

ECD ACTIVITY CARDS



Children's right to play, leisure and education is particularly restricted during and after an emergency situation. Many young children now living in refugee homes arrive in their host country after a dangerous journey, after potentially traumatic experiences. Your life has changed, the new living environment is different and often not really child friendly. Many parents suffer from high levels of stress and find it difficult to provide their children with the comfort, support and incentives they need to develop and learn.

UNICEF encourages and supports the creation of Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) in refugee homes to protect children and provide them with physically and psychologically safe spaces where they feel welcome, valued and empowered to learn and develop. This environment engages children in activities that reduce anxiety, alleviate psychological distress, and help them regain normality and stability.

The ECD Activity Cards were developed as part of the partnership between UNICEF and ISSA as a practical tool to support the planning of Early Learning and Play Groups (ELPG) and relevant activities as part of the daily management of Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) in refugee homes. The cards are created for the "UNICEF ECD kit, 2016" and can be used together with the ECD Curriculum. Of course you can also use the cards on their own! You are able to source the necessary materials in your local stores!

The ECD activity cards can also be used to strengthen parent-child bonds and to support educational and accountable care by providing caregivers with specific ideas for activities they can use to get together with children to play and relax.

The ECD activity cards are color coded and arranged in the following way::

■ PLAY ACTIVITIES ■ ARTS AND CREATIVITY ■ PSYCHOSOCIAL ACTIVITIES
■ ACTIVITIES FOR EXPRESSION ■ ACTIVITIES WITH LIFE-SAVING MESSAGES

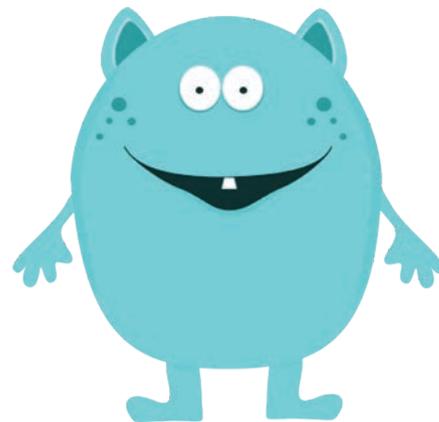
We invite you to use these cards to provide meaningful and fulfilling play and learning experiences for children, parents and caregivers.

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SWAMP MONSTER

■ DURATION::	5 TO 10 MINUTES
■ AGE:	DOES NOT MATTER
■ GROUP SIZE:	IDEAL FROM 6-8 PLAYERS
■ PREPARATION:	NONE
■ MATERIAL:	CARPET TILES



GAME DESCRIPTION

The “Swamp Monster” game is a cooperative game. Only together can children win this game and master the task.

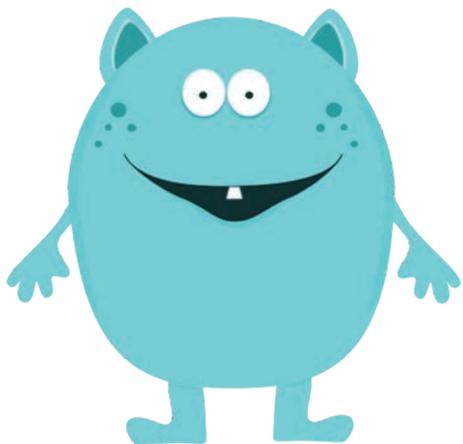
At the beginning, each participant gets a carpet tile – if none are available, the game also works with a piece of cardboard of the appropriate size. The task of all the group members is to use their tiles to cross the swamp, in which a dangerous swamp monster lives.

The participants have to be quick, because if they put down a tile and don’t step on it immediately, it will sink into the swamp and the tile will be lost for the other participants as well. This also applies if the next player does not follow the tile quickly.

The group has to figure out how to move forward the fastest. The first child places a tile in front of them, steps on it and takes the tile from the person behind them. This tile they place a bit further away from them, immediately stepping on it. The person behind follows onto the free tile.

The next tile is passed forward by the next person behind, etc. etc.

Participants who step into the swamp with any part of their body will be eaten by the swamp monster and have to go back to the start. There is no winner, because all participants have to cross the swamp in one piece if they want to solve this task. If at some point during the game the tiles are running out, the participants should think of a better common strategy in a short break and start a new attempt. Sometimes 2 people have to stand on a tile - of course without stepping over this tile.



