

Play
Activities
for
Young
Children



MINA SWAMINATHAN



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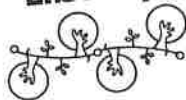
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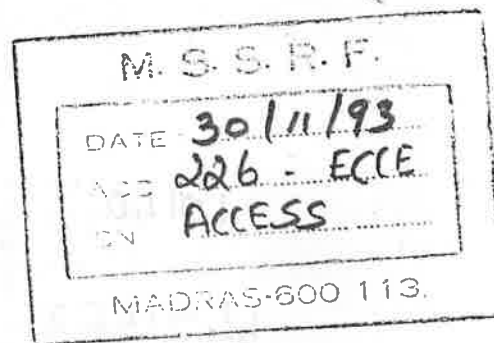
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INTRODUCTION

There has been a noticeable increase recently in the number of child care institutions in the country which are providing services to the young child belonging to the underprivileged section of society. The expansion of the ICDS programme in the last few years has led to the establishment of a large number of *angwanwadis* (child care centres) for the most vulnerable sections of the population. *Balwadis* as well as creches or day-care centres have also existed for several decades in both rural and urban areas, concentrating on the needs of the less affluent. There are also a number of pre-primary, nursery and kindergarten schools which are mostly located in urban and semi-urban areas, and generally cater to the more affluent sections of society.

Most of the institutions intended for the underprivileged child have several features in common: very little space, little or sometimes no equipment or play material suited to the young child, limited finance and workers who are untrained, or at best have only a bare minimum of training. The emphasis has generally been on programmes geared to health and nutrition services. Sometimes the workers, perhaps in response to parental aspiration, have mistakenly tried to introduce formal education of a type more suited to the first years of school. There is a dearth of knowledge and experience in play activities which promote total child development, focusing on the child's inherent abilities and interests of this age group by keeping in harmony within their particular cultural background. Supervisory workers rarely have the knowledge or expertise to offer adequate guidance in this matter and, if they do, the lack of time and resources hinder implementation. This volume is an attempt to fill that gap. It is hoped that the range of simple activities suggested in the chapters that follow will promote the integrated development of the young child. The activities suggested are solidly rooted both in field experience and in the findings of studies in child development, but no attempt has been made to discuss theory. The book is addressed to the field worker who has to deal directly with a group of pre-school children everyday. It is related to the workers difficulties and is intended for immediate application in the field.

The main characteristics of the suggested activities are:

- (1) They need very little or no money inputs. The materials suggested are easily available everywhere. Many are found in the environment, others are cheap and readily available; they need only to be collected. In a country as vast as India and with its immense regional diversity, naturally no suggestion can be equally relevant for all

parts of the country. But wherever an item is not available, a little imagination will suggest possible substitutes which can admirably serve the purpose.

- (2) Every activity has been tried out both by experienced teachers and by trainees or novices in circumstances characteristic of the majority of our *anganwadis* and *balwadis*. Nothing has been suggested which has not been actually tried out and found to be feasible.
- (3) The activities have been grouped, for convenience, into seven sections, each dealing with one major area of development. However, they can and should be used in any combination suitable to the worker. There is nothing sacred about the chapter division, since every activity fulfils several objectives.
- (4) Every section contains a few essential hints on the purpose and aim of the activities covered. The activities have been so written as to enable the workers to put them into direct practice.
- (5) The activities are intended to be carried out by people of limited education who have either little or no previous experience or training. The more experienced teachers and workers working in different learning environments may also find it useful.
- (6) The activities proposed are not intended to be comprehensive, but only suggestive. Hopefully workers will make their own experiments and variations and will help to introduce new and more rewarding activities. Based on their suggestions, future editions may contain material more closely related to their day-to-day needs.

Though the book is intended primarily for the practising field worker, it is hoped that it will be of use also in the training of field workers and as a sourcebook for their instructors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In preparing this book on play activities, I gained a wealth of ideas from the Indian Association For Preschool Education (IAPE) and its official organ "BALAK" (formerly known as Newsletter 1965-75 and as "Bal Chetana" 1975-76). Since 1965 IAPE has been striving to bring together people working with young children and enabling them to share their ideas through regular meetings as well as publications. The pioneering work of IAPE provided the inspiration for my writing of this handbook.

I am specially grateful to the following workers, whose published work in BALAK I have drawn upon.

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MINA SWAMINATHAN

PLAY ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Introduction
Acknowledgements

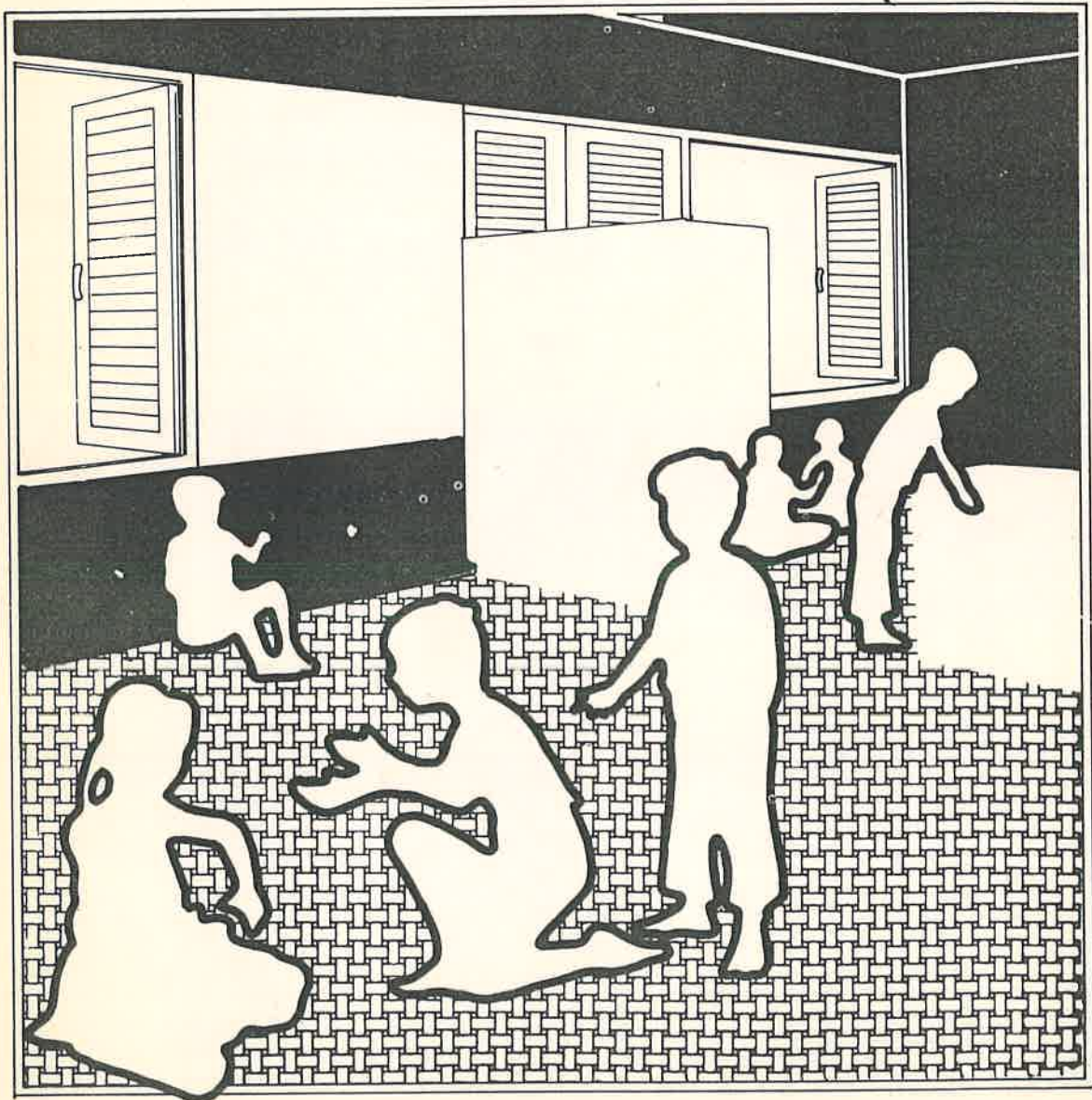
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GAMES AND PLAY FOR PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT



GAMES AND PLAY FOR PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Activities for Young Children—Why, How and What

A child's needs

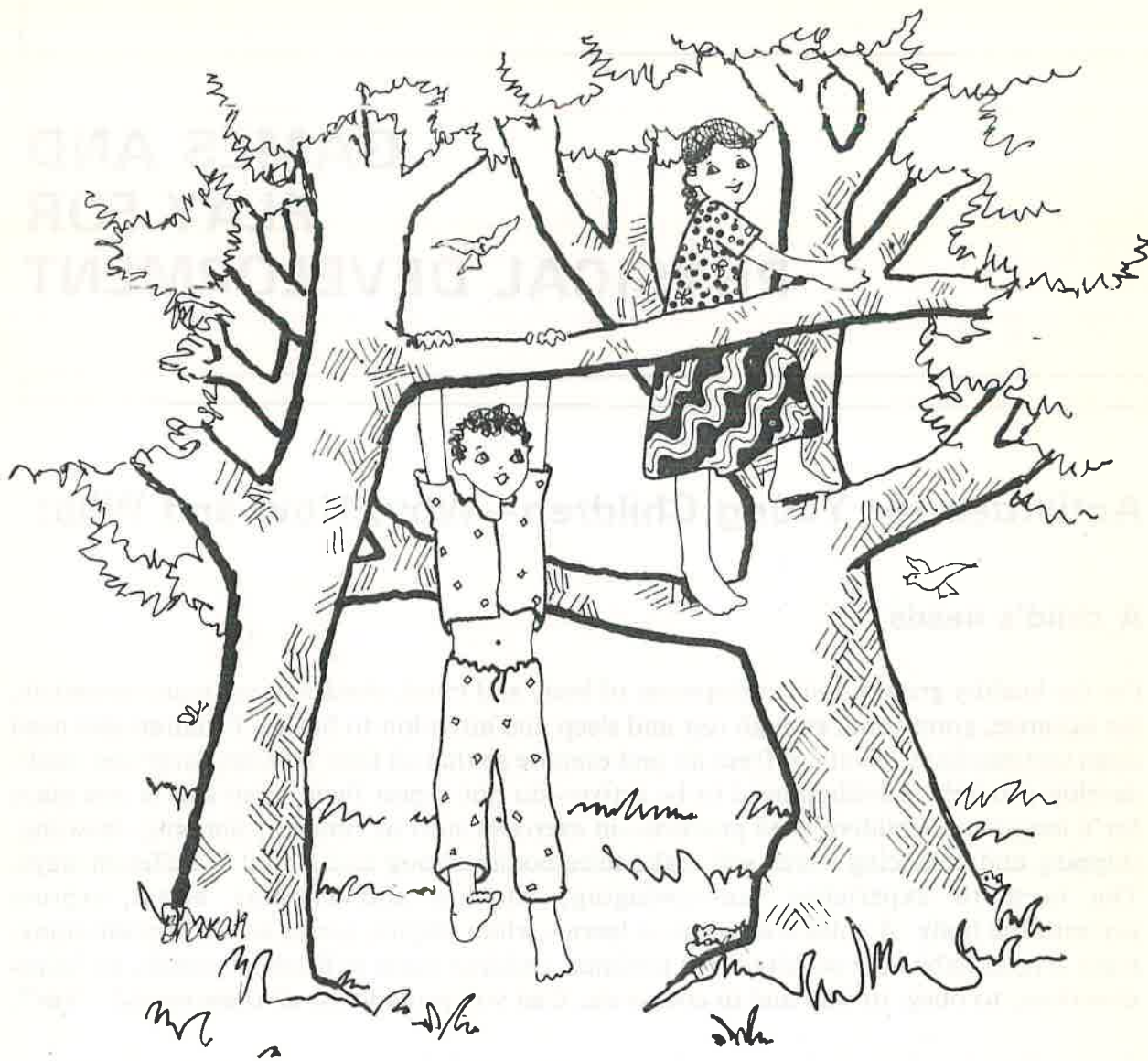
For the healthy growth and development of body and mind, children need many essentials, for instance, good food, enough rest and sleep and attention to health. Children also need clean surroundings, plenty of fresh air and exercise so that all their muscles, large and small, develop properly. Children need to be active—do not expect them to sit still in one place for a long time. Children need practice—in exercises such as running, jumping, crawling, skipping and balancing which will make their bodies strong and skilful in different ways. The need to experience fun—swinging, rocking and running about, express joy with the body. A child also needs to learn—while playing games which provide enjoyment several habits are acquired, for instance, children learn to listen, to watch, to follow directions, to obey, to wait and to cooperate. Can you provide for all these needs? “Yes”.

By ensuring that there is time every day for games and play, by providing some space and some play material, you can make a positive start. You do not need elaborate and expensive equipment such as slides, see-saws and jungle gyms. Simple, everyday material can be used for playthings. But first you must understand a child's needs and the environment in which you work. Sometimes it may be best to encourage free play with a few simple items, merely providing enough space and time for it, while at other times you can conduct organised games with easily available equipment. If you have studied the child's needs and know the environment, you will know what to do.

The environment

The kind of activities you provide will depend on where you live and work, what children need, and the facilities available to you.

If you are in a village Perhaps the children get plenty of opportunity during the day to run, jump and dance while they are playing on their own or with other children. They may already have practised all these exercises in trees, on walls and in streams nearby.



Perhaps they get enough fresh air and exercise for their bodies, and may have learned to swim and to skip from the older children in the village. Then what should you do? Look for what they do not get and try to provide that. For instance, they may not have had the opportunity to play organised games. In this case, give them a period of organised play every day which will teach them to behave as good members of the group. Also remember that young children cannot sit still for several hours. So ensure that physical movement is involved in the play you plan at your centre.

If you are in a town or big city Perhaps the centre is in a crowded area with narrow lanes. The children may be living in small houses with very little space for play. Perhaps there is heavy traffic in the streets. It may be that older children give the younger ones little chance to play; or the children may have no play material. What should you do then? Have you a small courtyard or a compound or any open space near the centre? If so, you can provide both free play and organised games. Collect some odds and ends and use them attractively. If there are many children, you may have to divide them into two or three teams, giving each team a turn to play in the courtyard. If you have no courtyard or open space near the centre, you can take your group to a nearby park or a *maidan* once or twice a week. There you can let them play organised games and also run about freely for a while.

Activities

Here are some of the typical activities a child likes to do and needs to do:

running	rolling	pushing and pulling
jumping	swinging	lifting and carrying
hopping	bouncing	building
skipping	sliding	swimming
throwing	balancing	splashing
crawling	rocking	dancing
stretching		

And here are some easily available materials which can be used for these activities:

walls	boxes	buckets
steps	tins	balls
poles	bricks	tubs
trees	ropes	umbrellas
rocks	hoops	kites
pools	tyres	balloons
pits	benches	handkerchieves
planks	flower-pots	handcrafts
sticks	paper	cloth

Now can you think of how you can use these and other materials to provide children activity, fun and practice? Find different ways to help the children in carrying out each activity. Here is an example:

Jumping

- jumping *off* a low wall, a stool, a step or a rock
- jumping *over* a brick, a stone, a pole or a rope
- jumping *in* and *out* of a tyre, a hoop, a circle or a tub
- jumping *along* a line, a rope or a stick
- jumping *between* two stones, two lines or two ropes
- jumping while *holding* or *carrying* something

Now, can you follow the same pattern for the following activity?

Crawling....

Simple Play Equipment for Physical Development

Remember that while children are playing and exercising their bodies they are at the same time acquiring knowledge about themselves and their environment. An observant worker can draw their attention to this and, through such awareness, can teach them new concepts and new words. Try and see what they can learn while they play. At the end of this section, you will find some examples of what they can learn.

Swing

There are various ways of constructing a swing. You can tie a thick, double length of rope from the branch of a tree or from a beam across a room or a courtyard. The seat can be made out of an old scooter or motorcycle tyre or a discarded cycle seat, a thick piece of bamboo or wooden rod, or a small cushion or pillow. If none of these is available you can use the rope itself, but this is not comfortable for young children.

Climbing frame

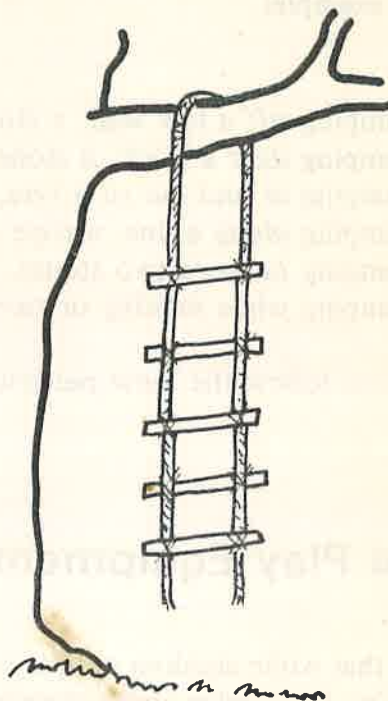
A set of wooden boxes (packing cases or crates) is excellent for climbing, jumping, crawling and other such activities. Select three boxes of different sizes and place them in a line. Remember that they must be strong enough for children to climb on. You can also use tin drums (oil or water drums), buckets or canisters of different sizes. What else could you use?

For climbing and jumping, you can build a set of three or more small steps by resting a wooden plank across two bricks or flower-pots or tins which act as the supports for each step. Older children can conveniently climb up small trees, walls, poles with wooden pieces attached, or rope ladders.

For crawling, you can use large cardboard boxes, hoops, tyres or drums with both sides open.

Rope ladder

You can make a rope ladder by using a thick piece of long rope. Taking the middle point of the rope, suspend it from a tree or a beam (using another piece of rope to attach it to the support) in such a way that the ends touch the ground. Attach small wooden or bamboo pieces, each about a foot long, across the length of the ropes. Keep the pieces six or nine inches apart. Attach four or five pieces to begin with, starting from the bottom. The children can climb by grasping the two ropes. Add more steps and higher ones as and when the children gain confidence, and you think it is safe to do so.

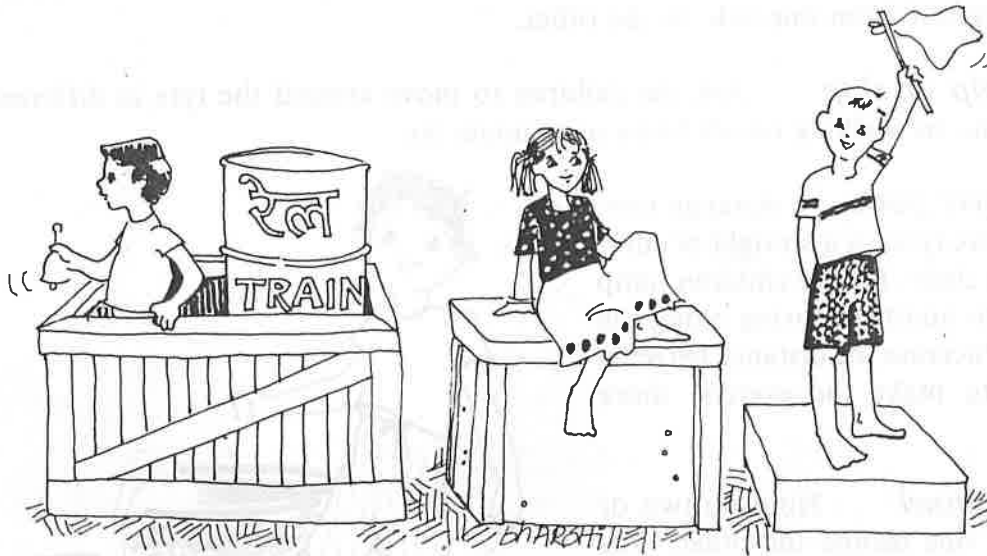


Balancing frame

Put two bricks or upturned pots (or boxes or tins of the same size) a few feet apart and place a plank across them, each end resting on one support. Then tell the children to walk along the plank. As the children become skilled, you can increase the height of the stands as well as the length of the wooden plank.

Building materials

Children enjoy building their own structures such as houses, tunnels, temples, mountains, trains, trucks and aeroplanes. All that you need to do is provide different sizes of simple items—wooden boxes, cardboard cartons, buckets, plastic containers, tins, canisters, bricks and flower pots. Or you can make your own blocks. Take cardboard boxes of different sizes and shapes, such as tea cartons and sweet boxes. Fill these with any light waste material—straw, dried leaves, rags, paper, coconut husk. (If you use sand or sawdust, the blocks will become too heavy for children to lift.) Then close the box and firmly paste the edges down with glue. If you wish to brighten the blocks, paint the surfaces or cover them with coloured paper.



Water

If water is easily available in your locality, you can show the children how to play with water and learn at the same time.

Use a large plastic or metal container which is wide and shallow. Let the children themselves fill it, using different buckets, mugs and jugs. It is worth introducing them to containers of different sizes: coconut shells, lids, sieves, ladles and other small objects. Let them pour, fill, splash and float different objects. If possible, provide a few rubber toys that will float.

What are children learning as they play like this? They are learning about concepts, such as, “up and down”, “heavy and light”, “high and low”, about shapes, sizes and weights, and about different materials. What else can they learn from this activity?

