

PLAY AND EARLY STIMULATION

6

**This module covers
the following information:**

Play and early stimulation

Making and adapting suitable toys

Case study 1

Case study 2

Case study 3

Monitoring progress

Sharing emotions and feelings



PLAY AND EARLY STIMULATION

Facilitator Tips:

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.

Don't forget to start collecting household objects and bits of recycling in advance. Also, ask each caregiver to bring some things to the session.

This session can be challenging for caregivers who were not used to playing when they were children, and for caregivers to find the toys and the moments that their children enjoy.

"It is difficult being creative." **Mother, Salvador**

"Playing is a moment of peace, but I do not have time. Joao does not like any toys, he is not very interested. He spends a lot of time sleeping and lying down. If he was more interested in playing, I think he would be more developed. He is just lying down, lying down, lying down and he is happy when he goes in the street."

Mother, Rio de Janeiro



Materials

10 Minutes

Cup, piece of cloth, container, ball. Materials listed on images 6.01 (a-b) at the end of the module.

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



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 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.

“I found this interesting. A box of milk can be a lot of fun. We can do that at home and we do not have to spend money.” Grandmother, Rio de Janeiro



Explain

By the end of today’s session, 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 may be challenging for a child with developmental difficulties, as she may need support and encouragement to learn to play. It is vital for development and stimulation can be facilitated through play.

This session is an opportunity to reinforce how other family members can be involved, and how everyone brings their own strengths. For example, fathers may be more boisterous in their play, grandmothers may read to their grandchild. Each person can stimulate different senses through play and the variety is important.



Ask

“What is play?”

Use the images 6.02 (a-e) 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.





Explain

Explain that play is any activity that a child **CHOOSSES** to do, and has **FUN** whilst doing. Through play, a child uses her **SENSES** to explore and learn.



Ask

“What are our senses?”

In pairs, ask everyone to think of a game and describe what senses would be used during the game.

Ensure that all the senses are discussed:

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

Something else that works very closely with our senses, and is involved in play, is **movement**.



Ask

“When should our children start to play?”

Often the words **‘Early intervention’** are used. This means doing things as early as possible to work on your child’s developmental, health and support needs. Good early intervention will be family focused and will be able to be done through the day at home.

The first years in life are a sensitive period for development of the brain, which affects how a child moves, communicates, and learns to look after herself.



Activity

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

- Enjoying the sound and feel of a rattle (Answer: hearing and vestibular).
- Handling different objects – soft, hard, prickly etc (Answer: touching/feeling).
- Hide and seek (hiding an object under a lid or box and getting 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).



Activity

Turn to your neighbour and discuss: What have you found play helps your child to do? Does your child need to play?

Cover the following key points in your discussions:

- **‘Play AWAKENS the brain’**– It gives her an opportunity to explore and therefore learn about things in her environment.
- It gives her opportunities to use and develop her senses.
- When she is having fun she will be motivated to move.
- It gives her opportunities to interact with other people and to learn to communicate.
- It gives her the opportunity to think and learn.
- **Play is FUN and fun is what motivated children to move and learn.**

Every child has a right to play.



Ask

“Do children need expensive toys to play? Do they need help to play? What do you see about the experience of children playing during these sessions?”

Discuss that during these sessions the children are not playing with expensive toys.

- Almost anything can be used as a toy, if used in a fun and playful way. Favorite toys are most often household items. (pan, wooden spoons, cups etc.)
- Toys that were made this morning may need you to buy something and a community member or father/husband may like to help make them at home.
- It is helpful to think of what the toy is doing and what sense it may stimulate if you are going to buy a toy from the shop.
- Your child may need help to play and interact with the toy.
- How you and other family interact with your child is a key part of play.
- Use the tips learnt in communication about turn taking and waiting for a response while playing with your child.
- Play is more important than toys.

MAKING AND ADAPTING SUITABLE TOYS



Materials

45 minutes (include break)

Image 6.01 (a-b) and materials listed (at the end of the module).

"I found it interesting, who would have imagined that a coffee capsule could make a toy, and the other, too, like a little bracelet that I can put anywhere, even in his baby crib" Mother, Rio de Janeiro



Activity

Make toys!

Follow the instructions on the sheets. Half the group should make one toy and half of the group the other (each person make a toy, not as a group).

Encourage everyone to ask any siblings and other family members to use the toy and not to just use it themselves.

Break

10 minutes



Activity

25 minutes

Allow 10 mins for discussion, 5 mins each group to feedback.

Split everyone into 3 groups. Give each group a case study. 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 (Image 6.03a)

Theo's arms and legs are very stiff. His hands are always closed so it is difficult for them to hold things. He has poor eyesight but will smile when spoken to.

