

Move 4 New Horizons

Playful Teaching

Manual



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The manual is available in English and Nepali language and can be ordered from info@sad.ch



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Preface

“Move 4 New Horizons” is an educational programme for disadvantaged out-of-school children in the Dang district in the Mid-Western region of Nepal. This programme has been implemented by the Swiss Academy for Development (SAD) and the Nepalese Dalit Welfare Organisation (DWO) since June 2008.

As a main project activity, 15 non formal education (NFE)-classes are held in different villages. The NFE classes target children aged 5–10 years who do not have access to primary school education due to discrimination on the basis of gender, caste, ethnicity, disability, poverty and/or conflict. NFE-classes last for nine months and are led by young facilitators who are

recruited from the village population. They teach the participants basic reading, writing and mathematics skills and offer them well-guided sport and play activities. After nine months, the participating children are integrated into the public school system.

By systematically integrating playful activities, the teaching approach of our NFE classes is adapted to meet the needs of disadvantaged children by providing them with educational opportunities and at the same time strengthening their psychosocial development. This rests on the conviction that children can only fully develop their true potential if they have the necessary self-confidence, inner strength and motivation to over-

come the multiple obstacles they face, to learn and to advance in life.

This manual was developed to help the facilitators in their NFE class-teaching and to complement the trainings that they have received. The guidelines in this manual incorporate the experiences and best practices of the first two and a half project years. By sharing the manual with a wider audience, we hope that it will serve as a reference on playful teaching approaches, which can be applied in pre-school and primary schools, and in either non-formal or formal teaching settings.

1. Why use a playful teaching approach?

Many teachers perceive the learning environment as “efficient” if the children sit still and are quiet. However, for a child it is very difficult to sit still for hours and to concentrate on what the teacher is saying. Research has found that the maximum average duration for a six year-old child to be able to remain concentrated is 15 minutes. Teaching methods, especially at pre-school and primary school level need to take this into account. If teaching is interrupted by active sequences, in which the children can move or if the lessons are designed in an interactive way, leaving the children room to explore and practice what they have learnt in a playful way, they will learn much more easily.

The M4NH project targets children from disadvantaged backgrounds in a rural area of Nepal. These children often face even greater difficulties to adapt to a classroom environment and to concentrate, because they might not have been particularly supported in their development at home and are not used to receiving learning inputs. When these children enter school, they have to adapt to an entirely new environment, which can be a difficult experience for them. Constantly lagging behind and receiving punishment for not being concentrated leads these children to have a negative attitude towards learning, which will also negatively impact their learning chances later at school.

It is not surprising that under these circumstances, school drop out and repetition rates are the highest in the first two years at primary school level in Nepal. Children from marginalised backgrounds are those that are most at risk of dropping out early.

What can a teacher do to make sure that disadvantaged children are not left behind and drop out early? How can the learning environment be adapted to become more responsive to the specific learning needs of these children?

The challenge for a teacher is to provide disadvantaged children with achievable and fun learning opportunities and thereby help them to develop self-

confidence, trust in their teacher and a more positive attitude towards learning. We therefore not only aim at promoting children's mental learning in our NFE classes, but we want to support their development in a holistic way. By "holistic", we mean that the teaching supports the development of the children on all four dimensions, which are defined as the mental, physical, emotional and social dimensions of child development. We use the illustration below and the four symbols on the right when we refer to these four dimensions of child development later in the manual.



physical



mental



emotional



social

4 dimensions of child development

Sport and play activities can be a powerful tool to support the holistic development of children, because they offer the children learning experiences on all four

levels. The illustration below explains how sport and play activities support learning along the four dimensions of child development.

Physical dimension

→ *Sport + play activities stimulate movements and help to develop physical abilities.*



The **body**
is moving.



- *Physical: flexibility, strength, endurance, resistance, speed*
- *Coordination: orientation, reaction, differentiation, rhythm, balance*

Mental dimension

→ *Sport + play activities help to develop intellectual capacities.*



The **head**
is thinking.



- *Ability to concentrate, to observe, to reflect, to anticipate, etc.*
- *Ability to think logically, to put strategies in place, to make decisions, etc.*

Emotional dimension

→ *Sport + play activities improve the awareness and management of emotions.*



The **heart**
is feeling emotions.



- *Learning to cope with fears and frustrations*
- *Learning to manage aggression*
- *Experiencing joy, fun and motivation*
- *Learning to win and to lose*

Social dimension

→ *Sport + play activities help to strengthen social relations and to improve social skills.*



The child acts within
a social **environment**.

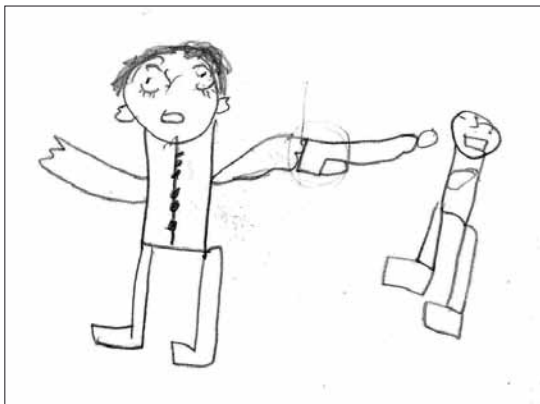


- *Making friends*
- *Gain trust, empathy, respect and tolerance for others*
- *Surrender stereotypes and prejudices*
- *Learn to cooperate, to manage conflicts, to obey rules and to act within a team*

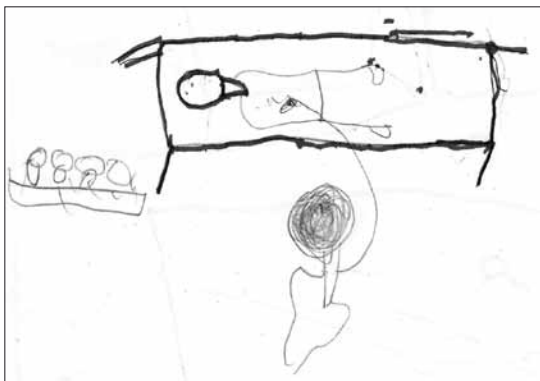
Through movement and play, children can hence explore and practice important competences and life skills. Sport and play activities should therefore not only be seen as a recreational and fun side-activity, but as a crucial factor for the healthy growth and development of children and a valuable tool to facilitate learning processes.

Our experiences from the Move 4 New Horizons-project also suggest it was mainly thanks to the playful teaching approach in our NFE classes that we have succeeded in preparing disadvantaged children so well for school. By including guided and independent playful activities in- and outside the classroom, by making the teaching more interactive and by offering the children a stimulating learning environment, the NFE classes have supported the children's physical, emotional, social and mental development at the same time very effectively. For example, we have found that the

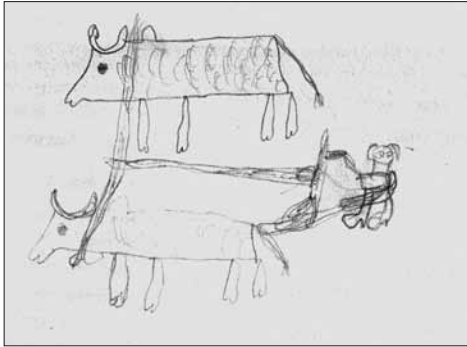
children have developed much brighter hopes for their future thanks to the NFE classes. For an assessment of the children's self-perceptions and future hopes, we had asked them, among others, to make drawings of how they see themselves in the future. We did this with all the children at the beginning and at the end of their participation in the NFE classes. Below, there are two examples highlighting how significantly these future hopes have often changed.



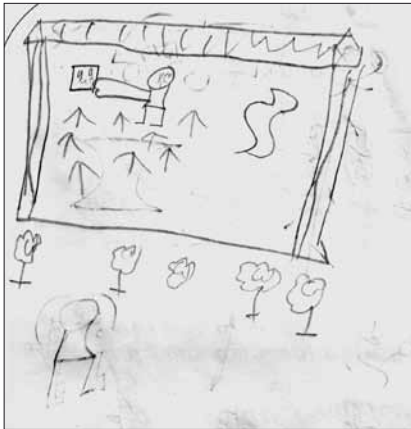
A nine year-old boy from a NFE class in Pawannagar made a drawing in October 2008 of himself serving in the army and shooting a man.



In May 2009, the same boy had already a more optimistic and peaceful view of himself in the future: He was drawing himself as a doctor, treating a sick patient.



A similar example is provided by an eight year-old girl from the NFE class in Purandhara. In October 2008, she saw herself ploughing the field with two oxen in the future.



In May 2009, the same girl saw herself working as a teacher.

Asked by the facilitator to comment her drawing, the girl said:

“I will be a good teacher in the future and I will provide education to the children in the villages, who are far from getting education.”

2. How do you teach in a playful way?

This chapter introduces some basic teaching principles and describes how a playful teaching approach can be systematically integrated into the teaching.

