**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES (ECEE)**

**FAMILY/CARER BOOKLET – for in-country adaption**

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| Image Key Area of learning 1  **Social and Emotional Development**  Dispositions and Attitudes  Self-confidence and Self-esteem  Making Relationships  Behaviour and Self-control  Self-care and Independence  Sense of Community  Managing Trauma | Image Key Area of learning 3  **Physical Development**  Gross motor skills  Fine motor skills  Hand/ eye coordination  Health and Bodily Awareness |
| **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES (ECEE)**  **FAMILY/CARER BOOKLET** | |
| Image Key Area of learning 2  **Thinking Skills**  Imagination  Creativity  Attention span  Memory  Problem solving | Image Key Area of learning 4  **Language Development**  Speaking  Listening  Reading  Writing |

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| **Contents** |  | |  |  |
| Key areas of learning | | 1 |  | Vso logo |
| Who is this booklet for? | | 2 |  |
| Helping children learn | | 3 |  |
| Learning through play: | | 4-7 |  |
| Songs and rhymes | | 8 |  |
| Games | | 9 |  |
| Resources: local or easy to make | | 10 |  |
| Managing Trauma | | 11 |  |
| Play spaces | | 12 |  | Mesh logo |
| Plans for play sessions | | 12 |  |
| More information | | 12 |  |

**WHO IS THIS BOOKLET FOR?**

This booklet is for anyone with responsibility for young children including:

* Family members/carers who are often the first and most important educators for young children
* Child educators and volunteers

Image of single adult child interaction

***It is important that, wherever possible, children are cared for by consistent adults who take responsibility for particular children. This provides emotional security both at home and in play sessions and allows children to feel safe, be open to new experiences and to learn.***

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| **The purpose of this booklet**   * To explain how children learn through play. * To provide ideas for educating young children using local resources. * To show how play and talk can support children who have experienced trauma. * To show activities which prepare children for school. | Image box  Images of group of adults doing activities with children e.g. cooking, singing, walking and looking at the world around, playing with hand made puppets |

*If you are interested in finding out more about Early Childhood Education more detail is freely available on the internet on the MESHGuides A-Z (www.meshguides.org).This knowledge is shared for the benefit of all children by teachers and other experts with experience in many countries.*

**HELPING CHILDREN LEARN**

**Children Learn through Play**

Image male and females playing with children

Children need the freedom to explore and play. A child’s development is influenced through the exploration, thinking, problem-solving and language expression which occurs during play. Play nourishes every aspect of children’s development – it forms the foundation of intellectual, social, physical, and emotional skills. These skills support children in being ready for school and their future lives. Play paves the way for learning.

**Parents Engaging in Play**

As parents and carers you want the best for your children and for them to be ready for, and succeed when they start, school.

We know that the level of children’s early learning rises when adults play with them. The variety of learning children engage in through play increases when adults join in.

The joining in is different from controlling. Controlling makes children follow the adult’s agenda and does not lead to as much learning as when adults follow the child’s lead and interests.

**Interacting with children to promote language and thinking**

* Listen to children – give them time to think and respond
* Value what the individual child is saying
* Ask open-ended questions to encourage conversations e.g. “How do you know…? ”Why, do you think…”
* Allow children to lead play and follow their interests – engaged, excited learners will want to talk to you about what they are doing
* Talk to the children as you play with them to extend interactions and learning opportunities
* Use actions to support the spoken word to capture interest and support understanding
* Repeat children’s own language – using correct pronunciation
* Play with the children – to extend their learning
* Encourage positive relationships - If children feel safe and comfortable they are likely to want to talk and play with you.

