



Primary *National Strategy*

Excellence and Enjoyment: social and emotional aspects of learning

Good to be me Years 1 and 2 small group activities

Headteachers, teachers
and practitioners in
primary schools,
middle schools, special
schools and Foundation
Stage settings

Status: Recommended

Date of issue: 05-2005

Ref: DfES 1360-2005 G



department for

education and skills

creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

SureStart

Disclaimer

The Department for Education and Skills wishes to make it clear that the Department and its agents accept no responsibility for the actual content of any materials suggested as information sources in this document, whether these are in the form of printed publications or on a website.

In these materials icons, logos, software products and websites are used for contextual and practical reasons. Their use should not be interpreted as an endorsement of particular companies or their products.

The websites referred to in these materials existed at the time of going to print. Users should check all website references carefully to see if they have changed and substitute other references where appropriate.

Silver set

Introduction

This Silver set provides an early intervention for children who need additional support in developing their social, emotional and behavioural skills. It is aimed at children in Years 1 and 2 and links to the Blue set. The ideas in the materials could also be adapted, however, to provide group work for children in Year 3 and in the Foundation Stage.

The Silver set contains:

- a proforma for planning a group-work intervention;
- a proforma for planning a group-work session;
- suggestions for warm-up activities to begin the sessions;
- suggestions for core activities linked to the relevant theme within the curriculum materials;
- suggestions for relaxation exercises to end the session.

The *Guidance notes* which follow address key issues for school staff in planning group work.

Why might we want to develop group work?

This group work supports an early-intervention approach for young children who need additional help to develop their social, emotional and behavioural skills. It is similar to other small-group interventions that schools may be using with children who need additional help in other areas of the curriculum – for example, Early Literacy Support (ELS).

The intervention is based on the principle that some children will benefit from exploring and extending their social, emotional and behavioural skills by being members of a supportive, small group that is facilitated by an empathic adult. This group should build on and enhance the curriculum being offered to each child within the whole-class setting.

The purposes of group work for the children will include:

- facilitating personal development;
- exploring key issues in more depth;
- practising new skills within a safe environment;
- learning more about self;
- developing ways of relating to others;
- feeling safe and taking risks;
- being better equipped to make wise choices;
- being reflective.

The group work is **not** about ‘therapy’. It is about teaching children new skills, and creating the conditions that will support this learning. It is positioned at Wave 2 of the Primary National Strategy ‘Waves of intervention’ model.



Is our school ready for group work?

The decision to embark on group work should stem from the needs of the whole school community and through reflection about those needs within whole-staff enquiry. As a staff, you may wish to consider the following questions in coming to a decision.

- Are you confident in your current provision at whole-class and whole-school levels to promote and develop social, emotional and behavioural skills?
- Do you feel that more is needed to reach all the children?
- Would small-group work be a natural extension of your curriculum in developing social, emotional and behavioural skills across the school?

If the answer to these questions is yes, you may wish to consider these further questions.

- Are there children who would benefit from small-group work?
- How might small-group work enhance the inclusion of all children, including your most vulnerable and troubled children?
- Is this the right time for you – does the school currently have the capacity to manage and implement the intervention?

When you have reflected on these questions and if you decide to embark on the group intervention, it might be time to consider in more detail the practical implications and requirements necessary to start the work.

Who needs to be involved and how?

Headteacher and the leadership team for inclusion

The key responsibility for decisions to implement, support and sustain small-group work rests with the headteacher and the inclusion leadership team. It will be their responsibility to ensure that there is an ongoing, coherent, whole-school approach and that there is the capacity for effective delivery. This will include:

Coordinating the involvement of other agencies as appropriate.

Ensuring adequate supervision and support for the group-work facilitator.

Ensuring that adequate time is allocated to the class teacher and group-work facilitator(s) for weekly reflection and planning.

Securing the practical arrangements required, such as appropriate staff, facilities, cover and resources for each weekly session to be able to run effectively.

Organising the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the intervention.

Class teacher

The intervention will not be successful unless the class teacher retains an active role. The class teacher takes overall responsibility for the group, including planning the curriculum being offered to each child and ensuring that it is consistent with whole-class activities. The teacher should work in partnership with the group-work facilitator in the following ways.

Planning the group-work intervention in line with the whole-class theme and to match the specific needs of the individual children in the group.

Holding weekly meetings to review and reflect on each session and agree the following session.

Building on the learning that has taken place in the small-group session throughout the week's work in class.

Following up targets and specific issues with individual children as needed.

Liaising with parents/carers and with other agencies as appropriate.

Lead behaviour professional/behaviour and attendance coordinator

Most schools will now have a member of staff who coordinates policy and provision to promote positive behaviour and regular attendance. Part of their role will be to ensure that the small-group work fits within whole-school provision and planning. They may also ensure that the facilitator has the necessary skills to implement the intervention and/or receives any necessary training.

Group-work facilitator

When considering who might be the most appropriate person to facilitate a group, the following questions need to be addressed.

- Do they understand and model effective social, emotional and behavioural skills?
- Do they show the core conditions of warmth, empathy and positive regard for children (even when the children's behaviour can be challenging) that we know to be essential in all effective helpers?
- Are they reflective learners?
- Do they have an understanding of how groups work?
- Are they effective in working with groups?
- Do they understand issues such as child protection, etc.?

The role of the facilitator will be:

Joint planning with the class teacher;

Facilitating each weekly session, making sure there is pace and purpose while responding and adapting to the needs of the group as they arise;

Making sure the intervention provides a coherent and meaningful experience for the children;

Having clear, intended learning outcomes that are matched to the needs of individuals and shared with the group for each session and the intervention as a whole;

Ensuring that each child has a positive and valuable experience each week and that there is follow-up as needed;

Maintaining the group as a safe and respectful environment for children and adults;

Liaising with other adults in school to make sure that the learning from the group sessions is followed up by everyone who has contact with the child.

You may decide that the class teacher is the most appropriate person to be the group facilitator. This would enable the teacher to build positive relationships with the members of the group and to build on skills and approaches used with the whole class. Or you may decide that a learning mentor or a teaching assistant has the right skills, working in close partnership with the class teacher.

