacting with the doll and considering its feelings, and also promotes imagination which is important for developing learning and communication skills.

Use a small box as a bath or bed for the dolls and have a cloth as a towel or blanket.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- For children with difficulty using one of their arms, offer to hold or position the doll so it is upright while the child feeds it, dresses it, etc.
- For children with very limited movement, get them to tell you what to do with the doll to carry out their play story.

Children with difficulty thinking or learning

- Demonstrate some simple pretend play actions with the doll and use simple words to describe what you are doing. For example, "Baby is tired, I am going to put baby to bed".
- Give verbal prompts of what to do with the doll, for example "I think baby is hungry, give baby some food".

Children with difficulty seeing

- Give them the opportunity to feel the doll, talking about its various body parts, clothing, etc.
- Place other items for doll play (bed, feeding, clothes) within reach and orientate the child to where these are.
- In group play, describe what the dolls and other children are doing.

Children with difficulty hearing

- Use visual aids/picture cards if needed to help the child describe what the doll is doing, saying or feeling.
- In group play, ensure the child is positioned so they can easily see the dolls and the faces of people communicating with the dolls.

Use in a group activity

- Children could use the dolls and puppets in the kit to create their own pretend class or playgroup, with some children pretending to be the teachers.
- Alternatively, they could do the same and pretend to be a family or group of friends and act out a mealtime or celebration such as a birthday.

Make it yourself

- Draw an outline of a person on two pieces of cloth and cut them out.
- Sew the two pieces together, leaving a small opening.
- Stuff the doll with scrunched up pieces of cloth.
- Sew the opening closed.
- Draw on a face and clothes or use baby clothes.



Picture 8: Homemade doll¹³

Notes

¹³ Picture credit: Werner, D. (1987), *Disabled Village Children: a guide for community health workers, rehabilitation workers and families*. The Hesperian Foundation.

15. Musical instruments



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Social, emotional, communication, physical

What is it for?

Musical instruments provide stimulation for hearing and an opportunity for children to develop their movement skills, social skills, communication skills, and to express emotions and creativity.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Ensure child is in a well-supported position and is able to reach instruments.
- Use universal cuff (see item 15), Velcro or cloth strap (see Picture 9) to assist with holding shakers, rhythm sticks or other instruments.
- Fasten bells around wrist, arm or leg if unable to grasp.
- Provide physical assistance to use instrument if needed, but allow to do by themselves as much as possible.

Children with difficulty thinking or learning




- Demonstrate how to use different instruments and give child opportunity to copy and practice.

Children with difficulty hearing

- In group play, ensure the child is positioned where they can see everyone playing instruments.
- Use exaggerated movements for shaking, banging, drumming etc.
- Some instruments may provide better sensory stimulation through vibration or other feedback than others, ask child which they prefer to use.

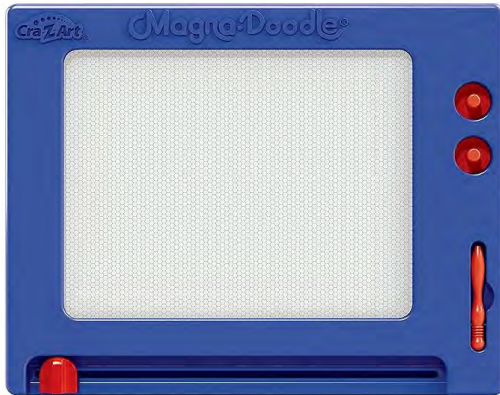
Children with sensory processing difficulties

- Allow child to move away to a quieter space if they appear bothered by the noise of the instruments.
- Provide noise cancelling earmuffs if available.

<p>Use in a group activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage children to play instruments in a group using familiar songs or making up their own songs. 	<p>Make it yourself</p> <p>Look around at the materials or items available locally to see what you can use to make “instruments” for children to make noise and music.</p>
	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make shakers out of clean, empty drink bottles with a small amount of rice, small pebbles, seeds, etc, inside. (Picture 9) Tape lids closed so that young children cannot access the contents of the shaker. Small tins with lids also make great shakers. Make sure there are no sharp edges. (Picture 10) Use an upside-down plastic container or bucket as a drum. Use two aluminium foil food trays or frying pan covers to bang together like cymbals. Thread some beads or bells onto a string, tie ends together and shake. (Picture 11) <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Picture 9: Shaker with handle</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Picture 10: Shaker made from tin with lid</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Picture 11: Bells/rattle¹⁴</p> </div> </div>
<p>Notes</p>	

14 Picture credit: Werner, D. (1987), *Disabled Village Children: a guide for community health workers, rehabilitation workers and families*. The Hesperian Foundation.

