

# A Chance To Play

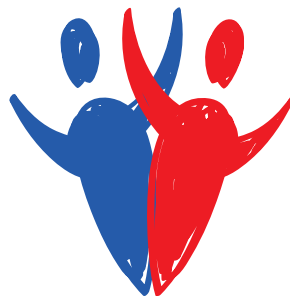
written by:

**Janet Prest Talbot** (Children's Rights Centre)

**Lucy Thornton** (Woz'obona)

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*a chance to play*



Volkswagen Group Works Council

*Together for children in need*

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hommes  
Help for Children in Distress

## **A Chance To Play**

A manual promoting play for children in Southern Africa

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### **Publishers: A Chance To Play**

A Chance to Play Southern Africa

Children's Memorial Institute Building

Braamfontein, Johannesburg 2017

Phone: +27 11 484 3633

Cell: +27 78 857 0311

E-mail: [actpsouthernafrica@gmail.com](mailto:actpsouthernafrica@gmail.com)

Website: [www.a-chance-to-play.org.za](http://www.a-chance-to-play.org.za)

Design and layout: Desiré Pelsler ([www.earthandoceans.co.za](http://www.earthandoceans.co.za))

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Help for Children in Distress

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### Writers:

Lucy Thornton (Woz’obona); Janet Prest Talbot (Children’s Rights Centre)

### Editor:

Desiré Pelser (Earth & Oceans Developments)

### Contributors:

André Viviers (UNICEF); Andrea Zeus (Active Schools Initiative); Brad Bing (Sporting Chance); Cati Vawda (Children’s Rights Centre); Children’s Resource Centre; Claudia Berker (terre des hommes Germany); Cynthia Morrison (Active Learning Libraries South Africa); Deyana Thomas (Curriculum Development Projects Trust); Isibindi – NACCW; Kirsten Prest (play worker at Red Cross Children’s Hospital); Leisl Hartman (Frank Joubert Art Centre); Louise Batty (Keep the Dream); Mary Clasquin-Johnson (TUKS); Milly Siebrits (SA Scout Association); Noreen Ramsden (Children’s Rights Centre); Sandi Eastwood (Meaningful Access Programme); Shadrack Mphela (Woz’obona); Sue Philpott (Disability Action Research Team); Oli Walsh (Whizzkids, Africaid).

### Proofreaders:

Tania Smith (original publication)  
Cynthia Morrison and Sharon Shevil (revised edition)

### Illustrations:

Adele O’Connell

### Photographs:

Rogan Ward with contributions from Alex Fattal; Andrea Zeus; Angie Buckland; Claudia Berker; Frank Garbers; Janet Prest Talbot; Max de Geus; Moira Schneider (Chess); Timo de Geus.

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In order to protect and uphold the dignity of children represented in the photographs in this handbook:

- No labelling is included that identifies names of children and or gives any suggestion to the context they are in unless this gives dignity and recognition to a child’s expression and achievement.
- All pictures relate to the overall theme of the book and the celebration and fun of play. They are not associated with any stigmatising theme that could undermine children’s dignity or safety.
- Reasonable measures have been taken to obtain permission from the children and adults whose photographs appear in this book.



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**“Play”:** Children’s play as behaviour, activity, or processes initiated, controlled and structured by children themselves and it takes place whenever and wherever opportunities arise. Caregivers may contribute to the creation of environments in which it takes place, but play itself is non-compulsory, driven by intrinsic motivation and is undertaken for its own sake, rather than as a means to an end...

Reference: Committee on the Rights of the Child: General Comment No.17 (2013) on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts (Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child).

## Introduction

Play is basic to children’s development and wellbeing; it’s their way to discover the world around them, to express how they feel and to deal with challenges and opportunities that come their way. Play offers many benefits to children: healthy physical activity; opportunities to socialise; a means to express their emotions; holistic development e.g. creative thinking, problem solving, communication; healing through play and great happiness, essential to wellbeing.

The definition of play on Page 6 (opposite) represents play in its purest form – the instinctive play that children around the world generate by themselves – without being taught by adults. It is this type of play which is at risk of disappearing.

Games and activities directed by adults for specific learning tasks are a fun way for children to learn but do not necessarily meet the above demand for self-initiated and self-directed play. Our role as adults and carers is to practically set up age appropriate play – in friendly, safe environments, that encourage various types of play. We need to understand and respect the process of play where children must be given enough time to enable them to experience the best quality play possible.

This book is a play manual. It brings together play activities and ideas drawn from the experiences of people working with children in South Africa. Part 1 describes children’s right to play and looks at play rights in practice; Part 2 offers many play activities to try out; and Part 3 explores how we can enable ourselves to make play happen for and with children.

By sharing these ideas for play with you, we hope to help you become a happier and better-equipped carer. We have seen that carers (youth and adults) who “work” in play programmes also play, and in that play they find enjoyment, energy and hope.



**“Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child’s soul.”**

Friedrich Froebel

## Grannies join in and play!

At a Play Day in Pokwane, Limpopo, Woz'obona introduced the concept of "A Chance To Play" to a crowd of children, youth and adults, inviting everyone to participate and have fun.

Two older women sat on their own and observed, but did not participate. They were soon joined by five or so other women, and all of them sat in a circle, talking about games they had played as children. Two of the women disappeared, returning some 15 minutes later with bottles from a nearby bottle store. They reminded the others of a relay race game they played as children where they balanced the bottles on their heads and raced to the finish trying not to drop the bottle.

The race was on!



## A Chance to Play programme

Child-aid agency and long-term funder of children's programmes in Southern Africa, terre des hommes Germany, began talking to its South African partner agencies in 2007 about a programme that could capitalise on major soccer events in 2009 and 2010, and would have children and youth as its primary beneficiaries. Partner agencies were already involved in children's programmes and saw a need to go beyond soccer, and even beyond sports, to create opportunities for everyone in South Africa to play – and so the A Chance To Play programme was born.

Realising the programme was made possible through financial assistance from the Volkswagen Global Group Works Council, representing the employees of the Volkswagen Group, its brands and subsidiaries. For almost twenty years Volkswagen's workforce has been donating money to support children in need.



From the start, projects have been selected and implemented in cooperation with terre des hommes Germany and local NGOs in South Africa and elsewhere in the world.

In 2008, nine partner agencies in Limpopo, Gauteng and the Eastern Cape began implementing A Chance To Play projects in their local areas, creating and influencing sporting and recreational development for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

As part of the plan for a sustainable intervention, the publication of a play manual for carers of children, including parents and teachers, youth and adults, who could facilitate play with children, was proposed. 'A Chance To Play', the first comprehensive play manual to be published in Southern Africa, is the result of this vision.

## Southern Africa's current challenges

In Southern Africa, many of our current generation of children have lost their opportunities to play. Poverty, violence and poor education continue to plague us. These and other challenges, such as HIV/AIDS and rapid urbanisation, have a negative impact on play opportunities for children. In fact, our children are less likely to have the full range of play opportunities than their parents and previous generations did. Although most schools are better resourced, many teachers are still inadequately prepared for teaching and do not know how important play is, how it grows and develops children, and how it should be integrated in education.

HIV/AIDS, in particular, has had a negative impact on children's lives, both for children who are living with HIV/AIDS and for those who have lost important adults, including parents. As fewer adults are caring for more children, adults are less able to ensure that children's rights are fulfilled – including the right to play. Many children have to assume adult roles and responsibilities in relation to their families and households, and this leaves little time for schoolwork and even less for play.

When basic needs are not met it is even more likely that play is seen as a luxury rather than as a fundamental right. Yet all children need play to feel like children again, to experience the freedom of exploring, to act out some of the frustration, sadness or anger they feel and to put aside for a time the burdens they carry.

We all have a vital role to play in children's lives – all of us can play, and all of us can teach others how to play. Using play with children helps us understand the challenges they face, and play can help to address those issues. Play unlocks powerful memories of good times, it renews our energy (physical, social, emotional, spiritual), it encourages creativity and it lifts us to other realms of possibility.

Children are our hope for a brighter future. By creating spaces and opportunities for children to play, we can all contribute to healthier, happier and more energetic nations.



# Part 1

## The right to play

## **Play is every child's right**

### **ARTICLE 31: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

### **ARTICLE 12: African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)**

Children have a right to play and to participate fully in cultural and artistic life.

# Children have a right to play



Play is a right of all children because it is vital for their development and wellbeing. This is recognised in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 31) and in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Article 12) – see full texts on the opposite page. Inclusion in both documents confirms that play is not an “optional extra” – it is essential in children’s lives. In these documents, play has equal status with all other rights. If children are to live to the full and grow up to be the best they can be – physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually and aesthetically (an appreciation of art, culture and nature) – they need opportunities for play, leisure and rest.

## Children’s rights in practice

In putting children’s rights into practice, including the right to play, keep the following in mind:

- **Best interests**

It is in the best interests of the child to play as long as it is safe and appropriate to that child’s stage of development, and meets that child’s current needs and context. Children often need to fulfil responsibilities of school, home, work and family chores before they can have the freedom of play. It is not in the best interests of children that these duties become so burdensome they preclude play.

- **Inclusion and equity**

For all children to realise their rights, all these rights apply to every child, equitably. For play, this means that facilitators of play must make sure that, as far as possible, there is inclusion and not discrimination on the basis of colour, class, age and gender and, in particular, that children with a disability are included. Inclusion also refers to anti-bias attitudes and a celebration of the diversity of indigenous practices in play, art, music, dance, drama and stories.

Children with a special need for play provision include those in high-rise buildings, in informal settlements, those living in the care of grandmothers in town or country, and those in children’s homes and in hospitals. This also includes working children whether they are labourers on farms or helping run the family business, or are burdened with childcare and domestic chores.

Cities can be hostile and excluding of children when they lack play spaces, have traffic hazards, are overcrowded and crime-ridden. Child-friendly cities prioritise to meet the needs of children and families in child inclusive urban design, programmes and policies.



- **Participation**

Children have the right to participate in decisions that affect them (Article 12 in the UNCRC). In play, this includes making choices about what kind of play they would like to be involved in, with whom, where, with what, and for how long they would like to play. Children can also give opinion on how they would like their play environments to be developed and be part of developing them. Even babies can indicate preferences for games and play things. From the time children are able to verbalise opinion, information can be shared with them to assist in meaningful decision making about play choices for themselves. Adults also need to recognise that children can be agents and creators of play.

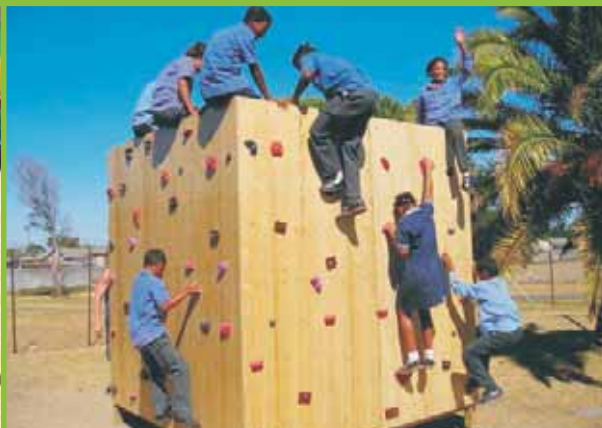
It is important that children are free to choose activities that are most meaningful to them from the options available: a sad child might choose to play with sand and water; an angry child might choose to kick a ball around; a child who has lost a parent may choose to play “funerals”; a lonely child might organise a “party” with pebbles for little cakes; and so on.

As with other rights, children’s right to play is realised with the participation of and in partnership with adults. Adults may be part of the play, or may be on the sidelines keeping a watchful eye. Adults can support, stretch and develop children’s understanding, values, creativity, imagination and skills – especially when in close, interpersonal encounters. Participation also includes the right of freedom of association in children’s clubs, sports clubs and other children’s groups.

## Children as “agents” of play

In the Active Schools Initiative children have opportunities to build and play with self-made playing equipment during school break periods, using stilts from wood off-cuts and trampolines made from old tyres. Trained child play leaders facilitate games for their fellow learners in class and hand out, monitor and check on the play equipment.

At WD Hendricks Primary School, learners and caretakers together built a boulder cube on the school grounds in Facticeon. Twelve months later the children are still enjoying their “climbing wall” and some of them are showing great talent.



## Play for holistic development

When we apply in play the right to development, to be the best one can be, we need to understand that children develop holistically, using all their senses, physical skills, mental capacity, social skills and emotions together. For example, in running, climbing and jumping, children:

- learn mathematical skills and concepts such as judging size, shape and space;
- develop physical skills of agility and coordination;
- gain the emotional benefits of confidence; and
- learn social skills like co-operating.

These skills are carried forward into other spheres of activity.

In play, children are busy learning through all their five senses, and absorbing and processing language by talking to friends. A wide range of play activities needs to be facilitated to provide stimulating experiences that suit all ages as well as the capabilities and temperaments of the various children.

## Justice and fairness must be practiced in play

A rights-based approach is very important as play experiences in childhood carry life-long consequences. If play experiences are positive and affirming, the child gains greater self-confidence and social skills. On the other hand, negative experiences such as bullying, exclusion and humiliation on the playground, make for lower self-esteem and resentment, which can have a negative impact on the rest of their lives.

When play goes wrong it is the responsibility of adults to intervene wisely. Various strategies can be employed, such as distracting younger children or bringing in an attractive alternative for older children. It is important to provide good role models that they want to emulate.

Those who facilitate play and train peer leaders for play should look at ways to establish an accepted code of conduct among the children that encourages fair play (the right to justice), inclusion (the right not to be discriminated against) and affirmation of each person's value to the group (the right to dignity).

Because it affects the whole child ("head, heart and hand") play can be very powerful in changing attitudes and building good values.

## Play fulfils rehabilitative rights

Without being a specific therapy, types of play can help children process traumatic incidents, manage anger, sadness and give periods of escape from stress. Adults observing play can intervene and refer children they see are in trouble. Just being in a positive space is restorative and brings happiness to children. Play supports disability needs, ADHD conditions and social needs.

## Providing for play – whose responsibility is it?

Who can help provide play for children and how can it be done most effectively? This is a challenge to all who are concerned about children's rights at all levels, from the family to communities in villages, towns and cities and from local to national government.

Play for children should be on everyone's agenda. It is not just a matter of setting up and maintaining playgrounds. The need to develop human resources is fundamental, and this is linked to issues of safety that need to be addressed, as well as to the provision and maintenance of the necessary play and sports equipment.

The "playing fields" in South Africa are not yet level and many children are subjected to play conditions that are not in their best interests due to safety, environmental and spatial challenges. Comprehensive strategies need to be in place to ensure that resources are available and that caregivers and play leaders are being empowered as the immediate enablers of play for and with children.

### Inner-city childcare

Many children are cooped up all day, five days a week, in small flats or shop fronts, growing up in a crowded space under fluorescent lights.

1. Parents need to check where they are sending their children each day and ensure that they have healthy, stimulating play environments.
2. Centre and crèche managers should be obligated to develop and provide child-friendly play facilities.
3. Municipal laws should have minimum standards to protect children.
4. The government needs to support and enable the effective running of childcare centres.





## The UNCRC promotes play in General Comment 17

A General Comment in the context of the United Nations Children’s Rights Committee is an authoritative document that is aimed at helping stakeholders (especially governments) develop a better understanding of a specific Article in the Children’s Rights Convention and what needs to be done to implement these provisions. The General Comment can help in strengthening national advocacy and be used as a framework for accountability. It can even be used by stakeholders to push for changes in legislation.

In 2010, the International Play Association initiated a series of global consultation meetings in eight countries (including South Africa) to establish the state of play globally with a view to submitting a document to the United Children’s Rights Committee which would show that Article 31 – the child’s Right to Play and Recreation – was generally ignored. All eight countries showed similar patterns of neglect of provision for play. This process culminated in the launch in Geneva of General Comment 17 in May 2013.

General Comment 17 spells out what is required to fully provide for and implement the right to play as described in Article 31 of the UNCRC. Article 31 has several other elements alongside its focus on play including the right to rest, leisure, recreational activities and participation in cultural life and the arts. When it comes to ensuring children’s rights overall, other rights such as survival and protection rights might often seem to be far more important but the General Comment emphasises that play rights are no less important than any other right and that every effort must be made by governments at all levels to ensure play happens for children. (To obtain the full document, Google “UNCRC General Comment 17”.)

The General Comment helps us to be strategic about making play happen for children in the following ways:

1. It explains why play is significant to children’s lives and why it is vital for their wellbeing.
2. It analyses each aspect of Article 31, defining exactly what is meant by “rest, leisure, play, recreational activities” and so on. The General Comment also shows how play rights are inter-connected with many other rights such as the best interests of the child, the rights to health, well-being and development of children and their right to education.
3. It most importantly considers what the barriers to play might be as identified in the eight global consultation meetings. Each country faces unique problems but many shared similar barriers. For example: play is not really regarded as important or highly valuable; environments for play are hazardous for play; children’s play is inconvenient in public spaces; some children’s play is seen as risky and children are inhibited in their play; there is a lack of access to nature; children have limited time for play and leisure and are increasingly scheduled into organised adult led activities; play is increasingly commercialised and electronic media often dominates.

The General Comment also considers particular children that are at risk of not being able to play freely. This includes girls who often have more family responsibilities, children with disabilities, those in institutions and children from minority communities who might be discriminated against. Children facing conflict, wars and natural disasters have their play disrupted and frequently are denied play entirely especially in the case of child soldiers and refugees.

4. Finally, the General Comment stresses the obligations of “duty bearers” to guarantee that this right is fulfilled! All levels of society are challenged from parents and families, to the institutions serving children, municipalities and local government and the state itself. Policies, budgets, short and long term planning is required across government departments and civil society sectors to achieve this.

Chapter 24 of this Manual, “Lobbying and advocacy for play”, considers a variety of actions that could be undertaken.

When a General Comment is produced, there are obligations on the governments (states) of all countries in Southern Africa that have ratified the UNCRC and those assigned to look after children’s best interests and rights in the nation, to take action on the recommendations of this document. It is a strong and authoritative advocacy platform for insisting on play implementation.

# Children's play needs at different ages

In children's rights provision, the developing capacity of a child is always taken into account. This chapter gives some ideas of the play needs of children at different stages of development. It is only a very general, simplified guide as each child develops at a different pace and with individual preferences. Children may surprise you with unexpected interests and abilities to pursue play!

## Babies: 0-18 months

Babies need to bond with caregivers who will play with them from birth: respond to smiles and babbling sounds, offer cuddles and massage, talk and sing, and generally have a warm, caring and relaxed attitude.

Babies respond to touch, to sounds, to bright colours and to movement – and very soon enjoy looking at smiling faces on real people or even in pictures. They explore with their mouths, first, and then with their hands and feet and play with anything within range. They soon imitate smiles and other facial expressions, and play endlessly with sounds as they start learning to talk. Singing and music are play activities that babies respond to. Siblings and other family members are very important to babies for extra love and care, and for stimulating new experiences. A baby is a quick learner and stimulation is important for later development. By the time a baby is 18 months old they should be able to walk.

### Play provision suggestions

- A person who responds and interacts with them – talking and sound imitation.
- Music, singing, being moved and danced with.
- Objects that can be held: rattles, chunky objects, (and later) objects that can be safely picked up and safely put into the baby's mouth.
- Soft toys, teddies, dolls.
- Pictures with large images such as faces, other children, animals, everyday objects.
- Mobiles: shiny with bright colours placed above the bed or in the pram; some that can be touched, pushed and spun or make a sound.
- Safe crawling space and things to hold onto as the baby learns to stand and walk.
- Sturdy pushing toys.
- Games: “peek-a-boo”, rhymes and songs with movements, pulling funny faces.



## Toddlers: 18 months to 3 years

Toddlers aged between about 1 and 3 years are great explorers of their physical environment and all the objects that are within reach. Safety is a prime need and they need safe places to play and constant supervision.

Besides testing through play the characteristics of any item they can get their hands on, they also enjoy climbing and running and sliding. They love water, sand and mud. They begin, too, to use their imaginations so that a small block becomes a “biscuit”, a cardboard box becomes a “car”, and so on. They learn to say “No!” and may be stubborn and have temper outbursts when they feel frustrated.

Toddlers play alongside other children but seldom actively engage with them.

### Play provision suggestions

- Sand pits and sand pit tools.
- Water play.
- Plastic scooters and wheeled toys.
- “Make and break” playthings like blocks and stacking toys.
- Swings, such as a tyre swing that can hold them safely.
- Climbing: easy jungle gyms, rocks, cardboard boxes to climb into.
- Coordination: post boxes, easy puzzles (four pieces), inset puzzles.
- Art: chunky crayons, finger painting, play dough, goop, sticking.
- Stories and interactive books, books with thicker pages.
- Tents, dens, “houses” under tables.
- Soft toys, teddies, dolls and prams, trucks, small cars, balls.



## Pre-schooler: 3-6 years

At this age children often gain a best friend, and learn the social skills needed to maintain cooperative social games of “house” or “pirates” with several children taking part. This “fantasy play” also allows them to explore roles, channel emotions and “make sense” of their world.

A pre-schooler’s play shows their growing skills of speech, physical agility and small muscle coordination; their play enhances these skills.

### Play provision suggestions

- More challenging climbing, balancing, swinging, park play (see-saws, merry-go-rounds, slides). Safe parks are essential and they need to be pleasant places for adults to be as they supervise play!
- Natural environment to explore: observing plants, insects, animal farms, pets.
- Pretend play: dressing up, shopping, hospital kits, cooking kits, dolls, doll beds and prams, making a house or den (provide large boxes, blankets to cover tables), forts, cops and robbers, Batman.
- Riding small bikes and sturdy scooters.
- Games: ball, hopping, chasing, learning to catch, even simple card games.
- Water play, including learning to swim (often with swim aids).





## Middle childhood: 6-12 years

Children's play in urban areas is often restricted at this age to formal sports at school and in clubs, or to recreational hobbies – and this is unfortunate. Far too many children turn to computer and video games for stimulus and excitement, and these do not provide the holistic development they need. Obesity in children is on the increase, with other unhealthy physical trends, and the development of social skills may be neglected.

Children's play needs to be facilitated in public parks and “wide-adventure” venues with a range of activities, and needs to be both (reasonably) safe and challenging. These play areas could include skate-board parks, camping grounds, climbing walls, off-road cycle tracks, areas where “club-houses” can be constructed from junk, and so on. Clubs that encourage play activities should be encouraged, such as Cub Scouts and Guides, and faith-based and school children's groups such as “Soul Buddyz”.

At this age, social play-groups are bigger and may show quite cruel exclusion/inclusion negotiations. Children start playing away from home; this can be quite risky as they wander in the neighbourhood. Gender stereotypes come to the fore – and need to be countered!

### Play provision suggestions

- Safe outdoor play areas for sports, games, challenging physical play (climbing, swinging, exploring).
- Traditional childhood games: skipping, elastic jumping, hopscotch, marbles, tops, indigenous games.
- Children's clubs, organised group play and activity: games, hikes, visits to special places, campfires.
- Sports: rules and skills of sports games.
- Bike riding, skate boards.
- Mind games: cards, board games, chess, computer games, puzzles.
- Creative: art projects, dance, drama, choirs, dressing up, learning a musical instrument.
- Craft skills: knitting, sewing, using tools, toy-making.
- Tents, huts, houses, dens, tree houses, forts.
- Swimming and water play, hoses, paddling pools.
- Private spaces for imagination games and fantasy play.
- Adults are needed to be leaders of children's groups and managers of play programmes and spaces.



## Teenagers: 12-18 years

Teenagers still need to play even if it is within organised sport, cultural activities, clubs for hobbies and social events. The team or group they play with becomes very important, as their primary reference is now their peers. They have a need to feel independent of adults, and to belong to a group where they have status and friendship. Teenagers need recognition and for many there is pleasure and pride in presenting their mastery – for example, in concerts, displays and sport events.

There is still a need for adult supervision at all venues and events as alcohol, drugs and negative social alignments could pose a risk for teenagers. Adults also need to be available to facilitate appropriate and accessible opportunities for a wide range of sport and recreational activities, and to support young people in choosing healthy lifestyles and making responsible decisions.

### Play provision suggestions

- Specialist coaching and skills development; sports, dance, music and other arts.
- Clubs and societies: youth groups, specialist interest groups, facilities and equipment for activities including meeting spaces, sports fields, courts.
- Leadership training to develop skills in order to run own programmes.
- Opportunities to develop and sustain physical fitness through formal and informal sports and other activities; gyms, unusual sport leagues, touch rugby, Frisbee.
- Adult partners to support and sustain recreational and sporting structures.
- Play provisions: pool tables, table tennis, darts, kerem boards, complex puzzles, card games, commercial games such as Monopoly, Trivial Pursuit, Pictionary, and so on.
- Adventure challenges: hiking, outdoor adventure, rock climbing.
- Exposure and access to arts and cultural activities including theatre, festivals, events.
- Young people's participation in designing and developing play and recreational activities for themselves (committees, commissions).

# 3 Play rights issues

## Gender and play

Equitable play opportunities for both girls and boys need to be promoted!

- Boys are often allowed to be more independent and are allowed to play away from home more often. Girls (possibly for their safety and for cultural reasons), are kept close to home, and in inner-city environments they are often mostly indoors.
- Girls are often burdened with household chores and even childcare responsibilities that might limit play opportunities.
- Boys are seen as being more active and sports programmes tend to favour them. Girls participating and achieving in sport, even to the highest levels, are not acknowledged or rewarded as much as boys are.
- Toys and game-traditions socialise children in particular gender roles. Some of these roles limit holistic development.

The gender issue in play is about ensuring equity especially for children whose play opportunities might be limited. There should be reflection on and responsiveness to play patterns that might promote negative stereotypes and behaviour of both boys and girls.

A rights approach requires adult attention to who plays together or at all, how children are treated during play, what forms of play are supported for which children, and what values are conveyed in the purpose, rules and imagery of the play.



*Girls carefully comb and groom a teddy bear with a toothbrush, while boys use the same toy in a mock attack and fight game.*



## Including children with disabilities

It is important for all those who facilitate or organise play to be inclusive and not to discriminate unfairly against any child. All children have the right to play and this includes children with disabilities – such as children who have difficulties in hearing or vision or moving around. There should not be discrimination against or exclusion of children who have chronic illnesses, those with intellectual disabilities or those facing emotional issues or trauma.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (Article 7.1) emphasises the need to *“take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children.”*



*Willem is a wheelchair user. His wheelchair is a means of mobility and independence, and enables him to participate in activities with other children. Willem does not always need the wheelchair and is able to move about in other ways. (From Voices and Vision exhibition – CRC.)*

In all play programmes and play experiences, constantly explore how to include children with disabilities, removing barriers that lead to their exclusion. Some guidelines for this:

- Focus on the child rather than on their disability.
- Aim to build the child’s strengths, recognising what they can do and what they want to do, rather than their perceived “weakness”.
- Work closely with the child, getting their ideas on how barriers can be removed and what would enable them to participate in play activities. Facilitators can encourage adults and children to develop creative responses that will ensure that all children’s play needs are being met.

Remember that children with disabilities who have not been given opportunities for play, may need particular encouragement and support. They need to be sure that they will be safe and will be protected physically as well as from teasing or ridicule by other children. Children with physical difficulties may need additional services or assistance to maximise their ability to take up opportunities (just as Willem requires a wheelchair to enable him to move around the playground). Assistive devices (such as hearing aides or crutches) could be helpful in supporting inclusion of children with disabilities.

Explore innovative ideas for construction of inclusive playgrounds and making of toys that are appropriate for all children, whatever their abilities or disabilities. For some ideas see *Disabled Village Children* (chapters 46 and 49), which can be downloaded from [www.hesperian.org](http://www.hesperian.org).

## Play and culture

Children need and have a right to playthings and experiences that include representation and affirmation of their cultures and aspirations. Molemo Kgomo is a mother who wanted to buy her child a black doll that would reflect and embrace her daughter's heritage, skin colour and hair. With few true representations of black people, Kgomo designed the Ntomb'entle' range of dolls. "Skinny, 'Barbie'-type dolls are not representative of our young girls," she says. "As adults, we can choose to wear weaves and our children should grow up with a love for their thick African hair". For Kgomo, the main purpose of her line is for girls, irrespective of race and culture, to "appreciate and see beauty in all kids and dolls".

It is essential for a child's sense of identity and belonging to be included in representation. Besides dolls, other representations of the various groups in Southern Africa include expressions and images in posters, books and stories and indigenous games, local music, songs and rhymes.

For more information: [www.ntombenhledolls.co.za/about-us/](http://www.ntombenhledolls.co.za/about-us/)

## Play in times of trauma

Play helps children to recover from hurt and to cope with ongoing trauma. Through play they can gain control over a part of their lives, and feel less anxious and helpless. Play can also help them to express safely and channel the raw emotions that may overwhelm them. Play also allows children to relive their experiences, safely, and make more sense of their often chaotic memories of what happened. Play provides welcome relief, a chance to escape worries and fears and to relax.