How to Use Common Objects for Physical Development

Here are some ways in which you can use three everyday objects to give children plenty of exercise, fun, practice and learning. As you read, ask yourself, “What are the children learning?”

Tyres

Use metal hoops, cycle tyres, scooter or motor cycle tyres for the following activities:

Roll the tyre Let the children roll the tyre anywhere around an open area. Then draw a chalked line on the ground and tell them to roll it along the line.

Jump in and out Raise the tyre a little above the ground so that the children can jump through it from one side to the other.

Hop, jump or skip Ask the children to move around the tyre in different ways, for example, by walking on all fours as animals do.

Make a tyre path Arrange two, three or more tyres in a straight or curved line or a circle. Let the children jump from one to another moving along the tyre path. Increase the distance between the tyres to make the exercise more difficult.

Make a tunnel Hold up two or more tyres one behind the other. The children can be asked to crawl through the tunnel. If the earth is soft or sandy, bury the tyres in the earth in a line or a circle. Some tyres can be buried half way beneath the earth; some only a quarter way. The tyres should form a tunnel. Let the children crawl through some, jump over others and so on down the line.



Hang a tyre up From a tree branch or beam, hang a tyre at the average height of the children. Let the children throw balls or other soft objects through it. Gradually increase the distance between the child and the tyre.

Tyre seats Use the tyres as seats for individual children or for the game 'musical seats' which is explained later in this chapter.

Remember, tyres can also be used to make swings, to build climbing and balancing frames and for construction play. Think of some more uses.

What do you think the children have learnt?

Balls

Rubber balls of different sizes may be successfully used in many activities.

Throw and catch Let the children throw the ball up in the air and catch it. Between

throwing and catching let the children carry out an action such as hopping on one leg, clapping, counting or saying a word.

Throw round the circle Ask the children to stand in a circle throwing the ball one to the other. Gradually increase the distance between the children.

Bounce the ball Practise bouncing the ball and counting. How many times can each child bounce the ball? Then draw an outline on the floor and bounce the ball within the marked-off area. Vary the shape and size of the outline.

Throw ball into a container Draw a line and ask the children to stand behind it. Let each one throw the ball into a container—a basket, a bucket, a tin, a hanging tyre or even an outline drawn with chalk. Gradually increase the distance of the line from the container.

Roll the ball Roll the ball along a line or a curve drawn on the floor, asking the children to do the same action.

Kick the ball This is similar to the 'throw-and-catch' activity except that here the children use their feet to kick the ball. How far can each child kick the ball when sitting and how far when standing?

Move the ball differently Ask the children to move the ball with the head, shoulders, elbows, knees and other parts of the body. While they do this ask them to name the part of the body being used.

Pass the ball Ask the children to stand in a line and pass the ball from one to the other in different ways—over the head, under the legs, with eyes closed, backwards, while hopping and so on.

There must be many more games that you played when you were a child. Do you remember the rhymes that you recited when you were a child playing with a ball?

Ropes

Rope walking Place a rope on the ground and step on it, or along one side of it, in different ways—for instance, hopping, skipping and jumping.

Blindfold walking Place a rope on the ground. With eyes closed and with a foot on each side of the rope, walk the length of the rope without touching it.



High jump Let two children hold a rope above the ground. The others must try to jump across the rope without touching it. Raise the rope a little each time.

Crawl under the rope Have two children hold up a rope while the rest form a line and try to go under the rope without touching it. Lower the rope a little each time.

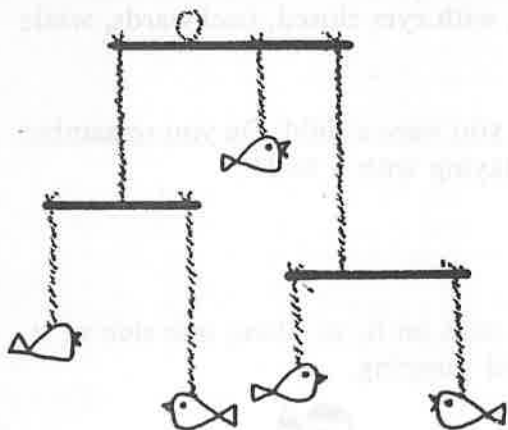
Make a rope path Arrange a long rope in different ways on the ground to resemble a path. Walk along, around, through and over the various patterns.

Act while walking Place a rope on the ground. Walk along it imitating a monkey, a snake, an elephant, a bird and so on. Change the name of the animal each time.



Silent walking Place a rope on the ground. Ask the child to hold a ball and walk along the rope without sounding the bell. A rattle, a *damru* or some other small instrument which easily makes a sound may be used instead of a bell.

Remember, ropes can also be used for dividing the room, for making swings and rope ladders, for screens and curtains, for hanging clothes, streamers, pictures and mobiles.



Action Games With Simple Equipment

Here are some simple games that you can play with groups of children. These games will create fun and at the same time teach the children many of the rules of social behaviour. You need hardly any equipment for them.

Musical seats

Place a number of chairs in a large circle. If chairs are not available you can use pieces of gunny bag, cloth, paper, tyres, mats—any flat surface will do. There should be one less

seat than the number of children who play. Let the children run around the circle while you clap or beat a drum or sing a tune. When you stop your rhythm, every child must find a seat. The one who has no seat must sit out quietly for the rest of the game. Now remove one of the seats and continue the game until all but one child is out.

Musical islands

Place a few large "islands" around the room or courtyard. These "islands" can be a large tyre, a circle drawn with chalk, a sheet of newspaper, a mat etc. Let the children run around in a circle while you sing or play or clap a rhythm. When you stop, call out any number, say, three, five or four. The children must get together on an "island" in groups of that number. If you have said three, only three children can get on to an "island," neither more nor less. Those groups that have joined in the wrong number should be asked to stand out and watch as the game proceeds. Remove one or more of the islands as the game continues. Start with small numbers and make it more difficult as you go along. Later, you can change the game slightly giving difficult instructions, for example, "six legs" (which means three children should climb on to an island), or "four hands" (two children).

In and out

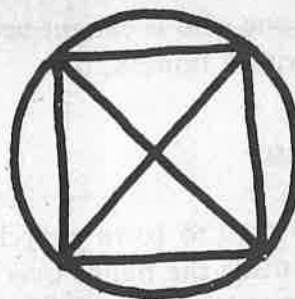
Draw a circle on the floor and let the children stand on the line to begin with. When you say "in", they must jump *inside* the circle; when you call "out", they must jump *outside*. Start by saying "in" and "out" slowly. Go faster and faster and keep changing the sequence of your calls. The children who do not do it right must sit out and watch the game. Continue until only one child is left.

The colour game

The children run around until you blow a whistle or clap. Then say the name of a colour. Every child must touch an object in the room of that colour. Set a time limit for this. The children who do not find an object in time must sit out and watch. Continue the game until only one child is left. Gradually make the game more difficult by saying the names of colours that are uncommon or a combination of colours.

Walk along a shape

Draw various shapes on the ground with chalk. Our illustration gives one suggestion. Ask the children to come up one by one and walk along the lines in the shape that you call out. If you say "circle" the child must walk the circle. Thus, they will learn to identify names of different shapes with the shape itself. To make the games more difficult, let each child who has succeeded tell the next child what shape to walk.



Statues

The children run in a circle while you clap or sing or make a rhythmic sound. When you stop, they must stay absolutely still. A child who moves—it may be only a flicker of the eyelids—must drop out and sit down quietly to watch. To make the games interesting, tell the participants before each round what to imitate; you may choose an animal—for instance, a goat, a monkey, a bird—or an object, such as a train, a tree, or a person—a soldier, an old woman, a dancer. For a change, you can allow the children to take turns in calling out the name of a statue of their choice.

Dodge ball

Ask the children to form a circle around two or three of their companions who are the “dodgers”. Those forming the circle throw a soft ball at the children inside the circle who must avoid the ball. If the ball touches any one of the “dodgers”, the child is out. Let the children take turns at being inside the circle. Continue until everyone has had a turn at being a “dodger”.

The dog and the bone

Divide the children into two teams and give a different number to each member of team 1 and the same number series to team 2. Make both teams stand in a line, one facing the other, and place a handkerchief (i.e. the bone) halfway between the two lines. When you call out a number, the two children who have that number are the dogs and must run to the centre and try to pick up the handkerchief. The one who gets it wins the round. Call out another number and repeat the activity. Go on until every child has had a turn at being the dog. In order to make the game more interesting, do not call out the numbers in serial order.

The lion and the goats

One child is the lion and the others are the goats. The lion stands at one end of the room or playground with his back to the others. The goats then creep up behind the lion and ask him the time. The lion can answer whatever he chooses, say, “One o’ clock”, “Four o’ clock”. When he feels like it, he can say, “Time for dinner” and tries to catch one of the goats. The one who is caught becomes the lion in the next round. Remember you can play the game with a lioness, too.

Do as I say

Ask the children to form a circle. Stand in the middle and perform a simple action, for example, putting the hands over the eyes, on the head, on the ears or just bending down. While you are acting, describe an action different from the one you are doing. For instance, say “I am bending down” or “I am closing my eyes” when actually you are sitting and reading. The children must do what you say and not what you are doing. The ones who do what you do, sit out of the game and watch. Go on until only one child is left. Let the children take turns in being the leader.

And remember, there are many, many more games that you played as a child. Do you remember? Singing games, group games, ball games, team games. Try them all out.

What do you think children are learning as they play?

PLAY ACTIVITIES FOR LEARNING FROM THE ENVIRONMENT



PLAY ACTIVITIES FOR LEARNING FROM THE ENVIRONMENT

Science and the Environment

Children learn from their environment all the time. They are curious and so they observe, and having observed, they wonder. You can help them to learn from these observations in simple ways. You can encourage children to sharpen their senses, their minds and their reason; thereby becoming more alert, more observant and more thoughtful. In this process you will prepare them for school where lessons will be taught through science.

Perhaps you are worried because you are not a scientist and you never studied the subject. Do not worry. You do not have to be a scientist to help young children to learn, because science is not something you have to teach them. Rather, science is a way of learning. Science is learning by inquiry, by discovery. The method requires:

- observing
- noting down or recording the observed facts
- asking questions
- speculating an answer
- finding out the answers by further observation
- finding out the answers by checking up
(experimenting) and understanding how and why things happen.

For example, you know:

- that plants grow from seeds
- that boiling water turns into steam
- that birds come from eggs
- that things dry fast in the sun
- that shadows are cast when something comes in the way of light
- that we breathe air though we cannot see it

How many young children know all these things? Can you put them on the path to knowledge? Yes you can, if you do some of the following:

take children out on walks
encourage them to observe
remind them to collect objects that they see, and bring these to the centre
you yourself can bring an assortment of things to the centre
encourage children to ask questions
allow them to do simple experiments by themselves

Children ask simple questions about every new observation. Sometimes, you can draw out the answers by asking questions yourself. What questions can you ask to encourage their curiosity? How can children do such difficult exercises as observe, measure and record? Let us take an example.

Place two piles of stones in front of a child. You can say, "This pile is larger than the other", or you can ask a question, "What is the difference between the two piles of stones?", or "Which pile is larger?" If the child gives the answer, ask, "How did you know? Let us check it up to find out if you are right." If there is no answer, ask "How can we find out which pile is larger? Let us solve the problem together." Working out such small problems together is beneficial. For example, you can count both piles to note which has more stones; or lift them up to see which one is heavier; or pick up in both hands as many stones as you can manage and see how many times you have to do this for each pile.

Can you think of more ways to answer your simple question? It is not difficult. In this way you have been teaching science. You have helped the child:

to be curious
to observe
to guess

to experiment
to find out
to learn

A very important factor in a child's mental growth is *curiosity*. Encourage the child to be curious; stimulate curiosity with questions. It does not matter if you do not know the answers. You can proceed to find out. If you cannot find the answer, the child will continue to be curious and he or she will try to find the answer by other means. In this process, a child will learn to become a learner. And that is the best you can do as a teacher. You have helped a child to learn by inquiry, to learn by science.

Another important factor is learning from *experience*. Teach the child to use every part of the environment. You do not need any elaborate equipment. Trees, leaves, plants, animals, stones, sun, shade, water, air, light, mud, earth, sand and household articles are sufficient. For example, a dry leaf floats in the air and falls to the ground slowly, whereas a stone falls immediately. This observation is enough to start a series of questions. In addition are the activities found in the centre, for instance:

playing
cooking
eating
cleaning

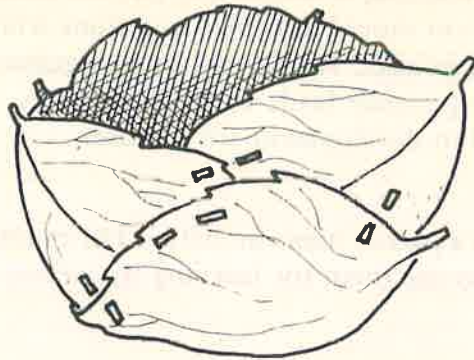
washing
gardening
moving
sleeping

can lead you to an exchange of questions and answers that will facilitate child learning.

A third important factor in learning is discussion. Let the children talk freely. Encourage them to ask questions. You too should ask them questions which make them think. Show them what to observe. Make guesses. Ask them to make guesses. It does not matter if the guesses are wrong. Every experience leads to new questions, new experiments and new activities—all of which lead to development for children.

These three factors can form a part of many activities. For example, here are some activities with leaves. See how you can use them for learning by inquiry with the help of curiosity, experience and discussion.

- Sort* Divide the leaves in groups according to colour (dark and light), size (big and small), length (long and short), shape (round and oblong), texture (rough and smooth), use (useful and useless).
- Grade* Arrange each group of sorted leaves in a particular order: from the darkest to the lightest; from the largest to the smallest; from the longest to the shortest, etc.
- Name* Learn to recognise the name of the plant from which each leaf is taken.
- Paste* Paste the leaves in a scrapbook, or on a chart, or on the door or window-pane.
- Cut* Tear the leaves into different shapes.
- Thread* Form the leaves into garlands and patterns.
- Crush* Find out the smell of each leaf.
- Paint* Use the leaves for painting and printing.
- Gather* Gather the leaves into bunches for cleaning or to make fans.
- Decorate* Use the leaves for decoration and dressing up.
- Construct* Use the leaves with sand or clay or earth for building.
- Experiment* Use the leaves in experiments with water, air, etc.
- Study* Learn about the uses of each kind of leaf.
- Count* Use the leaves in adding, subtracting and other number games.



Can you think of some more ways to use leaves? Can you use stones in similar ways? While the children play in this manner, they are learning, not only with their minds, but by their senses and bodies too.

Science Activities with Everyday Material

Here are some simple learning experiences which can grow out of the children's daily play activity.

Water

Children can begin to understand the properties of water through simple experiments which require only ordinary materials.

Some things float in water and some do not Use pieces of paper, stones, leaves, cloth, empty and full tins.

Some things dissolve in water and some do not Use salt, sugar, flour, sand, oil, soap.

Some things absorb water and some do not Use cloth, stone, wood, iron, sand.

Some things change the colour of water Use ink, flowers, paint, chalk, cloth.

Water always runs downhill Pour water on slopes and see how it flows. Observe natural streams, if possible.

Water evaporates in the sun Put some shallow dishes of water, wet clothes, and other wet objects in the sunlight and some in the shade and observe them. Which dries the fastest? Which takes the most time to dry? Put a salt solution out-of-doors; it will take several days to dry.

Water boils away and water condenses Boil water in a shallow open pan and watch it disappear. Boil water in a kettle, then hold a cold plate in front of the steam and watch the drops of water appear on the surface of the plate.

Water reflects Look at reflections in a puddle after the rain, or in a pool or lake if there is one nearby. Alternatively fill water in a large tub or pan. Can reflections be seen in running water?

Water contains particles Collect water from different sources such as rain, the well, the tap and observe the colour of each. Which one is dirty? Why? What does it contain? If you have a magnifying glass, you can show the children what there is in water that the eye cannot see.

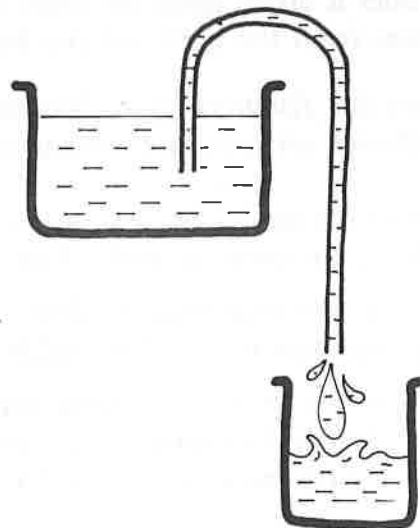
Water in different forms Draw attention to rain, clouds and mist; to rain in the wind, rain pouring down slopes, and rain collecting in puddles; to the different types and colours of clouds. Have the children ever seen a rainbow?

Pour water in containers of different sizes and shapes and observe that water takes the shape of the container.

Water can be measured Pour water from and into different sizes and shapes of containers.

Water can be moved in different ways Pour water from large and small openings, from tubes, spouts, sieves, through holes, from different heights and so on.

The children will learn about the different properties of water if you use these *experiences* for *discussion*.



Light

An interesting way for young children to learn about light is through shadows.

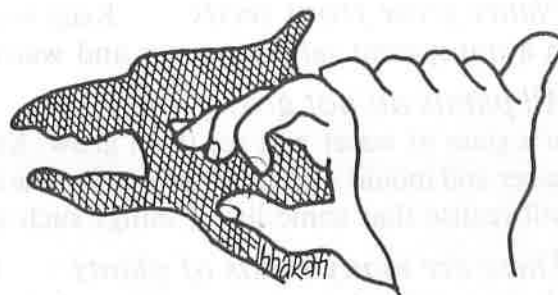
Light makes shadows Cast your own shadow on the ground or on a wall. Try to run away from your shadow. As the children imitate you, they will find out that their shadows are always on one side of their bodies and the sun on the opposite side. Draw their attention to this fact.

Cast shadows by means of artificial light too—use a torch or a candle.

Different objects make different shadows Do all objects cast shadows? Are all shadows equally dark? Let the children find out by casting shadows with solid objects of different shapes and sizes—say, leaves, flowers, toys and balls. Now use material such as glass, paper and fine cloth. What difference do they see?

Shadows move Make different kinds of shadows with the body and the hands. move the body or the hands and notice how the shadows move.

Shadows change in shape and size according to the distance from the light and the angle of light Observe the shadows of human bodies and those of poles, trees and other objects at different times of the day. When are the shadows longest? When are they shortest? Why? To understand this phenomenon, make shadows in the room by using simple objects and an artificial source of light. Move the object first away from and then nearer to the light. What happens?



Shadows have shape Draw the outline of a child's shadow on the floor or the wall.

How does it differ from the form of the child? Let the child move, standing at different distances from the light and the wall. How does the shadow change?

Images are formed by reflected light Observe images in puddles and pools, mirrors, glasses and polished shining metal. Which gives the clearest image?

Move two mirrors in different ways—up and down, away from or nearer to each other and the object, different in angle. You will note that several images are formed.

Light travels in a straight line Make a beam of light by covering a bulb or a torch with a large box or shade in which you have made a small hole or slit.

Light comes from different sources Observe the sun, moon, stars and artificial sources of light. Encourage discussion on the different aspects of light by asking questions. Why is it dark on a cloudy day? Have you ever seen lightning? A rainbow?

In these experiences with light, have you helped the children to go through the scientific processes of observing, noting, asking questions, guessing and checking?

Plants and animals

Children can learn about the growth of plants and the habits of animals by observing them in nature; but you can also carry out some simple activities to enrich this understanding.

Plants grow Let the children grow their own plants (if you have some space)—digging and preparing the earth, planting, watering and nurturing plants is sound exercise for mind and body. If you can make a small kitchen garden, they will love to harvest a few vegetables for themselves. If this is not possible, you can easily sow mustard and coriander (*dhania*) seeds in a shallow tray and the children can observe how these sprout indoors.

Plants need water, light, air and soil Place some plants in a dark area and others in the sunlight; keep some plants dry and water others; put some in a sealed jar and allow air to others; after a few days note the growth of each plant. Which plants flourish? Which die or wilt?

Plants grow from seeds Keep some lentils or bean seeds (*dal*) in a moist cloth or in a transparent jar with water and watch them sprout and grow.

