

PLAY

7

**This module covers
the following information:**

Play

What is play?

Why is play important?

Making and adapting suitable toys

Case studies

Monitoring progress

Sharing emotions and feelings



PLAY

Use this module to organise play activities for children attending all sessions.

Playing with the children is an important part of every session. This needs to be planned, so there is play equipment and support workers.

Facilitator Tips:

Start collecting household objects and bits of recycling in advance and ask each caregiver to bring some things to the session.

Making the toys with the parents is a fun activity. It does take time, and you may need to run a longer session to allow for this. You may want to invite other siblings to this session to encourage their understanding of the importance of play for their brother or sister.

If you have a child who has sensory impairments within your group it can be useful to use these children in play demonstrations to show caregivers how to use the other senses, particularly touch, in play.



Materials

Everyday objects (empty cereal boxes, match boxes, plastic cold drink bottles and lids, brightly coloured material, clothes pegs, tin cans, plastic containers, stones, seeds, beans or rice, plastic cups), floppy doll, examples of home-made toys, and case studies.

Pictures of toys you can make, materials to make them and instructions.

Don't using very small objects with younger children as they may choke on them.



Icebreaker

In groups of 3, give each group one inexpensive everyday item (eg cup, piece of cloth, container, ball). Ask everyone to use their imagination to transform the object into something else.

"Now we are going to use our imagination and creativity."

You can give an example, such as holding up a roll of tape and saying *"This is not a roll of tape, this is my red shiny apple."*

Pretend to take a bite and make a disgusted face 'with a worm inside'.



Ask

Ask each group for a few examples.

The object of the game is to show how our imagination works with play and how children have an even greater imagination than adults.



Explain

Explain that most children will find ways to play with any objects around them. We will learn together about how play can **'awaken the brain'** to promote a child's development.



Explain

Explain what we will learn together today.

By the end of Module 7, you will:

1. Understand and explain how play 'awakens' the brain.
2. Help your child to enjoy types of play that promote her communication, movements, social and emotional skills, and learning.
3. Explore ways in which other children can be encouraged to include children with disabilities in play.

Facilitator Tips:

Play is often not valued as culturally important. In Uganda and Ghana, we found that children generally play without adult involvement. This is challenging for a young child with developmental disabilities, who may need support and encouragement to learn to play. Play may not come naturally as it does to other children and yet it is vital for the child's development.

In Ghana, there was little improvement in the level of play activities after these sessions, and this highlighted the need to conduct more follow up in the home, and to involve other family members, especially siblings.

Caregivers themselves, generally mothers, often had very limited time for playing, which is why it is so crucial to involve other family members.

WHAT IS PLAY?



Ask

"What is play?"

Use the images 7.01 (a-f) as a visual prompt to facilitate the discussion.

If everyone struggles to answer the question then you could ask them to describe what is happening in the photos

Play is any activity your child **CHOOSSES** to do, and has **FUN** doing. Through play, she uses her **SENSES** to explore and learn.



Ask

"What are senses?"

- Seeing
- Hearing
- Touching/Feeling
- Smelling
- Tasting

Note: Movement isn't a sense but we use our senses to move and we move when we play.



Activity 1

Demonstrate the following play activities and discuss which senses are being used. If possible involve some of the children in the group:

- Enjoying the sound and feel of a rattle.
Answer: hearing.
- Handling different objects – soft, hard, prickly etc.
Answer: touching/ feeling.
- Hide and seek - hide an object under a lid or box and get your child to try and lift the box to find the object, or hiding yourself from her and seeing if she can move or look for you.
Answer: seeing.

- Singing and clapping games.
Answer: sight, movement, hearing.
- Splashing in water.
Answer: feeling and movement.

WHY IS PLAY IMPORTANT?



Activity 2

Turn to your neighbour and discuss:

“Does your child need to play?”

“Have you seen any ways that play helps your child?”



Explain

Play is important for your child because:

- Play is fun, and it helps her learn about things around her.
- She will use and develop her senses.
- Having fun will make her want to move more.
- Playing with others helps to develop her communication skills.
- Every child has a right to play.



Being able to play together makes children happy, and not being able to play with other children makes them feel sad.

“I play alone at school and at home. I like to play, but I cannot run. I feel sad when I see my friends playing and running around, as I cannot run like them.” I like to go to the training and I feel happy when I hear that I’m going to training. I can play there and they teach us many things.”

Child, Bangladesh



Ask

“Does your child need expensive toys? Does she need help to play?”

