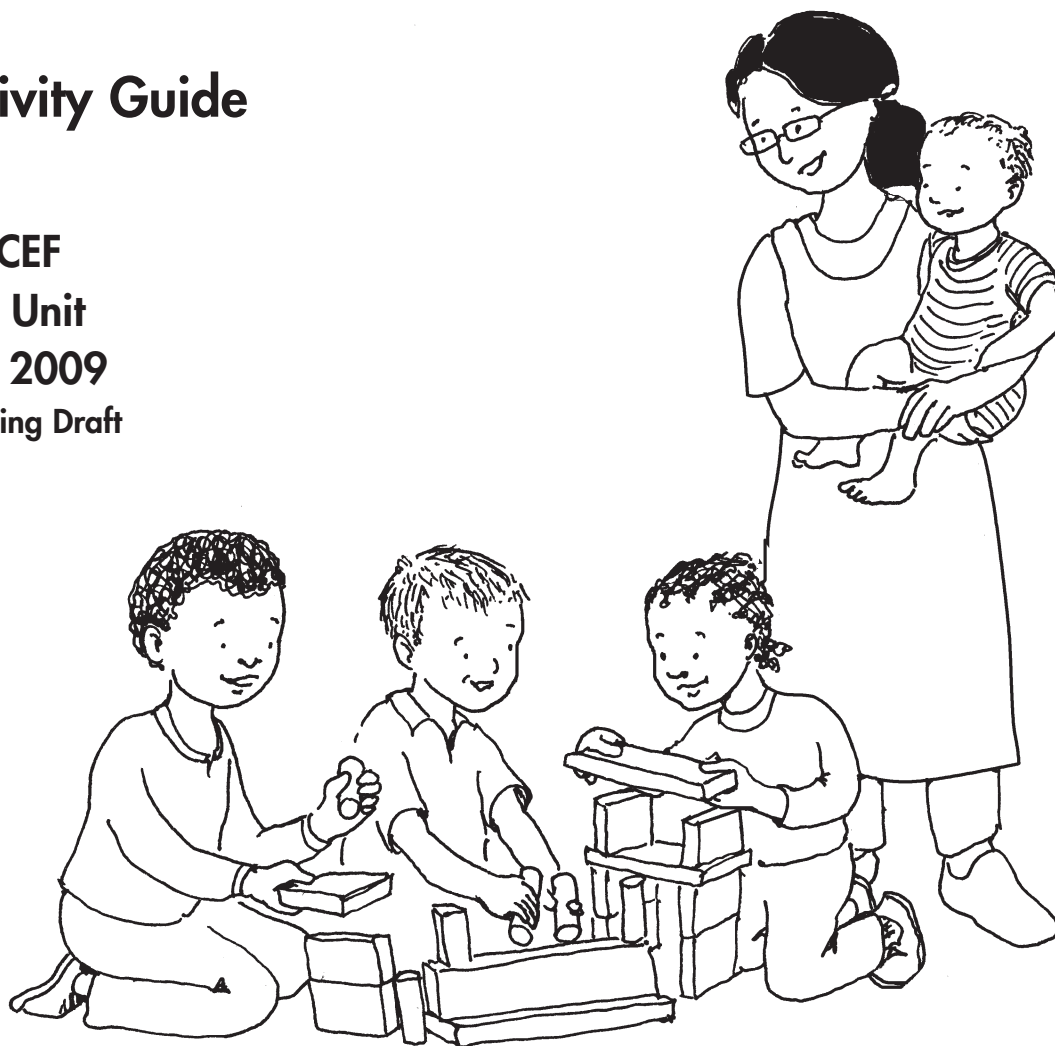


Early Child Development Kit: A Treasure Box of Activities

Activity Guide

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Working Draft



Acknowledgments

This prototype document was prepared by the ECD Unit with the help of Cassie Landers.

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Illustration

The document was illustrated by Joan Auclair.

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Activity Guide

Welcome!

How much are young children affected by events that take place around them?

A lot. Young children are active players in the world. Even though they may not understand the meaning of what they see or hear, children absorb the images that surround them and are deeply impacted by the emotions of the people they rely on for love and security.