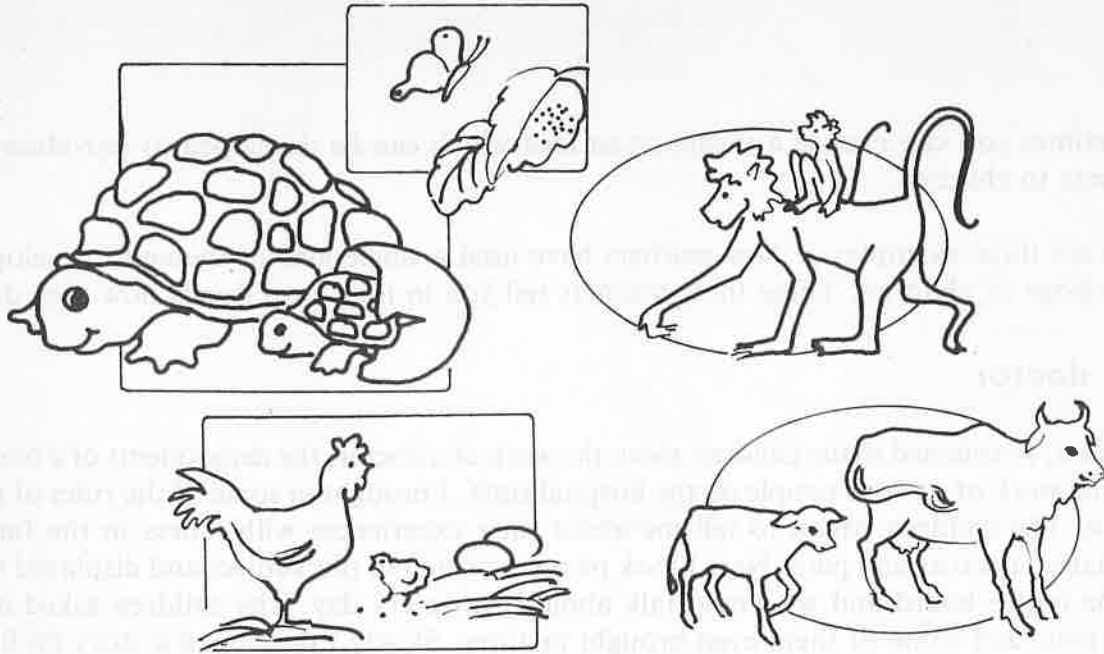
All plants do not grow from seeds Place onions, flower cuttings or a sweet potato in a glass of water and see them grow. Keep a piece of moist bread (*roti*) in a closed container and mould will soon form on it. The mould can be removed and examined. The children will realise that some living things such as moulds do not need seeds to grow from.

There are many kinds of plants Observe and collect different kinds of leaves and plants and list their characteristics, their uses and the names of the trees they come from.

Plants have different parts Collect some plants and study their different parts: leaf, stem, root, fruit, bud, etc.

There are many kinds of animals Observe the various animals in the neighbourhood, then exchange information on their habits, uses and characteristics.

Animals are made in different ways Make out a list of those animals that come from eggs, and those that are born from their mothers.



Animals eat different foods Discuss the food that animals eat. If possible, throw dried bread to birds and tit-bits to animals and watch how they feed.

You have read about some examples There are many more things found in nature that children can observe, study, question, experiment with and learn about—for instance, air and wind, sound, heat, matter, energy, the five senses, the human body, time movement, weight, balance, food and the seasons.

Now can you think of some activities to help children learn the following concepts?

- some things are hot and some are cold
- the human body needs food
- some things change form when they are heated
- vibrations produce sound
- different things smell different
- air can be felt but not seen
- some objects fall faster than others
- machines make work easier
- food comes from different sources
- articles of different sizes may weigh the same

What other concepts can you introduce to young children?

Projects for Learning from the Environment

We have just seen that children learn by observing, exploring, discussing, questioning, experimenting and guessing. But there are also other ways in which they learn—by acting out, by doing things with their bodies, by making things with their hands and by collecting.

Sometimes you can choose a theme or an idea which can be developed to introduce new subjects to children.

Here are three examples of how teachers have used a single idea or theme to develop the knowledge of children. These three teachers tell you in their own words how they did it.

Our doctor

“At first, I explained to the children about the work of a doctor, the departments of a hospital and the work of various people on the hospital staff. I brought in some of the rules of good health. The children began to tell me about their experiences with illness in the family, medicines, doctors and pain. Next I took pictures related to this subject and displayed them on the notice board and we would talk about them every day. The children asked many questions, and some of them even brought pictures. Slowly I developed a story on life in a hospital and the different people who work there.

“The children became so interested in our project that they began, in their play period, to build hospitals out of blocks, toys and bits of materials. Sometimes they drew or painted their impressions of a hospital or a doctor. In their drama period, they would act ‘doctor-doctor’. One child would be the doctor, another the nurse, and a third the patient, while others would line up outside the room. The game included toy thermometers, syringes, bottles of medicine and trays, all made up with whatever the children could find. This game would go on for hours.

“The most interesting part of the project was a visit to a nearby health centre. The doctor very kindly showed the children around, told them the names of many strange things they saw, introduced them to the compounder and explained about his work. The children saw patients being attended to, asked many questions and became familiar with many new names. Above all, this first-hand contact with the work done at a health centre helped many of them to get over their fears of the doctor.

“When the children returned, they resumed dramatic play with even greater interest. Now they added many more details and new facts. They began to write out prescriptions on scraps of paper, scribbling whatever they pleased with pencils! They used new ‘instruments’ and had ‘medicines’ made and poured into bottles by a ‘compounder’. When drawing, writing, painting and working with paper and clay, they tried to express their new ideas. This project gave the children an appreciation of and a first look into the work-life of doctors.”

The coconut

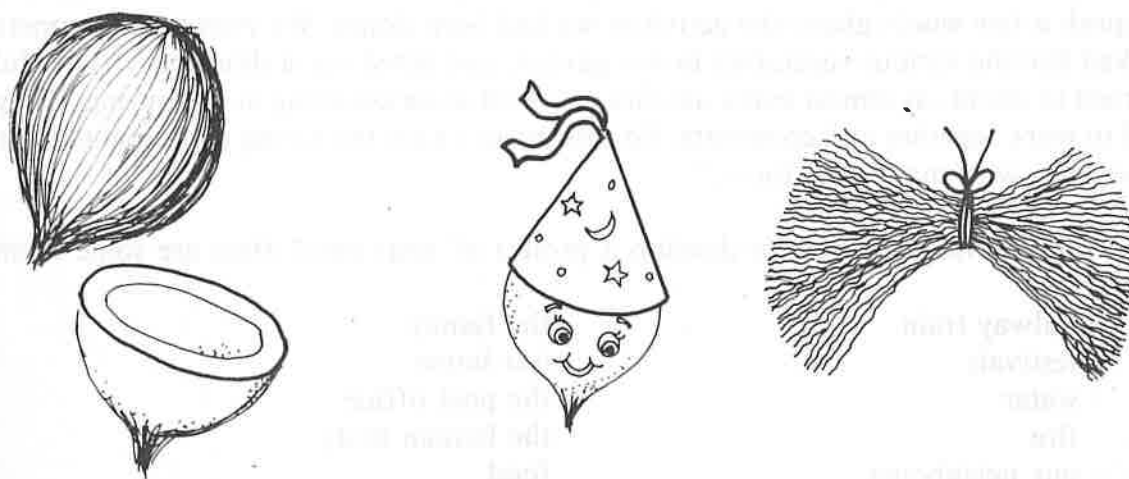
“One day, I brought a picture of a coconut tree to the centre and showed it to the children. We began talking about it and that started a stream of questions. I asked the children what the nut was used for. Some were able to tell me but others could not.

“The next day I brought in a fresh coconut. The children were keen to touch it to feel how rough it was, and some tried to lift it up with both hands to see how heavy it was. They shook it to listen to the sound of the water inside. I scraped away the outer husk of the coconut with a knife and then asked them to crack it open with a hammer. Each one had

a try. Finally, the coconut cracked and the water gushed out. Every child was eager to drink a little. Then they tasted the kernel of the coconut. By doing this they were learning by use their sense of taste, smell, sight, sound and touch.

“Later, the children were shown various products made out of different parts of the coconut—for example, coconut oil, sweets, coir mats, ropes and toys—and told about the uses of the coconut. Dry coconut was shown to them and they observed how oil came out of it when it was squeezed. Then they had lots of fun making things out of the husk and the shell—first they pasted husk on paper and made designs, and then they tried making little figures such as butterflies, dolls and animals. When one or two pretty dolls were complete, I encouraged the children to make up a little story and use the dolls as puppets in their narrative.

“In this project the children learnt to express themselves in different ways, and to extend their knowledge merely by touching, looking, smelling, listening and tasting”.



Plant life

“Our project on plant life was not pre-planned. It grew naturally. It started when we were cleaning the school grounds, and collected all sorts of objects—twigs, stones, flowers, leaves and pieces of wood and metal. Some children asked, ‘Why are all the leaves not alike?’ and wanted to know more about the various trees and plants. This led us to discuss what we had collected.

“At first, I asked the children to divide the leaves into two groups—green and dry. They smelt and felt the differences, they drew outlines of the various shapes of leaves, they coloured them, and some children tried out printing. Enthusiasm spread. Now they wanted to grow their own plants, so we sowed wheat, onion, radish, mustard and a few others in small plots. The children tended them every day. They watched the plants sprout and learnt that they need sunlight, water, air and manure to grow well.

“We conducted minor experiments. The children learnt that plants could not grow in an empty glass bottle, or in completely dry soil or in a dark cupboard where there is neither light nor fresh air. We scattered some seeds in a jar containing moist blotting paper so that, as the seed sprouted, the different parts of the seedling became visible. The children soon noticed that the seed that had fallen below the blotting paper did not sprout and so they

understood that too much water is also bad for plants. Some prepared manure by soaking refuse which they themselves had collected. How they loved to harvest the crops and pick the vegetables!

“From the vegetable peelings, we made dyes for painting and this taught the children more about colours. They used stalks of mustard and wheat for collage, they drew and painted flowers, they made clay models of fruit and vegetables and prepared an album. In the language lesson, they learnt not only the names of all the plants, fruits, vegetables and trees they had studied, but also about the sounds in the names. We made up little games, like this: The first sound in the word *mooli* [radish] is *m*. Whose name begins with *m*? Maya promptly stood up, or sang a song or danced, as agreed upon in advance. I told the children stories about plants and taught them action songs about plant life. Every child was encouraged to speak a few words about the activities we had been doing. We even made puppets that looked like the various vegetables in our garden, and acted out a short story. The children learned to count, as almost every activity involved some counting or measuring. They also had to work together and cooperate. So this project gave the young participants their first experience with many new facts.”

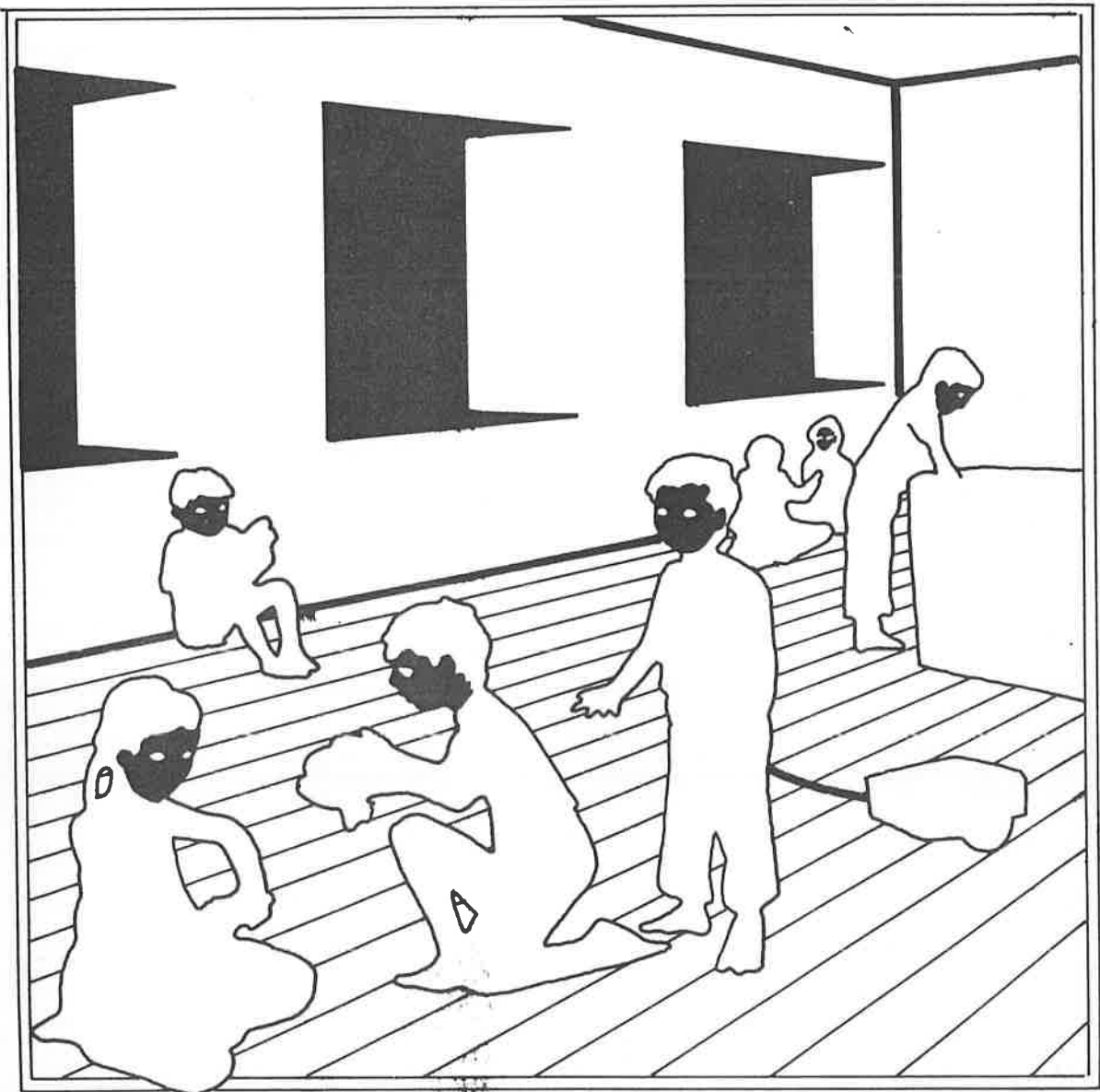
Now can you think of how to develop a project of your own? Here are some themes:

railway train
festivals
water
fire
our neighbours

the family
our home
the post office
the human body
food

Can you think of some more?

PLAY ACTIVITIES FOR INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT



PLAY ACTIVITIES FOR INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Many games and activities can help to introduce new concepts and enable children to develop thinking skills. Some of these can be conducted for only one child at a time or for four or five children; remember that if you use these, then you must find something for the remaining children to do. Other games can be played in turn while the others watch. Some games need no equipment at all, others need a few simple articles. It is worthwhile to make a collection of objects which you can use for such play, especially when children have to count, match and arrange. You can easily collect twigs, shells, sticks, beads, leaves, stones, seeds, matchboxes, bottle-tops, buttons and marbles. These items and others (which we shall call counters) will come in very handy for your exercises.

Activities for Small Groups

Make sets

Draw two large circles on the ground. In one circle, place a number of counters, for example, six. The children must place the same number in the other circle. Let them check by pairing the counters one by one. For older children, you can write a number in the first circle and ask them to place that many counters in the other one.

Which is more?

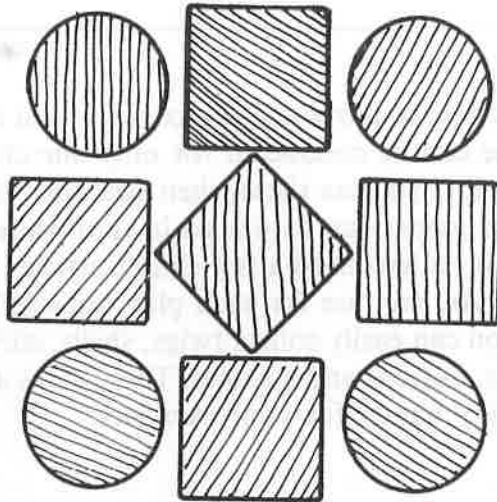
Make two piles of counters. The children must check whether both have the same number or a different number, and say which one has more. The younger children can do this by matching each counter from one pile with a counter from the other pile. The older children may be asked to count and say how many counters there are in each pile.

Arrange in order

Show the children three (later, four or five or seven) counters which are of the same kind, but differ only in one respect, e.g. sticks of different length, stones of different sizes or leaves of different shades. They must arrange these counters in order, from the smallest to the largest, the lightest to the darkest and the driest to the greenest.

Divide

Bring out an assortment of counters and ask the children to group these according to your instructions, for example, all the red beads on one side and all the green ones on the other. Later, they may be asked to separate the counters into three or four groups, say, red, green, yellow and white. Or you yourself could divide the counters into two groups, and ask the children to tell you how and why they have been so divided.



Make the same pattern

Make a pattern for the children to copy. You can arrange counters in a particular way (see illustration) and ask the children to copy your arrangement in every way. Begin with simple patterns, using only five or six counters. Later you can make more difficult ones.

Make a necklace

String together beads, flowers or leaves, in a fixed pattern, e.g. two red, three green, four yellow. The children should be able to make a similar necklace. For older children, you can write down the number (or give them number cards) in a fixed order and tell them to make a necklace in the stated way.

Collect and bring

Give the children a simple task, such as collecting a certain number of easily available articles. Make it more difficult by saying, "Bring me five dry leaves and six fresh ones", or, "Bring me three round stones and two sharp ones" and so on.

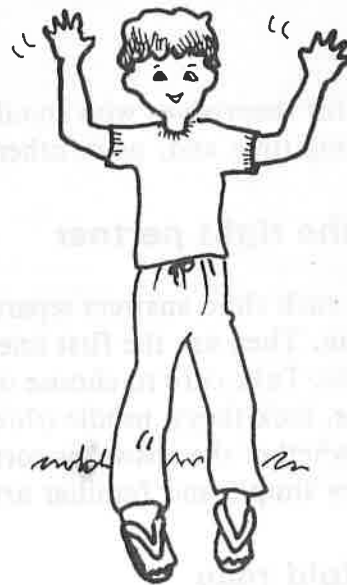
Activities for Large Groups

For these games, the children can sit or stand in a large circle.

Left and right

Tell the children to make a particular movement such as putting forward the right foot or the left foot or raising the right arm or the left. Now call out "right" and "left" at random. The children must respond by doing the correct action. Those who do not follow the directions correctly must sit out and watch quietly. Continue until all the children are out. Speak faster as you go along.

You can also play this game by asking the children to move the part of the body whose name you call out, foot, leg, arm, neck, eyes, fingers. Here too the child who moves the wrong part must sit down and watch. This is an easy way to teach the names of the parts of the body.



Count without looking

The children sit in a circle with their hands cupped open behind their backs. One child runs round the circle carrying a small bag of counters and putting a few into the hands of some of the children. These children have to count the counters (without looking) and state the number they have. Then each child has to place the counters in front of the whole group where everyone can count to check the answer.

Guess the number

Lay out an assortment of articles. Allow the children a few minutes to look at them. Now cover them with a cloth or put them away. Ask the children to guess how many articles there were. Give every child a turn. Then let the whole group of children count and find out the actual number.

You can also play this game by asking questions about the hidden articles, e.g., "Which item was the biggest? The shortest?...." Let the whole group check to find out the answer.

Clapping numbers

The children stand in a circle. Give every child a number, verbally, or a number card. Then stand in the centre and begin to clap. The children must count as you clap. If you clap three times and stop, the children who have the number three must sit out. Continue in this way until all the children are sitting. Alternatively, call out a number, and let the child clap that many times.

Conditions

Call out directions, such as, "All those who are wearing something red sit down", "All the girls jump", and, "All those who have washed their hands clap". The children must

decide for themselves who should obey your orders. Watch carefully for those who act at the wrong time and, as in other games, let them sit and watch.

Find the right partner

Here each child answers separately, so line up the children in the order in which you will call them. Then ask the first one to name the object that is commonly paired with the one you state. Take care to choose only everyday objects whose partners' are well-known, for example, lock (key), needle (thread), bucket (mug), *chakli (belan)*. Let the other children decide whether the answer is correct or not. In some cases several answers may be correct. Use very simple and familiar articles at first, going on to more difficult ones only later.

Blindfold race

Let each child choose a partner. One child of each pair is blindfolded by tying a large handkerchief or scarf around the eyes. The blindfolded children have to do a given task, such as crossing the room, going out of the door, touching a particular person or an object. In the beginning their partners can lead them by the hand. Later, do not permit touching; the children whose eyes are open may help their blindfolded partners only by telling them what to do.

Team and Pair Games

Team games help children to learn to obey rules and cooperate while they are practising mental skills.

Find your partner

Divide the children into two teams and give each child in each team a number card, a picture card or any small object. You must be sure that you have two of every article, one for each team. Line up the two teams at different ends of the room or courtyard. When you clap or blow a whistle the members of both teams run towards each other. Every child must find the correct partner (that is, the child in the opposite team who has a similar object or picture or number) and then run to you. The first team to reach you wins, but let the game go on until all the players have found their partners.

Counting race

Separate the children into two or three teams and place a pile of counters in a far corner of the room. Then call out any number. The first child in each team has to run to the pile of counters, pick out the stated number of counters, and run to you with these. For the second child in each team, you can either repeat the same number or call out a different one. Alternatively, you can distribute number cards and ask each child to bring the number of counters that is written on the card. This game can also be played as a race in which all the children run together and pick up the number of counters you have asked each one to bring.

