

Parenting

Module: Importance of Play



Help a Child (HAC) is a Christian, child-focused development organization working with local Partners in Asia and Africa. The Head-office is based in the Netherlands where the organization is known under the name Red een Kind (REK). Help a Child wants every child to have a loving and dignified existence and a promising future.

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Developed by Monique Peters (student Ecological Pedagogy, University of Applied Sciences)
Supervised by the Child Development Office, Help a Child, The Netherlands

For more information, please contact Help a Child

P.O. Box 40169

8004 DD Zwolle

The Netherlands

Phone: +3138 460 4648

Mail: childdevelopment@redeenkind.nl

Web: www.redeenkind.nl or www.helpachild.org

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| Information for the Facilitator

Goal of the Module: making parents aware of the importance of play, getting a clear view of the play development of children and finding a way to interact with children during play.

Introduction to the theme

Play is a very important part of the development of children. It is so important that it has been recognized by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights as a right of every child. Every child deserves the opportunity to develop to their unique potential. During play children will learn about the world around them. Besides having fun, play has even more features. These are the following:

- Play offers relaxation for children. Playing gives children pleasure and this will lead to relaxation and laughter which is very healthy for the brain, the body and general wellbeing of the child.
- Play helps children process feelings and desires. But it will also help processing traumatic events. An example is the loss of a loved one or the severe illness of a family member. But also just events in the daily life of a child will be processed by play. This is often done through role play or fantasy play. Parents can help and support their children during this process.
- Encourage and practice of the gross and fine motor skills. During play children are moving this is good for the physical development.
- Self-realization. When a child is playing, the child can show who he/she is and what he wants. Play helps children to give messages to others in a safe way.
- Play is a way of communication. Children are sometimes not really good in talking about their emotions. During play, children can communicate with their parents and making their attend of their feelings in an easier way.
- Play stimulates the social skills of a child: working together with others and practice behavior.

Play is essential to development because it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social and emotional well-being of children and youth. These are the three different development components:

1. Cognitive development. Process of learning. Experiencing and exploring the environment.

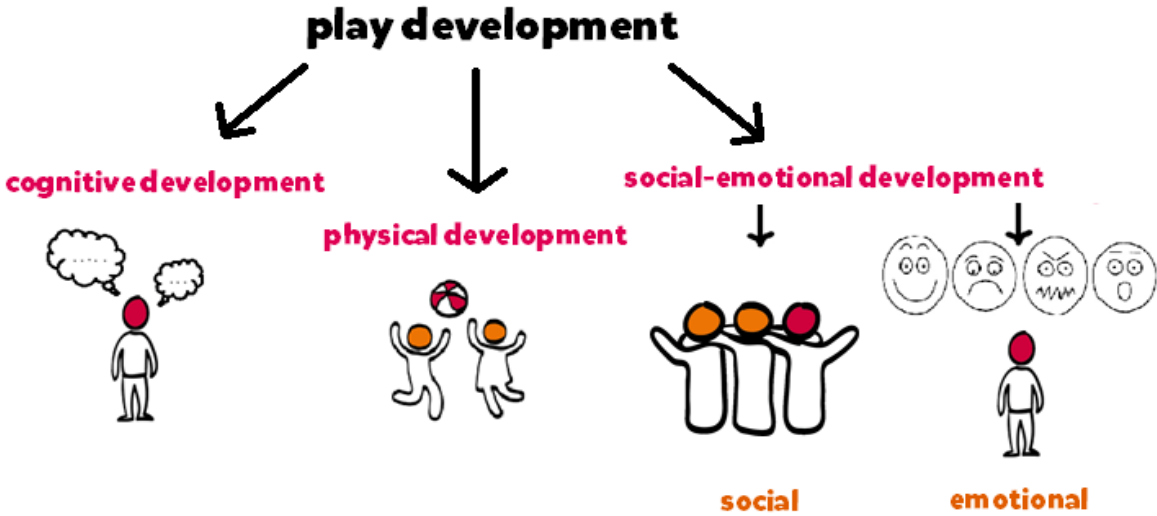
2. Physical development. Gross motor skills: running, jumping, hide and seek and building towers. Fine motor skills: puzzling, drawing and playing with sand.

3. Social and emotional development. Playing together with your child. Making friends to play with and learning how to play together.

Every age group has their own development phases, types of play and play materials. The age groups can be divided in the following groups:

0-3 years	3-6 years	6-12 years
<p><i>Types of play:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play with own body (hands and feet) • Rolling and crawling • Moving in the area/exploring the environment • Climbing 	<p><i>Types of play:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fantasy play • Develop creativity • Role play • Construction play • Rule games • Playing together with other children 	<p><i>Types of play:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop cognition • Reality play • Learning about winning and losing • Search for limits/boundaries and adventure
<p><i>Play materials:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rattle and soft materials • Household materials • Cubes 	<p><i>Play materials:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dolls and cars • Sand or mud • Paint 	<p><i>Play materials:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport (football etc.) • Rule games

The last part about the subject ‘play’ what is really important to mention, is the importance of the interaction between parent and child during play. When parents observe their children in play or join with them in child-driven play, they are given a unique opportunity to see the world from their child’s point of view, as the child navigates a world perfectly created just to fit his or her needs. The interactions that occur through play tell children that parents are fully paying attention to them and help to build enduring relationships. Parents who have the opportunity to glimpse into their children’s world learn to communicate more effectively with their children and are given another setting to offer gentle, nurturing guidance. Less verbal children may be able to express their views, experiences, and even frustrations through play, allowing their parents an opportunity to gain a fuller understanding of their perspective. Quite simply, play offers parents a wonderful opportunity to engage fully with their children.



Important to know

There are some exercises in the sessions that need some preparations. Be sure you know what to do during the complete session and prepare well.