Co-facilitator

Groups are likely to be more effective when there are two adults involved. Respective roles can vary, from two adults who take an equal role in facilitating to a more likely situation where one adult takes the lead and the other takes a supporting role. This combination may be of an experienced and/or trained practitioner and someone who is developing their skills as a group-work facilitator.

Roles within the session might involve role playing and modelling for the children, providing observation and feedback, or being available to deal with difficult issues for children who might need individual support.

An important benefit of having two facilitators is that it provides the opportunity for more detailed reflection and analysis of each session and planning to meet the needs of the children in future sessions. Time must be allocated for this essential part of group work.

The facilitators should model appropriate social, emotional and behavioural skills at all times. However, it is recognised that we all have 'bad' days. For example, an adult might become exasperated with a child and engage in a 'power struggle' or shout at a child. If this happens there will be a need to reflect on why and how this happened, and consider how it can be used as a helpful learning experience for all those involved. This also provides an opportunity to model the skill of 'putting something right' by apologising and making up when needed.

Children

The group work described here is an early-intervention approach and is planned primarily for children in Years 1 and 2. This is because there is research evidence that work can be particularly effective with this age group.

The selection of children for a small group should be transparent and fair and form part of a review of each child's skills and needs. Individual children and their parents/carers should be involved at an appropriate level in identifying their needs and deciding on appropriate provision. The rationale for including children in the group should be explained to the class, in a context where all children know they may at some time be part of a group having extra help with aspects of their learning – whether this be in literacy, mathematics, speaking and listening or group work linked to another SEAL theme.

It should be made clear to children that joining the group is voluntary, although attending individual sessions is expected once the child becomes a member of the group.

Careful consideration should be given to the make-up of the groups to make sure the individuals can work effectively together. A recommended model is that the children in the group are from the same class.

Schools can decide on the nature of small groups. They might be for example:

- for specific groups of children (for example: anxious or quiet children, children who have irregular attendance);
- to promote a specific skill or explore a specific issue (for example: assertiveness, resolving conflict effectively, coping with change or loss).

Either of these approaches is likely to be effective; the choice will depend on individual circumstances.

Groups should:

- include children who provide good role models for at least some of the skills to be explored;
- be balanced, drawing from children with a range of needs. This will be particularly important in supporting children who find it hard to resolve conflict.

Children in Key Stage 2 might be invited to mentor and support the children involved in the group work, as part of the whole-school approach to creating a sense of community and promoting pupil participation.

Parents/carers

When you first introduce your whole-school work on the social and emotional aspects of learning to parents/carers, it will be important to say that this includes opportunities for children to do extra work in small groups from time to time, where this will help their learning. You could emphasise that the extra group work is being carried out routinely with all children who can benefit, and that most children are likely to be offered the opportunity at some time.

Parents/carers have an important role to play in small-group work but they will not all have the same capacity to be involved or support their children.

Parents/carers should be part of decisions about their children being involved in small-group work and be provided with information about the purpose of the group.

Some schools might be able to involve parents more actively. This could be by:

- providing follow-up activities for children to do with their parents/carers;
- inviting parents into the group for one or more sessions to be involved in activities and to see what their children have been doing;
- involving parents in assessment of their child's learning;
- running a parallel group for parents/carers.

What are the factors that make group work successful?

Key features of effective group work include:

- early intervention;
- the use of assessment for learning to identify children who may benefit from the intervention;
- effective liaison between the facilitator, the class teacher and others who work with the child in school;
- the involvement of parents and carers;
- careful monitoring and evaluation.

Where shall we do the group work?

It is essential to consider carefully where the small group meets. The setting should:

- be quiet and comfortable (for example, with a carpet and sufficient resources);
- be free from interruptions;
- be set up to allow for children to work in a circle and to complete pair and individual activities;
- be attractive, with places for displays and personalisation;
- provide easy access to resources.

How do I plan an intervention?

The class teacher will coordinate the planning of the group-work intervention. The basic framework for this is across six weekly sessions, to mirror the duration of whole-class work on a SEAL theme. It is recommended that a group-work intervention be for a minimum of six sessions. A proforma is provided at the end of this section, to help plan the intervention.

The first planning task will be to adapt the activities in this booklet to meet the needs of the group, given their age and stage in their social and emotional learning.

Once the overall plan of the intervention has been decided, there will be a need to plan the weekly sessions, to meet the learning outcomes identified and to meet the specific needs of the individual children involved.

Planning for small-group work is an active process where the class teacher and facilitators use reflection, review and creativity. The proformas (for the overall group-work intervention and for each weekly session) provide a framework for recording decisions from planning meetings.

Each session will be based on intended learning outcomes for individuals, and on aims for the development of the group.

Intended learning outcomes: These take the form of 'I can ...' statements. Select intended learning outcomes from the 'I can' statements within the SEAL curriculum materials. These are objectives for individual children.

Group aims: These provide a focus for development of the group as a whole. They will be determined through observation of the group and might be identified by group members. An example would be 'We will take turns in our group.'

When planning the small-group work, the following questions might be helpful.

- What is the social, emotional and behavioural skills focus within the class?
- What is the focus for the small-group work?
- What are the skills of the children who have been selected?
- What are the key aims for the group as a whole?
- What are the key intended learning outcomes for individual children in the group?
- How will the small-group work be monitored and evaluated?

The planning group should also consider how to establish a well-run and effective group, bearing in mind the following factors.

The structure and process of the group-work sessions as a whole. These need to be planned as a coherent and meaningful whole, with a beginning and end to the intervention.

Group identity and formation. The very first session is key for setting aims for the group as a whole. It will include a reminder about the class charter and the relevance of this to the ways the children and adults will behave towards each other in the group. Children may be asked to decide the name of their group. Group aims will be agreed, and in each session children will be encouraged to reflect on their progress in working together.

Structures and processes for the group facilitators and class teacher to meet, reflect and plan each week. The overarching plan for the intervention will have been agreed before the group work begins. Adaptations to each session may be made as the intervention proceeds, in the light of the group's and individuals' development. There needs to be built-in flexibility, whereby a balance is struck between keeping to the overall plan and the process of weekly planning which is sensitive to feedback from ongoing observation and assessment for learning.

The way in which group work will be introduced to the children.

Communication within the group, including the language to be used, which should build on key vocabulary within the SEAL resource theme.