2.1 Subjects and timetable

Our NFE classes last for nine months and children are taught six days a week, 3 hours a day by local facilitators. Four subjects are included into teaching:

maths, Nepali, English and sports. Each lesson lasts 45 minutes. Sports lessons are being taught for at least three hours per week on an outdoor playground (a village square, a school yard or any other open space, like an unused field).

The weekly timetable of our NFE classes can vary, but as an example, it could look like this:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Maths	Nepali	Maths	Maths	Maths	English
Nepali	English	Nepali	Nepali	Nepali	Maths
English	Sports	English	Sports	English	Sports

2.2 “Cooking” a lesson

Conducting a lesson can be compared with cooking a meal. The actual “cooking” is only one part of the work. Before starting to cook, it’s necessary to prepare: decide what to cook, getting the ingredients ready, etc. Every good cook knows that a good preparation is the key for cooking a tasty meal. The same is true for carrying out an interesting lesson.

The following steps need to be considered for preparing a meal:

Step 1	Decide on what you want to cook
Step 2	Choosing how to cook the meal
Step 3	Preparation of kitchen materials and ingredients
Step 4	Cooking the meal
Step 5	Tasting the meal

These five steps can be taken as a reference for a teacher to prepare her or his lessons as well. The table below shows how these five steps in the kitchen correspond to the five steps of conducting a lesson.

	KITCHEN	LESSON
Step 1	Decide on what you want to cook	Setting a learning objective
Step 2	Choosing how to cook the meal	Choosing suitable teaching methods
Step 3	Preparation of kitchen materials and ingredients	Preparation of classroom/play-ground and teaching materials
Step 4	Cooking the meal	Carrying out the lesson
Step 5	Taste the meal	Evaluation

This model can be applied to all subjects, including sports. The five steps of preparing and conducting a lesson will now be explained one by one.

Step 1: Setting a learning objective

	KITCHEN	LESSON
Step 1	Decide on what you want to cook	Setting a learning objective
Step 2	Choosing how to cook the meal	Choosing suitable teaching methods
Step 3	Preparation of kitchen materials and ingredients	Preparation of classroom/playground and teaching materials
Step 4	Cooking the meal	Carrying out the lesson
Step 5	Taste the meal	Evaluation

An interesting and enriching lesson cannot be “improvised” by the teacher when he/she is in the classroom. The teacher needs to know which learning objective he/she wants to achieve with the children. If this learning objective is clear, the teacher should prepare at least one day before what teaching activities he/she is planning to do in the lesson.

It is important not to mix up learning objectives with teaching activities. Often, teachers define the aims of their lessons according to what they as teachers will do (teaching activities) and not according to what the children should learn (learning objectives). However, the achievement of the learning objective is what really counts. The learning objective defines what the children should know after the lesson (not what the teacher should have done).



Example: children are able to write the English alphabet in small and capital letters

Example: Exercise “Trace the letter” from textbook; teacher tells letter, children write small + capital letter into their notepads.

Normally, teachers have to define the learning objectives in line with a predefined **annual curriculum**. The annual curriculum contains the learning objectives, which should be attained with the children until the end of the year.

In order to achieve these learning objectives by the end of the school year, the teacher has to break them down into monthly, weekly and daily learning objectives and plan his/her teaching activities accordingly. This planning activity serves as a tool to help teachers prepare their lessons properly.

In the “Move 4 New Horizons” project, the facilitators use a **weekly planning format**, which is filled in for every subject (one for maths, one for English, one for Nepali and one for sports) beforehand. Below is one example.

This format should always be filled in from left to right. First, the learning objective, which should be

reached with the lesson, has to be defined. Only then the teacher should think of the teaching activities that he/she will do. This is then step 2 of “cooking” a lesson. In order to manage the time properly, it is important to also define the duration for each activity.



Move 4 New Horizons
Weekly preparation plan



Subject: English

Period: October 3 – October 8, 2010

	Learning / teaching objective	Activity	Duration	Material	Homework	Evaluation
Sunday	The alphabet: - Writing capital and small letters	1. Exercise "Trace the letter" in textbook p. 18 Differentiation: stonger pupils help weaker ones 2. Small Game: "Who is afraid of the lion?" 3. Teacher says letter, children have to write capital and small letter into their notebooks Differentiation: Stronger pupils think of a word starting with that letter and write it down. 4. Explain homework	15 min. 8 min. 10 min. 3 min.	textbook Two ropes to make lines notebooks, pens textbook	Exercises "learn to write H h" and "Circle H and h" in the textbook on p. 18	To fill in after the lesson: - How was the lesson? - Did the children face difficulties?
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						

Name / signature of facilitator:

Name / signature of social mobiliser:

Step 2: Choosing suitable teaching methods

	KITCHEN	LESSON
Step 1	Decide on what you want to cook	Setting a learning objective
Step 2	Choosing how to cook the meal	Choosing suitable teaching methods
Step 3	Preparation of kitchen materials and ingredients	Preparation of classroom/playground and teaching materials
Step 4	Cooking the meal	Carrying out the lesson
Step 5	Taste the meal	Evaluation

After having set the learning objective, the choice of suitable teaching methods is probably the most important part of preparing a lesson. The teaching methods define the activities that you as a teacher do in order to reach the learning objective with the children. The following requirements should be met by the chosen teaching methods:

- They should be suitable to achieve the learning objective with the children
 - They have to fit into the lesson structure
 - They need to be varied in order to remain interesting for the children
 - They need to be adapted to the age and the specific learning capacities of the children
- Since the two latter points are very important for our playful teaching approach, we will treat them separately in the chapters “Adding variety to the teaching” and “Inclusion of all children”.

First and foremost, the teaching methods should be suitable to reach the learning objective with the children. This means that you should choose the methods that are most effective for the children in order to achieve the learning objective.

In general, teachers spend too much time explaining (teacher-centered method). However, the children

learn most effectively, if they can practice new knowledge (child-centered method). There is a famous saying which states:

Tell me, and I will forget;
teach me and I will remember;
involve me and I will learn.

This is especially true for children, who are very good in “learning by doing”. If you as a teacher want to introduce a new topic, it is necessary that you spend sufficient time for explaining it, of course. But as a general rule, the time in which children can practice for themselves what they have learnt should always be longer than the time in which they need to sit and listen to the teacher.

As an example, the structure of a lesson could look like this:

Activity	Duration	Explanation
Welcome	5 min.	The children need some time to “arrive” in class and to calm down before they are able to listen. A welcoming ritual (e.g. a song, a dance or a game) can help the children to also mentally arrive in class, to feel at ease and to develop a feeling of belonging to the class.
Recapitulation	5 min.	Before the introduction of a new topic, the teacher should always repeat what has been taught during the last lesson. This should be done in an interactive way, with the children actively contributing. Like this, the teacher can also evaluate whether they remember what they had learnt last time.
Introduction of new topic	10 min.	If a new topic needs to be introduced, the teacher should not exceed the maximum concentration time of children at this age, which is 15 minutes. If real objects or games are used to demonstrate letters, numbers, words, etc., it will be much easier for the children to remember (see chapters “Adding variety to the teaching” and “Example games”).
Children practice	15 min.	The main part of the lesson should provide the children with the opportunity to practice what they have learnt. The teacher should explain the exercises well and then let the children do it themselves. It is important that all children get the opportunity to practice. That is why it is not very effective to call only one child to the blackboard and let him/her solve an exercise there. Rather, all children should do the exercises in their textbooks or copies. Alternatively, the children can practise something among themselves in groups (see chapter “Adding variety to the teaching”).
Evaluation	10 min.	At the end of the lesson, there should always be an evaluation whether the learning objective has been fulfilled or not. See step 5 “Evaluation”.

Step 3: Preparation of classroom/playground and teaching materials

	KITCHEN	LESSON
Step 1	Decide on what you want to cook	Setting a learning objective
Step 2	Choosing how to cook the meal	Choosing suitable teaching methods
Step 3	Preparation of kitchen materials and ingredients	Preparation of classroom/playground and teaching materials
Step 4	Cooking the meal	Carrying out the lesson
Step 5	Taste the meal	Evaluation

The teacher should come to the classroom (for indoor lessons) or playground (for outdoor sports lessons) early enough to prepare the classroom/playground and the teaching materials before the children arrive in. Since some materials might have to be organised beforehand, the teaching materials should already be thought of when planning a lesson and thinking of the teaching methods.

It is self-evident that you can only work in a classroom/on a playground which is clean and tidy.

It can be a good learning opportunity for the children if you involve them in the cleaning/tidying at the end of a school day. In this way, they will learn to take care of their learning environment and to leave it tidy. For sports lessons on an outdoor playground, make sure that there are no big stones, glass, cans or other garbage lying on the playground on which children could hurt themselves, wearing just slippers or running barefoot.