Image of physical activity

**LEARNING THROUGH PLAY**

**Some ways you can play with your child to help them learn**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **How adults can support** | **Learning** |

Physical Development

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Outside | Encourage your child to run, jump, climb, skip, balance, throw and catch objects. | Children that are physically active learn better. Through movement children begin to make sense of themselves, properties of objects, shape and space. |
| Outside/  Inside | Provide opportunities for mark making e.g. sticks/ stones in sand, soil, mud, water and chalks & pencils where available. | Handling tools and materials effectively for a purpose, control & coordination through finger/ hand movements |
| Hand washing | Encourage children to wash hands after using the toilet and before eating. | Hand washing can prevent germs from causing infection and a lot of illnesses. |

Image of thinking activity

Development of Thinking

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Explore | Provide natural objects of different shapes & sizes e.g. sticks, stones for children to play with in their own way. | Children can learn to problem solve and think creatively. They can learn about sizes, shapes, pattern, textures, counting, and vocabulary. |
| Pretend Play | Provide the time and space for children to explore their feelings and play freely by acting out experiences. | Children act out past & present experiences & future roles using their imagination. They have control over their play & make decisions. |

Image of language activity

Language Development

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Sharing Stories | Try to find a safe space to be quiet and share stories with your child. These can be based on your culture, experiences and stories. | Encourages speaking & listening skills and enables children to explore, understand & manage feelings, and gain a sense of self and others. |
| Songs & Rhymes | Sing familiar songs and rhymes, counting rhymes. You could make up songs and rhymes together.  Use hand and whole body movements along with the rhythm. | Recognising rhyme & using rhythm is known to support learning to read, write and count and an ability to listen and respond.  Confidence is developed from taking an active part, enjoyment and having fun interacting with others. |

Image of social interaction one to one

Social & Emotional Development

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Routines | Try to establish and maintain daily routines e.g. for eating and sleeping, and learning through playing | Familiarity allows the child to feel safe & secure. Children become confident & independent when they succeed and help others. |
| Time to play, reflect and talk | Value what your child has to say and encourage play with others, provide time and space to listen to them. | Promotes self-esteem and allows children to share and talk about their experiences and feelings. |

**SONGS AND RHYMES**

Image of a group sitting in a circle singing with actions

Fill in the table with games in the languages the children know

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What they teach** | **Songs and rhymes from the home language of children** | **Other languages** | **English** [**BBC**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyIDg6m4gA0)**,** [**Australian**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=se5XcrG4S8s) **and** [**USA**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFoUuFq3vHw) **examples are on the web** |
| Understanding of ideas up/down, around, pull/push, backward/forward |  |  | Incey Wincey Spider  The Wheels of the bus  Row, row, row your boat |
| Names of things |  |  | Head, shoulders, knees and toes |
| Hygiene and how we do things |  |  | Here we go around the big green bush…this is the way we wash our hands, brush our teeth etc. |
| Counting |  |  | 10 green bottles, 5 little ducks |
| Recall |  |  | I am the music man, Old MacDonald had a farm |

**GAMES**

Images of games being played e.g. hopscotch, skipping

Fill in the table with games in the languages the children know

Home language of the children

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name of game | What it teaches | How to play it |
|  |  |  |

Other languages

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |

Examples from English

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Hot potatoes  Simon says  I spy  Kim’s game  Hop Scotch  Skipping rope games  Ball games | Thinking and speaking  Listening  Observation  Memory  Balance  Physical development  Coordination |  |

**RESOURCES: LOCAL or EASY TO MAKE[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Adults around children and the relationships they have with them are the first resource. Many resources can be found or made locally.

**For individual play or for a Child Club or playgroup**

* put together sets ofresources e.g. fabrics, stones, wooden blocks, bottle tops, sticks showing different colours, shapes, sizes, textures and items capable of making different sounds when knocked together
* put together ‘story sacks’ e.g. from rice bags holding items associated with stories or songs which are retrieved one at a time to provide a focus for part of the story or a verse of a song
* fabric bags can hold items hidden for touching/feeling/guessing games
* fabrics can be used for dolls or puppets
* sand or bean bags can be used for playing catch and throw
* large heavy duty plastic food bags can be used to create charts including letters, images, actions
* where clay/or ‘play dough[[2]](#footnote-2)’ is available use it for rolling sausages or making models to develop fine motor skills (pinching, pulling, squeezing)
* items for cutting and threading and lacing
* plastic bottles filled with sand can be used for exercises rolling the feet back and forth over children to develop muscles
* fruit and vegetables which can be handled without damage
* cooking equipment (with no sharp edges)
* items for games such as dominos
* ‘flash cards’ can be made from local materials.