Parents and caregivers play a very important role in helping young children cope with and recover from traumatic and stressful experiences. Providing young children with sensitive and responsive care takes a lot of emotional and physical energy. But the everyday moments shared between a child and caring adults can be mutually healing. During difficult and uncertain times, simply finding comfort in each other's presence is the first step to helping young children cope and heal.



The Power of Play

Children are curious from the moment they are born. They want to learn about and understand their world. During the first five years of life children's brains are growing faster than at any other time of life. Children's early experiences shape how their brains develop. Children's early learning sets the stage for school success.

Good early experiences help a child's brain develop well. The more work the brain does, the more it is capable of doing. When children play, their brains work hard.

Playing is how children learn. Play comes naturally to children. They play during daily routines. They play during learning experiences you provide. Think about a baby who starts a peek-a-boo game with you when you pull her shirt over her head. The toddler or two-year-old who imitates the way you read to her as she reads to her doll. Or the three-or-four year old who scribbles and marks on a large sheet of paper you put out on the table, then announces proudly, "I wrote my name."

Sometimes it may look like not much is happening. Filling and dumping small objects from a can may seem boring to you. Playing blocks seems like just stacking them and knocking them down.

But play is filled with opportunities for children to learn and develop new skills. When children play, they use all their senses – hearing, seeing, tasting, touching, smelling and moving – to gather information about their world. Later they will gather information through language. They organize and reorganize this information into their first pictures of themselves, others, and their world.

Through the fun games in this Treasure Box, children – both older and younger – will develop new skills for talking and thinking, moving and doing, feeling and learning about themselves, and getting along with others.

Learning through Play

Look at how much children are learning as they play together with blocks:

Talking and Thinking

They may learn to:

Connect words to actions as they talk together about what they are doing.

Participate in conversations about what they are doing.

Understand position words as they walk *on* a path of blocks *next to* the table.

Understand concepts such as soft, hard, big, small, heavy, light, rough and smooth.

Use their imagination as they tell a story about what they have created.

Make a plan as they decide what to build together.

Complete a task as they make a path of blocks.

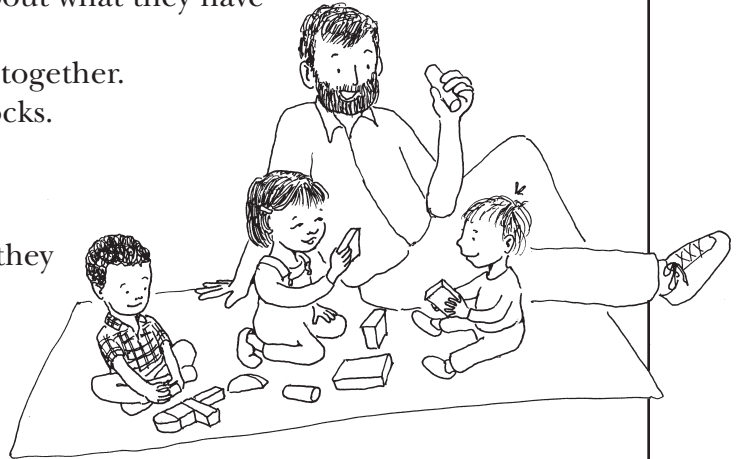
Moving and Doing

They may learn to:

Develop awareness of where they are going as they walk on a path of blocks.

Develop balance when moving as they carry blocks across the room.

Use hand and wrist muscles to do delicate tasks as they make a stack of small blocks.



Feelings and learning about self:

They may learn to:

Express their feelings when they discover: “I like to build.”

Feel “I can do it!” as they complete a tower of blocks – or knock a block tower over.

Getting Along with others

They may learn to:

Play with other children.

Cooperate with others as one child hands another a block.

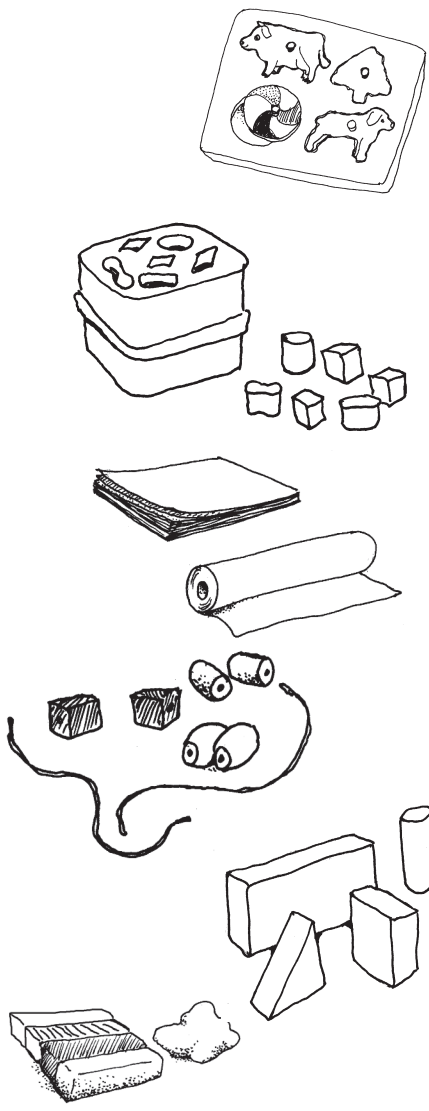
Follow a simple rule that keeps everyone safe, such as “no throwing blocks.”

Why an ECD Kit?

Giving time for and helping children play during times of stress is one of the most important things you can do. This ECD Kit of activities was created to help you help young children continue to develop their skills for thinking, speaking, and interacting with people and things even when times are very difficult. We hope these fun learning activities will help to stimulate children’s eager minds, quiet their hearts, and give them hope. When you help young children feel safe and secure they can be free to learn now and in the future.

What is inside the ECD Kit?

This ECD Treasure Box is filled with materials and ideas for learning and fun. Each item was carefully chosen to support the important work you do each day. Each one can be used in different ways depending on the age and interest of the child. Here is a list of the children’s treasures you will find.



Games and Activities			
	Babies	1–3 Years	4–6 Years
1. Board Puzzle	*	*	
2. Chain Puzzle	*	*	
3. Board Book	*	*	*
4. Sponge Balls	*	*	*
5. Shape Sorter	*	*	*
6. Paper and Crayons	*	*	*
7. Stringing Beads	*	*	*
8. Puppets	*	*	*
9. Stack and Sort Kit	*	*	*
10. Dominoes	*	*	*
11. Construction Blocks	*	*	*
12. Modeling Clay		*	*
13. Puzzle Blocks		*	*
14. Memory Game		*	*
15. Counting Circle			*
16. Jigsaw Puzzle			*

Treasures for Caregivers

The ECD kit also contains materials to help you create a safe learning space for young children. Look for tape, pen, pencils, paper, exercise book markers, and flipcharts. A water container and soap will help you to keep the materials and children clean.

Activity Cards

These activity cards have been developed to help you use the materials in the ECD kit. There is one activity sheet for each item. The activities are arranged from easier to harder. Each item can be used in different ways for babies, for children from one to three years; and children from four to six years.

These symbols will help you find the right activity for the right age.



Each activity sheet also includes:



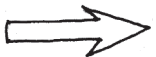
What you can do

Ideas for how to use the material to help children's develop skills for talking and thinking, moving and doing, learning about self and getting along with others.



What to look for

Things to observe in children as they play



Possible extensions

Suggestions for other things you might do



Caution

Tips to help you keep children safe while playing

Children are learning from you and each other all the time. There are many ways you can help children develop without any materials. For example, children love listening to your stories and telling you theirs; making up silly rhymes; and talking about their feelings. Look for the activity sheets that give you some more ideas on what to do even without any materials.

This is just a beginning. We know you have many ideas of materials and fun games to add. Use these materials with children. Adapt them. Get ideas for new toys and games to make and play.

Sometimes it can be tempting to put new materials away from children to keep them safe and clean. Please don't. These materials are made for children to touch, shake, stack, toss, pretend with, jump in and out of, put together, take apart. The only way children can benefit from the treasures in this box – and others you add – is if they have the chance to play with them.

How can you use the ECD Kit?

Gather children around the treasures in the ECD Kit in a safe and welcoming space. As many as 50 children can participate at any one time. That's a lot of children. Try creating small groups and assign different activities. Sometimes, a child might need a little extra attention and some special time just with you. Make sure you have help. Invite older children, parents, and other adults to help you plan and organize the activities.

Here are some helpful tips to think about.

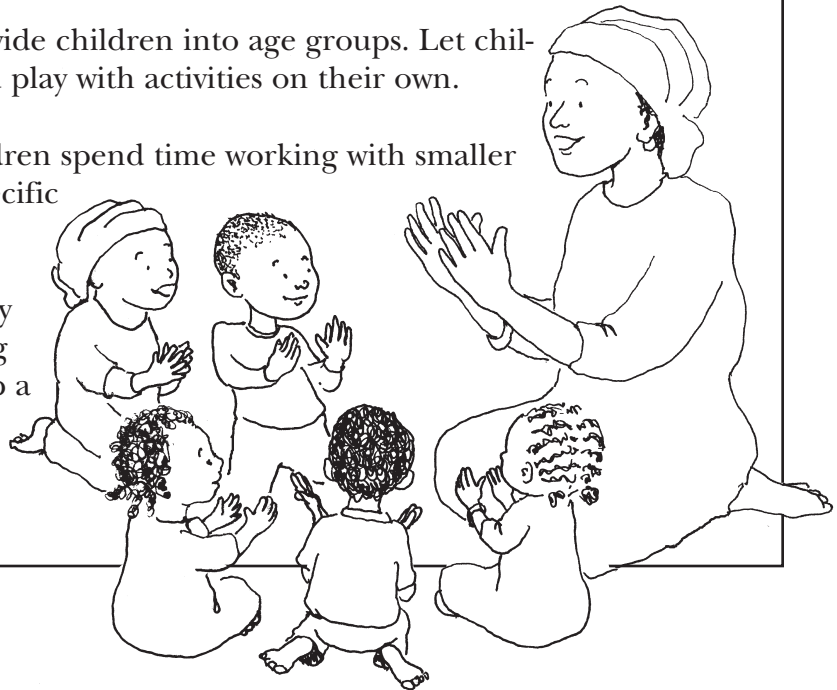
- *Create small groups of children.* You might try grouping children by age—babies, one to three year olds, and four to six year olds. Other activities work best when all the children are learning together. The activity cards will help you plan your program.
- *Invite older children and siblings to help you.* Encourage them to organize and plan activities. They can also be paired with a child who needs extra care and attention. This is a wonderful way for both older and younger children to learn together.
- *Provide opportunities for parents to support their child's play, learn from each other and from you.* Invite groups of parents to join you in the fun. The possibilities are endless. Think together about some activities children can do and what children may learn. As you work, encourage families to share their stories and questions with each other and you.
- *Make safety a priority.* Make sure the space is safe from things that might hurt small children. Keep all materials clean. Store them carefully.
- *Routines are important.* Children need lots of consistent attention especially during times of stress. Try to organize your activities at the same time each day. Children feel safe knowing they will spend some time each day with you and the treasure box.



- *Be creative.* The materials in the kit will help you get started. Make up your own games and activities. Sing familiar songs, tell stories, play traditional games, dance and sing.
- *Listen.* Your care and attention is the most important gift you can give to young children. Help them find words to express their feelings. Encourage drawing, telling stories, and pretend play.
- *Preparation and planning.* A little planning helps to make your time with children more meaningful. Try creating a simple schedule. Here is an example.

Treasure Box Fun: Daily Activity Plan

- 10:00 Welcome children and families
- 10:15 Circle Time: Select a fun topic. Ask children to talk about what they know
- 10:45 Small groups: Divide children into age groups. Let children explore and play with activities on their own.
- 10:30 Pairs: Older children spend time working with smaller children on a specific activity
- 11:30 Circle Time: Story telling. Try letting children make up a new ending!
- 12:00 Closing Song



The materials in this box become true treasures in your hands as you share them with children and families. Thank you for your time, energy, and commitment to helping young children grow, develop, and heal.