Session build up

Session Title	Content of the session
1. Let's start	Brainstorming about play, why is playing so important for children. Sharing own childhood experiences about playing. Learning about the children, what are their talents and what do they like to play with.
2. Importance of play	Zooming in into the importance of play, the different development stages and the functions of playing.
3. Age groups	Play development, types of play and play materials.
4. Interaction during play	Becoming aware why interaction between parents and children is so important during play. Tips how parents can participate in playing with their children and discovering how parents can support their children in their play development.
5. Let's be creative (optional)	Making play materials of random stuff.

Session 1: Let's start

Goal: Getting a clear view on what is play and share own childhood experiences

Materials: Flipcharts and markers

Duration: About 2 hours



| Introduction for the Facilitator

Introduction to the theme

As a parent, it is good to know about the importance of play and the play development of your children. Therefore it is good to know the basics. What is play? And why is play so important for children? In this session you will look back at the childhood of the participants of this session. What did they like about play and what types of play did they do? After this a clear and global view is provided about what play is and why play is so important.

Play is a very important part of the development of children. It is so important that it has been recognized by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights as a right of every child. Every child deserves the opportunity to develop to their unique potential. During play children will learn the world around them. Besides having fun, play has even more features. These are the following:

- Play offers relaxation for children. Playing gives children pleasure and this will lead to relaxation.
- Play helps children process feelings and desires. But it will also help processing traumatic events. An example is the loss of a loved one or the illness of a family member. But also just events in the daily life of a child will process by play. This is often done through role play or fantasy play. Parents can help and support their children during this process.
- Encourage and practice of the gross and fine motor skills. During play children are moving this is good for the physical development.
- Self-realization. When a child is playing, the child can show who he/she is and what he wants. Play helps children to give messages to others in a safe way.
- Play is a way of communication. Children are sometimes not really good in talking about their emotions. During play, children can communicate with their parents and making their attend of their feelings in an easier way.
- Play stimulates the social skills of a child.

Important to know

Prepare this session well. Make sure you can explain what play is and why play is so important, practice it before you will do it in the group.

| Exercises

Welcome

This is our first session of the module Importance of Play, from the Parenting series. In this module, we will look at the importance of play. Why is play so important? How do children develop during play? What kind of types of play are there? What kind of play materials fits at what age group? How can you interact with your children during play and how can you support your children? Those are important subjects we will talk about in the upcoming sessions. We will also take time to talk about our own childhood experiences, because this can help us to recognize what we liked to play in the past. It is good for the children in our community (mention the name of the community) when we know more about importance of play and more about interact during their play. So they can develop well and continue and empower our community!

Before we really start, let's talk through our basic rules again to refresh. What is important to make sure the sessions will go on smoothly?

- Be there at every session. If you are not able to come, make sure people know and will inform you about what happened.
- *(Bring up the rules you set up with the group at the very first gathering)*

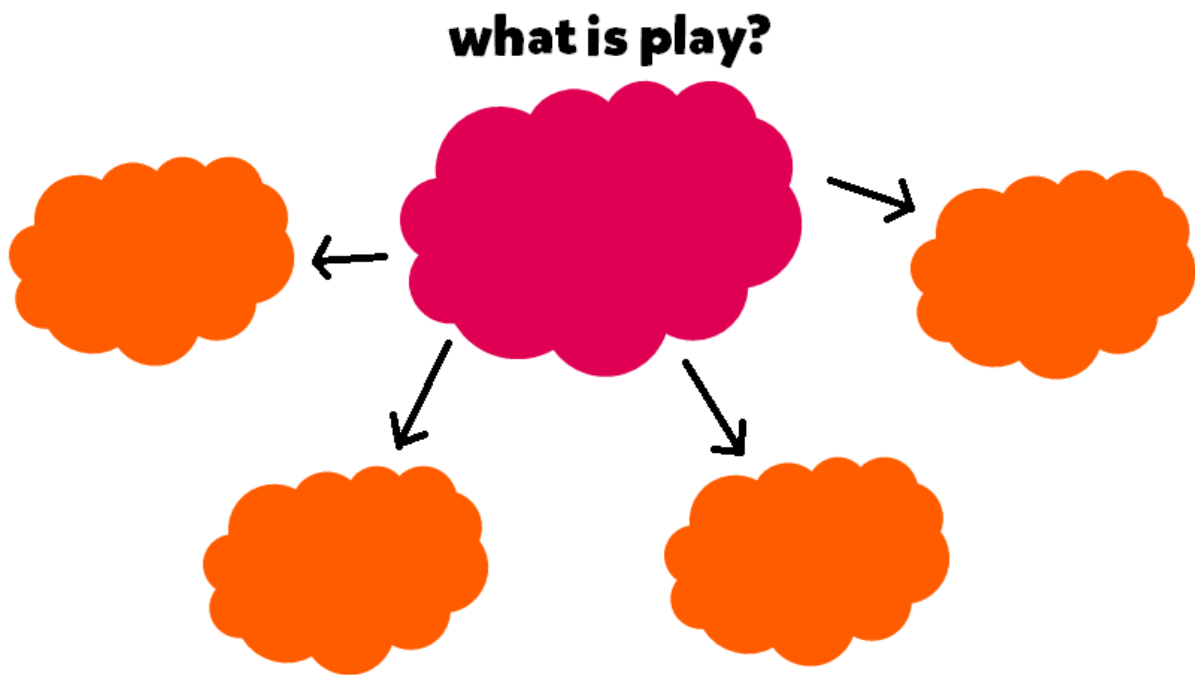
Ok, now that we all know again what is being expected, we can really start.



Exercise 1: Making a mind-map

Time: about 30 minutes

1. Split up in small groups of max. 5 persons in each group. Make sure every group has at least 1 person who can write.
2. Give every group a big paper and a marker.
3. Every group makes their own mind-map (see example, picture 1) about the question 'what is play'? Everybody can use their own perception. For example they can write down words about play or make a drawing about play. What are the first things you think about when you hear the word 'play'?
4. How are you making a mind-map? First write in the middle the question 'what is play?'.
5. Around this question, write down all the words when you think about play.
6. This is making a mind-map. You create a web of words about play.
7. Gather together after 20 minutes.
8. Let every group show their mind-map and tell what they have written down.