For both, indoor and outdoor lessons, you should have drinking water available for the children in a vessel with cups. Moreover, some basic first aid items (disinfectant, bandages, patches) should always be with you as a teacher (especially if you go outdoors with the children to play games).

The chapter “Local teaching and play materials” provides further suggestions on locally available materials you can use for teaching.

Step 4: Carrying out the lesson

	KITCHEN	LESSON
Step 1	Decide on what you want to cook	Setting a learning objective
Step 2	Choosing how to cook the meal	Choosing suitable teaching methods
Step 3	Preparation of kitchen materials and ingredients	Preparation of classroom/playground and teaching materials
Step 4	Cooking the meal	Carrying out the lesson
Step 5	Taste the meal	Evaluation

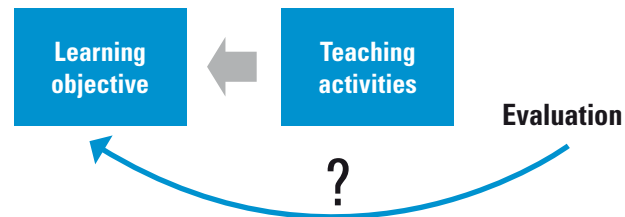
If you have gone through the previous three steps, you will be well prepared to conduct the lesson. However, there can always be difficulties that only appear during the lessons. The chapter “Adding variety to the teaching” will provide more tips on how to deal with this.

Step 5: Evaluation

	KITCHEN	LESSON
Step 1	Decide on what you want to cook	Setting a learning objective
Step 2	Choosing how to cook the meal	Choosing suitable teaching methods
Step 3	Preparation of kitchen materials and ingredients	Preparation of classroom/playground and teaching materials
Step 4	Cooking the meal	Carrying out the lesson
Step 5	Taste the meal	Evaluation

As we have seen in “step 2”, the evaluation of whether the learning objective has been achieved or not, should be part of every lesson.

It is important that the evaluation refers to the learning objective and not to the teaching activities:



You need to assess whether the children have learnt what you had planned them to learn and not whether you could conduct the teaching activities that you had planned to conduct. Only by testing the newly acquired knowledge and skills of the children, you can assess whether you have really reached the learning objective of the lesson or not.

This means that you have to test the children's learning achievements, e.g. by asking them questions or by checking what they have written in their textbooks or copies at the end of the lesson. By doing this, you should particularly focus on the weaker children in your class. It is important to know whether they have been able to reach the learning objective or not. If yes, you can go on with something new in the next lesson. If not, you have to come back to the same learning objective during the next lesson: Maybe you have to give the children more time to practice the new knowledge and

skills or you have to explain it to them with other teaching methods (see chapter "Inclusion of all children"). This needs to be considered in the planning of the next lesson. You should also give the children homework, so that they can also practice at home.

2.3 Adding variety to the teaching

As a teacher, you are probably familiar with the following kinds of problems:

- You are expecting the children to sit still and listen to you, but they get impatient after some time, start to move around, stand up, distract others, etc.
- You are out in the playground and do a game in which two children are running against each other at a time. The others have to wait until it is their turn. But instead of waiting, they walk away or start fighting with each other.



Case study

Imagine an NFE class somewhere in Dang district in Nepal. The teacher is giving an English lesson. One girl is writing a sentence at the blackboard and the others have to watch and wait. But the children get impatient. Two girls in the front row are starting to chat with each other, a boy at the back is hitting his neighbor with his pencil, his neighbor is screaming, the other children start to laugh and the concentration in the classroom is gone. The teacher reminds the children to be quiet and to concentrate on what the girl at the blackboard is writing. The class becomes quiet for one minute, but then, the boy who was hit by his neighbor hits him back and the whole class gets distracted, again. The teacher shouts at the two boys who were fighting, grabs one of them by the arm and makes him sit in another corner of the classroom. By that time, the girl at the blackboard

has finished the sentence and is sitting down again. The teacher asks the class to read the sentence out loud. But the children did not pay attention and are now overwhelmed with the task. The teacher asks one of the older children to come in front and read out the sentence at the blackboard. While the child starts to read it word by word, the fight between the two boys starts again: One of them throws his pencil across the room at the other boy, who starts crying. The teacher loses his patience and gives the boy who had thrown the pencil a slap in the face. As a consequence this boy starts to cry as well and the whole class is in such a chaotic state that the teacher has to stop the lesson and send everybody home.



The case study might be an extreme example, but it helps us to understand some basic principles on how to deal with disturbances as a teacher. Let's try to analyse the case study:

Why did the situation escalate?

The teacher thought the reason why the children are distracted is a lack of discipline and so he took measures to reinstall discipline in the classroom and to make the children sit still and listen again. The initial, "softer" disciplinary measures of the teacher (reminding them to be quiet) were not successful, as the children started to fight and chat again. So the teacher adopted stricter disciplinary measures (changed seating of the two boys). However, these were not successful either. This made the teacher lose his patience and use physical punishment. But the result was a class which was upset and impossible to work with anymore.

What would be alternative ways to react for the teacher?

As a teacher, you should always ask yourself first: Why are the children not concentrated? Children being distracted, inattentive, undisciplined, etc. should be a sign for you as a teacher. The children's behaviour signals that they don't feel involved enough in the lesson. The feeling of not being involved can have different reasons:

- The children cannot concentrate anymore (they had to listen to the teacher for too long)
- The children feel bored (they have to do the same exercise again and again or they have to wait for too long without anything to do)
- The children feel overwhelmed (the level of teaching is too difficult for them)

Undisciplined behaviour is only an expression of such underlying reasons and the teacher must take

this into consideration. A teacher must know e.g. that the maximum average duration for a six year-old child to be able to remain concentrated is 15 minutes. Then, the teacher will understand that such reactions are very natural for children at primary school age.

Therefore, trying to make the children disciplined only by punishing them will not be effective. Such problems can be prevented much more effectively, if the teacher tries to add variety to the teaching to integrate all children into the lesson. Active sequences can be used to interrupt a theory session and to help maintain the children's concentration. Moreover, variations in teaching methods can help the children remain concentrated and interested in the lessons for a longer time. In particular, if the children are given the opportunity to explore and practice what they have learnt in a playful way, they will feel more involved and their learning experience will be much more sustainable.

Active sequences

Children are not able to sit still and listen for a long time. They have a natural need to move and to play. Instead of trying to suppress this need (by pushing discipline and urging them to sit still), a teacher should try to capitalize on it.

The following recommendations will help you to do so:

- Keep the theory sessions short when planning your lesson (see chapter “Cooking a lesson”)
- If you need to explain a new topic for a longer duration, you should interrupt your teaching with active sequences in between.
- During these active sequences, the children should be able to stand up and move (e.g. in a small game).
- Examples of small games can be found in the chapter “Games for playful indoor teaching”.
- If your classroom is too small to move around and

play a game, go outside, to the front yard for five minutes to play a game.



Variations

The children's attention can also be improved by adding variety to the teaching methods. If the same content is taught in the same way again and again, it is not surprising that the children get bored after some time. Teachers should therefore think of a variety of methods to teach the children.

The standard method of the teacher standing in front and showing something on the blackboard or on a chart and the children have to repeat it altogether might also not be the best way to catch the children's attention. Using teaching methods, in which the children can get active themselves and learn things through practical exercises or games, will improve the children's attention and their learning success.

Not all children learn in the same way. There are different "types of learners", who learn best:

- by listening and speaking (verbal learner)

- through pictures and observation (visual learner)
- by touching and feeling (bodily learner)

By applying different teaching methods, which include verbal, visual and bodily learning experiences (e.g. stories, drawings, real objects), you will thus facilitate the learning of all types of learners.

You can find some examples for playful "applied learning" activities in the chapter "Games for playful indoor teaching".

Letting the children practice and explore things by themselves doesn't mean that the teacher has nothing to do during that time. The teacher should support the children when needed and help them if necessary. Moreover, also while doing an exercise; it is important to offer variations to the children, so that they don't have to do the same exercise for a long time. Otherwise, they will feel bored and not work properly by themselves.

These principles should be applied to both, indoor teaching and sport and play teaching outdoors. In the table below, there are two examples showing along

which criteria you can vary the same teaching contents: One for indoor teaching and one for sport and play teaching outdoors.

	Indoor	Outdoor
Example:	Learning the alphabet by using the chart	Kabaddi
What can be varied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Material (cards instead of chart) – Roles (child in front instead of teacher, children learning by themselves in learning corners) – Groups (split the class in groups) – Oral/written (Let the children write into their notepads) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Field (larger/smaller size) – Group position (line, circle, 2 circles,...) – Movement (jump, walk, run, forward/backward,...) – Material (several balls instead of only one) – Rules (children that are “out” can get back in with the help of one of the “inside” children) – Time (more/less time) – Tasks/roles (one child is the referee, one child counts, ...)