Is Theo in a good position for play? Which positions are good for play? What kinds of play activities could be encouraged? Who can help Theo to play?



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 them touch and smell the toys around them. This will help her to understand what is around her.

Case study 2 (Image 6.03b)

Samuel is 20 months old. He is unable to hold his head upright or to sit. He spends his days being carried by his mother. Mama finds it difficult to let him play and sit in a chair because she is unsure if this is safe.

Other family members do not talk or play with him and when she takes him outside the neighbours talk badly about him, and will not let their children come near him.



What are the main challenges faced by Samuel? What challenges are faced by the mother? Do any of you have similar experiences? Are there any ways that you can encourage others to include your child in play?

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 neighbors, 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 (Image 6.03c)

Bernadette has 3 children and her husband has left her. As well as full time caring for her son, who has cerebral palsy, she looks after the other two children. Bernadette would like to be able to work again but she is unsure if anyone else can look after her child like she can.

After attending a 'Juntos' group she makes a toy for her son, and explains to the other siblings that 'PLAY awakens the brain'.



She explains clearly to her other children how to use different toys: "I made him this bottle with beans inside to help him hear."

What do you understand when Bernadette says that 'Play awakens the brain'? How can you explain this to other people in your family? How much time do you have to play with your child? How can you involve others in your family?

Discussion points:

- 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

"How do you make sure that your child is safe when she is playing?"

Answers may include thinking about the surroundings that the child is in (eg decreasing distractions) and the choice of toy (being aware of older siblings putting things in her mouth, choking etc).

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 for a child's development. A child who does not play will not develop as much.
- We can use everyday simple household objects for play. Involve other children in making toys that are suitable for your child to play with.
- We can always find ways to help ensure that play is 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, Rio de Janeiro

Image 6.01a



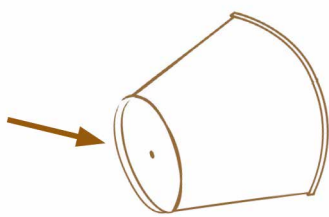
CREATING A WRIST RATTLE

Auditory and visual stimulation: colors and sounds.

Materials

- Used expresso cup, yogurt pot, small plastic container.
- Yarn for tying the rattle: string, elastic, wool or other thick thread.
- Bell or large bead.

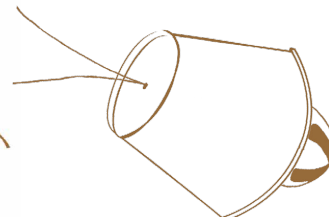
STEPS



1. Make a hole in the back of the container



2. Thread the string through the bell/bead



3. Thread the string through the hole and knot it

a

a1 - To help passing the thread through the hole, wrap tape around the ends of the cord.

a2 - Decorate your cup with paint or stickers to make the object more attractive. Do not forget the contrasting colors to stimulate the child!

b

b1 - For child safety, do not use a very thin cord, and make sure the bell or bead is securely tied.

Image 6.01a



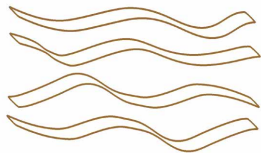
CREATING A RATTLE WITH RIBBONS

Visual and auditory stimulation: colors, sounds and movements.

Materials

- Curtain ring, bathroom curtain or plastic strap.
- Ribbons with bright colors.
- Bells or large beads.

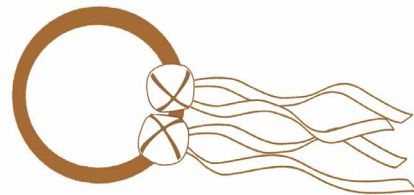
STEPS



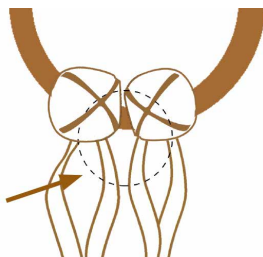
1. Cut 4 coloured ribbons into 40cm each (2 or 4 colors).



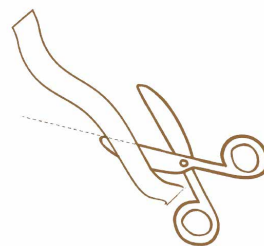
2. Thread the ribbon through the bell/bead to the middle of the tape.



3. Tie the bell on the ring with a double knot. Repeat the procedure with the other ribbons.



5. At the end, tie the ribbons that are next to each other together.



6. Cut the ends of the ribbons at an angle so that they do not fray.