Group and child management, including positive feedback and planned responses to disruptive incidents. Back-up support for the group facilitators should be planned, in case this is needed.

It is important to be aware that the **content** of the group-work session is only part of the learning and teaching that goes on. The **process** of the group is equally important. This process will include the facilitators modelling desired skills, providing frequent responsive and informative feedback to the children as well as addressing the specific needs of individuals.

What will a group-work session be like?

Each session will take a minimum of 40 minutes.

It is suggested that group-work sessions follow a standard format that will become familiar to the children. It is important that the balance between novelty and routine is matched to the needs and preferences of the children involved.

Specific approaches within the curriculum materials, such as the peaceful problem-solving process and the emotional barometer, can also be incorporated and practised within group-work sessions.

The proforma for planning a session provides the following structure.

- Welcome and check-in
- Warm-up activities
- Reminder of group aims for how we behave towards each other
- Review of previous week
- Plan for today's session
- Core activity

- Review and reflection
- Plans for coming week
- Relaxation

These key aspects of the session are expanded below.

Welcome and check-in

The group facilitators welcome each child to the group session.

The check-in provides an opportunity for the children to say or show (for example, using a feelings fan from the whole-school resource file) how they are feeling today and to express any concerns or issues they bring with them to the group. The check-in also provides the group facilitators with information about each child on that day. It is important to acknowledge and listen carefully to any concerns or issues the children bring, while still enabling the planned session to move on. It may be helpful to offer the child an opportunity to talk one-to-one at a later time, if they need to.

Warm-up activities

Suggested warm-up activities for group work are provided in this booklet. You can also use the circle games and rounds from the relevant year-group theme materials.

These activities are designed to:

increase group cohesion;

practise skills such as listening and taking turns;

mix up children to encourage them to work with everyone in the group;

provide opportunities for beginning to explore the intended learning outcomes for the session;

create a climate where children will feel free to share feelings and experiences.

Reminder of group aims for how we behave towards each other

These will have been discussed in the first group-work session and will build from the class charter. Supporting the children in developing the skills they need to meet these group aims will be an integral part of the group work in each session.

Review of previous week

The group reviews the week and developments throughout the week. This includes discussing any specific actions agreed at the previous meeting. It will also provide an opportunity for the children to review how they have applied learning from previous sessions. A standard format might be used, but planning should include any particular focus or adaptations.

Encourage children to talk about things that have gone well for themselves and for others in the group. A range of approaches may be used to support this, including rating scales. This is a time to enjoy the achievements of the previous week, and celebrate any progress made.

Plan for today's session

The group facilitators will give an introduction to the session. This will include the specific 'I can' statement(s) that are the focus of the session.

When the group is ready they might be involved in determining the group aims for the session as well as deciding how to work towards the intended learning outcomes. The facilitator might, for example, ask the following questions:

- Last week I really enjoyed the session. What do you think we all need to do to make sure it is another good session today?
- Today we are going to learn about how to listen to each other. How will you know if you have learned this?

Core activity

The core activity will relate to the SEAL resource theme being addressed by the class and to the 'I can' statement(s) for the individuals in the group. This activity can be selected from the ideas in this booklet, or designed by the class teacher and group facilitator. Activities should be chosen to provide a balance of types within each session and across the intervention – for example, rounds, structured group work and opportunities for enquiry.

The facilitator will play an essential and active part in the activities, scaffolding the child's learning:

- by making sure the ideas and activities are accessible to the child;
- through the use of facilitative questioning;
- by breaking down the task into small chunks;
- by making thinking, problem solving and reasoning explicit;
- by modelling the skills being taught.

It is suggested that the core activity of the final session of the group intervention includes the children planning how they are going to feed back their learning to their class.

Review and reflection

Children need to be given time to:

- review what they have done and what they have achieved in the session against the 'I can' statements and group aims;
- consider and plan how they might apply what they have learned over the week. Specific actions for individual children and the group as a whole can be agreed here, and children might think about who can help them apply their learning, and how. This might be other group members or the class teacher, for example.

As part of the review of progress with the group, you might establish a routine by which the children can show how well they think they have achieved their group aims.

One way is to do this graphically by the use of scaling. Below are some practical suggestions as to how this might be done.

On a line: Place a picture to illustrate success on one end of a 'line' and the opposite on the other end of the line. These might be a smiley face and a sad face. The children position themselves on the line to show how well they think they have achieved their group aims. Help the children to reflect on where they have positioned themselves, using the following questions.

- Why did you stand there?
- Why didn't you stand at the sad face?
- What shall we do next week to help us get nearer to the smiley face?
- What would each of us need to do to help get nearer the smiley face?

On a ladder: Draw a picture of a ladder or a staircase and stick it on the wall. Attach Velcro™ to it. Provide a picture to represent the group. This might be a puppet you use regularly in the sessions. Ask children to think about whether they have met their group aims. Choose a child (ideally a different child each week) to place the picture on the ladder to show how well they think the group have met their aim.

Ask the other children whether they agree or disagree with where the child has placed the picture and to give a reason. The group should try to agree a consensus but the facilitator should recognise that this might not be possible.

Use the questions above to encourage reflection.

In a circle: Ask the children to sit in a circle. Go through the aims and ask the children to give a thumbs up, thumbs down or thumbs neutral to each of the aims.

Use the questions above to encourage reflection.

Plans for the coming week

The group facilitator will suggest a task that children can undertake in the next week.

Relaxation

Each session might end with opportunities for children to relax, through a quiet time or guided exercises and visualisations. Suggestions for these are provided in this booklet.

How will we know the sessions are being effective?

You can evaluate the impact of the group work through formative and summative approaches.

Formative approaches involve the use of assessment for learning, to inform future learning and adapt approaches to ensure they are of maximum benefit for the children. Approaches may include discussions, interviews, questionnaires and observations in a range of sessions.

A range of people need to be involved in this evaluation, including the children, group-work facilitators, class teacher and other school staff and parents/carers.

Summative data should be collected both before and after the small-group work has been carried out. This might include using tools such as those suggested in Appendix 8 of the *Guidance book* in the whole-school SEAL resource. You might want to reconvene the group, perhaps a term later, to discuss and evaluate their progress with the 'I can' statements focused on during the group intervention.

What do we need to do first?

The following checklist will help you get started.