2.4 Inclusion of all children

If some children are inattentive and undisciplined in class, it can also be related to the fact that the level of difficulty is too high for them.

It is a fact that the children in our NFE classes are of very different ages, abilities and levels of understanding and this is a huge challenge for the teachers. Nevertheless, teachers should try to involve all children into their teaching and not leave anyone behind.

Adjusting the general learning objective to the level of some slower learners, while not offering the more advanced children new learning challenges, will also not be a solution. The more advanced children will then feel bored and possibly start to distract the class.

That means that the teacher has to differentiate his or her teaching: The learning objective has to be adapted to the learning capacities of the children in

class (both: more and less advanced children) and the teaching methods need to be adjusted accordingly.

The following two steps might serve as a reference for you in this regard:

1st step: Being aware of differences between children

As a first step, the teacher needs to be aware of the differences between the children in his/her class. These differences can be for example:

- Age-specific differences
- Different mental abilities
- Different physical abilities
- Differences in character, interest, etc.

2nd step: Dealing with differences and inclusion

In a second step, the teacher needs to find ways to deal with these differences. It is important not to value differences negatively. Children with different

abilities or learning capacities should not be given the feeling that they are inferior to the other children. Quite the opposite: for these children, your encouragement and support as a teacher is especially important!

Moreover, it is important that you are aware of what these differences mean for your teaching. Once you have identified the differences among the children in your class, you need to think of different learning objectives and teaching methods for these children.

The following sub-chapters will treat some of the differences that you might recognise in your class more specifically.



Age-specific differences

1st step: Being aware of differences between children

In our NFE classes, the age of the participating children ranges from 5 to 10 years. The learning capacity and the interests of a five year old child are very different from those of a ten year old child, of course. It is a huge challenge for the facilitators to deal with these differences and to meet the learning needs of all children at the same time.



It is important that as a teacher, you understand the age-specific capacities of the children, so that you know what you can expect from them and what not yet. This will allow you to adapt the learning objective to the age of the children in your class and to think of different learning objectives for younger and older children if you have big variations in age in your class.

The table below summarizes the age-specific developmental milestones of children between the ages of 5 to 10. It is structured along the four dimensions of child development (mental, emotional, social and physical).

Age	Cognitive	Social	Emotional	Physical
5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – can concentrate for 10 minutes – talks clearly and in complete sentences – comparison: sorting objects, putting things into relation (half, more, less) – tells a familiar story while looking at pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – self-care skills: washes, dresses, eats by him/herself; usually doesn't wet him/herself, but it may happen sometimes – starts to build friendships with other children – cooperation: takes turns, shares toys – recognises authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – self-control after an emotional outburst – tolerates frustration and failure – separates from parents without being upset – likes making people laugh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – strong urge to move and play – control of pencil – reproduces shapes and letters – able to jump forward and sideways – balances on either foot, runs on tiptoe
6 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – can concentrate for 15 minutes – understands time (today, tomorrow) – fun with problem solving and sorting activities – uses appropriate verb tenses, word order, and sentence structure, but still confuses certain letters – counts up to 200 and counts backwards from 20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – talks a lot – finds slang and profanity funny – does not understand moral standards, but understands when something is thought to be "bad" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – needs and seeks adult approval, reassurance, and praise – self-perceived failure can make the child easily disappointed and frustrated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – has trouble staying still – throwing, catching, kicking and striking skills are developing

Age	Cognitive	Social	Emotional	Physical
7 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – organises belongings and school supplies – proper spacing of words – counts and writes numbers to 100 – addition and subtraction of numbers to 10 – appropriate verb tenses, word order, and sentence structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – polite – cooperative, less selfish – lying, cheating, and stealing diminish – work in a small group – concerned with self and others' reactions (cheating, fairness) – sometimes aggression to solve problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – wants to finish things, has emotional outbursts when he/she cannot – ashamed of mistakes – more introverted and thoughtful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – satisfaction from using good motor skills in play – dancing still clumsy, but better coordination – able to kick a ball – restless
8 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – comprehension of text while reading – addition and subtraction to 20, memorizes multiplication table – distinguishes left-right – analyses a story (characters, ideas) – tells exact time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – knows right from wrong – likes to be a member of a group – has a best friend – concerned with fairness – judgments about the self in relation to others – personality affects playing habits (some play alone, some prefer with others) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – blame someone else when something goes wrong – if criticised, may burst into tears – empathy for the suffering of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – more control over small muscles: writes, draws better – moves from one activity to another – likes to be creative

Age	Cognitive	Social	Emotional	Physical
9 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – orders objects in a logical sequence – thinks about a problem and plans how to solve it – critical thinking: inference, prediction, summarising – learns about different cultures and customs – interest in reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – continuing friendships, peer pressure – understanding that other people may view things differently – untidiness – fairness very important – tries to please parents, teachers and peers – highly competitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – confesses when something wrong was done – shows responsibility for own actions – easily disciplined, accepts punishment – easily embarrassed – wants to do right, but sometimes overreacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – more physically active – good body control – likes more complicated crafts
10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – many interests – planning skills – works independently – fluency and comprehension of complex text – multiplication of whole numbers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – stable contact with children of same age – careless with belongings and self-care – submission to authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – more independent from care-givers – girls very jealous, possessive of their friends – sense the emotions of others, read facial and body language – balanced temperament – become extremely angry with unfair punishment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – well-developed motor skills – plays soccer – builds outdoor forts, tree houses

It is important to note that this table should serve as a general reference, only. In reality, the development of a child is never linear and deviations are normal to some degree.

2nd step: Dealing with differences and inclusion

Below, some of the options are described, which will allow you pursue different age-specific learning objectives for younger/older children in your class at the same time:

- Split the class into (two or more) **groups** and give them different tasks to do, according to their age and capacities
 - Example indoor teaching: Task for the younger group: there is a sentence on the blackboard. Write the sentence carefully and without mistake in your exercise book. Task for the older group: Think of other sentences with the same mean-
- ing and write the new sentences in the exercise book.
- Example sport and play teaching outdoors: If you do a relay with the children, split the children into at least two groups according to their age or physical performance. If you define a longer distance to run for the “faster” group than for the “slower” group, the competition will be fairer and the younger/physically weaker children will feel more motivated to participate.
- Assign different **roles** to the children
 - Example indoor teaching: An older/more advanced child assumes the role of the teacher and corrects exercises that have been written down by the other children in their exercise books. This will make the child feel proud of his/her capacities, instead of getting bored and possibly distracting the class.

- Example sport and play teaching outdoors: A younger child or a child who cannot run so fast could assume the role of the referee while the others play. This is a prestigious task and a responsibility instead of sitting on the sidelines, doing nothing.
- Let the older children help the younger ones (**child-to-child** approach)
 - Example indoor teaching: Let the children sit together in pairs of two, with one older and younger child in each pair. With picture cards, the children practice English words together, the older showing the card and the younger child trying to find the description in English (“This is a cat.”, “This is an apple”). If the younger child doesn’t find the word, the older child can help.
 - Example sport and play teaching outdoors: During a relay, you could also ask the children to run

in pairs of two. There should be an older and a younger child in each pair and they have to run together, holding each other’s hand. If they let go of their hands, they have to start from the beginning, again. Like this, the older children learn to cooperate with the younger children, as well.

Different mental abilities

1st step: Being aware of differences between children

You might identify children in your class who are lagging behind significantly in their mental development in comparison to the other children of their age. This does not mean that these children are “stupid” or less intelligent. There is always an underlying reason for such learning problems and it is important for the teacher to acknowledge this.

Psychological stress due to a difficult family situation or the past experience of traumatic events could

be a reason for children not being able to concentrate and learn properly. Another reason could be malnutrition as an unborn child or baby, which could have hampered brain development. An accident can also have such consequences. Or the child could have a learning disorder. Children with learning disorders receive and handle information in a different way: They see, hear, and understand things differently. A child with a learning disorder can show a very good performance in one subject (e.g. maths) but be very weak in another subject (e.g. languages).

2nd step: Dealing with differences and inclusion

Children with different mental abilities require special support on how to learn and how to use their potential. Below are some guidelines on how this could be done:

– Ask clear questions, and then let the children with

different mental abilities describe their understanding of the question

- Provide a predictable and consistent daily routine. Prepare the children early if the routine is interrupted
- Present an outline of the lesson or unit of the day, e.g. on the blackboard
- Reduce the amount of tasks for children with different mental abilities
- Don't ask questions in a way that makes children feel stupid, but gain confidence
- Repeat complicated tasks
- Use many different examples
- Reward children with different mental abilities with praise, good words, smiles, etc. as often as you can
- Give children with different mental abilities extra opportunities to ask questions
- Encourage their strengths, interests, and abilities

- Help them to develop self-esteem and to the ability to see their own progress instead of simply comparing themselves with the others
- Tutoring assistance from a peer
- Extra mini-lessons in which you re-teach skills and learning strategies

Different physical abilities

1st step: Being aware of differences between children

By different physical abilities we mean impairments which limit the physical function of limbs or fine or gross motor ability, as well as sensory impairments, such as visual or hearing impairments.