“What do you notice when your child plays during the sessions?”



Explain

- During the sessions children aren't playing with expensive toys.
- Favourite toys are often household items, and almost anything can be used as a toy for play.
- Your child may need help to play. Encourage her.

Facilitator Tips:

In Bangladesh, toys were not made at home, so making toys in the session to take home was a really helpful activity. During the home visits more time should be spent on play, so families know how and why to play with their child.

MAKING AND ADAPTING SUITABLE TOYS



Activity 3

Make toys - encourage everyone to use their imagination and the materials provided to make a simple toy for their child.

Ensure everyone gets an opportunity to make at least one toy which they will be allowed to take home. When the toys are complete ask everyone to show the group their toy and explain why they made it and how it helps their child play and develop.

Allow them to take the toy home and encourage them to ask any siblings and other family members to use the toy – not just the caregiver.

You can run this as a separate session and invite siblings to join.

In the facilitator resources are example of toys that could be made, use these as reference to help you – you do not need to explain them in detail to the group, the aim of this session is to create toys to play with.

CASE STUDIES



Activity 4

Split everyone into 3 groups. Give each group a case study (found in the facilitator materials). Ask them to read through the information about the child, and discuss the questions. Case studies (have them printed on card, one case study per group). You can also make your own case studies from your local context, if more suitable.

Ask each group to nominate one person to feedback to the group discussion.

Case study 1 discussion points:

- If a child has been diagnosed with blindness or deafness, focus mostly on other senses for play.
- How could you or your family help to do this?
- Eg using touch for a child who has difficulty seeing and visual toys for a child who has difficulty hearing.
- BUT: still try to practice the sense through play by giving opportunities to use that sense e.g. shiny mobile for a child who has difficulty seeing or rattles for a child with difficulty hearing.

'If you have a child who can see, but not well, you can use your words and let her touch and smell toys and objects. This will help her to understand what is around her.

Case study 2 discussion points:

- This case study brings up the issue of negative attitudes and discrimination – what ways could you and other members of your community begin to address that?
- Share what you learn from this session with family and neighbours, so that they can better understand and help your child.
- Take time to talk to siblings and other children and show them activities that your child can do and ways to play with them. Adapt toys, games and activities to allow for children with disabilities to be included in play with other children.
- Set up your own parent support group to allow your child to spend time around other children. Children will get huge benefits from meeting up and playing with other children in the group.
- Your group could consider running a session on disability in your community.
- Look at how you may be able to change the local environment to allow those with a disability to access where children gather and play.

Case study 3 discussion points:

- This case study asks us to think about how we build play into our busy lives.
- Think about how to involve **short periods of play** in your daily activities with your child, e.g. at bath time or when dressing your child.
- **It is important to involve other members of the family in playing with your child.** Discuss the types of play, those that your child finds easy or difficult, and especially your child's development needs.
- **Siblings or other children can also help your child play.** Instead of just saying: "Please play with my child," be very specific. Tell them about one of the games we have discussed in this session. Show them how to play it with your child, and explain how and why it is important to your child's development.



Ask

Ask everyone to think of ways more children can be included in play, such as:

- Share information with friends so they can help care for your child.
- Explain to siblings and other children which activities your child can do, and adapt toys and activities so she can play along with them.
- Ask a teacher to talk to local children about how to include children with disabilities. They could set up a 'buddying' system for non-disabled children to help children with disabilities.
- Set up a parent support group, and invite everyone to bring their children so they can meet. The group could run a session on disability in your community.
- Make local play areas accessible to children with disabilities.

MONITORING PROGRESS



Ask

Ask everyone to share one activity that they plan to try at home with their children.

"What have you learnt today that would help your child practice these?"

What are you going to do at home from today's session to help your child's development? What objects at home can you use to make a toy or toys that she can play with? How can you make everyday activities such as bathing, eating or dressing playful?"

Take Home Messages:

- Play is very important, and will help your child develop more.
- Use everyday objects for play, and involve other children in making toys your child can play with.
- We can find ways to make play inclusive for all children.

SHARING EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS



Ask

"How have these sessions influenced your relationship with your child? And with your family? Did it raise any emotions or feelings that you did not expect? How have you been feeling this week?"



"It is very useful, we stop to analyse the week and everything that happened, what was lacking. It is a moment when we can think and reflect, it is very good. Sometimes we do not have support at home, from father, mother or husband, then when you enter a place that can do that, it is very good. I feel very taken care of here." Mother, Ghana