Actions to be taken:	✓
Have all members of staff been involved in the decision to run the small group?	
Are your plans to teach social, emotional and behavioural skills to the whole-class group effective and being implemented?	
Have staffing and resources been secured and the choice of group facilitators made?	
Has any necessary additional training for group facilitators been arranged – for example, in active listening skills or in how groups work?	
Has time to run the group been timetabled, with provision for planning, review and weekly supervision?	
Do you have a robust system for selecting children for the group that involves key staff, including external agencies if appropriate?	
Has alternative provision been made or sought for children for whom there is concern but who are not included in the group, for example because they are felt to require more specialist support?	
Is a suitable room available and has this been arranged to facilitate effective group work?	
Have evaluation procedures been agreed and any necessary assessments been carried out before the sessions begin?	
Have parents/carers been involved in the selection of their children to take part?	
Have children been actively consulted about the group? Are they aware of why they are being offered this opportunity and have they agreed to join the group?	
Do children understand the purpose of the group and the intended learning outcomes?	
Are children aware of the timescale of the group and the format of the group?	
Have you agreed a plan to involve parents/carers in the group?	
Have you agreed the overall structure for the intervention?	
Have you planned the weekly sessions, including the specific 'I can' statements being focused on and the core activity for each week, with the aid of the session proforma?	
Do facilitators know what to do should they need to seek help and support and talk to others – if, for example, a session did not go well or if it becomes clear that a child needs help from someone with specialist skills?	
Have risks that would prevent the group work being effective been identified? Have plans been made to manage these risks?	

PROFORMA FOR GROUP-WORK INTERVENTION

SEAL theme:

Planning team: *Class teacher, group-work facilitators*

No. of sessions:

Minimum of 6 sessions

Dates:

Group:

Focus of group:

The planning team will have decided the focus of the group work.

This will have informed and been informed by the choice of the children to be part of the group.

Group aims:

These are the aims for the group as a whole, with planned outcomes by the end of the intervention.

These link to the aims within the curriculum materials for this theme.

Intended learning outcomes: 'I can ...' statements:

These are the 'I can ...' statements that will be focused on in the intervention.

These will link with the 'I can ...' statements within the whole class curriculum materials for the theme.

Key vocabulary for the intervention:

This will link to the key vocabulary within the SEAL curriculum materials for this theme.

Core activities chosen from the ideas in this booklet, or your own ideas

Session 1

The beginning process – naming the group, overall purpose and structure of the intervention, getting to know each other, referring to class charter

Focus: 'I can ...' 'We can ...'

Core activity:

Resources:

Session 2

Focus: 'I can ...' 'We can ...'

Core activity:

Resources:

Session 3

Focus: 'I can ...' 'We can ...'

Core activity:

Resources:

Session 4

Focus: 'I can ...' 'We can ...'

Core activity:

Resources:

Session 5

Preparation for ending the intervention

Focus: 'I can ...' 'We can ...'

Core activity:

Resources:

Session 6

The ending session of the intervention – summing up learning and achievements, planning to share learning with the rest of the class, agreeing ongoing support

Focus: 'I can ...' 'We can ...'

Core activity:

Resources:

Post-intervention review and planning

The class teacher, group facilitators and inclusion leadership team review outcomes of group intervention and agree the next steps for the group and individuals. The leadership team consider any whole-school issues or planning implications that have been raised through the group-work intervention.

PROFORMA FOR GROUP-WORK SESSION

SEAL theme:

Session no.:

Date:

Group:

Class teacher:

Facilitators:

Resources:

Group aims:

These may be phrased as 'We can ...' statements for the group.

The 'ground rules' for the session will also be group aims.

Intended learning outcomes: 'I can ...' statement(s):

One or more 'I can ...' statement(s) will be focused on in each session, linking with the whole-class curriculum materials.

Key vocabulary:

The key vocabulary focused on in each session, relating to the theme.

Welcome and check-in:

Each child is welcomed by the facilitators.

Each member of the group has the opportunity to talk about what's uppermost in their mind that day.

Warm-up activities:

Chosen from the ideas in this booklet, or your own ideas.

The children may develop a favoured routine for these.

Reminder of group aims:

A reminder about how we behave towards each other.

Review of previous week:

This includes the follow-up actions agreed and progress with last week's 'I can ...' statements.

This is a time to enjoy the successes of the last week and to apply a solution-focused approach to exploring any difficulties that may have arisen.

Plan for today's session:

This is the introduction you will give, including introducing the intended learning outcomes ('I can ...' statements) and deciding together some group aims for the session.

Core activity:

*This activity will focus on meeting the intended learning outcomes for the session, including the specific 'I can ...' statement(s).
Chosen from the ideas in this booklet, or your own ideas.*

Review and reflection on intended learning outcomes and group aims:

The group reviews and reflects on the process and outcomes of the session.

Plans for coming week:

Follow-up actions are agreed for the coming week, for individuals and the group as a whole.

Relaxation:

This may be a guided relaxation or a quiet time.

Approaches to incorporate into session:

Examples: Peaceful problem-solving approach, emotional barometer.

Warm-up activities¹

The start of a group session is an important time when members are deciding whether the group will be a comfortable place for them and will meet their needs. Starting and ending with the same short, simple game will give the group-work session a routine and help children feel secure. Games with a clear structure, where individuals feel safe and stimulated, can set the tone for the group. They provide children and adults with a way to get to know each other, express themselves and experience what it is like in the new group.

Working in a circle during warm-up activities supports a sense of belonging and occasion. A regular circle ensures that every member can see each other. Using chairs, cushions, small mats, a rope or a chalk line will help children maintain their place in the circle. If there is a range of cushions, each child has a safe, predictable space and place for games and sitting, then relaxing at the end.

'Changing places' games are often useful in encouraging children to sit with different neighbours. Asking children to change places if they agree with your statement offers even the shyest children a chance to express themselves, while children who don't wish to answer may just sit still. Prepare statements from fairly neutral areas, to more personal if appropriate; for example, 'Change places if you are wearing red socks', 'like sausages', 'have a sister', 'enjoy being on your own', 'like playtimes'.

Rounds offer a language structure to work within and can give group leaders an idea of how the children are feeling. They can be used at the start of the group (for example, 'If I were an animal I would be a ...') or as a closing ritual (for example, 'If I were an animal now I would be a ...'). You can invite the children to give reasons if they wish to.