Such impairments are not always immediately recognisable, as the impairment can be more or less severe. But already a slight hearing impairment for example, can greatly affect a child's ability to follow your lessons. The teacher might not realise this hearing

impairment and think the child is just inattentive "by nature". It is thus important that you are aware of the possibility of such impairments and that you try to find out about such different physical abilities in the interaction with the children.

It is not necessary to work out a special curriculum for children with different physical abilities, but you should make your teaching activities inclusive for all children.

2nd step: Dealing with differences and inclusion

Children with different physical abilities should not be excluded from some activities due to their impairments, quite the opposite: they should be particularly encouraged to participate. For example, it can be very valuable for a child with different physical activities to participate in sport and play activities and there are many possibilities to support this, even if the physical impairment is severe. The prerequisite is that

the teacher designs his/her teaching activities in a way that is inclusive for all children.

Below, you can find some suggestions on how such an inclusive teaching approach could look like in practice:

- Introduce a buddy system: Let other children assist the child with a physical disability
- Be flexible and accept suggestions
- Don't be over supportive and provide assistance only when it is really needed
- Focus on what the child can do – not what he/she can't do
- Never accept rude remarks, name calling or teasing of other children. Sometimes other children need to learn more about physical disabilities in order to develop respect and understanding
- Talk to the child about what he or she likes to do and can do. Maybe he or she can share that knowledge with the class
- Take frequent one-to-one time with the child to make sure that he/she is aware that you are there to help
- For children with hearing problems use signs when talking to them
- Children with visual impairment should be seated close to the blackboard. Special books with embossed printing exist for children with visual impairments to read
- Children with speaking problems should be able to use alternative ways to express themselves (drawings, pantomime, etc.)

Inclusive teaching values

As it was described above, it is important to adapt your teaching activities and to differentiate them according to the different levels of age, mental and physical ability of children in your class. However, it is equally important not to create differences where it is not necessary.

Emphasising differences among the children, e.g. along their gender, caste, religion, social status or ethnicity and treating them differently is a discriminatory practice and should be avoided by a teacher in any case. It is unjust and can create much harm for an affected child, as it will lead to social exclusion, a lowered self-esteem and hampered learning outcomes.

Often we do not discriminate against others intentionally. Discrimination mostly takes place on a rather unconscious level. However, especially as a teacher, you will be closely observed by the children and they will receive signals from you that you might not even be aware of. This applies to the classroom as well. Ask yourself:

- Is the decoration neutral in terms of gender, caste, ethnic groups or religion?
- What about the activities in and outside class? E.g. do girls and boys or children from different caste-

backgrounds play together or not?

- Do all children get the same opportunity to be called?
- How are children with different physical or mental abilities treated?

As a teacher, you should not only refrain from discriminating against children due to their gender, caste, ethnicity, religion, etc., but you are also responsible to prevent such discriminatory behaviours from appearing among the children. If you realise that one or several children in your class are being discriminated against, you should address this issue immediately. You can either talk to the other children individually and make them aware that their discriminatory behaviour is unjust or you can incorporate discrimination into your teaching and conduct a lesson on this topic.

Ask students to treat each of their classmates the way they would like to be treated, especially those

who may be different, who may come from different cultures or who may have limitations in their physical or mental abilities.

But most importantly, you should be a role model for the children in behaving in a non-discriminatory way, in being tolerant and respectful yourself.



Teaching values in a playful way

Sport and play activities can be a good platform to teach the children important values and life skills. But at the same time, sport and play, due to their often competitive character, can also trigger envy, aggression, disappointment, or even violence. Competition as such is nothing negative and it can be something valuable and motivating, as well. But competition should not turn into an over exaggerated rivalry. This is especially true when you work with young children, which haven't developed the emotional and social competencies to handle with this, yet.

In order to use the potential of sport and play to support the holistic development of children, sport and play activities have to be well guided by the teacher. It is in the responsibility of the teacher to find the balance between competition and cooperation. For this purpose, the teacher should not only play highly com-

petitive games with the children, but also encourage activities, in which the children need to cooperate in a team. This will teach them to respect each other and to work together to achieve an objective.

In general, the following principles should be met by cooperative games:

- Everyone has fun
- The game has a motivating objective
- Everybody needs each other to achieve the goal/objective
- Everyone is accepted and valued for their abilities
- Nobody is excluded from the game

Here are some suggestions, how you can enhance the acquisition of positive values in the children through sport and play:

- **Be a role model** for the children: reflect your own values and behaviour and try to act out respect, tolerance and fair play in front of the children

- **Show your feelings** to the children (e.g. that you are sad about cheating during a game; that you are happy about them helping each other, etc.)
- **Reward positive behaviour.** For example give points or allow a 5–10 minute free choice activity
- **React to negative behaviour** immediately and consequently
- Ensure that the **losers** are duly acknowledged and **thanked** (without them, there would be no winners!). You should e.g. make the children shake hands and say “thank you” to all other participants after every game. Such gestures will help to reconcile the children with one another and to deal with winning and losing a game
- Create certain **rituals** before, during or after a sports lesson. E.g. let the children carry the sports materials to the playground and back again. Or make the children clean the playground of stones,

garbage, etc., which could cause injuries when the children struggle over it. Symbolising mutual support and solidarity, such rituals improve the children's sense of identity and belonging to a group.



- Collect important values together with the children in a discussion and define what these values mean for their everyday behaviour in and outside the classroom. All children should then agree on

certain “**commitments**”, which they want to follow. These commitments should be written (or drawn as pictures) on a big sheet of paper, which can then be put on the wall in the classroom. Such commitments could be e.g.: we include everybody in the game, we respect everybody (including the opponent team), we don't use violence and rude words, we thank each other after the game, etc.

Gender

When conducting sport and play activities with the children, it is particularly important to emphasise gender equity.

In every society, there are certain norms that determine what girls and boys should or shouldn't do. When it comes to sport and play, generally girls are often thought to be less capable than boys and there are some sports that are considered unacceptable

for girls to do. However: There are no girls and boys sports! All sport and play activities are neutral and do not show any restriction regarding the involvement of girls or boys. These restrictions are stereotypes that exist only in our minds.

The equal participation of girls should therefore be facilitated in all activities. Especially if girls themselves are not used to doing sports, an active participation can be extremely valuable for them: It can give them the opportunity to experience the capacity of their own bodies and help to increase their self-confidence.

The following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- If participants need to split into groups, try to have both, boys and girls in every group
- Let girls and boys do the same activities.
Don't exclude any of them from a game because of their sex

- As a facilitator, you should treat boys and girls equally. E.g. if you demonstrate something with a child, choose a girl one time and a boy next time
- Be strict to avoid teasing, mobbing, etc. against the opposite sex
- Be aware that as a facilitator (male and female), you are a role model also in this regard



3. Game examples

This chapter introduces some game examples which can be used for playful teaching.

Children are usually very inventive and should be left the freedom to develop their own preferred game or game variation. But as a facilitator, you should be able to provide the children with new ideas and guide them through games that are well suited to support their development on the four dimensions explained in the first chapter of the manual. The example games could serve as an inspiration for you, but you should vary and supplement these games with your own and the children's ideas.

The games presented here require no material or material that is easily available in most places and they are suited to the age of 5–10 year old children. The games are divided into two chapters: one presenting example games for playful indoor teaching and the other example games for sport and play lessons outdoors. Sub-chapters are made according to the specific purposes of these games. On the upper right corner of every game description, the icons of head (mental), heart (emotional), body (physical) and group/environment (social development) can be found again. They describe which of the dimensions of child development are mostly supported through this game.

3.1 Games for playful indoor teaching

The games described below can be done after a long theory session to interrupt the classroom teaching and to get the children active for some minutes in between. They can either be done inside the classroom (if there is enough space) or in the front yard of the classroom.

Cooperation and mutual trust

The games described in this sub-chapter can be used to promote cooperation and mutual trust among the children. Especially during the first months of the NFE classes, these games can help the children to feel at ease in the classroom and to develop a sense of belonging to the class.

Blindman's obstacle garden

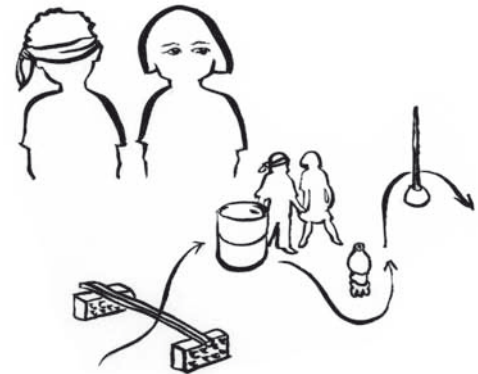


Material: ribbons (to cover the eyes), obstacles (like schoolbags, balls, pillows, etc.)