Play opportunities are especially needed by children who have been abused, or who have been in accidents, who are hospitalised for any cause, or who have been bereaved. Play spaces should be provided at police stations, clinics and hospitals.

Play is good for all children – but only experts can offer “play therapy” for deeply disturbed children. Untrained “play-people” should not attempt it! Expert help should be sought if a traumatised child does not improve with loving care and if, after several weeks, he or she is still not able to cope with everyday life – eating, sleeping, self-care (hygiene, toileting, keeping clean) and going back to everyday routines such as school and play with friends.

Help can be obtained from Childline (call 0800 055 555) or other therapists such as clinical psychologists.

## Play in camps for families displaced by xenophobic attacks

Active Learning Libraries SA (ALL-SA) was involved in a UNICEF project to provide play materials for children living in camps set up for families displaced by xenophobic attacks in 2008.

UNICEF, whose main aim was to make sure the children still had access to education in this emergency situation, provided emergency ECD Kits with puzzles, balls, Hoola hoops, Duplo blocks, dolls and art materials. ALL-SA's role was to identify mothers who were then workshopped on the importance of play, how to play with the various materials and how these toys developed important skills in children. The mothers had to agree to manage play sessions for children in the camp. ALL-SA had to make sure that the play kits were stored in a safe place and that there was a suitable, safe play area. Although the kit was meant for the very young, children of all ages enjoyed playing with the toys.

There were many challenges since the adults' first priority was food, shelter and protection from the cold. They were also understandably very anxious about their situation. However, many of the mothers managed to provide and maintain a safe place for the children to play.

A particularly poignant and successful workshop was held at a camp on the East Rand. ALL-SA reports:

“A clapping game was played with the mothers to break the ice and set the tone for the workshop. The mood in the tent immediately changed from apprehension to one of laughter and positive activity. Some of the women showed us some very complicated clapping games they had played as young girls. They were surprised and happy to see that women from different countries knew the same games. They could play together!

“After this activity the group was very receptive to our information. About 80% of the mothers participated openly and shared their ideas and concerns. The mothers thanked us for helping them and their children and commented that they felt that the playing had helped them forget about their tough situation, even if just for a moment, and that they would also like to do that for their children.”







# Part 2

# Play activities

Play involves the exercise of autonomy, physical, mental or emotional activity, and has the potential to take infinite forms, either in groups or alone. These forms will change and be adapted throughout the course of childhood. The key characteristics of play are fun, uncertainty, challenge, flexibility and non-productivity. Together, these factors contribute to the enjoyment it produces and the consequent incentives to continue to play.

Reference: General Comment No.17 (2013)

# Promoting many types of play!

This book is intended primarily to help all those needing to organise and promote fun, constructive play and recreational activities for children. It has many activities to try out and many will remind you of your own play experiences as a child. New games and activities will extend your repertoire – don't be afraid to try them out!

Two aspects of play are addressed in this book: **Child directed free play** where children spontaneously choose a play activity they would like to do and organise it themselves and **organised play**, led by adults, which happens most often with children's groups, in schools and in more formally organised play sessions.

- **Free play**

Most of the time, children will not be in organised play sessions and will be on their own, engaging in play in their own way. This might involve fantasy play, finding out (exploratory) and creative play, physical play like climbing and swinging and competitive play with friends, including games learned during organised play. It is the responsibility of adults (parents, ward councils, school officials, parks and recreation officials, land owners, housing estate body corporates, and so on) to ensure that safe, stimulating spaces are available for children to express themselves in play. Adults need to make enough time available for children for free play activities, which help to reduce stress and increase a child's feeling of wellbeing.

- **Organised play**

Children love organised games and these are often the main activity of groups when they get together. These activities require play leaders or coaches to develop programmes, organise the group, and find the space and equipment needed to play. Even though adults most often take on the role of "play leader", allowance needs to be given to children's own abilities to learn to lead games and become "play leaders".

Children usually need adult partners to coach skills, including leadership skills, and help in providing resources.

Children need outdoor and indoor spaces to play in. Outdoor places include parks, sports areas, cleaned up vacant lots, public swimming pools, nature areas and green spaces, school playing fields and constructed play grounds.

Indoor spaces include toy libraries, classrooms, children’s club venues and homes. Families need to allow play spaces to happen in their homes – a “restaurant” in the kitchen, a “house” under a table, a hiding space in a cupboard or behind a couch, sometimes an old mattress as a gym mat, and so on. Not all play will be robust and energetic. Quiet and intimate places are needed for other kinds of play. A space for a game at the front doorstep may be as necessary as a space to play soccer.

Children also need “play stuff” – toys such as dolls, toy cars, sand play tools, play dough, cards, marbles, skipping rope; fantasy play things such as dressing up clothes; music for singing and dancing; story books to inspire; sports equipment including balls and bats; and, if possible, things like bikes and skateboards. None of this “play stuff” needs to be state-of-the-art or expensive, and this book gives ideas for finding homemade and easily available equipment for children’s play spaces and play needs.

Both organised and free play require that someone puts in effort, and often some monetary investment, or creativity and time to make play materials, to ensure it happens. More than ever, children need adults who believe in play and who help make the “magic” happen!

## Loose parts play – a very special type of free play

One of the most popular examples of free play is “loose parts play” where children are given a range of mostly scrap materials with which they can do anything they want to.



### Albert Park Scrap Play Pod – exploratory play

In a barren basement of a high rise building in Albert Park, Durban, play workers assembled a collection of suitable waste for children to play and be creative with. This included sticks, fabric, odd wheels, tyres, pipes, taped up boxes, cardboard tubes from print shops, cloth and rope, chair seat shells from broken chairs, crates, planks and any object that was clean and safe to use. The play space was improved by laying down a “grass” carpet on the concrete floor. Children were never told by adults what to play but found their play ideas amongst the junk provided. Each play session generated different games and experiments. Some activities involved strenuous work such as rolling tyres and making carts and vehicles to pull each other around in crates. The play pod proved to be an engaging free play experience!



# Types of play

Experts have identified many types of play, each with its own benefits. It is up to adults to ensure that children experience the full range of play activities in a variety of play environments. This may involve landscapes of interest, play materials that involve manipulation, creativity and thinking skills and equipment that encourages active outdoor play. Safety is also important.

We can measure quality play by identifying whether different types of play for different age groups and abilities are being provided. The A Chance To Play programme focuses on the five play types in the following chart:

Type of play	Benefits of this kind of play	Manual chapters/other ideas
<p><b>Physical play</b> Activities include jumping, running, swimming, riding a trike/bike, scooter, skateboard, roller and ice skates, ball games, group games and sports games.</p> <p><b>Risky, outdoor physical play</b> Climbing, swinging, balancing, racing, testing boundaries.</p> <p><b>Rough and tumble play</b> With friends and family, includes chasing, grappling, and wrestling.</p>	<p>Development of physical strength, hand-eye-foot co-ordination, balance, mastery of motor skills and self confidence. Energy is released and channelled appropriately.</p> <p><b>Risky play</b> develops independence, resourcefulness and self-regulation.</p> <p><b>Rough and tumble play</b> important for emotional and social skills, emotional bonds, attachment and learning social boundaries.</p>	<p>Energisers and attention getters (6) Games sets (7) Water Play (8) Park Games and Sports (10) Outdoor play (11)</p> <p>Develop interesting outdoor play spaces and visit parks, beaches, forest and veld.</p> <p>Promote play days (25)</p>
<p><b>Pretend play</b> (drama and role play, imaginative and socio-dramatic play) Children try out different life roles such as fire fighters, hospital play, being parents, dancers or even being an animal! Children develop stories naturally. They energetically move freely back and forth between reality and pretend. This play may be done quietly or actively, alone (often with toy animals, dolls or action figures) or with others – including parents or children who take on different roles.</p>	<p>Children figure out how the world works and then use this information to create their own world. They may experiment with roles and responses to situations.</p> <p>High quality pretend play is closely associated with the development of cognitive, social and academic abilities, language skills, creativity and reasoning. Leadership skills, the ability to make compromises and to negotiate also develop during imaginative play.</p> <p>Children have an opportunity to escape a difficult reality, release stress and anger in a safe environment and perhaps play out incidents leading to healing.</p>	<p>Drama and role play (16) Imagination play (17) Free play: page 31 Loose part play: page 32</p> <p>This type of play is vitally important. Pretend play needs space, time and respect for emerging play scenarios. Live with a little play chaos as things are moved and co-opted into the play story. Do not interfere with the play story but co-operate if asked!</p>

Type of play	Benefits of this kind of play	Manual chapters/other ideas
<p><b>Exploratory (Finding out)</b> Play (with objects and materials, both natural and man-made) that involves manipulation, experiencing different textures, trying out different things, organising the material and figuring out how to use it (technology).</p> <p><b>Creative play</b> Finding out play often leads naturally to using the material to create something new – such as sticks, stones and mud that are used to create a village; a large leaf and stones becomes food on a plate; scrap material can become anything. Construction sets encourage the creation of a variety of models. Arts and craft materials encourage a variety of new images</p>	<p>Exploratory play is the basis of problem solving where children learn through trial and error. It develops coordination, patience, resilience, creativity and self confidence. Exploratory play builds concepts and knowledge. It helps to increase a child’s attention span and encourages self- regulation.</p> <p>Creative play provides a way for children to express themselves. It also encourages problem solving as children take what is in their heads and transfer it to the image, model or scene they are creating.</p> <p>Small muscle skills (technology) that are the foundation of handwriting, concentration and perseverance are developed.</p> <p>Self confidence is strengthened.</p>	<p>Many items found in loose part play: page 32 Water play (8) Recipes for Play (15) Involve children in household life: cooking, cleaning, washing, gardening</p> <p>Loose parts: page 32 Creative art activities (20) Musical instruments and music making (18) Making your own toys (19) Variety of construction toys – blocks of different sizes, lego, screws and bolts, planks and real tools, old appliances to take apart, sewing and threading items</p>
<p><b>Games with rules</b> Board and card games, including indigenous games, with set rules where someone is going to win or lose.</p> <p>Traditional group games with rules such as chasing games, hide and seek and skipping games where a child might lose his turn or have to become the chaser.</p> <p>Sporting games such as cricket or soccer. Depending on the resources available, children might make up their own rules.</p> <p>Some pretend play scenarios might include rules created by the children that have to be followed.</p>	<p>Children have to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the rules and each other</li> <li>• Collaborate and cooperate</li> <li>• Take turns and accept losing the game or their turn</li> </ul> <p>They learn acceptable behaviour and practice social skills like having to follow certain social rules, compromising by fitting in with group decisions and accepting the outcome calmly. This builds up friendships and a sense of belonging.</p> <p>Children learn to lead, communicate with one another and to be assertive and empathetic when managing a game.</p>	<p>Game sets (7) Cooperative and trust games (9) Park games and sports (10) Traditional games (12) Indigenous games (13) Board and card games (14)</p> <p>Encourage grandparents and parents to teach traditional and indigenous games.</p>

Type of play	Benefits of this kind of play	Manual chapters/other ideas
<p><b>Cognitive (thinking) play</b> Thinking is set in motion when children use their imaginations in fantasy play, create new objects and images in creative play, figure out how to achieve a goal in physical play and set safe boundaries in risky play.</p> <p><b>Brain games and activities</b> Problem solving also takes place during activities involving sorting and grouping; games of strategy including board and card games; building puzzles; word and maths games and controlled use of computer games.</p> <p><b>Language play</b> Includes experimenting with rhyming words, telling jokes, puns, telling stories and creating scripts that accompany fantasy play. Singing and making music are a further aspect.</p>	<p>This child-directed play practises problem solving and creative skills, develops self regulation and perseverance and results in feelings of satisfaction in their accomplishments which builds self confidence.</p> <p><b>Brain games and activities</b> develop short term memory, various concepts including colour, shape, number, size, spatial relationships and pattern recognition. They also develop small motor-co-ordination, concentration, perseverance and task completion.</p> <p><b>Language play</b> develops listening skills, comprehension and expressive language which form the basis of reading, spelling and creative writing.</p>	<p>Opportunities for child-directed play without adult interference. Enough time to complete their play thread.</p> <p><b>Brain games</b> Traditional games (12) Indigenous games (13) Board and card games (14)</p> <p><b>Language play</b> Drama and role play (16) Imagination Play (17) Musical instruments and music making (18)</p> <p>Provide a language and image rich environment: point out, name and describe what is seen; picture books for young children; rhyming books and nursery rhymes; read stories, poetry; sing songs; controlled TV programme watching, especially documentaries about aspects of our planet.</p>

For further reading on play theory, Google:

1. Dr David Whitebread: “The Importance of Play”.
2. The power of play – Part 2: Born to Play, Michigan State University Extension.

# 5 Planning ongoing play programmes

If you are responsible for an ongoing play programme for children, use this book’s table of contents as a “menu” to plan a varied and stimulating programme for your daily after-care programme or weekly club, or for a daily holiday programme. Additional variety can be introduced with themes (such as food on special events), and environmental projects, cultural events, outings, and so on.

Your play project might incorporate non-play activities for a specific purpose such as a community service activity or a chance for serious discussion, as in a faith-based programme or in children’s support groups for chronic illness. Play offers space for sheer good fun, laughter, release of energy and the building of a warm relationship between players and play leaders.

A term has approximately 10 weeks and each week could have a different activity theme. For a programme that runs every afternoon you could, for example, have a theme for each day:

- Monday – park sports (volleyball, hockey, cricket, soccer)
- Tuesday – art activities
- Wednesday – drama, dance, music
- Thursday – games (traditional and indigenous games)
- Friday – food, environment theme or outings, board games

A play programme such as the one below was used to keep a weekly YMCA Kids Klub going in the Durban inner-city for over 12 years!

## Example of a play programme menu

Activity themes	Activities
	<i>Choose one of these activities for your weekly programme. Do something different the following week.</i>
<b>1. Sports and games</b> (see Chapter 10)	Park volleyball; rounders; cricket; hockey; soccer; four square; Frisbee; swimming; bat and ball.
<b>2. Game sets</b> (see Chapter 7)	Games using a particular piece of equipment or theme such as: rope; elastics; water; newspapers; balloons; duster hockey; relay games; circle games.

<b>3. Treasure hunts</b> (see Chapter 7)	Match box; colours; categories; area treasure hunts; “Amazing Race”.
<b>4. Artistic activities</b> (see Chapter 20)	Chalk pavement art; drawing; wax crayon and food colour resist; papier-mâché work; play dough, clay or sand clay; use chunks of charcoal on newsprint; nature dyes (use leaves, flowers, mud, charcoal); collages with stuff collected from a park or the veld; junk recycling; art making.
<b>5. Food themes</b>	Make a camp fire and have a simple braai or bake bread on a stick over the coals (use scone dough). Remove the stick and fill the hole with jam or margarine, syrup, condensed milk or a Vienna sausage. Bake biscuits in a close-by oven (make the dough in advance and let children shape and decorate it). Make pancakes in electric frying pans. Pizza making (make your own scone or yeast dough); soup making; potjiekos competition. Hold a travelling supper (soup at one home, hot dogs at the next, dessert at another).
<b>6. Drama, music, singing</b> (see Chapter 16, 18)	Skits and plays; charades (acting out words and themes for others to guess); shadow plays. Also include dance; poetry; music making; singing; puppets.
<b>7. Team building and cooperative games</b> (see Chapter 9)	Games that help the group to think about how well they work together. For example, the group could make a human sculpture involving every “body” to be part of a giraffe or a bull-dozer.
<b>8. Round robin games</b> (see Chapter 7, 10)	Water games; match stick towers; skittles; sticky dough; ping pong target.
<b>9. Entertainment</b> (see Chapter 7)	Camp fires; game shows; your own “Fear Factor”; prick-a-balloon challenges; talent shows; story telling (get hold of good African stories – find Gcina Hlope books – and many others). Encourage children to learn stories in groups and to tell or dramatise them around a camp fire.
<b>10. Environmental projects</b>	Clean ups; hikes/walks; visit a park, water way or beach, hill or mountain or animal farm; plant vegetables in the ground or in old tyres; bird watching; camp fire and camp out; make shelters to sleep in.
<b>11. Outings</b>	Local swimming pool; library; theatre; museum; zoo; movies; botanical garden; park; game reserve; ice skating; beach.
<b>12. Traditional games</b> (see Chapter 12)	Hopscotch; skipping; elastics; marbles; tops; hide and seek; catch games.
<b>13. Indigenous games</b> (see Chapter 13)	Dikete; morabaraba; shumpu.
<b>14. Board games and cards</b> (see Chapter 14)	Chess; draughts; cards; Pictionary; Snakes and Ladders; Ludo; puzzles; “kerem”; Monopoly.
<b>15. Special events</b>	Public holiday theme activities; special days such as International Play Day (28 May); Environment Week (31 May - 6 June); and International Children’s Day (20 November); religious holidays.

# Energisers and attention-getters

# 6

Energisers and attention-getters are short games where everyone follows the directions of a leader. They can be used to start a play session, to energise a group if they seem bored during quieter sessions, or to quieten children when they are distracted and noisy. These games are useful to focus everyone's attention.

## Birds Fly

You flap your arms and call out "Birds fly!" or "Bees fly!" or anything else that flies and the group must copy the action. Then at random you flap your arms and call the name of something that does not fly, such as "Cats fly!", and then anyone who flaps their arms is out and must stand still.

## Traffic Lights (robot)

The group stands in the centre of the room. With a sense of anticipation, the leader calls out one of the robot colours: "red" – the group must stand dead still; "orange" – they rotate the top part of their bodies; "green" – they run on the spot. Vary the speeds at which the different colours are called and get the players running fast on the "green" to use up their energy!

## Simon Says

Players must copy the leader's action but only if the command comes from "Simon".

If the leader says (for example) "Simon says put your arms out to the side!" everyone must do just that. If the leader merely says "put your arms out to the side", nobody must move or they are out!





## Gotcha (catch me if you can)

- **Catch my hands**

Work in pairs. One person holds their hands together with palms touching. The other person holds their hands apart and then claps them together trying to catch the partner's hands. The partner has to avoid this by moving his or her hands quickly. When hands are caught, partners change roles.

- **Palm up; finger pointing down**

Stand in a circle. All players put out their left hand with palm facing up, right hand with forefinger pointing down into the palm of person next to them. With their open hand they try to catch the finger of the other person while at the same time not allowing themselves to be caught!

- **Rock, Paper, Scissors (a traditional game)**

Players choose to shape their hand in three different ways: Rock (hand shaped as a fist, can crush scissors); Scissors (hand formed like scissors, can cut paper); Paper (flat hand, can cover rock).

Both players put their right hand behind their backs. On the count of three, both players bring out the hand they've shaped as a rock, paper or scissors. You score if you can crush the scissors, cover the rock or cut the paper.

Pairs can also stand in a line. Whoever wins moves up the line. The line keeps changing. At the end of the line the loser moves back to the start.

## Action songs

- **The more we are together**

Players walk about, mingling with each other, singing: "The more we are together, together, together; the more we are together the happier we'll be." They then shake hands with the nearest person singing: "For your friends are my friends; and my friends are your friends; the more we are together, the happier we'll be!"

They then walk with this "new friend", repeating the song, and shaking hands with another pair of friends. Then four friends walk around to join up with another four, and so on until it becomes impossible to move!

Make up other lines, themes and actions like: "The more we play together ...".



- **I'm alive, awake, alert, enthusiastic**

Players sing: "I'm alive, awake, alert, enthusiastic (x2); I'm alive, awake, alert (x2); I'm alive, awake, alert, enthusiastic!" Emphasise "...stic" – and players make appropriate "enthusiastic" movements.

(Tune: "If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.")

- **Booma chikka boom**

This chant is sung rhythmically and with expression!

Leader says: "I said a booma chikka boom"; group replies: "I said a booma chikka boom" (repeat x2)

Leader: "I said a booma chikka, rocka chikka, rocka, chikka boom"; group: "I said a booma chikka, rocka chikka, rocka, chikka boom"

Leader: "Aha"; group: "Aha"

Leader: "Oh yeah!"; group: "Oh yeah!"

Leader: "Just one more time"; group: "Just one more time"

Leader: "This time a little bit... softer..." (each time choose a new way of saying this chant such as louder, faster, deeper, squeakier...); group: "This time a little bit softer..."

... and now repeat the entire chant a little more softly.

## Ajuka Jive

This game can be used as an ice breaker or just to have fun or draw everyone's attention. Players all stand up and face the leader who asks them to copy what he or she does and says.

### Round 1:

Leader says: "Thumbs up"

(leader demonstrates and puts thumbs up)

All repeat: "Thumbs up"

(everyone puts their thumbs up)

Then all say twice: "Ajuka Jive"

(and do a little jive!)



### Round 2 (and from now onwards keep adding an extra action):

Leader says: "Thumbs up, elbows together" (leader puts thumbs up and elbows together)

All repeat: "Thumbs up, elbows together" (everyone puts thumbs up and elbows together)

Then all say twice: "Ajuka Jive"

Then ...

**Round 3:** Thumbs up, elbows together, knees together

**Round 4:** Thumbs up, elbows together, knees together, toes together

**Round 5:** Thumbs up, elbows together, knees together, toes together, bums out

**Round 6:** Thumbs up, elbows together, knees together, toes together, bums out, tongue out

To keep the game going longer, other body actions can be added such as wrists together, chests out, chin down – usually the tongue is last because once the tongue is out players can't pronounce "Ajuka Jive"!



# Games sets

A “games set” is a set of activities that uses the same equipment and style and enables games to flow easily from one to the next. A play leader can learn these sets of games and always be ready to put them into action. Plan your programme in advance and choose several games that will keep the pace going and flow easily.

Keep notes on your games. There is value in learning a games set and being easily able to make a game session work.

Invent your own games sets. For example, dream up five activities you could do with:

- a plastic shopping packet
  - make homemade balls (cut into long strips and wind over each other, secure with tape)
  - weave strips into ropes
  - stuff with objects and use in relay races
  - carrying things, even water
  - toy making (dolls)
  - keeping “treasures” from a treasure hunt
  - cut into strips and tape together for ribbon dancing
- cool drink tins
  - stacking games
  - shakers
  - squashed and used as a “ball” for a hockey game
  - skittles



## Circle games (games played in a circle)

- **Dodge Ball**

To play this game you need a soccer ball or plastic ball. About 30 players stand in the middle of the play area. At least six play leaders stand around the players in a wide circle. The play leaders attempt to get players out by throwing the ball underhand or batting the ball with their hand to hit those in the middle of the circle below the knees. If the ball touches anyone below the knee, they are out and they join the circle of players and help get others out. Last one in the middle wins!



- **Gate ball**

To play this game you will need a soft plastic ball and up to 15-20 players. Everyone stands in a circle, legs spread and feet touching the feet of the person on either side. Their spread legs are “the gates”. A soft plastic ball is put into the circle and everyone has to use their hands to try and hit the ball between the legs of another player. The ball can be stopped by blocking or hitting it back. If the ball goes through someone’s legs, that player is out and the circle closes up again. If the “out” player catches a ball that comes through someone else’s legs and throws it to someone in the circle, they can come back in. When players become skilled and understand the game, add in another ball.



- **The sun shines on ...**

Everyone sits in a tight circle. One player sits in the middle and calls out: “The sun shines on everyone who ... (for example) is wearing blue.” Everyone wearing blue must then run round the outside of the circle and find an empty space. The player who doesn’t get a space goes to the middle and makes the next call. This has to be something that is true of the caller, as well as true for one or more of the others. It could be: “loves to play netball”, “has a younger sister”, “has earrings on”, “wears bangles”, “is wearing sandals”, and so on.

- **Knots or tangle**

Best played with 10-12 players in a group. Everyone stands in a close circle. They shut their eyes and stretch out their hands to grasp the hands of other players, at random. They then open their eyes and try to unravel themselves without letting go of hands. Players might need to climb over and under each other's arms to sort the tangle out. Try it a few times!

As this game works best with smaller groups, you could have untangling competitions and see who can do it fastest, without letting go.



- **Cat and mouse**

Everyone holds hands in a circle. One player is chosen to be the “mouse” and another the “cat”. The cat must catch the mouse. The mouse has protection by being able to run in and out the circle freely, and the hand-holders must lift their arms up to allow this. The cat, on the other hand, must be blocked from catching the mouse. The hand-holders must prevent the cat getting into the middle if the mouse is there – or keep the cat in if the mouse is out! The cat can be quite forceful in its chase after the mouse and hand-holders must be alert to the cat trying to break into the circle to get the mouse. Once the mouse is caught, others have a turn.

- **Wrote a letter**

To play this game you will need a handkerchief, shoe or any object. Players sit in a circle. One player walks around the circle while all the players chant: “I wrote a letter to my friend and on the way I dropped it; somebody has picked it up and put it in their pocket! I dropped it once, I dropped it twice, I dropped it three times over... It wasn't you, it wasn't you ...”

The player runs around the circle and drops the object behind someone's back. This player must then jump up, grab the object and chase the “dropper” around the circle. The chased player is safe when he or she gets back to the open place and sits down. The game chant starts again.





- **Sitting circle**

Everyone holds hands to get a good circle formation. Players drop hands and step toward the centre until their shoulders touch. All turn to the right and face the back of the player next to them. They then step side-ways in until they are really close. The play leader tells the players to sit gently down on each other's knees and see if the circle will hold. If it collapses, try again. A solid circle is even able to move around if everyone puts their right leg forward at the same time. Try an aeroplane ride!



## Rope games

- **Skipping**

You will need thin cotton ropes 5-7 metres in length; one skipping rope per 10-12 participants. Note that nylon ropes are too light for skipping. In a common skipping game, players:

- run under the rope as it swings up
- run over the rope when it touches at the bottom
- skip twice and run through
- see who can jump the most jumps before going out

Encourage players to play their own skipping variations. Some can even skip with two ropes going at the same time. Ropes can also be given to teams to work out interesting sequences.



## Thick rope games

To play these games you will need 10-15 metres of thick rope (2-3 centimetres in diameter), which you can get from a hardware store.

- **Tug of War**

You will need 12-15 metres of thick rope. Mark two lines on the ground about three metres apart. The middle of the rope must be in the middle of these two lines before the pulling starts. The team that pulls the rope's middle-mark across an outside line wins.

Choose two even teams and have a “war of tugging”! Teams can compete in a knockout competition between smaller groups of girls and boys.

Put similar ages together so younger players can exert themselves without being crushed or hurt by older players.



- **Circle Tug**

Tie the ends of a long rope together to form a circle. Mark a circle a bit smaller than the rope circle on the ground with flour or string (or anything else that can be “erased” easily). Space three or four teams of players evenly around the rope circle. Each team grabs onto a section of the rope circle and pulls the rope in their direction. Each team could all pull in their own direction or gang up on other teams pulling a different way. Once a team is pulled into the circle marked on the ground the pulling contest is over.



- **High jump**

Players jump with two feet together or scissors jump if there is space. Do not go too high as this becomes unsafe. Be careful of allowing high jumps on hard surfaces. Everyone must run and jump from the same side.





- **The limbo**

Stretch the rope out and hold up high. Walk under with chest up. Gradually lower the rope. Walk under without touching the rope. How low can you go?

- **Other rope activities**

- Lay rope on the ground and walk along it without touching the ground.
- If using the rope indoors, use it as a volleyball net and play with many balloons.
- If there a safe tree branch, can you make a swing?

## Newspaper games

Here is a series of activities that can be played with a pile of old newspapers!

- **Musical papers**

Place newspaper sheets on the floor. Play music or create a rhythm for players to march or dance around to. When the music stops, everyone must jump onto the paper. No bits of feet sticking over the edges!

Gradually remove paper sheets and those players who don't make it onto the papers are out.



- **Pack the paper**

How many people can you fit onto one piece of newspaper? Perhaps it is the only “raft in a sea full of sharks”; encourage players to be helpful to each other!



- **Dressing up with newspaper**

Cooperating in small groups, players select a member to be dressed up and they make “designer clothes” with the newspaper. They may be given sticky tape and some pins to hold it all together. Another idea is for everyone to make a hat. Have a fashion parade!

- **Big person**

A group member volunteers to have their clothes stuffed with newspaper and groups compete to see who can make the biggest person!

- **Build a sentence or slogan**

You will need scissors, paper to stick on, and glue or sticky tape. Players work in a small group and must cut out letters from newspaper headlines to spell out a word or slogan, such as “Children need to play!”

Players stick letters on a piece of sticky tape or masking tape (bend the ends under to stick on the wall or floor).



- **Newspaper treasure hunt**

For each group you will need a complete newspaper and scissors (younger players could just tear the paper). Players work in small groups. The play leader gives each group one item to search for at a time; for example, a birth notice; a Pick n Pay advertisement; something about the president of South Africa; something about children; a soccer score; and so on.