Picture 1: mind-map

Feedback to the group

Well, this was the first activity. I think there were a lot of good things written down in the mind-map. Maybe some of you have used your own childhood experiences to fill in the mind-map. This knowledge will be useful in the next exercise but first I would like to share a little piece of theory about what play is.

In the literature play is written down as:

Play is a spontaneous and active process in which, feeling and doing can flourish, when we play we are freed to be inventive and creative. In play, everything is possible with reality often disregarded and imagination and free-flow thinking taking precedence. Play is a highly creative process, using body and mind. It is flexible and often free from externally imposed goals.



Exercise 2: Experience our own childhood

Time: 40 minutes

1. Split up again in small groups of max. 5 persons in each group. The groups can be different than in the first exercise. Groups do not have to be the same all the time.
2. Let the groups talk about their own childhood. Let each member of the group tell to the group what he/she liked in playing, what kind of different games did he/she do in their childhood, what kind of play materials he/she played with, other stories about playing in their childhood.
3. Gather together after 30 minutes.

4. Let every group tell what was striking about the stories everyone told. Ask if someone wants to share something about what is told in the groups. When they don't want to share, that is also fine, maybe you can share a story of your own childhood.

Feedback to the group

Thank you all for the beautiful stories everyone told. I think it helped to think back at our own childhood and now empathy the thoughts and behaviour of our own children.



Exercise 3: True or false

Time: 20 minutes

1. This exercise is with the complete group.
2. Tell the group that the following exercise is 'true or false'. Make one side of the room/space 'true', the other side 'false'. The participants stand in the middle, while you are reading the statement. You will read a statement about the importance of play. The group members have to decide which side to choose. Everyone can choose their own side.
3. After everyone has chosen a side, you will ask why someone has chosen true or false. Try to create a bit of a discussion about the statement. Why some has chosen true and another person has chosen false.
4. After the small discussion you tell the right answer.
5. Then you will read a new statement

Statements about the importance of play:

1. Play is a waste of time. True or False?

Feedback to the group about statement 1

False, play is a very important part of the development of children. Play stimulates children in the cognitive, physical and social-emotional development. Besides that, play has also other important influences such as: relaxation, process/deal feelings and desires, develop gross and fine motor skills, self-expression/self-confidence, communication and social behaviour.

2. Play helps children to processing problems. True or False?

Feedback to the group about statement 2

True, playing helps children to process the loss of a loved one or the illness of a family member. But also events in the daily life of a child will process by play. This is often done through role play or fantasy play.

3. Play is for all ages. True or False?

Feedback to the group about statement 3

True, every child can play. It does not matter how old a child is.

4. A child younger than one year can't play because it is too small to understand playing.
True or False?

Feedback to the group about statement 4

False, even a child younger than one year can play. It is really important because a baby discovers during play its own body. They play with own hands and feet, they use their eyes and they also learn to roll over and crawl.

5. Play for children a way of communication. True or False?

Feedback to the group about statement 5

True, children are sometimes not really good in talking about their emotions. During play children can communicate with their parents and making their attend of their feelings in an easier way.

Feedback to the group

Thanks everyone for thinking and discussing about the statements of the importance of play. I hope it provided you new insights. In the following exercise we will look deeper into this subject.



Exercise 4: The importance of play carousel

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation:

Get 6 flipcharts and write on every flipchart one main subject about the importance of play. So you have 6 flipcharts with different subjects. The subjects are:

- Relaxation
- Process/deal feelings and desires
- Develop gross and fine motor skills
- Self-expression/self-confidence
- Communication
- Social behaviour

1. Split up the group in 6 groups. Try to make groups with an equal number.
2. Give every group one of the flipchart you have written on.
3. Every group writes or draws thing one the flipchart, what they think that belong to that main subject of the importance of play.
4. After 5 minutes every group switch to another flipchart. Do this clockwise. You are the leader of the switch moments.
5. The groups can read what the other group has written or drawn.
6. They can add something else if they think it is not already written down.
7. Do this, till every group have seen all the flipcharts.
8. Close the exercise together and ask the group if they have seen striking things.

Feedback to the group

Thanks everyone for thinking and sharing about the different reasons why play is so important.

Closure

Thank you everyone for working together today. I think we have made a good start about the subject play. Now we have a better view about the importance of play and that creates a good base for the upcoming sessions when we zoom in into the different development components.

Close the gathering with a song, dance or prayer.

| Homework

For next time, I would like you to do the following at home: observe your children when they play. What are their talents? Can you observe what they like to play? What different games do they do? Watch your children and, when possible, write down, draw or remember what you see. The subject of the next gathering is the development components of play. So can use the observation material in the next gathering.



Session 2: The importance of Play

Goal: Digging deeper in the subject importance of play and get a clear view about the different development components. Also what kind of play can be organized at the development components.

Materials: Ball, sand, splash of water

Duration: About 2 hours



| Introduction for the Facilitator

Introduction to the theme

Play is essential to development because it contributes to the cognitive, physical and social-emotional development of children and youth. The three different development components will be explained:

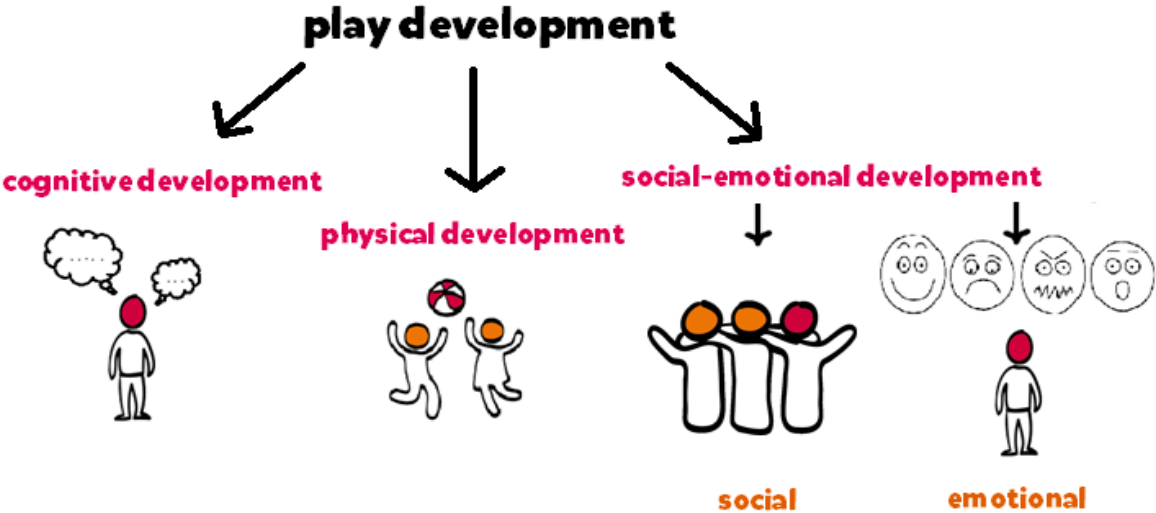
- **Cognitive development.** During play children will develop the cognitive development. Children learn to process information from their environment and re-use this information during other situations. They apply these acquired skills and knowledge at a later date. By gaining experiences while children are playing, they learn to discover things. The knowledge children discover is very important for growing up.
- **Physical development.** Physical play includes activities that use physical movements to allow children to use their energy, and gives children the chance to develop gross and fine motor skills. Physical play helps a child to develop connections between the nerve cells and the brain. Ideal physical play incorporates play with social interactions and problem solving.
- **Social-emotional development** (for more information about social-emotional development, take a look at the Parenting Module: Social Emotional Support). Social Emotional Development consists of the development of a personality, what corresponds to the expectation and behavior in the social environment. This part of the development, we can split in two parts. The social development is how children relate with peers and how they are making friends and relationships. It is focused on the interaction between a child and the environment. The emotional development lies on the child itself and his or her emotions. That means the child knows, recognizes and understands its own feelings and thoughts but also the feelings and thoughts of others, and knowing how to handle that.

Different types of play are belonging to the different development components, that can stimulate the development. In the following table you can find which type of play can be subdivided under the development components.

Cognitive development	Physical development	Social-emotional development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking, singing and telling stories • Puzzle and sorting • Playing with different materials and shapes • Imitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hopping, galloping, sliding, catching, jumping, throwing, kicking, bouncing and striking. • Sports and dance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play with peers • Play with parents • Roll play • Rule games and sharing play materials • Playing outside

Important to know

We zoom in into the development components. We will treat the three components separately in the sessions. There will be also some practical exercises too. Keep in mind that some parents may find it strange to do the practical playing. Try to explain why it is so important to experience this practical part. And that even if you are older playing can be fun and releases stress!



| Exercises

Welcome and recap

Welcome everyone! It's good to see you all again! Last time we have looked at what play is, your own childhood and the importance of playing. Today we will zoom in into the three different development components and we will look at the types of play that belong to this development components. In the following exercises there will be also a practical part, where we will experience how it is to play and develop. We closed the last gathering with a homework assignment. Let's start with looking at the outcomes. What did you see when you observed your children when they play? What talents have you discovered? What did they like to play and what are the different games that they do? Let's discuss that in the next exercise.



Exercise 1: Observing play

Time: 20 minutes

1. Gather everyone together in a circle, let them get their list with play observations (if they made it).
2. Let some participants, tell about what they observed at their children. You are the leader of the group conversation, so you give parents the turn to talk about their observation.
3. Tell them about the three development components. Tell shortly what they mean. The information can you find above. The three development components are:
 - Cognitive development
 - Physical development
 - Social-emotional development
4. Divide then the stories that have been told in the three development components. If that is hard for the group you can divide them, but tell the group in what kind of development component it belongs and why. You can also brainstorm in the group why it belongs to that development component.
5. When everybody had the chance to share and understand what the developments components are, you can close this exercise by giving a short summary about the three components.

Feedback to the group

Thank you all for sharing your observations. I think it's important to know that play is not only for fun but it helps children to develop. In the next exercise we will treat the development components separately. So we can dig a bit deeper and find out what play types will help to stimulate this development part. There will also be some practical exercises, be not afraid to

play and empathy how it feels to play as a child. It may feel a little bit strange but before we can support our children in play, we first must understand how it works.



Exercise 2: Cognitive development

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation:

This exercise is split in two parts. One part is singing and one part is thinking of a riddle. Make sure that you have enough time for both exercises.

1. Split the group in small groups of maximum 4 people.
2. Give every group an assignment to stimulate the cognitive development.
3. First let every group think about a song for children or a story/fairy tale/poem you can tell children. Ask if one group will sing the song or tell the fairy tale for the other groups.
4. The second assignment. Ask the groups to think about a play in which a child have to riddle, count or sort. Ask a group if they want to show it to the other groups.

Feedback to the group

Thank you for participating in this exercise about cognitive development. I split the cognitive development in three types of play.

1. Singing and storytelling. This type of play is really good for the cognitive development. Children learn the language and build a vocabulary.
2. Role play. In role play children will process daily events and learn so about the daily habits.
3. Puzzle and count. This type of play stimulates the brain development. It challenges children to learn during play.

I hope you see how play can stimulate the cognitive development. In session three we will look further to different kinds of play for specific age groups.





Exercise 3: Physical development

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation:

This exercise is split in two parts. One part for the gross motor and the second part for the fine motor. The first part is with a ball and the second part with the sand, water and other natural materials.