Sometimes it may be more appropriate for children to work initially in pairs on the warm-up activities suggested below, before working in the larger group. This allows less confident children to share ideas and build relationships. Change partners regularly so that everyone gets a chance to feel comfortable with each other.

When you have finished a warm-up game, try to explore with the children what they have learned.

Suggested warm-up activities

Find your match

Collect any pairs of objects (knife and fork, pencil and sharpener, connecting construction pieces) or half-pictures (old Christmas cards, simple coloured card). Issue one item to each child, who has to find the child with the matching object or picture.

Mirror games

Pairs take turns to mirror each other in movements, starting off slowly. Later they could be given feelings to express and mirror. The child doing the mirroring could then guess the feeling.

¹ **Note:** Many of these activities are well known and have been used in different settings under many names. We especially thank Jenny Mosley for her inspiration and support for us in using them.

Secret writing

Just using a finger, each partner draws or writes a simple word on the other's back or hand. The other has to guess what it is.

Serious sausages

Partners question each other about any topic, for example 'What are clouds made of?' The respondent always replies 'Sausages'. The aim is not to laugh.

Blindfold games

These particular trust-building games rely on a sense of trust already being established. Never force a blindfold onto a child; always ask for volunteers and use a loose scarf or aircraft-type sleeping mask that can be easily removed by the wearer. In the early stages play party games such as 'Squeak'. In this game the blindfolded child can sit and classmates come up and make animal noises. The child guesses their identity. When more trust is established, blindfolded children can be led around by hand or by verbal directions from partners.

Beanbag games

Using beanbags reduces the disruption caused by chasing after rolling balls. Group members call another's name and throw a beanbag to that child. If everyone begins in a standing-up position and sits down when they have thrown the bag, you can make sure they have all had a turn. Once a pattern has been established, new bags can be thrown in and passed around the same order of children. This gets increasingly fun and challenging the more bags are thrown in. Group facilitators can hold the bags at their turn to stop the game slowly.

Blast off!

The children count down from the total number present. Each child can say only one number. This means that everyone has to say a number to reach 'one'. When this happens, all call 'Blast Off!' They can call out at random, but must not call at the same time. If they do, they have to start again.

Traditional games

Playing familiar playground games in the group offers predictability and practice in games that can be used in the playground with other peers. Examples might be *Duck duck goose*, *Oranges and lemons*, *Wink murder*, *Ring a ring of roses*, *What's the time Mr Wolf?*, *Simon says* or *Hunt the thimble* (using louder or softer clapping to indicate how 'warm' or close the finder is).

Copying actions

The group leader starts an action, which the children copy. The leader then changes the action and the children copy. Once a range of movements has been established, a child can initiate the actions.

Passing games

Passing an object around encourages turn-taking skills. Once established, the game can be adapted – for example, passing an object and telling the neighbour what it is not (perhaps passing a pencil and saying ‘Here is an orange’). As more objects are introduced it becomes more challenging to remember their fictitious identities.

Zoom eek

Imagining a car zooming round the circle, children pass the word ‘zoom’ with both hands pointing as it passes. Encourage eye contact with neighbours. Later, introduce the word ‘eek’, which bounces the zoom in the reverse direction. Explore the sense of cooperation and the feelings of frustration that this causes. To ensure that everyone gets a turn, say that a new game can be played once the zoom has gone all the way round.

Walking around the room

Get the children to walk around the room. Notice and praise those who give each other space. Get them to practise freezing so they have a routine for stopping in a fun way. Then give them descriptions of how to walk, first concrete then according to feelings, which can be linked to the topic of the group. Examples might be:

- walking silently, sliding, stamping;
- walking as if you are feeling a little/quite/very: happy, sad, scared or angry (you could use the emotional barometer for this);
- walking as if you are with good friends;
- walking as if you have no friends;
- walking as if you have just done something great;
- walking away from doing something bad.

Fight, flight, flow

The group stands inside a small circle made from rope or cushions. Someone (a group facilitator at first) stands outside the circle. Shuffle cards with characters on them and quickly call out who the character is. Choose a range of friendly or frightening ones that the children would know, generic or particular (for example a ghost, police officer, Mum, Dad, a child who bullies others, a barking dog, a dragon). The person outside the circle acts the role of the character; the other children decide whether to run to the safety of the centre of the circle (flight), confront the character (fight) or be friendly with it (flow). (This exercise can give an opportunity to explore a range of appropriate responses to threat and to discuss the feeling of being scared.)

Core activities for *Good to be me*

You will need two large dolls or puppets and one smaller beanie. These will be used throughout the Silver set. Ideally they will be representative of the ethnic mix of the school. We suggest that you name them yourself, but for the purpose of these materials we have called them Zotty and Zeb. It will help to have a small beanie for the rounds and for some of the other activities.

Nine core activities are suggested here, of which you will want to choose about six for your group-work intervention.

Core activity 1

Intended learning outcome

- I can tell or show the things I am good at.

Key vocabulary

Session

like proud

General

happy sad angry scared relax relaxed
relaxation problem solving

Resources

- Zotty
- Pictures of the school and classroom
- A digital camera
- Coloured paper, pens, etc.

What to do

Introduce Zotty to the group.

Through you, have her say something like, 'My name is Zotty. I like playing with my toys.'

The children should take it in turns to introduce themselves and say something they like to do.

Explain that Zotty has a very bad memory. Have her go round the group and try to remember everyone's name and favourite thing they like to do. Show that she forgets, gets mixed up and makes many mistakes. The children should be encouraged to correct her.

Have Zotty try again and get it right this time because of the children's help.

Explain that Zotty has come from a long way away. She wants to know a bit about the children and their school.

Ask whether anyone can think of something that they might tell Zotty. The children should take it in turns to tell Zotty about themselves and the things they like doing at school. They might use the picture of the classroom to help them.

Explain that it is time for Zotty to go. She says goodbye and gets into her magic space machine (her bag).

When Zotty has gone ask:

- Would you like Zotty to come back?
- How could we make sure that she comes back?
- Do you think we can write an invitation?
- Can we include some of the good things about us?

The children should contribute to the invitation and draw, include photographs or write on it (with help if necessary) some of the good things about themselves and the school.