When the players have found the item in the newspaper they take it to the leader and are given their next topic to find. There might be 10-12 topics. The first team to find them all wins!

- **Paper ball fight**

Crumple up old pieces of newspaper into “balls”. Place a row of chairs down the centre of the room and divide players on either side. The aim of this game is for players to clear their side of “balls”.

Players need to quickly pick up the paper balls and keep throwing them over the chairs to the other side. Of course the others are also doing this so players have to be very quick and determined to get rid of the paper balls. When the whistle blows the side with the least amount of paper wins!



- **Clean up**

Conclude newspaper games with a clean up competition!

- **Reflection ideas**

Some newspaper games can lead into discussions. After playing a game, give children an opportunity to reflect. Some ideas:

- Discuss good news and bad news. Ask children what the good news and bad news is in their community/school/the group? Can something be done about it?
- Ask children to write an article about themselves and something they might imagine themselves (or the group) doing. Encourage them to express and share their dreams and aspirations.
- Ask children to write a newspaper article on what is happening to children in their community.

## Treasure hunts

Children love to go out and collect things. Here are a few different “hunts” to keep children active and having fun.

- **Matchbox treasure hunt**

Give groups of three or four players a matchbox. They must go out and fill it with as many different (whole) items as possible. Everything must fit in the matchbox – a seed, a leaf, a ticket, a pin, a tiny stone, and so on. Have a tray or paper plate to count out the items when they return. The team with the most items wins!

- **Colours**

In teams, find a number of items, each of a different colour. (Don’t destroy the environment – one petal is enough!)

- **Categories**

Give players a written list of what to find: something that moves (an insect); something hard, juicy, edible, smelly, prickly; a flower with five petals; something round, square; whatever is accessible in your environment.

- **Waste collection**

Players collect certain items of waste: bottle, packet, wire, tins, and so on. When they come back, they can make a sculpture!

- **Area treasure hunt (a local “Amazing Race”)**

Make up a list of questions about your area. Groups of players go off to find the answers. Some ideas: check wording on public spaces, monuments and art; names of buildings; nature information. You could also make up clues that the teams must work out and then go and seek the answers.

- **Shopping mall treasure hunt**

This game is suitable for older players. In advance, make a list of treasures to find. Some ideas: a bike (Where is it? How much does it cost? What colour is it?); Coco Pops or other kinds and flavours of breakfast cereals (What price at Hyperama and Pick n Pay?); find information about movies, books, clothing, children’s toys in specific stores. Meet up for ice creams and prizes. Make sure everyone is in a team of at least four players and that they stay together. Make rules about not being a nuisance when they run from shop to shop – perhaps “hunt” treasures in the shop windows only.

- **Reflection ideas**

After a treasure hunt give children an opportunity to reflect. Some ideas:

- The treasures in my life; special things about myself and my family.
- What is special in our community and should be preserved?
- Why do children have rights? Why should we protect and treasure these and why do we need to respect other’s rights?
- Each “treasure” collection is different and has special points of interest or unusualness. Same with our lives. What traditions and practices are like treasures?



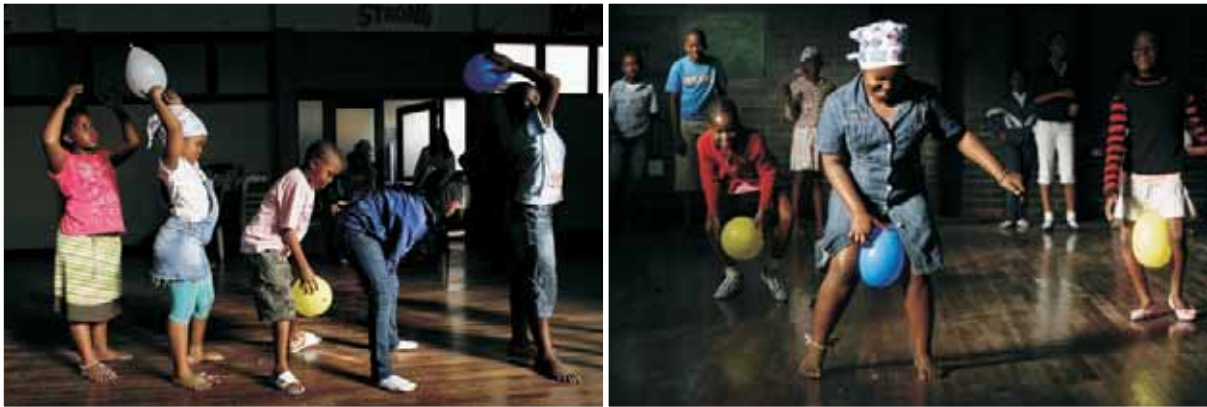
## Balloon games

- **Giant balloon volleyball**

Fill a double-skinned garbage bag with blown up balloons (one bag bursts too easily). Players must try to keep it up in the air. You could also get a game going between two sides, maybe over a row of chairs. Everyone could also try to keep the big air bag up with their feet. Inevitably the bag bursts and balloons come tumbling out. Everyone must try and keep the balloons up and off the floor.

- **Balloon relays**

Line up players in teams and make up various challenges: run with the balloon between your legs; pat it along the ground with your hand; run with it under your chin; pass it down the line from chin to chin; two players run with the balloon between their chests; and so on.



- **Balloon hockey using 2-litre cool drink bottles**

See the bottle hockey idea on page 62, and the rules for duster hockey on page 63.

- **Balloon stamp**

Tie a balloon to each player's leg. Try and stamp on another player's balloon. When your balloon pops you are out!

- **Reflection ideas**

After playing a balloon game, give children an opportunity to reflect. Some ideas:

- Keeping it up: It takes many hands to keep the balloon up. How do we keep the spirit of our group up? What actions and attitudes are necessary?
- Balloons pop easily: Life is fragile and we need to protect ourselves physically and emotionally.



## Round robin games

Set up five or six activity stations. Have a play leader prepare and run each one. Players spend 10-15 minutes at each station and then move on to the next. Be sure to have enough items at each station to keep all players in the group busy.

- **Matchstick towers**

Let teams of two players challenge each other to see who can build the highest tower with matchsticks on top of a cool drink bottle.



- **Tennis ball targets**

Cut holes into a large box. Can you throw your ball in? Allocate different scores to the different holes.

- **Skittles**

Use 2-litre cool drink bottles with some sand in them. Set them up and see who can knock them down with the fewest throws. Use tennis or plastic balls.

- **Fishing**

Make paper fish with paperclip noses. Players fish them out with rods and magnets. Allocate scores to different fish. Who “fished out” the most points?

- **Sticky dough**

Mix flour and water together into a big blob of sticky dough. Hide coins or plastic discs or lids in the dough. In a set time limit, how many items can players get out of the dough?

- **Ping pong target**

Players bounce ping pong balls (or tennis balls) towards a large egg box. Write a score on different sections of the egg box and see who gets the most points.

- **Old playing cards**

Players stand behind a set line and see how many cards they can throw into a hat or basin or waste-paper basket.

- **Postcard tower**

Collect old greeting cards and challenge players to build the highest tower.



## Beanbag games

For these games you will need several beanbags for each team, as well as boxes or buckets for the beanbags.

### Make your own beanbags

You need two 17 centimetre square pieces of strong twill weave fabric. Sew the squares together and fill the bag with plastic pellets (get polypropylene pellets from a plastic factory), dried beans or rice (you can first dry bake the beans or rice in the oven to make sure they will not sprout!)

- **Catchers**

In twos, throw and catch the beanbags, moving further and further apart.

- **Target throwing**

Throw beanbags into buckets, basins, onto a cloth marked with rings and scores (like a dart board). Each team has a different colour beanbag. Add up scores at the end.

- **Relays**

Organise players into two even lines. Choose different ways of passing the beanbag down the line. The last player runs to the front and starts again. When all players have had a turn to be leader, see which team was fastest. Some ideas:

- Pass beanbags over/under legs and shoulders.
- Pass from chin to chin.
- Pass down a tunnel of legs.
- Run with beanbags on your head, on your foot, behind knees, on small of back, between ankles, between knees. Don't drop or you start again!

- **Battle**

Divide players into two teams. Separate the teams by a row of chairs. Divide the beanbags evenly between the teams. On the shout of “go”, each team must try and clear their side of beanbags as quickly as possible by throwing them over the chairs to the other side. When the play leader shouts “stop”, the team with the least number of beanbags on their side is the winner.



## Giant Twist 'n Touch

Paint your own twist 'n touch game on large pieces of strong fabric. (The mat in the picture below was made by sewing two three-meter lengths of 150 centimetre-wide tough cotton twill fabric together.) Hem the edges. Use four different colours and paint five rows of circles, 20 centimetres in diameter and about 10-15 centimetres apart from each other, onto each strip of fabric.

You could also paint circles on a playground.

To play, the leader calls the instruction, for example: left leg green; right hand red; right foot yellow. See how everyone stretches and tangles. Who stays up the longest?

### • Other Twist 'n Touch games

- Add other body parts: heads on red; elbows on blue; knees on yellow; and so on. Players all stand on the edge. Race to see who can get four parts of their body on four different colours. Anyone falling over and touching a white area is out. Next round: only one limb per dot! Make up other challenges.
- Twins challenge: work with a partner and when an instruction is called both of you must use the same circles and stay up!
- Get everyone on the mat and try to touch every dot.



## Mini Olympics

Create your own great sports event, especially if it is an Olympic year. Use your imagination and create some Olympic events including team flags, opening ceremonies, medal awards and a closing ceremony (teams can provide some drama!).

Some ideas: shot put (use a balloon); discus (use paper plates); javelin (use straws); high Jump (“scissors-jump” over a rope); long jump with two feet together (be careful of hard floors); sprints (tie a loop around both feet and run a “shuffle”); sack races (run in a sack) or a three-legged race (tie the left leg of one child to the right leg of another with a cloth and they must coordinate running together); marathon (run a course with a beanbag or object on your head); cross country race (run with legs crossed).

# Water play 8

Children love water. South Africa has a warm summer climate that is ideal for swimming and getting wet. Children have endless fascination and pleasure with water and, if given the opportunity to swim, could spend hours in satisfying exercise and play. This chapter has a set of water games to play. It encourages free play with water and urges the development of swimming competency and safety as a necessity for enjoying water play.

## Free water play

Allow opportunities for children to play in all kinds of water environments. For some activities you need to provide water play things such as tubes, floating toys, buckets and bottles. You may also need access to taps, hosepipes and sprinklers.

Make the effort to go to interesting water play spaces – spend a day at a river, the beach or a local pool.



*Children love water. Given the opportunity, they can spend hours in satisfying exercise and play.*



## Water games set

Here are some games for hot summer days! You need access to a tap (a hosepipe will be useful), a supply of buckets and basins, sponges and yoghurt cups. Teams of players can try each game in a round robin fashion. You will need a play leader to manage each activity. Allow 10-15 minutes per activity.

These games are designed to get everyone wet! Warn participants to dress suitably – bring swim-wear or a change of clothes.

- **Bucket on the wall (or ladder)**

Place a bucket or bowl on top of the ladder (someone might need to sit up there and hold it). From buckets filled with water below, players must fill up cups with water and throw the water into the bucket or basin above them. A lot of water will fall back on them. See how full they can get the bucket.

- **Basin on feet**

Players lie on their backs and put their feet up together towards a central point. A basin is placed on their feet and filled with water. They must balance the basin and not let it fall. If it falls they'll all get drenched!

- **Sponge/water transfer**

In teams, players must transfer water from one large water container (a large bucket) to another a few metres away using sponges. How much water are they able to successfully transfer? (Finding sponges: collect the discarded sponges at a marathon station; cut up an old sponge mattress; visit a sponge shop for scraps.)

- **Water balloon catching**

Buy a packet of special water balloons (they are smaller than normal balloons). Fill them with water and tie off. Organise two rows of players. Each pair starts close up to each other, throwing and catching their water balloon. Gradually step further and further apart. How far can you go before the balloon is dropped and breaks?

- **Target throwing**

Let a play leader who's prepared to stick their head through a plastic sheet (maybe an opened up garbage bag?) be the target! Use wet sponges.

- **Water way**

Find several pieces of white plumbing piping or guttering. Players must hold them together to form a complete pipe and transfer water from one bucket to another, maybe several metres away. How much water are they able to collect? They will have to use their hands as watertight connectors.



## Water slide

1. Purchase or find about 8-10 metres of thick builders' plastic from a hardware store.
2. Lay out the plastic on a grassy patch. Remove thorns, sticks and stones. If necessary, pad with soft, non-spiky grass cuttings. A slope enables faster sliding.
3. You will need access to a tap and hosepipe. If a hosepipe is not easily available, you will need many buckets of water and a few sprinkler bottles (which you can make from 2-litre cool drink bottles) to spread water on the slide.
4. Every now and again sprinkle the slide with dish washing liquid to make it extra slippery.
5. Organise a queue of players waiting for turns. Go one at a time and in an orderly manner.
6. On the wet, soapy plastic you could also have running races or varieties of relay races.



## Children learn to swim

Inkululeko Community Centre is a social project of Pretoria Community Ministries in Salvokop, Tshwane. Salvokop is an inner city suburb where few children might get to learn to swim or enjoy a pool.

The project house has a private swimming pool which has been maintained and opened up for community and pre-school children to learn to swim and have fun playing in the pool. Volunteers who teach the children how to swim made material tubes stuffed with 2-litre cool drink bottles for the children to use as swimming aids.

## Swimming

Essential to enjoying water is swimming ability. If you and your children have access to a pool, develop a swim programme with experts to ensure all children are “water-safe”. They should at least be able to hold their breath under water, find their footing on the floor of the pool, and be able to get to safe edges and places.

Check the Swimming South Africa website ([www.swimsa.co.za](http://www.swimsa.co.za)) and local swimming pools for information, life-saving training and certification. Older children might find it a challenge to do life-saving as a sport.



*Have you visited your local swimming pool this summer?*

## Fun swimming galas

These activities should also cater for children who cannot swim well. Team relay races ensure maximum participation of all children.

Some ideas:

- Car tubes races.
- Running relay races across the width of a pool in the shallow end.
- Diving to fetch objects on the floor of the pool.
- Swimming through a hoop weighted down on the floor of the pool.
- Swimming or walking across the pool pushing a plastic ball or a 2-litre plastic bottle under each arm.
- Carrying items such as an umbrella across the pool.
- Having a Tug of War in the shallow end using a thick nylon rope.



## Water safety is essential for water play!

Many children in this country have sadly not learnt to swim properly and may over-estimate their ability to swim, especially when they find themselves in deep water, the sea or rivers with currents. Swimming safety must be taken seriously.

### Water safety checklist

1. One person should be designated to authorise when swimming may happen and ensure that a life-guard team is on duty.
2. Swimming rescue apparatus should be available, especially for sea and deep water.
3. At the beach there are often life-guards who could orientate children to safe swimming in the sea. Always swim where professional life-guards are on duty and make sure children are obedient to their instructions.
4. Pool areas should be securely shut off or have a net over the pool when not in use (especially if small children are able to access it).
5. Be especially careful when swimming in dams, rivers and the sea where current, visibility and depth of water are uncertain. An ideal swimming environment for unsure swimmers is a pool where they can always stand and the water is clear.
6. Slides, boats and balls or other games equipment often accompany swimming. Assess their safety. Can heads get knocked and individuals trapped underneath plastic toys? Could children be pushed or float into deep water? Make sure that all games equipment is used sensibly.
7. Clear rules must be made about swimming. This is one set of rules that are non-negotiable – breaking them is life-threatening!

### The Cub Scout Swimming Badge

Can your children achieve these swimming goals?

1. Do a racing dive and swim 50 metres using a racing stroke.
2. Swim 50 metres using a different stroke.
3. Be able to tread water for 1 minute in fresh water.
4. Float on their backs for 30 seconds in fresh water.
5. Duck-dive while standing in water or swimming.



# Cooperative and trust games

The aim of the games in this chapter is to foster the inclusion and cooperation of all players. They are not intended to produce one happy, confident “winner” and leave the rest of the players feeling that they are “losers”. Instead, these games should provide opportunities for learning about respecting others and acknowledging how the group can benefit from the contribution of all involved.

After a game has been played a “de-briefing” process might add value to some of the activities.

1. What happened in the game? What actions helped or hindered progress? When did the group progress well? Who led? Who did not get involved?
2. What lessons can be learnt from this experience of working together? For example, we must listen to each other; first idea is not always best; task not done until everyone is involved; acknowledge feelings; and so on.
3. Of all the lessons learnt, what should we put into practice? List these and make a reminder poster for the group.

## Cooperative games

- **Postcard jigsaws**

Take as many postcards or pictures as you have small groups of players and cut them up so that there is a “puzzle piece” for every player. Hand puzzle pieces out at random to the large group. Everyone then wanders around to find who has the other pieces to complete their picture. As they find them they stay together, forming teams for the next activities.

- **Highest tower**

Divide a large group into smaller teams of five or six players. Give each team a set of supplies that they are to use to build the “highest tower” they can in a set time. Supplies could include: two A4 sheets of paper; some paperclips and a length of sticky tape; some straws and a pair of scissors; polystyrene cups; tin foil; toilet rolls; and any other bits and pieces you might have.

Introduce challenges along the way: players must work in silence; only girls or boys can talk or work with the materials; use only one hand each; for three minutes send a member to trade materials with other teams. Share the results and discuss how effectively the members of each team worked together.





- Line up!**  
 Standing on chairs or on a low wall, players line up in different orders without stepping on the ground; try birthday months (then dates), ages, grades, shoe size, shortest to tallest, alphabetically, and so on.
- Cone reach**  
 Draw a line on the floor. Players must all stay behind this line and in teams see how far they can place the cone or 2-litre cool drink bottle across the line. If anyone tips over, they start again.
- Cloth carrier**  
 Give each team a bandana or square of cloth. The team members must use their “pinching fingers” (thumb and forefinger) to pull the cloth out very tightly. The play leader places a cup of water on the cloth and the team must transport it (maybe include an obstacle course) to a particular destination without spilling any water!

- Rope square**

Tie a rope into a circle. Blindfold all players. They must all hold onto the rope and try and shape the rope circle into a square. Try shaping it into a triangle as well!

- Cross country skiing**

You will need two 2.5-metre-long wooden planks to be the “skis”. Prepare six or eight pairs of rope loops to slip over the wooden skis. Players stand one behind the other, with one foot on the left ski, and one on the right, holding the loops. With cooperation they try together to lift first one ski and then the other and move forward, “skiing”.

- Ball down the tube**

Cut several toilet paper, Carlton towel, tin foil tubes in half. Each player holds one and attempts to make a tube along which a small ball can run. As the ball gets to the end, a “tube holder” further up the line must run to the end to make the tube longer.





- **Ball tossing**

Use a blanket, a strong bedspread/sheet, or a 5-metre length of Lycra fabric. Everyone stands holding the blanket off the ground. A ball or balloon is tossed onto the blanket and everyone must cooperate to keep it from rolling off. The next stage is to use the blanket to toss the ball as high as possible and catch it again.

Using a large beach ball, lift the fabric and roll the ball down to players on the other side who catch it and roll it back. Bounce the beach ball and try and keep it on the fabric. If playing outdoors on a windless day, place a large beach ball on the fabric, bounce it up, and then as a group run around trying to catch it.

Players could also learn to coordinate the rolling of different balls:

- a smaller plastic ball; add a second ball
- a tennis ball; a few tennis balls
- try it with many marbles



- **Lycra stretch challenge**

Learn how to stretch the Lycra out: fingers on top, thumbs below, everybody pull the fabric so it is like a tight trampoline. Players sit down together and hold the fabric down low, about 30 centimetres off the ground. The players then wriggle under the fabric until everyone is hidden.

Other Lycra challenge ideas:

- Air conditioning (hold the edges of the Lycra and wave it up and down to create a lot of wind).
- Swap shop (players stand holding the Lycra at waist height. Players are given numbers. The play leader calls out a number and this player has to run under the Lycra and swap places with someone else).
- Hold the Lycra at a low level. Starting at one end, send two players chasing each other under the Lycra.

## Trust games

- **Leading the blind**

In pairs, the players take turns to be blindfolded or be the leader. The leader guides the “blind” partner around tables, chairs, trees, plants and other obstacles. The leader can start by holding onto the blind player’s shoulders, and then progress to holding just one hand and then only the tips of the fingers and finally, when confident, letting go and only using verbal directions.



- **Mirrors**

Do this activity in pairs, facing one another. One person moves their hands slowly in front of them. The other person must follow their actions as closely as possible. Swap roles.

- **Trust circle**

Stand with hands raised in a tightly-knit circle small enough not to let the volunteer fall. The volunteer stands in the middle of the circle. With both feet firmly on the ground, body straight and eyes closed, they “fall over” so that the raised hands of the circle catch and support them. The group gently pushes the player this way and that.



- **Trust lift (travelling to heaven)**

One person lies on the floor. At least ten other players form two lines with one person at the head and another at the feet of the “traveller”. The group all put their fingers underneath the traveller. They stay in this position for a while to attune themselves to the traveller’s breathing and to reassure them. When ready, the group gently lifts and rocks the traveller. After a while (and before arms get too tired!), the group gently lowers the traveller to the floor.

- **Trust run**

Form two rows of players about one metre apart. Take turns to run down the “aisle” with eyes closed. Players in the rows on either side guide the runner gently down the aisle.

# 10 Park games and sports

The games in this chapter are similar to formal sports but the rules are simplified and relaxed, the equipment has been adapted and, if necessary, more or less players are included in teams. Any outdoor space can be used and arranged to accommodate play.

## Rounders

### Aim of the game

To score runs by running around the pitch and touching each of the bases.

### Equipment needed

- Four base or post markers and markers for batting and bowling positions (a mat, a stick in the ground or a piece of clothing).
- A bat (cricket bat, baseball bat, stick, axe or pick handle).
- A ball (depending on skill, a soft plastic ball, tennis ball, baseball or softball).

### Play space set up

Set up a play area similar to the illustration.

### Teams

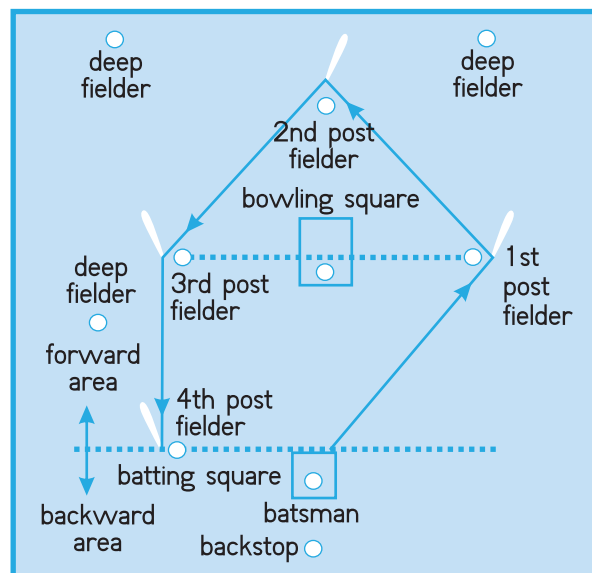
Organise two teams of 6-15 players each.

#### Batting team:

- Batters wait for their turn behind the batting square.
- Once all batters are out, the side is out and they become the fielders.

#### Fielding team:

- Select a bowler (maybe they bowl a certain number of balls and then change to give others turns).



- Place one fielder at each post or base.
- Place “deep fielders” outside the base area.
- A backstop is needed behind the batter to catch missed balls.
- A fielder can also be placed inside the base area to pick up “short” balls.

### Play instructions

The fielders spread out on the playing field. A batter steps up to the batting square.

Bowling:

- The bowler bowls to the batter from the bowling square.
- Bowl underhand and aim the ball between the knees and shoulder of the batter.
- The batter must hit the ball and run to the first base or post.
- If the batter misses more than three times they are out.
- If the bowler bowls more than three bad balls (too high, low or wide), the batter can walk freely to the first base.

If the batter hits the ball in any way they must drop their bat and move to the first base. If any other player is on 1st base they must run onto the next base, and so on. The ball should only be hit into the “forward area”.

Player is out:

- if caught
- if run out (the base is touched with the ball before the player reaches it)
- if tagged (the player is tagged – or touched – by the ball while running to the base)
- if they do not hit any of three good balls

Scoring:

Your team scores one run when a player has completed running around the pitch and touching all four bases without being tagged or run out. If a base is not touched the player must go back and touch it, and hopefully not be tagged or run out.

Running around the pitch:

- If you stop at a post or base you must keep contact with the post with your foot or hand; if you do not, the fielding side can stump the post to get you out.
- When the bowler has the ball in their square, you cannot move on, but if you are between posts, you can carry on to the next.
- You cannot have two batters at a post. The umpire will ask the first batter to run on when the second makes contact.
- At a post, you do not have to move on for every ball bowled.
- You can move on as soon as the ball leaves the bowler’s hand, this includes no (bad) balls.
- You must touch the 4th post on getting home.

You could play a soccer version of Rounders by kicking the ball instead of hitting it with a stick (bat).

## Park volleyball

### Aim of the game

Mostly just to keep the ball up and going from one side to the other. A regular scoring game can also be initiated.

### Equipment needed

- Volleyball net.
- A volleyball or large beach ball (easier to handle for children: light, slow and big). The giant size tennis balls often sold at supermarkets also work well and are less likely to puncture.

For a large group: try using two balls at once; find the largest beach ball possible for extra fun; several volleyball nets can be put up next to each other.

### Teams

Two teams of 10-40 children in each.

### Play instructions

- Mark a few appropriate boundaries.
- Organise teams into front, middle and back rows.
- Keep rules few and simple: keep the ball up, pass from one side of the net to the other.
- With skill, introduce volleyball rules, scoring and techniques. Check on the internet for formal volleyball rules.



*Play leaders making a volleyball net with cabbage bags. The bags were unpicked, tears repaired and then sewn together and threaded with nylon rope to make a volleyball net. The homemade net was tested with a game of balloon volleyball.*



## Bottle hockey

### Aim of the game

To score goals.

### Equipment needed

- Hockey sticks, 2-litre cool drink bottles, or branches (don't destroy trees though!).
- Goal posts.
- Team identification.
- Plastic ball or squashed cool drink can.

### Teams

Divide players into two equal teams of 10-12 players.

### Play instructions

- Play according to similar rules of hockey.
- Play leader organises each team into defensive and attacking positions.
- No touching the ball with hands or feet.
- Penalties equal a free hit for offended side or player.



*Players might like to learn how to play proper hockey. Investigate the possibility of acquiring real hockey sticks and a coach to teach hockey techniques and the game.*

## Granny Go-Getters play hockey

The Granny Go-Getters from Phokwane, a village in Makhuduthamaga, Limpopo, surprised everyone at a children's play day event, which was part of the "A Chance To Play" project. The silent and passive grannies suddenly became the star attraction when one elderly woman arrived carrying a selection of homemade hockey sticks, cut from dead tree branches. She distributed the hockey sticks to her "mates" and they ran out onto the sports field.

They did a quick "warm-up" and then proceeded to play hockey with a squashed cool drink tin and their improvised sticks. When they were offered a ball, they refused it saying, "A ball will roll too fast and we won't be able to run fast enough to play!"

This same group of grannies now travels to other villages to recruit older women to come and play. They have even organised competitions between grannies of other villages, and competitions between themselves and the children.



## Duster hockey (indoor hockey)

### Aim of the game

To score goals.

### Equipment needed

- Hockey sticks made from rolled up newspaper secured with tape.
- A duster “ball” made from odd socks or rags tied together with string.
- Score board.
- A hard floor is needed, so play indoors in a hall.

### Play space set up

Set up a play area similar to the illustration.

### Teams

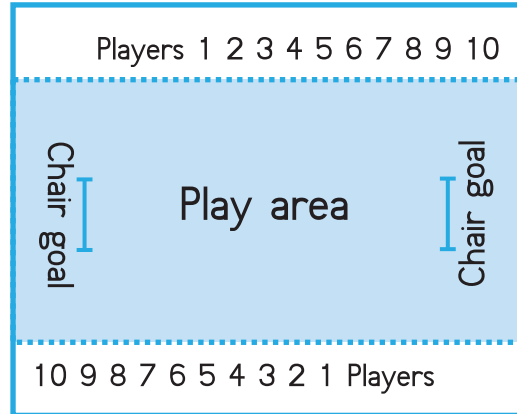
- Players divide into two equal teams.
- Each player is given a number (this could be marked on their hands).
- Team members sit in a row opposite the other team on the other side of the hall.
- Each play round is only played by between two or four players.

### Play instructions

Place the duster “ball” in the middle of the playing area and a chair “goal” at the end of the playing area.

The play leader shouts out one or two numbers and players with these numbers must rush to get their “sticks” from their goal chair. They then try to hit and dribble the duster “ball” into the chair where they can score a goal.

