

Inclusive Sports and Play

Early Years Teachers' Guide



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Introduction

Why this guide?

Play and physical activity are vital for young children’s development. Well-organized and age-appropriate sports and play in school settings help with learning across the Early Years curriculum.

Including children with disabilities in organized sports and play helps them develop skills for fulfilling lives and serves as a starting point for social inclusion. This inclusive play can change how children, parents, and teachers view disability. Unfortunately, in many schools, the importance of play-based learning for children with disabilities has been overlooked.

This teachers’ guide gives practical advice and guidelines on how to facilitate sport and play in Early Years Education, with a focus on including children with disabilities. It is helpful for all Early Years teachers, considering the likelihood of having a child with a disability in their class. It is also relevant to teaching assistants, physical education (PE) teachers, parents, volunteers, and those organizing out-of-school and home-based sport and play activities.

This resource guides teachers in different settings, such as an Early Years class in a mainstream school with few children with disabilities, a school with a special unit or class, or a segregated school for children with disabilities. This allows teachers to reflect on the guidance and adapt it to their situation rather than providing fixed solutions that may not suit their context.

“Inclusive education shall be the key strategy in achieving education and training for learners and trainees with disabilities.”

Ministry of Education (May 2018)

Teachers should be playful in their approach to sport and play. They should recognise that finding out what does not work as well as what does work is part of learning and improving.

Inclusion and the Competency Based Curriculum

This guide discusses including students with disabilities using Kenya’s Competency Based Curriculum (CBC). The CBC promotes inclusive practices by respecting diverse learning needs and abilities in the learning environment.

Creating an inclusive learning environment requires teachers and schools to make reasonable accommodations to consider all children’s capabilities, needs and desires. This guide offers ideas on how to make reasonable accommodations to ensure inclusive sport and play in Early Years Education.

Children with disabilities may be placed in a special school, special unit, regular school with support, or home and hospital-based programme. While this guide focuses on schools, Section 5 looks at the role of parents and communities.

This teachers' guide has been developed to align with the CBC. It makes use of three strengths of a competency-based approach¹ that are of value for children with disabilities:

1. **Learner-focused** – this requires teachers to have a responsive, flexible approach. The focus is less on the school system and more on each individual child. This guide follows on from the Individualised Education Plan Guide,² which also takes a learner-focused approach in assessment and planning for each child.
2. **Focus on competencies** – the CBC is based on competencies, aligning with the Early Years and Special Needs Education curricula. It aims to enable children, including those with disabilities, to contribute effectively to society. This teachers' guide is built on these competencies and subjects.
3. **Collaborative and co-developed** – the CBC promotes collaboration with teachers and parents. This teachers' guide has been tested and reviewed by teachers to enhance its design and development.

Learning outcomes: The Early Years Education and Special Needs Education (foundation level) curricula have seven shared learning outcomes. The Early Years Education includes two more learning outcomes (see **Box 1**). This guide shows how sport and play activities align with school subjects and contribute to learning outcomes.

Box 1: CBC Learning Outcomes

By the end of Early Years or Special Needs Education, the learner should be able to:

1. Communicate appropriately using verbal and/or non-verbal modes in a variety of contexts.
2. Demonstrate basic literacy and numeracy skills for learning.
3. Demonstrate appropriate etiquette in social relationships.
4. Explore the immediate environment for learning and enjoyment.
5. Practice hygiene, nutrition, sanitation, safety skills to promote health and wellbeing.
6. Demonstrate the acquisition of emotional, physical, spiritual, aesthetic and moral development for balanced living.
7. Apply digital literacy skills for learning and enjoyment.

The Early Years Education curriculum contains an additional two learning outcomes:

- Apply creativity and critical thinking skills in problem solving.
- Demonstrate appreciation of the country's rich and diverse cultural heritage for harmonious co-existence.

¹ Government of Kenya, 2017

² See the 'Able Child Africa and ANDY Kenyan Inclusive Education Plan 2021' for more details.

Subjects: The school subjects for Early Years Education and Special Needs Education differ, as indicated in **Box 2**.

Box 2: School subjects – Early Years and Special Needs Education

Early Years Education

1. Language Activities
 2. Mathematical Activities
 3. Environmental Activities
 4. Psychomotor and Creative Activities
 5. Religious Education Activities
- (Digital literacy and pertinent and contemporary issues integrated across all subjects).

Government of Kenya, 2017

Special Needs Education

1. Communication and Social Skills
2. Activities of Daily Living Skills
3. Sensory Integration
4. Pre-Numeracy and Pre-Literacy
5. Psychomotor and Creative Arts
6. Orientation and Mobility
7. Digital Literacy

Outline of this guide

The six sections of the guide are as follows:

- **Section 1: Play in early learning**
This section looks at what 'sport and play' encompasses and how it contributes to learning outcomes.
- **Section 2: Making sport and play inclusive**
This section gives an overview of adaptations that can make sport and play more inclusive of children with disabilities in Early Years Education. It then gives guidance on including children with specific difficulties.
- **Section 3: Spaces and equipment in sport and play**
This section focuses on how sport and play equipment can be adapted for Early Years children and those with disabilities.
- **Section 4: Just do it! Facilitating play-based lessons**
This section looks at planning and structuring an inclusive sport and play session. It then gives some ideas for inclusive games based on school subject areas.
- **Section 5: People and play**
This section focuses on teachers, and the qualities and approaches needed for successful inclusive play. Parents, family members, and other children are also key players so this section looks at their role.
- **Section 6: Keep it safe!**
This section presents key points in safeguarding and ensuring healthy and safe sport and play. Teachers are encouraged to get more in-depth advice and guidance from their school and educational authority.

Some ideas in this guide will be relevant, others will not. Teachers are encouraged to reflect on the principles and ideas within this guide and adapt them to their own situation.

Section 1. Sport and Play in Early Learning

PE, sport, play: what are we talking about?

Sport and play is much more than just physical education (PE). It is a flexible approach that can be used beyond PE and across the entire Early Years and Special Needs curricula. This teachers' guide is about this wider application of sport and play³. This section shows different types of 'sport and play'.

Structured	Unstructured
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> formal sports (football, athletics); informal sports (tag, dodge-ball); learn cognitive and social skills such as attention, memory, respect sharing, and turn-taking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> free play, child-led, imaginative play helps young children develop their imaginations and social skills such as communication and cooperation. recreational activities emphasise fun, exploration and physical activity
Competitive	Cooperative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develops social and communication skills; requires extra effort to accommodate those with disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> easier in a mixed-ability group of children.
Group based	Individual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> helps children's social and communication skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> helps children reach personal learning outcomes.
High activity	Minimal activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> running, jumping, walking, hopping; physical development (motor skills), but participation in this by children who have severe physical difficulties may be limited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ludo or dominoes, flashcards and sorting; may enable greater inclusion for children with physical difficulties.
Activity-based	'E-sport' or digital games

The UN definition for 'sport' provides a short summary:

"Incorporated into the definition of 'sport' are all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction. These include: play; recreation; organized, casual or competitive sport; and indigenous sports or games."

United Nations Inter-Agency Taskforce on Sport for Development and Peace

³ KICD, 2017

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • singing games; • need little adjusting to enable children with disabilities to participate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • competitive or cooperative, imaginative and creative play; • educational as well as purely for fun. |
|--|--|

How does sport and play build young children’s competencies?

Play-related learning outcomes

- **Motor skills** – this means gross and fine motor skills for the child’s co-ordination, manipulation, dexterity, grace, strength and speed.⁴ It also includes motor skills for activities of daily living (ADL) like holding a spoon or doing up buttons on a shirt which can be developed through play activities.
- **Sensory integration** – this includes hand-eye coordination, spatial relationships, balance, and posture. These skills are an integral part of many games like throwing and catching, gymnastics and dance-based activities.
- **Communication skills** – children express themselves fluently, listen, concentrate, understand, and use memory.⁵ For most children, expression means verbal communication, which is part of most play activities, while non-verbal (gestures, facial expressions, mime) can also be involved. Games and sports also often involve concentration and memory especially for learning the rules of the game and following instructions.
- **Pre-numeracy and pre-literacy skills** – letter recognition and numeracy skills, such as counting, keeping score and measuring, are part of many sports and play activities. Games can also be designed for other pre-numeracy and pre-literacy skills, such as sorting, matching and grouping.
- **Etiquette in social relationships or social skills** – developing social skills is usually a part of sport or play, at least in group activities. This includes, for example, learning how to share toys and play equipment, playing fairly and honestly, getting to know and greet other children, following rules, respecting the each other, controlling one’s behaviour, and learning how to behave after winning and losing a game.

Sport and play can also develop characteristics such as children’s self-confidence and self-esteem, by helping them overcome anxiety or shyness about new activities or meeting new children. Children can also learn a sense of responsibility through sport and play by taking leadership roles in the group.

- **Integrated learning outcomes** – other learning outcomes across the curriculum, which are not natural parts of sport and play, can be integrated into sport and play through purposefully designed games and activities. The possibilities are almost endless, but include activities of daily living, hygiene, nutrition, sanitation and safety skills.

⁴ KICD, 2017

⁵ Ibid.



Remember! These social skills and characteristics may not arise automatically from participating in play. You need to carefully guide all young children in developing them, especially those who are shy, have low self-confidence or show behavioural problems. Notice that sport and play can exacerbate or provoke anti-social behaviours like cheating or fighting. Also, be aware that sport and play can also have negative effects on children’s social development if it leads to a bad experience such as bullying, failure or injury.

Play in Kenyan education policy

It’s policy!

“Play shall be integrated in all learning activities.”

Government of Kenya, 2018

Kenya’s **National Pre-Primary Education Policy**⁶ fully recognises the value of play within Early Years Education. It states that “play shall be integrated in all learning activities”, meaning across all five pre-primary school subjects (see **Box 2**). Guides containing a variety of play activities for young children are provided by the Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development (KICD). Teachers are expected to adapt these for learners with disabilities.

The National Pre-Primary Education Policy promotes play within the Early Years Education sector in many other ways. These are referred to elsewhere in this teachers’ guide and include:

- **Role of pre-primary school teachers and assistant teachers:** play is recognised within their roles as acquiring, improvising and using play and learning resources.
- **Play equipment and materials:** age-appropriate and suitable play equipment and materials are to be provided in all pre-primary schools, and County governments have a responsibility to provide these materials.
- **Playgrounds:** adequate and safe playgrounds must be provided in all pre-primary schools.
- **Disability inclusion:** playgrounds and materials shall be adapted for children with special needs and disabilities.
- **Families and communities:** they are to have a role in providing play materials.

Kenya’s national **Special Needs Education Policy** gives less recognition to play than the Pre-Primary Policy. Play is mentioned once as an example of general inclusion in the Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities.⁷ The Policy’s Guidelines⁸ refer to inclusive sport and recreation as a means towards social participation and

⁶ Government of Kenya, 2018

⁷ Ministry of Education, 2018a

⁸ Ministry of Education, 2018b

engagement of children with disabilities, rather than as an integral part of their education and development.

Despite this gap at policy level, at curriculum level games are suggested for supporting learning.⁹

⁹ KICD, 2017c

Section 2. Making Sport and Play Inclusive

It's policy!

"Creating the conditions required for the successful inclusion of learners with special needs in inclusive settings benefits all learners."

Government of Kenya, 2017

Kenya is increasingly moving towards an inclusive approach to education. This means being more child-focused and enabling teachers to take an individualised, rather than one-size-fits all, approach to each child's learning needs. Inclusive education is recognised as benefiting all children, not just those with disabilities.

Including all children in education can be challenging, but sport and play is a relatively easy entry point to start making inclusion happen:



Through inclusive play, young children can show to adults that inclusion is possible.

Young children are less likely than older children or adults to see or judge difference.

If well designed, sport and play can unite children of different abilities.

Children are more likely to find ways to overcome barriers such as mobility and communication difficulties.

Adapting sport and play

To include children with disabilities in sports and play, adjustments to the activities are often needed. This ensures that all children can participate equally and safely.

When preparing to make adaptations:

Assess and observe the child's capability, in areas like moving, hearing, seeing, learning,

Consider factors such as the child's confidence, experience, personal preference.

Consider costs ahead of time. Adaptations can be made with little or no additional cost.

The following STEP model can be used to adapt sport and play activities. It has been used widely in disability sport programmes in the UK and globally.¹⁰

Adapt the **SPACE**



This is all about adapting the playing space, which may be indoors in a classroom or a sports hall, or outdoors on a grass playing field, a hard-surface playground, or in nature.

Section 3 suggests ways to adapt the space.