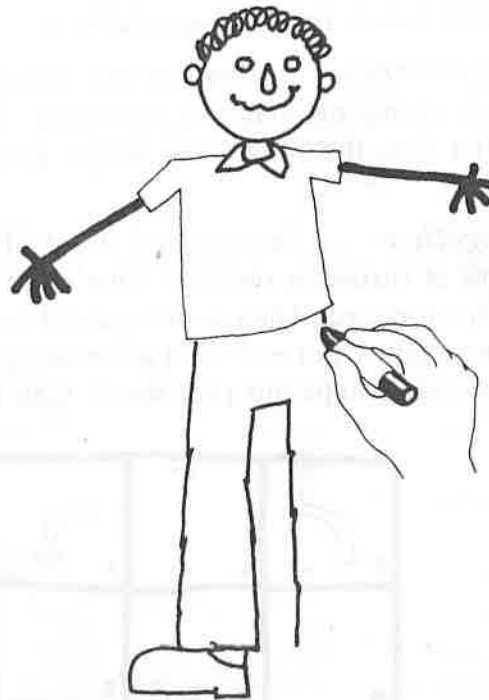
Pairing team race

The two activities in "Counting race" may be combined for another team race. Divide each team (remember you need two to three teams) into two groups and line up the two groups on opposite sides of the play ground or room. The two or three groups lined on one side of the room should be asked to hold up a number card or a picture while the second group of the team on the other side keeps the counters or the matching pictures. Once the counter or picture is held up, the children from the opposite side must match with their partner and bring him/her back. The children of all teams must run one by one in serial order. The first team that has all the pairs together on one side of the room wins the race.

All these games help children to recognise and identify similar things. Games such as "Guess the number", "Clapping numbers", and others that you have already read about, can also be played as team races. Can you try to work out the details yourself?

Complete the picture race

Draw a simple picture on the board, such as a house, a man or a tree. Divide the picture into distinct parts. For example, if you draw the picture of a man, show the definite divisions into head, body, two legs and two arms. If there are four parts to your subject, then divide the children into groups of four. The first child in each group has to run to the board and draw a head, the second one the body, the third the legs, and the fourth the arms, into one composite picture. The aim of every group is not only to finish first but to draw the picture well. You can increase the interest by drawing different things every time you play the game, but be sure these can be divided into parts, and the children understand the divisions they are expected to draw.

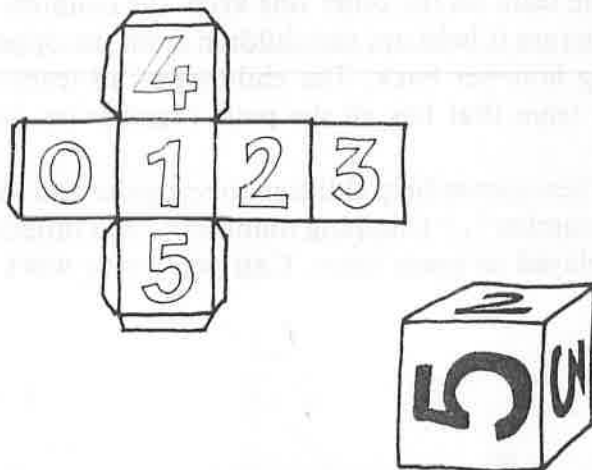


Games with Equipment

Here are some materials which will widen the range of your games and activities. As they are easy to make, have several sets of each so that the children can use them in groups. As you get used to games with these materials, you will be able to think of many new activities.

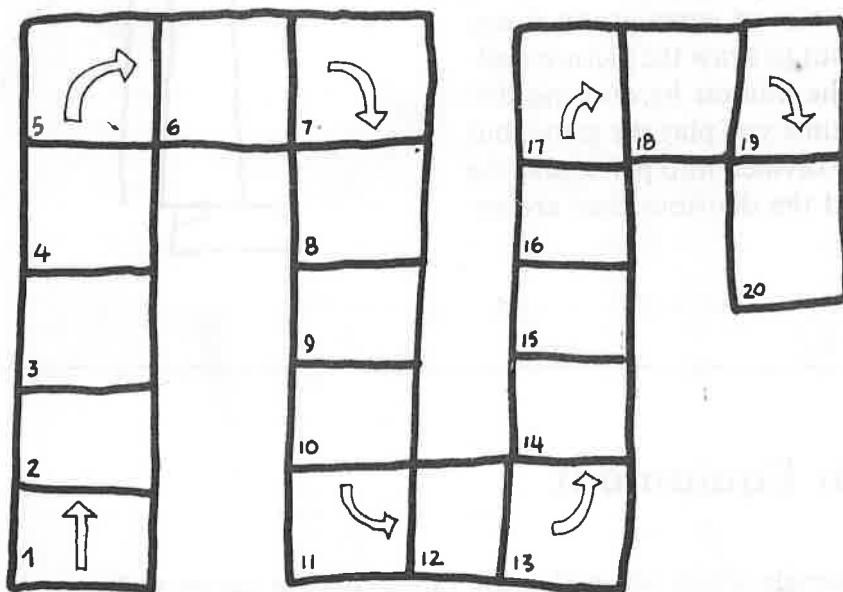
Dice

Make cardboard dice about two inches square as illustrated. A wooden cube, or a plastic building block, if available, will also serve the purpose. On the six sides, write the numbers from 0 to 5. If possible, make two dice. On the second one, you may repeat the numbers from 0 to 5—this will teach the children to add—or write the numbers from 6 to 10. What will you do with the sixth side? Keep it blank? Write O again? Repeat a number? Think about each possible choice. Dice can also be painted, each of the six sides a different colour—this will be useful in colour recognition games for younger children.



Act the number Stand or seat the children in a circle and give each one an action to do—say, jumping, clapping, counting. Then let each child have a turn at throwing the dice. After this, the child must do the given action as many times as the number shown on the dice.

Step together The children stand in line along a wall with their backs to it. They take turns at throwing the dice. One child throws the dice and all the children take that many steps forward. Then another child throws the dice and again everyone moves ahead that many steps. Continue until all cross the room, or courtyard or space that you are using. How many steps did they need? Can they remember? Do it again.



Track race Draw a race track on the floor or compound in large squares as illustrated. Or you can have a circular track. Let three or four children play at a time while the others watch. Since every child must get a turn to play, it is advisable not to have more than twenty squares, or the game will carry on too long.

Each child throws the dice in turn and goes forward as many places as the dice shows. When all have moved forward, repeat the round. The child who reaches the end square first is the winner, but continue the game until all who are playing complete the track. Then the next batch of children have their turn.

Bank One child keeps all the counters and is called the "bank" or "banker". Each child throws the dice and collects from the "bank" as many counters (use coins or cardboard money) as the number shown on the dice. After a few rounds, all the children total their counters. The one with the highest number gets a turn to become the "banker".

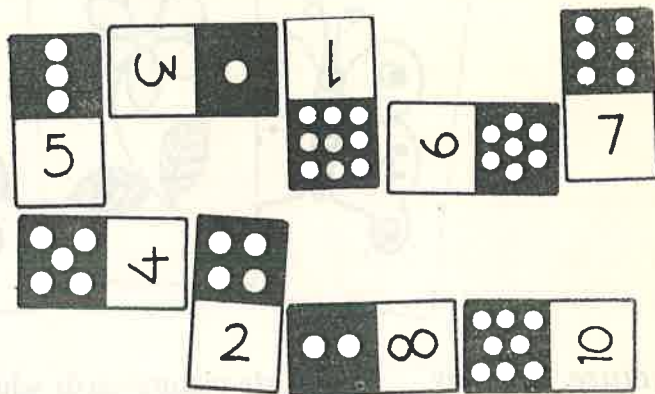
Dominoes

Matchboxes and cigarette packets are most suitable for homemade dominoes. On each domino, there should be a number and a set of dots, as shown in our illustration. The number indicated by the dotted pattern on one domino should NOT be the same as the number indicated by the numeral on the same domino. Remember to keep the pattern of dots the same for each set that you make, so that the children do not get confused. You can also make dominoes by using different shapes and pictures.

Number and domino cards

Make number cards from 0 to 9. If you wish, the number 10 could also be made. Keep at least two sets ready, though it is advisable to have four sets, if possible. Make separate domino cards the same size as the number cards. These will be useful in matching and counting games.

Match the dominoes This is played with pairs of number and domino cards. Four children can play if you have four sets of each. Each child is given a set of number cards and has to place the related domino card alongside its matching number card, or you can give the child the domino cards. The child must match these with their related number cards. Or you can stack the number cards separately, then call out any number and let the children pick up first the number card from one pile, then the domino card from the other pile and place them together. When they finish, the two lines must be arranged in the correct order, i.e., the number line must match the domino line.



Dominoes Put forward one domino. The children have to place next to either of its ends a matching domino, i.e. the dots (or picture or shape) of the new domino must match the end of the first domino put down. If you are playing the regular game, then a number domino must be placed next to its matching pattern of dots, and a pattern domino next to its related number. Let the children continue to make a long line, matching the dominoes at every stage. The line can grow at both ends, as shown in our illustration. But to make it more interesting, give the children the freedom to make the line zig-zag and take different shapes.

Picture cards

Paste pictures on small pieces of card, or draw them if you so prefer. Keep all the cards the same size. Picture cards can be of many types; for example:

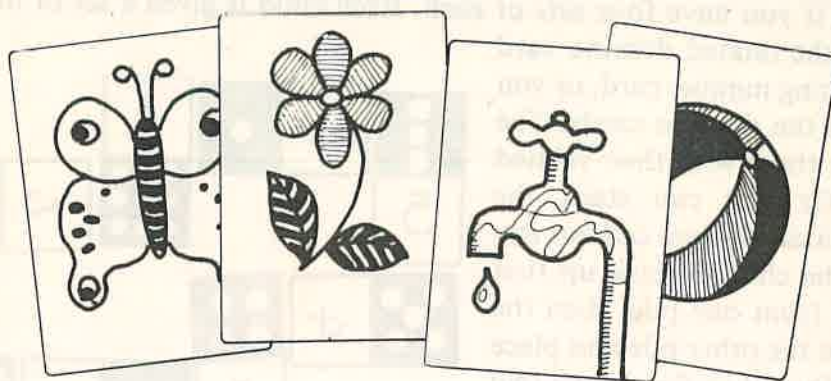
Identical pairs Use pictures of common objects: fruits, vegetables, flowers, animals, leaves, toys, household objects, etc. You should have two of each.

Associated pairs Find or draw pictures of animals and articles that go together: cow and calf, needle and thread, bird and egg, and so on.

Graded pictures These are sets of pictures of the same article, but they differ in only one quality—for example, five squares, each one bigger than the previous one, or five balls in different sizes, or five sticks of different length or thickness. You can also use different shades of the same colour. These cards can be used to teach children to grade or arrange in order.

Pictures in sequence By arranging those picture cards in order, the children can tell a simple story. You may be able to make them yourself if you are good at drawing. If you find this difficult, you can make use of pictures from discarded books and magazines. For example, you could compose a picture story from this outline: put a glass under a tap; carry the glass; drink water from the glass; drop the glass; sweep up the broken pieces on the floor.

Such sets can be used to teach children to understand time sequence.



Picture families These are picture cards which can be grouped together in different ways in sets of four. If you have collected a large number of pictures, you can ask the children to group them in different ways every time you play the game “Making families”—for example, four fruit, four vegetables, four birds, four animals. Or four household goods, four school articles, four objects found in the fields and four items seen in the jungle another time.

Missing picture Show the children a pack of six or seven cards—picture cards or number cards. Now turn them face downwards and take away any one. Place the cards face up again. Which one is missing?

This game can be played with objects too. Place six or seven objects on the floor and allow the children to look at them for some minutes. Now cover them with a cloth and take away one article. Remove the cloth. Which one is missing? You can also play this game by changing the order of arrangement and asking, “Which one has changed its place?”

Memory Place some cards or objects on a tray and let the children look closely at

them for a while. Then cover them with a cloth and ask the children to name all the objects. Remove the cloth so that they can check whether they remembered all the items. You can gradually increase the number of cards or objects.

Making pairs: Give four or five number or picture cards to each child. Use a pack of 40 cards for five children. Let the players sit in a circle holding the cards up but not showing them to one another. Each child in turn draws a card at random from the player to his left. If it forms a pair, the child puts them down, face upwards, so that everyone can see it. Continue until all the pairs are complete. Deal more cards after a few rounds. Repeat the pairing.

Making families: This is played with family cards. Use 10 family sets of 4 cards each, i.e. 40 cards in all. Give five or six cards to each child. Here too the children sit in a circle and do not show their cards to the other players. One child puts a card down, face upward. If the next child has a card belonging to that family, he/she places it alongside the first one. If the child does not have a family pair he/she places down a card belonging to some other family and thus starts a new set. The third child may then place a matching family card onto either card already placed down. Go around the circle until all the 10 families are complete, face upwards. Deal new cards after every few rounds.

Arrange in a line This is similar to "Families", but is played with number cards instead. These have to be arranged in sequence. For example, the first child opens the game by placing down a card, say the number three. If the next child has a four or a two, this is placed beside the three. If not, the child starts a new series as in the previous game. The third child then plays, trying to add to either of the rows with an appropriate card, or starting a new series. Continue around the circle.

Bingo Before you begin, be sure that you choose (a) enough cards to be able to give six to each player, and (b) appropriate cards so that the pack in your hand has all the 'pairs' of the ones given to the children.

Give each child six cards to be arranged in a line face upwards in front of them. Now you draw a card from the pack in your hand and hold it up. The child who has a matching card must call out its name and claim your card to make a pair. Go on drawing cards from your pack until the whole pack is over and all the pairs complete.

Activities for Older Children

Almost all games can be simplified or made more difficult to suit the age of the child. It is for you to choose the right activities for the children at the right time. As children near the age of five or six, you can introduce some special games and activities to help them prepare for school.

Letter and number games

You can play all the games described so far, but now use letters and numbers instead of pictures and shapes, so that the children begin to recognise some of the letters and numbers before they enter school.

Which one is different

Put down four objects or pictures, three of which should be of the same type, and one different. For example, three animals and one bird, or three fruit and one animal. Ask the children to select the one that is different.

Position

Give the children number cards and let them run about freely. When you clap or whistle or give a signal, they should form a line—the child who has number 1 standing first, the child who has number 2 behind the first child and so on in serial order.

Addition and subtraction

Place a stack of counters on the floor and ask the children to count them. Now take away a few and ask, "How many are gone?" Or take away a few counters and let the children count them. Cover the remaining counters and ask, "How many should be left?" Then check the answer with them by counting. Use the same number say 9, and try out different combinations, for instance, $4 + 5$, $6 + 3$, $7 + 2$, $8 + 1$, so that the children learn to subtract up to 9 without any difficulty.

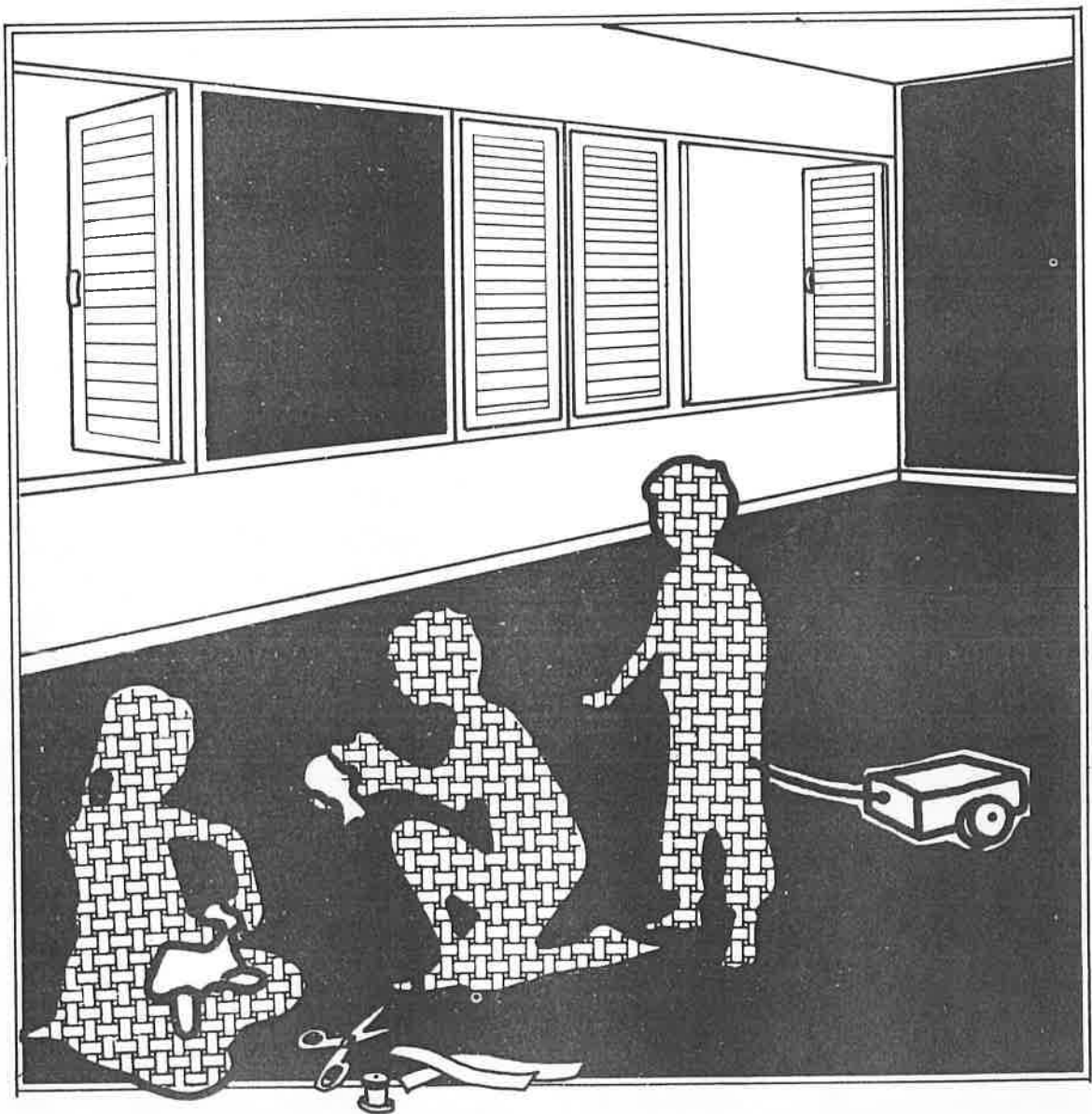
Sums race

Ask the children to divide themselves into pairs. Give every child a number card, face down. Ask them to stand at opposite ends of the room. When you clap your hands, each of the partners will run to each other. Together they will add the two numbers on their cards, and run back to you with the answer. The pair who comes to you first with the correct answer wins.

This can also be played as a team game. Divide the children into two or three teams. In sequential order one member of each team will run together to the front of the room where you are standing. When the children reach you, you will give each one a simple addition or subtraction sum to solve. As soon as it has been solved correctly, the child runs back to the team at which time the next child in line has to run forward for solving a sum. The first team to complete the activity wins. However be certain to let each team complete.

You can plan many more activities that help children learn to think and by using ordinary items which are around them. Remember that children are quick to learn and active and, therefore, they should be taught from the beginning to develop problem-solving strategies.

PLAY ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT



PLAY ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Young children are constantly learning language from their environment, but *you* can help them to learn it better. When children go to school, they will be taught to read and write. But first they must learn to understand language and speak fluently. The child must be able to communicate and express feelings and ideas in the mother tongue. This is where you can help.

How a Child Learns Language

The child learns language by:

- listening
- imitation
- repetition and practice of conversation
- appreciation and encouragement by others

So what can you do to assist the child to learn?

Listening

Give the children frequent opportunities to hear language. You must be a model of good, proper and clear speech. Talk to the children frequently, individually and in groups, about everyday matters and experiences. Tell them about yourself and encourage them to listen.

Speaking

Give the children ample opportunity to speak. Do not expect them to sit quietly or to be silent for long periods. Let them talk to each other as they play. Encourage them to talk to you and ask questions. Keep aside some time every day for free conversation. Give them things and experiences to talk about.

Encouragement

Give every child the freedom to express himself or herself. Praise and encourage the efforts

of all the children. Help them to correct their errors. Do not make fun of them or find fault with their mistakes.

What is Language Used for?

As children learn the use of language, they should be able to do some of the following:

- describe something
- ask questions
- follow instructions
- give directions
- express feelings
- know the meanings of many words
- use words correctly
- discriminate sounds in the mother tongue

There are many activities you can plan to give them practice in language. For instance:

- talking and listening
- singing songs
- rhymes
- puzzles
- acting games
- stories
- playing with puppets
- free conversation
- picture games

and, as the children approach the school-going age, some special activities to help them read and write can be introduced.

Talking, Singing and Games

Here are some games and activities that give children the opportunity to act, sing, speak, listen and have fun. Try them out.

Tell about

Seat the children in a circle. Put a collection of toys and common objects in the centre and cover these with a cloth. Each child has to pick up an object from under the cloth and say a few sentences about it. See that every child gets a turn. Encourage them and ask questions when they find it difficult to express themselves.