**Local markets** may be a source of toys:

Insert images e.g. B’desh markets have the following:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Glass set | Doctor set | Doll set | Animal set | Cloth Ball |
| Mobile set | Car set | Fruit set | Duck set | Button |
| Peas | Filter | Funnel | Measurement cup | Comb |
| Balloon | Jar | Picture Book | Cooking set | Story Book |
| Cup set | Jhoonjhuni | Weight scale | Mask | Block set |
| Flute | Puzzle | Domino | Small bowl | Fish Set |
| Plastic cup |  | Plastic plate |  |  |

**MANAGING TRAUMA**

Adults in emergencies have many challenges themselves. The advice here is a summary developed by Syrian refugees with Academics from The University of Manchester, UK.

What might **you** be experiencing?

You may become more irritable, feel anxious, nervous or depressed. You may have repeated and vivid memories of your experiences which lead to physical reactions such as rapid heartbeat or sweating. You may find it difficult to concentrate or make decisions. All these things may affect how you look after children.

**What can** **you do to help yourself**?

Recognise that this is a challenging time but one that you can work to manage. Allow yourself and your children to mourn. Try to be patient and keep a positive outlook. This will help your children have hope for the future. Support each other and look after yourself. Try to establish order - establish routines, such as regular bedtimes.

**What might your child be experiencing?**

How children react to stressful experiences can vary but here are some common ways children react: Physical complaints such as headache, stomach ache, lack of appetite; being fearful and anxious; difficulty sleeping, nightmares and screaming. Older children regress to bedwetting, being clingy, crying, thumb-sucking and being afraid to be left alone. Becoming unusually active or aggressive or the opposite - quiet, withdrawn and sad. It is important to remember that it is NORMAL for children to show stress reactions.

**What can you do to help your child?**

SAFETY: Ensure your children knows their name, where you are staying and how to get help if they are separated from you. Try hard not to be separated for long periods.

PROVIDING WARMTH AND SUPPORT: Try to be affectionate. Being caring and telling your children that you love them will reassure them.

GIVING PRAISE: Look for opportunities to praise your child when they have done something good, however small it may seem. Try to be patient with your child and not to criticise them for changes in their behaviour. Encourage your child to help, children cope better and recover sooner when they help others.

SPENDING TIME TOGETHER AND TALKING

MAINTAINING A ROUTINE: Try to maintain everyday routines, such as bed times. Encourage children to do school work even if there are no schools. It helps maintain some normality in their lives.

ENCOURAGING PLAY: Encourage your child to play. Play is important in helping children work through their experiences and to prepare for the future.

**PLAY SPACES[[3]](#footnote-3)**

**You may be able to develop your own play spaces with friends and neighbours within your community. Here are some examples:**

Save the Children recommend two initiatives:

**Child-Friendly Spaces\*:** Children need to continue their education and play activities even in the midst of the conflict or disaster.  Child-Friendly Spaces are supervised areas that provide quiet areas, opportunities for play and talk. Perhaps where parents can safely leave their children, allowing parents to attend distribution points and perhaps find relatives.

**Child Clubs\*:** Child clubs or playgroups are very important in times of disruption. Adults and children undertake activities together which are educational but fun. Sometimes there may be club ‘leaders’, otherwise families may take turns to run the club. The clubs build children’s self-esteem and confidence, increase their access to information, develop solidarity and leadership qualities, and give opportunities for recreation and joyful learning.

**PLANS FOR Play Sessions**

A one or two hour playgroup for 3-5 year olds typically provides introductory songs, then ‘free play’ activities as mentioned in this booklet, where the children choose the activities that interest them. Stories and more songs follow towards the end of the session with usually a goodbye song.

**MORE INFORMATION**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Recordings of the Training booklet and the Family/carers booklet, songs, and rhymes are being made available in different languages for use on mobile telephones without wifi being needed.  Contact [enquiries@meshguides.org](mailto:enquiries@meshguides.org) if you want these. | Further reading and deeper knowledge is available on the internet on [www.meshguides.org/ in the Early Childhood section of the A-Z](http://www.meshguides.org/%20in%20the%20Early%20Childhood%20section%20of%20the%20A-Z). |

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1. Acknowledgements P.36 Davies) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. mix flour, salt, a little oil, food colouring (blue, yellow, red)  [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. **\*Save the Children**<https://goo.gl/pcD4p7> **With thanks to Mike Blamires** [↑](#footnote-ref-3)