16. Magnetic drawing board



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Physical, learning, emotional, communication, vision

What is it for?

The magnetic drawing board allows children to develop their drawing and writing skills. This is important for communication, expressing emotions and imagination. It also helps them develop control of their hand and fingers.

Boards like these are great for children who lack confidence in their drawing or writing skills and like being able to easily erase their work.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Position the drawing board on a table within easy reach of the child.
- It may help to place something under the top of the board so it is positioned at an angle.
- Use the non-slip placemat (item 27) to stop board moving around.
- Use universal cuff (item 26) if needed to help child hold pen.



Children with difficulty thinking or learning

- Draw a simple shape on the board (e.g., circle, square, triangle) and get child to copy.
- Provide some simple pictures to give them ideas of what they could draw.
- Give verbal prompts to help them break down the steps of drawing what they want to draw. For example, drawing a person "What does a person need? Do they need a head? OK, draw a head. What else do they need?"

Children with difficulty seeing

- Positioning the board at an angle (see picture) may help children who have low vision.
- Provide shapes cut out of thick cardboard for them to trace around.
- Provide alternative multisensory drawing options, for example drawing in shaving cream or sand using the sensory play tray (item 17).

Make it yourself

- Fill a shallow tray about 30 cm x 25 cm with approximately 1 cm of sand.
- Use a stick or finger to draw or write in the sand.
- Smooth out sand to erase drawings.

Notes

17. Sensory play tray



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Emotional, learning, physical, social

What is it for?

The sensory play tray is included in the kit for activities that provide stimulation of touch. Tactile sensory play is important for all children's development but can be especially enjoyable for children with sensory processing difficulties who seek a lot of touch in their play, and children with difficulty seeing. Sensory play can also include some pretend play, which is helpful for children's imagination and social skills development.

How to use it:

These are some ideas of how you can use the sensory play tray.

- Water play:
 - Partly fill the container with water.
 - Use with the water/sand play kit (item 18) or provide some plastic containers or other toys for children to play with.
 - Pretend to bath dolls, pour drinks, stir food, play boats, etc.
 - Add some bubbles or food colouring to provide additional visual stimulation.
- Sand play:
 - Fill the bottom of the tray with clean, dry sand to approximately 30 mm depth.
 - Use with the water/sand play kit (item 18).
 - Use with vehicle toys.
 - Hide small toys in the sand for children to find.
- Shredded paper:
 - Fill the tray with paper (e.g., newspaper) that has been torn up into small pieces.
 - Hide small toys in the paper for children to find. Encourage them to find toys just by feeling, without using their eyes.
- Leaves:
 - Fill the tray with lots of dry leaves or other dry natural material available in your area.
- Shaving foam: (substitute a mix of cornflour and water)
 - Squirt some shaving cream into the bottom of the tray.
 - Children can use their hands to spread the cream around and draw pictures in it.
 - Some children may prefer to use a stick or sponge or paint brush or other tool instead of their hands.

Make it yourself

- Use any available container suitable for containing sensory play activities. Ensure the sides are not too high so that young children can reach in easily to play.

Notes

18. Water/sand play kit



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: physical, learning, social, sensory processing

What is it for?

These water or sand play tools are for use with sensory play activities outdoors or indoors using the sensory play tray (item 17). Water and sand play provides tactile sensory experience while also allowing children to use their imagination and play individually or in small groups.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Consider how to position the child so they can easily reach into the water or sand tray. If they are in a wheelchair, place the tray on a table or other raised surface.
- Wrap cloth around the handles of tools to make them bigger to hold onto.
- Use universal cuffs (item 26) to help them hold onto tools.

Children with difficulty thinking or learning

- Demonstrate simple actions the child can do when playing with sand or water, or other sensory play.
- Prompt them to look at what other children are doing and try copying them.

Children with difficulty seeing

- Take time to introduce the child to the sensory play activities, allowing them to feel the different textures and tools.
- Provides co-active assistance to help them understand how they can use the tools.