Tell before:

What is the difference between fine and gross motor skills? First let me explain what are motor skills. Motor skills are motions carried out when the brain, nervous system and muscles work together. Fine motor skills are small movements that use the small muscles of the fingers, toes, wrists, lips and tongue, such as picking up small objects and holding a spoon. Gross motor skills are the bigger movements that use the large muscles in the arms, legs, torso and feet, such as rolling over and sitting.

1. Gather together in a circle and take the ball.
2. Throw the ball to each other. Every time someone throws the ball to someone else, the person has to mention a game or activity what stimulates the gross motor. For example:
climbing, hide and seek, football. Do this till everyone has thrown the ball.
3. Gather together again in a circle and let everyone sit down. Give everybody a bit of sand and one splash of water, so together it becomes mud.
4. Give everybody also some natural material such as, twigs, pebbles and sticks.
5. Let's be creative, everyone can create something with the mud. An example of an exercise is to make your own house with the mud and materials, or maybe group wise create a map of the village.

Feedback to the group

In this exercise we have experienced how to stimulate the gross and fine motor. To throw the ball to each other we have practiced the gross motor. For children the gross motor skills are important to develop. They learn how to use their body. Also we have practiced the fine motor skills. When we played with the mud, we stimulate the fine motor. Children learn the movement of loose body parts and the eye-hand coordination.





Exercise 4: The social-emotional development car

Time: 30 minutes

Important to know

This exercise is based on trust. It is important to know that people can find it scary. First let everyone do the exercise by closing only the eyes. When you want to make the exercise a little bit more difficult you can use a blindfold.

Tell before

Social-emotional development has a lot of benefits, one of them is making friends. One of the things that friendship means, is trusting someone. This is the next assignment.

1. Let everyone make a pair. When there are fathers and mothers of the same children in the group, let them form a couple together.
2. The pairs have to stand behind each other.
3. The person in front has to close his/her eyes. The person in the back is the steering wheel of the 'car'.
4. The person can steer by tapping.
 - A tap on the left shoulder means that the first person have to go to the left.
 - A tap on the right shoulder means that the first person have to go to the right.
 - A tap in the middle means that the first person have to go straight ahead.
 - When you hold your hand in the middle of the back it means stop.
 - A double tap on the back means start.
5. Let the pairs move through the area. After 5 minutes let the couples switch position.
6. Close with sharing the experience. How was it to be the first person? Did some secretly looked? How was it to be the steering wheel?

Feedback to the group

Thanks everyone for participating in this exercise. Maybe you find it exciting or a little bit scary. But it is good to experience how it feels to trust someone.

Trust me

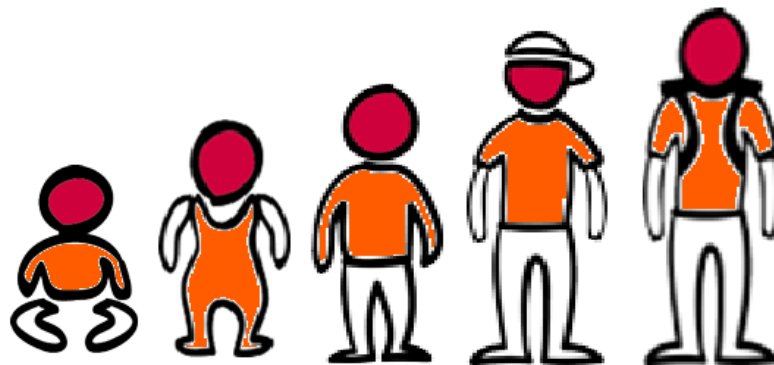
Closure

Thanks you everyone for working together today! I think it was a good practical session and we experienced games from different development components. Next time we will look to the different age-groups. What kind of play belongs to a certain age group? What kind of play material belongs to that certain age group?

Close the gathering with a song, dance or prayer.

| Homework

For next time, I would like that you bring some play materials from your children. Think about the subject we discussed today. It doesn't have to be toys (is allowed), it can also be for example a household material or a game you think of (name of a game). Try to look at different age-groups. I am very curious what you bring along.



Session 3: Age groups

Goal: Getting a clear view about the different age groups. What kind of development, type of play and play materials belong to a certain age group.

Materials: To be sure some play materials from different age groups.

Duration: About 2 hours



| Introduction for the Facilitator

Introduction to the theme

The play development of a child will be displayed in a timeline. We distinguish the following groups: 0-3 year, 3-6 years and 6-12 years.

0-3 years

In the first months a baby can't see really clear. It is important to use bright colors, because a baby can distinguish these colors. In the fourth month a baby learns to grab materials. Also a baby learns to react to sounds. You can tell stories and sing songs. When the child becomes older, it can sit on your lap. And it tries to crawl. The child likes to play on the belly, with this you can stimulate crawling. When the child is 1 year old, it tries to pull up and learns to walk. At 1,5 years old starts the motor development. In this age groups children learn to play together.

3-6 years

In this age group the imitation play starts. Children like to imitate daily events, for example mummy and daddy, cooking or driving a car. They act like it's the real world. They learn all lot of this kind of play. The self-confidence grows. Rules, structure and repeat of play is in this age group really important. In this age group the play with peers and friendships is more important.

6-12 years

In this age group changes imitation play in rule play. Children find it interesting to play rule games in peer groups. In this rule games the child learns to lose and win because there is some competition. Let children experience, experiment and work together. In this age groups children sometimes prefer to be alone. It is good that the child decides what it wants to play.

Every age group has their own development phases, types of play and play materials. The age groups can be divided in the following groups:

0-3 years	3-6 years	6-12 years
<p><i>Types of play:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play with own body (hands and feet) • Rolling and crawling • Moving in the area/exploring the environment • Climbing 	<p><i>Types of play:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fantasy play • Develop creativity • Role play • Construction play • Rule games • Playing together with other children 	<p><i>Types of play:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop cognition • Reality play • Learning about win and lose • Search for limits and adventure
<p><i>Play materials:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rattle and soft materials • Household materials • Cubes 	<p><i>Play materials:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dolls and cars • Sand or mud • Paint 	<p><i>Play materials:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport (football etc.) • Rule games

Important to know

For the homework task, the parents should bring some play materials. It could be that no one has brought play materials. Take some play material to be sure, otherwise you can't do exercise one.