RATING: *There is no rating for this game. The participants should learn to solve a task together. It is ideal if the game is played in different variants, sometimes with more tiles, sometimes with fewer, or with the specification that at least 2 people must always stand on a tile.*

BUILD WITHOUT WORDS

- COMMUNICATING WITHOUT WORDS
- WORKING TOGETHER AND HELPING EACH OTHER
- CREATIVITY

AGE GROUP: FROM 3 YEARS



MATERIALS FROM THE ECD KIT: BUILDING AND HANDICRAFT MATERIALS

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Good friends often understand each other without words. It's more difficult to work together and play together when you don't know your companions well enough or when there are also some language barriers. The game "build without words" shows that it can still work. Give the children building and craft materials and ask the children to use them to build something together without speaking to each other. All the children in the group should help each other, not just the most skilled builders. What the group assembles or tinkers with is entirely up to their imagination.

TIP:

You can work in groups of 2-3 children or with up to 8 children.



REGULARLY WASH YOUR HANDS

BY WASHING THEIR HANDS REGULARLY, CHILDREN LEARN:

- PERSONAL HYGIENE
- HOW TO REDUCE INFECTIOUS DISEASES

AGE GROUP: FROM 1 YEAR



Explain to the children that we always wash our hands with soap after using the toilet and before eating. Ask the children if they know why washing hands is so important. What can happen if you put dirty hands and fingers in your mouth? Explain to them that under their fingernails and on their hands, there can be harmful bacteria so small you can't see them. Bacteria can make us sick. But with the help of soap and water, we can wash away the bacteria.

YOU CAN DO THIS:

- Make up a song that describes how children should wash their hands. On YouTube you can find many songs for kids on how to wash their hands with the correct hand movements.
- Move to the song and pretend to wash your hands with soap and water: the back and palms of the hands, between the fingers and under the nails.
- Remind children not to put dirty hands in their mouths.
- Remember that children always need a reminder to wash their hands. Not because they are forgetful or lazy, but because children are sometimes so caught up in the impulses and stimuli around them that they forget everything else.

TIP:

■ *Sing the wash song while the children wash their hands and invite the children to sing along.*



PLAY AND BUILD WITH MODELLING CLAY

WHEN MODELING, CHILDREN LEARN:

- FINE MOTOR SKILLS ■ CREATIVITY
- TACKLING AND SOLVING PROBLEMS

AGE GROUP: FROM 12-18 MONTHS



MATERIAL FROM THE ECD KIT: MODELLING CLAY

YOU CAN DO THIS:

- Set out a box of colored clay and let the children use it to create shapes and figures freely.
- Let the children experiment by using the modeling clay with things from nature, such as shells, leaves and thin twigs. You can also use everyday materials such as plastic bottles or bottle caps.
- Act out a story: Suggest that the children use the play dough to make their favorite characters in the story. The plasticine figures can then talk to each other. Play dough can also be used to model cars, trees and houses for the background of the story.



HAND AND FINGER PUPPETS

WITH HAND AND FINGER PUPPETS CHILDREN LEARN:

- CREATIVE ROLE PLAY
- SOCIAL BEHAVIOR
- USING THEIR IMAGINATION

AGE GROUP: FROM 6 MONTHS



MATERIALS FROM THE ECD KIT: HAND AND FINGER PUPPETS

YOU CAN DO THIS:

- Tell a simple story using the puppets. Put a doll on your hand and give each child their own doll. Tell each child who their doll represents in the story.
- Begin telling the story. When it is a child's puppet turn, help the child, if necessary, to act out their role with the puppet. This role-playing game becomes easier for children if it is played more often. You can also act out the routine in the playgroup (e.g. you play one child in the playgroup and one of the children is the group leader, etc.).

TIP:

- *Make up stories with the children and the roles that go with them.*
- *Include parents and other caregivers (or older children) in the game.*
- *Only use puppets that fit into the respective cultural context. In some cultures, certain animals are sacred or ostracized. They are therefore not suitable for playing.*

INVENT STORIES WITH THE PICTURE BOOK

WHEN MAKING UP STORIES, CHILDREN LEARN:

- VOCABULARY AND PROMOTE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT
- CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION
- DEVELOP SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

AGE GROUP: FROM 2 YEARS



MATERIALS FROM THE ECD KIT: PICTURE BOOKS

YOU CAN DO THIS:

- From the age of 3 months, children develop a larger field of vision and can look at simple pictures.
- For younger children, repeat the words accompanying the pictures slowly, so that the children can follow your lip movements. Let the children imitate the words and sounds.
- Point to a picture and say a new word together with the children. Ask simple questions about the pictures to support the child's word learning and comprehension.
- Together with older children, you can make up stories based on the different pictures in the picture book.
Discuss the colors and count the objects pictured – let the children help with counting.
- Before you continue, ask the children how they think things will turn out.
- Where appropriate, ask the children how they feel about the story. This strengthens the children's ability to empathize with other people.