There are always two children together; one has his/her eyes covered and the other is guiding “the blind” through an obstacle garden. When they are through, they start again with changed roles.

Variations:

- The “blind” child is guided in the same way through the obstacle garden but without being touched: the guide is giving oral instructions only.
- The “blind” child is guided by the guide orally again, but this time the guide gives the instructions from outside the obstacle garden.
- All the other pairs of children are in the obstacle garden at the same time and need to sidestep each other. Special attention is required from the guides in this situation.



Ball journey



Children play in pairs. They stand behind each other and keep an object (e.g. a balloon) between the back of the child in front and the waist of the child behind. Now the child behind tries to navigate the other through the room without any words. The front child lets the partner control and tries to find out, where the journey goes.

Variations:

The child in front closes the eyes and tries to find out, where it stands in the end.



Talking stick



Material: A 30cm long stick (or stone, ball, etc.) which could be decorated nicely.

The facilitator tells the class that in some ethnic tribes when they come together to talk about something serious or difficult they are using a “talking stick”.

Now, you do the same with the children. The stick is sent around from child to child, and only the child with the stick in his/her hand can talk while the others are listening quietly. The stick is sent around until everybody had a chance to say what s/he wanted to.

Begin with simple questions (e.g. “what did you do on their day off?”) until the children get used to using the “talking stick”. After a while you can use this activity for more difficult situations, e.g. when a conflict between two (groups of) children must be resolved or when you feel that the children are worried about something. Every child should get the chance to say something. However, if a child doesn’t want to say anything, you should not force him/her to do so.

The “talking stick” can be a nice ritual to start the day with.

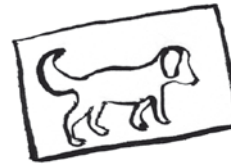
Animal lottery



Material: 4 sets of the “animal lottery” each consisting of big sheets of paper with illustrations of animals and little cards showing one of the animals displayed in the big sheets.

The children learn to describe animals non-verbally (pantomime). Then these movements are used for a quiz game.

The children form four groups. Every group gets one of the “animal lottery” sets. The groups spread their small cards on the floor with the reverse side up. Then they sit at the opposite side of the room around their big sheets. As soon as the facilitator shouts “go!”, one child from each group runs and fetches one of the small cards, shows a non-verbal demonstration of the animal and waits until the other children of his/her group guess it right. Now, they are allowed to place the animal on the same animal they have on their sheet and the next child runs to get a card. The group which has covered all the animals on the sheet first will win.



Hurricane



This is a very quick trick, good for getting the children to move around after a long theory session, and for regrouping the participants, especially when there is a group sitting together that is whispering or disturbing the others or to ensure that boys and girls play together. Every time the teacher calls out “hurricane!” everybody has to run to another place and sit there. Make sure the children don’t start fighting for the same places. The child that came first can sit there.

Concentration

The games which are described below help the children to concentrate themselves well and to think ahead before they act. They are well suited to help the

children “arrive” in class at the beginning of the day or after an exciting sport and play lesson and to gain their attention.

Name games



Material: one ball

All children sit in a circle. A ball is rolled from one child to the other. Anyone who gets the ball has to say their own name out loud and then roll it on.

Variations:

- The ball can be rolled in any direction. Before a child says his/her own name, he/she has to repeat the two previously mentioned names.
- The child who passes the ball calls the name of the child who receives the ball.



Name games (continued from page 54)

Without ball:

- One after another, every child says his/her own name and makes a gesture, e.g. claps hands or demonstrates something personal, e.g. favourite sport. After that, all other children repeat the name and the movement.
- All children sit in a circle. One child calls the others' names. Children, who have been forgotten or called by a wrong name, stand up. Then another child continues.
- The children stand in a circle, one is outside the circle. The one outside taps one child in the circle on the back and each of them runs in the opposite direction around the circle. When they meet they must shake hands and greet each other by name. After this, they continue to run in the same direction until they reach the next empty space in the ring. The child that arrives later at the empty place has to start again by tapping another child on the back.

Animal pairs

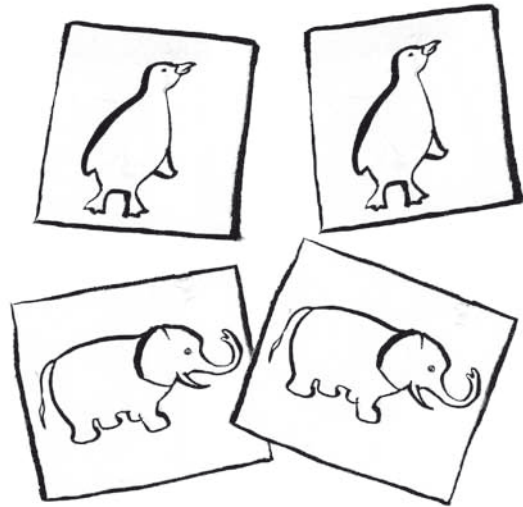


Material: Memory game: Cards with pairs of animals (the total of cards should equal the number of children in your class)

The cards are spread on the floor with the reverse side up. All children at the same time take one card and mime the animal which is on it. By doing this, the children have to find their matching partner to form pairs of the same animal.

Variations:

Memory: Children sit two and two together. Each group receives a “memory game” which is spread on the floor with the reverse side up. Now, turn by turn, the children uncover two cards and try to find the pairs. If the second card they have uncovered doesn’t match the first one, they have to imitate the second animal. After that the game continues.



Left-right



The children stand in a circle, one child is in the middle. The child in the middle addresses someone saying “left” or “right” and moves slowly towards that child. This child has to tell the name of the left or right neighbour before the child from the middle reaches him/her. If the child fails, the roles change and he/she has to go into the middle of the circle.



Freezing dance



The facilitator sings or claps hands. The children move around freely. As soon as the sound stops, they take a position which the facilitator showed them before, e.g. standing on one foot, keep the bottom on the floor, keep the legs higher than the head, lying on your front etc.

Variations:

- When the children stand still, the facilitator tells them how they can start moving again, e.g. like a giant, like a witch, like happy children, like stressed adults, like proud dancers, like soccer players etc.

In pairs:

- One child leads the other through the room. As soon as the sound stops, they freeze. When the sound goes on, the children change their roles.
- Both partners run around freely. When the sound stops, they catch eye-contact and take the same position.



Touch riddle



Material: Various small objects which the children choose themselves. For the variation: 2–3 ribbons. The children sit in a circle. Every child hides an object in the hands which they start passing around behind their backs. When the children hold their own objects in their hands again, they lay it down hidden on the ground behind their backs. Now, the children guess the objects they identified by touching. When an object was identified, the child to whom it belonged presents it in front of them and then hides it behind his/her back again. When all objects have been identified, the children try to remember and name all objects jointly.



Observer



Always two children are standing face to face. On command, one of them closes the eyes and the other child changes something in its appearance, e.g. folds arms, takes off hair tie or necklace etc. When he/she is finished, the other child can open the eyes and guess what has changed. Then they change roles.

Variation:

The children move around freely in the room. The facilitator tells them to pay attention to the other children's feet, heads or other body parts. On command, the children close their eyes and the facilitator asks for example: "What is the colour of A's socks?" or "How has B done her hair?"



Recognizing a sound



Material: Different things that create small sounds.

The facilitator tells the children to rest their heads on their arms, close their eyes, and be absolutely silent. After a while the facilitator makes a small sound by scrunching up a piece of paper, or clicking a ball point pen etc. The children guess what it was.

Applied learning

These games engage the children into activities in which they can practically apply and explore certain learning contents. Like this, the children learn in an

active way and will remember things more easily than by listening to the teacher only.

Trail of numbers



Material: Paper, scissors, coloured pens.

Write each of the numbers from 1–10 (or higher, if the children are more advanced), on a sheet of paper. Put the papers on the floor in linear order. This is the “trail of numbers”. By stepping on the sheets, the children can learn the order of numbers spatially, moving from 1 to 10.

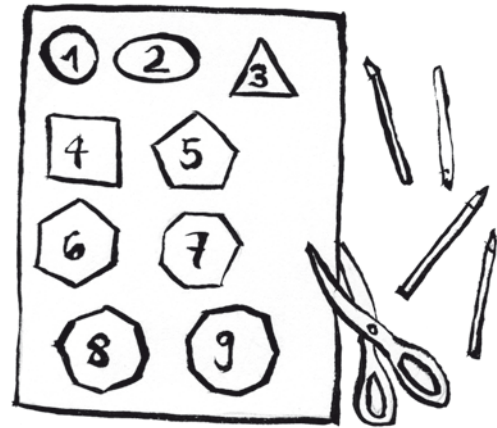
House of numbers



Material: Paper, scissors, coloured pens.