Session three consists of rotation places. It is important to explain this good to group.

| Exercises

Welcome and recap

Welcome everyone! It's good to see you all again! Last time we have looked at the importance of play and the different development components. Today we will zoom in into the different age groups. You can split the age groups in three different groups. The first group is children from 0-3 years old, the second group is children from 3-6 years old and the last group is children from 6-12 years old. The homework task was to bring some play materials or household materials where children can play with. I am curious what you brought with you!



Exercise 1: Play materials

Time: 20 minutes

1. Gather everyone together in a circle.
2. Let everyone put the play materials or household materials in the middle of the circle (you can also put your own brought-in toys in the circle).
3. Mark three places in the circle and tell the group that every place is a different age group. (0-3 years, 3-6 years and 6-12 years)

4. Everyone takes one by one a play material and puts in on the age group place, wish he/she thinks it belongs.
5. Let everyone explain why they put it on that age group place. If the group thinks, it's not correct, discuss together why it wrong or right.
6. Do this till every play material is grouped in the age groups.

Feedback to the group

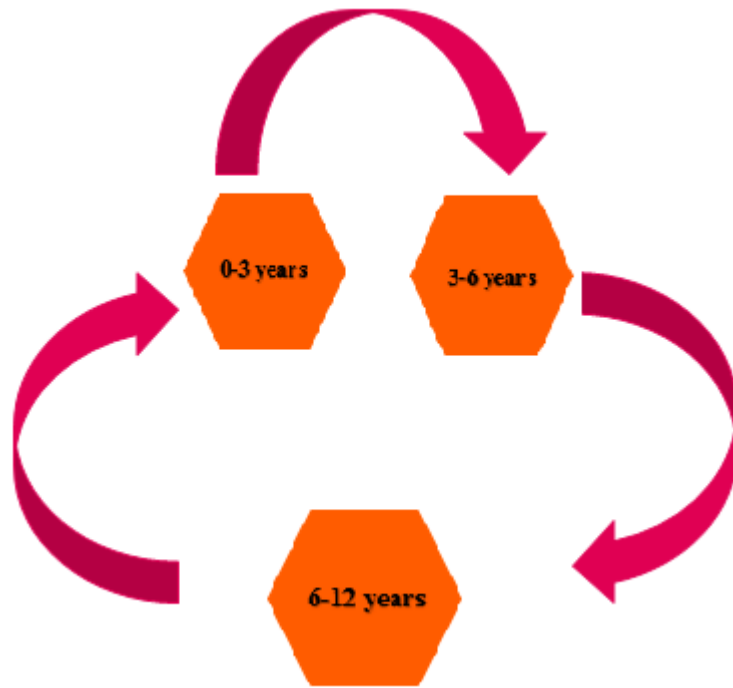
Good, thanks everyone! We will use this exercise for the next one. We have put all the toys in the right age group.



Exercise 2: Roulation places

Time: 60 minutes

1. Divide everyone across the three age groups (0-3 years, 3-6 years and 6-12 years). Make sure that every group has an equal number of people.
2. The purpose of this assignment is a roulation place. So after 20 minutes the groups switch to another place. So every group have seen all of the age group places.
3. The assignment is to look deeper to the certain age group and discuss with each other about the next questions.
 - What kind of play belongs to this age group?
 - What kind of play can you do with the play material?
 - What can you stimulate in the development with the type of play in this age group?
 - What kind of play did you do in your own childhood in this age group?
 - What can you remember about the play materials in your own childhood, share some stories?
4. You can walk around during the assignment and look if you can help, participate in the discussion or answering questions.
5. Close with a summary of things what you have heard during the assignment. Compare the outcomes of the parents. You are the leader of this conversation. Make sure that it is clear for everyone.



Feedback to the group

Thank you all for the participation in this exercise. I hope you have a clear view about the different age groups.

Examples of play materials:

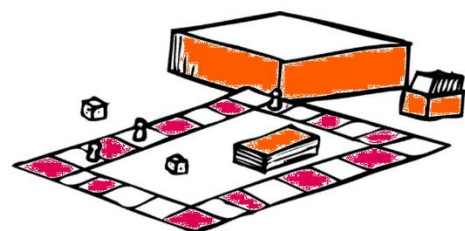
0-3 years



3-6 years



6-12 years





Exercise 3: Friendship and respect

Time: 30 minutes

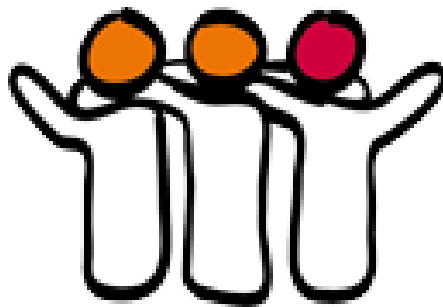
Tell before:

Friendship is one of the most important benefits of play. It causes a child to develop in the society. The child learns to deal with other personalities and learns to respect others. Also for a child it is very good to share struggles about daily life with peers. A friend can support you during difficult times. Also, friends have a positive influence for the confidence of a child.

1. Gather together in a circle. You are the leader of this group conversation.
2. Ask everyone one by one to finish this sentence.
When I think of friendship I think of
3. After a person finishes this sentence, they also may tell something about friendship in their own childhood. What was special and why was it then so important? If someone doesn't want to tell a story about the own childhood, that is fine.
4. Close with thanking everyone for sharing the importance of friendship.

Feedback to the group

Thank you for sharing your childhood experience about friendship. I hope you see the importance of develop social skills and make friends to share age-related situations and problems.



Closure

Close the gathering with a song, dance or prayer.

| Homework

In the next gathering we will talk about interaction between parents and children during play. For the next time I would like you to try interact with you children during play. For example tell them a story about you playing in your own childhood, or play something you liked to play in your own childhood with your children. In the next gathering we will discuss your experiences about this homework exercise.