SMALL THEATER OR MUSIC PERFORMANCES

DURING PERFORMANCES, CHILDREN LEARN:

- CREATIVITY AND EXPRESSION
- IMAGINATION
- COOPERATION AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOR
- LANGUAGE AND MOTOR SKILLS ■ ORGANIZATION

AGE GROUP: FROM 3 TO 4 YEARS



YOU CAN DO THIS:

- Choose a simple story with the children.
- Discuss with the children the different roles that appear in the story. Make sure that all children can play along. They can invent additional roles that a child with disabilities can also play. For example, when depicting a forest, children can become trees, plants, flowers, blades of grass and animals.
- With younger children, you can tell the story whilst the children focus on their roles. Dialogues should be kept short so that children can memorize their sentences.
- Incorporate dance, song and music where possible.
- You can invite adults and siblings to a performance in order to make the day festive.
- Ask parents, other adults, and older siblings to help with costumes, sets, and other preparations.

BUILDING BLOCKS

WHEN PLAYING WITH BUILDING BLOCKS, CHILDREN LEARN:

■ EYE-HAND COORDINATION

■ MOTOR SKILLS

■ SOCIAL SKILLS

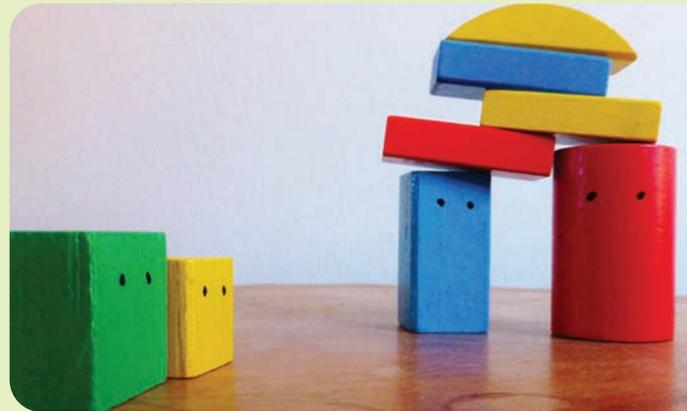
AGE GROUP: FROM 2-3 YEARS



MATERIALS FROM THE ECD KIT: BUILDING BLOCKS

YOU CAN DO THIS:

- Lay out a box with colorful blocks so that the children can play with them freely. Now have the children build a house, bridge, or other structure.
- To encourage interaction, give each child a few blocks so they can build together. The children should use their blocks one after the other until they are all built.
- Help the children wait their turn. It's not easy for her. Remain calm and friendly. Praise the children when they wait their turn.



CIRCLE GAME

CIRCLE GAMES HELP CHILDREN WITH:

- MOTOR DEVELOPMENT
- IN THEIR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AGE GROUP: FROM 3 YEARS



YOU CAN DO THIS:

- Have the children hold hands and form a circle with you.
- Sing a song while the children move in a circle with you, still holding hands.
- Choose a children's song with lyrics that encourage the children to perform different movements: e.g. sit down, stand up, jump forwards or backwards, turn in place, hop in place, etc.

TIP:

- *Choose well-known music or children's songs. There are many songs on YouTube to get moving.*
- *When making your selection, make sure that the lyrics of the songs use respectful language.*
- *Invite community adults to share movement and rhyming songs with the children to sing to their countries of origin and their families. This reassures the children that their family languages are welcome.*
- *Make sure that children with disabilities can participate!*



JIGSAW PUZZLE

WITH THE JIGSAW PUZZLE CHILDREN LEARN:

- PROBLEM SOLVING ■ COLLABORATING
- IMPROVING THEIR MEMORY AND CONCENTRATION

AGE GROUP: FROM 3-4 YEARS



MATERIALS FROM THE ECD KIT: JIGSAW PUZZLE

YOU CAN DO THIS:

- First, let the children play with the jigsaw puzzle on their own and see what they do with it.
- Ask the children to put together a picture with the puzzle.
- Assign a group of children the task of putting together a jigsaw puzzle as quickly as possible. All children should take part.
- Help the children work together. Especially when children in a group have different abilities, arguments can arise if you set “speed” as a goal. On the other hand, you can tell the children that the goal is to see which group helps each other best.