Adapt the **TASK**



The way any game or sport is played can be adapted to make it accessible for children with disabilities. Rules can be simplified or removed altogether, and then reintroduced as children's skill and confidence in the activity increases.

Section 4 suggests ways to adapt the task.

Adapt the **EQUIPMENT**



In inclusive play, it is important that the materials are appropriate for the children with disabilities, in terms of size, weight, texture, grip, speed, and colour. This will ensure that the child can participate in the game equally, fairly, and safely.

Section 3 suggests ways to adapt the equipment.

Adapt the **PEOPLE**



This is about changes to the way the children engage in the play activity, whether individually, in small groups or as a large group.

Section 5 suggests ways to adapt the people.

Disability-specific considerations

During play sessions with children with particular disabilities, consider certain adaptations. These are general guidelines, remembering that every child is unique. Plan play activities based on your experience of the child rather than on assumptions about what works for children with a particular disability.

¹⁰ For example, Weidemann et al (2014)

Remember that a child may need adaptations in more than one area. For example, a child with moving difficulties may also have learning difficulties, or a child may have both hearing and visual difficulties. The design of the play activity should factor in all relevant considerations. For example, in a ball game, a child with both moving difficulties and learning difficulties is likely to need adaptations in both the physical aspects of the game and cognitive aspects, such as understanding how to play the game and focusing on the task.

Children who experience difficulty seeing

- Give the child more time to become familiar with their environment and to know where equipment, obstacles, and boundaries are. Use bright colours or tactile landmarks to mark boundaries.
- Consider lighting – poor lighting can be a barrier for some children, while bright light can be painful to the eyes of others.
- If the child has some vision, ensure they stand where they can see you when you are giving visual instructions.
- Use peers or buddies to help the child participate in the game.

Children who experience difficulty hearing

- Use visual aids like pictures to explain the game. Use a flag, scarf, or just arm gestures to support auditory signals such as whistles.
- Face the children when talking to help them lipread or follow facial expressions.
- Use a peer or a buddy to help the child to receive information by giving prompts.
- Make sure you stand facing the sun or light. Do not have the light behind you, which would prevent a child from clearly seeing your face.
- Ask all children in the group to be quiet when you are talking.

Children who experience difficulty moving

- Be aware of the child's level of functioning in terms of muscle strength, muscle control, balance, joint function, and coordination. Make adaptations as needed. Carefully watch the child's range of joint movements and muscular ability, to prevent injury.
- Use games and play activities less reliant on strength, speed, or coordination.
- Some children may not be able to feel pain in certain parts of their body, so extra attention is needed to prevent accidents and injuries.
- Use a peer or a buddy to assist and complement the child's efforts.
- Avoid playing on slippery surfaces, especially as children who use crutches may be more likely to fall.

Children with medical conditions

- Some chronic medical conditions can affect a child's level of functioning. These could be cardiovascular problems (related to the heart and circulation) and respiratory (breathing) problems such as asthma. In these cases, seek advice from the parent and a medical practitioner. In general, greater caution is needed to ensure that the child does not get over-excited or over-exert him/herself. Observe the child carefully during the lesson to watch for early signs of this like excessive sweating, change in skin colour, and unnatural breathing.

Children who experience difficulty communicating

- Adapt games to reduce the reliance on verbal communication or use simplified communication.
- Use alternative methods of communication like gestures. Make sure the other children understand the meaning of the child's gestures.
- Use a peer or buddy to help the child communicate with others.

Children who experience difficulties learning

- Give the child more time and attention so they can absorb the information and instructions provided. Use routines, frequent repetitions, and singing to help the child remember rules. Explain in advance what will happen in the game to reduce anxiety.
- Use visual aids and auditory signals to enhance understanding, or alternative communication such as Makaton (also referred to as charts/graphs by some).
- Allow more time and assistance, if necessary, for the child to respond during the game.
- Be aware of the child's characteristics – such as posture, coordination, and sense of rhythm – and make allowances accordingly.
- Children with learning difficulties may have short attention spans and get easily distracted or bored. Ensure the lesson is sufficiently stimulating and observe to see if the child is engaging well.
- Be aware of the child's behavioural traits and preferences. Some children may not tolerate loud noises, being in large groups, or displays of emotion. A game that is meant to be fun could instead induce anxiety and misunderstandings. Learn about the child's character and look out for incidents and situations that could provoke stress.
- The child may be more likely to become emotional during the game. They may get over-excited when happy or very angry when getting frustrated. You need to find appropriate ways to manage such behaviour.
- Be patient and use humour! With all young children, you should lose your inhibitions, even if this means you look and do silly things! This is particularly important with children with learning difficulties.

Children who experience difficulty dealing with change

- Some children can find changes in the environment stressful. The child may have a preferred place to play or a favourite piece of equipment and may show anxiety if this is changed. They may prefer games which are repetitive and predictable, rather than games which are uncertain and spontaneous.
- You should ensure a calm, well-organized playing environment. Use calm communication and avoid invading the child's personal space.
- It may be helpful to have a mediator between the you and child, for example, a parent or a sibling with whom the child is more familiar and feels at ease.
- As with children with learning difficulties, allow more time for the child to process information. Visual aids and objects can aid verbal communication.
- Observe the child during the lesson and notice their expressions and potential sources of anxiety. You may need to learn some specific strategies that effectively reduce the child's anxiety, de-escalate any behaviour, and keep the child and others safe.

Children who experience poor mental health

- Children may show signs of anxiety, sadness, or depression. For example, they might appear very nervous or worried (anxiety). They may seem sad. Or they may become very sad for a long time, lose energy, and/or lose interest in things they normally enjoy (depression). Children may experience poor mental health in the short term, and feel anxious when faced with new activities, places, or people. Some children experience longer-term mental ill-health or psycho-social disability resulting from environmental factors such as child abuse, trauma or medical/genetic causes.
- Promote a sense of safety. Ensure the play space is a safe space, both physically and in terms of relationships of trust (between you and child and among the children). Make sure the child is comfortable with the planned activity and offer alternatives. Promote a sense of normality by creating a regular routine and maybe using traditional games which are more familiar to the child.
- Promote calming. Make sure that the child is comfortable with the other children and knows there is a 'break-out' area, where they can step out of the play if they feel anxious. Use relaxation techniques such as breathing and counting.
- Promote self-esteem. Ensure the child experiences success in the play session, to build self-esteem and self-confidence. Set achievable goals and break big tasks into smaller goals.



Remember! Adapting physical activity to make it inclusive should not make it less fun. Sport for all should also mean fun for all! If the sport and play activity becomes too easy or boring, there is a risk of creating a backlash or bullying.

Fostering inclusive attitudes

All those involved – teachers, children with and without disabilities, and parents – should have a welcoming, positive attitude to inclusive sport and play.

The following attitudes and feelings can create barriers:

- **Teachers:** Some teachers may be reluctant to include children with disabilities in sport and play due to:
 - Lack of knowledge about disability – they may be concerned that children with disabilities are more vulnerable to injury or health problems. All children face this risk in sport and play. Teachers need to understand each child's disability and health issues and the associated risks, and reduce these risks by appropriate choice and design of play activity.
 - Belief that sport and play with children with disabilities is a specialised field – they may believe it requires specialised coaches and equipment. However, this guide shows that with creativity and a can-do attitude, any teacher can adapt their practice to facilitate inclusive sport and play. Schools may also need support to recognise the importance of educational, developmental sport and play, rather than focusing attention and resources on competitive, formal sport.
- **Parents:** Parents may over-protect children with disabilities, unaware of the health and social benefits of play and/or believing they are more likely to get injured while playing. They may also feel a sense of shame about the child being seen playing in public. Disability awareness and counselling, maybe by another parent of a child with disability, can ease a parent's perceived sense of embarrassment.
- **Children:** When starting inclusive play activities, children are unlikely to be familiar with children with disabilities, except in schools with special classes or units. When meeting children with disabilities for the first time they may respond in different ways. Children may be very welcoming of difference, or they may struggle to accept it. You can prepare children in advance by facilitating some games and activities around accepting and celebrating differences and anti-bullying.

Tips on helping children to accept difference:

- **Keep it concrete:** Young children use concrete thinking more than conceptual thinking, so focus on the facts about children's abilities ('Musa has difficulty catching and throwing, but he can still play this game'), rather than concepts such as rights and inclusion ('children with disabilities have the same right to play as others').
- **Identify differences and similarities:** Children may focus on visible differences, but help them to recognise the similarities too, ('Adongo runs more slowly than you, but she loves playing tag the same as you.')
- **Humanise children with disabilities:** Encourage children to introduce themselves to each other and learn each others' names. Use activities in which children find out more about each other like their family members, their favourite food, and where they live.

- **Balance curiosity with respect:** It's natural for children to be curious about each other and differences between them. This may lead them to asking questions which seem rude or inappropriate. Help children to understand that they should balance their natural curiosity with respect.

Challenge:

Can you make up a song or an activity on the theme 'It's OK to be different' or 'All children are different, but we are all friends!'

Example: Teach the children the song and asks the children to join in with singing or clapping, and inventing mimed actions for the words in bold, eg:

Some of us are **tall**, some of us are **short**, but we can all **wash our hands**.

Some of us are **quiet**, some of us are **loud**, but we can all **play**.

Some of us are **slow**, some of us are **fast**, but we can all **dance**.

It's OK if you are different, it's OK if you need extra help, because God made you, God loves you, and I love you, you can be my friend.

End with an age-appropriate discussion/talk about how we all have things in common and we are equal although we're different, and about children who might need extra help in the class.

Some more ideas:

The Olympics and Paralympics happened in 2021. Which people with disabilities participated in the Paralympics? What sports did they do? Which Kenyans participated? Organise an Olympic-themed event in your school with the theme 'Yes, I can play too!' For instance, introduce paralympic sports such as boccia (see **Appendix 4**).

International Day of People with Disabilities is on 3 December every year. Organise an event in your school to show how sport can include children with disabilities.

Section 3. Spaces and equipment in sport and play

Ways to adapt the space

It's policy!

Ministry of Education in collaboration with County Governments shall... ensure that children with special needs and disabilities have equal access to recreational sporting facilities within and outside pre-primary school programmes.

Playing surfaces

Consider the moving and balance capabilities of children with disabilities. The quality of the playing surface is particularly important.



Add layers of safety checks for hazards such as bumps or holes in playing fields, or slippery surfaces.

Size

The size of the playing space, fields and the distances in athletics should be made ability appropriate. Make the activity more achievable for children where required.



Some children may need to be given more space and allowed to play alone, or with a buddy. Children with learning difficulties or autism may require more personal space than others, as they may feel anxious when other children come near, or when playing in a large group.

In some games, 'zoning' can be used to enable children with varying capabilities to play together. For example, on a football field, the penalty box could be designated for particular children only.

Noise

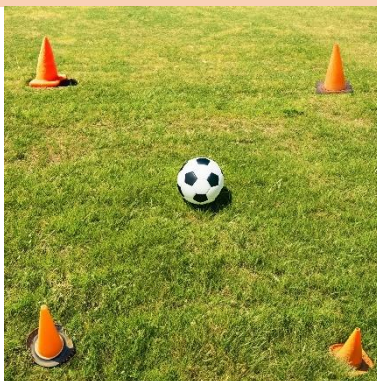
Loud music or excited children can be distracting or create anxiety for some children, such as those with learning difficulties or autism. You need to know these children's likes, dislikes and 'triggers' in advance. Create a calm environment, perhaps in a small group at a distance from the larger group.



A noisy environment creates challenges for children experiencing hearing difficulty to hear your instructions or to communicate with others. Issues of noise are likely to arise more in indoor settings like classrooms or sports halls, where noise is contained and there can be poor acoustics such as echoes.

Lighting

Poor lighting can create a risk for children with visual impairment. There will be increased risk of collisions with equipment or other children, and tripping hazards. Children who lip-read are also dependent on good lighting. Make sure these children are at the front of the group when you are giving instructions so they can hear and see more clearly.



Lighting is usually more of an issue in indoor play settings. Use brightly coloured play equipment as much as possible, and mark out the playing space with coloured cones and markers. Give an additional verbal explanation about the playing space.

Playgrounds

Playground equipment can include swings, slides, climbing frames and seesaws.

Inclusive playground equipment

Free and imaginative play, physical activity

- Gross motor skills
- Communication
- Health
- Social skills
- Cognitive development

Age-appropriate, size-appropriate

- Height
- Safety (see Section 6)
- Access
- Drinking and handwashing nearby

Include sedentary play

- Water trough and sandpit

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fine motor skills • Creativity
Increase stimulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painting equipment bright colours • Colourful flower beds • Wall murals
Increase multisensory appeal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tactile play-boards • Noise-making equipment • Sensory activities, like smelling different scents

Tactile and auditory playground equipment in Sri Lanka

It's policy!

