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<http://globallearninglondon.org.uk/thinkingtogether>

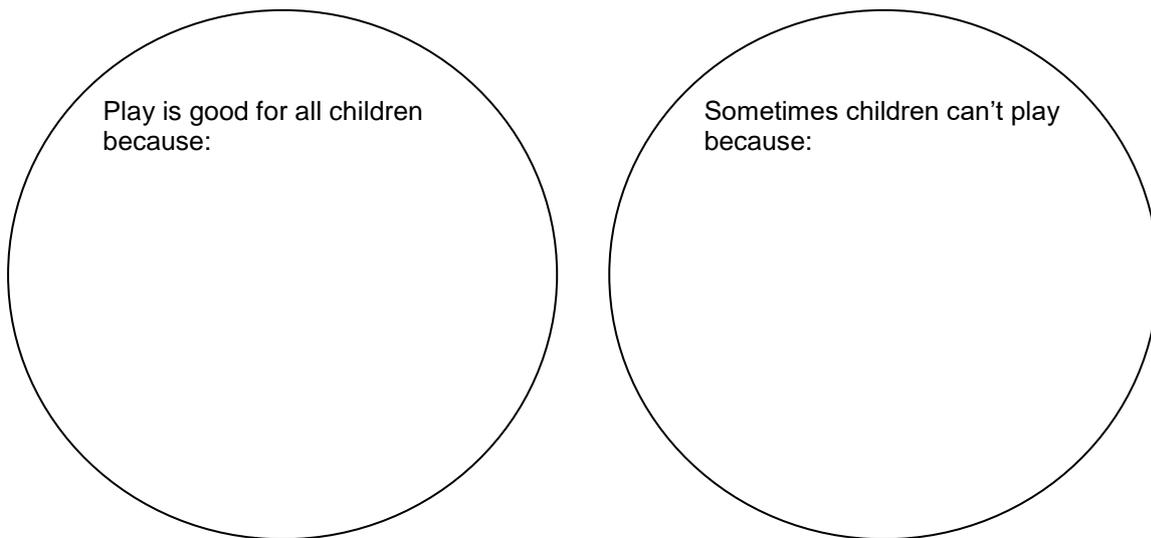
www.risc.org.uk/toolkit

5. Thinking Together about Play: Baseline Activity

Draw an outline of two large circles to represent two balls as objects of play all over the world.

Label one circle '**Play is good for all children because:**'

Label the other '**Sometimes children are unable to play because:**'



Ask the class to write as many answers as they can think of onto each circle.

This will give you an indication of what they are thinking about the value of play and to what extent they are aware of children living in different circumstances which may restrict their ability to play.



Keep the sheets, and when you have finished the topic, repeat the activity, comparing the results and exchanging results with you partner school.

When you repeat the activity at the end of the topic you are looking for:

- A wider range of responses about benefits of play for children's development and well-being
- Greater understanding of the issues and perspectives around the topic of play

How to know if your teaching has been effective: What to look for:

- A broader and deeper appreciation of the importance and the benefits of play for the health and well-being for all children and of similarities and difference in the ways children play in different contexts.
- Understanding that all children have the same rights to play and recreation but not all are able to access these rights equally.
- Knowledge that there are internationally agreed goals to achieve this end.

Thinking Together about Play and well-being: Information sheet ¹

‘Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities’ Article 31 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

Play is important for children’s development:

- ☐ **Through play children are children.** Many games are shared by children all over the world such as jacks, hopscotch and marbles.
- ☐ **Through play, children have fun.** Playing is different from working. It can happen at any time in any place. It gives children the chance to enjoy themselves.
- ☐ **Through play, children learn.** They learn in the playground and in the classroom. Games can make learning fun.
- ☐ **Through play, children learn to cooperate.** Boys and girls play together. Children of different ages and abilities play together. Children find out about getting on with others.
- ☐ **Through play, children develop physical skills.** They move around, control how they use their bodies and improve their sense of timing and observation.
- ☐ **Through play, children use their imagination.** They invent different experiences. They create fantasies and explore worlds.
- ☐ **Through play, children become builders and makers.** They design their own toys and games. These can be made from even the simplest materials.
- ☐ **Through play, children pretend to be grown-ups.** They practise being parents, doctors and teachers. They rehearse what it is like to live in an adult world.
- ☐ **Through play, children interact with adults.** Children’s games can be directed by adults or adults can help children to play. Sometimes adults make the rules, sometimes the children do.