MEMORY

MEMORY GAMES HELP CHILDREN:

- MEMORY TRAINING AND IMPROVING CONCENTRATION
- COMPARING DIFFERENT IMAGES
- IN THEIR SOCIAL BEHAVIOR WHEN PLAYING TOGETHER

AGE GROUP: FROM 2 YEARS OLD



MATERIALS FROM THE ECD KIT: MEMORY GAME

YOU CAN DO THIS:

- Let the children look at the cards themselves first. Discuss the different pictures with the children and explain that there are always two cards with the same picture. Let the children find and arrange the pairs themselves.
- Sit in a circle or at a table with a small group of children and turn the cards over. Each player may turn over two cards so that everyone can see the pictures on them and where they are. Then the cards are turned over again.
- If a player has uncovered two identical cards, he can keep them and turn over two more cards.
If he didn't uncover any pairs, then it's the next child's turn.
- During the game, the children should remember where the same cards are. When it's their turn, they can then try to turn over the same cards and then collect them.
- The player with the most pairs wins.

TIP:

- *Play with only a few pairs of cards at the beginning. Encourage the children in their first attempts. You will find that you will learn this game very quickly and have a lot of fun doing it.*
- *Increase the number of pairs of cards with each new game.*

COUNTING CIRCLE, PAPER AND CRAYONS

IN THIS GAME CHILDREN WILL LEARN:

- NUMBERS AND COLORS
- THEY IMPROVE THEIR VOCABULARY

AGE GROUP: FROM 4 YEARS



MATERIALS FROM THE ECD KIT: COUNTING CIRCLE

YOU CAN DO THIS:

- Have the children play with the counting circle and look at the parts with the numbers and dots.
- Ask the children to assemble the circle. Talk about the number of the circle pieces.
- Help the children learn the numbers by pointing out the number of dots on each piece.
- Give each child a piece of the circle and have the children put together the matching pieces with one, two, three, etc. dots.
- Now ask the children to complete the counting circle by putting each pair in the correct order
- Write the numbers 1 through 10 on cards. One number per card.
- Give each child a card and ask them to find the circle piece with the corresponding dots.
- Use the cards and circle pieces for simple subtraction and addition exercises. Example: Everyone sit in a circle. Ask five children to stand up. A child should sit down. Now let the children count: how many children are left now?
- Have a child find the puzzle piece with three dots. Then have another child find the puzzle piece with two dots. Then the points are added up: “How many are there now?” (5) “Can you find the puzzle piece with the number 5?”

TIP:

- *This game sounds complicated. Encourage the children at the beginning. You will see how quickly the children do it to learn.*

SORTING CUBE

WITH THE SORTING CUBE CHILDREN LEARN:

- DIFFERENT COLORS ■ SAME AND DIFFERENT SHAPES
- THEY IMPROVE THEIR FINE MOTOR SKILLS AND EYE-HAND COORDINATION

AGE GROUP: FROM ABOUT 6 MONTHS



MATERIALS FROM THE ECD KIT: SHAPE-SORTER

YOU CAN DO THIS:

- Let the children use the shape-sorter and the individual play parts.
- Lay the parts on the floor. Name the shapes.
- Ask the children to give you the different shapes, for example all rectangles, triangles, etc.
- If the children cannot find the correct shape, show them that shape. Now ask the children to find this shape again. You can e.g. also ask for all blue or all red parts.
- Ask the children for the shapes and their names and colors, and then have the children place the pieces in the sorting cube.