“Adequate and safe playgrounds shall be provided in all Pre-primary schools.”

Government of Kenya, 2018



Ways to adapt equipment

Equipment makes a sport and play session come alive! Using Kenya’s oral traditions, fun, inclusive lessons can be facilitated, with you and the children using their bodies and voices. Materials can greatly enhance sessions; indeed some learning outcomes are difficult to achieve without them. The good news is that sport and play materials, including those suitable for children with disabilities, do not have to be costly or complicated.

In the **STEP** model, the **E** stands for **Equipment**. Children with disabilities may be able to use the same play equipment as children without disabilities or use it in a different way. However, sometimes the equipment may need to be adapted to their needs, according to their functional and developmental capabilities, in particular moving, seeing, and learning.

Size and weight

Light balls and bats are easier (and safer) for young children to manipulate. Light balls also travel more slowly than heavier balls and are easier for children to track in the air and react to or catch. Heavy balls can cause injury and scare small children.



When it comes to hand function, larger play materials can be easier to handle than small play materials. There should be progression from larger to smaller items as the child's hand function develops.

Outdoor play equipment such as football goalposts and basketball hoops can be adjusted to the width and height suitable for the children.

Colour and Sound

Brightly coloured play equipment is more stimulating to all children, especially those with learning difficulties. It can also be more visible to those experiencing seeing difficulties.

'Howlers' are throwing items, similar to mini-javelins. They make a sound when thrown which children enjoy.



Sound-making equipment is stimulating to many children, especially those experiencing learning difficulties, and can be particularly helpful to children with seeing difficulties. This could include balls with bells inside, or simpler sound and music-making materials such as drums, tambourines and shakers.

Grip and texture

Tactile balls with textured surfaces provide sensory stimulation when played with. They also provide more grip, so they are easier to catch. Soft throwing items such as bean bags and woollen pompoms are easier to throw and catch than balls as they mould easily into a child's hand.



Rubber hoops are also soft and easy to grip, throw and catch. Materials can be adapted to support different levels of hand function and coordination.

Speed

Lighter balls such as foam balls or beach balls move more slowly than heavier balls. Balloons are even slower and are an ideal play material, especially as they are colourful.



Small, coloured scarves can also be thrown and travel slowly in the air.

Quantity

It is important to have an adequate supply of equipment in a lesson to keep all children engaged. This can be challenging in large classes. Young children, and especially those with learning difficulties, can have short attention spans.



One ball for a class of 30 is not enough! Quantity, in this case, is more important than quality. For example, it would be preferable to have 30 balls made from old plastic bags/old rugs/woven bags, so that each child can have their own ball.

Suggested equipment

Here are some ideas for equipment that would be useful to have available in your Early Years/Special Needs Education class. Some items will be available in shops at relatively low cost while other are easily improvised or made using natural materials.



Flash-cards

Can be made with paper or cardboard, coloured and laminated if possible. Flashcards are extremely versatile aids in play. They can include numbers, letters, colours and pictures.



Ropes

Ropes can be used for skipping, or for marking out zones in games.



Markers

For marking out playing spaces or indicating targets. This includes marker saucers, cones or even home-made drink bottles. Make sure they are colourful!



Pieces of cloth

Can be used for three-legged races or as blindfolds. Kitenges and bigger pieces of cloth can be used as play parachutes.



Hoops

Useful as targets on the ground for throwing games. They can also be rolled along, or children can 'hula' with them.



Buckets

A variety of containers can be used in games, for throwing items into. Try to find buckets of different colours and sizes.



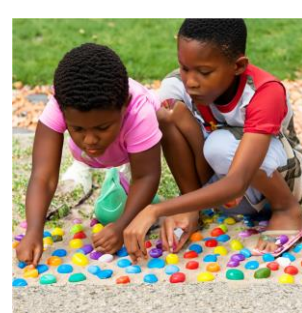
Skittles

Can be made easily using drinks bottles and sand. Can be used in skittles games or as



Balloons

Children love them and they can be used in many different games. They are disposable but



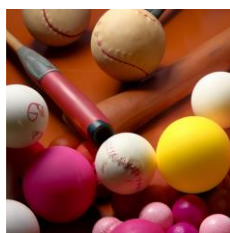
Counters

Small items, ideally colourful, which can be used in many games. Bottle-tops and pebbles are good substitutes.



Balls

A variety of sizes and weights, but mainly light-weight and of an appropriate size. Include substitutes for balls such as beanbags, quoits (soft rubber rings) and woollen pom-poms.



Bats and racquets

Tools for hitting balls, cricket bats, table tennis bats, badminton and tennis racquets. Look for adapted designs for younger children, like smaller, lighter and in bright colours.

Using your equipment

Make the most of whatever play equipment you have by thinking of different ways you can use it. Any given item of play equipment can be adapted and used in different curriculum areas.

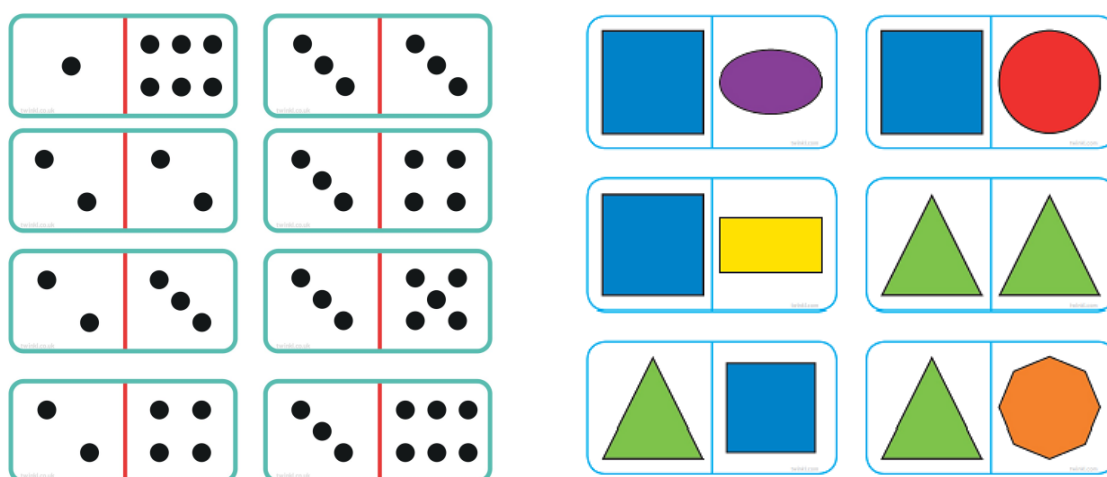
Here are two examples of the versatility of play equipment:

Dominoes

Dominoes is a matching game which can be used to develop numeracy skills.

Alternative activity ideas:

- Scatter the dominoes around the play space and ask the children to collect them. Give specific instructions such as 'find me a piece that has a number 3', or 'find me a piece with two of the same numbers'.
- Put the domino pieces in a bag and ask each child to draw a piece. Ask the child to say the two numbers, and then add them together. Who has a total greater than 5? Who has the highest number?
- Wooden or plastic domino pieces can be used for building or stacking, to develop fine motor skills. Who can build the longest wall or the tallest tower?
- Dominoes sets could be made from cardboard or wood for other learning areas such as animals, alphabet, vehicles, vegetables, colours, shapes, or words.



Example of dominoes: standard spot dominoes and shape/colour dominoes

Dice

Dice can be made easily out of cardboard, wood or cloth. A dice template is provided in **Appendix 5**. Children enjoy rolling the dice and the excitement of seeing where it will stop!

Activity ideas with number dice:

- Children roll the dice and say the number.

- Children roll the dice, pick up the number of balls indicated and put them in a bucket.
- Children roll two dice and add the numbers.
- Assign actions or sounds to each number. For example, 1 means elephant, 2 means monkey, and 3 means tiger. Children then move and make the sound of the animal corresponding to the number rolled.

Alternative dice design ideas:

- **Colour dice** – each side of the dice is a different colour. Children have to say the name of the colour or find an object in the room of that colour.
- **Movement dice** – have a type of movement like jump, hop, wave, on each side of the dice.
- **Health dice** – each side of the dice has a picture of a health and hygiene activity. After rolling the dice the children mime that action.
- **Road safety dice** – each side of the dice has a road sign and children say what the sign means.



Play dice being used in Nairobi

Dice and domino adaptations to support children's individual needs or disability

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|
| Concentration | ➔ | Bright colours |
| Visual | ➔ | Good colour contrast, tactile dominoes |
| Fine motor skills | ➔ | Extra-large dominoes |
| Early numeracy | ➔ | Use pictures instead of numbers |
| Safety | ➔ | Soft dice (made of cloth or stuffed with fibre such as kapok) |

See [Appendix 3](#) for more equipment-specific game ideas.

Sourcing your play equipment

Schools: Schools have provision to purchase sport and games equipment, which should include materials suitable for young children as well as standard, formalised sports equipment. Resources in schools such as picture-books and stories can be used creatively as the basis for games and play activities.

It's policy!

“County governments and pre-primary management shall provide appropriate and adequate play, learning and teaching materials.”

Government of Kenya, 2018

Teachers: You can make many materials themselves, using low-cost materials such as paper, cardboard, cloth and wood. While making materials can take time, it adds hugely to the quality of educational play sessions. When done collectively with other teachers, it can even be fun! Everyday items such as buckets, pebbles, and sticks can be used in play activities, requiring minimal preparation time.

It's policy!

“A pre-primary school teacher shall acquire, improvise and use play and learning resources.”

Government of Kenya, 2018

Children: Children are creative and often naturally make their own play materials like balls, toy cars and dolls. Making play materials could be included in children's school activities. For instance, during art and craft lessons children could make pompoms, dice or beanbags for use in inclusive sport and play sessions. These tasks could be part of disability awareness activities in the school, or to mark events such as International Day for People with Disabilities.

Parents: You can encourage parents to provide materials from home that children can use in school such as empty boxes, plastic bottles, cloth, newspaper. Schools can also encourage parents to participate in resource mobilisation activities and infrastructure work related to play, such as building playgrounds.

It's policy!

“Parents shall participate in development of play and learning materials.”

Government of Kenya, 2018

Communities: You could explore how to source some materials from the community. For example, local businesses could provide tyres, plastic bottles, cardboard boxes, cotton cloth, and paint.

Section 4. Just do it! Facilitating Play-Based Lessons

What kind of play activities?

Outdoor games, indoor games, imaginative play, recreational activities, formal sport, traditional games...the field of sport and play is vast and almost all of it can apply to Early Years and Special Needs Education! The important thing is that the selected play activity is educational and contributes in some way to the learning outcomes in the curriculum.

This section gives some examples of games for different school subject areas. Since play is such a flexible approach, however, the principles behind these games can be applied to other subject areas or learning outcomes. Further examples are given in [Appendix 3](#), which you can use as the starting point for your own ideas!

Planning the play session

Learning outcome: A school-based session within the regular school curriculum starts with the expected educational outcomes in the Early Years or Special Needs Education curriculum.

Individual goal: Make the plans child-centred, considering individual children with disabilities in the class. This means reflecting on information about each child's:

- **Disability:** It's more useful to think about the child's disability in terms of his/her functional abilities rather than medical labelling (Downs syndrome, cerebral palsy). An internationally recognised system of describing children's functional abilities is the Washington Group's module on child functioning.¹¹ This gives two sets of functional abilities to relating to children's development. See [Box 3](#) for a summary of these.
- **Individual goals:** These should relate to the school curriculum objectives, activities of daily living, sensory skills, mobility, social skills, or communication skills.

Current competence: Identify the child's level of performance. This involves **task analysis** which is breaking down the activity into individual steps and assessing the child's competence in each step. An example (throwing a ball into a bucket) is shown in [Box 4](#).

Individual characteristics: Identify characteristics that can help or hinder a child in reaching the objectives. These include strengths, preferences and traits, issues related to health and disability, and behaviour.

See [Box 5](#) for a sample plan using these four categories.

¹¹ UNICEF, Nov 2018

Box 3: Washington Group: children's functional domains

Children aged 2 – 4	Children aged 5 - 17
Seeing Hearing Mobility Fine motor Communication/ comprehension Learning Playing Controlling behaviour	Seeing Hearing Mobility Self-care Communication/ comprehension Learning Remembering Attention and concentrating Coping with change Controlling behaviour Relationships Affect (anxiety and depression)

Box 4: Task analysis example: throwing a ball under-arm into a bucket

What are the constituent skills needed to achieve this task?