Follow-up

Ask the children to think about what they have learned today, and what they could do to practise what they have learned, before the next session. Suggest that they ask another child in the class what they like doing at school, or tell a person at home something they like doing at school.

Core activity 2

Intended learning outcomes

- I can say or show when I am feeling sad.
- I can say some things that might make me feel happy.

Key vocabulary

Session

dislike happy sad

General

angry scared relax relaxed relaxation
problem solving

Resources

- Zotty
- *Feeling fan* with happy, sad and OK (other feelings can be added later)

What to do

In the 'Welcome and review' of the week, you will have already explained how happy Zotty was when she got the invitation from last week. How would you know if Zotty was feeling happy?

Explain that Zotty doesn't want to come out to see them. Say that she is feeling sad. Ask the children to encourage her to come out. Eventually, make her come out of her bag.

Explain that Zotty is feeling so sad that she doesn't want to talk about it. Ask:

- Can you think of why she might be feeling sad?

The children should think of some reasons and then take it in turns to ask Zotty questions, for example, 'Zotty are you feeling sad because ... ?'

Explain that Zotty is feeling sad because she lost her favourite teddy. Ask what we can do to help Zotty feel better.

The children should give some ideas about what they might do to cheer Zotty up. The facilitator(s) should help them.

For example:

- they might sing a song;
- tell a story;
- tell a joke;
- dance;
- laugh and smile;
- give Zotty a cuddle.

Summarise by writing on the whiteboard: 'We made Zotty feel a little better by ...'

You should write down all the children's ideas. You might like to make these into a book of ideas or make them part of a display to be used in the introduction next week.

Introduce the *feeling fans*. Explain that sometimes it is hard to talk about the way we are feeling. Explain that these fans might help let other people know how we are feeling.

Review

Use the *feeling fan* as part of the review, asking the children to show how they are feeling at the end of the session.

Follow-up

Ask the children to think about what they have learned today, and what they could do to practise what they have learned, before the next session. You might suggest that over the next week they do something to make someone at school happy or do something at home to make someone feel happy. Their class teacher should help them with this and give them feedback.

Core activity 3

Intended learning outcomes

- I can say or show when I am feeling happy or sad.
- I can tell if someone is feeling happy or sad.

Key vocabulary

Session

happy sad

General

angry scared relax relaxed relaxation

problem solving

Resources

- Zotty
- *Feeling fan* with happy, sad and OK (other feelings can be added later)
- A smile (this might be made with card and should be small enough to fit in a child's cupped hands)
- A bag with objects and pictures in it so there is at least one for each of the children. The objects and pictures should show things that might make us feel happy – for example, a shell to represent the seaside
- An empty bag

What to do

Make Zotty come out of the bag holding a *feeling fan*. The fan should be pointing to happy. Ask the children to guess how she is feeling.

Ask the children how they can tell if someone is feeling happy if they haven't got a *feeling fan*? Focus on how eyes, mouth, body look when they are happy.

Next you will need the card smile. Pick it up and smile as soon as you look at it. Pass it to the child sitting next to you. When they get the smile they should smile too. When it has gone all round the circle, everyone should be smiling.

Explain that Zotty has brought a bag of her favourite things. She has to go, so she leaves the bag with the children.

Pass the bag round and ask the children to reach into the bag. They should bring out something and say what they find, and how it makes them feel. For example:

- I feel happy when I am at the seaside.
- I feel ... when I am in bed.
- I feel ... when I play with my toys.
- I feel ... when I read my books.

Ask the children to make a bag for Zotty of all the things that make the group feel happy. They should draw them on card or find objects to represent them to put in a bag for Zotty. You might like to bring some objects with you that might show children's favourite activities or bring some photos or pictures cut from magazines.

Review

Ask the children to show what they have learnt by showing what sad and then happy looks like.

They should use their bag for Zotty to show and talk about the things that make them happy before they put them in the bag.

The children should use the feeling fan to show how they are feeling at the end of the session.

Follow-up

Ask the children to think about what they have learned today, and what they could do to practise what they have learned, before the next session. You might suggest that they notice if someone in the group looks a bit sad. They could try and cheer them up. Children might buddy up in pairs to keep an eye out for each other. Their class teacher should help create opportunities for this and give them feedback.

Core activity 4

Intended learning outcome

- I can make my body relaxed.

Key vocabulary

Session

relaxed calm relaxation relax relaxed

General

happy sad angry scared problem solving

Resources

- Relaxing music
- Candle
- Aromatherapy oils
- Muted light
- Zotty
- *Feeling fan*
- Large paper and pens or digital camera

What to do

Zotty should be lying, looking very relaxed, on one of the chairs at the beginning of the session. The relaxing music should be playing and the aromatherapy oils should have made the room smell really lovely.

The children might notice Zotty and try to encourage her to speak. Draw out that she is too relaxed to even hear them. Ask them what is wrong with Zotty. They might say that she is asleep. Explain that you know that she is really just very relaxed.

Discuss with the children how they might know she was relaxed. For example:

- her arms and legs are floppy;
- she is very still and quiet.

Lean down to listen to Zotty. Have her tell you that she needs to relax and she needs some peace and quiet. She could say that it would help if the children relax too.

Whisper to the children that you are going to teach them to relax so that they don't disturb Zotty. Draw their attention to the music. Zotty has chosen it to help her relax. Suggest that they should lie down. Remind them to make their bodies really floppy. Go round and check if their bodies are relaxed. Lie down yourself or sit in a relaxed way. Time how long the children have remained quiet and relaxed. When about two minutes have gone by, turn off the music and help Zotty become alert. Allow the children to 'wake up' at their own pace.

Have Zotty thank the children through you. She might ask them how they feel and whether they like relaxing. She could explain that she relaxes when she is feeling wound up or tense.

Play the game 'Blink Relax'. This is a variation on the party game 'Blink Murder'. First of all, the children need to be able to get into a relaxed position. Explain that to play the game you need to be able to get in the relaxed position. Explain that if someone blinks at you, you must become floppy and relaxed. Practise by blinking at the children and making them relaxed. When you feel the children understand this, you should ask for a volunteer to go out of the room. From the children remaining, choose someone to be the Blinker. The volunteer should return and the Blinker should try to make everyone relax without the volunteer working out who the Blinker is.