Following directions

Seat or stand the children in a circle around you. Give directions for two or three different actions which have to be done in the same order as stated by you. For example, "First touch

your toes, then put your hands on your head, and then jump three times." Begin with only two instructions and later make it difficult by adding more. At first, let all the children do the series of actions together. Later each child must act individually while the others watch to see if the sequence is correct. When the children are confident of the rules, let them take your place as leader turn by turn.

Ram says

This game needs careful listening. The children form a circle around you and have to listen carefully to your directions, which may be "jump, clap, bend, touch your toes, or close your eyes." They must carry out your instructions only if these are preceded by "Ram says". If you don't say "Ram says" first, they must not do what you say. Now start giving directions, sometimes with "Ram says", sometimes without. Do this quickly and watch the children. Those who are acting at the wrong time must sit out and watch. Let the children take turns at being leader in your place.

In and out

Here is another listening game you may already know. Draw a circle (or a line) and name the two areas formed—for example, inside the circle (or left of the line) is "land" and outside the circle (or right of the line) is "air". When you say the name of an animal or thing that lives on land, the children must jump inside, and when you mention the name of a bird or insect that flies, they must jump outside. You can use this game for several other things which fall into two groups, for example, living and non-living. You can also say the name of objects that begin with different sounds.

Family names

Divide the children into teams or groups, or form a circle or play as individuals. First, decide on the name of a particular class or family—for example, fruits, or red objects, or something edible. Discuss the chosen class in brief and get the children to name a few members that belong to it. Then ask each child in turn to call out the name of a member of the class. For example, if you have chosen "fruits", each child in the circle must name a fruit. The ones who do not do so must sit out and watch. To make it difficult, after some practice, no one should be allowed to repeat the name of a fruit that has already been said. This will make the children listen more carefully and test their memory. After a few rounds, select a new category.

First sound

This game is similar to "Family names", but here every child must say a different word commencing with a particular sound—for instance, m, or k, or l—which has been decided upon in advance. In the beginning, the children may find this difficult, so discuss some words with them before you start playing; this will give them words ready to use. Later, they will be able to recall words by themselves.

Outsider

Once you are familiar with the two previous games, you can introduce this one which is

more difficult. Decide on a certain family of words and discuss some words, pointing out what makes them a family. For example, if you choose "animals", mention a few animal names and then introduce something outside the family, for instance, a colour, or the name of a child. When the outsider is mentioned, the children must clap or signal in some way. After they have mastered the game, give your place as leader to some of the children in turn. Remember the game "Which one is different?" found in chapter III?

Find the right partner (in teams)

Divide the children into two teams and let them face each other in two lines. The first child from team I chooses the name of something. The child's partner in the opposite team must give a reply, which must be something related to or associated with the first object. For example, cow-calf, pencil-paper, boy-girl. Let the children themselves decide whether the answer is suitable or not. If it is not, give the child another chance. Try out many examples so that the children have sufficient practice before they begin the game. Remember the same game with pictures? "Find the right partner" and "Associated pairs" found in chapter III.

Add a word

This is a word game which trains the memory. Seat the children in a circle and begin by saying any word. The child next to you must repeat your word and add one of his or her own. The next child must repeat the first two words in the order stated and add a third one. Continue in this manner as far as is possible. Usually five or six words only are repeated. Then start a fresh round. Make different conditions every time to increase the interest. For example, you can have only colours the first time, or words about food, or names of animals, or words beginning with a particular sound and so forth.

This game is slightly difficult and is therefore more suitable for older children. You can also play with short sentences so that you compose a story as you go along. Decide on a topic before you begin.

Do you know any more games in which children get practice in listening and speaking?

Let's become

Stand or seat the children in a circle. Tell them to 'become' different things and to imitate those things when you say the word. If you say, "Let us become elephants", all the children have to become elephants and act like elephants. Go on saying the names of various things, animals, birds and different kinds of people. All the children have to act together. Later let a child be the leader and give directions.



If I was...

This is similar to "Let's become", but it is played to a tune. For instance, you sing "If I was a soldier, a soldier, This is what I would do..." and here you march smartly and all

the children do the same action. There are many such songs in all Indian languages. You yourself can compose a few lines. Can you try one in your own language?

Fly birdie, fly

This is another acting and listening game for the young. Stand or seat the children in a circle. When you say, "Fly birdie, fly" all the children move their arms in a flying motion. Now go on repeating the words. If you say the name of something that does not fly, for example, "Fly, horse, fly", then the children must stay still. Go faster as the game continues and ask those who move at the wrong time to sit out and watch. Later, let the children take turns in giving directions.

Shopping

One child stands up and says, "I went to the market". The others ask "What did you buy?" The child then acts out an object and the others must guess the name of the object. If they guess correctly, they can ask, "What did you do then?" and the child acts once again. This can continue for two or three questions.

This game can also be played as a team game.

What am I doing?

This game is similar to "Shopping". A child comes to the centre, does an action and asks, "What am I doing?" or "Who am I?" and the others have to guess. All the children should be given a turn to act. You of course will have to give each child a suggestion as to what he should act in the beginning. But after some time the children will think of their own ideas.

Follow the leader

The children line up behind a leader who goes around the room doing any action he or she likes—hopping, clapping, imitating an animal, etc. All the children follow, doing the same action. Every child should get a chance to lead.

Read and act

This game helps older children prepare for reading in school. Assemble a set of small cards. On each card write the word for a different action—for instance, "sing", "laugh", "sit", "stand", "jump", "eat", "cry", "drink", "bend". Show each card to the children and explain what action they are supposed to do. Soon they will recognise the shape of the word, though they cannot read it yet. Now start the game. Shuffle the cards, and as you open them one by one, let the children "read and act". They will love to pretend that they are reading.

There are many more acting games that help in language development. Some of them have already been introduced to you in other sections:

Statues

Do as I say

The colour game

Blindfold race

There are many singing games in our country which combine music with questions and answers, actions and fun. Do you know any? Songs and rhymes are an enjoyable way for children to learn facts and develop verbal expression. Teach as many as you can and look out for new ones.

Puzzles

Puzzles are fun, help children to think and remember, and encourage them to use language correctly. There are many puzzles in every language. Do you know any? Some of them are difficult for young children, so here are a few suggestions to make it easy.

Describe it

Put a variety of articles on the floor and cover them with a cloth or put them in a bag. Ask one child to select any article without showing it to the others. Then the child must try to describe it—saying how big or how small it is, its colour, what it is used for and so on—without saying what it actually is. The other children have to guess what it is. If they guess correctly, the child can take out the article and show it to them. Help the child in the description by asking questions. In this way, allow each child to have an opportunity to select and describe an article.

Picture puzzles

Show the children a set of pictures on a single subject, for example, animals. Then cover up the pictures. Pick out any one and describe it. For instance, you may choose the picture of an elephant and say, "It is very big and has a long nose which swings from side to side". The children must guess its identity. The one whose guess is correct is given the picture card. Continue until all the cards are used up, and every child has guessed at least one picture.

Word puzzles

Tell the children you are going to play a puzzle without any pictures or objects in front of them, but say that it will be about one class of things, such as food or animals. Then start describing and giving hints, as in the previous games, until the children guess correctly. You can make the game more and more difficult as the children learn to play it with confidence.

Sound puzzles

In this game, you tell a story and whenever you pause the children must find the right word and say it. You must tell them the particular sound with which the word begins and they must guess the word. For instance, your story may begin, "I went to the market. I was very hungry. I saw some fruit. I wanted to buy some fruit to eat. So I bought a few...". Then mention the sound "a". The children must name a fruit that begins with the sound "a". If they are all unsure, you can help by giving hints and asking suitable questions.

Comparison puzzles

To help children learn reasoning and to be observant, introduce comparisons, such as, “What is round and gives light, like the moon at night?” “What is green like grass but grows on trees?” “What is white like sugar, but does not taste sweet?”

Just as there are many singing and acting games in every language, so too there are many puzzles. Do you know any? Learn some from the mothers and other people in the locality. Introduce the easier ones to the children. Puzzles will help children to think, to analyse and learn language.

Story Telling

Children love listening to stories, and while they listen they learn—they learn not only new words but also new ideas, feelings and experiences. So reserve plenty of time for story telling and make sure that your stories are interesting.

What to tell

Stories for young children should be short and simple. Tell about things familiar to them from their environment, and deal with their favourites—toys, people and nature. Include lots of rhyme and repetition, and short songs which they will be eager to learn. Children enjoy fantasy, fun and humour. Try to avoid subjects that are sad or frightening, and do not bring in difficult or complex ideas. Rather, start with well-known stories which you knew as a child. Later, you will find many more. There are many folk tales, legends and stories drawn from our ancient traditions which are always popular with children. Do you know the *Panchatantra* and *Hitopadesa*? Why not ask some people in the community to tell you or the class some local stories?

How to tell

Make your story telling as interesting as possible. Let the children sit close to you in a group. Use simple, everyday language which children understand. Speak in a clear, pleasant voice. Change your tone and expression to suit the situation. Use lots of gestures and act a little, if you can. Make the story as dramatic as possible. Rhythm and repetition usually help to hold the attention of young children.

Aids to story telling

Here are some ways to put more fun and interest into your stories, so that the children will enjoy while learning.

Blackboard and chalk If you can draw a little, then sketch with chalk on the blackboard. Keep adding more strokes to your drawing as you go ahead with the story.

Sounds and actions Let the children join you in making the sounds and doing the actions at the right time. Tell the story once. Then tell it again, but this time ask the children to fill in the right sounds whenever you pause and signal to them—perhaps the story will require the sound of the wind, of a train, of a cart, of an animal....Or tell them to act

as you speak. Little by little, the children will be enthusiastically acting out the whole story. Now you can ask them to speak the different parts. Divide the children into groups for this. For example, if you are narrating the "Hare and the Tortoise", let half the group act and speak as the hare, and the other half act and speak as the tortoise.

Pictures Cut out colourful and large pictures whenever you can and keep these carefully. Remember that the younger the child, the larger the picture should be. Pasting pictures on pieces of cardboard keeps them firm and clean. Your personal collection of pictures will grow slowly and will always be useful. You can use pictures in several ways.

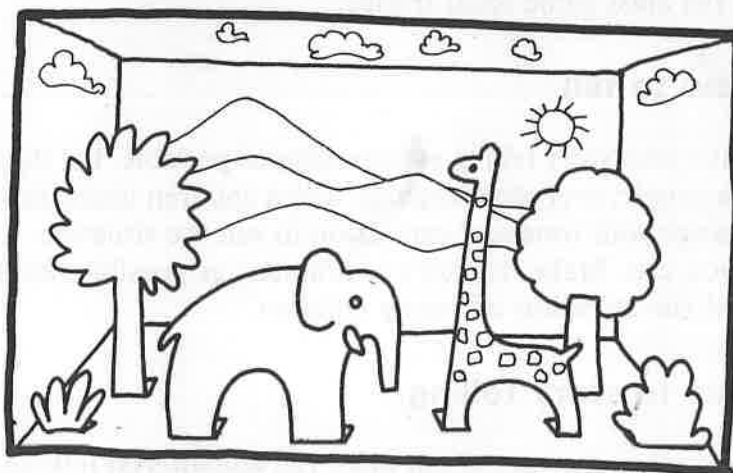
Put them on a flannelgraph. To make a flannelgraph, spread any rough material (*hori*, blanket or *chaddar*) on a blackboard, or on the back of a chair or the side of a table. Apply wool, cotton or any similar substance on the back of each picture. This will allow the picture to stick to the flannelgraph.

Pass the pictures around for the children to look at while you are telling the story. Use them before story telling to introduce the characters, and after the story is over as a reminder.

Use a home made booklet. Fold some thick sheets of any used paper, and stitch them down the middle. Paste your pictures on these pages, and you have a picture book! If you wish and if you have the time to spare, you can paste pictures for each story, and get separate books ready.

Note: Try not to use charts on the wall. Pictures on the wall are never as clear to children as pictures in their hands. And usually they are too crowded and therefore difficult for a child to understand. If you have some story charts in your centre, cut them up and use them as individual pictures.

Diorama Make a diorama as illustrated here. Take an old cardboard box—a sweet box will do—and paint a background scene (or paste pictures) on the bottom. Then take thin cardboard and draw the outline of the main characters. Cut out these figures and paint them. Let the figures stand in front of the scene and pin or paste these to the box.



You can also use:

dolls
models

toys
books

as aids in your stories. Perhaps you can produce some aids of your own?

Puppets

What is a puppet? It is a moving thing. A puppet is not a toy or a doll. It is not to be kept in the room for decoration. It is not for children to use as a toy or a doll.

A puppet which looks like a person, or an animal or a thing MOVES and SPEAKS. This is what the audience is made to believe. It looks as if the puppet talks to the children, and the children should be encouraged to carry on a conversation with it. Sometimes you handle the puppet and make it move and speak. At other times allow the children to do this themselves.

Make the puppet tell stories. Or the puppet can become a person in a story. The puppet can also be made to sing and dance and act. Make your puppet come alive in different ways.

Here are four puppets that are easy to make,

Paper bag puppet

Take a paper bag and fill it with anything similar to scraps of paper, pieces of cloth or waste material. Draw a face on it and colour the face, or paste pieces on the bag in the shape of a face. Remember that the pieces should be large and in strong, bold colours. Only then can you see the puppet clearly. Insert a rod or stick in the bag, tying up the bottom of the bag securely so that the rod does not slip out. Your puppet is ready.

How to make a paper rod If you do not have a stick or bamboo or a long piece of wood, you can make a rod by rolling up paper very tightly, and then tying or pasting the edges down.



Ball puppet

Take an old rubber ball and paint a face on it. Make a hole in the ball and push the rod in. Instead of a rubber ball, you can use a:

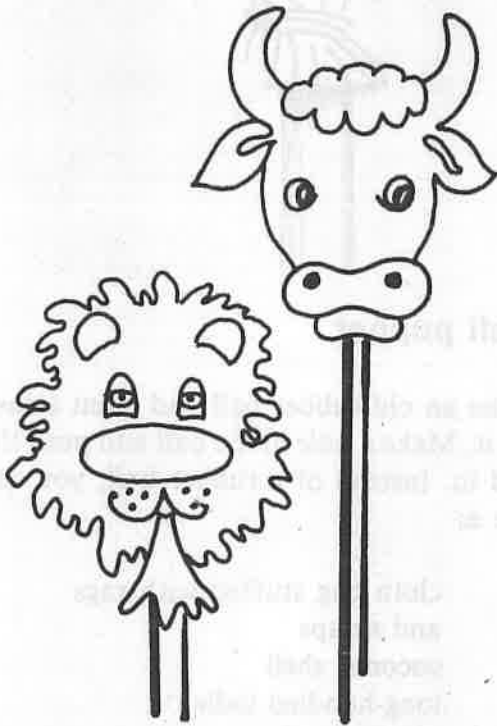
- cloth bag stuffed with rags and scraps
- coconut shell
- long-handled ladle
- plastic bottle

Can you think of anything else?

To dress the puppet, fold a piece of cloth and stitch it on to a bag, leaving a hole at one end. Slip it over the rubber face and tie it around the rod.

Finger puppet

With a coloured pencil, pen or a ballpoint pen, draw faces on your fingers. Cover the finger with a strip of cloth and you have a puppet. Make your two thumbs into puppets, hold the cloth with the other fingers, and your two puppets can comfortably talk to each other! Or you can put a matchbox on your finger and draw a face on the matchbox.



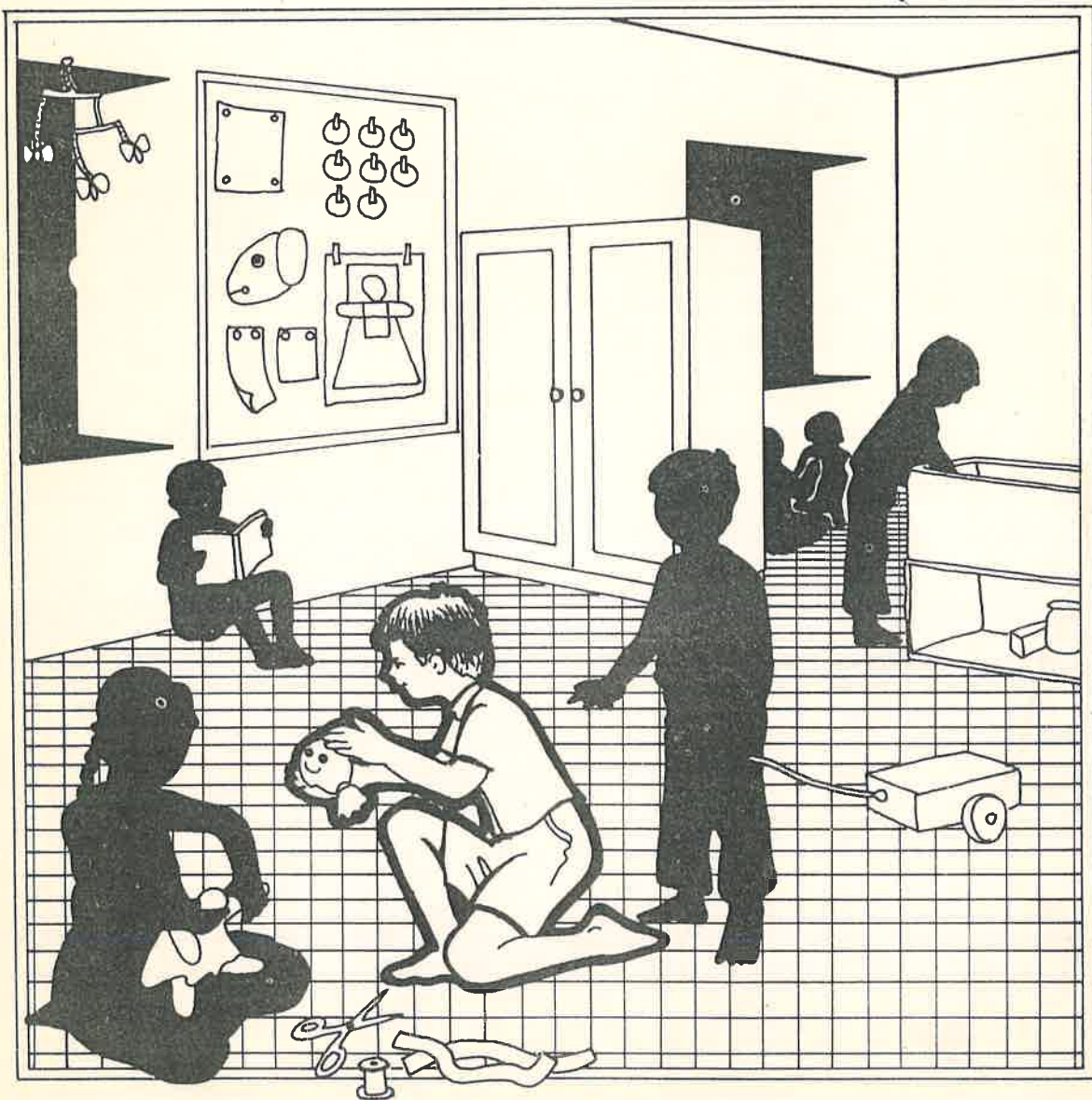
Flat puppet

This is most suitable for animal figures. Draw the outline of an animal on a piece of thin cardboard, cut it out and paint it. Fix a thin, flat rod at the back of the puppet with glue or cellotape.





PLAY ACTIVITIES FOR SENSORY AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



PLAY ACTIVITIES FOR SENSORY AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As children grow, they develop in every respect. They learn by:

- seeing
- hearing
- touching and moving
- tasting
- smelling

In various ways, children participate in new experiences. Sometimes they think over their experiences, and repeat them in different ways. In repeating their experiences they often meet new ones. They use their *imagination*—this is another way to gain experience. They also learn to express their feelings and thoughts—to communicate. They not only *express* their feelings, but learn to control them too by:

- creating with their hands (as in arts and crafts)
- acting with their bodies (as in movement and dance)
- using their voices (as in speech and song)
- using every part of themselves, body and mind

You can help in this process of development. We shall describe some ways in which you can help children to:

- experience
- imagine
- express

with their senses, minds and feelings.

Sensory Games

Here are some activities that require the use of the five senses. Through these children can gain new experiences and also think about them.

Touch, taste and smell

We usually give less importance to touch, taste and smell than to seeing and hearing. Learn to use these three important senses too.

Guess by smelling Stitch small cloth bags out of discarded material or bore a small hole in the lids of tins. Fill the bags or tins with items of differing scents such as onion, *dhania*, flower petals, spices, rubber, leather and chalk. Let the children come up one by one. Closing their eyes they should guess what each item is by its scent. Ask questions about the hidden contents, “What else do you smell? Anything sweet? Something dry or pungent?”

Guess by tasting Talk about various tastes, using words such as sweet, sour, hot, bitter, salty and flat. Collect a variety of eatables in small cups or bowls—sugar, *gur*, *roti*, fruit, vegetables and small types of common local foodstuffs. Ask the children to close their eyes. Place a little bit of the contents of one cup in a child’s mouth. Can the child guess what it is? Ask, “How did you know?” Encourage everyone to use words that describe the taste. Give the next child a different taste.