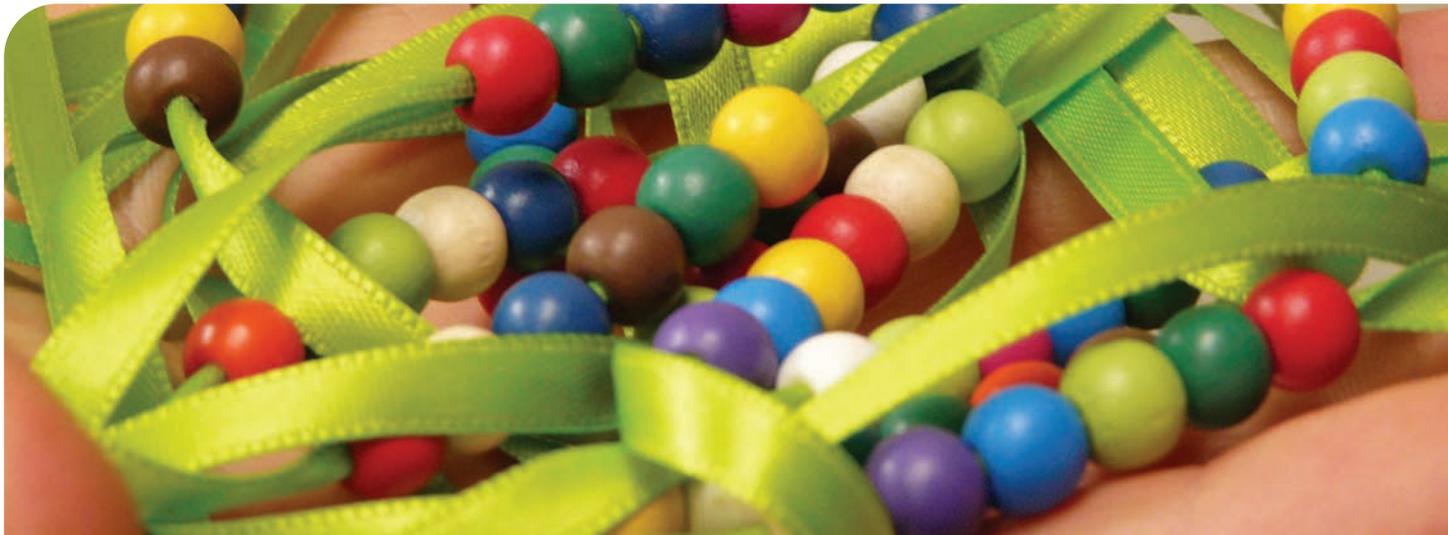
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PLAYING WITH WOODEN BEADS

BY PLAYING WITH WOODEN BEADS,
CHILDREN IMPROVE:

- THEIR FINE MOTOR SKILLS
- THE VOCABULARY TO THE SAME AND DIFFERENT COLORS AND SHAPES

AGE GROUP: FROM 2-3 YEARS



MATERIALS FROM THE ECD KIT: WOODEN BEADS

YOU CAN DO THIS:

- Let the children decide which wooden beads they want to thread. Have the children name the colors and shapes and count the beads.
- Other materials can also be threaded, e.g. colorful strips of paper, flowers or leaves that you have previously collected with the children.
- Help the children thread the rope.



STACKING AND SORTING

BY STACKING AND SORTING, CHILDREN LEARN:

- SAME AND DIFFERENT COLORS AND SHAPES AS WELL AS THEIR NAMES KNOW
 - A FIRST COUNTING
- AGE GROUP:** FROM 2 YEARS



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MATERIALS FROM THE ECD KIT: TOYS TO STACK AND SORT

YOU CAN DO THIS:

- Let the children play with the different pieces and sort them.
- Ask the children to sort the pieces by colour, size and shape:
 - all pieces of the same size.
 - all parts with the same shape.
 - in a row from small to large.
 - all parts with the same color.
- Ask the children:
 - How many pieces are in each group?
 - Which group is the largest?
 - Which group is the smallest?
- Have the children count the objects in each group.
- Ask the children to line up 10 pieces in front of you.
- Repeat the word 'ten' and show the children that there are exactly 10 pieces lined up. Compare those Number 10 with the number of fingers or toes. Do this game with other numbers from 1 to 10.

TIP:

- *Repeat the game in different variations so that all children have a turn.*
- *For older children, you can adapt this exercise by choosing more difficult tasks, e.g. B. adding and subtracting objects.*

TELL STORIES

IN THIS ACTIVITY CHILDREN WILL LEARN:

- SOCIAL AND GROUP BEHAVIOR
- CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION
- INCREASING THEIR VOCABULARY

AGE GROUP: FROM 2-3 YEARS



YOU CAN DO THIS:

- Sit with the children and ask them to listen carefully. Choose a well-known story or make up a simple story.
- Ask an older person to tell a story from their own culture or the past.