After a goal is scored they sit down and other numbers are called. The game leader needs to keep score of goals and a record of the numbers called so that everyone gets a fair turn.



## Street cricket

### Equipment needed

- Two wicket sets (tins or bins could also be used as wickets).
- Two bats.
- Two balls (red tennis balls or ordinary tennis balls).

### Play instructions

- Play according to regular cricket rules.
- If overhand bowling is too difficult, try underhand bowling and, if necessary, use a bigger ball to keep things going.



## Community street cricket

Communities in South Africa are filled with sport-mad children, wanting to be actively involved and needing a sporting environment in which to display their skills without having to travel too far. Talent is in abundance and the skills newly learnt have to be worked on!

So what better place to demonstrate their sporting ability than on the streets where they live?

Street cricket was launched in South Africa in October 2004. Already this concept is being played on an informal basis in the streets of the townships. By structuring this into a league system it has encouraged participants to prioritise this fun event over and above their already difficult social environment.

Street cricket adds a new dimension to youth cricket in South Africa and creates an environment where aspiring youngsters can entertain their communities and involve their family members as "spectators", thus creating an event for everyone.

See the Sporting Chance website ([www.sportingchance.co.za](http://www.sportingchance.co.za)) for more information.

## Four Square

### Aim of the game

To be player number one or the server and to stay in this position as long as possible.

### Equipment needed

- A bouncy ball like a plastic ball, volleyball, small basketball, or tennis ball for the skilled.
- A hard surface court. Lines can be painted, taped or scratched on the ground.

### Play space set up

Set up a play area similar to the photographs below. Make each square about one metre wide.

### Teams

Four players play at a time, but up to 12 or more players could play a game.

### Play instructions

- Each player stands in one of the four squares. They can play inside or outside of their square.
- To start the game, the player in square one serves the ball by bouncing it in their square once and then hitting it to bounce in one of the other squares. The receiving player picks up the ball then hits it to any other player in one of the other squares.
- The ball must bounce in another player's square, and they must hit it to another player before it bounces a second time.
- If a player chooses to hit the ball, they must do so before it bounces.
- If a player hits the ball so that it misses another player's square, or fails to hit the ball before the second bounce after it has landed in their square, they are "out".
- When a player is out the other players move up to take their place, and that player moves to the last square, or to the end of the line of other players, if there are more than four players. Extra players line up behind the player in square number 4 and wait for a turn to play.



## Ultimate Frisbee


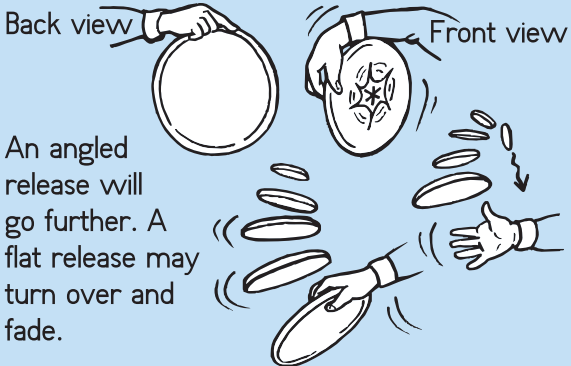
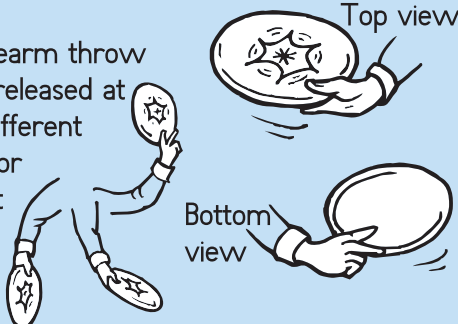
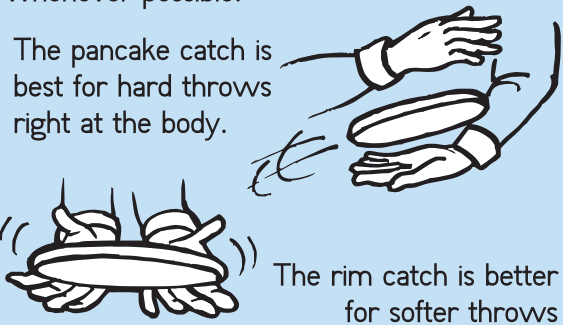
This game takes on traits of three sporting activities – soccer, basketball and rugby. It has the defence characteristics of playing basketball because the players on the field are defensive, but without constant contact with the ball. The scoring is similar to that of rugby; there is a goal area and if you are anywhere inside the goal area when you catch the Frisbee you score a goal and points, and there is no dispute. The game is also similar to soccer because players are always on the go; there is running and passing of the ball between players all the time, and players can also be substituted.

For more information, download the *Ultimate Frisbee Handbook* from [www.mindef.gov.sg](http://www.mindef.gov.sg).

### Getting used to Frisbees

Frisbees might be a new play thing and before a game is played, a few techniques need to be mastered such as accurate throwing and catching. Have a few Frisbees so that everyone can practise. Here are some warm up activities:

- Learn how to hold the Frisbee and throw it.
- Throw and catch between two lines of players.
- Throw at a target or even just over a line. You will need to do this in order to score.
- Practise running and throwing to each other and catching.

<p><b>THROWING TIPS:</b></p>  <p>The Frisbee needs lots of spin to fly. It will always turn to its top, so the angle of release is very important.</p>	<p>The Backward: ideal for long passes and pull</p>  <p>Back view      Front view</p> <p>An angled release will go further. A flat release may turn over and fade.</p>
<p>The Sidearm: the most popular Ultimate throw because of its quick release.</p>  <p>Top view</p> <p>Bottom view</p> <p>The Sidearm throw can be released at many different angles for different effects.</p>	<p><b>CATCHING TIPS:</b> Catch with both hands whenever possible.</p>  <p>The pancake catch is best for hard throws right at the body.</p> <p>The rim catch is better for softer throws or throws away from the body.</p>



## Aim of the game

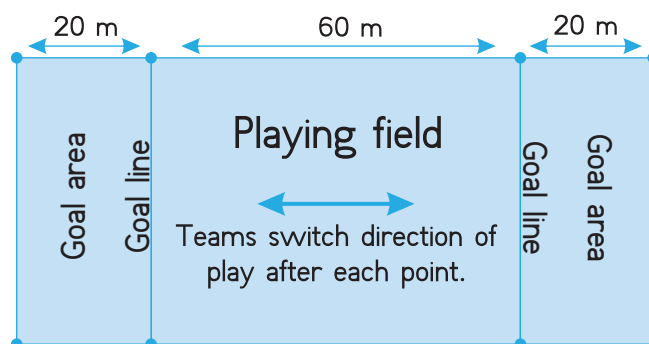
To score points by catching a Frisbee in the goal area of the playing field. The match is played until one team reaches ten goals.

## Equipment needed

- Frisbees (bought at most stores, sports shops; sometimes given away as promotional toys).
- Try bucket lids and plastic plates, although they are not as aerodynamic!

## Play space set up

Set up a play area similar to the illustration that fits your play space and number of players. Mark edges and goal lines with cones or other markers.



## Play instructions

- To start the game, each team needs a total of seven players. Players line up on the goal line.
- The way you move up and down the field is to pass the Frisbee to a teammate. If that person does not catch the Frisbee on the fly, it is turned over to the opposing team. You leave it on the ground where it landed. Players cannot run with the Frisbee either. Once the Frisbee is caught you have to stop and throw it to a fellow teammate as soon as possible.
- Substituting throughout the game is allowed and if you go out at any point during the game you can also go back in when you are ready; there is no penalty for substitution.
- If you are caught running with the Frisbee or if you hold onto it for more than a few seconds, the opposing team has the right to take the Frisbee from you and start their offense. When you have the Frisbee you must look for a teammate for a short time after you catch the Frisbee without running with it, and throw it to the teammate.
- The defending team can try to intercept the Frisbee at any point during the game. Once they do so, the disc becomes their possession and they try to score goals.
- There is no time limit to the length of the game. There are no ties, no extra time, no penalties and there are no red or yellow cards in Ultimate Frisbee.



*Shadrack Mphela of A Chance To Play introduced a Frisbee to a child support group in Ngwanamatlang village, Limpopo. Although the children had never seen a Frisbee before, they quickly learnt how to throw one and Ultimate Frisbee soon became a very popular game!*



## WhizzKids United

WhizzKids United (WKU) is a pioneering approach to HIV prevention that uses football as a medium to teach life skills designed to enhance HIV prevention. Targeting boys and girls from 11 years and older, this fun and engaging approach speaks through the universal language of football. Such has been the success of the programme, that WKU has been accredited as an Implementing Partner of FIFA's Football for Hope Movement.

As part of the programme every child who graduates gets the opportunity to take part in a World Cup-style tournament to celebrate their achievements. WKU is currently working on a tournament toolkit to provide all the rules, instructions and materials needed to run a tournament.

For more information: [www.whizzkidsunited.org.uk](http://www.whizzkidsunited.org.uk).

## WhizzKids football drills

- **Donkey**

Get players to stand in a circle. The idea of the game is to keep the ball in the air; this can be done either without the ball bouncing or, depending on the skill level of the boys and girls, allowing one bounce between turns.

If a player fails to keep the ball up or plays a bad pass, they “score” a letter (D). Once a player “scores” all six letters (D O N K E Y), they are out of the game. The winner is the player who is left at the end!

- **Taking control**

- Set up a goal and arrange several players at the penalty spot.
- Pass the ball at speed to each player in turn.
- Each player must shoot at the goal with their first shot.
- Repeat the exercise but allow players to control the ball before they shoot.
- You should pass the ball more softly, to give the players a better chance of scoring.

- **Zonal Play**

- Set up two pitches with small goals at each end.
- Divide each group into two teams of six players.
- Play for five minutes without positions.
- For the next five minutes, each team has two defenders, mid-fielders and two attackers who must fulfil their assigned roles and must stay in their allocated zones on the field.
- Award a free kick if any player goes out of their zone.

- **Playing with a hitch**

- Divide players into two teams of six players.
- Let them play.
- After three minutes, let each player of one team link arms with a teammate.
- These players are not allowed to separate. If they do, award a penalty to the other team.
- After three minutes, give the same instructions to the other team.

- **Relay races**

- Divide the players into groups of five or six and let them line up behind the cones.
- The first player starts by dribbling the ball around the far cone and back. Upon returning, the ball is passed to the next player who then repeats the exercise. Every player has a turn.
- Try the race again but with different rules. For instance, when a player gets back they must roll the ball through all the legs before the next player goes.
- All players must complete the course and sit down in a straight line to finish.
- The first team sitting wins.
- Be creative in thinking of new rules for each round.

These football drills are taken from WhizzKids United’s six-session life skills programme, which is currently being implemented in schools as part of the Life Orientation Curriculum. Every activity lends itself to conversations about life issues and through conversation and coaching, hopes to build life skills as well as football skills.



Young football players enjoying a coaching clinic run by Masibambane African Action Group at Motherwell Township in Port Elizabeth.

# 11 Outdoor play

Outdoor play is a birthright for children in Southern Africa! Sunshine, wide open spaces and freedom to play – this is part of our dream for all children. But for a very large number of children living in high-rise blocks of flats, confined in flat-size crèches during the day, crowded in informal settlements or faced with the daily threat of crime, free and safe outdoor play remains just that – a dream!

## Claim outdoor spaces for play

What is needed is designated outdoor play areas that are planned, developed, maintained and vandal-proofed by all those concerned with the rights of children – at all levels of government from national, to provincial and throughout several responsible departments down to local councils, housing and town planners, community groups, parents and the children themselves.

Available land should be identified, allocated and invested in specifically for play and recreation. Vacant lots, unused railway beds, informal market areas and pedestrian pathways can all be upgraded and used.

For very young children even small “pockets” of land can be improved to meet needs and local faith-based centres, clinics, libraries and so on, can be encouraged and supported to provide these “play gardens”. By age four or five children need more space for active play and running around. Their playgrounds should still be easy to access and close to home to be usable.





## Develop stimulating play environments

Communities should be encouraged to aim at a wider range of play than a few isolated pieces of fixed equipment! Children need to be able to choose from a variety of play equipment that invites them to run, climb, balance, swing, jump down from reasonable heights and slide down ropes, poles or slides. A maze or obstacle course will often invite children to try out new activities. Areas are needed for informal ball games and wheeled play-vehicles such as bike tracks.

Children enjoy equipment that they can use to build tents or shelters or to use as props for their fantasy play. Sand, mud and water are always popular with children, even if parents object to the muddy clothes they bring home! Space is needed for digging and constructing, for experimenting with various materials such as planks and boxes, as well as for quiet activities (tables painted as boards for draughts or chess) and fantasy or pretend play (tents).

## Children need “nature”!

Children living in urban and rural areas need safe natural spaces to explore and play in. Nature reserves with streams and rivers, boulders, trees, paths and bush, small animals, insects to study, tadpoles, butterflies and bird life are necessary for a whole and balanced life and for gaining an appreciation of our Earth and what is needed to sustain it. Animal farms introduce urban children to domestic animals. Tshwane has a world class zoo and some children live near mountains, game reserves, beaches and other nature reserves. Adults need to go out of their way to expose children regularly to the richness of our land.



## Safety and protection of children when playing

Children need protection while playing. Community members and park wardens (or play workers) need to be on duty during the times children come to play (mid to late afternoon for school children). Local organisations may be able to take on some of these functions, especially through a “park watch” made up of active pensioners, youth (including those doing high-school community service) and parents.

Spaces for children’s play should never be planned only for children; there should be pleasant shady areas with tables and chairs where all ages can relax and socialise and “park watch” duties are pleasant to undertake.

Good risks and physical challenges are acceptable and offer few surprises. They help children gain confidence in using their bodies, and test and develop their judgement and abilities. Children need and want to take risks when they play! Minor and easily healed injuries are part of play; children learn about risks very quickly through an experience that is unpleasant.



Safety means eliminating hazards! When large numbers of children play on equipment that is poorly designed or installed, there is the possibility of serious injury. Sand, gravel or woodchips should surround climbing equipment to absorb most of the impact if a child falls. Providers of play activities need to check apparatus regularly, especially metal equipment that can rust, and improvised equipment or natural features such as trees, logs and stumps that might deteriorate. Watch out for sharp edges to climbing equipment and insecure, shaky play structures, and “traps” for heads or fingers.

Other areas used for play should also be scanned for hazards such as disused mine shafts, open drains and other similar hazards which should be fenced off or made out of bounds.

Important reading – Google the following:

1. Play England “Managing Risk in Play Provision”
2. Tim Gill “No Fear- Growing up in a Risk Averse Society”
3. “Playground Ideas: Safety Manual”

## Ideas for outdoor play

This section outlines several ideas for creating challenging and engaging outdoor experiences and spaces for children. It includes ideas for climbing, swinging, sand play, balancing, play apparatus and so on. The photos and diagrams should inspire your own creativity and inventions with stuff you might find in your own “backyard”. We encourage you to at least put up a swing!

Google the following for more ideas on practical outdoor play constructions:

1. Playground Ideas: The community playground manual
2. Play England: Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces
3. James Jolley- Entirely fun playground ideas



*Requirements for outdoor play are simple: physical safety, the presence of other children, the proximity of adults, no bullying or harassment, and diverse and stimulating physical surroundings.*

## Climbing

- **Climbing walls**

When building a wall in a child space, think in advance about developing it into a climbing wall. Introduce natural materials, jutting out rock and brick that will give hand and footholds to eager climbers.

Climbing walls need not be high or necessitate climbers being “roped up”. A “bouldering” wall can be built with climbing handholds placed no higher than three metres. The climbers “traverse” or climb sideways along the wall instead of to great heights. Low level climbing walls can also be created for pre-schoolers.

Custom-made durable handholds or other inventions could be bolted onto walls at intervals.

The resin-based handholds come in many different sizes and colours and each cost no more than the price of a hamburger! The handholds are attached by special bolts and securely hold climbers as they test their skills.



- **The Climbing Cube**

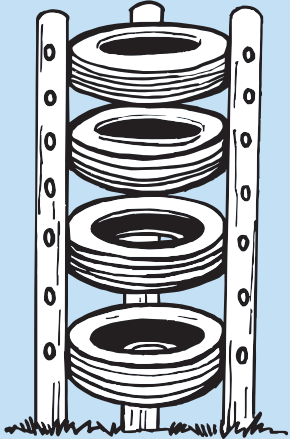
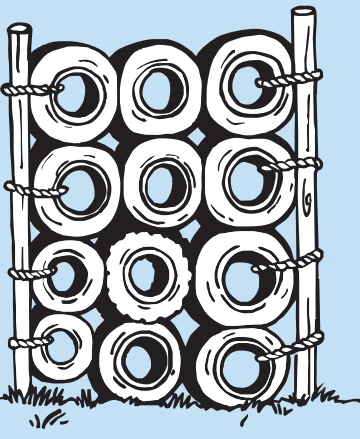
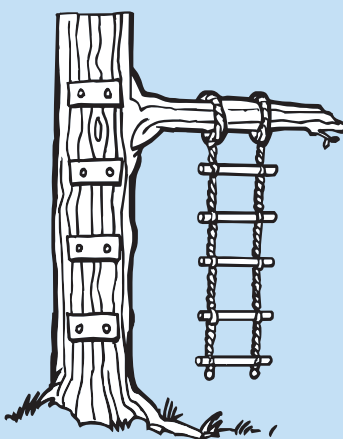
The Active Schools Initiative supported children at a Cape Flats school to build a “Climbing Cube” with shutter boards, timber and wooden and resin handholds.





- **Climbing challenges**

Gum poles, trees, tyres and cargo nets all contribute sturdy materials for climbing. The Tyre Tower has three poles planted in the ground. The centre space has a pile of loose old tyres of various sizes. A rope assists climbers getting up and down. A chain connects the poles at the top. Cargo nets attached to log frames are also a challenge to climb.

		
<p><b>TYRE TOWER:</b> Plant three logs in the soil. Bolt tyres on at intervals. Tyres can be trimmed in the centre to create a larger space to climb through.</p>	<p><b>TYRE WALL:</b> Bolt tyres together and then tie or bolt these onto a pole structure.</p>	<p><b>ROPE LADDERS and STEPS:</b> Some trees are sturdy enough for climbing in. Rope ladders and steps help access.</p>

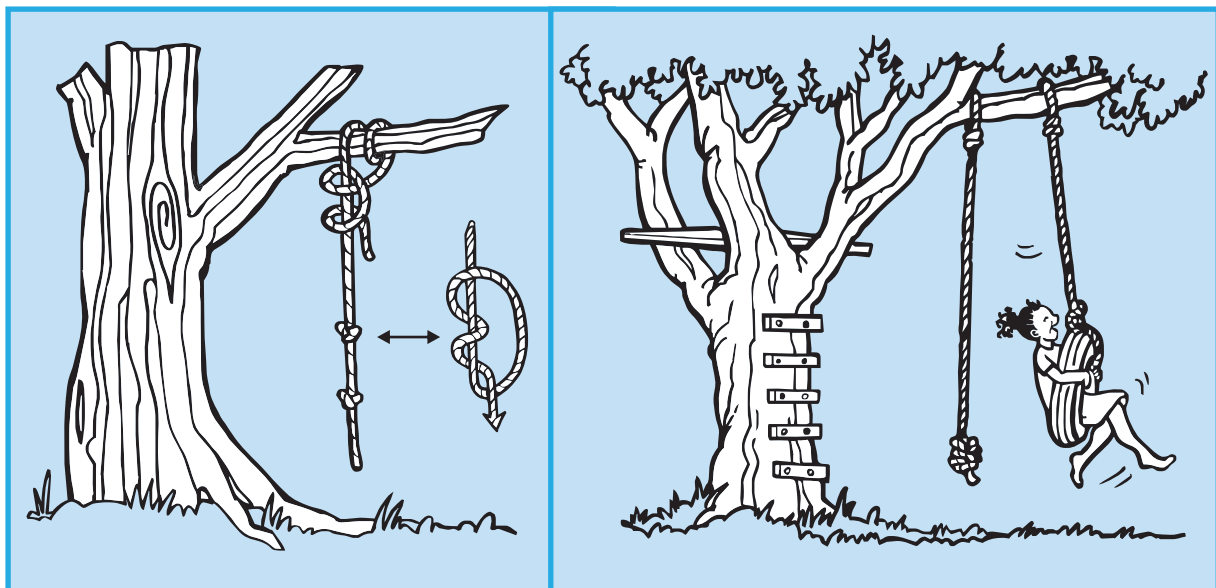




## Swinging

Children love to swing – and swings are easy to make from old tyres (see page 76 for instructions). You could also provide poles and ropes for children to swing from (see instructions below).

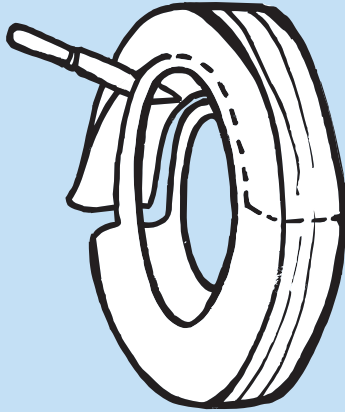
Avoid wooden-seated swings as these can so easily hit and injure small children who are unable to avoid the swing.



### CLIMBING ROPE and SWING:

To attach the rope, make two turns around the branch (or pole). Make two half knots and pull tight. Tie knots in the rope about 1.5m apart. To tie knots, make two twists in the rope and pull tight.

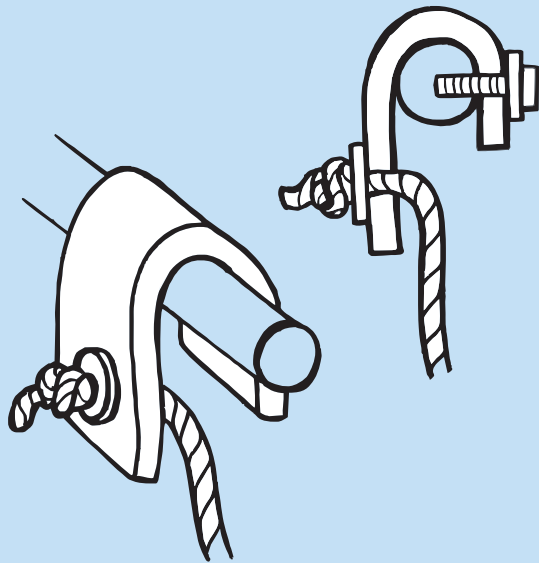
**TYRE SWINGS:** Tyres can be made into swings of many shapes and sizes – bucket seats (which are good for supporting young children), flat seats and swings made from whole tyres hanging either horizontally or vertically.



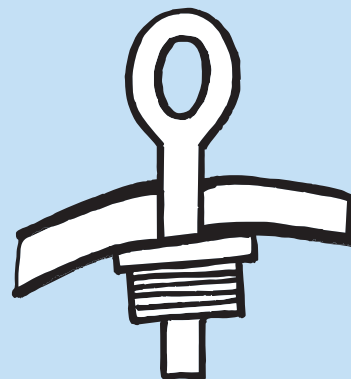
Slice the old tyre approximately two-thirds of the way round. Use a tyre without steel rims.



Turn the sliced tyre inside out and trim to size. Drill a drainage hole in the bottom.



Attach the swing to a branch or pole with a strip of tyre. This helps to prevent wear and tear on the rope and on the pole or branch.

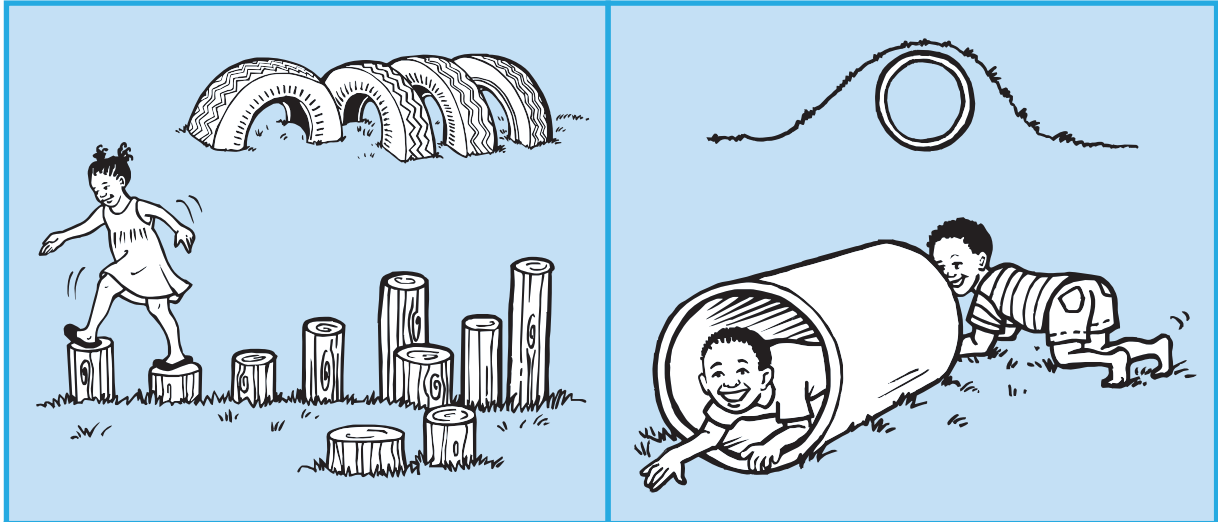


Using a washer, attach bolts to the strip of tyre. This helps to prevent wear and tear on the strip of tyre attached to the branch or pole.



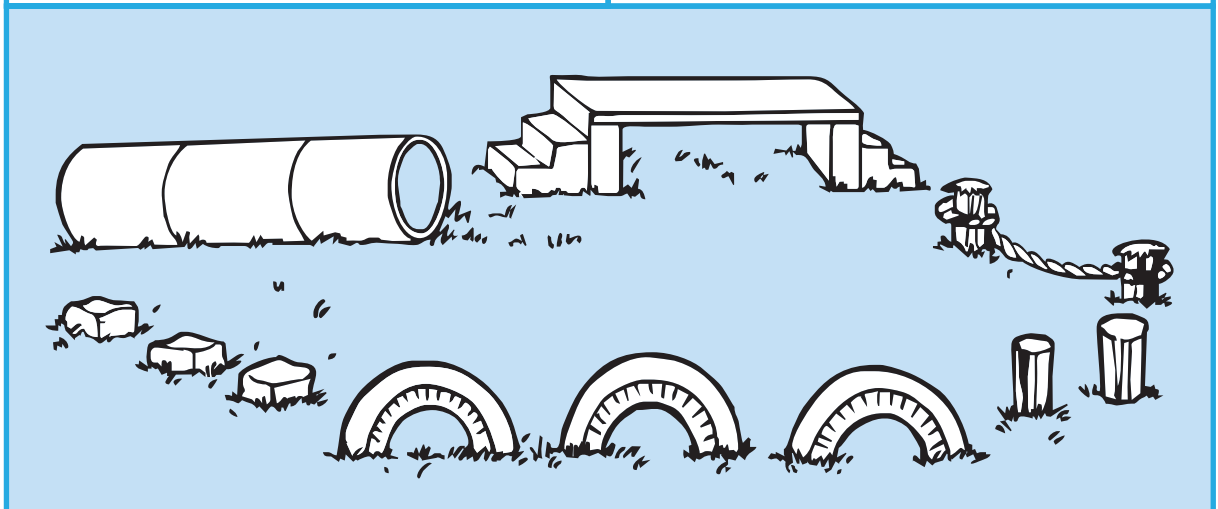
## Balancing and obstacle courses

Keep your eyes open for “obstacle” resources in your environment: large rocks, fallen down trees that could be sawed up, left over concrete drain pipes, tyres (especially large ones that can be used in many different ways), mounds of sand that could be compacted into cycle tracks, and so on.



BALANCING on tree stumps, cement pipes, rocks, boulders or tyres.

TUNNELLING through large cement “pipe” covered by grass to form a hill.