Guess by feeling Put into a big cloth bag or sack an assortment of common articles which have different textures and different shapes; they may be made of wood, metal, cloth, plastic, clay or they may be natural objects—for instance, leaves, twigs, shells, seeds, feathers and stones. Every child has a turn to put his/her hands into the bag, touch one article and guess what it is from the feel. You may help by using relevant words such as rough-smooth, hard-soft, sharp-blunt, heavy-light.

Tell about This activity has already been introduced in chapter III. This time encourage the children to speak more about the object—its feel, taste and smell, not only about how it looks and what it is used for.

Games with sounds

There are many games that teach children to look carefully. Here are some that teach them to listen carefully.

Guess the sound Collect a few common articles which make different sounds—for example, a bell, a rattle, a ball, pieces of wood, a metal plate or cup, scraps of paper, leaves, a clay pot, shells, sticks. Make sounds with each, using different methods—striking the pot or the metal plate with a stick, shaking a box or a tin containing stones, tearing or crushing paper, rubbing two spoons together, bouncing a ball, splashing water and so on. Ask the children to listen carefully and describe the particular sound. Now play the game. The children sit in a circle and close their eyes. Make a sound and ask one child to name it. Continue around the circle until every one has guessed a sound correctly.

Guess the order As in “Guess the sound”, so too here show the children the articles you have collected and let them hear the different sounds they make. Then ask them to close their eyes. Now make three sounds with the objects and let the children take turns at naming them in the correct order. Let one child come forward and repeat the three sounds in the correct order.

Who Spoke? Each child has to speak briefly and everyone listens carefully to his or her voice. Then ask one child to leave the room, and let the other children select a “speaker”. Let the first child return and close his/her eyes. While the eyes are closed another child speaks. The child must keep his/her eyes shut and try to guess who it is. How did

he/she find out? By direction? Or by the voice? Ask the child.

Song can be used instead of speech. In this case one child sings and the child with closed eyes is asked, "Who sang?"

Body sounds How many different types of sounds can you make, using only your own body and nothing else? This game can continue for as long as the children come up with new ideas. In the beginning they will need suggestions. They can jump, clap, hit a part of the body, rub the hands together, click the tongue, smack the lips, blow and so on. Can you think of any more?

The silence game The children have to close their eyes and sit absolutely silent for a minute. Then ask them, "What did you hear?" Go around the circle and let each child tell you what he/she heard.

Neighbourhood sounds Take a walk around the compound, or even out into the neighbourhood if possible and try to remember all the sounds you hear. How many sounds can the children remember? Ask them to sit down and tell you about them as soon as they come back. Can the children keep quiet while walking? Can they remember where they heard each sound?

Rhythm, Music and Movement

Children love rhythm, music and movement. These provide experience and at the same time a chance for children to creatively express feelings and ideas with their bodies. Here are five ways to use rhythmic activities with children.

Rhythm activities

Repeat the rhythm Clap out a simple rhythm, for instance, two quick beats and one slow. Let the children repeat it with you. Now do it again until everyone is clapping the correct beat together. You can alter the game by playing it with the feet; i.e. every child stamps his foot in rhythm. Later, you can change to a more difficult rhythm.

Move in rhythm Clap out a simple rhythm and ask the children to move their bodies to the beat, each time in a different way. First, show them some movements, for example, sway from side to side, sway forward and backward, swing the arms, swing one arm at a time, swing the foot. Later, you can ask them to move in any way they like, keeping to the rhythm. Alter the pace of the rhythm from slow to fast. Sometimes change the rhythm itself.

Fast and slow Stand the children in a circle, all facing in one direction. Start clapping or beating a rhythm, and ask the children to move, keeping time to your beat. When you clap slowly, they must move slowly, and as you clap faster, they must walk faster, until, when you are clapping very fast, they are running. Change the pace from time to time. Can you vary the volume of the clapping to explain the difference between loud and soft?

Body orchestra Remember "Body sounds" in this chapter? Now use the same activity to form a "band". Divide the children into groups of four or five. Let each group make one kind of sound—blowing, whistling, clicking the teeth, snapping the fingers, stamping,

clapping, rubbing the hands, etc. Let each group first practise their sound in time to a simple rhythm which you must teach them. Now begin the game. When you call one group, they must make their sound, keeping to the rhythm. Go on like this turn by turn. When you call out, "Everyone join", then all the groups make their sounds together and you have a body orchestra!

Rhythm story This follows the same pattern as that of the sounds and actions story in chapter IV. Tell a well known story. As you narrate, pause at places that require a sound or action. Let the child fill in the gap with the sound in rhythm; for example, the fox came running, the rain came down.

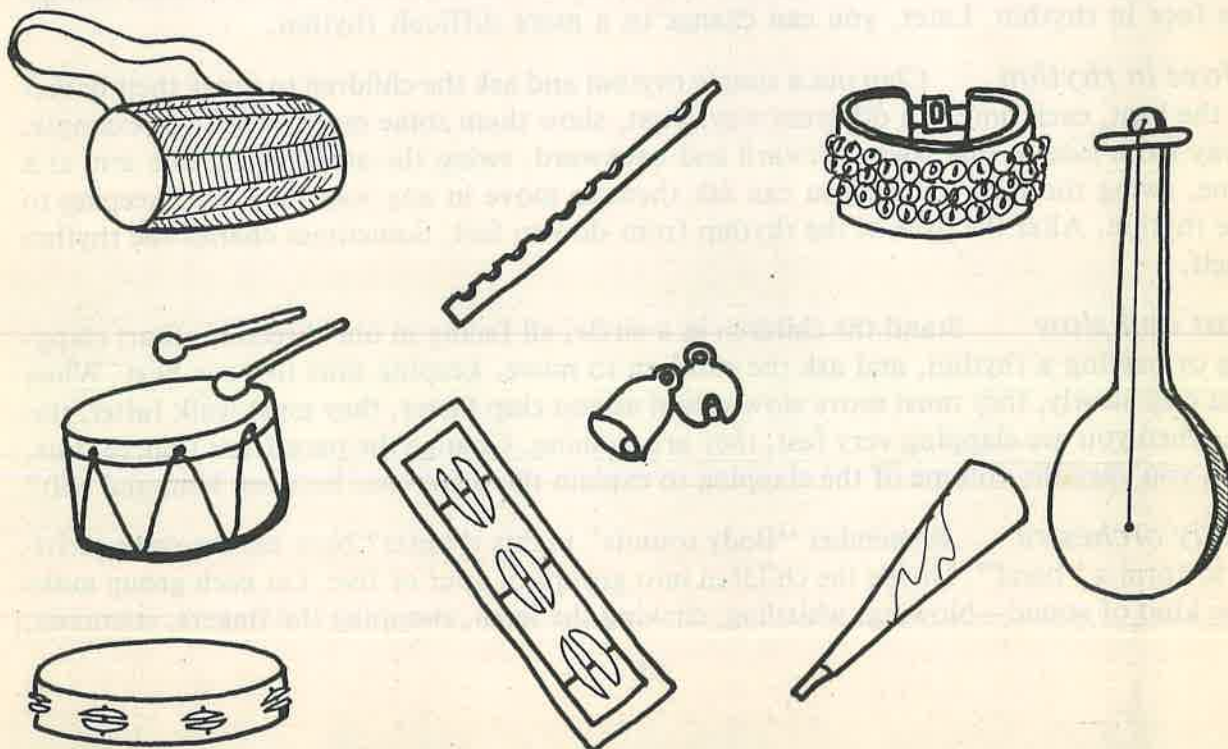
Musical instruments

To produce music and rhythm, you need instruments. There are many ways to make sounds and rhythms that increase children's enjoyment. You do not need elaborate or expensive equipment for this. Some instruments are easily available:

- dholak* (drum)
- daphli*
- damru*
- manjira*
- bells
- khadtal*
- flute
- ghunghru*
- pipe or bugle
- ektara*



If possible, try to get a few of these.

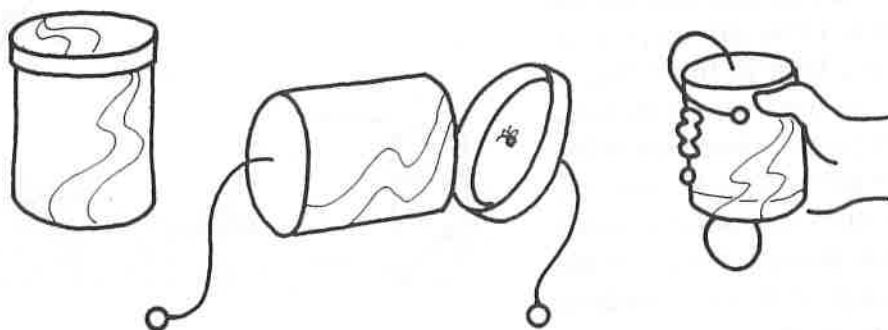


Some instruments are very simple to make. Here are a few:

Rattles Fill an old tin with pebbles, seeds, twigs, marbles, sand.

Manjira Pierce holes in two coconut shells and pass a string through. Tie knots at each end to keep the string from slipping out.

Ektara Stretch a rubber band or a long wire tightly between two nails.



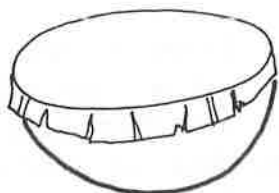
Damru Take a round tin with a well-fitting lid and make two holes, one on each side of the tin. Thread a thick piece of string through each hole and make a knot on it on the inside to hold it in place. Tie a bead or a *ghunghru* to the other end of the string. When you swing the tin from side to side, the beads will swing and make a sound against the top and bottom of the tin.

Jhunjhuna Thread *ghunghrus*, beads, seeds, shells, bottle-tops or other such material along a thick piece of wire, or a long thin stick, or a green bamboo that can be bent.



Gong Hang a metal plate on a rope. Use a metal spoon or a wooden stick to strike it.

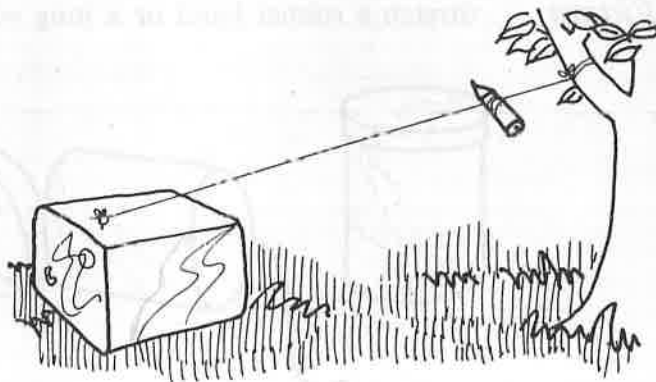
Jaltarang Take two or three glasses, porcelain cups or earthenware cups of the same size and put different quantities of water in each. When you strike them with a metal spoon, you will get a different sound from each one.



Daphli Take a shallow, unbaked earthenware bowl and stretch a piece of paper tightly across it. Play it with the fingers only.

Flute Make a slim roll out of thin paper. At one end, make a V-shaped cut and squeeze it slightly flat. You have a flute, you can alter the pitch by cutting the roll shorter. You can also use a hollow reed or bamboo if this is available.

Ektara You can make a real *ektara* with a sound box. Take a large coconut shell, or a dried gourd, or an old ghee tin. Make a hole in one side and thread a string through it. (You can use rubber or wire too.) Tie a knot in the string so that it does not fall out or twist it round a nail or wooden piece. Stretch the string and tie the other end to a nail in the wall with a pencil or ruler or a piece of wood to tighten it. Now stretch the string and pluck it. You can get different sounds by stretching the string more or less.



Rhythm band Now can you form a rhythm band with all these instruments? As with the 'body band', so too here let the children make sounds, but now they should use all the different instruments. You can also play these instruments when you sing songs or dance and need rhythm.

Can you think of some simple instruments to make?

Movement activities

Words are not the only way to express ideas and feelings. Children can express them with their bodies too. Here are five activities that encourage such expression.

What can I do? Spread out the children all over the room or courtyard. Keep ready an instrument or whistle for signalling start and stop. Or you can clap your hands. Now begin. Call out different movements, such as "stretch as tall as you can", "crawl on all fours", "roll on the ground", "swing your body from side to side", "move your left foot from left to right"..... and the children have to move together. Use rhythm, if you like. Vary your commands, so that the children learn new concepts; for example, up-down, left-right, fast-slow, heavy-light, loud-soft, strong-weak, over-under. To make the game interesting, have lots of variety. Follow a foot movement with a slow one, a stretching movement with a bending one and so on.



Make shapes Follow the same rules as in "What can I do?", but now the children must make definite shapes with their bodies. "Roll up like a ball", "spread like a tree", "be straight like a pole", "become sharp like a rock", "stand pointed like a mountain" and so on. Or you can suggest the shapes of different common objects that they see around them. Later, you can help them to make the shapes of different numerals, for example, 4, or letters of the alphabet. Sometimes you can ask two children to form a shape together.

Move like a... Remember "Let's become...." in chapter IV? Play this game the same way. The children have to move in the manner of the animal/thing that you name.

So you may say, "Move like a bird... a fish.... a cloud... the wind... a tree... a cat... an elephant.... a cart... a train...." Sometimes you can ask two or three children to join together to depict a movement. Vary the commands and use different rhythms from time to time. Let the children learn to start and to stop when you blow the whistle. Once they are sure of the rules, let them take turns at being the leader.

Follow the sound After you have played the three foregoing games for some time, let the children learn to match each movement with a particular sound. Make a soft, slow gentle sound for clouds, a quick beat for a train, a heavy one for an elephant and so on, and show the children what movement goes with it.

Now start the game. Make a sound. The children have to listen carefully and make the appropriate movement. Change the sound and the children must change to the appropriate movement. Soon they will be dancing! Or you can tell stories and ask them to move their bodies to suit the different sounds they hear.

Through the maze Set up a maze for the children, using articles that are easily available. You can use drums, stools, *chowkis*, planks, rope, tyres, cloth, sheets of paper, chalk lines and boxes, and arrange these in different ways around the room. The children must form a line and play one at a time. One child must finish going through the maze before the next starts. Tell each child what to do at each junction, for instance, "jump over the stool", "go under the rope", "walk along the line", "hop between the two drums" and so on. Vary the commands for the next child. Use rhythm to control the movements, changing from fast to slow. Later, one of the children can take your place as the leader and give the commands.

Dance Teach the children the folk dances and other simple dance steps common in your locality.

Creative Drama

Creative drama combines all the different elements we have been talking about—experience, imagination, expression. In creative drama children can express themselves by using their imagination. They remember their experiences and create new ones with the help of rhythm, movement, sounds, song, dance and speech. They use their bodies, minds and feelings. Here are some starting points for creative drama.

The three things game

Choose the names of three common objects, but let them be as different as possible, for example, tree, pot and comb. Or let the children suggest the names of any three items. Or take three different pictures. Make up a story, beginning with one of the three chosen articles. For example, say, "In a jungle, there was a big, old pipal tree." Let the children act the story out with you as you tell it, becoming the tree, making suitable sounds and movements. Go on with the story, bringing in the other items. "A woman was going to the well. She had a pot on her head. She was feeling very tired, so she sat down to rest under the tree." Continue in this manner until the story is complete. As you go along, let the children help to add to the story and act it out. Ask them questions from time to time. In this kind of drama, all the children act together and act all the parts. They act as you tell the story.

Chorus acting

Choose a well known story, and tell it to the children once again. Now divide the children into groups and allot a part to each group. For example, if your story is ‘The Wolf and the Seven Goats’, one group can be the wolf, another group the mother goat, and a third group the baby goats. Tell the story slowly and let each group act out its part with the sounds, words and movements. Use songs whenever possible.

The objects game

Seat the children in a circle. Put an ordinary object in the centre. Each child has a turn at using the object to ‘become’ someone, do something, and say something. For example, if a stick has been placed in the centre, the child may act as one of the following, using the stick suitably: an old man, a blind person, a cartman driving his horse, a traveller carrying a bundle, a woman washing clothes, a vendor carrying a basket, a policeman, a soldier, a *chowkidar*, a boatman. The next child uses the same object, but imitates another character using actions and speech different from those of the first child. Ask questions and remind the children of what they have seen and what they know. This will help them to use their imagination. The other children watch and can sometimes guess who the child is; or sometimes, the child will have to tell them. Other simple objects: a pot, a cloth, a box. Can you think of some more?

Dramatic Play

Children like to play freely, pretending to be various people and acting out different experiences. All you have to do is provide a few simple settings to create the right atmosphere. For example, if you can provide them a simple house or shop from boxes, the children will create their own story and act it out.

House play

To make a play ‘house’, you can use a table draped with cloth on three sides, or a plank resting on two stools and covered with cloth. A large wooden box or cardboard carton will also do for a house. Put in a set of toy kitchen utensils, some dolls and a few pieces of cloth. This will enable the children to play at cooking, eating, feeding babies, etc. Add a few items which you and the children can conveniently make—clay fruits and vegetables, bead necklaces and matchbox furniture, for instance.

Shop play

Make a counter by resting a plank or shelf on two bricks or tins or boxes. Make a pair of scales, using two tin lids, or coconut shells, or earthenware cups, some string and a ruler.

For a grocery shop, collect pebbles, marbles, sand, beads and shells of different sizes and colours and put them in little tins or cups or jars. For a fruit and vegetable shop, make clay fruit and vegetables and paint them. For a tailor’s shop collect pieces of cloth, reels and thread.

Doctor play

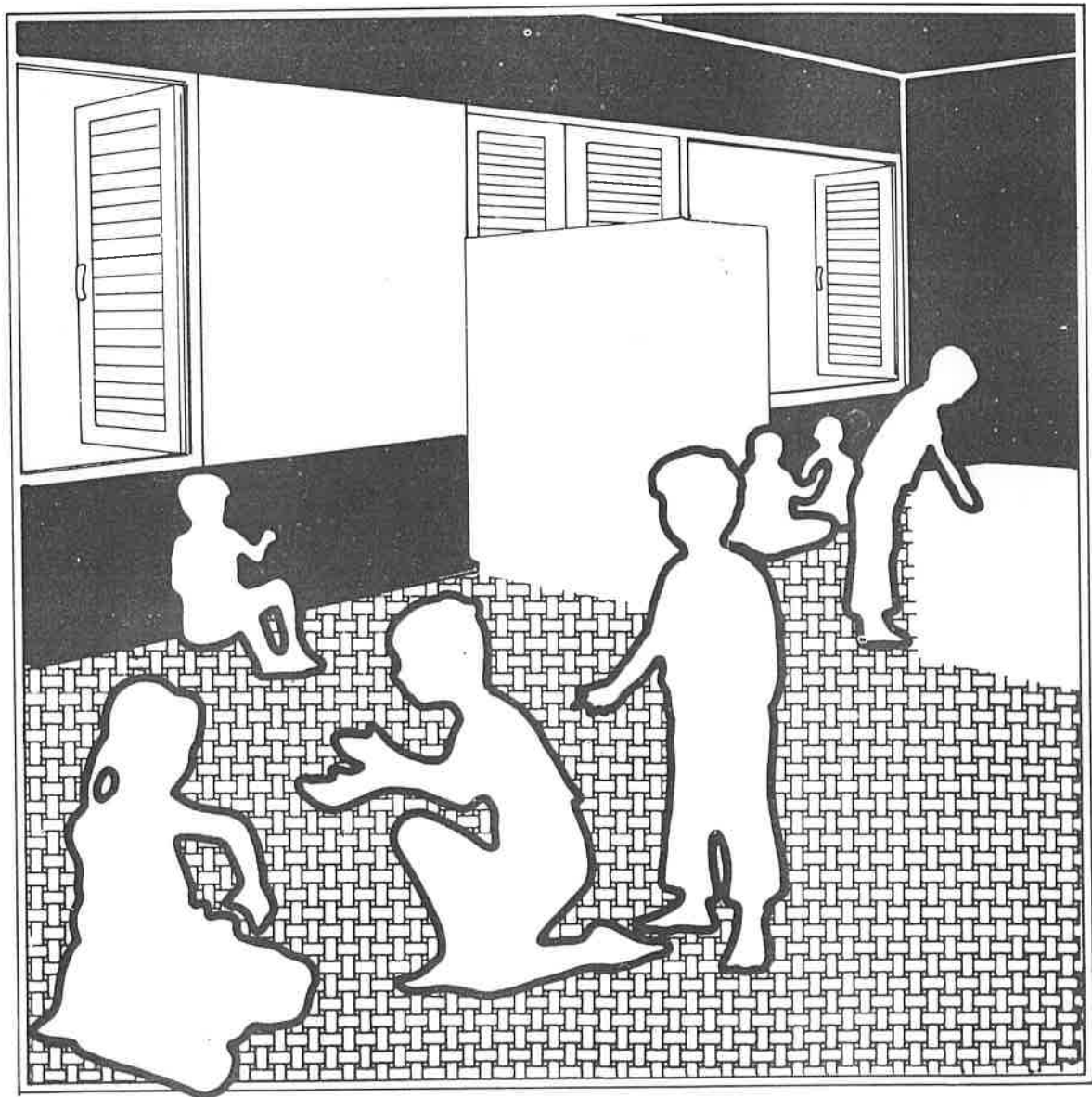
Hang up a white sheet in a corner of the room to suggest a doctor's clinic. Plastic bottles filled with coloured water will become medicines. You can also make tablets out of clay, and paper caps for the nurses. Collect cotton and scraps of cloth for bandages. You can even get a toy stethoscope, or try making one with odds and ends.