TIP:

- *Use your facial expressions and change your voice to help children immerse themselves in the story.*
- *If an older person tells the story, children learn how to act with and around a person from a different generation.*
- *They will learn about culture and the past, and older people will be more involved in the community with children.*
- *Discuss with those involved which stories are appropriate for this group of children.*

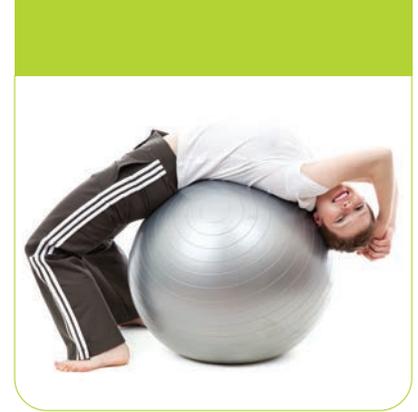


PLAY WITH SOFT BALLS

WHEN PLAYING WITH SOFT BALLS,
CHILDREN PRACTICE THEIR:

- MOTOR SKILLS ■ EYE-HAND COORDINATION
- CONCENTRATION

AGE GROUP: FROM 6 MONTHS, DEPENDING ON THE
TYPE OF GAME



MATERIALS FROM THE ECD KIT: SOFT BALLS

YOU CAN DO THIS:

- Roll one of the soft balls toward a child. Let the child touch the ball, hold it and feel how soft it is.
- Roll one or more balls to a small group of children and have the children kick the ball, throw it and catch it.
- Sit with the children in a circle and roll the ball towards a child. You can ask the child to say his name or to tell something about themselves.
- Ask older children, either in pairs or in a group, to toss (throw, roll, kick) the ball to one another. You can increase the level of difficulty by having the children turn around once, twice, etc. before catching the ball.

TIP:

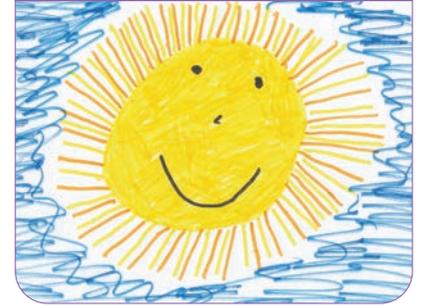
- *Children with disabilities can easily be involved in this game. Help the child throw or roll the ball, or ask an older child to help.*

FREE PAINTING

WHEN PAINTING FREELY CHILDREN LEARN:

- CREATIVITY
- EXPRESSING THEIR FEELINGS

AGE GROUP: FROM 2-3 YEARS



MATERIALS FROM THE ECD KIT: DRAWING PAPER, WAX CRAYONS, COLORED PENCILS, FINGER PAINTS

YOU CAN DO THIS:

- Hand out the coloring materials. Have the children sit on the floor or at tables, if possible, let them choose.
- The children are allowed to paint whatever makes them happy. Give them enough time and explain that there are no right or wrong pictures.
- When the children are finished, place the pictures in a circle on the floor or hang them on the wall and take the children on a tour of the exhibition.
- Ask the children if they would like to say something about their picture. If children paint about their conflict or crisis situation, you can take the opportunity to talk to the group about fears and questions that may arise with this stressful situation. Try to emphasize the positive aspects in the end (e.g. that the children are now safe, that they have overcome the worst, that they will find new friends here). If this topic is difficult for YOU, please find support from other adults. Children often stop talking when they notice that adults don't react well to what is being said.

TIP:

- *Give the children a chance to talk about their pictures, but don't push them.*
- *Some children do not want to show their pictures or talk about them. That's not bad. Usually, it is enough if one child draws a picture without talking about it.*
- *You or the child should write their name and perhaps the date on the back of the picture. So, the children see it as their own. This increases their self-confidence. Let the children decide whether they want to take their picture home, hang it in the children's classroom, or put it in their folder.*

OUR CIRCLE OF PAPER HANDS

WITH THE CIRCLE OF PAPER HANDS CHILDREN LEARN:

- THAT THEY ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THIS SMALL COMMUNITY, THAT THEY BELONG AND ARE SAFE IN THAT GROUP
- ALLOWING NEW CHILDREN TO JOIN THE PLAYGROUP AND CIRCLE

AGE GROUP: FROM 2-3 YEARS

MATERIAL FROM THE STUDY CASE: PAINTING MATERIALS, SCISSORS, GLUE, ADHESIVE TAPE



YOU CAN DO THIS:

- Draw the outline of your hand on a piece of paper and cut out a hand for each child. older Children can draw and cut out their own hand.
- Sit in a circle with the children.
- Welcome the children and let them know you look forward to getting to know them better.
- Explain that this is a safe place where they can play freely, have fun, ask questions, be friends, as well as find and get help.
- Hand out the craft materials and paper hands.
- Let the children decorate the hands and write their names on them. When everyone is done, put your hand in the middle and say your name out loud. Ask the next child to do the same until all children have introduced themselves.