- Child stands still at the throwing spot.
- Child takes hold of the ball in one hand without dropping it.
- Child looks at the bucket, assessing its position and distance.
- Child swings arm back while holding the ball in hand.
- Child swings arm forward.
- Child releases the ball at the right time, using judgement about distance and speed of ball.

Work with the child on each of these skills to help him/her to successfully achieve the task.

Box 5: Sample plan for a boy named Okello with moderate learning difficulties

General and specific learning outcome (from Pre-Primary One curriculum)	General: Develops appropriate listening skills from varied experiences to enrich their ability to communicate. Specific: Recalls a variety of sounds in the environment.
Individual goal	To respond to and name five environmental sounds by the end of the school year.
Current competence	Okello responds to the school bell and says 'bell' when he hears it.

Individual characteristics

Okello is nervous and gets agitated by sudden loud noises, but he enjoys music.

Design games and activities relevant to the learning outcome. This could involve selecting an existing game that you know or have heard/read about, adapting another game, or creating a new game or activity. In doing this, you need to be aware of the resources available and any constraints.



SPACE

How much space is needed for this activity? Is the space available sufficient for the number of children, and suitable?



TASK

Are the rules and expectations appropriate for the children's abilities? See ideas in **Box 6**.



EQUIPMENT

Is the right equipment or play materials available for this activity? Are they appropriate for the children's abilities and in sufficient quantity?



PEOPLE

Is there adequate staff or peer support for this play activity to be led effectively and safely?

Adapt the selected game or play activity to the needs of the children participating.

Box 6: Ways to adapt the task

- Give children more 'lives' or chances before they're 'out' in a game.
- Give some children a 'head-start' in a race or bonus points in a game.
- Give children more time to complete a task.
- Allow children to complete a task using different ways of moving according to their ability.
- Reduce or remove competitive aspects of the game such as scoring or having a winner.
- Reduce team sizes to increase the chance of each child being involved or have unequal-sized teams to allow for different abilities.
- Divide tasks in a game to different team members according to ability.

Work with the child on each of these skills to help him/her to successfully achieve the task

Structure of a play session

Stages in a play session

- Welcome
- Warm-up
- Main activity
- Cool-down
- Sharing time
- Evaluation

Welcome

Welcome everyone, set the 'ground rules', and create a welcoming and safe environment. Emphasise equality, respect, and playing fair and safe. A song may be an appropriate welcome.

- Children may not know each other.
- Mothers or carers present may not know each other.
- Some may be anxious, shy, afraid.

Warm-up

Use simple, fun games and songs, especially those that are familiar to children, and getting-to-know-you games where children interact with one another.

- ice-breaking
- getting the children to know each other. Here is one example

Sample: 'Me and My Shadow' warm-up

- Ask all the children to find a partner.
- Explain that they are going to do everything their partner does.
- The children take it in turns to complete an action like waving one hand.
- The partner copies the action, doing exactly the same.
- They then swap over.

(See Appendix 2 for other warm-ups.)

Main activity

Lead the planned play activities, according to the educational objectives and child's needs.

- Praise the child on objectives achieved and focus attention on those needing support.
- Provide a **variety** of short activities to maintain interest, engagement and effort.
- Offer different **workstations** to allow for levels of difficulty and development of different competencies.
- Include whole-group activities for interaction and small-group activities for specific competencies.
- Play sessions should be **designed for progression**. Challenge the child to develop a skill by increasing the difficulty of tasks as competence grows.

Sample: Balloon game levels of progression



- Hold a balloon in a stationary position and the child hits it.
- Move the balloon slowly towards the child and the child hits it.
- Throw the balloon towards the child and the child hits it.
- Substitute the balloon for a ball that moves faster.

Sample: Other forms of progression

- Child plays alone → Plays in pair → Plays in group.
- Activity with a single skill → Activity with several skills.
- Cooperative activity → Competitive activity.

Encourage participation:

- Demonstrate the activity.
- Guide and direct as appropriate.
- Are the children enjoying the session?
- Are all children fully included?
- Make adaptations if necessary to increase the inclusion of all children.
- Provide additional prompts.
- Give choices.
- Follow the child's lead if he/she prefers to play another way.

Cool-down

An activity which gets progressively slower helps calm the children down and bring the lesson to an end.

- Return children's bodies to normal after exercise.
- Return their mental state to normal if they became excited during the lesson.

Sample: 'Gears' cool-down

- Explain to the children that they have 3 gears and a brake. In 1st gear they should tiptoe, in 2nd gear walk, in 3rd gear they jog. Brake mean stop. Adapt the types of movement for children experiencing difficulties with moving.
- Children can mime changing gear and applying the brake.
- Call out the different gears so that children move around the space, going up and down the gears, changing speed.
- After a couple of minutes, slow the children down, then ask them to stop by applying the brake.

(See **Appendix 2** for more cool-down examples.)

Sharing time

Ask the children some summary/evaluation or extension questions.

- Discuss next steps and further actions children can do at home or in the community.
- Get some feedback from the children on how they felt about the session.

Sharing time example:

- 'Did you enjoy the session today?'
 - 'What did you like about it?'
-

- 'Was there anything you did not like?'
- 'Did you make any friends?'
- Probe further as appropriate to find out what could have been done to make the session more enjoyable and more inclusive.

Evaluation

Gather feedback from other teachers/assistant teachers involved in the session.

- Be open and frank with yourself. It's rare for a play session to be perfect or go completely according to plan!
- Identify what areas could be improved next time.
- Welcome constructive feedback from your colleagues.

Try to create a culture of teamwork and openness in your school, where teachers help each other to improve practice and giving feedback is welcomed.

Home sessions

Plans for home-based sessions do not need to follow the school curriculum. Planning can be more informal with input from parents. Guide parents to identify areas for improvement for their child and discuss home-based play activities to support this. For example:

Development area	Goals	Play activity
Physical development – gross motor		
ADL		
Communication and language		
Social and emotional development		
Pre-literacy skills		
Pre-numeracy skills		
Expression and creativity		

Some inclusive educational games

School subject area: **Pre-numeracy**

Game: Fill the bucket

Learning outcomes

- Pre-numeracy: number recognition, counting
- Cognitive development: colours
- Physical development: gross motor (throwing, running), hand-eye coordination
- Social skills: turn-taking, honesty, following rules

Equipment

- Large play dice, one per team
- Buckets
- Small balls, ideally of different colours (could also use pebbles or Lego bricks)

How to play

- Divide the children into teams. Give each team a bucket and a dice.
- Place a large container or pile of small balls at some distance from the teams.
- When you make a signal, the first child from each team throws the die. He/she then runs to the pile of balls, picks up the number of balls shown on the dice, runs back and places the balls in their bucket.
- The second child in the team does the same.
- The game continues for an allotted amount of time. The team with the most balls in their bucket wins!
- Each team will need a 'referee' to check for fair play!



their

Progression

- Use two dice per team – a number die and a colour dice. The child throws both dice and takes the number of balls of the correct colour each time.

Adaptations

- Use a colour dice rather than a number dice for children who can recognise colours but not numbers.
- Allocate roles in the game according to ability. For example, a child who is unable to run throws the dice while another child runs.

School subject area: Communication

Game: Matching rhymes

Learning outcomes

- Communication: listening, speaking
- Physical development: gross motor and fine motor
- Social skills: playing together with other children

Equipment

- Rhyming match-cards (see examples below and in Appendix 5)

How to play

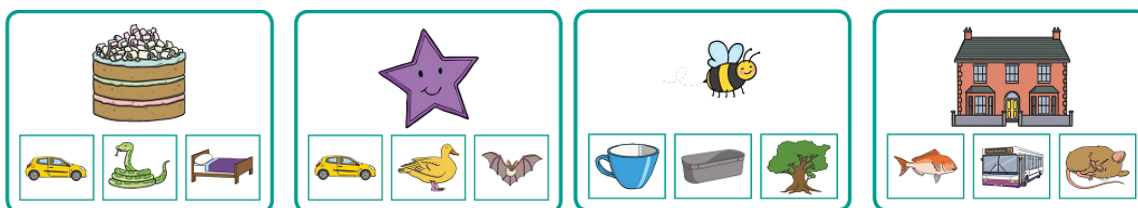
The rhyming match-cards can be used in different ways:

Sedentary games:

- Children say the words on the card. They point to a small picture which rhymes with the big picture.
- Cut out the small pictures and put them face down. Children turn the cards over and say the word. They place the relevant small picture on top of the large picture that it rhymes with.

Active, outdoor games:

- Cut out the small pictures and scatter them around the play space. Children run in a circle or dance. When you make a signal, they pick up a card and say out loud what their picture is. Hold up a big picture ('house') and say, "Jump up and down if you rhyme with me". The child holding the 'mouse' card jumps. Repeat this for each big picture, requesting a different action each time.
- Cut out the matching rhyming words and scatter the cards around the play space. Children dance around the area. When you make a signal they run to pick up a card and must find another child with a card that rhymes with their card. Play in a small group of 6 or 8 children.



Examples of rhyming match-cards

Progression

- Similar card-matching games can be used for matching colours, pictures, or numbers.

Adaptations

- Give children more time, prompts and clues if needed. Allow a child to play with a buddy to help explain or prompt.

School subject area: Pre-literacy

Game: Fruit relay race

Learning outcomes

- Pre-literacy: letter recognition, words
- Cognitive development: colours, types of fruit
- Physical development: gross and fine motor skills
- Social skills: turn-taking and patience

Equipment

- A picture sheet of items of fruit, and a set of corresponding alphabet cards (see photo).

How to play

- Arrange children into small teams. Each team lines up behind the start line and is given a set of alphabet cards.
- Place the picture sheet about 5 meters from the start line.
- Make a signal and then one child from each team takes one alphabet card and runs up to the picture sheet. They place their alphabet card on top of the corresponding fruit picture.
- The child runs back to the start line and tags the next child who takes an alphabet card and places it on the relevant picture.
- The race continues until all the fruit pictures are covered. The first team to complete their sheet correctly is the winner!



Progression

- Rather than being a relay race, this could be a gathering activity. Scatter alphabet cards around the play space. Children gather and place the cards on the appropriate fruit pictures.
- To make the game more challenging, add some alphabet cards that do not correspond to any of the fruit pictures.
- Use the principle of this matching game with other themes.
- The matching game can be used for pre-numeracy or maths skills.

Adaptations

- Simplify by substituting the letters of the alphabet with pictures, so the game just involves matching pictures.
- Children who experience difficulties moving could sit next to the picture sheet and place the alphabet cards onto the pictures as instructed by the race runners.
- The same play materials (matching pictures and letters) can be used in sedentary games.

School subject area: Activities of daily living

Game: Dressing up

Learning outcomes

- Gross motor skills: putting on a T-shirt or trousers/skirt.

Equipment

- Variety of dress up clothes and sacks
- Include a mix of easy and more complicated items with buttons and zips. Make the clothes colourful.

How to play

- Divide children into small groups and give each group a sack containing a set of dressing-up clothes.
- The children open the sack and dress up in the clothes.
- Encourage the children to help each other as needed.



Progression

To develop the movements involved in this activity:

- Use dance or gymnastic, raising arms in the air, lifting feet off the ground, and standing on one leg.

This could progress to various games involving dressing up:

- Children sit/stand in a circle and pass a hat or a mask around the circle. In turn, each child places the hat or mask on their head.
- Children mime or do role-play after getting dressed up.

Game: Board games and jigsaws

Learning outcomes

- Fine motor skills: buttoning up a shirt, using a zip, typing shoelaces

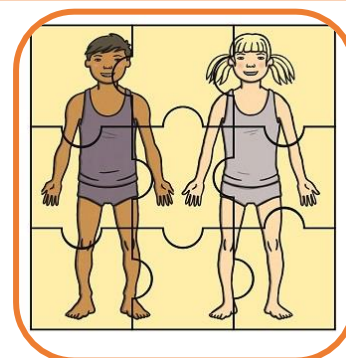
Equipment

- Make your own board-game! Use the template in **Appendix 5**, or create your own template. The theme of the board-game could be 'activities of daily living' or the game could be on any other theme.
- Dice are easily made from card, wood or cloth, as discussed in **Section 3**.
- Number spinning tops can be made easily with card and a pencil, or wood. See the full-size templates in the **Appendix 5**. Jigsaws can easily be made by mounting colourful pictures onto card. Jigsaws can be made of any picture or on particular themes for specific learning outcomes.
- Can other (older) children in your school design a board game or make number spinners for younger children to play with?