Can you think of how to create a setting for a:

- doll's wedding
- festival
- post office
- railway station
- bus

What other places are familiar to the children? Can you try and decorate a corner of the room suitably? Then leave it to the children to follow up from there, using their imagination and ideas.

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT



CREATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Children love to create with their hands. As they work with their hands, they are also *exploring* with their senses, gaining new *experiences* and using their *imagination*. They are *expressing* their thoughts and feelings when they make something; they are also *practising* skills with their hands and fingers and are *coordinating* and *controlling* their muscles. Do you see in how many ways they are developing? So when we speak of “arts and crafts” for the young child we mean only things to make and things to do. This is why they are sometimes called “creative activities”. Remember, children enjoy making things that they can make by themselves. And while they are doing that, you are helping them to:

- use all the five senses
- gain new experiences
- use their imagination
- express their thoughts and feelings
- use their hands, fingers
- practise skills
- coordinate eyes and hands, and
- appreciate beauty

You need not be a scientist to help children learn through science. In the same way, you do not need to be an artist to provide creative activities for children.

How to Organise Creative Activities

Here are some suggestions to guide you in organising creative activities:

Collect all the materials in advance so that you have everything ready when you need it. Collect lots of old tins, canisters and boxes to store all your materials. Try to label everything.

Train the children to take out only what they need for an activity, to clean up the room after the activity, and put away everything neatly in its proper place.

Do not give all the children the same activity at the same time. You will find this leads to confusion. Plan three to five activities for the same period, and let the children work in groups. Then you will be able to help and guide them well.

Do not provide a model for the children to copy—for example, do not draw a flower on the blackboard and ask the children to copy it. Do you know why? Look again at the reasons above for the need for creative activities. Will the children learn *more* or *less* if they copy you?

Show the children how to use tools—for example, how to hold a pencil, a brush, the scissors; how to cut, fold, paste, etc. Then let them make things by themselves. First teach the activities that you find easy. Later learn some new ones which you can try out with the children.

Painting

Children love to work with colour. Here are some ideas on how to introduce the young child to the world of colour.

Where to paint

Paper Use large sheets of paper: newspaper, brown paper, paper bags or any other paper that you can get. It need not be new paper; used paper will do for children.

Floor This is convenient if you have a *pukka* floor. You can wash it afterwards.

Walls If you have mud walls, plaster them regularly and they can be used.

Objects The surfaces around you—planks, old stools and tables, pots, tins, boxes, discarded books, even the doors—are ideal for children's paintings.

Colours

Powder colours Mix dry colours, which are available in the market, with water and a little homemade glue (prepared from *maida*) or gum, and keep each colour in a separate container.

Vegetable dyes Collect seasonal flowers; soak or boil them and then squeeze to make natural colours. *Mehndi* and vegetables too produce rich shades.

Local colours Use *geru* for red, black ink for black and experiment with other local materials.

If you can afford it, buy poster colours and water colours.

How to paint

Brushes Make your own brushes by attaching a little piece of rag or cotton to the end of a stick. You can also tightly tie together the dry fibre from plants, such as the date and gourd, or the dry leaves which are used for sweeping and dusting.

Fingers Children can use their fingers to draw outlines and to make dots and lines.

String String dipped in colour is effective for designs.

Printing Take leaves and stems of different shapes or cut out a variety of flat pieces

from dried vegetable peelings or bark, dip these in colour and press flat on the paper. This is called "painting" and children enjoy it immensely.

Drawing

When only lines are made and colours are not filled in, children are drawing and not painting. Below are some materials that help them to draw.

Where to draw and with what

Slates A special hard pencil is available for slates.

Paper Lead pencil is usually used on paper. Coloured pencils are more effective, if you can get them; crayons and coloured chalk are also popular with children.

Blackboard Chalk, especially coloured chalk, is suitable on blackboard.

Ground If the earth is soft, or covered with sand, the children can draw with sticks.

Clay Clay can be spread out like a large board for drawing with sticks and twigs.

Wooden surfaces Doors, *taktis*, *chowkis* make excellent surfaces for chalk and pencil.

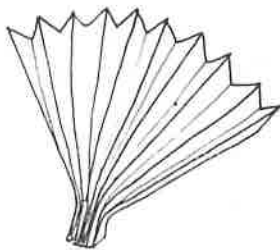
Hands Remember the finger puppets drawn on the fingers with ink? You can use *mehndi* leaves to draw on the hands.

Paper Craft

Collect all kinds of paper—thick and thin, smooth and rough, shiny and dull. Newspaper, brown paper, paper bags, coloured paper, kite paper, thin card like old postcards—all can be useful.

Paper folding

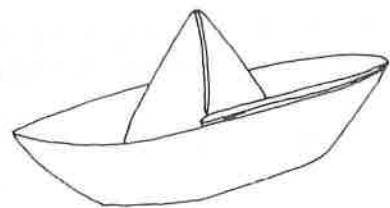
You can show the children how to turn the paper into simple articles as shown in our illustration.



Fan



Bag



Boat

Paper tearing

Draw a variety of shapes, for instance, a house, a fruit, a flower, and let the children tear the paper along the outline.

If you can get pairs of small, blunt scissors, which will not hurt tender fingers, you can also teach the children to cut. Then you can outline more difficult shapes for the children to cut out.

Paper pasting

Cut out all sorts of shapes from paper and let the children paste these on large sheets of paper or small cards.

Let the children tear paper, preferably coloured paper, into tiny pieces and keep these in a container. Draw a large outline and let them paste the pieces on it. The effect is very pleasing and the children will enjoy the occupation.

Modelling

Clay

This is the best material for modelling. Use a local sticky clay. Ask the local potter to help you to find the right source. Sieve the clay when it is dry. Add a little oil and some spun cotton, or add some ground *methi*. Knead well, adding a little water. Keep it in a bucket or container, covered with a wet cloth. Always keep the clay moist, otherwise it takes a long time to prepare the correct texture when you want to start shaping it. Let the children make balls, long pieces shaped like 'snakes', and flat pieces shaped like *chapathis*. Then they can mould different things: fruits, pots, plates, baskets, houses, benches, animals and men. You can show them how to join small pieces to form larger objects.

Papier mache

Tear or cut old newspapers into small pieces and soak in water for four to five days. Then squeeze out the water and add some ground *methi*, a little cottonwool and some oil. Pound and knead well into a coarse dough. *Papier mache* is suitable for shaping into cups, bowls and plates. You should mould it around a cup or a plate or a bowl to get a good shape. After it dries you can paint on it. It is not heavy like clay and therefore cannot be used for solid shapes.

Paper sculpture

Tear or cut the paper into pieces and wet them a little. Prepare some simple homemade glue out of *maida*. Paste one layer of paper on a bowl or cup or glass, using only water for the first layer. Now go on pasting more layers, using glue. Paste eight or ten layers. Leave it to dry for a few days. When it is dry, remove the holder, i.e. the glass or cup or bowl. Gently loosen the edges with a sharp instrument, such as a knife, and then pat it out. If you have used only water for the first layer, your sculpture will separate from its holder easily.

Collage

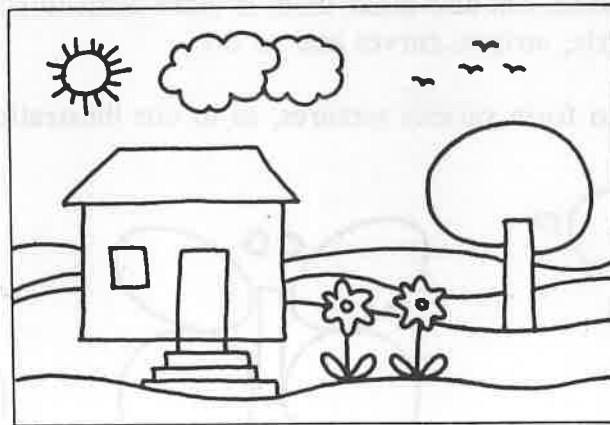
A collage is a picture made by pasting together all kinds of odd material into a design. Collect waste materials in small pieces—paper, cloth, wool, cotton, string, rope, beads, shells, twigs, leaves, petals, pebbles, sand, sawdust, buttons, bangles, flowers, broken pieces of glass and so on. If possible, put each item in a separate jar, so that the children can see what they need without having to search for it. For example, the child may want string, rope, wool or cotton for hair, beads and buttons for eyes, cloth and paper for leaves and branches and so on. If your entire collection is in one box, the child's work becomes troublesome instead of enjoyable.

Fill up the outline

Draw any outline on a large piece of paper and let the children fill it up with a variety of materials. You can discuss with them what to use.

Make figures

Draw a particular shape—perhaps a house, a tree, a bird, a man—and let the children paste materials within it. Now they have to think about which material to use in which place. Help them to decide by asking appropriate questions. For example, "What colour is the trunk of a tree?" "What type of material will be best for a bird's wings?"



Wall pictures

You can make different types of scenes on the wall. Draw the outlines and let the children fill them in.

You can also let the children make up their own scenes and compositions.

Pattern and Design

Rangoli (Floor design)

There are many traditional Indian arts of pattern and design which can give children the

joy of creation. Use the ones common in your locality. Floor designs are found in many parts of the country.

Draw the outlines of various designs and let the children follow the lines by placing small pebbles, flower petals or shells along them; or let the children fill the spaces using white stone powder, coloured powders, flower petals, pebbles, sand, etc.

Tiles

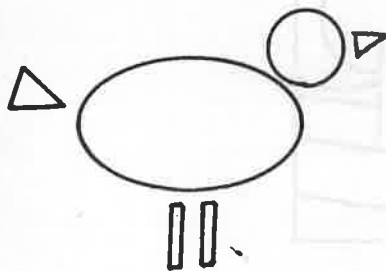
Prepare small coloured tiles in a few shapes— square, diamond and rectangle— and in different shades. You can use old postcards (or cardboard or thick paper) or pieces of sacking, bark and stems of plants such as banana, *jowar* and date palm. Use at least two colours, or more if possible.

Start with simple designs as in our illustration. Arrange the tiles in different patterns. Let the children copy the pattern. They should also be encouraged to make their own patterns.

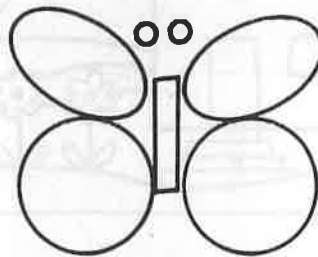
Shape tiles

Prepare tiles as just explained, but now make them in more difficult shapes—long, oblong, circular, square, semi-circle, stripes, curves and so on.

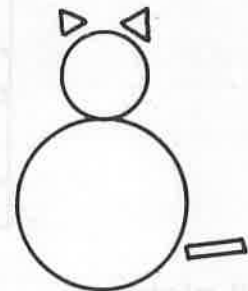
You can then use them to form various pictures, as in our illustration.



Bird



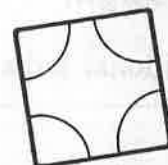
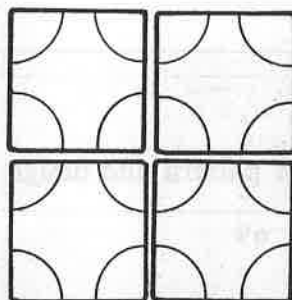
Butterfly



Cat

Corner tiles

Square tiles can also be designed so that only the corners of square pieces are coloured. The tiles can then be put together in different ways to form patterns. Our illustration gives one such pattern.



Construction

Children love to build outdoor scenes with natural materials. If you have space in the courtyard or the compound, collect soft mud or earth. Along with it, you will need material such as chips of brick and stone, pebbles, pieces of wood and cardboard, boxes of all types, tins, cups, sticks, twigs, leaves, stems, flowers, shells, feathers, seeds, beads and cloth. Can you think of some more items?

When you ask children what they would like to build, the immediate reply will be something they have noticed themselves—roads and bridges, houses, villages, temples, mountains and valleys, fields, farms, rivers, boats and so on.

You can show them how to develop their project, correct any errors, and give them new ideas. For example, they can use a real branch for a tree or prepare flowers and leaves out of cloth and paper. If there are birds in the trees, they can make a nest out of straw, eggs out of clay, and birds from clay or cloth. Can you think of some more ideas?

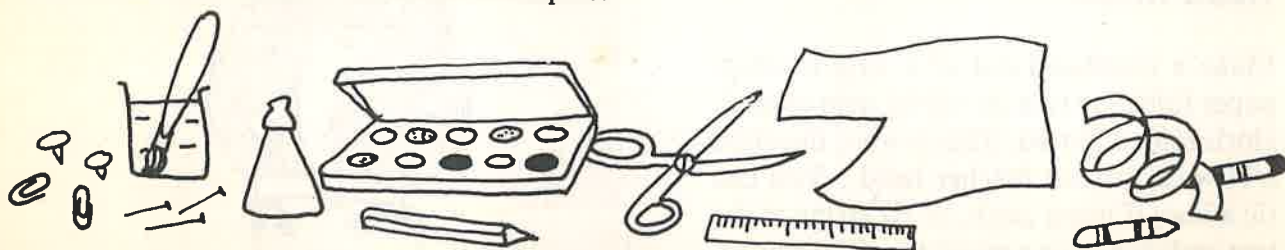
Garlands

Making garlands is another traditional Indian art. You do not have to restrict yourself to flowers and leaves, which are the usual choice for garlands. There is a wealth of other materials. You can make beads out of clay and paint them, or use wooden beads. Or you can form beads out of *jowar* and banana stems or other natural materials. You can collect and use rubber, cork, lids, reels, pine cones, shells and other such material. Can you think of other items? Remember, children find it difficult to thread small articles. So collect large objects, or those that already have holes, or are soft so that holes can easily be bored—for example, reels of thread, spools, small cardboard boxes and tins, soft lids and milk bottle tops. Do not use a needle or any sharp object for boring holes. A nail is more suitable. Keep the material ready for threading. Use thick string and dip the end in a little homemade glue. This will stiffen the end so that it can pass through the holes easily.

Another way to make a garland, when there are no holes for threading, is to wind the thread around the bead or object and tying little knots. Let the children make their own patterns and sometimes give suggestions.

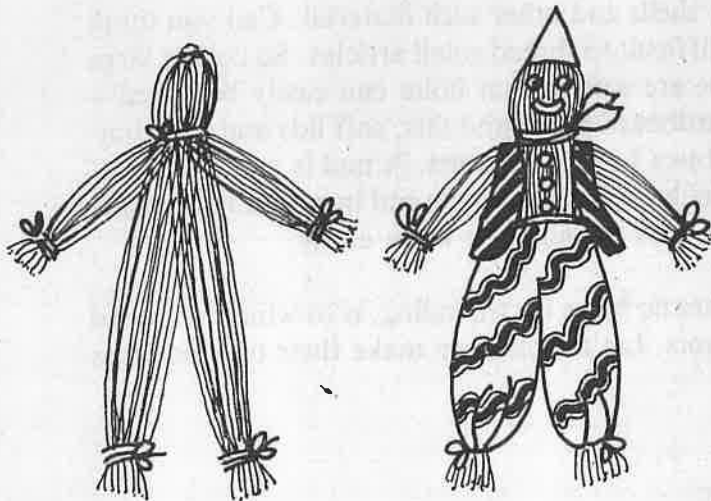
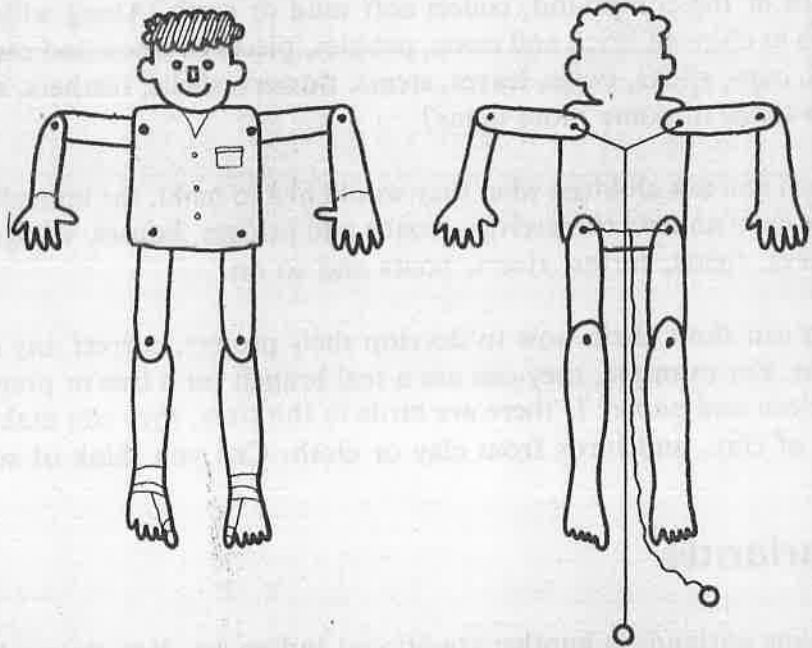
Toys, Dolls and Masks

Guide the children in their choice of handwork so that the articles they make can be played with afterwards. Here are three examples.



Moving man

Use thin cardboard, like a postcard. Cut out pieces in the shape of a man's body and attach the parts with string. Make knots on the wrong side so that the string stays firm.



Rope doll

You can use wool, yarn, jute, rope and the fibres from plants such as maize, *bajra* and date palm.

Divide your ropes into two. Tie the two parts together in a cross. The shorter end of the vertical bunch will form the head, and the longer end the body. Divide the longer end into two for legs if you want the doll to have legs. The two ends of the horizontal bunch form the two arms. Tie them up and paint them as shown in our illustration. When your doll is ready, you can put in facial details or dress it up.

Head mask

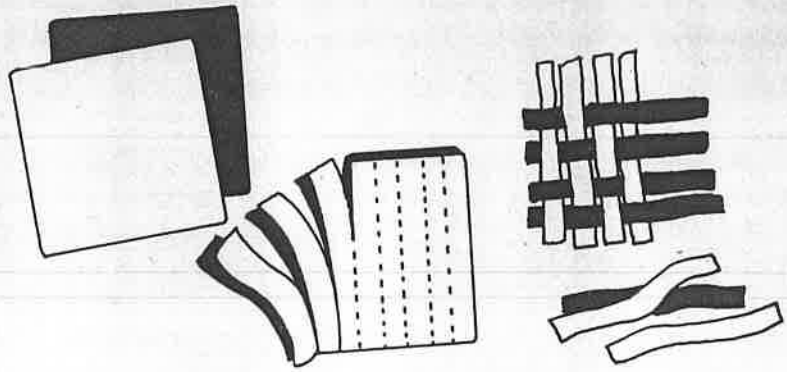
Make a headband out of a strip of thick paper folded in two, or a long strip of thick cloth folded in two. This is what the child will wear around his/her head. You can tie a knot if using cloth, or fix string at the two ends for tying around the child's head. Cut out shapes from cardboard or thick paper that depict different animals and fix them to the headband.



peacock

Weaving

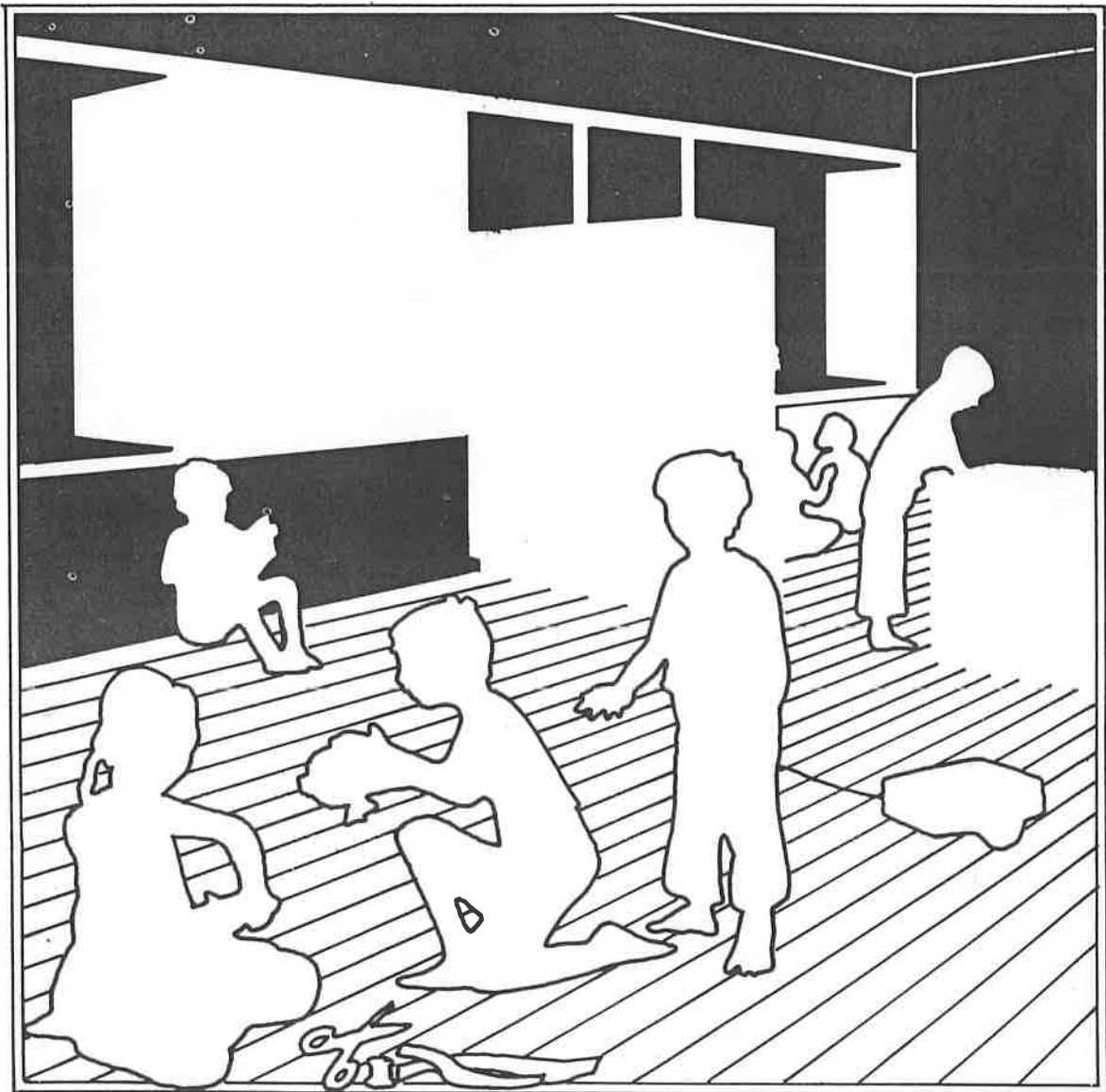
Weaving is another traditional art which can be taught in a simplified way to young children. They love to make small mats, *asans*, baskets and bowls in different patterns. Use the local straw, grass, cane and fibres which are suitable for mats and baskets. Remember to keep the strips wide because young children usually find it difficult to handle narrow strips. In the beginning, children should only make items in a small size.



To start, this is how you can teach your group weaving. Take a square of paper, about one foot on each side. Cut three or four slits along the square in one direction, but do not cut up to the edge. Now give the children strips of paper about one foot long. Let them weave the strips into the slits.

What are some of the things children have learned by these activities?

PLAY ACTIVITIES FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



PLAY ACTIVITIES FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Social Development

Social development means the development of good habits and good behaviour, the right attitudes and sound values.

The first few years of life are very important, because the impressions formed at this stage may last forever, or for a very long time. During these years, the child adopts habits, attitudes, behavioural patterns and values from the environment and learns to become a well-adjusted member of the society to which he or she belongs. That is why it is so important to teach the young child good habits and healthy attitudes. Children are influenced by the world around them, by their families and by other children. But you too can help them to learn and develop socially in desirable ways.

Learning Attitudes and Habits

Children learn the habits and behavioural patterns that they observe around them. This is obvious to everyone. At the same time, they acquire attitudes and values which are not so easily seen in the environment of your centre. It may be difficult to know what attitudes and values they are learning. And yet it is essential for you to integrate these into your daily teaching. From the adults and children in home and school children learn to live and work as socially accepted beings.

How to teach good habits and good behaviour

If you know how children learn, then you can plan with assurance how to teach. Children learn by:

- observation
- imitation
- repetition
- love, praise, encouragement
- enjoyment

By observation so:

always set a good example, doing only that which you want the children to do
have a well planned time-table for your daily activities and include the habits
that you want to instil.

By imitation so:

always set a good example
let all the children imitate what you do so that they learn from one another
involve the parents by talking to them about what you are doing and getting
their support.

By repetition so:

practise the same routines every day at the same time and the same way create
plenty of opportunities for doing what is right; plan carefully so that the
children do not get the time to do what is wrong.

By praise and encouragement so:

shower praise, encouragement and love on those who are well-behaved
sometimes talk about what you are doing and explain the reasons for your
actions, so that the children gradually learn why good habits are necessary
let the group praise and direct individual children.

By enjoyment so:

make all admirable actions enjoyable and interesting so that the children will
be eager to do them
make all undesirable behaviour appear unpleasant so that the children will
shun it.

Some DO's and DON'Ts:

Remember that young children cannot reason like adults:

- Do NOT expect them to behave exactly like adults
- Do NOT give detailed explanations
- Do NOT lecture on good behaviour. Rather teach by example, practice, repetition and encouragement
- Do NOT severely punish bad behaviour, since children may not understand the reason for it
- Do NOT use bribes, threats, scoldings
- Do NOT compare children with one another
- Do NOT single out individuals and make them a bad example for others.

Besides your daily routine, keep alert for occasions to guide the children in their behaviour. For example:

celebration of festivals and community events
excursions or outings
visits from outsiders

are all ideal occasions for teaching children to practise good behaviour.

What are good habits and good behaviour?

Here are some examples of good habits and good behaviour.

In health and hygiene

washing the hands before and after eating
washing the mouth after eating
keeping clean all the parts of the body: hair, nails, teeth, eyes, ears
keeping the body clean
keeping clothes clean
keeping the surroundings clean
going to the toilet regularly
keeping the toilet clean
keeping drinking water clean
and many more

In nutrition

eating the right foods
trying new foods that improve health
preparing food hygienically
eating at regular times
disposing of left-over food hygienically
disposing of waste
and many more

In social behaviour

speaking politely
using the correct forms of speech
waiting for one's turn
following instructions
sharing things with others
dividing duties and responsibilities
taking part in group activities
and many more

In preparing for school

attending school regularly
arriving on time every day
doing things at the proper time

obeying instructions
completing the assignments
keeping work material in the proper place
holding a pencil and slate
writing from left to right
and many more

Can you make your own list of good habits and good behaviour?

Attitudes and values

What are attitudes? They are based on feelings.

What are values? They are based on beliefs.

Both attitudes and values are difficult to teach, because they concern feelings and thoughts. Young children have strong feelings. If you can guide them, creating opportunities for them to express their feelings constructively, they will develop the right attitudes. Young children have no beliefs; they follow what others do, as they grow to adulthood they usually accept the beliefs common in their society. Normally, these are not talked about; they are learnt through silent observation. Sometimes people question them and may choose their own set of values.

Though children tend to pick up the values of their environment, you too can influence them. Some healthy and desirable attitudes and beliefs that you can teach are:

being loving and kind to others
helping each other
sharing things
cooperation and team work
respecting others needs and rights
listening
taking initiative in positive actions
self-reliance
self-confidence

How to teach healthy attitudes and values

You cannot teach attitudes and values that you consider admirable by lecturing. But you can attract children to them by:

providing opportunities
inviting participation
your own example

Here are some hints on how to teach a child proper attitudes:

When a child has some difficulty with a game, an activity or a puzzle, ask another child to help out. By this, they will learn *to help* each other.

Arrange jobs that a whole group has to do together, for instance, carrying a big tub, collecting bricks, digging a pit, decorating the room. By this activity children will learn *to work together*.

When food or sweets or toys have to be distributed, let one or two of the children do it. By this they will learn *to share* what they have.

When you plan a programme, ask for suggestions from all the children and discuss each one before you decide to include or reject it. Thus will they learn to *respect* others. Assign duties to every child and praise each one who carries them out well. Thus will they learn to value *responsibility*.

Let the tasks you give them be easy enough for children to manage so that they have the satisfaction of success. Thus will they grow in *self-confidence*.

Can you think of some more examples?

Some DO's and DON'Ts

Remember that it is difficult to teach values and attitudes that are very different from those of the child's parents and families so:

DO get to know the community well

DO emphasise values that the community appreciates

DO involve the parents in your programme

DO inform the parents about what you are doing and why and ensure their participation

Learning new concepts

Besides practising good behaviour and habits, and developing healthy attitudes and values, there are also some socially useful concepts that children should learn. Daily routine and thoughtful guidance teach the young many things. But children must be introduced to new concepts, and they need to understand these and why they are important. How can you teach concepts that are socially necessary? There are many ways. Every game you have played so far can direct the child to selecting values and social habits. But you can also develop some special game for this purpose.

Here are two examples of board games for older children.

Nutrition snakes and ladders This game is the same as "Snakes and Ladders", but also teaches a few concepts about nutrition. Two to four children can play at a time. Let each child have a different coloured counter. Use home made dice (see chapter III) to throw numbers. Each child must move the number of steps forward that is shown by the throw of the dice. If the counter gets to the base of a ladder, it moves up to the top. If it gets to the mouth of a snake, it goes down to the tail. Incidentally the child learns to count. Remember each time to mention and discuss the reason for the ladder or the snake, i.e. the ladders symbolise habits leading to good health whereas the snakes are habits leading to poor health. So talk about "good and bad" eating habits as the children play. You may say, "Oh, Mala is a good girl; she eats a raw carrot every day. That is why her eyes are bright and shining. See how she goes up the ladder and is going to win." Or, "That is not good — eating open foods on the roadside, because they can be dirty and make you ill."

Therefore games for the five-year old should be such as to develop all these positive qualities fully and prepare the child for the next stage of development. Introduce team and group games which require cooperation and sometimes competition. Language games where children have to express themselves in words and listen to and follow instructions, and memory games which require them to remember certain rules are favourites at this age. Let the children learn to accept both success and failure. Let all of them take turns at being the leader in all group activity so that every child learns both to follow and to lead. Make minor variations in the games each time so that there are new challenges.

You already know many activities to help five-year olds develop. Remember?

- Tell about (put your hand into a bag and tell about the object)
- Which letter is missing? (find out which letter or number is missing)
- Track race (take the number of steps shown by the dice and play as a team)
- Objects game (compose a story about three objects)
- Conditions (decide which children should do the action)
- Musical island (get together in the right number on "islands" when the music stops)
- Do as I say (follow the words and not the action)
- The silence game (listen to sounds in silence)
- Categories (name all the items of a particular type)
- Read and act (act according to written instructions)
- Patterns (make patterns according to instructions)

If you understand the pace of child's growth, you can help and guide him/her. You will not expect from children what they cannot do. You will try to ensure not merely progress, but progress with fun and joy.

Behaviour Change

Children learn not only by doing things—by observation, by imitation, by repetition and enjoyment; they learn also by our system of rewards and punishments. Sometimes it becomes necessary to use reward or punishment, and this teaches children to distinguish right from wrong. Yet the best course is to so arrange and plan your programme so that you avoid both reward and punishment.

Rewards

The best reward for a young child is approval, praise, encouragement and love. This can be shown in many ways. You can recognise an achievement by:

- a look
- a smile
- a nod
- a pat
- a few words
- telling other children about it
- informing the parents about it

Remember:

- Do NOT praise the same children all the time
- Do NOT draw comparisons between children
- Do NOT offer bribes such as sweets
- Do NOT make promises that you cannot keep

Punishments

The most humiliating punishment is disapproval or reprimand or lack of love. This too can be shown in many ways. But punishment must be determined by the age of the child. A young child cannot always understand our reasons for punishment, so the same mistake committed by children of different ages must be treated differently.

A three-year old should NOT be punished, but you should try to *prevent or avoid* the wrong doing. If you cannot, change the activity quickly.

For a four-year old, stop the wrong action and merely show your disapproval.

For children of five and above, show your disapproval and explain the reason for it.

Disapproval can be shown by:

- your facial expression
- a few firm words
- a sign of your hands
- your tone of voice
- a shake of your head

If this does not bring the desired results, use a simple, quick and short punishment.

Remember:

- Do NOT strike or hit or slap a child
- Do NOT shame a child in front of others
- Do NOT complain to his parents about his behaviour.

Can you watch yourself carefully the next time you find a child doing something 'wrong' or 'good' and learn about your own attitudes?

ORGANISATION
AND EQUIPMENT
FOR PLAY ACTIVITIES



ORGANISATION AND EQUIPMENT FOR PLAY ACTIVITIES

Since children grow, develop and learn through play, the entire programme and the environment of your centre should be built around PLAY. How can you plan and conduct your daily programme in such a way as to achieve your objective, namely, the all-round development of the child? Obviously you must plan:

- time
- space
- equipment and materials

Planning the Daily Time-Table

Your daily routine should be so planned as to meet the needs of the children.

Which activities?

Every day you should plan at least one or two activities meant to help in each aspect of the child's development. Each chapter so far has dealt with one aspect. Choose a few activities from each. A balanced programme will include:

something for the body	something for the hands
something for social adjustment	something for the emotions
something for the mind	something for the senses
something for creative expression	something for curiosity

Remember that for every objective there can be many activities. For example, for language development, you can have songs in the morning, some games later and a story-telling session in the afternoon. Can you give another example? It is essential to plan a varied programme.

For children, the whole programme has one major purpose: play and fun. For them, it is enough if they enjoy it. In planning it there is an important principle you must check that the play is also useful, that the children are *learning* while they play.

How much time

Have a fixed routine for each day and follow it broadly. Children appreciate routine. It gives them a sense of security and helps to form good habits. Also you will be able to plan the work carefully and have materials ready in time.

Do not be rigid in your programme. Be prepared to adjust to children's needs and moods. You need not always adhere to the time-table. Learn to use unexpected events— such as the arrival of a visitor, a sudden storm, a celebration— to change your schedule and do something different.

Though you may have planned your routine, you do not need to have fixed timings for each activity. Young children cannot do any one thing for very long, so you may need to spend about 20-30 minutes roughly on each activity. Sometimes the game may take longer; at other times it may finish earlier.

If possible, plan regular excursions and outings. Frequent short walks and visits to nearby places are better for young children than infrequent long trips.

How to make a time-table

Children are subject to different moods. Sometimes they need to play alone. You should be able to recognise this need and allow them the freedom to play with whatever they please. At other times they will be eager to play in a group and then they will need careful instruction from you and guidance on how to follow directions. So you must provide for both individual activity and group activity. Ideally you should blend the two, one following the other in a pattern that maintains the child's enthusiasm.

Here are some of the different types of play that you must consider when planning your day. You need to balance both sides in order to enjoy wholehearted participation.

physically active and noisy
outdoors
individual play/work
free play
regular daily routine

physically quiet and restful
indoors
group activity/work
structured or guided activity
new activity or event

Here are three sample time-tables drawn up by other people like you. Study them. Do they follow all the rules? Would you like to follow any one? Can you improve on them? Can you change them to suit your circumstances? What are the advantages and the shortcomings of each?

(1) *Four hours*

8.00 - 8.15	Reception of children
8.15 - 9.00	Free play outdoors with equipment
9.00 - 9.45	Indoor activities with equipment (dolls, toys, blocks, clay, sand and crafts)
9.45 - 10.00	Group games for language development

10.00 - 10.15	Wash and toilet
10.15 - 10.45	Prayer, attendance and lunch
10.45 - 11.00	Story - telling
11.00 - 11.30	Music, movement, action songs
11.30 - 11.45	Picture books and toys
11.45 - 12.00	Getting ready to go home

(2) *Four hours*

8.00 - 8.15	Reception of children
8.15 - 9.00	Outdoor play—organised games and PT
9.00 - 9.45	Indoor activities with equipment (beads, puzzles, patterns, games and toys)
9.45 - 10.00	Group project work
10.00 - 10.15	Wash and toilet
10.15 - 10.45	Prayer, attendance and lunch
10.45 - 11.15	A walk to collect materials/a sightseeing excursion
11.15 - 11.45	Working on the materials collected/discussion of excursion
11.45 - 12.00	Getting ready to go home

(3) *Four hours*

8.00 - 8.15	Reception of children
8.15 - 8.30	Attendance and prayer
8.30 - 9.15	Outdoor free play with equipment
9.15 - 9.30	Looking at pictures and discussion
9.30 - 10.00	Indoor activities with equipment (paper crafts, painting, patterns, puzzles and beads)
10.00 - 10.30	Wash, toilet and lunch
10.30 - 11.00	Songs and rhymes
11.00 - 11.30	Story-telling
11.30 - 11.45	Organised games
11.45 - 12.00	Getting ready to go home

Which activities have been left out? Which areas of development have been neglected? How can you include these? Make a model time-table for yourself. Make six copies of a blank time-table form, one for each day of the week. Now under each time period write down the specific activities you will conduct. Do this for each of the six days of the week. Which activities can you change from day to day? Which are fixed? Have you got a balanced programme? How can you include everything?

Planning The Use of Space

Children need:

space for physical movement and activity
an environment that stimulates

variety and change in the environment
a sense of order in the environment

If you can provide these essentials, they can learn while they play.

What kind of space

How much space do you have? Ideally, you should have:

- a room for a group of up to 30 children
- a verandah or courtyard
- a small compound, garden or open space
- a kitchen to cook and store food
- a latrine
- a clean water supply for drinking water
- containers for storage of all your material

Perhaps you do not have all or some of the above. Then you must make the best use of what you have. Learn to adapt your limited facilities.

Arranging the space

You need a large open space in the centre of the room as well as a scattering of smaller spaces. Use whatever furniture you have—shelves, racks, trunks, chairs, tables—to divide the room into smaller areas. Then the children can sit in small groups for different activities. Children find smaller spaces cosy and personal. You can move from one group to another observing, helping and encouraging. For activities where the whole group participates together—as in story-telling, music, puppets, language and picture games—all the children can sit in the centre of the room. If you have *durries*, mats or *tats*, you can spread these on the floor in different ways according to the need of the activity. Let the children help you to arrange the room and keep it clean.

For the mid-day meal also, the children will need to sit in the centre of the room. Let them sit in a circle or at least in two rows facing each other, rather than in a line. Then the meal will give them the opportunity to learn while they eat.

For games, dance and PT, you need a large open space. A verandah or courtyard is ideal. If you do not have either, you must be able to clear enough space in the room itself. If you are lucky to have a small garden or compound, you can conduct all such activities here and use it for free outdoor play as well.

Arranging materials

Try to keep all the materials for one type of activity in a fixed place. Then the children will know where they are, and learn how to take them out and put them back. For example, keep the dolls in one corner with, if possible, a doll house made from an old box—this is the 'doll's corner'. You can also have 'corners' for sand play, water play, clay work, painting, picture books, puzzles and so on. Then the children can form small groups and each

group can take its place in one of the 'corners'. Such method of organising the different activities will train the children to work in one place and thus learn discipline.

Storage

Perhaps you have a cupboard, a rack or a shelf, or some trunks to store all the playthings? Perhaps you do not have any of these? Or perhaps what you have is not enough? It is advisable to collect all types of containers to store your play materials. You can use:

tins—kerosene, oil, ghee, biscuit
plastic—buckets, tubs, basins, jars
boxes—wooden crates, metal trunks, cardboard cartons
bags—cloth, jute, canvas
baskets—wicker, bamboo
earthenware—pots, bowls, jars

You will need different sizes for different items. If possible, label every one. You could even make picture labels so that the younger children find what they need even if they cannot read.

Display

Display not only makes the place attractive and cheerful but is also an aid to learning. When children *see* what is being discussed they can remember better and can choose an activity more easily. You can display: pictures, charts and all sorts of objects to awaken curiosity; samples of the children's work; materials to play and work with.

There are many ways to display material. You may have a display board or a bulletin board. If this is not possible, there are many other things you can do:

Wall Stick items with glue or cellotape, or fix nails for hanging objects.

Cloth Stretch an old sheet, curtain or sari across a door or window, or hang it on the wall and stick or pin things on it.

Furniture Use the backs of shelves, racks, cupboards, boxes, tables, doors, etc. Cover them with thick paper or cloth and pin or stick objects on the surface. This is especially suitable if you have used the furniture to divide the room.

String Stretch a thick string or rope across the room or along a wall and attach each end to a nail. Use it to hang small items and pictures.

Tables Use the tops of trunks, stools, boxes and window-sills to rest objects.

Remember your environment teaches children. It gives them:

space to move
enjoyment
learning experience
things to remember

constructional sets
wooden pieces
tools: hammer, screwdriver, spanner, nails, screws
cardboard cartons
beads
building materials from waste
shapes for pattern-making

For science activity

magnifying glass
magnet
balance
measuring utensils
clock, torch, bulb, rubber tube, jars

For cognitive activities

picture pairs
picture families
dominoes
sequence cards
bingo board
jigsaws
puzzles
cards: associated pairs; cards in series/graded pictures;
number cards
board games
counters
dice
assembly and constructional materials
board games
mosaic shapes and tiles
puzzle and activity books
problem-solving toys
slates
pencils

For language work

story books
picture books
pictures
charts
puppets
picture cards

For art and handwork

paper: newspaper, brown paper, coloured paper, kite paper, glazed paper, printed paper

paint: poster and powder colour, dyes, vegetable dyes, natural materials, *geru*, limestone powder, chalk, charcoal pencils, crayons.

tools: homemade brushes, scissors, knife, homemade glue, fasteners such as pins, clips, string and rubber bands

cardboard

cloth: scraps and rags of all types, thicknesses and colours

thread: rope, twine, string, tape, wool

containers: *katoris*, large buckets

waste: matchsticks, cotton, foil, feathers, seeds, stones, glass, buttons, bangles

What other materials can you think of? What have you used? Try out new things and keep jotting down your ideas.