- Connect the paper hands into a circle and ask the children how it feels when all hands are connected to each other.
- Discuss using your hands to greet or help. Ask the children for other examples of things you can do with your hands.

TIP:

- *Younger children often have trouble holding pens. Give 2-4 year olds chunky crayons and 4-6 year olds colored pencils.*
- *Outside you can use a plastic pad as a seat. This leaves a place for each person in the group .*
- *When painting, encourage the children to use as many colors as possible and to share the colours with each other*
- *It is important that you form a circle with your hands. The circle symbolizes connection for the children, Security, community and trust.*
- *To introduce a new child, ask them to decorate a hand. Ask the other children to join you to introduce her name and their hand.*
- *Then it is the new child's turn to introduce themselves and insert their hand in the circle.*

COLORING IN GROUPS

- A SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND SECURITY TO DEVELOP
- THEIR SOCIAL SKILLS AND TO IMPROVE EXPRESSION

AGE GROUP: FROM 2-3 YEARS



MATERIALS FROM THE ECD KIT: WHITE PAPER ROLL, WAX CRAYONS, COLORED PENCILS, PENCILS, STICKY TAPE AND ADHESIVE TAPE

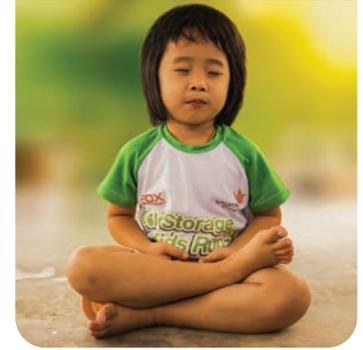
YOU CAN DO THIS:

- Ask the children to collect things from around them (leaves, rocks, wood, bottle caps, sand, cloth rags, playdough, sticks, unused plastic bottles, bags, etc.). With it you can build sculptures, create works of art or invent new games.
- Divide children into groups of 4 to 5 and give each group a large sheet of paper from the white paper roll.
- Then ask the children to choose a topic for their group picture and discuss it. The groups can choose different topics or the same topic. The children should decide this in their group. Then ask the children to work together on their group picture on the large piece of paper.
- The children can also create other pictures together, e.g. a plan of the accommodation (with your favorite places or the most important places), a plan with important places in the vicinity of their accommodation (playgrounds, kindergarten, school, etc.). Objects such as rocks, bottle caps, and other materials can mark the different locations. Give the children 1 to 2 hours to complete such a group project. This exercise can also be interrupted and ended at a later point in time.

EXERCISES TO RELAX, CALM AND FEEL GOOD

WITH RELAXATION EXERCISES, CHILDREN LEARN:

- REDUCE STRESS AND ANXIETY
 - A SENSE OF SECURITY AND WELL-BEING
- BUILD UP
- RITUALS AT THE END OF THE SEASON



YOU CAN DO THIS:

Exercise A: Breathe deeply

Help the children become more aware of their breathing. They should breathe deeply while standing or sitting and let their imagination run wild. Do short breathing exercises with the children every day.

- Tell the children that they are holding a well smelling flower or fruit in their right fist and a candle in their left fist
- Tell the children to first take a deep breath in the scent of the flower (or fruit) and then on the exhale blow out the candle in their left hand. Keep breathing in the sweet scent through your nose with the children and blow out the flame through your mouth. Repeat this breathing at least three times.

Exercise B: The hand puppet

Take a hand puppet from the learning case. Explain to the children that sometimes it's good to move like a doll or stuffed animal and pretend that your arms, legs, hands, and feet are loosely attached to you.

- Begin shaking out your legs, then your arms, your neck, your shoulders, and then your torso. Tell the children that they can be as silly as they want and that they can relax their bodies like a doll.
- Ask the children if any part of their body feels stiffer or tighter than others. Tell them to try to loosen those body parts while shaking.