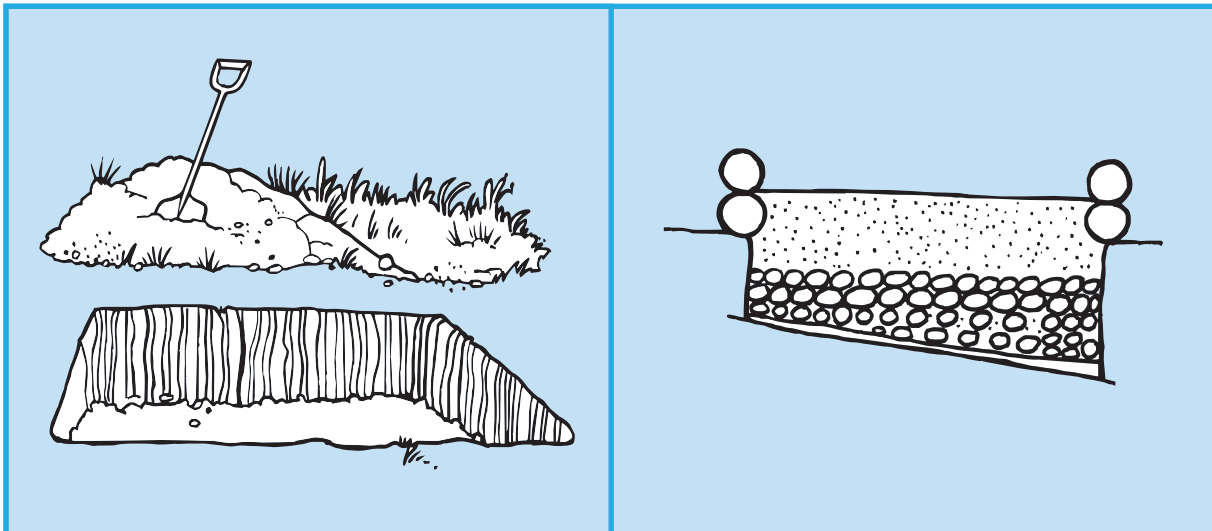


OBSTACLE COURSE with tyres, tree stumps and rope for balancing, a large concrete pipe for tunnelling, and a wooden bridge for climbing.



## Playing in sand: digging, sandpits

A sandpit is an immediate attraction to children and has scope for all kinds of play, especially if sand play tools are provided. For older children there are options of real work: castle building, tracks and vehicles, deep digging, using real tools, and all with a mix of water!

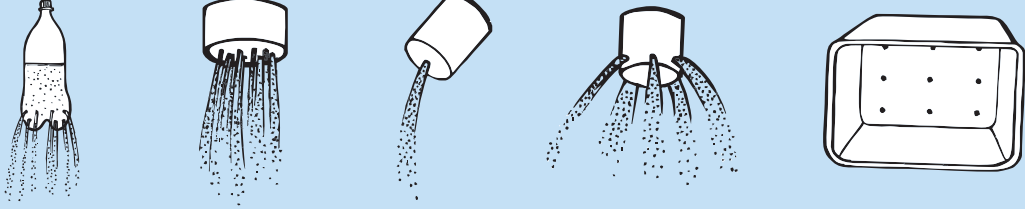


### MAKING A SANDPIT:

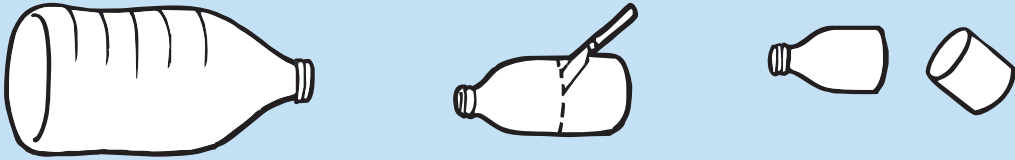
1. Dig a hole: depth slanting from 1.5m to 1m (remember to keep a top edge space); length and width at least 3m by 2m (for up to 10-15 children).
2. Lay stones and rubble for drainage at the bottom.
3. Dig in tyres, rocks, cement edges or logs to make a border around the sandpit.
4. Fill with clean, sifted river or sea sand.
5. Add 10kg course salt to keep the sand sterile and clean.
6. Make a cover for the sandpit when it is not in use to keep animals and other dirt out.
7. During summer, a sandpit ideally needs shade cover.

- **Sand pit toys or tools**

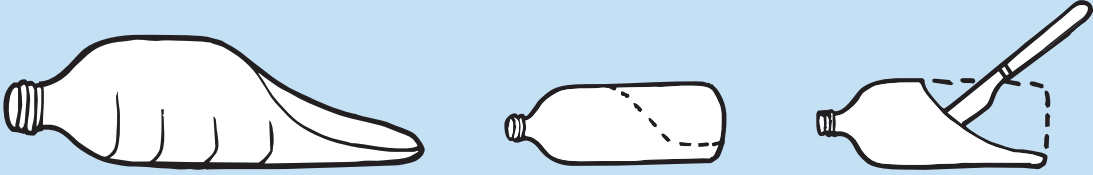
Tools include buckets, spades, yoghurt cups, tins, sand moulding shapes, pieces of wood, planks and so on. Toys such as wooden or plastic trucks. Children like to add sticks, leaves and objects from the environment. The sandpit might need to be cleaned out regularly or you could have a day of sifting out debris with the children. Always keep a sandpit covered when not in use.



SIEVE: Plastic bottle, cup or container like an ice cream box. Punch holes with a hot metal skewer



FUNNEL: Cut halfway down a plastic bottle and use the section with the hole. The other part can be a bucket or cup.



SCOOP: Various size bottles can be cut at an angle to make a scoop or digger.

*Sand and water make ideal ingredients for make-believe cooking or potion making.*



## Outdoor play equipment: tricks and acrobatics

Develop play equipment that will develop children's physical skills such as strength and agility.

The outdoor playing equipment in this section was developed by the Active Schools Initiative. Children were included and taught skills to make their own play equipment.



- **Tyre trampolines**

1. To make a trampoline you need an old truck tyre and at least three old inner tubes from a bus or truck wheel.
2. Cut strips 6-8cm wide from the tubes. You will need 12-16 strips and a few extras for later repairs.
3. Pull the first 5-7 strips around the tyre, placing them next to each other and tying tightly at the back.
4. Tip over the tyre and weave the next 5-7 strips over and under the tied pieces.
5. Tie these pieces tightly at the back.
6. Once in use it is very important to check the tube pieces for wear and tear and replace them when necessary.

- **Balance board**

All that is needed is a short plank, sanded down and painted, and a piece of gum pole to balance on.





- **Wooden stilts**

To make stilts you will need a drill, hacksaw, spanner and sandpaper, as well as a paint brush and varnish to finish them off. You will also need two long planks of wood and triangular off cuts for foot blocks. The foot blocks are bolted onto the planks.

Measurements must be carefully made as each foot block on a pair of stilts must be at the same height. For beginners, set the foot block about 40cm from the ground.



- **Balancing wheel**

Look out for old cable reels (or call your local municipality and ask where these can be sourced from). An old wooden cable reel can be painted and used as a balancing wheel for older children.



## Sports fields: goals and hoops

Children will always need space to play their favourite sports games. Invest in clearing space and putting in sports equipment to enable children to play sport. Younger children need dedicated spaces otherwise older children and youth could dominate and exclude them from play possibilities.

*Adults and young volunteers in Mamatshekele village in Limpopo improvise a netball stand and hoop using bamboo for the stand and an old bicycle wheel frame for the hoop. The children made a ball using plastic bread bags.*



## Camping

All children need outdoor experiences and adventures. This can even happen in the inner-city. Never underestimate your resources!



- **Camp fire activities**

- Story telling and skits.
- Camp fire singing and music making.
- Cook sausages on homemade wire forks or sticks.
- Make “stokbrood” with scone dough (rub margarine into self-raising flour; mix in a small amount of water to form a soft dough). Wrap dough around a thick stick and bake in fire coals. Fill centre with margarine, syrup or a Vienna sausage.

- **Other resources**

- Camp fire songs, skits and recipes: [www.scoutorama.com](http://www.scoutorama.com).
- *Stories That Talk*, ten read aloud stories and discussions: [www.heartlines.org.za](http://www.heartlines.org.za) (available in all South African languages).
- Gcina Hlope stories and other South African story books available at local book stores. Learn them and tell them, and encourage children to learn them and tell them!

## The Concrete Jungle Camping Experience!

Several hundred children live in the flatland area of Albert Park, Durban. Often the flats are overcrowded and families are financially hard-pressed. One year, the YMCA Kids Klub could not afford to go away on a camping trip, so they borrowed tents and camped in the car park of the YMCA building. Surrounded by barbed wire and city sounds, they slept out in the open and cooked their food on an open fire.



# 12 Traditional games

Generations of children all over the world have played these surprisingly universal games. Every region has special variations and this chapter serves to remind us of some of the games we might have played, and which we should make the effort to pass on to the current generation of children.

## Arm wrestling

Arm wrestling is a sport with two participants. Each participant places one arm, either the right or left, on a surface, with their elbows bent and touching the surface, and they grip each other's hand. The goal is to pin the other player's arm onto the surface, with the winner's arm over the loser's arm.

Did you know that there are arm wrestling associations with competitions happening at international level?

Have you tried to thumb wrestle?



## Marbles

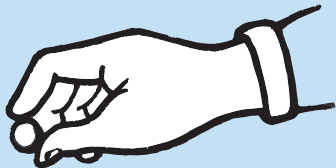

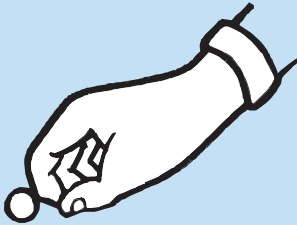
(izimabuli, malies, amaeli, taws)

Marbles can be used in many different ways and children can create their own games with marbles.

- **Marble golf**

Write the numbers 1-9 on objects such as an empty matchbox, a draughts piece, a bottle lid, a yoghurt cup, and so on. Place them randomly in the playing area. Each player has one marble and shoots in turn from a starting line at target number 1. The player who takes the least number of shots to hit the target wins that “hole”. Players then shoot at target number 2 and so on. The player who completes the whole marble golf course having won the most “holes” is the overall winner. Alternatively, the player who uses the least number of shots over the whole course could be the winner.

## HOW TO "SHOOT" A MARBLE

		
<p><b>1. SQUEEZING:</b> Hold the marble between thumb and index finger and squeeze it.</p>	<p><b>2. KNUCKLING:</b> Rest knuckles on the ground. Bend in thumb and place the marble in the crook of the first or second finger. Shoot the marble by flicking the thumb forward.</p>	<p><b>3. FLICKING:</b> A quick flick with the index finger. Useful when trying to hit a close object.</p>

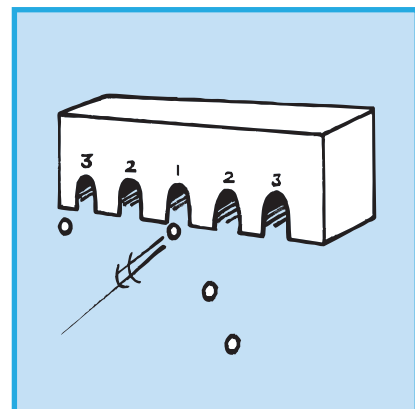
- **Ring Taw**

Draw two circles – a smaller one (about 25 centimetres across) in the centre of a larger one (about 1.5 metres across). Each player places one or two marbles as agreed in the small circle. The first player stands outside the large circle (or “bar”) and shoots their “taw” trying to knock as many marbles out of the inner circle as possible. All marbles knocked out by a player become that player’s property. The successful player continues to shoot from wherever the taw rests until they fail to knock out anymore marbles from the inner circle.

At this point the taw is left where it has rolled and the turn goes to the next player, who, in addition to trying to knock marbles out of the inner ring, may try to hit the first player’s taw. If their taw is hit, the first player must give one marble to the hitter. Each player may only aim for another player's taw once per turn. The game continues until all marbles are knocked out of the ring.

- **Bounce Eye**

Draw a circle 30 centimetres in diameter. Each player places one marble in the circle. The first player drops a marble from waist height and tries to hit one of the marbles in the circle. Any marble driven out of the circle becomes their property. If no marbles are knocked out, the player adds another marble to the circle and the turn passes to the next player.



**MARBLE SHOOTING GALLERY:**  
Cut holes in a shoe box. Number the holes and allocate scores (smaller holes should have higher scores).

Try and shoot your marble into the highest scoring hole. Each player uses 10 marbles. Highest scorer wins one or two marbles from the other players.



## Elastic jumping

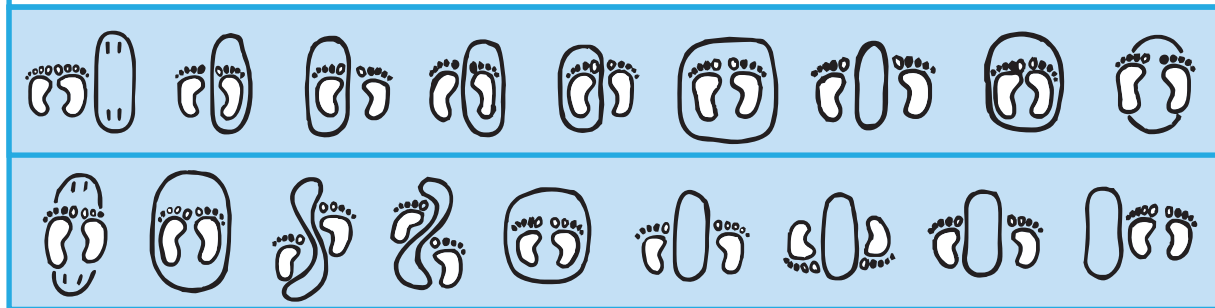
(umagalopha, umghusha)

Players jump sequences on an elastic band held on the legs of two other players. Lengths of elastic can be used. If this is not available, players have often used old pantyhose pieces tied together or even woven grass strands. Play starts with the elastic “band” held on the ankles of support players and, at intervals, this is lifted to right up under the arm pits. Players take turns jumping the sequences and perfecting their skills.

Every region has their own traditional jump sequences and rules vary. Two popular elastic jump sequences are illustrated below.



TWO POPULAR ELASTIC JUMP SEQUENCES



## Skipping

(inqathu, kgati, ugqaphu, ntimio)

This game is played with a thick rope and it can be played outside or indoors in an open space. Two players must hold the two ends of the rope with one hand and swing it in the same direction. The other players will be waiting in queues to take turns jumping over the rope. While players jump they might sing local rhymes or songs; as the song gets faster and faster, so too does the rhythm of the swinging rope.

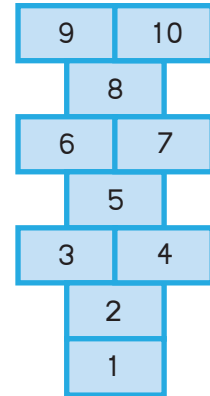
Jumpers can jump as many times as they want as long as they don't stop or touch the rope. If that happens they must stop jumping and become the rope holder. Any jumper who touches and stops the rope is said to be “uqhustile” (faulted).

## Hopscotch

If playing on cement or concrete, draw a hopscotch plan with chalk; if using the ground, draw the plan with a stick. Number the squares or spaces.

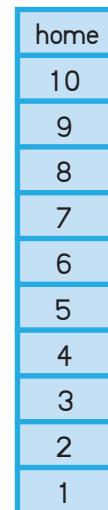
- **Traditional hopscotch**

- First, throw a stone into square 1.
- Hop over square 1 into square 2.
- Jump into square 3 and 4, landing with one foot in each square.
- Hop into square 5, jump into squares 6 and 7, hop into square 8 and jump into squares 9 and 10.
- Jump completely around and land back in squares 9 and 10, facing the way you have come.
- Jump and hop back again in the same way, stopping on square 2.
- Standing on one leg, pick up the stone from square 1 and hop over it.
- Start again, this time throwing the stone into square 2, then square 3, and so on.
- You miss a turn if your stone does not land in the right square; if you accidentally step into the same square as the stone; if you stand on the line; or if you put two feet on the ground while hopping.
- The winner is the first person to pick up the stone from square 10 and get back to the start.



- **Ladder Hopscotch**

The player throws the stone into square 1, hops over that square into square 2, then 3, 4, and so on up to 10 and then lands on “home” with both feet. The player “jumps” around to again land on both feet in the “home” square and then hops back into each square until 2. After picking up the stone from square 1, the player hops over that square and back to baseline.



Continue to play as above (traditional hopscotch).



*Hopscotch patterns and other games painted on school grounds.*

## Hide and Seek

Choose a player to be a “seeker” and station them at a central place designated “home”. The seeker covers his or her eyes and counts up to 20 or so while everyone else goes and hides. When the seeker reaches the end of their count, they shout a warning, “Coming, ready or not”, and they start to look for the hiders. The hiders have to try and reach “home” before being caught, and if they do this they are “safe”. The first player to be caught is the next seeker.

Try playing this in the dark. Give the seeker a torch.

Adapt the game for players of different ages. Younger players might need adults to help them find spaces to hide. If the game is in your house, make sure that players know the “out of bounds” areas!

- **Sardines**

In this version of the game, one player goes off to hide while the others shut their eyes. Once hidden, all the other players split up to search for the hider. When a seeker finds the hider, they carefully slip into the hiding place with them (the hiding place should accommodate a few players). As further players find the hiding place, they too silently squeeze into the space, which becomes tighter and increasingly squashed up.

Other players become aware that fellow searchers are disappearing and rush to the places they were last seen. When the last player arrives, they are sometimes chased back to the starting point, but more often than not there are sighs of relief as the “sardines” come forth from their cramped positions.

- **Hunt the Lantern** (a traditional scout game)

This game usually takes place on a dark night in a bushy camping area. There should be trees, boulders, shadows, and so on to hide in. Players line up at one end of the playing area, while one player, holding a flashlight, stands at the other end. The object of the game is to move from one end of the playing area to the other, past the player holding the flashlight. The player with the flashlight stands with their back to the other players. Every five seconds or so they turn around and scan the playing area for three seconds. If a moving player gets caught by the flashlight beam, they must return to the starting end. Stationary players remain where they are.

The first player to successfully move past the “flasher” becomes the light or “lantern” for the next round.

Variation: The player with the flashlight keeps the flashlight on, and continuously scans the playing area. Stalking players dress in dark clothes and need to be more skilful in getting past the light.

## Tag or catching games

(aan-aan; touchers; cops and robbers)

- **Chain tag**

One player is the catcher. When they catch another player they join hands and together try to catch other players. The last player to be caught is the winner. The chain can split once four players are holding hands.

- **Stuck in the mud**

Once a player is caught by the catcher, they must stand frozen and “stuck in the mud”. The only way to rejoin the game is to have a friend crawl through their legs to free them. The first player to be stuck three times is the catcher in the next game.

- **Catch my tail**

Each player tucks a tail (cloth, piece of rope) into the back of their waistband. The object of the game is for each player to grab another’s tail. Once your tail is taken you cannot take anyone else’s tail. Last player with a tail wins.

- **Shipwreck**

The catcher tries to catch other players who are “safe” when they are on an “island” (which could be anything off the ground such as logs, pillows, chairs, rugs, crates, tyres). Players may only stay on an “island” for a couple of seconds at a time. When a player is caught they become the catcher.

- **What’s the time Mr Wolf?**

One player is “Mr Wolf” and stands with their back to the rest of the group. The group calls out, “Wolfie, Wolfie, what’s the time?” Mr Wolf does not turn around but replies in a gruff voice, “eight o’clock” (or any other time). The players walk the number of steps the wolf calls out (in this case eight). The players continue to pester Mr Wolf with their question. Suddenly Mr Wolf cries, “Dinner time!” and turns round and chases the other players. The players run back to the starting point (usually screaming). If Mr Wolf catches one of them before they reach home, that player is the next Mr Wolf.





# Indigenous games 13

Indigenous games are part of our heritage, and we encourage you to find people in your communities who can teach children how to play these games. Many of the indigenous games are played in slightly different ways (and with different names), throughout the SADC region.

The South African Department of Sport and Recreation is actively promoting indigenous games as options for play and even formal games in South Africa. So far (2009) ten games have been identified as part of an indigenous games national project. These are: dibeke (a running ball game); diketo (a coordination game); kgati (a rope jumping game); ncuva (a board game); morabaraba (a board game); jukskei (a throwing and target game); kho-kho (a running game); lintonga (a stick fighting game); arigogo (similar to rounders) and drie stokkies (running and jumping game). You can also download the Indigenous Games Rules Book from the Department of Sport and Recreation website: [www.srsa.gov.za](http://www.srsa.gov.za).

We have not included all these games or game rules in this chapter as there are so many variations of playing them in the SADC region. We encourage you to attend local indigenous games events as these games are best learnt in practise. For more information contact the indigenous games association in your region.

## Three Tins

This game is played by two teams. Three tins are placed on top of each other. A player from one of the teams tries to knock the tins over with a ball. After three unsuccessful throws, a player from the opposing team has a turn.

If the ball hits the tins, the player who threw the ball must run to the tins, reposition them again, draw “brackets” around the tins and shout “square”, then hop over the tins three times. If the ball is thrown too far, the players shout “thayma” and everyone waits for the ball to be found.



## Diketo

(magave, upuca, jacks)

### Aim of the game

To be the first to scoop out all the stones and then return them to the hole.

### Equipment needed

Two players can play this game. They each need a ghoen or “taw” or big round stone. Each player also needs at least ten small marbles or stones.

### Play space set up

Dig a small hole in the ground (or draw a square on the ground) and place the small stones in the hole.

### Play instructions

These play instructions are for a ten-stone game, while the photograph shows a variation of the game played with at least 20 stones and a square drawn on the ground.

The first player throws the ghoen into the air and tries to scoop or push all the small stones out of the hole before catching it again. If the ghoen is not caught, the next player takes their turn.

If the ghoen is caught, it is thrown in the air again. One of the stones is kept back and the others pushed back into the hole. The ghoen is thrown again. While in the air the nine stones are pushed out of the hole before the ghoen is caught again. Next throw, another stone is kept back and eight stones are pushed back. Continue in this way until ten stones are in possession. At this point, another round begins.

All ten stones are put into the hole but this time two stones are retained after the second throw. In round three, three stones are retained, and so on. If at any time the ghoen is not caught, the other player has a turn.

The winner is the player who has advanced the furthest in the game without making a mistake.



## Moruba

(tsoro, ntjiwa, ncuva, instuva)

### Aim of the game

To play the game until one player has lost all their “cows” (or pebbles).

### Equipment needed

- A space to dig small holes into the ground.
- At least two pebbles (“cows”) for each hole.

### Play space set up

The size of the play space and the number of holes often depends on the number of players. Most common are boards that have four rows of 12 holes (mekoti) each, although the number of holes can vary from 4 to 36 per row. Place two small pebbles or morula pips (“cows”) into each hole.

### Play instructions

Each player (or team) only uses their side of the play area or “play board”. On a turn a player takes the contents of one of their holes, which must contain at least two stones, and distributes them, one by one, counterclockwise into consecutive holes on their own side. If the last stone falls into a non-empty hole, its contents are distributed in another lap in the same direction. The move ends (kulala, literally “to sleep”) when the last stone is dropped into an empty hole.

If the last stone falls into an empty hole of the inner row, and the opponent’s opposite hole contains stones, these enemy stones are “killed” (tlaaba) or “hit”. Additionally, the stones in the hole of the same file in the outer row are “captured” (tloa). The killed or captured stones are removed from the board. The player is then entitled to capture the contents of any other two enemy holes.

When a player has only singletons, they are permitted to move them, but only in empty holes. The player who still has stones at the end of the game is declared the winner. It is a draw when the board position repeats without anything being captured.

*Peter Nchabeleng Sport Ground in Skoonoord, Limpopo, is alive with activity since A Chance To Play came to Sekhukhune. Indigenous games feature as an activity at A Chance to Play events where an older woman teaches moruba to local children. She trains “apprentices” who then pass their knowledge and skills on to other children.*



## Cheia (Full!) – a game from Mozambique

### Aim of the game

Fill the bottle with sand without getting hit by the ball.

### Equipment needed

A tennis ball or homemade version, a half or a litre plastic bottle.

### Play space set up

Draw a large rectangular or square court with a stick or feet to mark the play space. Have a pile of flowing, dry, soft sand in the middle



### Play instructions

There are two teams of two to four players each. Team One enters the court starting in the centre with the empty bottle positioned on the ground in a heap of sand. During the game players must not step out of the court boundary lines. The opposing team members stand on the outside corners and court boundary. They throw the tennis ball to each other, first as a warning and then directly at the opponents in the centre, who must dodge the balls while filling the bottle of sand. Any team member that is hit while filling the bottle must leave the game. If the remaining team members can fill the bottle before being hit, that team wins. If all the players in Team One are out of the game then Team Two wins. When the game is finished the sides swap over.

## Jukskei

This game is played in a sandpit. A wooden or rubber “skeet” (something like a heavy rounded bat with a handle) is thrown underhand at two “stakes” or a pin pegged in the sandpit. Players score points for hitting the stake or for being nearest the stake. For play instructions and game rules, see the Indigenous Games Rules Book available for download from [www.srsa.gov.za](http://www.srsa.gov.za).



*At a Play Day in Phokwane, Limpopo, a local teacher brought along a Jukskei set. Some of the women had played the game as children. Remembering the rules, they shared their knowledge and skills with others.*



# 14

## Board and card games

### Draughts

#### Aim of the game

To capture all the opponent's playing pieces. The game is over when all the opponent's playing pieces have been captured, or they are blocked and cannot move.

#### Equipment needed

- Board with eight rows of eight squares (four black; four white). See the next page for instructions on how to make a draughts board.
- Twelve bottle tops or playing pieces per player.

#### Board setup

Two players can play this game. Each player chooses a colour on the board (either black or white) and places twelve bottle tops or playing pieces on the coloured squares of the first three rows.

#### Play instructions

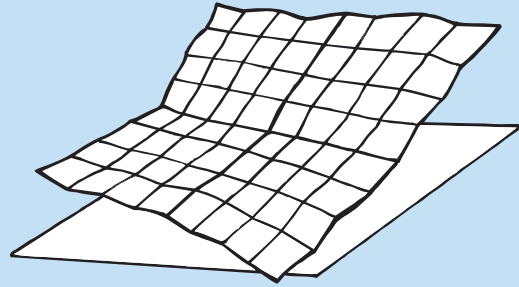
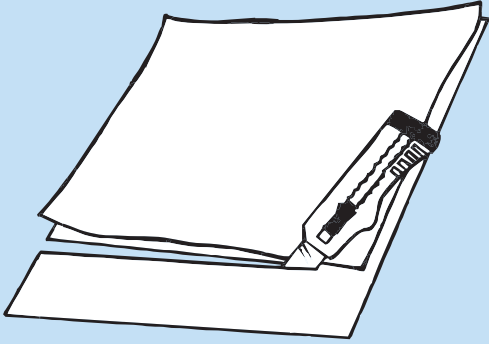
Players can only move their pieces diagonally in a forward direction to another square of the same colour. Players capture their opponent's pieces by "jumping" over them. Once the opponent's piece has been "jumped" it must be removed and kept by the "capturing" player. Players can even jump two or more playing pieces if the board set up allows it.

If a player gets a piece to the back row of the opponent's space, then it becomes a "king" by having another piece placed on top of it. The player then retrieves one of the captured pieces. This gives the "king" the right to move forward and backwards, making it easier for the player to capture their opponent's pieces.



### MAKING A DRAUGHTS BOARD:

Materials needed: side of a cardboard box; 2 sets of 12 coloured bottle tops; marker pens, paints or crayons to colour each alternate square; scissors, blade or craft knife; long ruler.

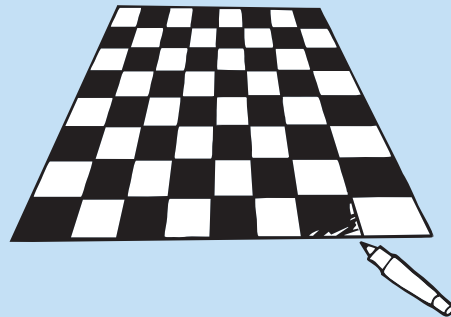
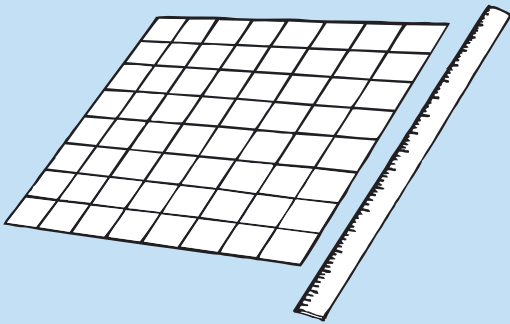


#### 1. Make a square board:

Cut a large piece of board. Cut a piece of newspaper the same size as the board. Fold short edge of paper to make square. Cut paper square. Measure the cardboard and cut square.

#### 2. Getting 8 accurate squares:

Fold square piece of newspaper in half, then half again and once again (3 times). Open up. You should have a row of 8 squares.



#### 3. Measuring out the squares:

Use the fold to mark 8 spaces on each edge of the board. Using a ruler that spans the cardboard square, connect these marks and rule the lines on to the board .

#### 4. Colour the blocks:

Colour in squares and complete the board.

## Chess

Chess is a game of strategy and common sense, of power, attack and retreat. The chess pieces represent soldiers in the frontline who protect the “king” and the “queen”, and “bishops” who lend a supporting hand with the “knights” to protect the stronghold of the realm.