Session 4: Interaction

Goal: Zooming in into interaction between children and parents during play. How to interact with children and what to do while you are playing with your children.

Materials: None

Duration: About 2 hours



| Introduction for the Facilitator

Introduction to the theme

Interaction between parents and child during play is really important. There are different reasons why it is important. Below are the following reasons:

1. Interaction during play offers a child structure, set boundaries and parents can explain questions while they are playing with their children. Playfully, daily events can be discussed.
2. Parents can stimulate during interaction the cognitive, social-emotional and physical development.
3. Interaction is good for the self-esteem of the child. The child feels safe and loved. It is also a unique opportunity to see the world of their child.
4. Interaction stimulates the relationship between parent and child. The interaction that occurs through play tells children that parents are fully paying attention to them.
5. Less verbal children can communicate with their parents during play. They are able to express their views, experiences and frustrations. Play offers parents a wonderful opportunity to engage fully with their children.

Important to know

In this session we will discuss, **why** it is so important to interact with children but also **how** you can interact with your children.



| Exercises

Welcome and recap

Welcome back everyone! Welcome to the fourth session of the module Importance of Play. In the previous sessions we discussed why play is so important, what kind of development components play stimulates and what kind of play belongs to an age. This session we will focus on the interaction between parents and child during play. Why is it so important that parents interact with children during play but also how can you interact as a parent with your children during play.



Exercise 1: Homework experiences

Time: 20 minutes

1. Split up in small groups of max. 5 persons in each group.
2. Let the groups talk about the homework assignment of the previous session. The homework assignment was to try interact during play.
3. Let the groups talk about their experience. What happened? How was the reaction of the child? How does it feel for the parent? What kind of play did you do? Did you tell something about your own childhood?
4. This is an example of questions, what can be discussed in the group conversation.
5. Walk around, maybe someone wants to ask something. Listen to the different stories.
6. Close to thank everyone for sharing the experience and maybe you can give a short summary about the different stories that you heard.

Feedback to the group

It is really good to hear that many of you tried to interact with your children during play. Sometimes it is difficult to empathy in a children's play world. It is really good for children that the parents interact during play. This is because it gives them warmth, love and safety. But it is also good for the relationship between you and your child. You can learn from each other.

There are different ways to interact with your children during play:

- Stimulate them to play and ask what they have played. Talk about it, have a little conversation or tell something about playing in your childhood.
- Learn them games, for example games what you have played in your childhood or maybe a riddle that you can remember.
- Visit the play area of your child. Give for example a compliment or mention that they are playing, take a positive approach.
- Participate during play. With younger children you can sing or tell a story to. While you are singing, you can for example tickle or rock the child. For older children it is nice to make something together, from mud or other natural materials. You can also play a rule game together.

- With teenagers the interaction is different. Teenagers like to play with friends and devote themselves more to their parents. This is normal for the puberty. It is good to show interest in their play.
-



Exercise 2: What would you do?

Time: 30 minutes

Important to know

Tell the parents that they have to pretend that one of the children in the cases is their own child.

1. Split up in small groups of max. 5 people in each group. Try that the groups are different compared with the first exercise.
2. In this exercise there will be three cases. The purpose of the exercise is to empathy in the case. Answer with the group members the following: 1. What do you think of the case? 2. What would you do in this situation? 3. Why do you choose to do this? 4. What are other options you could do?

This are the three cases:

1. Two children are playing in the sand. Another child is sitting with them but does not play with the other two children. You see that he/she wants to play with them but the children ignore him/her. *Answer the four questions in the group.*
 2. Your child is inside the house. The child is doing nothing, it wants to play but needs some stimulation. Assume first that the child is 1 year old and after assume that the child is 10 years old. *Answer the four questions in the group.*
 3. Your child is playing outside. During you are doing the household you see that your child shows an anger emotion during his/her play. He/she looks very angry. The child is throwing with stones. It looks like that the child is showing a message. *Answer the four questions in the group.*
3. Go further to exercise 3.

What would you do?

Feedback to the group

Thank you all for your empathy in the cases. Sometimes it is difficult to empathy in the play life of a child but today we tried and it worked out really well. In the next exercise we will do a role play and we will use the cases as a script for the role plays.



Exercise 3: Role play

Time: 40 minutes

Different levels

In this exercise you can make it more difficult. Let it depend on how the people are doing in the role play. Make it harder for the two people who are playing the parents. By letting them show some emotions, for example crying or anger.

1. Split up in groups of max 4 persons. When there are fathers and mothers of the same child in the group. Make sure that they are going in the same group.
2. Let every group make a role play of the cases in exercise 2. Two people are the children and the other two people are the parents.
3. The two people who are the children, play together. The two people who are the parents want to interact.
4. The two people who are the parents have to find different ways to interact with the two people who play the children.
5. After 20 minutes, gather everybody together.
6. Let every group show their role play to the others.

Feedback to the group

It is really nice to see how enthusiastic you participate in the role play. You did it really good. This was the last exercises of this session. Thank you all very much, I hope you learned a lot.

Closure

Close the gathering with a song, dance or prayer.

| Homework

The homework exercise for the next session is again to try interact with your children during play. Try to use the tips and tricks that you learnt in this session. The next session and also the last session we will do something different. In that session we will be creative and make some play materials of random stuff, for example natural materials and garbage material. Make sure that everyone brings the materials with them, you need for the next session.

Session 5: Creative play materials (optional)

Goal: Let's be creative and make some play materials of materials you can find outside.