Use a large piece of paper to draw round one of the children. Annotate the body shape to show how the body feels when it is relaxed. Make sure you include:

head/brain;

eyes;

ears;

mouth;

body.

Alternatively, you might like to use a digital camera. Children should show what relaxed looks like and you should take photos to illustrate this.

Review

Use the picture on the flipchart for the children to explain what they have learned.

Follow-up

Ask the children to think about what they have learned today and what they could do to practise what they have learned, before the next session.

The class teacher should make sure that there are opportunities for the children to feel relaxed during the week. If the class seem tense, ask the children from the small group to help them to relax.

Make time for the children from the small group to teach the rest of the class how to play Blink Relax.

Core activity 5

Intended learning outcomes

- I can say when I am feeling worried or anxious.
- I can think of some ways to make myself feel better if I am anxious or worried.

Key vocabulary

Session

scared anxious worried

General

happy sad angry relax relaxed
relaxation problem solving

Resources

- Zotty
- Relaxing music

What to do

Arrange the room in advance so that Zotty is sitting on the chair looking anxious. Her legs might be crossed tightly and her arms folded.

Through you, have Zotty explain that she doesn't feel right. She has a horrid feeling in her tummy and her head feels tight. She doesn't like the feeling and she doesn't know why she is feeling like that. The children should try to guess what might be the matter, for example:

'Are you ill?'

'Are you scared?'

'Has something nasty happened to you?'

You might suggest to the group that you feel a bit like that when you are scared or worried. Ask them if they think that might be what is wrong with Zotty. You might suggest that one of them asks her.

Encourage one of the children to ask her why she might be feeling like this.

Have Zotty say she doesn't know. The children might try to help her decide. They might ask her things like:

'Are you going to the dentist?'

'Are you starting a new school?'

Have Zotty decide that she thinks she is feeling worried because her mum and dad are going on holiday. Her nana is coming to look after her, but she thinks she might miss her mum and dad.

How can we help Zotty? Perhaps the children can think of some ideas. They could:

- help her to think about something different;
- tell her a joke;
- help her to relax;
- suggest she does some exercise;
- dance for her.

The children should tense up their bodies and do a tense person's dance. Play some relaxing music and suggest the children do a dance/move to show themselves getting more and more relaxed.

Zotty says the dance has helped her stop worrying but that she thinks she would like to relax.

Play the relaxing music from last time and encourage the children to relax.

Say that it is time for Zotty to go. The children should say goodbye.

Follow-up

Suggest that the children try to cheer someone up at home and at school this week, and report back on what happened. Their class teacher can help by providing opportunities and giving them feedback.

Core activity 6

Intended learning outcome

- I can say what I need.

Key vocabulary

Session

scared strong

General

happy sad angry relax relaxed
relaxation problem solving

Resources

- Zotty

What to do

Explain that Zotty is not feeling happy.

This is what has happened. Try to act this out if you can.

Zotty was sitting in class and she wanted to go to the toilet. She was feeling shy and timid so she tried to ignore it. The feeling started to grow. Zotty went to ask Miss ..., but Miss ... was really busy and she told Zotty to go away. Zotty sat down. She couldn't think about anything else. She put up her hand but nobody came to see her. She was getting desperate. She really needed to go to the toilet. She had to rush. She was in such a hurry that she trod on Ven's model and broke it. She knocked into the milk trolley and the milk spilt. She got to the toilet just in time.

Miss ... was cross because of all the damage.

Ask the children to suggest what Zotty should have done. The children should work in a smaller group supported by an adult to work out what Zotty could do. They should show the other group their ideas.

Ideas might include:

'Please Miss ..., I need to ...'

The children should call Zotty to come back out of her bag. When Zotty comes out the children should tell her their ideas.

Review

Ask the children to think about what they have learned today. Draw out their ideas about asking for things in a clear and strong way when you really need them.

Follow-up

You might suggest that they try out their ideas about how to ask for things in a clear and strong way. This will need the support of the class teacher. Children in the same class might support each other.

Core activity 7

Intended learning outcome

- I can say what I need.

Key vocabulary

Session

angry strong

General

happy sad scared relax relaxed
relaxation problem solving

Resources

- Zotty

What to do

Explain that Zotty has a friend called Zeb. Have Zotty explain, through you, that Zeb is very good at getting his own way. But Zeb is always in trouble. He doesn't understand why. Zotty wants the children's help in understanding why Zeb is always in trouble. Zotty gives you a list that Zeb's teacher has written for Zeb's mum and dad. It is a list of the things that Zeb has been in trouble for. Then explain that she has to go and put Zotty back in her bag.

You might ask for volunteers to help you model the things that Zeb did wrong or the facilitators might work together to model them.

If possible act out the following examples:

- Zeb wanted a car but another boy was playing with it. He reached over and tried to take it. The boy wouldn't give it to him. Zeb hit him on the head and when he was crying he took it.
- Zeb wanted a turn on the bike but a girl was riding on it. She had it for ages. Zeb tried to wait but he got bored. He pushed her off and she grazed her knee.
- One of the children on Zeb's table had taken all the crayons and put them near her. Zeb thought this wasn't fair so he hit her.
- Zeb was late getting up. He didn't have time for any breakfast. He was very hungry. He knew where Miss ... kept the biscuits. He went and he took the biscuits without asking.

The children should make suggestions about (or show) how Zeb should have behaved. Try out the ideas by acting them out.

Call Zotty back from her bag. The children should take it in turns to show what Zeb might do in the four examples. Draw out ideas about asking for things in a clear, strong way, but not hurting others.

Review

Ask the children if there are times when they have been a bit like Zeb. Suggest that during the week they should try out some of their ideas.

Follow-up

Write down the ideas together on a card and give it to the class teacher, who should try to spot when the children in the group are using their new ideas. You might like to make a card for the child instead, to give to the class teacher. The child and the teacher can put a star or sticker on the card when they have used the strategy. The children might 'buddy up' and act as the class 'look-out' to spot when their partner is asking for things in a clear, strong way without hurting others.

Core activity 8

Intended learning outcome

- I can tell you something I am good at.