How to play

Games that involve hand dexterity are ideal, for example:

- **Board games** – these involve hand function such as throwing dice or spinning a number-spinner, and moving counters on the board.
- **Jigsaws** – picking up, sorting, placing and fitting jigsaw pieces helps children to develop hand function, as well as cognitive skills and concentration.



Parts of the body jigsaw

Progression

Other play activities:

- Stacking building blocks, domino games or card games all involve fine motor skills.

Adaptations

- Adaptations for children with visual difficulties – colour contrast and tactile surfaces?
- Length and complexity of the game – suitable for children with learning difficulties?
- Safety of the game – can any small pieces be swallowed?
- Tactile jigsaws can be made for children with visual difficulties.
- Reduce the difficulty of the jigsaw by making it with fewer and bigger pieces.

School subject area: Environment

Game: Scavenger hunt

Learning outcomes

- Exploring nature: learning about trees, plants
- Pre-numeracy: length, weight, colour.

Equipment

- Scavenger lists (1 per child): Prepare a list of items that can be found in the nearby environment. This could be the school field, or maybe in a natural location.
- The items can be accompanied by pictures (see example in **Appendix 5**).

How to play

- Explain to the children that they have a certain amount of time to move around the environment to gather as many items on the list as possible. Explain carefully about any safety issues and areas that are off-limits.
- At the end of the allotted time, the children present their items and talk about them. Facilitate conversation about the items, their colour, size, weight, and origin.
- The scavenger game can also be played indoors, with items on the scavenger list enabling children to learn about shape, colour, and size.



Progression

- The game can be made competitive, with children scoring points for each item gathered (maybe bonus points for more difficult items).
- For older and more able children, this can be played as a team game, with the children divided into teams and give one list. This involves higher-level skills of delegation and teamwork, allocating tasks to different members of the team.

Adaptations

- Ensure that some items on the list are easily findable.
- Give verbal support to children to explain the items on the list.
- Support children as necessary, with a buddy or an adult, in finding items and moving safely around the environment.

Game: Litter collecting race

Learning outcomes

- Environment: the importance of not dropping litter; recycling
- Social skills: turn-taking, patience, following rules
- Physical development: gross motor (running, bending), fine motor (picking up)

Equipment

- Set of flash-cards: Make a set of flash-cards depicting different items of rubbish.
- Bucket.

How to play

- Divide the children into small teams of up to five.
- Place a bucket symbolising a bin at the start line, and the 'litter' items at varying distances away from the bin.
- When you shout 'go', one child from each team runs to pick up one item of litter, places it in the bin and returns to the start line. The second child runs to pick up an item of litter, places it in the bin and returns. The first team to collect all their pieces of litter is the winner.
- At the end of the game, show the flash cards to the children and ask them what each one shows. Then lead a discussion about the importance of throwing away rubbish and keeping the environment clean.



Progression

- Depending on the children's age/ability, you could talk about recycling. Which of these items can be recycled? Why is recycling important?
- The same game could be used to teach children about items of clothing. Use flash cards depicting items of clothing. In this case the game symbolises collecting dirty clothes and putting them in the laundry basket.

Adaptations

- For a simpler game, scatter all the litter flash cards over the playing area with the bin in the middle. When you shout 'go', all the children run and collect them.
- A buddy could help a child with limited mobility by running and picking up the cards, which the child then drops in the bucket.

Sport-based education for Early Years

This section gives some examples of football and athletics-based activities which have broader curriculum relevance outside of PE, and which are adapted for young children and those with disabilities.

Football-based activities

Game: Hit the cone¹²

Learning outcomes

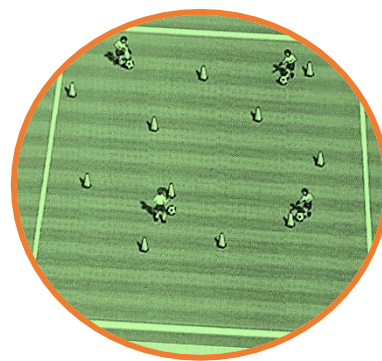
- Pre-numeracy: counting
- Cognitive development: colours, concentration
- Physical development: gross motor (kicking, dribbling, throwing, hitting targets)

Equipment

- A large number of cones or plastic bottles, ideally of different colours
- 5 footballs

How to play

- Mark out a playing space, around 25 x 25 metres.
- Inside the playing space, set up around 20 cones or bottles.
- About 5 children can play at a time. Select 5 children to go first and enter the play space.
- When you blow the whistle, the children dribble a ball and aim to knock over as many of the cones as possible in the allowed time. The child calls out each time she/he knocks over a cone '1, 2, 3...' Children should stand cones up again after knocking them over.
- Each child keeps count of how many cones she/he has knocked over.



Progression

- Children pick up and carry each cone when they have knocked it over, until all cones have been removed from the area.
- Set up cones of five different colours and give each child a certain colour. The child is only allowed to knock over cones of that colour.
- Add flash-cards to the cones, such as numbers, pictures, or letters of the alphabet, to make new games.

Adaptations

- Place the cones closer together for children who have different levels of mobility.
- Children who are still learning kicking or coordination can carry and throw the ball at cones.
- Some children can work in pairs with other children, standing up the cones when their buddy has kicked them over.

¹² Adapted from Wareing, 2010

Game: Body parts

Learning outcomes

- Cognitive development: parts of the body, concentration
- Physical development: gross motor (kicking, dribbling, throwing).

Equipment

- 10 footballs
- Cones.

How to play

- Mark out a playing space, around 25 x 25 metres.
- Up to 10 children can play at a time. Make sure there is enough space and children do not bump into each other.
- The children dribble a ball around the area. When you call out a body part (such as 'left foot', 'knee', or 'right hand'), the children stop the ball with that part of the body.
- Encourage the children to keep their head up and keep the ball close to their feet, kicking the ball gently.

Progression

- More able children can dribble with their non-dominant foot.
- Add obstacles to be avoided, to make the game more challenging.
- Instead of parts of the body, you could shout out the names of animals, and the children stop the ball with their foot and act like that animal.

Adaptation

- Give support to children where necessary so that they can hear and understand the instruction.
- Children who cannot dribble can kick or carry the ball around the area.

Athletics-based activities

Game: Obstacle race

Learning outcomes

- Cognitive development: concentration and memory, following instructions, spatial concepts such as left/right, over/under
- Pre-numeracy
- Physical development: gross motor (running, throwing, dribbling)

Equipment

- Various, depending on your creativity!

How to play

- Set up an obstacle course for children to negotiate in relay teams. This could include:
- Jumping from hoop to hoop
 - Throwing beanbags in a bucket
 - Crawling under a sheet

- Zigzagging between cones
- Jumping in a sack

Game: Kitenge throw

Learning outcomes

- Pre-numeracy: measuring, counting
- Physical development: gross motor (throwing, walking)

Equipment

- Kitenge: Take a small square of kitenge and tie a knot in one corner of it, to produce a soft throwing object which doesn't travel very far or fast.
- Or 'floating scarves' used in pre-school play, which can easily be made using light-weight material such as artificial silk or nylon.

How to play

- Children take it in turns to throw the kitenge as far as they can.
- After each throw, children measure the distance in steps, counting the number of steps.



Progression

- Let children experiment with different ways of throwing the scarf such as under-arm, over-arm, or two-handed.
- Use another throwing object; something that is light, does not travel far and cannot cause injury, like a foam ball, a shuttlecock, or a pompom. Children compare them; which object can they throw furthest?

Section 5. People and play

People make play happen!

The Early Years or Special Needs teacher is at the centre of inclusive play facilitation. This section focuses on their skills, approaches and qualities. A wider circle of people are also likely to be involved:

- **Special Needs Education teachers** – can be resource people on making adaptations for children with disabilities.
- **Early Years teachers** – have experience in play-based education, but may have less experience with children with special educational needs.
- **Assistant teachers** – are recognised within the pre-primary education system in Kenya as having a role to “maintain a safe and conducive environment for children to play, explore and learn”, but may not be present in all schools.
- **PE teachers** – teachers in primary schools with a background or interest in PE or sport may also be involved. There should be a shared understanding that the focus is on cross-curricular educational and developmental play, and not a narrow focus on sport.
- **School administration and management** – to facilitate connections and collaborations within the school, and to give support in areas such as play/sport equipment and external relations, such as with other schools.
- **Parents and carers** – who can support home-based and community-based play, and possibly volunteer in school activities and after-school or out-of-school activities run by the schools.
- **Children** – peer support from within the pre-school, and also wider support from older year-groups.

Teaching approaches in inclusive play

Your approach to planning and facilitating inclusive play sessions should be guided by these three principles:¹³

- **Success-based teaching:** Make sure that the play activity is designed so that the child can experience success. This gives encouragement and prevents disappointment and frustration. Once the child has experienced success, use progression to give them ongoing developmental challenges.
- **Personalised teaching:** Observe and listen to the child and their parent/carer and read their individual education plan to get an in-depth understanding of his needs, desires and abilities, strengths as well as limitations. Remember that every child is unique. Do not generalise by making assumptions about the child’s type of impairment or medical diagnosis. Plan activities for the child based on this understanding.

¹³ Eynot et al, 2011

- **Differentiated teaching:** Use a wide range of teaching and learning methods. This will enable all children with different levels of competency, preferences, and personalities to benefit from the session by using different communication methods (verbal, gesture, pictures, demonstration) and using STEP adaptations.

Communication methods

- Use age-appropriate communication – for young children this involves very simple language and a lot of humour! Play activities are meant to be fun, and young children love silly voices and jokes, especially visual ones.



Silly things to do with marker saucers!

- Keep instructions short and simple, use repetition and check for understanding.
- Be mindful of your positioning. Check that children can hear you and see you, especially your face.
- Use body language, gestures, miming, and Sign Language to support your verbal communication.
- Use appropriate physical assistance to support communication. You could guide a child's body parts through a movement.
- Use visual aids such as pictures and actual objects.
- Use buddies to support communication.
- First explain the activity/game and then demonstrate it visually.
- Have a system for getting children's attention that works for everyone, such as stamping your feet and raising your arms instead of shouting.

Qualities of a good inclusive teacher in play

“One must not fear failure, one must be optimistic, always approach difficulties as a chance to rise to the occasion. One must always overcome obstacles, and never retreat.”

Sports coach with deaf footballers in Tunisia (Eynot et al, 2011)

The most effective teachers in play with Early Years children, with and without disabilities, have certain qualities and attributes, including:

- **Inclusive and non-discriminatory** – the inclusive teacher welcomes and accepts all children, not discriminating by disability or any other identity. The teacher has a positive attitude, believing in children’s abilities and not focusing on or labelling them.
- **Creative** – a good inclusive teacher enjoys creating new play activities to meet all learners’ specific needs. The teacher isn’t afraid to try something new which may not work but will still be useful.
- **Patient** – some children with disabilities make slow progress in developing skills. A good teacher doesn’t seek quick results but accepts the child’s limitations while continuing to set goals and helping the child work towards them.

Staffing levels for inclusive play

Sport and play activities usually require more intensive staffing. If they take place outside, they cover a wider space than a classroom. National Pre-Primary Education Policy gives very clear guidelines on acceptable staffing ratios in pre-primary and special needs education (see **Box 7**). This highlights the importance of teaching assistants, volunteers or parents to play a supporting role.

Parents

Parents, families and caregivers are a child’s first and most important educators,¹⁴ especially in their early years.

For children with disabilities who are in school, sport and play **at home** can greatly benefit the child’s school education. For children with disabilities who do not attend school, a home-based play programme is of even greater importance. It will form a large part of the child’s overall education and rehabilitation programme.

It’s policy!

“Teachers should have the skills required for creating strong partnerships with parents”

Government of Kenya, 2017

¹⁴ Government of Kenya, 2017

In school, parents and caregivers can provide valuable support to you. Regular volunteering, especially by parents of children with disabilities, can be welcome support for inclusive sport and play sessions.