Exercise C: Butterfly hug

Cross your arms across your chest as if hugging yourself. Your left hand should be on your right shoulder and your right hand on your left. Tell the children to imitate this.

- Keeping your arms crossed, pat your shoulders alternately: the left hand pats the right shoulder and the right hand pats the left. Repeat this. It is important that you only tap on one side at a time, never on both shoulders at the same time.
- Tell the children that tapping feels like the flapping of a butterfly's or a bird's wing. One wing flaps up and down, and then the other follows. Let the children do the exercise for one minute. Tell the children to take a deep breath and ask how it makes them feel.
- You can do the exercise as many times a day as is comfortable for the children.

Exercise D: abdominal breathing

- Tell the children to lie on their backs with their hands on their stomach.
- Have the children breathe in slowly and deeply through their noses. As they exhale, ask them to quietly say, "Ahhhhhh." Draw their attention to their hands on their stomach. They should feel and see how their hands move up and down when inhaling and exhaling. Tell them to slowly inhale through their nose and exhale through their mouth as if trying to move a feather in the air.
- Have the children slowly inhale on 2-3-4 and exhale on 2-3-4 and repeat a few times.
- Ask the children how this activity makes them feel. Practice this technique with them regularly. Tell them that they can do the exercises themselves, e.g. when they are worried, angry or scared. Suggest them doing this breathing exercise at home before bed too.

EXERCISE E: Laugh

Laughter is a natural way for children to relieve stress and relax. Think of games or exercises that will make the children laugh. For example, sit or stand in a circle with the children. The children should now take turns trying to make each other laugh with funny noises, facial expressions, body movements or stories. Discuss together what makes her laugh the fastest.

TIP:

- *It is a good idea to discuss these exercises with a colleague or volunteer beforehand to see how best to do them . Do these exercises help reduce stress or anxiety? Why?*
- *Both children and adults can benefit from these relaxation exercises. Use these exercises when you feel stressed or overwhelmed. You can also show these exercises to the children's parents and suggest them to do them at home for relaxation and stress relief.*

NETWORK OF CONNECTIONS

IN THIS ACTIVITY, CHILDREN WILL LEARN:

- OTHER CHILDREN'S NAMES ■ SOCIAL SKILLS AND CONCENTRATION
- IMPROVING THEIR VOCABULARY

AGE GROUP: FROM 3 YEARS



MATERIALS FROM THE ECD KIT: SOFT BALL

YOU CAN DO THIS:

- Form a circle on the floor with the children and other caregivers.
- Throw or roll the ball to a child in a circle and say their name loudly and clearly.
- This child throws or rolls the ball to another child and says their name loudly and clearly. Repeat this process until each child has had the ball and it has landed back on you.
- You can repeat this exercise again in the same order so that the children recognize the different names learn and pay attention to the order.

TIP:

- *You can also vary this exercise and, for example, send a slow ball, or a fast, hot, cold, sad or happy ball. Or you can ask the children to name their favorite food, their favorite color or the best toy when catching them. and thus increase the vocabulary.*

RITUALS AND CUSTOMS

- REDUCE STRESS AND ANXIETY
- DEVELOP A SENSE OF SECURITY AND TRUST
- INTRODUCE RITUALS AND ROUTINES INTO THE PLAY AREA

AGE GROUP: ALL AGES



WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Ask the children to agree on a ritual at the beginning and end of the playgroup. This can be, for example, a special song or game at the beginning and a relaxation exercise at the end.
- Children are energetic and may find it difficult to focus on a creative exercise or activity. Start new activities with a short ritual to release excess energy. You can e.g., dance in a circle, stretch your arms to the sky, flex and relax your muscles, toss or roll a ball, or play other games the children know. After 1 to 2 minutes of physical activity, everyone then takes two deep breaths. This helps children release energy and calm down. The children can then concentrate better on the new activity.
- After a painting or crafting session, you should ask permission each time, if you can hang a picture on the wall or if you can place it in the circle on the floor. Then walk around the room with the children and look at the pictures together.
- Create clean-up rituals after each play, painting or handicraft activity and determine with the children where the toys and materials should be put back.
- Talk to parents/guardians about the importance of rituals at home.
- Talk to the children about rituals they know and love from home. For example, ask: When are you going to sleep? What do you do before bedtime? What family rituals do you have?
- **Attention!** Just because many refugee children come from Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan does not mean that all families from the same country have the same rituals or traditions. Stay with concrete questions and everyday experiences of the children.