Cut different geometrical forms out of the paper as illustrated on the left. They represent the “houses of the numbers”. Write each of the numbers from 1–10, into one of these forms. The number 1 “lives” in a circle, number two in an ellipse, then it goes on with triangle, rectangle, pentagon, hexagon, heptagon, octagon, non-agon, and decagon.

Now, the children can learn the numbers by counting the “corners” of the houses. At the same time, they learn to link abstract numbers to geometrical forms, which can be found in nature and in their everyday life.



Estimate and compare



Estimating a distance

The children estimate how many steps it takes to get from one tree (or house, chair, etc.) to another. After estimating, the steps are counted.



Estimating an amount of objects

- Each child takes a handful of maize kernels or small stones or beans, etc. and guesses how many pieces it holds in the hand. After estimating, the pieces are counted.
- The teacher takes a handful of small objects in each hand and lets the children estimate in which hand most objects are. Then they count.



Combine numbers and amounts

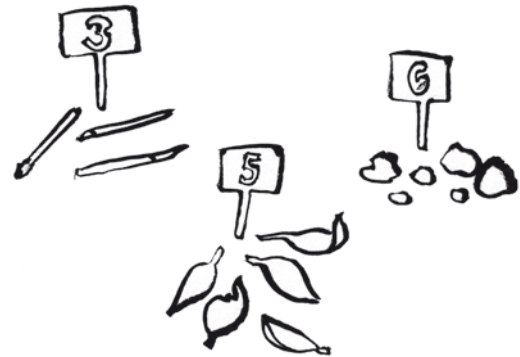


Children like to collect things. Collecting is also a basis for mathematical experience.

The facilitator tells the children to collect a certain number of objects inside the classroom or (even better) outside. This can be anything (pens, books, chinks, shoes, stones, branches, etc.). Like this, the children learn to count and to link numbers to amounts. Depending to the learning progress, numbers can be higher or lower.

Variation:

- Change the movement: Children are only allowed to jump/crawl/jump on one leg, etc. to gather their objects.
- Children work in pairs. One of them is blindfolded; the other has to guide the partner in getting the objects.



Learning corners



Learning corners are well suited to get the children active in learning independently and to explore teaching content practically and independently. Teachers can also use this methodology to work with a smaller group of children, which might need additional support in understanding the teaching contents, while the other children (who have already understood) can engage in the learning corners independently.

The idea is that several thematic corners are defined in the classroom. These corners are then equipped with materials for the children to practice and explore certain teaching contents in groups or individually.

Examples for learning corners:

- ABC/Spelling corner with alphabet charts, picture cards, letter cards, etc.
- Free reading corner with children's books
- Numbers corner with objects (stones, beans, etc.) to count and with number cards, dices, etc. (see also games 'combine numbers and amounts', 'estimate and compare', 'house of numbers' above)
- Art corner (with paper and coloured pens, natural objects e.g. leaves, wood, sand, etc. for drawing, doing handicrafts, etc.)
- Storytelling corner (with puppets, drawings, etc. for the children to invent their own stories and develop their imagination)
- etc.

Learning corners (continued from page 66)

There are no blueprints for learning corners. You should establish the learning corners creatively; the only criteria should be that they match the interests and learning needs of the children. That is why the children should be involved in creating these learning corners: they can help to collect materials, to decorate and to equip the corners. Like this they will also enjoy to work in the corners much more.

If the space in your classroom is very congested, already, it doesn't make sense to occupy space in addition with the learning corners. Instead of having permanent learning corners, you could have "learning boxes", with all the equipment inside. Like this, the boxes can be stored on a tray or in another room when they are not in use.

Some additional tips:

- The learning corners should be given a title (written on a card which is placed centrally)
- Post a set of instructions (written or illustrated with drawings) in each corner explaining the activities that the children can do there. Before the children start to work with the learning corners, you should explain the instructions to them in class
- A variety of activities should be offered in each corner, including easier and more difficult activities, so that the children can choose according to their level and interest
- Children should remain working in one learning corner only as long as they really have something to do there. When they are finished, they should move on to another learning corner

3.2 Games for sport and play lessons outdoors

Cooperation and fairness

These games can be used at the beginning of a sport and play lesson to support the development of team spirit within a group of children. Every single

member of the group is needed for the game to work. In this way, the children experience how much they can achieve if they organise themselves well within the group. Because the games are fun and the children get in touch with each other, they are also well suited to reduce initial shyness of children who don't know each other well yet.

Feet and hands on the ground



Work in groups. Someone decides how many feet or hands may touch the ground in the group as a whole, e.g. in a group of 3 children, 4 hands and 1 foot are touching the ground (see drawing).

Make it increasingly difficult by reducing the number of feet that are allowed to be on the ground.



The endless chair



The children stand close behind each other. When the teacher gives them a signal, they try to sit on the knees of the child standing behind.

Variation:

When all children sit, they move according to the facilitator's commands, e.g. left, right, rub the back, massage shoulders, wave your hand and shout goodbye at the end.



Wheel



The children form a circle and hold hands. Every second child puts both his/her feet in the middle of the circle on the ground. The children standing straight are carrying the other half. The children with their feet on the ground turn, so that the whole circle turns like a wheel.

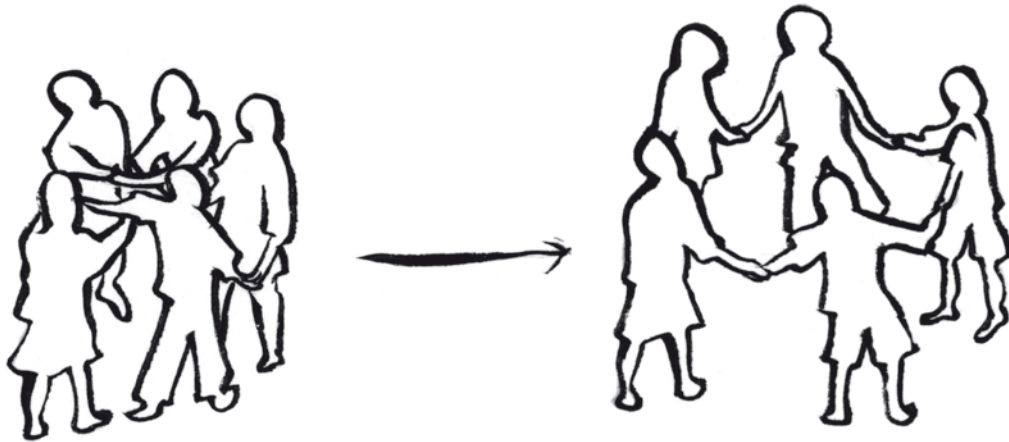
Variation: Instead of putting their feet in the middle, every second child is sitting on the arms of the two children next to him/her.



Knot



The children form a circle, reach out their arms to the centre of the circle, close their eyes and walk towards the centre. Each child's hand has to grab someone else's, so that the children's arms form a knot. Now, the children try to form a circle again by disentangling their arms without separating hands.



Cat and mouse



The children build a circle, three children are in the center. One of them is the cat and is blindfolded, the two others are mice. Now the “blind” cat has to catch the mice who have to say “beep” recurrently so that the cat knows where they are. When a mouse gets caught, roles change: the caught mouse becomes the cat and two other children from the circle become mice.



Hiding handkerchief



Material: Handkerchief

The children stand in a circle, facing the centre. One of them goes around the circle and drops the handkerchief behind the back of a child inconspicuously and starts running. As soon as the child in the circle notices that the handkerchief lies behind his/her back, he/she has to try to catch the child who placed the handkerchief. If this child is not caught before he/she reaches the empty space in the circle, he/she can close the gap and take the other child's place. The other child repeats the handkerchief drop again. If the child is caught, he/she has to do another round.



Physical activity

A sport and play lesson would not be fun for the children, if they didn't get the chance to run around and be physically active. Especially after several hours of sitting in the classroom, the children want to release

their energy and be able to move. Therefore, every sport and play lesson should contain at least one game of higher physical intensity. The games described below could provide you with some ideas.

Tug of war without rope



The children form two groups which stand in a line facing each other. The children in each group hold each other around their waists. The two front children who are facing each other grasp each other's arms. Then the two groups try to pull the opposite group over a line between them.



Balance



The children stand in pairs, their backs touching or leaning against each other. Now they try to unbalance each other. The child who rises one foot first, loses. Change partners. If one child says “Stop”, the fight must be interrupted. He/ she is not allowed to hurt his/her partner. Make sure that the pairs consist of two children of roughly the same physical strength.

Variations:

- Both children fold their arms, jump on one foot and try to unbalance each other by pushing the partner’s shoulder.
- Both children stand around an imaginary puddle (e.g. marked by a rope, a tire, etc.) and join hands. They try to pull each other into the puddle.
- One child lies on his/her back covering the ball underneath his/her back. The other child tries to get the ball.



Reading the newspaper



Material: A newspaper (or a notepad to fake a newspaper). For the variations: schoolbags; balls.