For more information on how to play the game, e-mail Lente Mare ([lente@netpoint.co.za](mailto:lente@netpoint.co.za)) at Chess for Change to obtain David MacEnulty’s free book *My First Book on Chess*. The book is also available as a pdf file.

If you would like to play a game of chess on the computer, visit [www.chesscube.com](http://www.chesscube.com).

Investigate Chess South Africa ([www.chessa.co.za](http://www.chessa.co.za)) and other local chess leagues that may be running in your schools and communities.

## Chess for Change

Chess for Change is an organisation promoting the game of chess to children in South Africa.

The organisation is inspired by David MacEnulty, a chess teacher from the United States and the subject of the Hollywood movie “Knights of the South Bronx”, which portrayed his experience of teaching chess to inner-city New York children. He says: “It’s a little microcosm of the real world. While the game is recreational, it also needs good reasoning skills and the ability to plan a move several steps ahead.”

Chess for Change (CFC) promotes MacEnulty’s method of teaching chess and the organisation is rolling out programmes in several centres in South Africa. For more information, e-mail [info@chessforchange.org](mailto:info@chessforchange.org) or visit the Chess for Change website ([www.chessforchange.org](http://www.chessforchange.org)).



## Snakes and Ladders

### Aim of game

To reach “home” first.

### Equipment needed

- Snakes and Ladders play board. (You could design your own game boards with other themes.)
- Dice and a marker for each player.

### Play Instructions

Each player takes a turn to throw the dice. They move their marker along the spaces according to the number thrown. If they land on a square with the beginning of a ladder, they can travel up the ladder to a higher space. If they land on a snake’s tail, they must slide down the snake to a lower level.



Many play organisations are promoting board games by making giant boards for park play. Here Snakes and Ladders is being played in Burgers Park in Tshwane during the “Feast of the Clowns” festival.

You could also design your own game boards with other themes. This game used a “play rights” theme and arrows pointing down (snakes) and up (ladders).

Make a photocopy (enlarged to A3) of this page to use as a play board.

21 You have no open space to play in.	22	23	24 There are bullies who fight in your playground.	25 HOME
20	19	18 There is too much traffic around the play park.	17	16 You own a pack of cards to play card games.
11 The swings in the park are always broken.	12 You play in a sports team.	13	14 There are no clubs for children in your area.	15
10	9	8	7 There is a local swimming pool in your area.	6
1 START The park in your area is clean and safe.	2	3	4 You have friends to play with.	5



## Morabaraba

(umlabalaba)

### Aim of the game

For one player to remove (eliminate) their opponent's tokens.

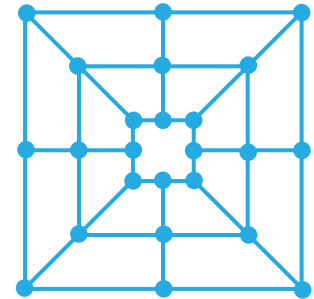
### Equipment needed

This game, played by two players, can be played on a board or on a "board" drawn with a stick in the sand. Each player needs 12 tokens ("izinkomo" cows). These could be stones, marbles or even bottle tops of the same or similar colour.



### Play instructions

Play can happen in a period of minutes or hours. Tokens are placed, one at a time, alternately, on a point of intersection with the aim of making the tokens form a line, three in a row. The opposing player can place their tokens anywhere to block the other player from getting three in row. When a player gets three tokens in a row they have won that row and must remove one of the other player's tokens from the board. When all tokens are used, the game continues. Players can move their tokens to new intersections and keep trying to get each other's tokens. The game ends when one player has removed all of their opponent's tokens.



Board designs vary – here is the "official" design.

## Make your own board and other brain games!



Google and download the book "**It costs almost nothing**". This book represents the collaboration of many Namibian children's NGOs, churches and government departments.

In Section 2, from page 45 onward, there are instructions for making over 30 board and brain games with easily accessible materials and stationery. Children can be encouraged to make their own games to take home and play with their families.

Collect waste materials like cardboard, bottle tops, plastic bottles and tins for some projects. To complete the games you will need stationery scissors, marker pens, glue, some coloured paper, if available, and tape.

## Rummy

### Aim of the game

To get rid of all the cards in your “hand”.

### Equipment needed

One deck of cards.

### Play instructions

Between two and five players can play this game. To start, deal seven cards each. The remaining cards are placed in the middle, face down, with one card facing up. Once players have their cards they must organise and sort them into sets. They must decide on which set of three cards to collect. Cards can be collected as same numbers (for example, all 4s) or in sequence (for example, diamonds 1-4 or hearts 3-5).

The first player looks at the upright card on the table. If this card will help to form a “set” they can take it and throw away a useless card from their hand. If the card is not helpful they take a card from the face-down pile. This may or may not help to form a set. The most useless card must now be chosen to throw onto the upright pile. Each player has a turn to pick up a card from either pile and must throw away a card as well.

As soon as a player has a “set” they can place it onto the table during their turn. First, they pick up a card, then put their “set” down, then discard a card. Once a “set” has been placed, a player may, during their turn, add extra cards that fit the “sets” that others have placed on the table. The winner is the player who places all their cards on the table and throws away the final card.



Find more card games to play! See this comprehensive website [www.pagat.com](http://www.pagat.com) which aims to document the rules of traditional card and domino games for the benefit of players who would like to broaden their knowledge and try out unfamiliar games.

# 15 Recipes for play

## Sand clay

Sand clay is good for making permanent objects and it must be used on the same day that it is made. It dries hard and strong.

### What you need

- 1 cup fine smooth sand (fine beach sand or sand on a path that has been ground smooth – sieve all granules and stones out).
- Half a cup of starch (or Maizena).
- Half a cup of boiling water.

### How to make it

Mix well in a pot and cook until it thickens. If it is too thick, add more boiling water. Cool the dough before giving to children to play with. Note: if it stands too long it will go hard. Completed objects can be dried in the oven or left in the sun to harden.

### Activities

Objects that can be made include: candle holder; bowl; paper-weight; a pen holder; animals; or any other object children choose!

## Goop

This “goop” has a wonderful cool, slimy feel but sometimes becomes dry and brittle.

### What you need

- 1 packet corn flour or Maizena.
- 1 cup of water.
- Food colouring.

### How to make it

Mix it all together. Do not make it too runny. Plunge hands into the goop and feel the texture, make it run, pull up the hard bits. Provide a “Kitchen Kit” (see page 109) to play with it.

## Play-dough

### What you need

- 2 cups cold water.
- 2 packets (12g) or 4 tablespoons cream of tartar.
- 4 tablespoons oil.
- 1 cup salt.
- 2 cups flour.
- If you wish, add food colouring.



### How to make it

Put all ingredients in a pot and mix into a smooth paste. Place on the stove and cook over a medium heat, stirring all the time, until it thickens (3-5 minutes). Mould and knead when cool. Play-dough can be safely stored in a plastic packet – no fridge needed.

### Activities

- Play-dough can be kneaded, rolled into “snakes” or into balls. It can be pinched or hammered or cut into pieces.
- A rolled ball can be turned into a nest, or pinch-pot, by pressing ones thumbs into the centre and pinching the edges. It can be pricked or have holes bored through it.
- It can be squeezed and pinched to make a monster or a dough-baby or other object. Bits of dough can be joined together by pinching the edges.
- A long dough snake can be coiled into a pot or object.
- Impressions can be made by pressing a hard object, such as a key, into it.
- Use biscuit cutters.
- Express “upset” emotions with it: bang it, squash it, stretch it.





## Basic biscuits

### What you need (makes 100 small biscuits)

- 250g cooking margarine.
- 1 cup sugar (experiment with natural sweeteners for a health-conscious alternative).
- 1 teaspoon vanilla essence.
- 1 egg, beaten.
- 5 cups flour (500g).
- 2 teaspoons baking powder.
- 1 teaspoon salt.
- 1 tablespoon water.

### How to make

1. Cream the butter and sugar together.
2. Add the vanilla and egg.
3. Sift the dry ingredients and add to the above mixture with sufficient water to make a stiff dough that can be rolled out and cut.
4. Sprinkle flour on working surface, roll dough out till 3mm thick and cut shapes out. On a hot day it might be better to allow the dough to get cold in the fridge before rolling it out.
5. Put on greased baking sheet and bake at 200°C till light brown. (When baking with a group of children, use pieces of baking paper to collect each child's biscuits. Write names on the paper to identify who the biscuits belong to.)

### Variation

Spice biscuits (gingerbread people): Sift in 10ml cinnamon, 10ml ginger, 3ml nutmeg and 2ml cloves with the flour.



## Bubble-blower

### What you need

- Bubble cup: a small yoghurt cup; a straw; an elastic band; a piece of stretch material like T-shirt material or lycra.
- Bubble liquid: 2 tablespoons strong dishwashing liquid; 2 cups water with 1 tablespoon glycerine.

### How to make the blower

Make a small hole for the straw near the top of the cup (a heated skewer or nail will help). Insert the straw into the hole. Stretch the fabric over the top of the cup and secure with the elastic band.

### How to make bubbles

Pour some bubble liquid into a saucer. Dip the fabric on the cup into the liquid. Shake off excess liquid. Blow through the straw and make a pile of bubbles.



# 16

## Drama and role-play

Children and young people gain social skills through acting out a story. As they take on different roles and pretend to be, for example, an elderly person, or someone living with a disability, or someone being bullied, they often gain new insights and sympathies. They can also practise and internalise life skills through role-play. They may learn and practise new ways to communicate, how to be assertive with regard to their values under peer pressure, different ways to manage conflict, and so on.

### Communication games without words

- **What am I telling you?**

Divide players into small groups of even numbers, separated from each other. The groups each send a member to the play leader who tells them something to communicate to their group without using words. When the group guesses the message, a second member comes forward and asks for a new message and they have to guess that. This continues until all members have had a turn. The first team that finishes is the winner.

Simple messages for younger players might be: “I am hungry/angry/tired/afraid/happy/proud/surprised”; or “I love you”, “leave me alone”, “come with me”, “stop”, “sit down”, “be quiet”. Older players can be challenged to act out “jealousy”, “disgust”, “excitement”, “boredom”, “impatience”, and so on.

- **Guess what I like?**

All players stand in a circle. One by one they come forward and act out what they like most, without speaking. Whoever guesses correctly takes the next turn – or nominates someone else if they have already had a turn.

- **Charades**

Divide players into small groups to act out a word, without speaking. At first, and especially for younger players, the word should have only two syllables. The group can choose a word themselves or the leader can give them a list to choose from (try cupboard, laptop, bookcase, suitcase, playdough, schoolroom, plateful, eyeball). They act the sound of the syllables (for example, rugby would be rug and bee) and the rest of the players try to guess the word.

## Role-play

Role-play can be introduced around many themes. These play activities are not aimed at a polished performance, but rather the fun of putting it together.

- **“Idols” and performances**

A simple and popular theme is “Idols”, where participants take turns to sing or act. In groups they could be challenged to make up little skits on “The scariest moment in my life!” or “The funniest ...”. Older children and young people may like to improvise a skit on a television programme or a fairy-tale.

- **Role-play an issue of concern**

Form groups of about five or six players and give them each a brief scenario to act out for the whole group, taking only five minutes each. You can choose a relevant theme such “harassment and bullying”, where group one acts out a scenario of a group of boys teasing a girl; group two are boys teasing a young boy who is overweight and wears glasses; group three are girls excluding another girl from their activities because she wears shabby clothes; group four are children ganging up against a refugee child; group five are teasing a disabled child who walks with a limp.

After each role-play, discuss what happened and how the players felt – the powerful and the victims each have a turn to talk. If there are any players who obviously enjoyed being bullies, repeat the role-play and let them be the victims – but all in good fun! Let them discuss what the victims can do to protect themselves. Discuss the role of good friends. The players may like to repeat the role-plays with a just and fair outcome.

Let the players make up and chant slogans about being fair as they march and toyi-toyi round the room: “Fair’s fair – don’t scare! We all belong to the human race!” or “It’s not cool to be cruel!” or “Stop bullying!”, “Real men don’t hurt girls!”, and so on. If possible, let the players make posters.

- **Puppets**

Hold conversations, act out situations, make requests, all through the face of a puppet/ mask.

- Find pictures in magazines and newspapers of large faces and other items (such as food, cars, homes, animals).
- Stiffen the picture by sticking it on scrap paper or thin card and then cut out the picture shape.
- Roll up a tube of paper and paste it on the back of the picture as a holding stick.





## Drama themes for acting out

A dramatic theme or “story-line” can give focus to a play programme and be very appealing. Many games can be adapted to fit in with the theme.

Some suggestions:

- The Circus – with clowns, performing animals, tumblers, balancing acts, balloons.
  - The Game Reserve – with wild animals and birds, tour guides.
  - The Olympics – with team banners and medals.
  - Marine World – tag or catchers with fish and sharks (see page 85), penguin-race (feet hobbled), octopus tangle (see page 31), rope games on board a ship (see page 41), and so on.
- **Boot-sale drama**  
You will need an assortment of odd items (the funnier the better) such as an egg-whisk, umbrella, one sandal, a potato, a ball, notebook, birthday-card, comb, cake of soap, can of beans, old key, tin mug, paper plate, pencil, kitchen sieve, cap, sock, bath towel, old toy car.

Divide players into small groups and give each group five or six of the items you have collected. (Have them ready in shopping bags to save time.) Each group has to invent a story that involves every item they have been given, and they act it out for the whole group with every person taking a part.

## Celebrating with art and culture

The Feast of the Clowns festival, organised by the Tshwane Leadership Foundation, is held every August in Burgers Park, Tshwane. Dance, poetry, music, visual arts and play is celebrated and promoted in a week-long programme that seeks to renew and celebrate the life of the inner-city.

Many children contribute performances that have involved long hours of practise and dedication.

Children’s right to play includes a celebration of arts and culture, and in this demonstration, the formalised and disciplined learning of skills to express it.

For more information visit [www.tlhf.org.za](http://www.tlhf.org.za).



## Shadow plays

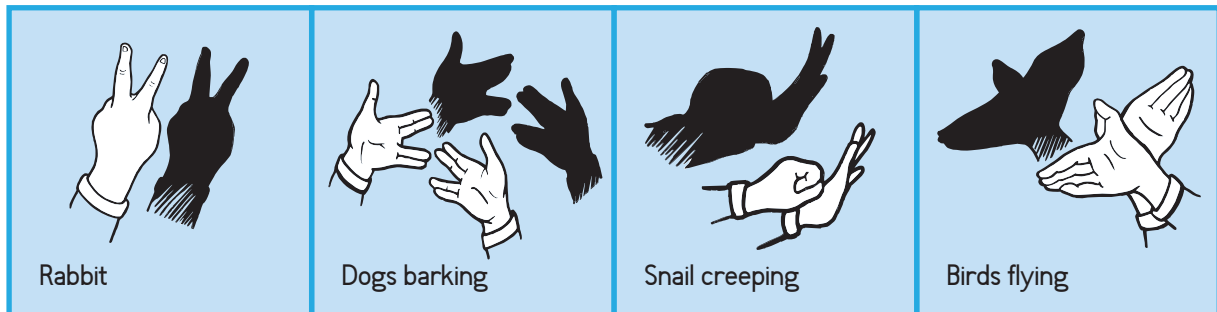
Shadow play actors (or mime artists) act out their skit by standing between a bright light in the background and a sheet between themselves and the audience. Their movements are close to the sheet and the audience sees their shadow through the sheet on the other side. Shadow dramas depend a lot on defined and exaggerated movement, and the room should preferably be darkened.

### Equipment needed for the shadow play stage:

- One or two white sheets.
  - Rope across a room on which to peg or pin the sheets.
  - At least two bright desk lamps (a spot light is even better).
  - Long leads are needed to put lamps in the correct place.
- **Miming**  
Use your body to mime different actions: talking and gestures; falling, walking with a limp, ranting and raving; sobbing and sad; do things like tying a knot, getting dressed, graceful dancing, marching, and so on. Provide music to stimulate movement. Experiment doing the actions face towards the sheet and side on. Discuss together which works best. Experiment with placing the lights behind the actors.

Props can also be used to create shadows such as pieces of furniture or shapes cut out of card (a giant insect, flower, tree, giant ice cream, and so on). Shapes can be stuck on sticks or backing so they stand upright. If you use split pins, parts of the cardboard prop will be able to move; for example, a bird's wing moves up and down as if flying. Use wire attachments to make this happen.

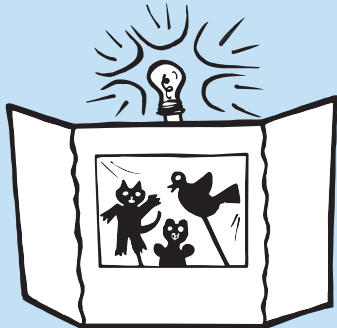
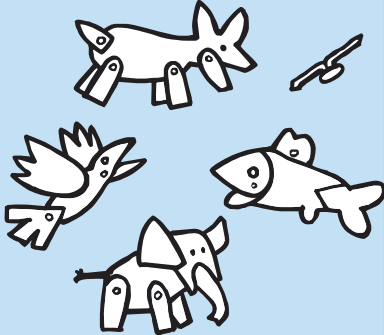
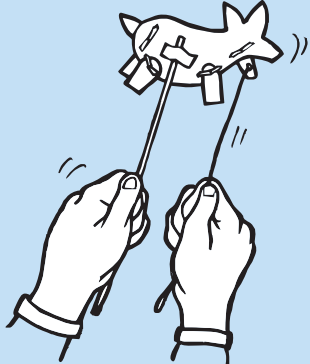
- **Drama and storytelling behind the sheet**  
Actors make use of the things they have learnt and prepare a skit to act out behind the sheet. The secret is bright lights behind them and acting close up to the sheet to get a sharp image or shadow on the other side.
- **Finger and hand shadows**  
Start off by experimenting with finger and hand shadows so that everyone gets the idea. You could also do hand shadows in a dark room with a strong torch.



- **A shadow play box theatre**

Try all the shadow plays in a miniature format. Make a box theatre and encourage players to create their own stories and characters, and to act these out. They could also act out traditional stories or fairy-tales.

You could also make a puppet shadow theatre and work with the players to make their own puppets.

MAKING A PUPPET SHADOW THEATRE		
		
<p>Use a cardboard box and cut a front window in it. Paste or tape tracing paper or a piece of stretched cloth over the stage opening.</p> <p>Shine a bright light behind the screen.</p>	<p>Cut out shapes of animals, people, birds, household objects and so on as props and characters.</p> <p>You could make an arm or leg move up and down by attaching a moving part with a split pin.</p>	<p>The shadow puppet is held up with strong thin sticks or wire.</p> <p>Attach a separate wire to any moving parts (one stick for holding up and another for the moving part).</p>

# 17 Imagination play

## Dressing up

Shop at the next jumble sale and purchase garments that could transport children to another world: hats, caps, shoes, jackets, large gowns, silky dresses, saris, waistcoats, old jewellery, wellington boots, belts to hold up too long dresses! Fabric scraps from a dressmaker's shop or a fabric waste centre, that are tied or pinned around small bodies can be made into any number of imaginative garments.

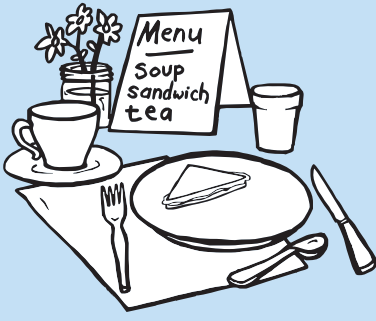

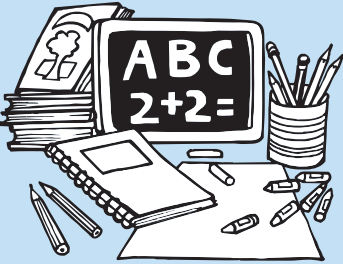





*Granny kept her wedding dress and clothes from long ago and now her granddaughters spend many happy hours playing dress-up with them.*



## Play kits: Props for imaginative play

Children love to imitate and act out life as they see it. Encourage role-playing and story-making by providing props to stimulate ideas and increase the fun.

		
<p><b>RESTAURANT KIT:</b> Plastic or paper cups, saucers, plates, trays, cutlery, menus, tablecloth, tea pot, aprons. Make play food: for example, cold tea or cool drink, papier-mâché fruit and vegetables.</p>	<p><b>KITCHEN KIT:</b> Pots, pans, bowls, measuring cups, whisk, baking sheets, rolling pin, pastry cutters, frying pan, playdough, jelly, box made into a stove.</p>	<p><b>SCHOOL KIT:</b> Paper, pencils, old books, chalk board, crayons, story books, tables and chairs.</p>
		
<p><b>SHOPPING KIT:</b> Toy cash register, sales slips, play money, price tags, old ATM cards, shop supplies (empty product boxes, plastic bottles, papier-mâché vegetables and eggs), baskets, invent a trolley.</p>	<p><b>CLEANING KIT:</b> Small brooms, dustpans, dusters, cleaning liquid, bucket, cloths.</p>	<p><b>HOSPITAL OR CLINIC KIT:</b> Adhesive tape, plasters, cotton wool, stethoscope (real or plastic), small bottles filled with sweets (pretend pills), pretend thermometer.</p>

Ideas drawn from *Learning Through Play* written by Jean Marzollo and Janice Lloyd.

- **Ideas for more play kits:**

- Building: spade, bricks, mud, bricklaying tools, spirit level, string, tool box (allow children to use real tools if possible).
- Camping: tent, sticks for a pretend fire, sleeping bag, cooking stuff, fishing rod, torch.
- Hair and beauty salon: brushes, creams, clips, nail polish, ribbons, shampoo and water, towels.
- Office: old computer, paper, pens, old phone, briefcase, stamps, stapler, punch, old files, stickers, in/out baskets.
- Fire rescue: fire helmets, red clothing, red fabric for cloaks, gumboots, rope, hosepipe, buckets, chairs for a fire truck.



## “Strictly Come Dancing”

These children were mad about “Strictly Come Dancing”, a ballroom dancing competition they had watched on TV. For days they practised their pieces and then held their own “Strictly Come Dancing” show for parents in the neighbourhood.

Children’s play can be inspired by music, being able to observe the real thing in real life or even on a TV programme.

These children had dressing up clothes, space to practise and access to music to pursue their dream of “ballroom” stardom!

# 18

## Musical instruments and music making

Create simple percussion instruments to accompany singing and dancing activities. Challenge older children to create instruments with a “scale” such as xylophones or flutes made from bamboo or pipes. Give time to meaningful creation of sounds and rhythm, even inviting skilled musicians to assist in your music improvisation.

### Drums

Drums are traditional musical instruments and are made with a variety of natural materials such as animal skins, and made materials such as rubber and metal tins. In many traditional cultures drums have a symbolic function and are often used in religious ceremonies. Drums are usually played with the hands, or with one or two sticks.

#### What you need

- Something for the frame (metal tin, carpet tube, ceramic pot).
- Pliable wire and pliers.
- Inside tube of a tyre.

#### How to make a drum

Cut the tyre tube 5cm larger in diameter than the frame. Cover the open side of the frame with the rubber. Wrap wire around the rubber on the sides of the frame and pull it tight. Twist a tight knot with the wire to secure the rubber to the frame. Make sure no sharp edges of wire stick out.

Drum sticks can be made from dead tree branches, old broom sticks or dowel sticks cut to size.


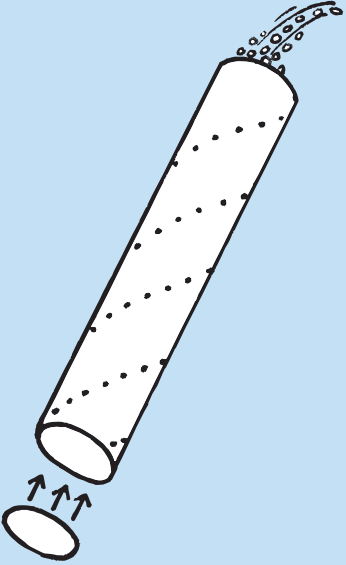


## Rainstick

A rainstick is a long, hollow tube filled with small baubles such as beads, beans or rice. It has small pins or thorns arranged in a spiral pattern (see illustration below). When the stick is upended the beads fall to the other end of the tube, making a sound like a rainstorm as they bounce off the pins.

### What you need

- Bamboo or cardboard tube (from paper towels, wrapping paper, fabric, posters).
- Straight pins (for thin tubes like paper towel or wrapping paper); nails (for thick tubes – nails should be shorter than the diameter of the tube); toothpicks (especially for bamboo).
- Popcorn, seeds, beans, beads for filling.
- Hammer (if using nails).
- Masking tape.
- Materials for decorating the outside (fabric, coloured masking tape, papier-mâché, paint).

HOW TO MAKE A RAINSTICK	
	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Insert pins or nails into the side of the tube in a spiral pattern.</li><li>2. Cover the nail or pin heads with tape to keep them in place.</li><li>3. Close off one end by taping on a circular piece of cardboard.</li><li>4. Pour in filling (for different sounds, try different ingredients such as rice, beads, seeds, beans, popcorn).</li><li>5. Close off the other end of the tube with a piece of cardboard cut to size.</li><li>6. Decorate the outside of the tube with coloured tape, fabric, markers, paint or papier-mâché.</li></ol>	



## Instruments made from waste materials

- **Coffee tin drum**

A coffee tin drum sounds better if the bottom is hammered into a concave shape. Use a cloth and a hammer to do this. Use a teaspoon to make different sounds: scraping on the side, tapping on the plastic lid, hitting the bottom on the edge and in the middle.



- **Shakers**

Use bottle tops and cool drink tin tabs to make a variety of shakers. You can also use plastic bottles, cool drink cans with seeds and small stones as shakers. Two deodorant spray lids can be forced together to make a shaker – dip the plastic in boiling water to make it mouldable.



- **Papier-mâché shaker**

This shaker is made with many strips of newspaper dipped in glue (diluted wood glue or office glue) and moulded around a balloon. After it has dried hard, the balloon is popped.

Pellets, rice or small stones are added into the middle and a stick attached in the hole. Another layer of glue paper strips is added to strengthen and to secure the holding stick in place. Once the glue has dried, decorate the shaker.



- **Bottle xylophone**

Collect bottles and fill them with water to different levels. Ask a musician to help you tune them. Make a sound with a spoon.



## Veld instruments

Use natural resources from the veld to make beautiful indigenous instruments.

Always use natural resources in a sustainable way – do not destroy trees and plants unnecessarily.



## Making music together

Before a host of music makers and their instruments start noisily banging away, think about the music you would like to make.

First, hear what each instrument can do. Imagine what each instrument sounds like – the wind, the sea, thunder? Imagine the instruments having conversations – softly, angrily, excited? Try the coffee tin drums out and test the different sounds. Test how each shaker sounds.

Allow different instruments to sound themselves on their own. Get a rhythm going that everyone can follow. Try a popular song and beat a rhythm to go with it. Sometimes have all the instruments going, other times single out particular instruments to get variety.

You might divide the children into music teams to find their own song and accompanying sounds, and then perform for the others. Always have enough instruments for everyone to have one. Have them available for regular use.



## Making music “sharp, sharp”

Young musicians in Mamelodi and Soweto experimented in a music project called “Sharp, sharp” and made instruments to accompany their music. They made a xylophone with brass plumbing pipes. The pipes rest on sponges and are held on by nails on one side. They also made a drum using packing tape stretched across the top of a plastic crate. The drum is beaten with a stick.

They even made a sewage pipe organ. Several pipes of different sizes were arranged on a frame. A beater was made with a block of wood attached to a handle, and a piece of foam backed carpet that was stuck onto the wooden block.



# Making your own toys 19

For most children in South Africa, toy shops are very inaccessible. This chapter encourages adults and children to work together to create their own special, loved and expressive toys.

In a chapter on making toys in the Hesperian book *Disabled Village Children*, the writers encourage us to “give tools not toys”; to set up work spaces where children can invent and experiment and make their own constructions with adult assistance and coaching. In this way, double value is created: making *and* owning. Consult the book, which is available at [www.hesperian.org](http://www.hesperian.org), for more toy construction ideas.

## Balls

- **Natural material balls and paper balls**

Cut the leg section of pantyhose. Push dried grass into the pantyhose until the desired ball size and tie a knot to secure the ball. Fold stocking back to make the ball stronger and tie again.

- **Rubber band balls**

Connect rubber bands by looping together into a long string. Wind the string into a ball until it reaches the desired size.

- **Plastic balls**

Mould pieces of any plastic wrapping into the shape of a ball. Secure the ball with tape. Continue wrapping plastic around the ball and taping down until the desired size is achieved.

- **Soft stitched ball**

Cut 12 pentagon shapes of paper (get the pentagon shape off the “autosshapes” on a computer and enlarge to size needed). Be careful not to distort the shape and cut it out accurately. Cut 12 pentagon shapes of fabric 1cm larger than the paper. Tack the material tightly and accurately around the paper pentagon shapes. Top stitch the edges together until it forms a ball shape.