Box 7: Teacher-child ratio

- a) The teacher-child ratio in a regular pre-primary class shall be 1: 25;
- b) An assistant teacher shall be required for each pre-primary class;
- c) Teacher-child ratio for pre-primary education special needs children shall be as follows:

Category of Special Need	Standard Ratio
Deaf Blind	1:1
Cerebral Palsy	1:1
Severe/Multiple impairment	1:1
Autism	1:5
Mild mentally Impaired	1:10
Gifted and Talented	1:10
Hearing Impaired	1:12
Visually Impaired	1:15
Physically Impaired	1:15

Government of Kenya (2018)

Promoting parental involvement in sport and play

Encouraging parents to be involved in sport and play can be easier than in other areas of education, because:

- Parents can enjoy playing alongside their children, and it can help to develop the bond between parent and child.
- It is a flexible approach and can take place at times convenient for the parents, recognising their other time commitments.
- It can involve family members who have more free time, like grandparents and siblings, and help with their physical and mental health.
- Parents and caregivers may have valuable knowledge of traditional songs and games they can teach the child.
- Play needs little or no financial resources from the parents.



Barriers to parent involvement:

- Parents may not appreciate the educational value of play.
- They may think 'sport and play' only refers to competitive sports.
- They may think play involves buying equipment which they cannot afford.

- Fathers are often under-represented in all aspects of children’s education including play, which is seen as the mother’s/grandmother’s role.

You should encourage parents and caregivers to be more involved in play with their child, by:

- reinforcing positive messages about play.
- addressing any misunderstandings and myths.
- keeping the emphasis on enjoyment. Don’t over-complicate home-based play programmes with form-filling.
- involving fathers! Despite cultural barriers, fathers’ involvement in play programmes can be helpful in advocating for the value of play.

Parent-to-parent approaches

If you have a motivated parent of a child with disability in your school, you could work with them to reach others and bring them together to better support their children, including through play.

Parents Support Groups (PSGs)

These are parents of children with disabilities who come together for mutual support of their children. They could:

- educate and encourage each other on the value of sport and play, by sharing experiences of how play activities helped improve their children’s development;
- share experience on how other family members have supported their child with disability in sport and play.
- share ideas on games and activities and their educational benefit, and on local materials;
- work together to organize and facilitate sport and play activities, after-school or weekend group sessions;
- raise funds for educational play equipment for their schools.

Existing PSGs could help to train or motivate parents and caregivers in your school. Contact ANDY to find out more.

Children

Children in the inclusive play group, or in the wider school, are a valuable resource to help make inclusive play successful.

Buddying

Friends or siblings may be able to support each other. You can also use a **buddying** system where children are selected to pair up. This can help create new friendships and build wider understanding and acceptance of diversity.

Tips on using buddying

- Pair children based on complementary skills or interests.
- Ensure they know their roles in the play activity and ways they can support each other.
- Ensure that both buddies in a pair play an active role in the game and contribute meaningfully to the joint effort.
- Monitor how the buddying goes during the play activity and make changes where necessary.
- Give children opportunities to change their buddy regularly so they can make different friends.

Group leaders

- Give children responsibilities during lessons.
- Children can support you (perhaps by setting up or collecting in play equipment).
- They can assist any other child needing support in the group.

Wider school support

In the wider school, there could be ways that other children can participate in and give support to inclusive play sessions.

- Older children could make educational sport and play materials.
- Children and youth in school clubs and social programmes could volunteer in sport and play activities.

Section 6. Keep it safe!

Sport and play is generally a safe and fun experience for all children, but you need to be aware of and manage some risk factors. This chapter gives an overview of the management of risks in sport and play with young children, including those with disabilities.

Risks of accidental and non-accidental harm exist for all children in sport and play, but very young children, and those with disabilities, are particularly vulnerable for various reasons:

- Very young children are smaller, weaker and less well-developed physically so are more prone to injury from accidents.
- Very young children are less well-developed emotionally and therefore more vulnerable to emotional damage.
- They are less likely to understand the nature of acts they are involved in, particularly sexual acts, and to recognise them as abuse.
- They are less likely to express their concern, either through fear or because they are unaware they are being abused. Children with communication difficulties face additional barriers of expressing themselves.

These factors highlight the importance of having risk management and safeguarding measures in place.



Remember! Sometimes lengthy risk assessments are disproportionate and result in play activities being disallowed because of the risks identified. However, some measure of risk is often beneficial in play, as it allows children to learn and develop as they face new experiences and overcome new challenges. The aim of risk assessment is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risk and the benefits. Keep in mind the positive impact of the play activity on children.

Accidents and health risks

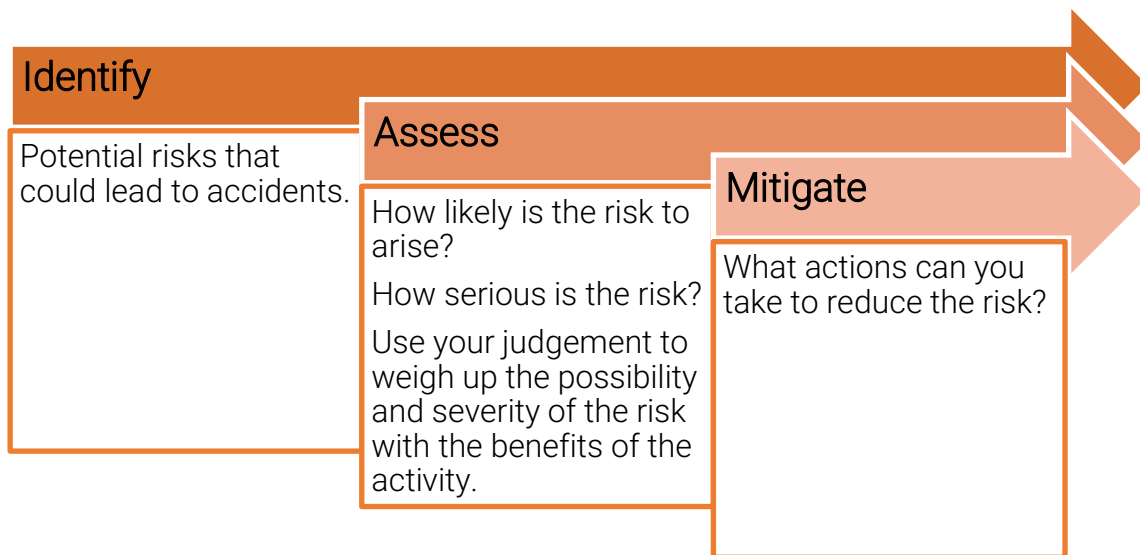
Preventing accidents

Accidents in sport and play involving young children and those with disabilities, can include:

- **Stigma related** – some children with disabilities may be unintentionally excluded, neglected or discriminated against due to preconceptions and stereotypes relating to their disability.
- **Falls and collisions** – these are more common, due to less-developed coordination, balance and strength, particularly among children with physical disabilities.
 - Children with visual impairment and hearing impairment may also be more prone to falls and collisions due to not seeing or not hearing instructions.

- In inclusive play, children are likely to have a range of abilities or be different sizes. Children who are stronger or faster may need to be reminded to be careful with children who are smaller or slower.
- Set ground rules to prevent dangerous or over-physical play.
- **Equipment-related** – children may use play equipment in a dangerous way, deliberately or through misunderstanding.
- **Mobility equipment** – some children use aids such as wheelchairs, crutches and callipers which can be a risk to themselves or to other children during play.
- **Toileting accidents** – some children with disabilities may not have well-developed toileting skills or medical problems such as poor bladder control. Extreme over-excitement during play can lead to toilet accidents. Make sure the child has a change of clothes and sanitation facilities are available.

When planning your play activity:



The STEP approach, introduced earlier, is also useful in identifying risks in play:



SPACE

Are there any potential dangers in the play space? Be aware that surfaces change depending on weather. They can get slippery or hot.



TASK

Watch for signs of children over-exerting or straining themselves. Young children can't always judge their own limits and abilities.



EQUIPMENT

Take care with equipment that is hard or fast-moving. Are there any small items that could be a choke hazard? Is the equipment broken or dangerous?



PEOPLE

Is the staffing ration adequate? Have staff been properly vetted? Have interpreters and support staff for children with disabilities been identified?

Box 8: Playgrounds

Playgrounds are often damaged by over-use and vandalism. Sometimes poor quality or inaccessible playground equipment is installed, leading to risks for children, especially those with disabilities. Health and safety factors to consider include:

- **Play surfaces** – surfaces need to be level and free from sharp objects or hazardous plants. Soft surfaces such as grass, sand, woodchip, or rubber are preferable to hard surfaces such as tarmac or bare earth, especially around high equipment such as slides and climbing frames.
- **Area** – the play area needs to be large enough for children to run around freely with less risk of colliding with each other or play equipment. All play areas need to be accessible and safe for children with disabilities to move about easily. The Kenya Pre-Primary Education policy specifies approximately 45–50 square feet of space per child.
- **Shade** – providing shade from trees gives more comfort, and can prevent metal equipment overheating in the sun. However, trees can also create risks, and roots can be a trip hazard.
- **Maintenance** – regularly check that playground equipment is securely fixed and in good working order to prevent injury.
- **Water features** – need particularly close supervision due to the risk of drowning.
- **WASH** – make sure that water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in playgrounds are clean, safe and accessible for children with disabilities.

Managing health risks

When planning physical play activities, consider some health conditions that may be more common among children with disabilities or younger children. The following is general guidance, but seek child-specific advice from parents or medical staff if you have a child with these health conditions in your class.

Epilepsy (seizures): Epilepsy is associated with some types of intellectual disability and can also affect a child without any other impairment present. You should understand from the parent or carer and a medical source about the frequency and severity of seizures, any medication the child takes, and any signs or triggers that the child is about to have a seizure. Epilepsy should rarely be a cause to exclude a child from play activities if the right precautions are taken. Situations such as extreme stress or excitement can initiate a seizure. Activities at a height like climbing frames, should be avoided because of the risk of falling. The child's participation in risky activities depends on the number of staff available. One-to-one staff support is advisable for activities such as swimming.

Asthma: Asthma is a lung condition that causes occasional breathing difficulties, including wheezing, shortness of breath and coughing. Incidence is growing in Kenya, especially in urban areas. Asthma cannot be cured but it can be controlled by using inhalers. Physical exercise is recommended for children with asthma because of the general health benefits. Short periods of physical activity are advisable rather than prolonged sessions, and a warm-up is vital. Using an inhaler 15 minutes before starting physical exercise may reduce the likelihood of an asthma attack during the session.

Heart conditions: Congenital heart conditions affect the flow of blood around the child's body. Heart conditions can be associated with other conditions such as Down's syndrome. Medical advice is needed on the child's specific condition, but in general, caution is needed when the child engages in physical activity. Physical exercise can lead to shortness of breath, unusual fatigue, and a change of colour of the skin. Carefully monitor the child's level of activity and exertion and avoid high excitement levels.

Non-accidental harm: child abuse

Intentional abuse of children is sadly a reality in every country, and can happen in schools, community settings and homes. Everyone, including teachers, has a responsibility to keep children safe and protect them from abuse.

Physical abuse: deliberately hurting a child in ways such as hitting, kicking, pushing, pulling hair, or having objects thrown at them. Corporal punishment in schools in Kenya was banned in 2001.

In sport and play, physical abuse also includes when a child is over-exerted or is given physical tasks that are not age- or ability-appropriate.

Sexual abuse: when a child is forced to or enticed into sexual acts. This might involve physical contact or be non-contact.

In sport, there is potential for sexual abuse because of the close physical contact between teachers/coaches and children. Older children can be pressured into offering sexual favours to coaches, for example, in exchange for team selection. Younger children can be groomed by coaches who build trust and an inappropriate friendship, preparing them for such abuse in future.

Emotional abuse: emotionally mistreating a child; for young children, this could mean by scaring, bullying, humiliating or ignoring the child.

Giving a child a physical punishment like running around the field, can be emotional abuse if it results in the child being humiliated. Emotional abuse can arise in sport due to the strong passions and emotions that sport arouses, and teachers/coaches sometimes using bullying language towards children.

Neglect: failing to look after a child's physical and emotional needs, and not protecting them from harm.

In sport and play, this could mean failure to ensure the safety of physical activities, such as by failing to check the safety of the play space or the equipment, or by providing insufficient supervision of children, which leads to an accident. Remember that young children, especially those with disabilities, need closer supervision than older children because of their vulnerability.