One child stands with his/her back against the other children, pretending to read a newspaper. The other children stand on a starting line in about 20 metres distance. They also want to have a look at the newspaper and try to approach the reading child inconspicuously. They are not allowed to run, only to sneak. If the reading child hears something from behind, he/she turns around. The other children “freeze” in their movements immediately. If the reading child sees anybody still moving, the child who moved has to go back to the starting line. The others continue. The game is over when one of the children has reached the reading child.



Reading the newspaper (continued from page 76)

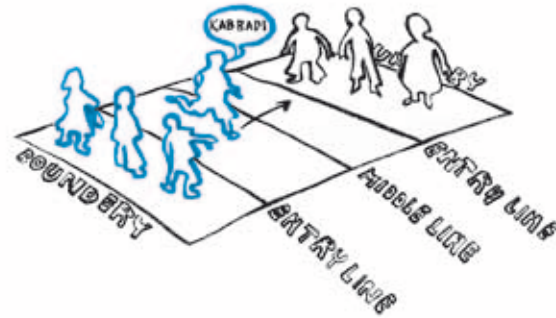
Variations:

- The children who sneak up from behind are only allowed to jump like rabbits or to crawl on all fours like cats.
- The sneaking children have to balance their schoolbags on their head, or they have to roll a ball in front of their feet, which they have to stop when the reading child turns around.

Kabaddi



The children play in two teams on a rectangular playing field. The teams stand on opposite sides of the court. The core idea of this very popular game in Nepal is to score points by raiding into the opponent's court and touching as many opponent players as possible without getting caught on a single breath. One player (the catcher) moves into the opponents' court, chanting "Kabaddi, kabaddi, kabaddi, ..." and tries to touch the opponents closest to him. The opponents touched by the catcher during the attack are declared 'out' if they do not succeed in catching the catcher before he returns to the home court. These players can resume play only when their side scores points against the opponents during their catching turn or if the remaining players succeed in catching the opponents' catcher.



Kabaddi (continued from page 78)

If the catcher loses his/her breath while still being in the court of the opposing team, he/she is out of the game. After 20 to 30 minutes, the game is stopped and the children out of the playing field are counted. The team with most children inside the field wins. They also win if there are no children of the opposing team left inside the field.

Train relay



Material: Minimum two markers (e.g. empty bottles).

The children are instructed to run a course defined by two markers. They have to stand behind the first marker in a row. The first child of each group running the course is the “locomotive” who picks up a new child after every round around the course. Hence, after each round a new “wagon” (child) is added to the “train” until all children are running together.

Variation: You can split the children into two or more groups of equal number and let them run their courses parallel.

Which group is the quickest to return?

Be careful that you don't have the strongest children all together in one group and the weakest children in another one. The competition would not be fair like this. You should mix stronger and weaker children in the groups or give the weaker children a shorter course to run.



The fox and the hens



The children form a line of “hens” behind one child called the “rooster”. Each “hen” is holding the front one around its waist. The „fox” tries to catch the last „hen” of the line. The chain of hens tries to protect its last member by moving around without letting go. If they let go or if the “rooster” has caught the last “hen”, the last “hen” becomes “rooster” and the “rooster” becomes the first “hen” in the line.



4. Local teaching and play materials

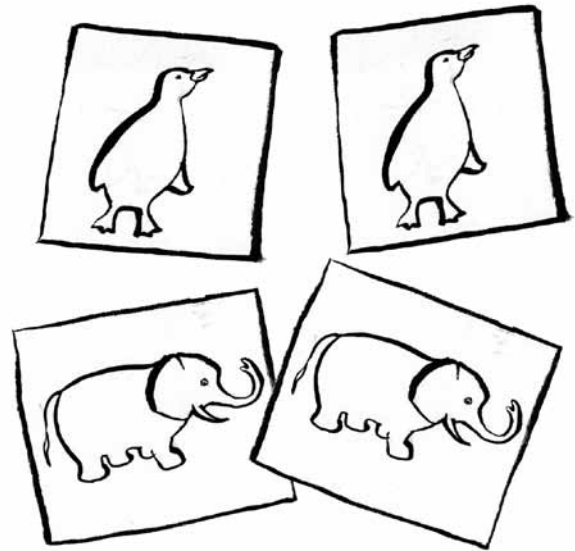
Local materials can be used to make the teaching inside and outside of the classroom more interesting. It is important that the newly taught knowledge is not only told by the teacher or written on the blackboard in an abstract way, but that the children understand the concept behind it and are able to apply it in their everyday life. Using materials, which can be found by the children in their daily environment makes the learning experience for them more sustainable and helps them to develop their imagination.

It is not necessary to buy expensive “child-friendly teaching materials” in shops. Many suitable materials can be found easily and for free in our everyday life. Either you can use these materials directly for your teaching or you can produce teaching materials out of them with little effort. You have certainly many good ideas for this yourself. In addition, the following tips might provide you with some new ideas.

4.1 Material for playful indoor teaching

Picture cards

Material: Paper/cardboard, coloured pens, scissors
Draw pictures/pairs of pictures of animals, fruits, etc. for memory games like “Animal pairs” (see “Example games”) on paper or cardboard.
You can also use identical bottle caps or lids for memory games and colour them differently on their inner side.



Puppets

When you introduce a unit, use puppets to tell fun facts or stories. Puppets can also be used to address difficult situations or conflicts among the children in a playful way.

Hand puppet

Material: strong fabric, sewing kit, drawing material

You can make a hand puppet out of strong fabric. Trace your hand onto a piece of paper to define the dimensions and draw a puppet (animal, child, teacher, etc.) around it. Use this template to cut the shape out of fabric. Sew it together and draw or stitch eyes, mouth, nose, etc. on it.



Puppets (continued from page 84)

Finger puppet

Material: peanut shells, drawing material

You can make fun finger puppets using peanut shells:
Take one half of the peanut shell that fits onto your finger and draw a face on it.

Stick puppets

Material: wooden sticks, paper, drawing material, adhesive tape/glue

Draw animals, persons, etc. on a sheet of paper and cut them out. Glue a stick onto the back of the paper so that you can use the paper animals/persons, etc. like puppets.



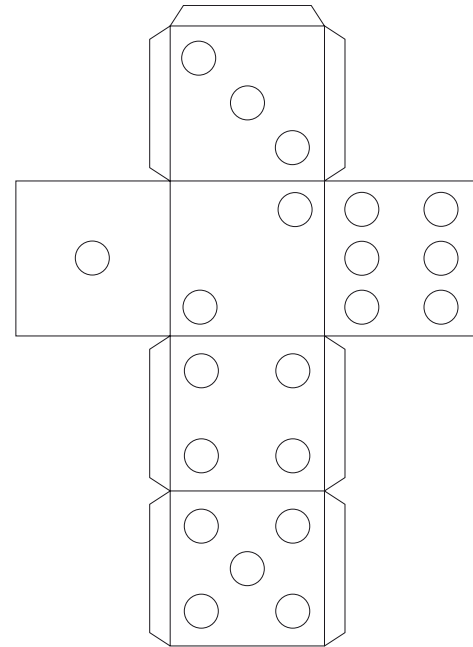
Dice

Material: Paper, scissors, glue, coloured pens.

Draw the basic grid of a dice (as illustrated on the left) on a large sheet of paper and cut it out. Then, fold the paper along the line and glue it together. Instead of dots, numbers or symbols can be drawn on the surface.

You can use the dice for various games in order to teach the children the numbers:

- One child after the other throws the dice. When the number on the dice is e.g. “3”, all children clap their hands three times/jump up three times, for “5” they do it five times, etc.
- The children form groups or pairs. In each group there are two teams. Every team gets, for example, 20 beans. Then, the children throw the dice in turn. The number that has been thrown may be taken from the opponent’s beans, for example 5 beans after the number five has been thrown. One team or player has won, when the opponent has no more beans.



4.2 Material for sport and play lessons outdoors

Equipment to distinguish one team from another

Material:

- some fabric or plastic bags of different colours
- scissors

Cut out ribbons or triangles for scarves or head-bands. These can be used to distinguish one team from another or to play games like “catch the mouse tail”.

Equipment to mark out the playing field

Material:

- Plastic bottles or stones
- Chalk powder

You can use objects to mark out the playing field: Plastic bottles should be filled with stones or sand, so that the wind cannot blow them away. You can also use big stones and colour them to mark out the pitch.

Alternatively, you can grind up chalk and use the chalk powder to draw lines/circles, etc. on your playground.

Balls

Material: plastic bags/old fabric, string

You can make your own ball by collecting a bunch of plastic bags or old fabric and tying them into a ball with a piece of string.

Tin-can race

Material: tin cans, string

Make two wholes in each tin can, thread a piece of string roughly 1.50 m long through the holes and knot both ends inside the tin. The children can use them like stilts to walk around on them or to make races.



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