Stuff with pantyhose or fibre filling. You could add a bell or shaker or different fillings to create different “weights”.



## Moving Hearts Dollies: “from my heart to yours”

The Moving Hearts Dollies project began as a result of discussions with learners about the right to health. Serious healthcare issues affecting teenagers, such as drug addiction, HIV and teenage pregnancy, were also discussed as these are issues that learners deal with on a daily basis in their communities. The learners concluded that having a healthy body was a privilege that came with the personal responsibility of caring for and not abusing one’s own body.



To remind them of their health and the needs of children who suffer ill-health, Grade 9 learners from Cedar High School, Oaklands High School and South Peninsular High School were each tasked to make a doll to give away to a child who was ill or had a disability. The doll had to be small enough to be held in the child’s hand. Using waste fabric, the learners created what became known as their “Moving Hearts Dollies”.

During the creative process learners were asked to focus on what they would want to say to the child receiving the doll. These personal messages of support and encouragement were attached to the dolls.

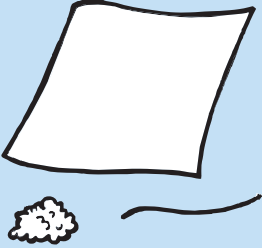
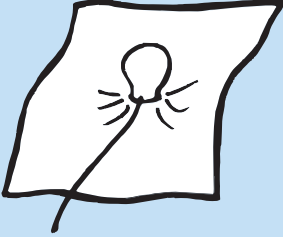
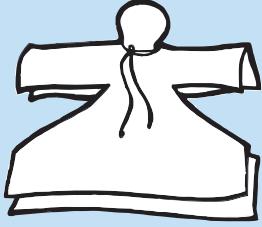
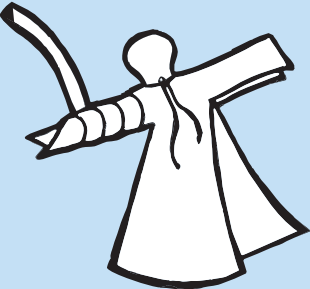
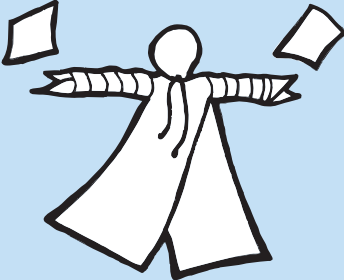




For more information about the Moving Hearts Dollies project, contact Liesl Hartman at the Frank Joubert Art Centre, Cape Town ([www.frankjoubertartcentre.co.za](http://www.frankjoubertartcentre.co.za)).

(Above): A doll maker explains the project to visitors at the Iziko Art Gallery where the dolls were displayed. (Below): A few of the Moving Hearts Dollies.





## HOW TO MAKE A "MOVING HEARTS" DOLL

		
<p>1. Start with a square piece of fabric, some stuffing and a piece of wool or string.</p>	<p>2. Pinch the centre of the fabric and stuff it to make a head. Tie with wool or string.</p>	<p>3. Cut into the fabric from the sides to form the arms.</p>
		
<p>4. Use thin strips of fabric to start binding the arms.</p>	<p>5. Use small pieces of fabric to end off the arms neatly. These form the doll's "hands".</p>	<p>6. Tie the "hands" with wool or string. Bind across the belly to strengthen the joints.</p>
		
<p>7. Bind the body and legs with thin strips of fabric. Cover the "feet" in the same way you did the "hands". Sew the loose bits of string and fabric away so that there are no bits hanging.</p>	<p>8. Sew hair and a face on the doll. If the fabric used is colourful, clothes may not be necessary, but they do add a more personal touch!</p>	<p>9. Make a heart and sew it somewhere on the clothes or body of the doll. Write a message to the child who will receive the doll. Attach it with a tag to the doll's arm or leg.</p>



## Play tent

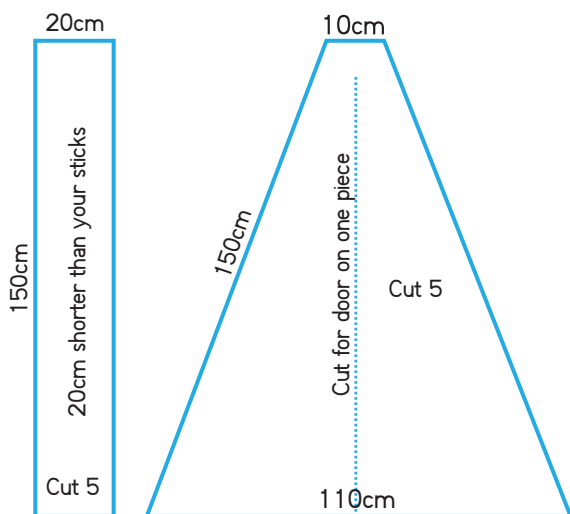
Imagine a whole playground full of colourful tents and a great game of camping or “house”.

### What you need

- Sticks – find five, 2m-long sticks. Clean them up for tent poles.
- Fabric – visit your waste fabric centre and find material to fit five triangles and five rectangles. Take the pattern below with you to measure exactly what you need.

### How to make it

- Cut out five triangles (for the tent sides) and five rectangles (for the tent pole pockets).
- Hem top and bottom edges.
- Cut three quarters of the way up the middle of one triangle piece to create an opening for a “door”. Bind the opening with bias binding or fabric.
- Fold the rectangle pieces in half lengthways. Sew each folded rectangle between two triangles to form a pocket for a tent pole. Sew all pieces together in this way.
- Slip the tent poles into the pockets, secure top and bottom with drawing pins or tacks.
- Pitch the play tent by balancing poles over each other at the top, or secure poles with an extra piece of rope. Spread the sticks out at the bottom.
- The front opening might need a piece of tape to keep the sticks apart at the right distance.



## Cardboard box constructions

Cardboard boxes can be cut up to form many different shapes. Try making a house, a hut, a car, a boat, a garage. Cut pieces of cardboard with a craft knife to fit the shape of your design. Bend and shape to make your project. Tape the pieces together with masking tape.

The “construction” can be made very strong if you cover it with newspaper strips dipped in glue (wallpaper glue, wood glue slightly diluted, office glue or even flour and water glue). Smooth the edges and if necessary do a second layer. Allow to dry well and then paint and decorate. Modge podge glaze finishes it off very nicely.



*Learners from Elsie Mtshali Combined School in Greytown constructed houses out of cardboard boxes. Every home was unique and reflected the homes and environments they knew. Imagine other objects that could be made to go with the homes, and a game that could centre around a town, people, community...*

## Soccer box

Use packing crates to create a table soccer game; you could also try using a reinforced cardboard box. Make holes in the sides and insert thick dowelling sticks. Nail on “soccer players” made from wood off-cuts. Teams can be simply coloured by soaking in food colouring.

This table soccer game was made by children participating in the Active Schools Initiative (see page 146).



## Celebrating local toy makers

Consider how wire, tins, boxes, found wheels, tubing, bottles and so on can be inventively used to make toys.

Support local toy making initiatives with tools, ideas and technical assistance.

Support local toy makers. Visit the African Toy Shop website at [www.theafricantoyshop.co.za](http://www.theafricantoyshop.co.za).

# Creative art activities

# 20

A child's vision is global – they take in the entire whole, exploring it fully through all the senses and defining it through creative impulses. This creative exploration and development is absolutely integral to the understanding young children have of their world and how they relate to it; this influences their sense of self and ultimate place in the world.

Making and learning in the arts is a unique form of experience, which cannot be initiated in any other way. Every child has the potential to be creative, original, spontaneous and innovative – every child is an explorer and only needs a stimulating environment that allows them to freely express feelings, experiences and an understanding of life. Children's creativity needs to be nourished and developed from a young age so that it can continue to grow throughout their lives.

Making images is not only non-verbal, it is pre-verbal.

## Drawing and storytelling

### What is drawing?

Drawing is the act of making marks on a surface using line, tone and texture. Children draw to express their feelings, to tell stories and to communicate their ideas to others. They may invent symbols that they know only the meaning of to represent their reality. Children should always be invited to talk about their artwork and not discouraged or judged by adult standards.

### About storytelling

Storytelling is as old as humankind. From the very earliest times it has been the way to entertain, to educate and to pass on history, traditions, important events and legends from one generation to the next. Stories allow people to relax and, just for a moment, to step into another world to become part of another place, time or event. This is where our imagination is stimulated and becomes active. There are many different ways of using stories to stimulate children's ideas and creative thought.

### What you need

- A suitable story that children can relate to their experiences.
- Real objects or pictures to introduce or to use during the story.
- Drawing materials (such as paper, paintbrushes, wax crayons or oil pastels, food colouring).

### Introduction before telling the story

This can be done by doing one or more of the following activities related to the story such as using rhymes or songs that connect to the theme of the story; clapping or dodging games; action songs. Use pictures, real objects or have a theme table to introduce new or unusual items that will be mentioned in the story.

### Tell the story

Some stories are best told together with the children or with the children taking an active part.

### At the end of the story

Allow time for the children to reflect on what they have heard and learnt. Prompt them to share ideas by using open-ended questions that require them to give full sentence replies and to think about solutions to problems. Avoid getting children to repeat the whole story as this can get boring for the other children. Encourage children to share their feelings about the story they have heard.



### Drawing

Have drawing materials set out for the children and invite them to freely draw any picture about the story. Always encourage children to draw freely without self-consciousness, to experiment and explore.

## Printing

### What is printing?

Printing is to transfer a design, pattern or image from one surface to another surface by a range of techniques. This means that some parts of the surface are covered with ink or paint or they may be textured, and other parts are left blank. Children enjoy the magic of the printing process and different cultures express the patterns, designs and symbols that have meaning in their lives.

Before printing, talk about colours and shapes with the children. Allow them to play around with different ways of applying paint to different objects to get exciting prints.

### How to make a print pad

Place a thin piece of sponge, cotton wool or a pad of pre-washed cotton fabric onto a small dish. Mix powder paint with a little water until creamy. Pour several spoonfuls of paint onto the sponge. This helps the object to collect a minimum of paint and gives a clear print.

Place a pad of newspaper under the paper to be printed. This gives a better impression.





### Printing with found objects

Find objects to relief print (try cotton reels, corks, tyre pieces, old shoe soles, rubber, buttons, bottle tops, wood, cardboard shapes, lids, crumpled plastic bag with elastic band to hold it, wheels of broken toys). Show children how to use the print pad by pressing an object onto the print pad and then onto the paper or fabric and repeat without necessarily repressing onto the print pad.

### Printing with sponges

You will need sponges of different shapes and sizes or scrunched up and secured with a clothes peg. Dip these onto the paint pad and print on paper.

### Chalk and dry paint prints

Cut or tear shapes out of thick paper or card. Colour around the edge of the shape with dry coloured chalk. Place on the paper. Hold the shape and gently rub from the shape onto the paper, pulling the colour from the shape onto the paper all around the edge. Carefully lift shape and repeat. The same effect can be achieved by using a finger dipped into dry paint powder and rubbed around the edge of the shape. The finished design can be prevented from smudging by spraying with hair spray.

## Making masks

Masks have been traditionally used in many societies. For centuries, people in Africa have worn masks in rituals and ceremonies to act out myths, to teach moral lessons, to solve problems in the community and to entertain. The masks are usually worn with full costume in dances or plays, accompanied by music and song. They often have distorted or emphasised features to express strong feelings. Masks can tell us a great deal about the people who use them and their society.

### What you need

- Bases for masks (cardboard boxes, paper bags).
- Strong glue.
- Scissors or cutting knives.
- Wire.
- Masking tape.
- Stapler.
- String.
- Pliers
- Wire cutters.
- Powder paint in a range of colours.
- Waste materials (such as wool, raffia, fabric pieces, small cardboard boxes of all shapes, corks, buttons, polystyrene containers, foam pieces, feathers, leather bits, pipe-cleaners, sticks, shiny paper, string grocery bags, pie-plates, tin foil, cotton waste, sponge, toilet rolls, paper towel rolls, old stockings, bottle tops).



Before making masks, play some games to stimulate the children's imaginations and to create awareness of facial details. Show children some examples of masks. If possible, take them to a museum or gallery to see real masks. You could also find photographs of masks in a book on African art. Talk about masks. Why were they made? How were they used? Keep your explanation short and simple.



## Finger painting

### What is finger paint?

Finger paint is a kind of paint intended to be applied with the fingers. Finger painting has therapeutic benefits and is a fun activity for both adults and children.

### What you need

- 1 cup corn flour (maizena).
- Full kettle of boiling water.
- Food colour or powder paint.

### How to make finger paint

Mix cornflour with cold water to form a runny paste (like making custard). Add a few drops of food colour or powder paint into the paste. Pour in boiling water while stirring until the cornflour “cooks” and becomes thick. If the cornflour doesn’t thicken you can place it in the microwave for a minute or two, or you can cook it in a saucepan. When cool, spoon the finger paint directly onto a table top or a plastic sheet on a table or on the floor.

### Activities

The children use both hands to spread the finger paint and make patterns. Lay large sheets of paper over the finger-painted patterns. Pat lightly and then lift the paper carefully. You will see the printed patterns on the paper.

When most of the finger paint has been taken off, children can make new patterns in the paint that is left and then print again.





# Part 3

## Enabling play

**“Ensure that the available opportunities are accessible to all children, regardless of their difference, by addressing all barriers to play, with specific attention paid to groups of children at a higher risk of exclusion from opportunities to play because of their circumstances.”**

Reference: General Comment No.17 (2013)



# Adults as play enablers

# 21

Enabling play as a right for children is a life-giving and necessary provision. Rights become a reality when someone takes responsibility. Children across the world, including those in Southern Africa, face a number of common barriers to the right to play. Special measures to ensure play must be taken by governments and others to overcome these barriers through the country's policies, laws, programmes and budgets at national, provincial and local levels.

## Challenges and barriers to the right to play

**Poor understanding and recognition of the importance and value of the right to play for children of all ages:** Play is seen as a “frivolous or unproductive activity” and certain forms of play, such as competitive games and sports are valued more highly than other forms of play that are equally important for the child's development. There is ignorance about the true value of play.

**Unsafe and hazardous environments:** Children need safe and age-appropriate spaces to play freely. However, many children face physical hazards such as pollution, overcrowding, excessive traffic, lack of green spaces and cultural facilities. Environments are toxic and violent with high levels of crime which pose a special risk for girl children.

**Resistance to children's use of public spaces:** The increasing privatisation, commercialisation and regulation of public spaces contribute to restrictions on children's freedom to play in these areas – NO BALL GAMES!!

**Lack of access to nature:** Increasing levels of urbanisation mean that children are no longer able to access and play freely in natural environments.

**Pressure for educational achievement:** Formal learning and pressure to improve educational outcomes demands extra time in the classroom and a minimising of play opportunities for children in learning centres.

**Overly-structured and programmed schedules:** Adult-decided extracurricular activities such as sports, cultural and rehabilitation activities for children with disabilities are increasingly regulating children's lives, leaving little time for self-directed play activities which is a catalyst for creativity and wellbeing.

**Growing role of electronic media:** Screen time has numerous benefits for play, information and connection but excessive passive hours spent on the screen interferes with children’s holistic development by restricting varied play opportunities.

**Safety concerns:** Perceived and real lack of safety for children is causing caregivers to carefully manage and curtail children’s natural play movements.

**Child health:** Obesity and diabetes are associated with children not exercising their bodies. Some of the barriers to play that have been listed contribute to this.

## Particular children need special attention for play rights

**Children living in poverty:** The poorest communities have the least allocation of resources for providing safe and appropriate play spaces. Due to impoverished and unsafe living environments, they are the ones who most need it!

**Children with disabilities:** Due to lack of knowledge, prejudicial attitudes and lack of resources, children with disabilities are at a greater risk of not playing.

**Girl children:** Safety issues and onerous domestic responsibilities inhibit the right of girls to play.

**Children living in institutions:** Children in institutions such as residential homes and schools, hospitals, detention centres and refugee centres experience lack of resources, inadequate space and lack of permission to play.

Children in minority groups and those affected by humanitarian and natural disasters might also have their play rights neglected.

### References:

1. General Comment 17 (2013)
2. “A child’s right to play – A policy brief for South Africa” ([www.a-chance-to-play.org.za](http://www.a-chance-to-play.org.za))



*Adults can enable play by paying attention to children and by supporting and accompanying them as they learn play skills. As adults expose children to new play ideas by doing activities with them, children become more confident and capable of pursuing many interests.*

# Remembering our childhood play

In this chapter we share an exercise that is used to motivate older youth and adults to become play activists. Adults participate in drawing and/or telling stories about their favourite form of play when they were young. Stories and pictures are shared with others and reflection is encouraged. Often during reflection, someone will ask whether today's children have those same opportunities and they may even speculate about what will happen to children if they aren't given the same kind of opportunities to play and discover.

As a result of this exercise people become energised, enthusiastic and excited about play.

## Favourite memories of childhood play

### Step 1: Clapping game

Sit across from your clapping partner. Try this sequence together: Clap your own hands together, clap each other's right hand, then your own hands, then each other's left hand, then your own hands, then both of each other's hands, and start again. Repeat a few times. The speed of the clapping (and the song) gradually increases. Children often develop complicated patterns and may either sing or chant remembered verses, or create new songs or poems to go with their clapping.

Before moving on to step 2, briefly discuss what skills were developed by the clapping game; for example, hand-eye coordination, memory of the patterns, concentration, keeping up as the speed increases, working as a team, agreeing on the pattern, and so on.

### Step 2: Imagination exercise

Invite participants to close their eyes, relax, and picture themselves playing in a situation they enjoyed as a child. Where were you? Who were you with? What were you doing? What was good about the play? Some participants may wish to draw their favourite memory of play.

### Step 3: Sharing

Invite each participant to share his or her memory of their favourite way of playing as a child. Each presenter should also share what they enjoyed most about the play, who they played with, what they learnt from it and how they benefited from the play.

#### Step 4: Debriefing

What are the common threads in the memories? Do you think today's children have the same opportunities for play? How is it different for them? How do rural opportunities for play differ from urban opportunities? What are the implications for us as carers of children?

Responses will vary but in most groups adults report fond memories of creative play with only improvised props or home-made toys. Adults also report having felt safe where they played, even though they played without adult supervision.


Discuss the relevance of the group's memories to planning for play today.

ELIZABETH TSHWENYANA

I loved playing skipping when i was young and i would run from washing dishes because of it, i used to play with my sisters friends.




The illustration shows two women on either side of a rope, holding it taut. A small child is in the middle of the rope, jumping over it. The scene is simple and captures a classic childhood game.



TSHEHLA · T · CHARLOTTE

This was a sweet moment I will never forget in my life, Because I enjoy playing Soccer with my uncle wearing his jersey.

The illustration depicts a young girl in a soccer uniform, captured in the middle of kicking a ball. She is wearing a jersey with the number '08' on it. The background is plain, focusing on the action.

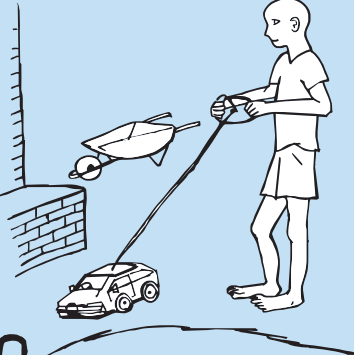


Thapedi

I used to play a Rounders game even though I did not know how to run but i used to make the game fun. I loved my flare dress and i didn't fall while running from one corner to the next, i would wear sandals so that i could run quicker.

The illustration shows a girl in a striped flare dress and sandals, looking towards a ball. The word 'Thapedi' is written in a stylized font above her.

During my age when I was a little boy I was good with doing cars and also driving them, I used to make cars for my friends too. Making cars was something that I enjoyed in my life.



KAGISO

The illustration shows a boy standing next to a toy car he has made. He is holding a string attached to the car, which is on a small track. The background includes a brick wall and a window.

Some favourite memories of play.

# 23 Training play leaders

Play leaders may have many different roles. They may lead games, create safe play spaces, watch over children as they play, develop equipment and keep it in good shape, and they may teach children to be play leaders during school break times. Play leaders may need to calm a noisy group or even support individual children during play activities. Play leaders might have a more direct role as they initiate and teach new games to a group of children, and as they facilitate a play session or programme.

Children, teenagers, young adults, mothers, fathers and grandparents can all be play leaders. This chapter will help play leaders to develop skills and to think through some of the issues of “play rights” for children.

## Training Activity 1: How to lead a group game

### Step 1: Role-play

Start the session by playing one or two games with trainee play leaders. Lead them well and ensure much enjoyment. After a few games, role-play poor leadership: speaking too softly, trying to read rules from a book, going away to fetch equipment, talking too long, and so on.

### Step 2: Discussion

How did the first games go? What made the games go well? Use flipchart paper and write up leadership tips and ideas on what needs to happen for a game to run well (see the checklist on page 132). Think about the last few games. What problems were there? Write these problems on the flipchart paper. How could these problems be managed better?

### Step 3: Make yourself heard!

Allocate or allow a choice of a game to two or three trainee play leaders. Give them time to prepare the game and then explain and demonstrate it. After one or two games, you might challenge them by having members of the group act out problem behaviour: players talking during instruction, not understanding, showing no interest and withdrawing, or getting restless and messing around. How would they handle this?

Reflect on their efforts and check the leadership tips again.

**Group games** – Chapters 7, 9, 10, 12, 13.



## Checklist for leading a game

- Do you know the game? You must not read it out of the book!
- Do you have everyone's attention before you begin to explain the game?
- Is your voice loud enough?
- Do players understand your explanation? Have you demonstrated rather than talked too much?
- Is everyone included? Have you made space to include late-comers?
- Is the room organised before you start (furniture moved, floor clear, windows open, lighting on)?
- Have you written down the list of games you are planning to play?
- Is your equipment ready (balls, string, tape, and so on)? Is the electricity on if you need it for music?
- Is your support team with you and helping? Are they in among the players, actively joining in and not sitting on the sidelines?
- Did you stop the game at its best, before people lost interest?

## Training Activity 2: Play rights

### Step 1: What is play?

Start by having a conversation about what play is. Brainstorm ideas and try to make your own definition. Then show the General Comment description of play written up on flipchart paper (you will find it on page 6) How do they compare? Discuss the practical implications of each element in detail.

### Step 2: The right to play – key messages

Display the words of Article 31 on the right to play (you will find them on page 12). Ask play leaders what messages they see in this text. Briefly write some ideas up on flipchart paper and discuss them. Then divide into small groups, each taking a statement to discuss further and report back to the group. Some key ideas include:

- “Rest, leisure”. What does this mean for a child?
- “Play and recreational activities”. Must play be organised or free choice (see page 39). What are recreational activities?
- “State parties shall respect and promote ... and shall encourage provision of ...” What is the role of government in ensuring play? Which departments would be involved in fulfilling this role? Who else in a community could support the development of play (see page 139)?
- “Equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity”. What is the reality of this and what are the practical implications?

Consult General Comment 17 on the child's right to play and recreation pages 5–7 to gain clearer insight on the above themes. You might copy the sections and give the groups information to support their feedback.

#### References:

1. Google “United Nations General Comment No. 17”
2. Children have a right to play – Chapter 1 of this manual

## Training Activity 3: Debate guidelines for good play

Actively debate issues around play and decide on guidelines for good play.

### Step 1: Explain the debate process

Prepare four signs (agree, disagree, strongly agree, strongly disagree) and stick these up around the room. Explain to play leader trainees that you will make a statement and participants must choose to stand near the sign they most agree with. Ask participants from each position to speak in turn about why they are standing where they are. If all are in agreement, encourage a few to take opposite stands just to get a lively conversation going.

See the table below and on the next page for sample debate topics with some example of for and against arguments.

### Step 2: Debating statements

While play leaders are sharing their ideas, write key points up on flipchart paper for all to see.

### Step 3: What will your position be?

After the discussion and having gone over the points raised, decide as a group what position you will take on each of these issues? Write them down and use the document as your guideline for good play.

Debate topics (examples):	Some (example) arguments supporting the statement:	Some (example) arguments against the statement:
<p><b>1. Promoting competition helps keep the game exciting.</b></p> <p><i>Underlying topic: How competitive should your “play” be?</i></p>	<p>Provides challenge; motivates; give purpose to the game; players take it more seriously; players try harder. Play is for results not just for fun or exercise.</p>	<p>Sporty children always win, others feel put down and discouraged. Promotes aggression.</p>
<p><b>2. Children who disrupt a game should be removed immediately.</b></p> <p><i>Underlying topic: How do you manage disruptive behaviour?</i></p>	<p>They will learn a lesson and begin to behave; other children will know what the behaviour boundaries are and cooperate for fear of also being removed from the activity.</p>	<p>Players should be given a chance to correct themselves; they should be informed clearly about what the problem is. Immediate removal is unnecessary; play leaders can individually speak to and guide a child more positively than drastically throwing them out. There should be a warning system like soccer yellow and red cards.</p>

<p><b>3. Adults should never play in a team or game with children.</b></p> <p><i>Underlying topic: Role of adults in “play”. Should they join in the game or not?</i></p>	<p>They dominate; they can hurt a child; they might get carried away and become too competitive; they get all the turns.</p>	<p>Can guide, provide skills to keep game going; can support children learning skills; can help a badly losing team catch up to create an edge to the game. Can be a coach, cheerleader, player, role model of good gamesmanship and fun, all at the same time!</p>
<p><b>4. It is very difficult to play a meaningful game with children of mixed abilities.</b></p> <p><i>Underlying topic: Playing with children of different abilities.</i></p>	<p>Children who have superior ability will get frustrated and not reach their potential. Active and able children will leave bored.</p>	<p>Children will learn tolerance and become creative at adapting games and play to include others; new experiences and insights into “disability” will be gained; games do not need to be competitive.</p>

## Training Activity 4: Risks—Benefits Assessments

Children need and choose exciting places to play, which inevitably means managing situations that are inherently risky. Striking the right balance between protecting children from the most serious risks and allowing them to reap the benefits of play is not about eliminating risk. In essence, play is a safe and beneficial activity. The concept of balancing risks with benefits has become an appropriate approach to risk management across play, leisure and education.

Children need challenging and even risky activities to develop skills, confidence, and judgement and to set their own boundaries. Children become more efficient at self-protection when allowed to do this. Always be checking for potential risks and actively remove hazards that may not be anticipated by children e.g. broken glass in the grass, damaged play equipment. Be as **safe as necessary** rather than as safe as possible.

Google: “Play England: Managing risk in Play Provision”

Watch: “The benefit of risks in children’s play” – a video by Alliance for Childhood

Discuss: 1. What play risks and hazards do your children face?

2. What have you done to support safe play?

## Play leader Code of Conduct

Not everyone has the same sense of what is appropriate behaviour with children. You are obligated to protect children in your company. This includes protecting them from adults who might behave inappropriately towards children and even be abusive.

Signing a code of conduct is just one security step in protecting children. Play Active, a programme organised by the Children's Rights Centre, used the example on the next page.

If you are running regular programmes with children, your organisation should have a "Child Safety and Protection Policy" in place. This would include how you recruit adults into the play programme, code of conducts, grievance and disciplinary processes, specific safety arrangements, training and identification of a "childnet" that includes contact people and organisations you could refer children to if you become aware of problems.

For more information on Child Protection and Safeguarding go to [www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk](http://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk). Click on "How we keep our children safe" then "Resource Library".



*Play Active Community Play Days (see page 146) emphasised three guidelines for "good" play: have fun; play fair; nobody hurt.*

*Simple yellow vests were sewn for all play leaders to wear on play days. A silkscreen was prepared and the Play Active logo and play rules were printed onto the vests. The vests help to unify and identify play leaders during a Play Active event or play day. Vests and play day equipment could be stored at a safe venue or at your organisation and individuals could borrow them for their own play days.*

## Example of a play leader Code of Conduct

It is expected that play leaders who have joined the “Play Active” team as volunteers to help facilitate and promote a fun day of games activities for children will:

- register for the day’s activities (only registered play leaders may wear the yellow identification vests);
- wear a name tag so that they are identifiable by the children, team leaders and parents;
- attend the Play Day orientation and skills training session; and
- uphold the following responsibilities and Code of Conduct:

**1. The safety and wellbeing of children participating in the event must be upheld constantly and with great care.** This includes:

- ensuring road safety;
- safe use of public facilities such as public toilets (that they are safe going there);
- controlling the use of sports equipment that could be dangerous such as bats and hard balls;
- being aware of children leaving the activity area unaccompanied;
- preventing harmful actions and negative interference of any kind, including “physical or emotional” attack and bullying and fighting between children;
- reporting safety-compromising situations to the team leader.