Key vocabulary

Session

happy proud

General

sad angry scared relax relaxed
relaxation problem solving

Resources

- Children should bring something that they are proud about to show Zotty
- Class teachers should provide a list of good things about the children in the group
- Prepare one positive statement from yourself about each of the children
- You might want to prepare a photograph of each child on large sheet of paper
- Sticky notes
- Zotty

What to do

Draw round each of the children in turn, or use the photograph of each child placed in the centre of a large piece of paper. Stick these up round the room. Show these to the children and say your positive statement about each of them.

Ask the children to write or draw something good about each person (including the facilitators) in the group on a sticky note. They will need help to do this.

Take Zotty out of her bag. She should listen to what is going on.

The people in the group should take it in turns to be 'it'. The other people should take it in turns to read out their card and give it to the person who is 'it'. The person who is 'it' should place the sticky notes on their own poster.

Zotty should explain that she has been to see the children's class teacher, and add the positive comments from those teachers.

Review

Ask the children to think about what they have learned today. They might talk about it with a partner before you ask them to share their ideas.

Follow-up

The class teacher should provide an opportunity for children in the group to say something good about themselves.

Suggest that the children watch out for something good about someone else in the group and tell them about it.

Core activity 9

Intended learning outcomes

- I can tell you when I am feeling proud.
- I can say something that makes me feel proud.
- I can tell you what I have learned.

Key vocabulary

Session

happy proud

General

sad angry scared relax relaxed
relaxation problem solving

Resources

- A list of the things that you have learned and done over the sessions so far
- Zotty
- A greetings card for each child with all the positive things about them from last week's session. This might include their picture with the positive statements round it. It might have a group photograph. It should contain a message to thank the child for coming to the group and doing such a lot of learning.

What to do

This activity session is to prepare for the final session, when the children will take Zotty to introduce her to the class and to share what they have been doing. It is likely that they will need a lot of support to do this.

Go through the things that you have done and made in the group. Ask the children to decide what they would like to tell their class.

Help the children to decide what they might do when they talk about their learning with their class. For example:

- children might take it in turns to lead some of the warm-up games with the class;
- they could introduce Zotty;
- they could read out the positive things about group members.

Help the children plan how they will go back to class and spend 5–10 minutes sharing their learning with the other children.

Follow-up

Children should be supported to do their presentation to their classes.

Relaxation exercises

A routine of relaxation or visualisation exercises establishes a sense of closure and safety at the end of the group session, offers a chance to reflect on the learning that has taken place and can calm down a group ready for the next lesson. Children may have their own cushion or towel to lie on. Ideally, the children should lie down comfortably, with their eyes either closed or covered, with the lights dimmed. Alternatively, they could stay in their seats.

Suggested relaxation exercises

Breathing by numbers

Get the children to try breathing by using their abdomens rather than by chest expansion. They can rest a hand on their chest to see the difference. You will need to model this before counting. Say 'I want you to breathe in for four counts and out for six. In – one, two, three, four; out – one, two, three, four, five, six.' Do this just five times at first.

You can extend the exercise by encouraging the children to breathe in through the nose, and out slower and longer, through pursed lips. You can extend this to relax on the exhale using the techniques below in *Tense and loose*.

Tense and loose

Get the children to tense and relax (in turn) their feet, legs, buttocks, back, shoulders, arms, hands, neck and finally face. Use timings appropriate to the children's concentration, from five seconds tensing and ten seconds relaxing, to longer stretches. Use a range of vocabulary to emphasise the skills – harder, stronger, tighter, fiercer, then calmer, softer, letting go, ease, looser.

For a quicker version, concentrate on legs, hands or face. You could say, for example:

'Lying flat on your back, feel the floor touching your body. I will name a part of your body (*check the children know these*) and then tell you to squeeze and tense it as hard as you can. You should feel that part become hot and tired. When I say relax, stop tensing and feel it become limp, floppy and calm. Try to just work on that one part at a time. We will work on different parts as we go.'

Melting in the sun

Paint an accessible verbal picture of the group lying in the sun. This could be lying in the playground or on the sand on holiday. Point out that imaginary sun bathing is healthier than risking sunburn!

'... The sun is heating up your body. You can feel it warming you up through your clothes, through your skin... it's warming you right through to your muscles. Even your bones are getting hot. Your body starts to feel soft and loose. Feel your face become softer. Your jaw relaxes, slightly open. You can feel your muscles start to slip off your bones. Feel your legs melting. Your arms are slowly melting into the floor ...'

After a few minutes, start bringing the children back to reality, for example saying:

'A cloud covers the sun and you start to cool, but you still keep the warmth inside you. Feel the hard floor underneath you and your own body being strong but still relaxed. In your own time open your eyes, see where you are and slowly sit up and smile at the others in the room.'

The mysterious shop

Paint a different kind of word picture for the group, saying:

'You are going down to your local shops and notice a strange old shop that you have never seen before. You go in and look around. It is full of shelves of old and interesting things. You find a shelf in a dark corner. At the back of it is something of yours that you have not seen for a long time. You pick it up and remember how it felt, how it smelt, and how heavy it was. The shopkeeper smiles at you and says that you can take it for free. It is wrapped up in lots of brown paper and you carry it out of the shop. You carefully take it home and put it in a special place. When you look at it you remember the happy times that it gave you. Now hold that feeling in your head, slowly open your eyes and smile at the other people in the group.'

Copies of this document may be available from:

DfES Publications

Tel: 0845 60 222 60
Fax: 0845 60 333 60
Textphone: 0845 60 555 60
e-mail: dfes@prolog.uk.com

Ref: DfES 1360-2005 G

© Crown copyright 2005

Produced by the
Department for Education and Skills

www.dfes.gov.uk

If this is not available in hard copy it can be
downloaded from:

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk

The content of this publication may be reproduced
free of charge by schools and local education
authorities provided that the material is
acknowledged as Crown copyright, the publication
title is specified, it is reproduced accurately and not
used in a misleading context. Anyone else wishing
to reuse part or all of the content of this publication
should apply to HMSO for a core licence.

**The permission to reproduce Crown copyright
protected material does not extend to any
material in this publication which is identified
as being the copyright of a third party.**

Applications to reproduce the material from this
publication should be addressed to:

HMSO, The Licensing Division, St Clements House
2-16 Colegate, Norwich NR3 1BQ
Fax: 01603 723000
e-mail: hmsolicensing@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk