

Circle games

Circle games are a great, fun way to support the development of social skills, whilst supporting fundamental skills such as attention and listening, turn taking, gross motor skills and developing vocabulary. They can be done in a small group such as 3-4 children or scaled up to include the whole group (depending on the needs and ages of the children).

Possible ideas:

Silent games which do not require speaking are a nice way to involve EAL and nonverbal children, allowing them to take part in social games such as Pass a smile pass the action/hug/squeeze/toy

Emotions call out a different emotion and children can make the face or act out the emotion

Pass the rhythm either using hands to clap or simple instruments to tap out a basic rhythm and the children take it in turns to play their rhythm. This could be extended with different instruments, with children waiting for either their name or the name of the instrument before they start to play

Sensory bag – put a sensory object or objects in a bag which can be passed around the circle and once all children have had a chance to feel inside the bag, they can guess what is inside.

Pass the puppet – adult to set the theme such as today the puppet is happy because... then children take it in turns to explain why they are happy for, with only the person holding the puppet allowed to speak with others encouraged to listen

Song bag children choose a card/object from the bag to sing matching song

Duck, Duck, Goose – One child is the 'fox' and they walk around the back of the circle tapping each child's head, saying either 'duck' or 'goose'. The child who is chosen to be 'goose' then has to chase the 'fox' around the circle, until the 'fox' can sit at the space left by the 'goose'. The 'goose' then becomes the 'fox'

Top tips:

- Play fun games which help children learn
- Move things at a good pace so children are always interested – know when to stop if many are losing interest
- Start with a 'hello' or 'welcome' song and close with a 'goodbye' song so all children have a clear start and finished cue
- Introduce a shy puppet who needs cuddles or strokes for those children unsure
- Keep circle time short and extend the time gradually
- Find creative ways to invite children to circle time
- Find activities that allow children to participate



Links to EYFS: Communication & Language, Personal Social & Emotional Development, Physical Development, Mathematics, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design

SEND Code of Practice: Communication & Interaction, Cognition & Learning, Social Emotional & Mental Health