Use in a group activity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage small groups of children to play together, taking turns and helping each other.	Make it yourself <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look around for everyday objects that can be used for water, sand and other sensory play activities. These might include plastic cups or water bottles, spoons, bottle caps, small cooking pots or utensils.
Notes	

19. Bubble blowing kit



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Social, emotional, vision

What is it for?

Blowing bubbles for children to watch, pop and catch can be a fun, simple way to play with individual children or in a group. Watching and popping bubbles can be calming for some children who are upset or overstimulated. For children who have difficulty focusing it can be a good way to get their attention.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Make sure you are blowing the bubbles close enough to the child to be able to see them and try to reach them to pop the bubbles.
- Provide co-active support to help them pop the bubbles.

Children with difficulty seeing

- Allow the child to feel the bubble wand and describe to them what you are doing when blowing bubbles.
- Guide their hand to bubbles to help them to pop them.

Children with sensory processing difficulties (seeking or avoiding)

- Watching bubbles can be helpful to calm sensory avoiding children who are overwhelmed by sensory input, or sensory seeking children who have difficulty focusing and being still.
- Take the bubble mixture and wand near to the child, get down to their level and quietly blow some bubbles to get their attention. Repeat blowing bubbles for several minutes while they watch until they are calm enough to try to encourage to participate in other activities.

Children under 3 years

Young children will like watching bubbles and may try to pop them. For children who are not yet walking play with bubbles seated on the floor.

Make it yourself

- You can make bubble mixture yourself:
 - Mix ½ cup dish soap, 1 ½ cups water, and 2 teaspoons of sugar.
 - Mix gently, don't shake.
- A local alternative in the Philippines:
 - Crush the gumamela (hibiscus) flower until sticky juices come out and mix with water.
 - Use the fibre from the coconut leaf to make the wand, or hollow papaya stalks to use as a straw for blowing bubbles.

Notes

20. Fidget tools



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: emotional, sensory processing

What is it for?

Fidget tools can be used to provide touch, vision or auditory stimulation. This can be helpful for children with sensory processing difficulties who seek more of this type of information than other children or for children who are anxious or worried. By using these tools, they may feel more calm and be able to sit still and focus on other activities, like listening to a story.

How to use it with:

Children with sensory processing difficulties:

- Make sure the fidget tools are available for children with sensory processing difficulties whenever they need them.
- Keep them in a place that they know where to find them.
- During group activities, such as story time, if a child has difficulty sitting still or focusing on the story offer the child a sensory tool to fidget with while they are listening.

Children with difficulty moving:

- Try to ensure the fidget tools are kept in a location that can be accessed by all children, including those with movement difficulties.
- If you notice a child with movement difficulties appears anxious or is having difficulty focusing, offer to get them the fidget tools.

Children with difficulty seeing:

- Make sure children are aware that these items are available and where to find them for when needed.
- Describe the items to them.
- Provide them with the opportunity feel the different fidget tools to understand how they work.

Make it yourself

- Many everyday items can be used as sensory tools. Try putting together your own kit using the suggestions below.
 - Strips of different fabrics.
 - Rubber bands.
 - Thread some beads onto a string and tie in a loop.
 - Bubble wrap from packaging.
 - Fill a balloon (not inflated) or small bag with dry rice and tie end to secure tightly to make a “stress ball” to fidget with.

Notes

21. Emotions flash cards



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Learning, social, emotional, communication

What is it for?

Emotions flash cards are useful for helping young children learn about different feelings or emotions, and to help them identify and express their own feelings.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Place cards in a single layer on surface in front of child so they can see them all.
- Provide physical assistance for child to pick up and hold cards as needed.

Children with difficulty thinking or learning

- Keep words clear and simple when talking about feelings and provide easy to understand examples.

Children with difficulty seeing

- Add tactile elements to differentiate between different feelings on the different cards, e.g., dot = happy, cross = sad.
- Take time to describe the pictures on cards.

Use in a group activity:

- Get children to take turns to pick a card and identify the emotion shown on the card. As a group, discuss what things make you feel that way.
- When reading books, get children to use the cards to identify how the characters are feeling.

Make it yourself

- Draw a series of faces showing different emotions or cut out pictures from magazines.
- Glue each face onto a separate piece of cardboard.
- If you wish to join the cards together, punch a hole in the top left corner of each card, thread some string through and tie cards together with a knot.

Notes

22. Educational flash cards



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Learning, social, communication, vision

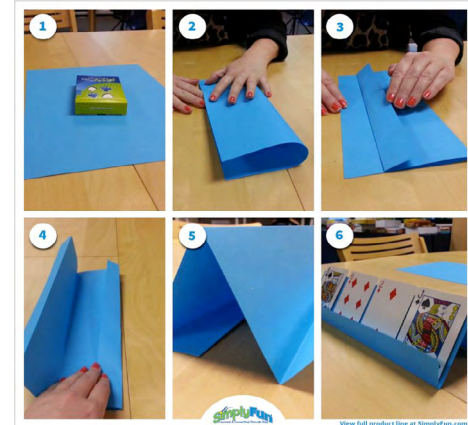
What is it for?

Educational flash cards can be used to help children learn about concepts such as numbers, colours and names of everyday objects. Cards can help with developing communication skills by learning new words or describing what is on each card. Cards with bright colours or black and white contrast also provide great visual stimulation for babies.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Place cards in a single layer on surface in front of child so they can see them all.
- Provide physical assistance for child to pick up and hold cards as needed.
- Make a card holder out of a sheet of paper as shown in Picture 12.



Picture 12: Card holder made from paper

Children with difficulty thinking or learning

- Use a small number of cards at a time.
- Use examples from the immediate environment around the child to help them understand concepts on the card. E.g., For colours, help them find things in the room that are the same colour as the colour on the card.

Children with difficulty seeing

- Use cards with clear contrasting colours.
- Allow child to hold card closer or further to help them see best.
- Add tactile elements to cards by gluing fabric, cardboard, sandpaper or other textured materials to the cards pictures that add meaning to the pictures. E.g., add some soft fabric for a dog, feathers for a bird.
- Describe the pictures on each page as you read the book.

Children under 3 years

- Position cards so babies lying on their stomach or back can look at pictures.

Make it yourself

- Draw pictures suitable for young children, get children to draw pictures or cut out pictures from a magazine.
- Glue each picture onto separate thick pieces of thick cardboard (e.g., from packaging cartons).
- Add tactile elements to pictures using fabrics or other available materials.

Notes

23. Communication cards



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Communication, learning

What is it for?

Communication cards are a set of pictures of everyday activities or simple instructions (e.g., stop, go, yes, no). They are used as a visual support to help children communicate their needs, or for you to communicate with them.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty communicating

- Have the cards in an accessible place so that children can access them when needed.
- You may want to have some of the cards pinned onto a wall, at a height that children can reach and point to them. For example, a child who is hungry might go to the wall and point to the picture for 'eat'.
- Show them the cards so that they know where they are and what is included.
- Use the cards to prompt or ask the child about their needs. For example, you might show them the toilet card and ask, "do you need the toilet?"

Children with difficulty moving

- If the child also has difficulty communicating, make sure the cards are within reach.
- It may be helpful to have some key cards stuck to the table top where they are playing or on their wheelchair tray for them to point to when needed.

Children with difficulty seeing

- Use cards with clear contrasting colours.
- Add tactile elements to differentiate between different cards.
- Enlarge pictures if possible.

Make it yourself

- Draw pictures of key everyday activities or instructions, for example toilet, eat, drink, yes, no, home, outside, sleep.
- Glue each picture onto separate thick pieces of thick cardboard (e.g., from packaging cartons).

Notes

24. Visual schedule



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Communication, social

What is it for?

Visual schedules use pictures to help children understand the order of activities or what is going to happen during the day. They help children to know what to expect, which can make them feel more calm and in control. This is particularly useful for children who are anxious or who have difficulty coping with changes in routine.

How to use it:

- You can use the visual schedule for an individual child or you may use it with the whole group to show them the programme for the day.
- For using with an individual:
 - Select pictures that correspond to the main activities the child is going to be doing. E.g., puzzles, read a book, snack time, outside play, go home.
 - Place the picture in order on the schedule board.
 - As each activity is completed, remove the corresponding picture from the schedule.
- For using with a group:
 - Select the pictures that show main activities for your group programme
 - For example, inside play, snack, read a book, outside play, singing, go home.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Ensure the schedule is accessible to where the child is playing.

Children with difficulty thinking or learning

- For some children with difficulty focusing on several steps at once you may need to limit the number of pictures to just two or three, and then add the next ones after the first ones have been completed.

Children with difficulty seeing

- Use objects instead of pictures and place them in order of the activities in a place that the child can access and feel them (and other children know not to touch).
- For example, you could use a block for inside play, a hat for outside play, a bowl for snack time.

Make it yourself

- Visual schedules are often made by teachers, parents or therapists who work with children. They are easy to make and individualise to suit your needs.
- Draw, print or cut out pictures that show the activities needed.
- Glue these onto separate pieces of card.
- Have one larger piece of thick card that can be the board.
- Use Velcro, doubled over tape, mounting putty (e.g., Blu Tack) or other fastener to arrange the cards onto the board.

Notes

25.Noise cancelling earmuffs



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Emotional, sensory processing

What is it for?

Noise cancelling earmuffs are useful for children who are overwhelmed or upset by noise and can help them feel calm and able to focus. They can be used to help children join in activities with or near other children by reducing the noise they experience.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- If a child with movement difficulties also has a sensitivity to noise, you may need to help them take the earmuffs on/off.

Children with sensory processing difficulties

- Offer the earmuffs to children who appear to be sensitive to noise if it is impacting on their ability to play and participate (e.g., covering their ears, playing away from others, becoming upset by noise).
- Be aware that they may not like the feel of the earmuffs, especially if they have never used anything like this before. You may need to offer them a few times before they are willing to use them.
- Some children with noise sensitivity will not want to use them, that is ok.

Use in a group activity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow children with noise sensitivity to use earmuffs as needed during group activities such as singing, dancing or story time.	Make it yourself <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You can try tying some fabric in a band around a child's forehead and tying at the back, making sure it covers their ears. Ensure it is firm enough to stay in place but not too tight.
Notes	

26. Universal cuff



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Physical

What is it for?

Universal cuffs are used to help children who have a physical impairment that prevents them from holding objects to be able to hold and manipulate objects for play or other everyday activities, such as eating.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Select the correct size universal cuff to fit the child's hand.
- Place the cuff over the handle of the toy or object.
- Assist the child to position their 4 fingers under the cuff and wrapped around the handle (see picture).
- Their thumb should remain outside the cuff and wrap around the handle in the opposite direction to their fingers.
- You can also use the cuff around a child's wrist.
- Ensure cuffs are not too tight. If the colour of the child's hand or fingers change colour remove it straight away.



Make it yourself

- You can make similar “cuffs” using strips of fabric or even folded tape as shown in the pictures below.



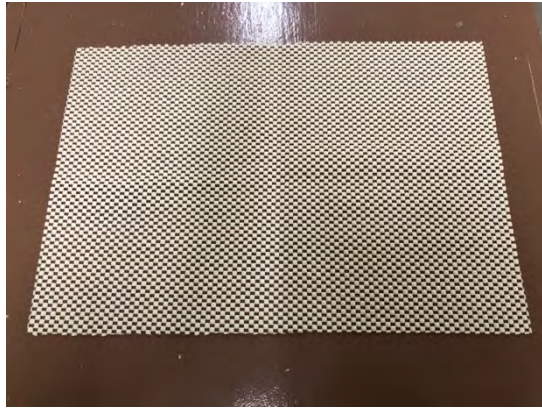
Picture 13: Handles or “cuffs” made from folded tape and woven fabric strips¹⁵

- For smaller items (e.g., pen, drumming sticks) you can tie a piece of elastic or use a large rubber band positioned over the back of the child’s hand and attached at each end to the item.

Notes

¹⁵ Picture credit: Veerman, A. & Christianen, C. Making toys by yourself using low-cost and waste materials. Holy Family Center, Monze Zambia & Enablement.

27. Non-slip placemats



Under 3 years 3-6 years

Skills supported: Physical, vision

What is it for?

Non-slip mats can be used to stop toys or other objects (e.g., bowl when eating) from moving around. This is helpful for children with difficulties controlling the movements of their arms and hands. The mats can also be used to provide a contrasting plain background for children with vision impairment.

How to use it with:

Children with difficulty moving

- Place a nonslip placemat on a tabletop or other flat surface (e.g., wheelchair tray) and place toy or other items on top of the placemat.
- Observe to check that the placemat does not prevent the child from playing. There may be occasions when it is more helpful for them to be able to easily slide items around on the tabletop.

Children with difficulty thinking or learning

- For children with difficulty keeping their attention on one activity at a time, you can use a placemat as a visual cue to show them which things to focus on, placing only what is needed for an activity on the mat.

Children with difficulty seeing

- Ensure placemat is a plain colour, white or black if possible.
- Place a placemat under play items to provide visual contrast so child can see items more easily. Ensure items are not the same colour as the mat.

Make it yourself

- Look for materials available in your context that could be used as a non-slip mat.
- Try to choose plain colours without patterns.
- A small plain coloured towel may provide some resistant to items slipping and contrast for vision impairment.

Notes



Activities without toys

In this section there are some common activities that can be done as a group without needing toys, and some suggestions of how to adapt them for children with disabilities.

There are more activity suggestions in the ECD Kit for Emergencies: Activity Guide (see link under 'Further Resources' at the end of this guidance).

1. Story telling

- Encourage children to make up stories using their imagination or retell familiar stories.
- Choose a topic or ask one of the children to choose a topic and as a group make up a story about that topic, taking turns to say a sentence each.

How to adapt the activity

Children with difficulty seeing

- Use tactile objects that relate to the story for children to touch and feel.

Children with difficulty hearing

- Use objects and communication cards or pictures to help children with difficulty hearing to follow the story or tell their story.
- Make sure they can see the face of anyone who is speaking.
- Encourage children to use gestures with their hands and body movements to act out the story.

2. Singing

- Sing songs together as a group.
- Use actions to include movement in your singing activities.

How to adapt the activity

Children with difficulty hearing or communicating

- Use visual aids such as pictures, objects to support children with difficulty hearing to understand what the song is about.
- Make sure they are looking at you when using actions to the words of the songs and encourage them to copy you.

Children with difficulty seeing

- Describe any actions to songs for children with difficulty seeing to know what the actions are.
- Provide physical assistance to help them learn the actions if needed.

Children with difficulty moving

- Adjust the speed or tempo of actions to be slower for children who need more time to copy them.
- Choose actions that can be performed sitting down.

Children with sensory processing difficulties

- Allow children who are sensitive to noise to move away from the group while singing if they wish.
- Encourage them to try using the noise cancelling earmuffs.
- Singing softly may encourage children with noise sensitivities to participate.

3. Dancing

- Play music using the musical instruments from the kit, from a mobile phone or radio, or make your own music by clapping hands or drumming sticks on a surface.
- Encourage children to dance freely to the rhythm.

How to adapt the activity

Children with difficulty moving

- Make sure child is positioned so that they are included and not separate from other children.
- Encourage participation based on the child's ability, such as from a seated position, using assistive products for support or only moving some parts of their body or using facial expression.

Children with difficulty hearing

- Let them know that there is music playing and whether it is fast or slow.
- If using music from a mobile phone, you can show them the phone to see what the music is.
- Encourage them to join in and copy other children's dancing.

Children with difficulty seeing

- Ensure dance space is clear of any obstacles and advise other children to be mindful of not bumping into child with difficulty seeing.
- The child may like to dance with a partner to assist them within the group.
- You could provide a mat or other tactile marking on the floor to provide a guide of the area to stay within while dancing.

Children with sensory processing difficulties

- Play music with different tempos (faster or slower) and styles to accommodate different sensory preferences.
- Encourage dancing for movement seekers.
- Allow sensory avoiders to sit nearby and watch if they prefer or to use noise cancelling earmuffs while dancing.

4. Outdoor exploration

- Take children outside (Note: only if there is an area that is safe and secure).
- Encourage children to explore nature, for example looking at plants, searching for insects, collect leaves and seed pods, looking at the shapes of clouds.
- Use materials found outside like sticks, stones, leaves or flowers to create pictures.

How to adapt the activity

Pairing children up in a buddy system to assist each other may be helpful for all children, and children with disabilities in particular when doing an outdoor exploration activity.

Children with difficulty moving

- Use an outdoor space that is accessible for children with balance and movement difficulties, including those using wheelchairs or other mobility products.
- Assist where needed to move over uneven surfaces to access items of interest.

Children with difficulty seeing

- Have a child buddy or adult assist the child to move safely around the outdoor area.
- Describe the surroundings and assist them to feel the textures in nature such as tree trunks, leaves, rocks, seeds.
- Encourage them to use their sense of hearing, smell and touch.

5. Obstacle courses

- Obstacle courses involve a series of movement activities set up one after the other. They are great for helping children develop movement skills and providing sensory input.
- Obstacle courses can involve all sorts of movements such as jumping, crawling, rolling, throwing, balancing, and anything else you can think of.
- You can do them indoors or outdoors and use furniture or objects you already have.
- Choose 4 or 5 activities and put them together as a circuit.
- For example:
 - Crawling over a 'mountain' of cushions.
 - Jumping with feet together from one circle drawn on the ground to another (use tape to mark circles on the floor inside).
 - Scatter leaves on the ground and pretend they are stepping stones across a river for children to get from one side to another.
 - Use some rope or string along the ground or floor for children to walk along trying to 'balance'.
 - Crawl through a tunnel made from a large cardboard box or a table with a cloth draped over it.
 - Scatter leaves or scrunched up pieces of paper on the ground or floor and children have to move between them without touching them.

How to adapt the activity

Children with difficulty moving

- Create obstacle courses that can be completed in different ways. For example, crawling, bottom-shuffling, walking with support.

Children with difficulty seeing

- Use brightly coloured markers or textured mats to assist children with difficulty seeing to find their way through the obstacle course.
- Guide the child individually through each stage of the obstacle course, describing each stage or obstacle and assisting them to complete them. Once they are oriented to the course allow them to try on their own if they wish but provide close supervision and offer assistance, when needed.
- Have the child complete the course with a buddy to help each other.

6. Simon Says

- This is a common game that encourages listening and following instructions. It may be known by a different name in your context.
- One child is the leader (Simon) and gives instructions of actions for the other children to follow by saying, for example, “Simon Says clap your hands”. The children must only follow the instruction if it starts with “Simon Says...”
- The game continues with the leader giving instructions, but on some occasions gives an instruction without first saying “Simon Says”. If any children still follow the instruction, they sit out of the game.
- The game continues until only one child remains.

How to adapt the activity

Children with difficulty moving

- Adapt actions to suit different movement abilities, for example movements that can be done sitting down, or allow arm movements in place of leg movements, etc.

Children with difficulty seeing

- Ask the leader to clearly describe the actions to do as well as demonstrate them.

Children with difficulty hearing

- Make sure the child can see the leader when they are demonstrating the actions to do.

Children with difficulty thinking or learning

- Allow enough time for children to process and understand instructions before moving onto the next action.

Further Resources



The importance of play

- Learning through play (UNICEF & The Lego Foundation)
<https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2018-12/UNICEF-Lego-Foundation-Learning-through-Play.pdf>
- Why play is important for children 0 to 8 years (Raising Children Network)
<https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/first-1000-days/play/why-play-is-important>

Early Childhood Development in Emergencies

- ECD Kit for Emergencies: Activity Guide (UNICEF)
<https://www.unicef.org/supply/documents/activity-guide-early-childhood-development-eed-kit>
- Links to a range of UNICEF resources to support ECD in emergencies programming
<https://www.unicef.org/early-childhood-development-emergencies>

Inclusion of children with disabilities in ECD activities

- Additional guidance on including children with disabilities: Early Childhood Development (UNICEF)
<https://www.unicef.org/supply/documents/guidance-including-children-disabilities-education-kit-handbook>
- Learning through play for children with cerebral palsy (Physiopedia)
https://www.physio-pedia.com/Learning_Through_Play_with_Cerebral_Palsy

Making toys using locally available materials

- Making toys by yourself using low-cost and waste materials (Enablement)
<https://enablement.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Final-Photobook.pdf>
- Disabled Village Children – Chapter 49 A children’s workshop for making toys (Hesperian Foundation)
<https://www.dinf.ne.jp/doc/english/global/david/dwe002/dwe00251.html#part2chap49>
- Adapting toys and materials to meet a variety of needs (Wisconsin Department of Children and Families)
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/ys-2019-20/adapting-toys.pdf>
- Homemade toys and free activities for children (Raising Children Network)
<https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/first-1000-days/play/homemade-toys>
- 10 Playful activities for children with disabilities (UNICEF)
<https://www.unicef.org/parenting/child-care/10-playful-educational-activities-children-disabilities>



© UNICEF Philippines/2024/RSalvador



© UNICEF Philippines/2024/RSalvador

Disclaimer: Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers.

UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office

19 Phra Atit Road Bangkok 10200 Thailand

Tel: (66 2) 356-9499

Fax: (66 2) 280-3563

E-mail: eapro@unicef.org

www.unicef.org/eap/

unicef 
for every child