Sometimes children cannot play or their right to play may be restricted

- ☐ It is not safe to play in the streets, there is too much traffic.
- ☐ The weather affects play. In winter/summer it can be too cold/ hot to go outside much.
- ☐ We do not have a garden, where is it safe for our children to play?
- ☐ If you look after people in your family who are not well you do not always have time to play.
- ☐ We look after animals to help our family earn a living, so we do not have much time to play.
- ☐ We walk every day to collect clean water for our family so we do not have energy to play.
- ☐ There is fighting in our country, so it is not safe to play.
- ☐ It is harder for children with disabilities that affect mobility or communication to join active play

Not being able to play may affect children

- ☐ If children work too much they lose an important part of their childhood.
- ☐ If children cannot play they become like grown-ups too early in life.
- ☐ If children cannot play outside they may feel like prisoners trapped in a small space.
- ☐ If children cannot play they may not develop their imagination.

¹ These ideas are from ‘Play on the Line: All Children have the Right to Play’, produced by the Humanities Education Centre, London. The ideas were developed by teachers and children in the UK and the Western Sahara in 2000-2001

Playing is good for you and it's learning too!

Activity 1: Playing for fun, cooperation, teamwork and fair play

This activity builds on the group work method that is used in the Starter Activity 10:10:10 activity in resource 1 Introduction to Thinking Together Resources and Linking for Learning.

Explain that:

Playing is a very important part of children's well-being.

It is important for fun, friendship, fresh air, health, exercise and relaxation. It is a way of learning to cooperate, to play fair, to use your imagination, improve coordination, gain skills and knowledge and to learn how to win, lose and play as part of a team.

What to do:

- The class in each school should be divided into groups.
- Each group is asked to discuss their favourite playground games.
- Each group chooses two games from the ones they have discussed, as suggestions for games they would like to share with their partner school.
- The class discuss and agree which game they are going to choose to share with their partner school.
- You could also use this as a maths activity to set up an election and count the votes.
- You could add a discussion element – those in favour of the proposed games could be invited to stand up and speak about why they think this a good game to play and to share. Other members of the class could ask questions about why they think this is a good game to share.
- When you have chosen the games, divide your class back groups.
- Each group has the task of writing a set of instructions and rules for the game. They can illustrate this with drawings and comments on what it feels like to play the game.

This activity will give you the opportunity to discuss the importance of team work, of fair play, learning to win and learning to lose and of having agreed rules and clear instructions.



Share your games with your partner school and ask them to send you their ideas. You could each try to play the games and give and receive feedback on the clarity of instructions and the fun had playing.

Ask you grandparents what games they played at school when they were young.

Why not try out some traditional games from around the world?

http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Education-Documents/Resources_Documents/UNICEF_TraditionalGames_resource.pdf

Or play games to improve your class maths skills <http://nrich.maths.org/8261>

Activity 2: Leisure time activities for learning, health and well-being

‘Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities’ Article 31 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

What to do:

- Ask each member of the class to think of their favourite leisure time activity. (This could be a sporting activity, a playground game, a role-play game, a computer game, a board game, or any other form of play).
- Ask them to answer 10 questions about their chosen activity. This could be done as an individual task or in pairs, with each partner interviewing the other and completed the questionnaire for them.

1. Describe the activity that you have chosen, in one sentence.
2. When do you do this activity?
3. Where do you do this activity?
4. Who does this activity with you?
5. What information have you learnt from this activity?
6. What skills have you improved through this activity?
7. Can you think of any things that have stopped you being able to do this?
8. How do you feel if you are not able to do this activity?
9. What do you think might stop children from being able to play or take part in leisure time activities?
10. What would make it easier for these children to play games and take part in leisure time activities?



You could analyse some of the information on the questionnaires and discuss the results. Share your ideas with your partner school and consider their perspectives on this issue.

Plenary – Class Discussion:

- **What is different about learning from play and learning in school?**
- **What stops some children from being able to play?**

If the class do not raise these issues you could suggest some. For example: Children who work and do domestic tasks like water collection and looking after animals, children who are carers, children who are unwell, children who have a disability that restricts their mobility, children who do not have access to outdoor space or safe spaces to play in, children who are refugees or in a war zone.

- **What impact does this have on their lives?**
- **What can be done about it?**

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2015 - 2030 aim to make the world a fairer and more sustainable place for all. Look at the three UN Sustainable Development Goals below. How will they help children around the world to play and lead healthy lives?

Goal 3: To ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages

Goal 8: To promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all

Goal 11: To make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.