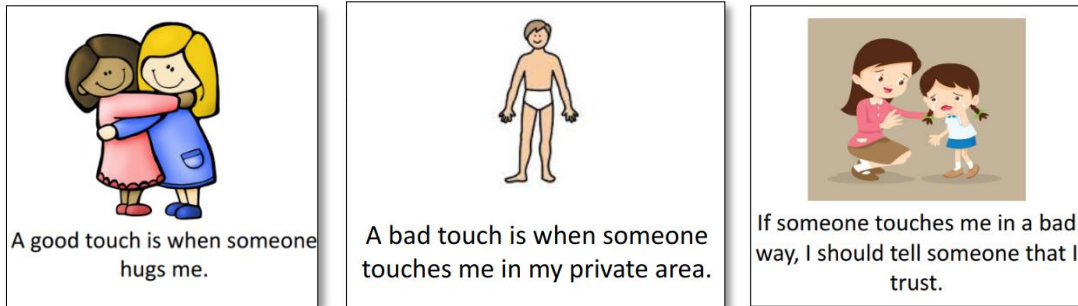
Ensuring safeguarding in your school

All schools should have a safeguarding policy and procedures in place, to ensure a safe environment for children, and to respond when there are concerns about children's safety. This safeguarding system should cover:

Awareness about safeguarding

All those who have contact with children – teachers, other school staff, volunteers, and family members – should be aware of the problem of child abuse and the key signs of abuse. This also includes the young children themselves, including those

with disabilities. Information and messages on safeguarding need to be appropriate for these children. Use simple, child-friendly approaches and messages such as 'good touch/bad touch' messaging on physical/sexual abuse. You could use cartoons or props such as a doll.¹⁵



Examples of age-appropriate messaging on abuse

Assessing risks

For larger activities such as sports events, using a formal, written risk assessment template is a good idea. (See an example in **Appendix 6**). For smaller-scale activities like regular PE lessons, risk assessment could involve a simple, mental checklist.

Who might abuse a child in sport and play?

- Teachers and other adults who encounter the child in a professional capacity
- Parents or other family members
- Other children

The risk assessment should cover specific risks related to the particular children in the group, to their disability, behaviour or health condition. For example, a particular child might have a tendency to wander off and get lost, or a child may be prone to

Risk management plans need to be thorough, but also proportional to the actual likelihood of the risk.

temper tantrums which can create a danger to themselves and to other children.

Risk management actions could include:

- carrying out checks of the play space and equipment;
- briefing staff in advance on the code of conduct and safeguarding procedures, their roles in the play activity, and any disability, health, or behaviour-related watch-points for specific children;
- having first aid personnel and materials available;
- having contingency plans in place, for example, if an outdoor event is affected by rain.

Reporting concerns

¹⁵ Melanin Kidz, 2019

It should be clear what steps you need to take if you have a concern regarding the safety of children, for example, reporting it to a safeguarding officer or other designated person.

- Schools need to create the organisational culture of openness, responsibility and accountability that allows this.
- Children should know that they can and should report any concerns to a responsible adult. Reporting mechanisms should be age-appropriate and accessible for children with disabilities. Create a trusting relationship with children, and give them opportunities such as one-to-one feedback sessions, where they feel able to share their concerns.
- A concern, once raised, should be acted upon and investigated, swiftly and fairly, following the school's safeguarding procedures. There should be systems in place to support children and staff following an incident, allegation or complaint. At all times, the welfare of children should be of paramount consideration.

Code of conduct

Safeguarding policies usually contain guidance for your behaviour in relation to children such as:

- treat all children with respect and equality and uphold the dignity of all children including those with disabilities;
- do not show any discriminatory behaviour or discriminatory language;
- act as a role model and demonstrate good behaviour to the children;
- commit to complying with the school's safeguarding policy and being proactive in promoting a safeguarding culture in the school.

A schools' code of conduct applies to its own staff, but the school should expect other partners involved in the play activity (volunteers, NGO staff, sports coaches), to follow similar principles of conduct. Similarly, the school should give guidelines to visitors to the school, media or donor representatives.

Safeguarding outside of the school's duty of care

Your primary concern is to ensure that children are safe while under your duty of care, which is mainly while the child is at school, but may also involve school-led activities in the community. However, children can also suffer abuse and neglect in their homes, outside of the school's duty of care. You may suspect that a child is suffering abuse or neglect, for example, if the child is showing the signs or if the child voices a concern about a problem at home. In this case, you still have a duty to act in the best interests of the child, by involving the relevant authorities. For detailed guidance, refer to your organisation's safeguarding policy.

Box 9: Possible signs of abuse among young children

- unexplained physical marks on the skin, such as bruises;
- changes in behaviour or personality, like being withdrawn, anxious or having outbreaks of anger;

- having regular nightmares or sleeping problems;
- changes in eating habits, or loss of appetite;
- showing an inexplicable fear or avoidance of particular people or places;
- becoming secretive and reluctant to share information;
- showing knowledge of adult behaviour such as alcohol, drugs or sex;
- regular flinching in response to sudden harmless actions like someone raising a hand quickly;
- bed-wetting.

But

- A child may show some of these signs and not have experienced abuse. For example, children with moving difficulties may have bruises due to everyday knocks and bruises moving around; temper tantrums may be part of a normal behaviour pattern for some children with learning difficulties.
- A child who has been abused may show no signs.

Box 10: Possible signs of abuse among children with disabilities

- Children with disabilities displaying change in how they react to or interact with primary caregivers – could be seen as usual behaviour for a child with a disability.
- Children with disabilities who need assistance to go to the toilet suddenly refuse or appear fearful to use the toilet.
- Regression or delay in development, behaviour management or skills. Often excused by the nature of the impairment and can be an indication of a lack of stimulation and encouragement that can go undetected.
- Excessive bruises or new bruises in places where the child is not touched for support or uses a safety harness. It is important that bruises on children with physical impairments are not ignored just because they may fall or injure themselves or get sores due to immobility.
- A child who excessively apologises for their disability or inability may indicate they are experiencing verbal and emotional abuse.
- A child not using assistive devices or not knowing how to use their devices although they are available can be an indication of neglect.

BUT

There are some signs that generally indicate abuse but may not for children with disabilities:

- Children with physical impairments may have more bruises due to falling or have bruises in unexpected places due to using different limbs for mobility support. You should look for new, or unexplained bruises and marks.
- Children with limited or no mobility are more likely to sustain fractures with minimal force which may therefore not be an indication of excessive force.

- Children may be quieter than their peers if they have a hearing impairment, intellectual disability or psycho-social disability without it being a safeguarding concern.
- Children with some intellectual impairments may seem withdrawn or their behaviour may seem erratic without it being a safeguarding concern.
- Children with some intellectual impairments may display aggressive behaviour towards family, peers and strangers without it being a child safeguarding concern.
- Children with Tourette's Syndrome may pronounce explicit or unusual words or phrases without it being a child safeguarding concern.
- Children with some disabilities experience incontinence without being distressed.

Inclusive play is safe play!

Appendices

Appendix 1: References

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Appendix 2: Warm-up and cool-down activities¹⁶

Warm-ups (5 mins)

Directions game

- Tell the children that they will be completing an action and performing it in different directions: Forwards, Backwards, Sideways.
- Give the children an action: Walking, Tiptoeing, Giant steps, Hopping, Jogging.
- Then hold up the direction cards. The children should move in that direction.
- Change the direction every couple of seconds.
- Repeat with different actions.

Groups

- Tell the children to walk around the space.
- Shout out a number and the children should get into a group of that many children.
- Children then skip round the space.
- Shout out a different number and the children should once more get into a group of that many children.
- Continue with running, hopping and jumping, calling out different numbers each time.

Cool-downs (2 mins)

Balancing Beanbags

- Make sure each child has a beanbag.
- Shout out different body parts: head hand knee foot. The children should balance the beanbag on that body part.
- Children attempt to slowly move round the space whilst balancing the beanbag.
- Continue the activity by shouting out different body parts.

Sleepy animals

- Tell children they are going to be different animals. Explain that they should move like an animal of their choice.
- Shout out: 'Freeze.' They should then freeze in the position of the animals.
- Repeat this but explain that the animals are getting tired and the children should make sure their movements are slowing down.

¹⁶ Free resource from [Twinkl.com](https://www.twinkl.com)

Appendix 3: Equipment-specific game ideas

Beanbags

Game: Beanbag balance	
Learning outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive – recognising colours, learning parts of the body, concentration and paying attention • Pre-numeracy - counting • Physical development – balance, coordination, gross motor skills • Social skills – working together and helping each other 	Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beanbags of different colours
How to play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Scatter the beanbags around the playing space. Children move around the area following your instructions. You might ask them to walk, skip, hop, or move like a monkey. → When you make a signal, the children run and collect beanbags according to your instructions (for example, three beanbags – one red, one yellow and one green). → Ask the children to form a circle. Shout out an instruction which the children have to follow, (for example, 'place the red beanbag on your head'). → Give praise to the children for completing the action correctly, and support those who have difficulty. → End the game in a fun way (for example, 'throw all your beanbags at me!')
Progression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress from simple, one-action instructions to more complex instructions involving multiple actions (for example, 'place the green beanbag on your left shoulder and the yellow beanbag on your right shoulder', or 'place the red beanbag on your head and stand on one leg while counting to ten.') • Make the game competitive, by eliminating children if they follow the instruction incorrectly. 	Adaptations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify the instructions according to children's abilities. You could take out colour instructions for children with difficulty differentiating colours. • Have children play in pairs or small groups, encouraging them to help each other to follow each instruction correctly.

Game: Beanbag maths	
Learning outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive – recognising colours • Pre-numeracy – counting, learning about size and ordering • Communication - • Physical development – gross motor skills, hand-eye coordination • Social skills – turn-taking, playing fairly 	Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beanbags numbered 1 to 10 • Ten containers of different sizes also numbered from 1 to 10
How to play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ask the children to arrange the containers in a line according to their size, from smallest to largest. → Divide the children into teams. Mark a line on the ground, about 2 metres, parallel to the line of containers. Children from each team take it turns to throw the numbered beanbags into the corresponding container.
Progression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The beanbags and containers could be labelled with other matching words like days of the week, months of the year or words beginning with the same letter, to extend children’s learning to other areas. 	Adaptations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For children who can’t recognise numbers, the beanbags and containers could be matched by colour instead of number • Vary the distance for throwing the beanbags according to the children’s ability.


Game: Beanbag golf	
Learning outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-numeracy/numeracy – recognising numbers, counting, addition • Physical development – gross motor (throwing, walking), hand-eye coordination • Social skills – turn-taking, honesty, following rules 	Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beanbags • Hoops (about 10) • Flags or cones • Score-cards
How to play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Spread the hoops across the playing area, approx. 5 metres apart, depending on the size of the playing area and the abilities of the children. Mark each hoop with a numbered flag or cone. → Children stand on the start line, and throw a bean-bag so that it lands in hoop 1. If the beanbag lands in the hoop in 1 shot, the child scores 1 point and writes this on the score-card. If not, the child walks to where the beanbag fell and takes another shot at the hoop. If the child takes 2 shots to land the beanbag in the hoop, he/she scores 2 points.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → When the child has successfully landed his/her beanbag in hoop 1, he/she stands in hoop 1 and aims for hoop 2. The game continues until the child reaches the final hoop. → Encourage children to keep their own score and to add up their total score. The game can be competitive between children, or children can be encouraged to beat their own score.
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This game can potentially be played over a large area or a field, depending on the age/competence of the children. When playing over a wide area, ensure that children stay within sight and boundaries or fences are secure.
Progression	Adaptations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let the children design and set up the 'golf course' themselves, making some 'holes' more difficult than others, with longer distances and corners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an individual game which children can play at their own pace, so it is suitable for children of different abilities. Alternatively, children can play in pairs, with one child helping the other to count and record scores. • Decrease the distance between the hoops to make the game easier and shorter. • Children can be given more of a challenge by throwing with their non-dominant hand. • Take out the numeracy aspect of the game by making scoring optional.

Skittles

Game: Alphabet skittles	
Learning outcomes	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-literacy/literacy – such as alphabet or names of animals, food. • Physical development – gross motor (throwing, walking), hand-eye coordination • Activities of daily living – such as toileting or personal hygiene. • Social skills – turn-taking, honesty, following rules, responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set of ten skittles (can be home-made from drinks bottles), each one labelled with a letter of the alphabet. • Soft balls
How to play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Set up the ten skittles in a triangle formation. → Children form teams, and one by one they stand behind the start line and throw a ball, aiming to knock down as many skittles as possible. → After each go, the children from the team say the letter(s) of the skittle(s) they have knocked over. For each letter, the children have to think of words beginning with that letter.
Progression	Adaptations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For each letter of the alphabet, ask the children to give a word related to a theme. • Start conversations about the themes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use pictures on the skittles instead of letters of the alphabet. The children then talk about the word or mime the action. • Instead of the children thinking of a word, you give a word, and the children have to move, mime, or make the sound related to the word. • Give children different roles in the team according to their ability. A child experiencing learning difficulties could throw the ball or arrange the skittles rather than participating in the alphabet-related exercise.
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Game: Skittles maths	
Learning outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-numeracy/numeracy – recognising numbers, counting, addition • Physical development – gross motor (throwing, walking), hand-eye coordination • Social skills – turn-taking, honesty, following rules, responsibility 	Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set of ten skittles (can be home-made from drinks bottles) • Soft balls
How to play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Set up the ten skittles in a triangular formation → Children form teams, and one by one they stand behind the start line and throw a ball, aiming to knock down as many skittles as possible. → After each go, the child counts how many skittles have been knocked down, which is his/her score. Each round, the child adds up his/her total score → After a given number of throws, the winning team is the team with the highest score. 	
Progression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can also learn subtraction, by subtracting the number of skittles left standing from 10. • Give children responsibilities during the game such as setting up the skittles when they've been knocked 	Adaptations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can propel the ball in any way of their choice, like throwing, kicking, or pushing the ball. • Provide children with an appropriate-sized ball that they are able to handle.

down, counting the skittles, and keeping the score.

- Add numbers to the skittles from 1 to 10, and the children's score is the total of the values of the skittles knocked down.
- Vary the distance according to the child's ability.
- Give children more than one go if required.

Appendix 4: Boccia

Boccia is a recognised para-sport which is played at the highest level of international competition, at the Paralympics, every four years. It has a formalised set of rules and a standardised set of equipment, but simple versions of boccia can be played informally, using adapted rules and locally available equipment.

Boccia is a very accessible sport which can be played by people with severe impairments. It is also very inclusive, and children without disabilities also enjoy it, and can also play in mixed teams.

Playing boccia – key points

- It can be an individual game or can be played in pairs or teams of four.
- Equipment needed is a set of 12 boccia balls (6 red and 6 blue), and a small white ball, the 'jack', which is the target. These can be improvised using locally available balls of two different colours.
- 'Official' boccia is played on a smooth-surfaced court, but it can equally well be played on grass or earth surfaces.
- The aim is to score as many points as possible by placing your set of coloured (red or blue) balls closest to the white 'jack' ball.
- In singles each player has 6 balls. In doubles each player has 3 balls. The player can propel the ball by rolling, throwing, or kicking the balls.
- Singles and doubles games consist of 4 'ends'. One 'end' consists of all 13 balls (6 red, 6 blue and 1 jack) being thrown onto the court.

- A player from the red team starts the game by throwing the jack to start the first 'end', and also plays the first coloured ball.

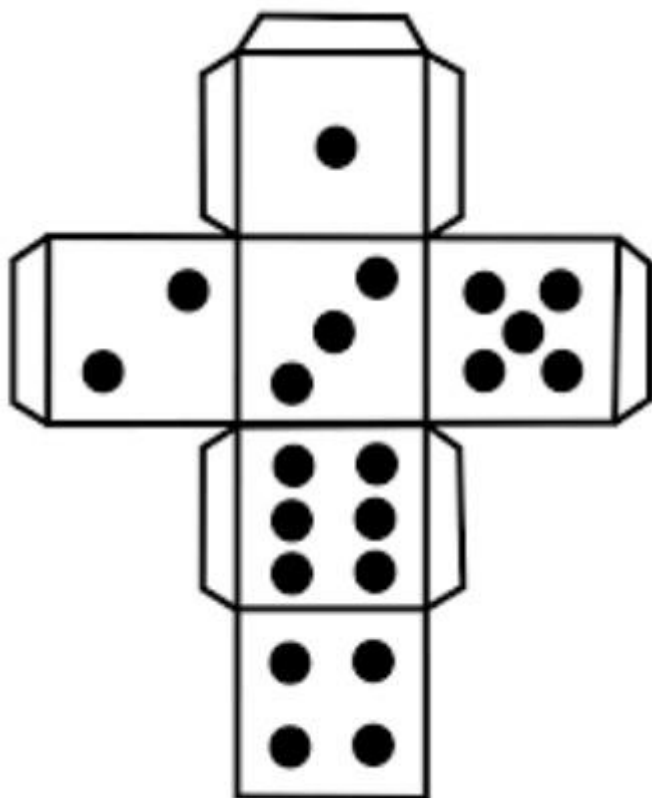


Children playing bocce in Sri Lanka

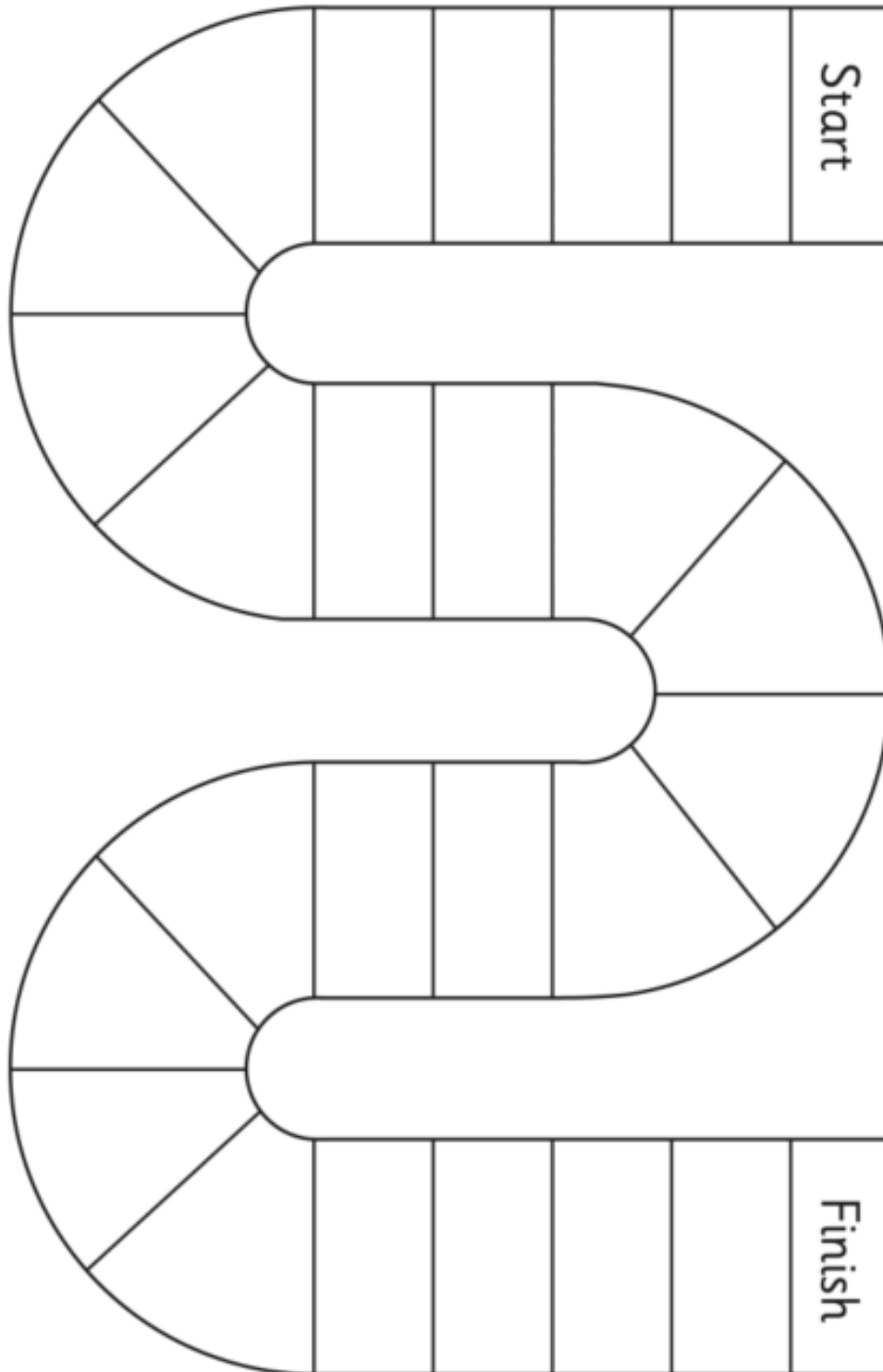
- A player from the blue team then throws his ball.
- The side to throw next will be the side which does not have the closest ball to the jack, as determined by the referee.
- Play continues in this way until both sides have thrown all their balls.
- If two or more balls of different colours are the same distance from the jack and there are no other balls closer, it is the side that threw last that must throw again.
- Once all the balls are played then that is the end of one 'end'. The team whose ball is closest to the jack wins that 'end'. This team scores points - one point for each ball closer to the jack than the opponent's closest ball to the jack.
- If two or more balls of different colours are the same distance from the jack, each side will receive one point per jack.
- Starting new 'ends' alternates between the red and the blue teams.
- After 'four ends' are completed, the side with the most points is the winner.

Appendix 5: Templates and flashcards

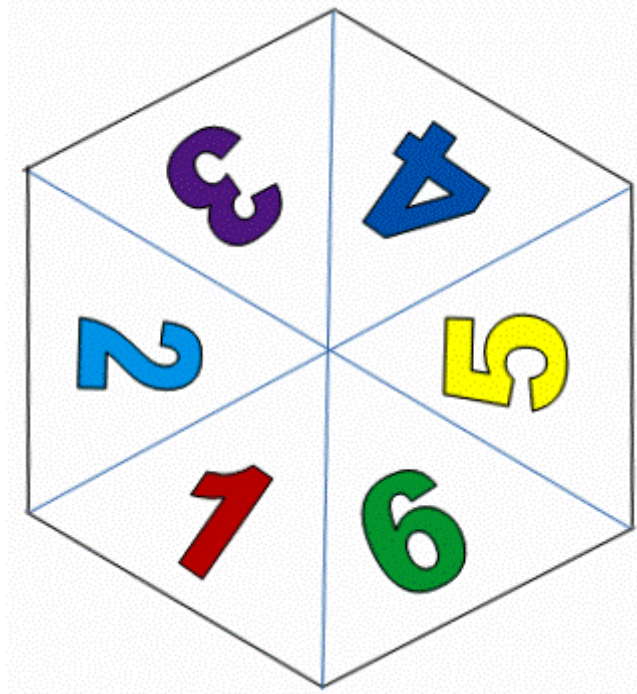
Dice template



























Board-game template

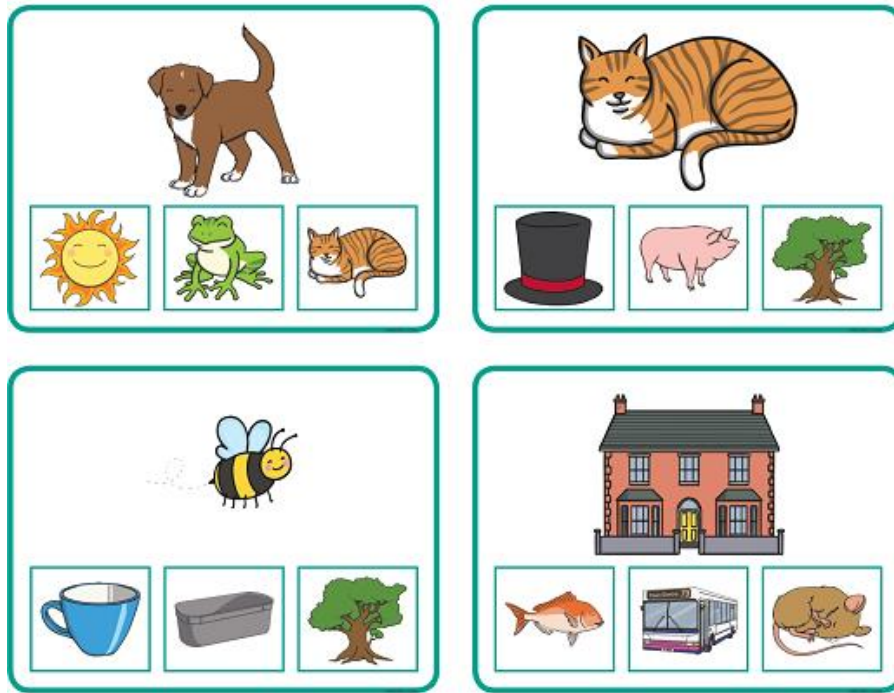


Spinners template









Rhyming match-cards



Example of a scavenger list:

A white flower	
A wooden stick as long as a ruler	
A round stone	
A brown leaf	
10 blades of grass	
A piece of litter	

Appendix 6: example of a risk assessment template

Risk no.	Risk	Severity Risk rating High, Medium or Low	Controls already in place	Likelihood of Occurrence	Prevention - What can be done to mitigate these risks?	Responsible	Deadline



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