Materials: Everyone brings their own materials, because that is the homework appointment, but to be sure you bring the materials yourself. These are the materials you need for this creative session:

- Plastic bottle
- Little stones (20)
- Bottle tops
- Wire
- Scissors or razor blades
- Plastic Jerry Can
- Tin cans (4)
- Firmly sticks (2)
- Rope
- Maize sacks
- Paint (4 different colors)
- Black marker
- Die
- Other things you find around

Duration: About 2 hours



| Introduction for the Facilitator

Introduction to the theme

In this session we are making some play materials of random stuff, for example natural materials or materials you can find on the street (garbage materials). There will be three examples. One example for the age group 0-3 years old. This will be a rattle, made from an old plastic bottle and little stones. Another example is for the age group 3-6 years old. This will be a play car, made from a jerry can, cans and sticks. The last example is a rule game for the age group 6-12 years. This will be made from painted corn bags and stones.

Important to know

This session is optional. If you think it does not fit with the group, you can leave this behind.

| Exercises

Welcome and recap


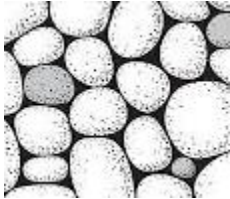

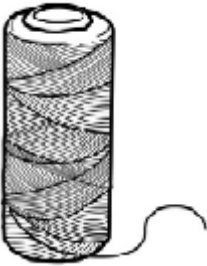

Welcome everyone! Today is the last session of this module importance of play.



Exercise 1: Rattle

Time: about 40 minutes

1. What do we need?

Plastic bottle	Little stones	Bottle tops	Wire (firmly)	Scissors
				


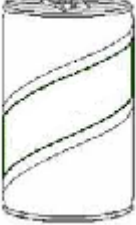



2. Make sure all the materials are clean. Many little children put things in the mouth.
3. Put the little stones in the bottle and turn the cap back on the bottle.
4. Make in the bottle tops, a little hole with the scissors/razorblade.
5. Take the wire and lace the bottle caps on the wire.
6. Make with the scissors two little holes in the bottleneck, now you can lash up the wire (step 5) on the bottle. Make sure it is firmly tight.
7. Now the rattle done is. Children from 0-3 years can play really nice with this rattle. They can make sounds with it or roll it around and crawl after it.



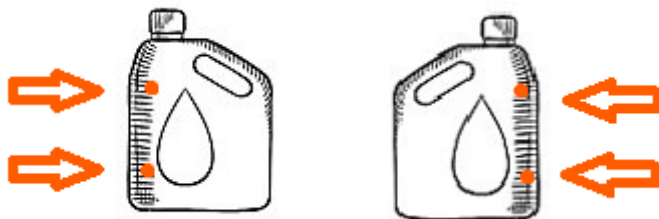
Exercise 2: Play car

Time: about 40 minutes

1. What do we need?

Plastic jerry can	4 tin cans	2 firmly sticks	Rope	Scissors
				

2. Take the jerry can and make two holes in each side with the scissors. Make sure that the holes are big enough to put the sticks through.



3. Put the sticks through the holes. So that the stick protrudes on both sides.
4. Flatten the 4 cans. This will be the wheels. You also can use other materials to make the wheels as long as it is round.
5. Put the flatten cans on the sticks, now the car has 4 wheels.
6. Turn the top of the jerry can. Make with the scissors a hole in the cap.
7. Put the rope through the hole and make a knot on the inside of the cap in the rope.
8. Turn the cap back on the jerry can, now is the car done.
9. If you want and when it is possible, you can paint the car in a nice colour.


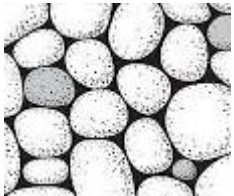








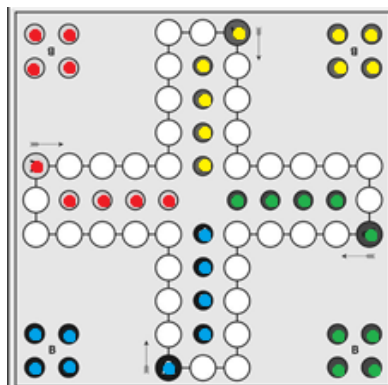
Exercise 3: Ludo

Time: about 40 minutes

1. What do we need?

Maize sacks	16 little stones	Paint and pencil	Black marker	Die	Scissors
		4 different colours 			

2. Cut the bag open, so that it becomes a large square figure.
3. Paint the stones. 4x4 in different colours. If no paint available you also can use the tops of soda bottles 4 coke, 4 pepsi, 4 fanta etc.
4. Take the marker and draw the following figure on the bag.



5. Paint the drawn figure. Look at the example here above. Use the same 4 colours that you used for the stones.
6. Let everything dry and your rule game is done.
7. This are the rules of the game (see next page).

Rules Ludo:

The two to four players get four pawns each in their own district colour. They each have their own starting point, a circle in each of the corners of the game. The players throw one die in their turn. Only a six gives a game piece entrance to the board. After that you can move the token according to the numbers on the die.

The goal is to bring your pawns home around the board. Once they're home, the game pieces are safe. But before that, on the long road to safety, the players can send each other back to the beginning by landing their own game piece on the same square. This means all game pieces are very vulnerable towards pieces coming from the back. Of course, to send a token to the start circle you have to land on the exact same square. If you throw is too high, you pass the token with the likely risk of getting punished yourself.

Safe home base consist of four squares. When every pawn is in the safe home, the player have won.

Closure

I think it was a good decision to go for this module. There are modules we can follow. Let me know what you think is interesting!

Close the gathering with a song, dance or prayer.

Group Evaluation

At the end of the module, evaluate the module together with the parents. Discuss these questions below and write down the answers that come forward.

1. What have you learned from this module?
2. Did you miss anything? What else would you have liked to learn about this theme?
3. Do you already use something you have learned in this module in your daily life? If so, how and what were the results? If not, what is keeping you from using it?

4. What can you do after this module as parents in your family?

5. Question for all parents: what can you do after this module as a group?

Other comments:

Please share this document with the Child Development Desk: childdevelopment@redeenkind.nl. We want to hear about your experiences so we can optimize the Parenting Modules.