**2. Help all participants have a worthwhile and fun day.** This includes:

- upholding and acknowledging the dignity of each participant;
- ensuring that children’s needs are met first (such as refreshments);
- promote a positive spirit throughout the activity;
- cooperate with team members to achieve the day’s outcomes;
- help with all the practical details of organising this event.

**3. Dealings with children:**

- No smoking while on duty.
- No bad language or swearing at children for any reason.
- No physical harmful actions such as hitting, arm twisting or anything else that may be used against any child.
- Conflict situations must be resolved non-violently and if it cannot be dealt with, referred to team leaders.

**4. Care for resources and equipment**

All equipment must be used for the correct purposes and returned and stored in places where it will not be stolen, damaged or lost. We depend on play leaders to protect equipment.

**5. Uphold the Play Day rules:**

- Have fun.
- Play fair.
- Nobody to get hurt!



# Lobbying and advocacy for play

This chapter encourages all concerned about children’s right to play, to be advocates and activists for play. Awareness needs to be raised about the importance of play not only for the individual child’s development, but also to redress some of the ills in our society. Those who make decisions about sport, leisure and cultural activities must be convinced that “ordinary” play also needs planning and resources.

Our common cause for advocacy is play. Different target groups at different times require different actions. An overall cause might need to be broken down into smaller achievable actions. For example, lobbying for indigenous games to be played at the local school will require different actions to a campaign to establish a playground for children in the inner-city.

## Key messages on play

- Play is a right and starts at birth. South Africa has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which includes Article 31 on the right to play.
- Play has many purposes and is vital for children’s development.
- A range of play is essential to meet all needs, ages and stages.
- Play is essential for a healthy society.
- Children need to play every day.
- Children take the lead in play, but need adult support.
- Include children in play rights awareness raising and advocacy.
- Play does not have to be expensive.
- Play must be safe. It must not hurt feelings, bodies or relationships.
- Play must be fair and where problems arise, justice must reign. Adults have a key role to play in mediating conflict and socialisation.
- Get adults playing children’s games and they will become advocates for children’s right to play.

### Each one of us can contribute to making children’s right to play a reality:

- At home, improve your own children’s play opportunities, quality and appropriateness of play experiences.
- At family and community functions, create safe, designated play areas with adult supervision.

- Make sure that your workplace has play space for children who may be waiting for attention or who are accompanying adults who use your services. Ensure that there are a range of activities for children of different ages and abilities.
- If you work in the community or work with community outreach workers, consider including mobile play packs as part of the field equipment.
- Encourage others to include play spaces and programmes in service delivery points – hospitals, clinics, social workers’ offices, and so on.
- Toy Libraries – join or start a toy library.
- Learn and teach more about child development to make play appropriate to different ages and different developmental stages.
- Learn, share and support traditional and indigenous games.
- Encourage extramural programmes in schools.
- Play in playgrounds at school – monitor quality of school playgrounds and demand the best from the authorities.
- Insist on decent, safe outdoor play spaces for children in Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) through local councils.



## Ideas for advocacy

### Start a Community Play Forum to mobilize action for play:

1. Gather facts about the situation regarding play you want to change – e.g. is there a play area for teenagers?
2. Win over strategic partners (ward councillor, organisations, educators), raise public awareness and get support from community leaders, parents and children themselves.
3. Evaluate play provision for children of different ages and abilities and identify possible future play spaces.
4. Choose a problem to address that has an achievable goal.
5. Identify, convince and get commitment from the decision makers and press for a solution. Gather the resources needed.
6. Pursue a spiral of action: plan–do–review and then start again to plan the next action, building on what has been done.

For more detailed information go to [www.a-chance-to-play.org.za](http://www.a-chance-to-play.org.za)

Some ideas for advocacy and some hints on what may work at various levels in society are listed in the table on the opposite page. These ideas should get you thinking about what you can do.

Once an advocacy strategy has begun, many more issues will be discovered and ways of dealing with them. A P.L.A.Y. (Play: Lobbying and Advocacy for Youngsters) movement could begin!

Have a look at [www.eastafricanplaygrounds.org](http://www.eastafricanplaygrounds.org) (Uganda) – 150 playgrounds built.

Levels of society	Goals for play rights	Who to target	Communication strategies and actions
<p><b>Neighbourhood level</b></p> <p>After the household, this is the most localised area where we can promote play and should advocate for more play.</p> <p>A Community Play Forum (see p142) ensures that children’s play needs are met in their own wards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play groups and clubs</li> <li>• Parent information sessions on play</li> <li>• Toys and play materials in the local library</li> <li>• Play days at various religious and other venues – especially on World Play (28 May)</li> <li>• Use of school playgrounds by broader community for play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local parents</li> <li>• Community leaders</li> <li>• Church leaders</li> <li>• School principals and governing bodies</li> <li>• Councillor who makes sure that play is on the Agenda at Ward Council meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact sheets</li> <li>• Letters</li> <li>• Door-to-door campaigns</li> <li>• Presentations</li> <li>• Direct visits by appointment</li> <li>• Play days and play demonstrations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Municipal level</b></p> <p>Local municipalities are the smallest government entity and also the local government entity responsible for the wellbeing of all their inhabitants and citizens. This includes children!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient and safe parks and play facilities</li> <li>• Recreation facilities and programmes such as sport groups</li> <li>• Budget for play</li> <li>• Local toy library</li> <li>• Play days</li> <li>• May need to advocate against new structures that take away green spaces and child-focused activity centres</li> <li>• School holiday programmes</li> <li>• Libraries with special sections for children</li> <li>• Museums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ward Councillor informing Ward Council</li> <li>• Mayor</li> <li>• Mayoral committee</li> <li>• City or town manager</li> <li>• Municipal officials</li> <li>• Town planners</li> <li>• Developers</li> <li>• Tax payers association</li> <li>• Local media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact sheets</li> <li>• Letters to important people</li> <li>• Door-to-door campaigns</li> <li>• Presentations to structures</li> <li>• Direct visits by appointment</li> <li>• Letters to the media</li> <li>• Media articles</li> </ul>
<p><b>Provincial level</b></p> <p>Provinces have specific mandates towards the development and wellbeing of all inhabitants. These are different from that of municipalities, though it does support local initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awards for municipalities that promote play</li> <li>• Budget for play</li> <li>• Provincial play days especially on World Play Day (28 May)</li> <li>• Resource list on play and recreation in the provinces</li> <li>• Funding of NGOs that support and promote play</li> <li>• Play as part of government initiated or supported programmes for children</li> <li>• Provincial awareness campaigns on play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Premier</li> <li>• Members of the legislature</li> <li>• Portfolio committees</li> <li>• Members of the Executive Council</li> <li>• Heads of departments</li> <li>• Officials at all levels</li> <li>• Print media</li> <li>• Provincial and community radio</li> <li>• Provincial advisory council for children</li> <li>• Provincial interdepartmental committees on ECD</li> <li>• Business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact sheets</li> <li>• Letters to important people</li> <li>• Presentations to structures</li> <li>• Direct visits by appointment</li> <li>• Letters to the media</li> <li>• Media articles</li> <li>• Media packages</li> <li>• Research reports</li> </ul>

Levels of society	Goals for play rights	Who to target	Communication strategies and actions
<p><b>National level</b></p> <p>The highest level of government is at a national level. This level is very important for uniform national norms and standards, the development of national policies and legislation as well as for their general oversight function.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget for play</li> <li>• Inclusion of play in important child-related policies and legislation</li> <li>• Play as important in training programmes</li> <li>• Public information campaign on play</li> <li>• Research on play</li> <li>• Monitoring whether we are fulfilling children's right to play across the country at every level</li> <li>• Ensuring that play is included in the country report to the UN Committee on Children's Rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of parliament and national committees of parliament</li> <li>• Presidency</li> <li>• Ministries and national departments</li> <li>• National media (including SABC and the press)</li> <li>• National non-governmental structures</li> <li>• National Office on the Rights of the Child and provincial advisory councils for children</li> <li>• Portfolio committees of parliament</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact sheets</li> <li>• Letters to important people</li> <li>• Presentations to structures</li> <li>• Direct visits by appointment</li> <li>• Letters to the media</li> <li>• Media articles</li> <li>• Media packages</li> <li>• Research reports</li> <li>• Submissions</li> </ul>
<p><b>International level</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send reports on World Play Day activities in the region to the International Toy Library Association</li> <li>• International Play alliances and movements for resources &amp; support</li> <li>• Ensure that play is included in Country report to UNCRC and ACRWC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Websites and newsletters and links with children's actions for play Committee on the Rights of the Child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact, join and support international movements to lobby for play and share resources</li> </ul>

*Communities should be reacting to play spaces that are broken down and falling into disrepair. Who is responsible for literally “untangling” the swings? Resources such as this should not be tied up and unavailable to children.*



# 25 Play action in practice

There are many organisations and projects in Southern Africa that are champions of play. In this chapter we share a few examples that will hopefully “seed” ideas for play programmes in many more communities around our region.

## World Play Day

In 1999, at the 8th International Toy Library Conference in Tokyo, the then President of the International Toy Library Association (ITLA) Dr Freda Kim proposed the establishment of World Play Day. Since then the Southern African region has joined over 30 countries worldwide in celebrating World Play Day on 28 May each year. (Google: International Toy Library Association and click on World Play Day – Reports.)

Dr Kim shared her vision for World Play Day:

“What I envisage is not an event or series of events, and not something that entails expansive and expensive preparations (or expensive presents). The essence of play is childlike. It is what all children do naturally. Therefore, a World Play Day should be a day of total attention to each other, from generation to generation; a day when children and adults do what they want to do, and a day that is relaxed and emphasises human interaction.

“We do not need to stop the world for a day. We play in our own place, home, school or work place. Perhaps I am describing an attitude rather than an activity. A day that is fun and shows adults and children in interactive situations promoting the healthy growth of each other in simple, self-motivated activities of their own choice. If everyone in the world can do this on the same day each year we will have a World Play Day.”

On World Play Day (and every day), we should make sure that we:

- allow play to happen and give children the time to play;
- provide safe spaces to play that take into account children’s play needs;
- take time to play with a single child or a group of children;
- teach a child one of the traditional games we played as children, making sure that these games are passed on to the next generation;
- invite someone from an older generation to come and play with children; and
- encourage the whole family to spend some time playing together.



## Planning a Community Play Day

The Children’s Rights Centre (CRC) in Durban started the Play Active Day as an event to highlight the right and need for children to play. This is especially so in situations where possibilities of play are often limited; for example, in inner-city areas where there might be a lack of facilities and play equipment. It is an awareness-raising and community-building event to get children in local communities playing together for a morning or afternoon, with older children and adult partners helping to run the games.

Play Active events aim to:

- develop play leader skills and enthusiasm to regularly support children’s play;
- create a fun, safe play experience in a local park – sometimes this is an act of reclaiming a space which is not used for play; and
- involve partner organisations and build and share skills and ideas for furthering play activities.

Play Active events motivate for the creation of child-friendly play spaces that are of a decent size, are clean and safe, have some resources and play equipment, and are supported by adults to enabled safe and stimulating play.

Google: “Pop up Adventure Play” – specialising in community play days and “play pop ups” which are free, play events that happen anywhere that children are found – neighbourhoods, schools, parks!

## Planning a Play Active Play Day

Here is a list of things to talk about when planning a Play Day:

### 1. Organising team

- Who will be on the organising team?
- Who will help with this project?

### 2. Purpose/ Outcomes

- What do you want to achieve?
- What messages would you like to communicate?
- Why are you doing this activity and how will it promote children’s play?



### **3. Funding**

- Budget: What do you think the costs will be?
- Fundraising: How will you raise funds and by when?
- Donations-in-kind: Will someone donate such things as food, equipment? Can you borrow and make do instead of needing to buy the items you need?

### **4. Dates and timeline**

- When will the event happen?
- Planning meetings: When and how often will the planning team meet?
- Play leader training date: When will play leaders be trained and taught the games?
- Work-party date: When will equipment for the play day be prepared and made such as posters, banners, vests, beanbags, and so on?

### **5. Marketing the Play Day**

- Identify the target group: Who will be invited?
- How many participants would you like to aim for?
- Who will make posters and pamphlets and organise distribution?
- Who will prepare a media briefing and information for newspaper articles?
- Who will contact a reporter to write a story and take photographs?

### **6. Venue and facilities**

- Permission to use park or other venue (Who do you ask? Must you write a letter, visit or phone the person in charge?).
- Is there access to water?
- Is there access to toilets and is toilet paper provided? Are the toilets clean and safe?
- Do you need electricity for a sound system?
- Find out about security arrangements and keys for property and facility.
- Are there hiring costs involved?

### **7. Programme outline**

- Decide on what kind of programme you will have and how long it will be.
- Divide your programme into sections.
- What ages and special needs will you cater for?
- What games will you play?
- How will you end the Play Day? Identify concluding story-teller, clown, puppet show, drama, and arrange this.

### **8. Play equipment**

- What equipment do you need?
- What needs to be home-made? By whom, how, when, what materials are needed? What equipment can be borrowed?

### **9. Finding and organising play leaders**

- Identify key play leaders for different age groups and special needs.
- Define the tasks the play leaders will be undertaking and write them down so that they know exactly what they must do.
- Decide who will lead the play leaders' training session.
- How will play leaders be identified at the Play Day? What must be made (a vest, badge, arm band)? Who will organise making or buying this?

### **10. Food and beverages**

- Will food and drinks be for sale or will donations be obtained?
- You will need to at least provide lots of water. Maybe you can get a donation of juice.
- You will need cups, water containers (buckets and jugs) and a table to put everything on.
- Organise something to eat – fruit, bananas, vetkoek, etc.

### **11. Public relations**

- Inform the local community forum and ward councillor.
- Keep up good relations with park and recreation officials.
- Inform children's clubs, faith-based organisations and schools in the area.
- Media: Can you get an article in the local newspaper?

### **12. Security and safety**

- Is anyone likely to interfere? Talk about how to ensure that this event will be safe. Do police need to be informed and visiting or patrolling?
- Organise first aid provisions and first-aider.

### **13. On-the-day checklist**

- Toilets must be unlocked, clean, with toilet paper.
- Water connection.
- Tables for food and cool drinks – maybe they need to be transported to the site; make arrangements in advance!
- Set up a secure equipment storage area.
- Decorations: banners, flags, area markers, notice board. What will be put up?
- Garbage/litter collection – purchase black bags and find rubbish containers.
- First aid – equipment and someone who knows first aid.
- Appoint monitors to watch toilets, food, road crossing, first aid and general security.

## Toy Libraries

A toy library is a service where a collection of toys, games, puzzles, activities and learning aids is available for children in the community to play with. Toys can be played with at the toy library or borrowed for a certain period of time by families and ECD centres. Some toy libraries offer a mobile service. Toy libraries aim to provide:

- Education: Toy Libraries provide toys that develop skills in children. The children have fun playing with the toys, but the learning that happens is more important.
- Recreation: The main purpose is for children to have fun with the toys. The children will learn something but that is not the main reason for providing the toys. It is important for children to relax, to socialise and to be able to do what they want to do for a while.

### Benefits of toy libraries

- They offer a variety of play materials that encourage the development of a child's abilities – toy libraries try to be inclusive.
- There can be graded toys, from easy to difficult, to cater for all levels of development and help to build a child's self confidence.
- Toy libraries encourage parent-child interaction.
- Many low-income families are not able to provide their children with adequate learning opportunities.
- They may be unable to send the child to any form of pre-school centre. The parents may be uneducated and not understand the benefits of early stimulation.
- Many children play with the toys, making it a cost-effective service.

For information on toy library training contact Cotlands on 011 683 7201. [www.cotlands.org.za](http://www.cotlands.org.za) – click on TLASA (Toy Library Association of South Africa).



Left: Children playing games at a “come and play” toy library. Right: A toy library on a bus.

## Play programmes in schools

Play programmes in schools can reduce bullying, promote positive interaction, provide engaging, positive activity and generate a more peaceful environment.

The Active Schools Initiative in Hanover Park Cape Town promoted play in schools each week by providing weekly training sessions for play leaders at different schools. Four children from each class were chosen and an ASI adult coordinator met with them on a weekly basis to introduce them to new games, to practise facilitation skills and discuss challenges that play leaders can face when they take children out to play.

Problems like “how to deal with children who do not listen” are raised in the weekly meetings, and the whole group tries to find a solution. The play team also developed play equipment to enable a stimulating play experience. (see chapter on outdoor play) Hanover Park is a socially challenging township of Cape Town with gangsterism and drugs impacting children’s lives. The play programme developed character, skills, self-esteem and provided constructive activity for the children.

Google: “Playworks” ([www.playworks.org](http://www.playworks.org)) for resources suitable for school playgrounds. Download their “Playworks Game Guide”!

## Play facilities for children living in high rise communities

In the high rise, flatland area of Johannesburg, a housing company (Makhulong a Matala -Johannesburg Housing Company) has proactively included children’s needs in their developments. Most properties have an equipped play room and, where possible, an outdoor space on pockets of land or building roof tops. A play facilitator is employed to manage the play centre and develop a play programme. This is one element in a programme to develop healthy communities in the inner city and to keep children on properties safe and occupied until parents return home each day. It serves over a 1000 children living in the buildings!

Google: [www.jhc.co.za/about/makhulong-a-matala/youth-and-children-development](http://www.jhc.co.za/about/makhulong-a-matala/youth-and-children-development).





## Street play

Open Streets Cape Town is a citizen-driven initiative inspired by Bogotá's Ciclovía, a recreational programme that creates 120km of car-free streets in the Colombian capital every Sunday and public holiday. More than 400 cities around the world have followed suit with their own versions of streets that provide space for recreation and social interaction. A group of volunteers founded Open Streets Cape Town (OSCT) in 2012. Roads are closed to motorised vehicles and become an open space for pedestrians, cyclists, skateboarders, wheelchair users and other non-motorised transport users to move in safety. Open Streets is free and everyone is encouraged to participate and help plan the day. See: [www.openstreets.org.za](http://www.openstreets.org.za).

“Playing Out” is a UK based play programme being widely promoted because funding has been cut for play and recreation. Local roads are closed for a couple of hours each week to enable free play and movement of children right on their doorstep. Residents form a play association that monitors and enables the playing out on the streets to happen.

Google:

1. “Playing Out – Activate street play in your neighbourhood” <http://playingout.net>
2. [www.streetparty.org.uk/residents/street-play.aspx](http://www.streetparty.org.uk/residents/street-play.aspx)

## Park Watch programme

The YMCA in Albert Park, in the inner-city flatland area of Durban, started a community project to ensure a safe park for children to play in. An essential part of the project was the municipality fencing off the children's play section so that this could be reserved and kept safe for younger children. The existing play area was relocated from deep in the centre of Albert Park to the edge of the park where activity could be observed from the surrounding flats. The play-park was more visible and so safer. With the help of the children, the play area was kept clean.

The Park Watch, which was in contact with park officials, included community volunteers, especially parents and older teenagers, doing a few hours of park watch duty each week to watch children playing in the late afternoon when the children were home from school. Park Watch volunteers were identified by bright yellow jackets and name badges so that parents/caregivers and children could see from a distance that someone was on duty – and that it was safe to play. A local police station did regular patrols.

Activity bags were available for volunteers with equipment including a large ground sheet on which children could do puzzles, drawing and artwork on boards. There were bat and ball bags including soccer balls, goal cones, netballs, cricket bats, wickets and balls, Frisbees, skipping ropes, thick ropes for playing with in the trees, large shade cloth pieces to make dens and houses, sand play cups, spades and buckets.

## Safe parks programme

In South Africa, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has forced many children to take on adult responsibilities. They care for dying parents, look after younger siblings and learn to cook and clean. The National Association of Child and Youth Care Workers (NACCW) has developed a concept of safe places for children to play – safe parks where children have access to adult supervision and can play in peace.

The Safe Park is a holistic programme that not only includes a play space and a play programme but also life skills discussions, organised sports, traditional cultural activities, food gardens, storytelling and homework help including interventions for vulnerable children.

For more information about the Isibindi Safe Parks Programme, visit their website: [www.naccw.org.za](http://www.naccw.org.za).

## Claiming open land for play

More than six crèches serving several hundred children were located in the Durban inner-city “Point” area. Most crèche’s were accommodated in high-rise building with no daily access to an outdoor space.

Crèche staff noticed a small piece of land between the roads. Through the intervention of the Point ECD Forum it was proposed that this land be fenced off for the use of children in the area. In due course the city council agreed, fenced the property and now children have an outdoor place to visit.

Forums that champion the needs of children should have a play rights agenda. A space to play might be within easy reach by just asking! See Community Play Forums – page 142.



## Scouts

The aim of Scouting is to add to the development of boys, girls and young adults in achieving their full potential as individuals, as responsible citizens and members of their local, national and international communities.

Games and play are a big part of being together and a fun way to learn valuable life skills such as leadership, teamwork and first aid within peer groups.

For more information about Scouting go to [www.scouting.org.za](http://www.scouting.org.za) or email [info@scouting.org.za](mailto:info@scouting.org.za).



Scouts from 4th Durban troop do a community project building a tyre playground!

Google:

1. “EnTYREly fun playgrounds”, James Jolly – a booklet with dozens of tyre playground ideas
2. “Playground ideas” for playground design and safety
3. [www.scoutresources.org.uk](http://www.scoutresources.org.uk) and “Macscouter: The great games resource”

## Red Cross Children’s Hospital play programme

Volunteers established the “Friends of the Children’s Hospital” in 1978. Their main belief is that physical and emotional healing work simultaneously.

An orientation day informs volunteers about hospital rules, registration and the play programme. Regular volunteers are preferred so that children can get to know the volunteers and so that programme organisers can depend on volunteers arriving for duties.

On arrival, volunteers collect brightly coloured toys from a storeroom and visit different wards that they are assigned to. There are many rules when playing with the children but the main aim is to give love and comfort to recovering sick children. The “Friends” believe that emotional healing can be achieved through play and in creating a loving, friendly and happy environment.

For more information on the Red Cross Children’s Hospital play programme visit their website at [www.friendsofthechildrenshospital.co.za](http://www.friendsofthechildrenshospital.co.za).

## Rural “A Chance To Play programme”

One of the first areas introduced to A Chance To Play (ACTP) programme was Makhuduthamaga Municipality in Sekhukhune District, Limpopo. Sekhukhune Educare Project (SEP) ran the programme in this area. They approached community members who were already interested and engaged in coaching or play promotion, and offered to train them to be ACTP coordinators.

This then was the beginning of the ACTP asset mapping exercise. Asset mapping is about identifying all possible resources that could help the “play” cause, including identifying human resources, spaces, equipment, financial support, stakeholders, and so on.

A Play Day was organised so that candidates could be observed in action, playing with the children. SEP staff members assessed the candidates’ enthusiasm and leadership potential. Candidates were briefed on how to do a practical asset mapping for play in their areas, with suggestions on who should be consulted, how to collect information about what spaces and facilities for play already existed in their areas, how to interview people and how to write up a report on their findings. Other stakeholders who were interviewed and informed were local government councillors, home-based carers, teachers and nurses. These stakeholders were identified as community members who could support and mentor, as well as assist ACTP play coordinators with their tasks.

The “Memories of Play” activity (see page 133) was facilitated by SEP with play coordinators, and then with stakeholders in the community. This helped to create the right atmosphere and context for play promotion, and aroused more interest in lobbying and advocacy as well as drawing in volunteers for play work. The play coordinators also received training in child development (ages and stages), and play facilitation. These ACTP coordinators then ran workshops for volunteers in their communities.

Play coordinators worked with SEP staff to set up work plans and a calendar of events. Coordinators had job descriptions, signed contracts and received ongoing support and supervision. Each cluster and the two coordinators assigned to it were responsible for hosting events and getting the children together to play and socialise with each other. They also met on a monthly basis to keep updated with any news from the donor organisation. Sporting equipment was purchased for each cluster to use and play coordinators were responsible for keeping the equipment in their possession.



*Woz’obona/SEP staff who implemented the A Chance To Play programme in Makhuduthamaga, Limpopo*



## Comments from ACTP play coordinators:

**Thoto Tladi:** “I’m very proud when I see the large number of children who are showing up for events. To give an example of my nephew – he’s taking care of the playing materials, and when I see how careful and precise he is counting and guarding it, I see a talent that I might never have seen without ACTP.”

**Fortunate Moshoaneng:** “We keep children safe, and even children with disabilities participate in the activities.”

**Dennis Moretsele:** “ACTP has taught me how to organise events. Running events is stressful but it makes us grow every day. I’ve also learnt how to motivate kids until they get so motivated they take over!”

**Kagiso Moganedi:** “The thing I like best about this work is that we can take these young kids from sometimes negative things; we open doors for them and bring them a more positive life.”

**Shadrack Mphela:** “This programme brings children and parents together for fun. This actually wasn’t predicted, but is certainly a very happy and positive outcome, one which makes me really proud. Enthusiastic parents and grandparents love to teach their children the old games.”

## A Chance To Play Southern Africa (ACTPSA)

ACTPSA is a Non Profit organisation that was founded by organisations involved in the original ACTP programmes, supported by terre des hommes Germany. Together with like-minded organisations and individuals throughout the SADC region, ACTPSA actively supports and advocates for the implementation of Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Article 12 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) – namely, the child’s **Right to Play and Recreation**.

The organisation focuses on **advocacy** for play, **training** of play facilitators and encouraging the establishment of **play forums**.

A distance learning course based on the “A Chance To Play” manual will be available in 2018.

For more information, to view the publications available for free download, and to affiliate with ACTPSA visit [www.a-chance-to-play.org.za](http://www.a-chance-to-play.org.za) .







## Conclusion: Give children a chance to play, today

There is always a sense of urgency in those who can affect children's lives for the better because childhood is so short. To promise the children of South Africa the play opportunities they need tomorrow, or next year, is not good enough!

As Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral wrote of the child:  
Right now is the time his bones are being formed  
his blood is being made  
and his senses are being developed.  
To him we cannot answer "Tomorrow".  
His name is "Today".

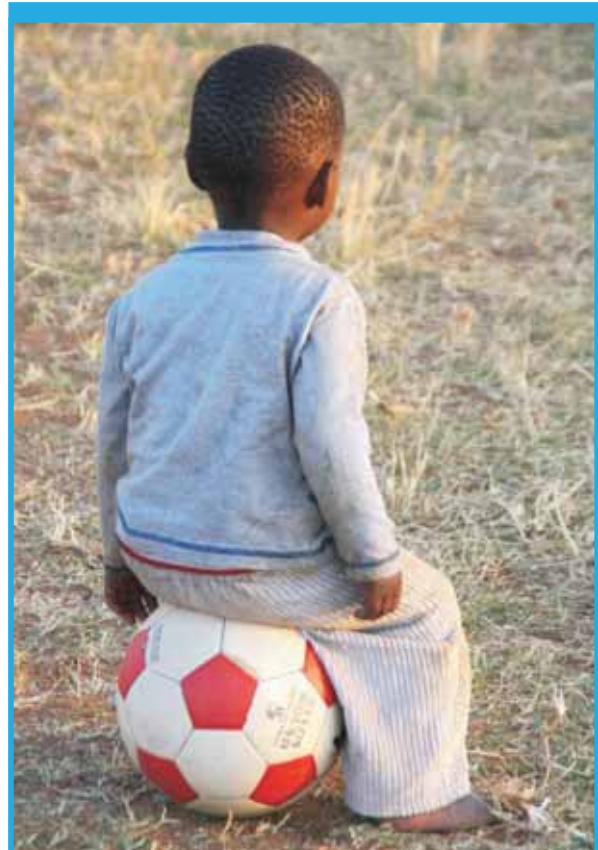
Today, can you make play happen? Today, is there an idea in this book that you can put into practice with your children? Today, will your time spent with children be more creative and engaging in play? We hope so! We hope the smiles and the laughter of the children represented in this book will ripple across South Africa as even more play takes root and children have their space and the support to do what children need to do – play!

### Making Nelson Mandela's dream for children a reality

Former President Nelson Mandela spoke of his dream for children when on 10 December 1993 he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize and signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. He said:

"At the southern tip of the continent of Africa, a rich reward is in the making, an invaluable gift is in preparation, for those who suffered in the name of all humanity when they sacrificed everything for liberty, peace and human dignity and human fulfilment. This reward will not be measured in money. Nor can it be reckoned in the collective price of the rare metals and precious stones that rest in the bowels of the African soil we tread in the footsteps of our ancestors. It will and must be measured by the happiness and welfare of the children, at once the most vulnerable citizens in any society and the greatest of our treasures. The children must at last play in the open veld, no longer tortured by the pangs of hunger or ravaged by disease or threatened with the scourge of ignorance, molestation and abuse, and no longer required to engage in deeds whose gravity exceeds the demands of their tender years.

"In front of this distinguished audience we commit the new South Africa to the relentless pursuit of the purposes defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – the survival, protection and development of the child."



**"Children are the greatest of our treasures."**

Nelson Mandela





