

Closing Games & Activities



About Us

Children for Health is dedicated to the promotion of health education in the global south, focused on developing children as agents of change and communicators of essential health messages in their families and communities.

To that end, we created the 100 messages (10 main health topics with 10 messages each) to help children become ambassadors for good health in their homes and community.

Most of the games and activities in this book are designed to help children engage with the messages and gain a deeper understanding. Our first book covers:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Malaria | Caring for Babies |
| Diarrhoea | Preventing HIV & AIDS |
| Coughs, Colds & Pneumonia | Water, Sanitation & Hygiene |
| Immunisation | Accidents & Injuries |
| Intestinal Worms | Nutrition |

<https://childrenforhealth.org/100MessagesEnglish>

Our second book covering an additional eight topics:

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Oral Health | Menstruation Health |
| Ebola | Coronavirus |
| Diabetes | Inclusion |
| Eye & Vision Health | Preventing Anaemia |

<https://childrenforhealth.org/other-health-messages>



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Games

AMPE (Ghana)

This is a game best played with a group of four or more, but just two people will do, too. It's an active game, with so much clapping, singing, and jumping involved that it almost looks like a dance. It's a game that's been passed down from generation to generation.

- A leader is chosen and the rest of the group either stand in a semicircle or split into groups of two.
- The leader and another player jump at the same time, clap and thrust one foot forward when they land.
- If they both have the same foot forward (left or right) the leader wins a point. If they have opposite feet forwards the leader's opponent becomes leader.
- If they players are in a circle, the leader role moves along the inside of the circle playing against others in turn. If they're in a line, the leader moves down the line.
- Everyone gets a chance to be the leader and usually the first person to reach 10 points wins!

Community of Five

1. Ask children to stand in groups of five at the start of this activity.
2. Tell them that you are going to call out different numbers and they should break up their groups and make new groups of a size matching the number you call. You may call out 3, for example, then 6, 4, 2, and maybe 5
3. Each time the children have to decide quickly who joins or who should be let go. Those who are not in groups corresponding in size to the number you have called out have to drop out of the game at that point.

At the conclusion of this game, you could open a discussion of how the children felt about belonging to or being left out of groups.

Continuous Storytelling

1. Divide children into groups of four or five. Ask them to stand or sit in a circle.
2. Someone starts a story and stops in the middle of a sentence.
3. The next person in the circle continues the story, stopping in the middle of a sentence.
4. Repeat until the story ends.



Dragon's Heads and Tails

1. Children line up, each holding the shoulders of the one in front.
2. The child at the front is the dragon's head the child at the back is its tail.
3. The game begins with the dragon in a straight line, standing still. The dragon is asleep.
4. It wakes up when the one of the children in the middle of the body shouts, '*Chase!*' Then the head begins to chase the tail that in turn tries to keep out of its way.

The fun of this game is that the body must stay together while the chasing goes on. None of the players may let go of the players in the front.

Fishbowl Game

This game is a useful problem-solving game. Children make an inner and outer circle with partners facing each other.

1. Children in the inner circle think of a problem, and ask their partner in the outer circle to suggest advice. The partner makes a suggestion.
2. After a few minutes, all the people in the outside circle move one place to the right. The children with problems ask the same question to their new partner in the outer circle.
3. The game continues.
4. The circles can change places so the other half is asking the questions.

Fruit Salad

This game increases the energy of the group. Play it after lunch or mid-afternoon when energy levels are usually at their lowest! It is also a good way to divide children into groups. Here is an example of the game where 25 children divided into 5 groups of 5 children in each group.

1. Children sit on chairs in a circle.
2. Five children are asked to call out the name of a fruit in turn.
3. When five children have called out a fruit name (e.g. pear, apple, peach, banana, mango), the 20 remaining children continue around the circle repeating the same sequence of five fruits until everyone has a fruit name.
4. One child (the caller) stands in the middle of the circle and takes their chair out of the circle. The caller calls out one of the fruits.
5. All the children with that fruit name stand up and run to a vacant seat, including the caller. One person is left without a seat and they then become the caller.
6. Repeat the game calling one or more fruit names at a time.
7. When the caller calls 'fruit salad', everyone must stand up and change places.

At the end of this game, the 'fruit groups' can be used as working groups for another activity.

Mbube, Mbube

(Pronounced Mboo-bay Mboo-bay)

This is a popular game in African countries where children are helping the lion (mbube) find and capture the impala (a southern African buck). All ages can play, but it is best in large (6+) groups. You'll need two blindfolds to play. Each round takes 2-3 minutes. The aim of the game is to help the lion catch the impala:

- Everyone forms a large circle.
- Choose two players; one to be the lion and the other the impala.
- Place a blindfold on each player and spin them around several times.
- Staying inside the circle, the lion then moves around hunting for the impala. The impala can move around too.
- The children who have formed the circle begin calling out to the lion, "Mbube, mbube". As the lion gets closer to the impala, the chanting gets louder and faster. However, if the lion moves away the chanting gets softer and slower.

If the lion doesn't catch the impala within one or two minutes, a new lion must be chosen. If the impala is caught by the lion then another child is chosen to be the impala. You might like to use a stopwatch to ensure the timing is fair.

Mamba

This is a popular game played by children in African countries. All ages can play, but it is best with a large group of 10 or more people. Each round lasts 5-10 minutes. The aim of the game is to be the last player caught by the snake.

- Mark out an area for play and set boundaries. Everyone must stay within the boundaries or they are out for the remainder of that round.
- Choose one player to be the mamba (snake).
- The snake runs around the marked area trying to catch others. When a player is caught he becomes part of the snake's body by joining onto its tail. He joins the snake by holding onto the shoulders or waist of the player in front of him.
- Only the first player (the snake's head) can catch other people. However, its body (the other players joined to him) can help by not allowing players to get past. Players are not allowed to pass through the snake's body.

The game continues until all the players have been caught. The winner is the last player left and becomes the head of the new snake.

Name Game 1: Memory List

1. Divide children into groups of nine or 10.
2. Each group forms a circle.
3. The first participant says the name they would like to be called and the name of a favourite colour, animal, fruit, vegetable, occupation etc. which begins with the same letter as their name (e.g. *My name is Clara and I like carrots*).
4. The next participant repeats this and adds their name (e.g. *Her name is Clara and she likes carrots. My name is Alberto and I like avocados*). The list *builds* up as you go around the circle.

Name Game 2: Call a Name

You need a ball for this activity.

1. All children stand in a large circle.
2. One player stands in the centre with a ball. The player throws the ball high in the air and calls the name of another player. The named person has to run and try to catch the ball (or at least retrieve it when it bounces).
3. Continue until everyone has had a turn in the middle.

Points Down

1. Explain to the group that there are seven points of the body that can touch the floor in this game – two hands, two elbows, two knees, one forehead.
2. Call a number from one to seven and each player must touch the floor with the body part point matching the number.
3. Ask for groups of people to work together – pairs, then threes, then fours etc.

Note that the number called may not be higher than seven times the number of people in the group (so for three people, the highest number is 21), it may be lower than the number of people in the group (for example, a group of four can go as low as two points by giving piggy-backs while standing on one leg!).

Rhythm Clap

1. Children sit in a circle with their eyes closed and they each think of a rhythm.
2. At a signal they begin tapping or clapping their rhythms at the same time.
3. Listen to see if people gradually begin to move in similar rhythms: from the initial jumble of sound you will find a growing order and after a while the whole group tapping or clapping in a single rhythm.



Sort the Squares

This exercise helps to show what is meant by working as part of a team. The children may go through a frustrating time during the game. Ensure they understand the instructions before the game begins.

Materials

- Sets of the six squares you see on page 8. Make as many sets as you will have groups when you do this exercise, so if you have five groups; make five sets of six squares. The squares should be of equal size, but five squares should be cut up differently. Cut along each line and put all the pieces from the five squares together.
- Keep the complete square separate.

Instructions

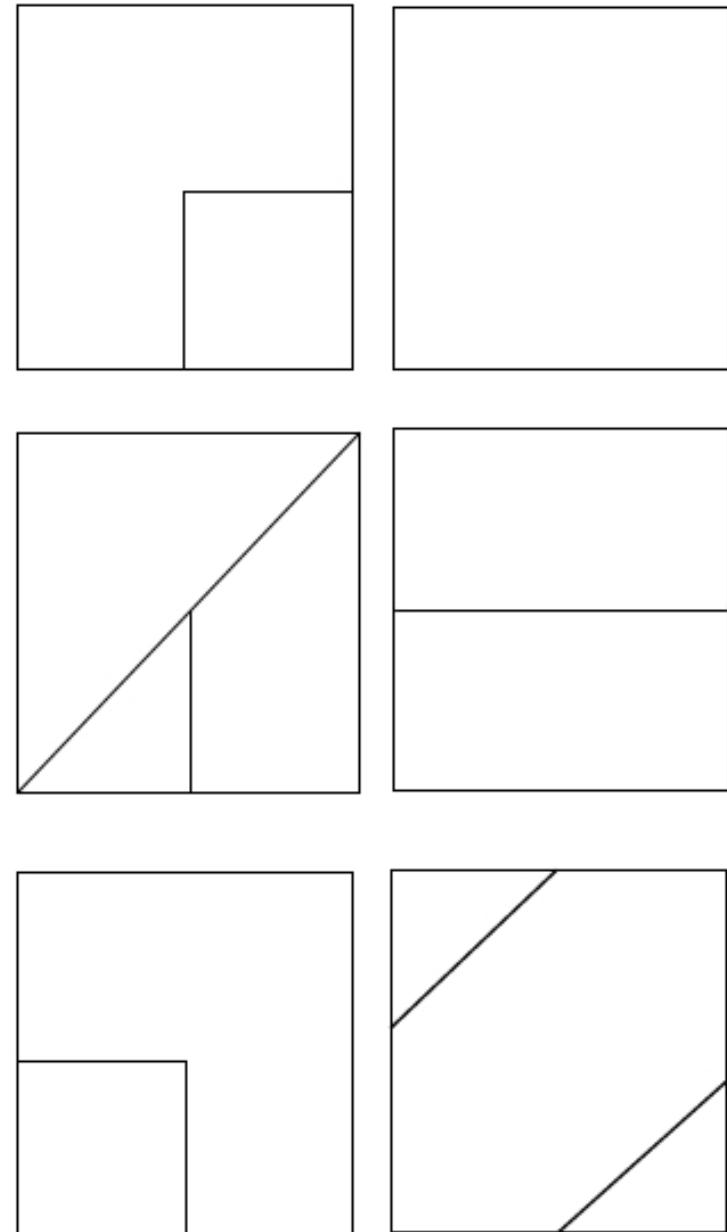
1. Divide the children into groups of 5. Appoint one observer per group, the rest are the square makers.
2. Explain the rules: talking, whispering and sign language are not allowed. No one can take a piece of square from another player but anyone can **give** a piece of square to another person. Make sure the children are clear about the rules. You may want to spend time on this, as the children will not be able to ask for advice once the game has begun.
3. Ask observers to look out for:
 - The reactions of children
 - Rules being broken. If rules are being broken, which ones? By whom?

4. Now ask the groups to sit on the floor or at a table. Give each group one set of the mixed up pieces for the squares 2-6. Then give each group the complete square (square 1).
5. Ask each member of the group to make one square that is the same size as the complete square using a combination of the mixed up pieces.
6. The game is over when each player in the group has made a square and all the pieces are used up. The game can take anything from 15 minutes to hours! Although it is difficult, it is better not to interrupt.

Final Discussion

Ask the children how they feel about the game. Observers make their comments and the relevant players can say why they broke the rules. Conclusions emerge about working together for example:

- it is difficult
- personal needs often have to be given up for the benefit of the group
- some people are more helpful than others
- everyone must know the aims of the whole group



Take Your Turn

This game develops the idea that we must value what everyone has to say and give shy or quiet people 'room' to contribute.

1. Divide the children into groups of four or five and have them sit in a circle.
2. Ask them to talk about a simple topic like, '*Accidents that have happened in our area.*'
3. Give each child six markers (you can use stones, matches, coins, small twigs etc.). Each time a child speaks; they must place one of their markers in the centre.
4. Practice this several times – it is enjoyable as well as difficult at first. Even when the children say, '*Hmm*', '*Yes*', '*Pardon*', '*What did you say?*' they must place a marker in the middle. When a person runs out of markers, they can no longer take part.
 - Who gets rid of their markers the fastest?
 - Are there some people who should have more chances to speak?
 - In a teaching situation who does most of the talking, the educator or the students? Why? Who does most of the listening? Why? Are the listeners really listening?

Team Drawing

This game emphasises the benefits of working together agreeing an idea before starting a project.

1. Ask the children to working silently in group of six to 10. They take it in turns to make 'one stroke' with a marker pen or crayon on a large sheet of paper. As each child adds their stroke, the team make a drawing (but without speaking).
2. After 5-10 mins or when most teams have made some kind of drawing, ask the children to share their drawing and discuss what they felt when they were creating it.

Many children raise the point that if they had agreed on an idea before they began, they would have been able to make a better drawing.



Theme Park

Explain to children that they will be given a theme and they immediately have to form a frozen action relating to that theme.

If the educator approaches and touches them, they can unfreeze and start the actions.

For example: The theme is 'park'. A child might freeze in a pose showing they are playing with a ball. If the educator touches them, they can do this action – running or throwing a ball.

Ideas for themes: Park, Railway station, Hospital, Market, Forest.

The Whistle Blowers

1. While all the children are talking before an activity (or at the start of a life skills session), quietly ask one child to whistle.
2. The children are called together and then asked if they heard one child whistling. The educator then talks about how one voice is not often heard in a crowd but if people unite, then their voices together can be heard more loudly.
3. The children are asked to carry on their talking but if they hear anyone whistling then they should start whistling too.
4. Within a few minutes all children should be whistling and the sound should be quite powerful.

If the children have trouble whistling then they could use humming or clapping instead.

The Trust Fall

This game is about putting complete trust in a team and the importance of trust and team work.

1. In groups of seven to nine, the children make a tight circle by standing shoulder to shoulder. From each group, one child volunteers to stand in the middle of the circle with their eyes closed (or wearing blindfold).
2. The remaining children take a step forward, forming a tight circle around the volunteer.
3. With their eyes closed and their body relaxed, the volunteer should fall in any direction. Tell the child that their team members will catch them and prevent them from falling.
4. The children in the circle put their hands up to support the volunteer and gently hold them up.
5. The educator talks softly about the importance of the group to gently support the volunteer.
6. After a few minutes, another child can volunteer to stand in the middle.

At the end of the game, children think about the importance of trust. *What did you learn from this game? Is trust important? Is it easy to trust in a group? Why? Why makes it easy or difficult to trust someone? How does trust help a group to work well?*

Who is the Leader?

1. The children sit in a circle.
2. Ask one child to volunteer to leave the room.
3. While the volunteer is out, invite any one group member to act as the leader while two others in the circle act as mirrors. The leader's job is to start some action (such as clapping) and keep it going rhythmically for a few moments, then change to another action (such as stamping one foot) and again, after a few seconds to another.
4. Invite the volunteer to return and sit in the circle. The *mirrors* should watch the leader and copy the movements but without letting the volunteer notice that they are *copying* not *starting the action*. The rest of the group should get the cues for the action from the *mirrors* rather than the leader, to confuse the volunteer who is trying to identify the leader.
5. After the group has done a few actions, the volunteer should try to guess which person in the circle has acted as the leader of the game.

Closing Activities

The Virus Carriers

1. Cut and fold as many pieces of paper as there are children in the group. Leave all of them blank except for one, which should have the words 'virus carrier' written on it.
2. Fold them carefully and pass them out for children to pick out as in a lottery. People look at the papers they have picked without letting others see them.
3. Children then walk around the room looking at each other as they do so. The virus carrier must try to catch someone's eye and wink. That person then imagines they have caught a virus and falls to the ground or falls out of the group taking one or two other persons along (whoever the infected person touches while falling).
4. All these people leave the game as soon as they are infected, but should not let others know who infected them.

The game goes on until children guess who the virus carrier is before the person has had a chance to wink at them.

Chair Game

1. Children sit either side of a chair in the middle of the room. Explain that the chair represents movement towards or away from your goal, for example:
 - o being able to resist pressure to have sex before you feel ready
 - o trying to give up smoking
 - o putting into practice lessons learning in the life skills sessions.
2. In turn, each child comes up to the chair and moves it forward or back as they like with a statement about why they feel they are 'moving in that direction'. (You can ask the children to begin each phrase with, "*I am moving the chair forward/back because...*")

Circle Reflection

Children sit in a circle. In turn, they say what they learned from and what they liked about a session, a programme, a child, an educator. This is a simple but very effective way to develop a positive and loving atmosphere.

Knots Game

This is a good game to use if the activity has involved problem-solving activities.

1. Divide children into groups of six to nine.
2. Each group stands in a close circle with their eyes closed. Ask the children to stretch out their arms in front of them and grasp another person's hand so that they are holding two people's hand in each of theirs.
3. Once connected hand-in-hand the children are asked to open their eyes. The whole group is in a knot. Without letting go of their partners hand they have to work together to try to undo the knot so that they are standing together in a circle.
4. Once the children have managed to untangle themselves, you can all cheer loudly!
5. Ask children to think about the meaning behind the game (working together and co-operating helps overcome difficult problems).



Physical and Mental Relaxation

1. Ask children to lie on the floor or to put their head in their hands on a table in front of them.
2. Ask them to tense up their whole bodies and then relax. Ask them to do the same again, but taking each part of the body. For example: *Tense your feet and your toes, then relax your feet and relax your toes.*
 - your calf muscles
 - your thighs
 - your chest
 - your shoulders
 - your arms and fingers
 - your neck and face
3. The final part of the relaxation is to leave the group in silence for 5-10 minutes. Encourage them to breathe deeply and listen to their own breathing. Many children love this experience of peacefulness and relaxation is very refreshing. It is good to play soft music and/or burn incense while you do this.

The Suitcase Game

1. Either draw a suitcase or bring one with you to the session. Explain that this is the suitcase that you brought with you to the life skills session/programme. It was full of all the things you brought to the session:
 - your experiences
 - your ideas
 - your confidence
 - (perhaps your bad behaviour!)
 - your fears
 - your worries.
2. Now that the session/programme is over you are going away with your suitcase but you will be taking extra things away with you and leaving some things behind.
3. In turn, each child says what they are leaving behind and what they are taking with them. For example, "I am taking with me new ideas and confidence. I am leaving behind my cigarettes and my fears about what others are saying about me."

The Web Game

This activity is particularly good if the children are graduating from the programme. Be careful to keep the activity positive. Endings are always a little sad so be sure to emphasise the positive things that you have all earned together so that moving on feels positive.

1. The children stand in a circle. The educator stands with them and has a ball of wool or string, the end of which is tied to one of the educator's wrists.
2. You (as the educator) explain to the children that you will say something about what you have learned from the group during the session/programme. When you have finished, you will throw the ball of string to another person. This person must then tie the string around their wrist (a neighbour can help!) and then say something they have learned from the group. They then throw the ball to someone else.
3. The game continues until everyone has said something and everyone is connected to each other with string.
4. The educator finishes this by saying, "We have shared a lot and become connected together during the life skills programme. Let's look at each other and think about all the things we have learned and shared. Each of us is a stronger 'me'. I will cut the string to show we are ready and can move on. If you like, you can keep the string around your wrist to remind you of the group and what we have learned together."

Other Activities

The *But Why?* Game

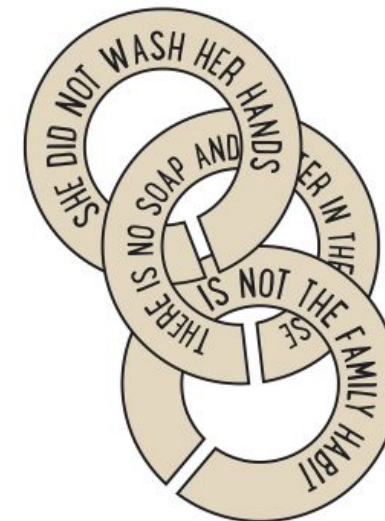
Materials

Scissors, cardboard, pen that writes clearly on cardboard

Preparation

Make five or more circles out of cardboard with holes in the middle as shown in the picture. Make a cut across one side so the circle can be linked together.

If no cardboard is available, children can hold hands each time a link in the chain is made (See Adapting the Game below).



1. Do some introductory activities with the children – singing, name games, clapping games etc.
2. Learn one of the health messages. (We're using message one from Water, Sanitation & Hygiene as an example: "To wash hands properly: use water, a little soap. Rub for 10 seconds, rinse & air-dry or dry with a clean cloth/paper, not on dirty clothes.") Pick the best action message and learn it together.

The *But Why?* Activity

- Show the children a picture of a baby or a doll and give it a local name for example, 'Victoria'.
- Start the activity by saying to the group, "Victoria has diarrhoea."
- Then ask the children, "But why?" Their answers might include, "Germs have got into her body." Write this on the first cardboard circle.
- Ask again, "But why? Have germs got into her body?" The answer could be, "Because she did not wash her hands." Write this on the second circle and link it to the first through the cuts in the sides.
- Ask again, "But why didn't she wash her hands?" Answers, "Because there is no soap and water in the house.", "It's not a family habit.", "Because Victoria comes from a family where this is not the custom." Continue asking, "But why?" and getting answers until the ideas are at an end and you have found root cause(s) of the problem. At each point, ask the children to choose the most common link to write on the card.
- When you have finished, read out all the links in the chain.
- Ask the children to make a drawing of the chain in a notebook and read out the links.

Adapting the Game

If cardboard is unavailable, play this game using a chain of children instead.

- One child stands up and states the problem and ends their statement, "*But Why?*"
- The child with the next idea states their idea and if it works they hold one of the first child's hands, repeats the first statement, adds their reason and ends their statement with, "*But Why?*"
- Repeat step two to make your "*But Why?*" human chain!

Further Uses of the "*But Why?*" Game

The game can be used for any of the health messages too, for example:

- A baby that is suffering from malnutrition
- A child who has not been immunised
- A toddler who has burned themselves in the kitchen
- A child who doesn't want to take their HIV medication

Memory Line

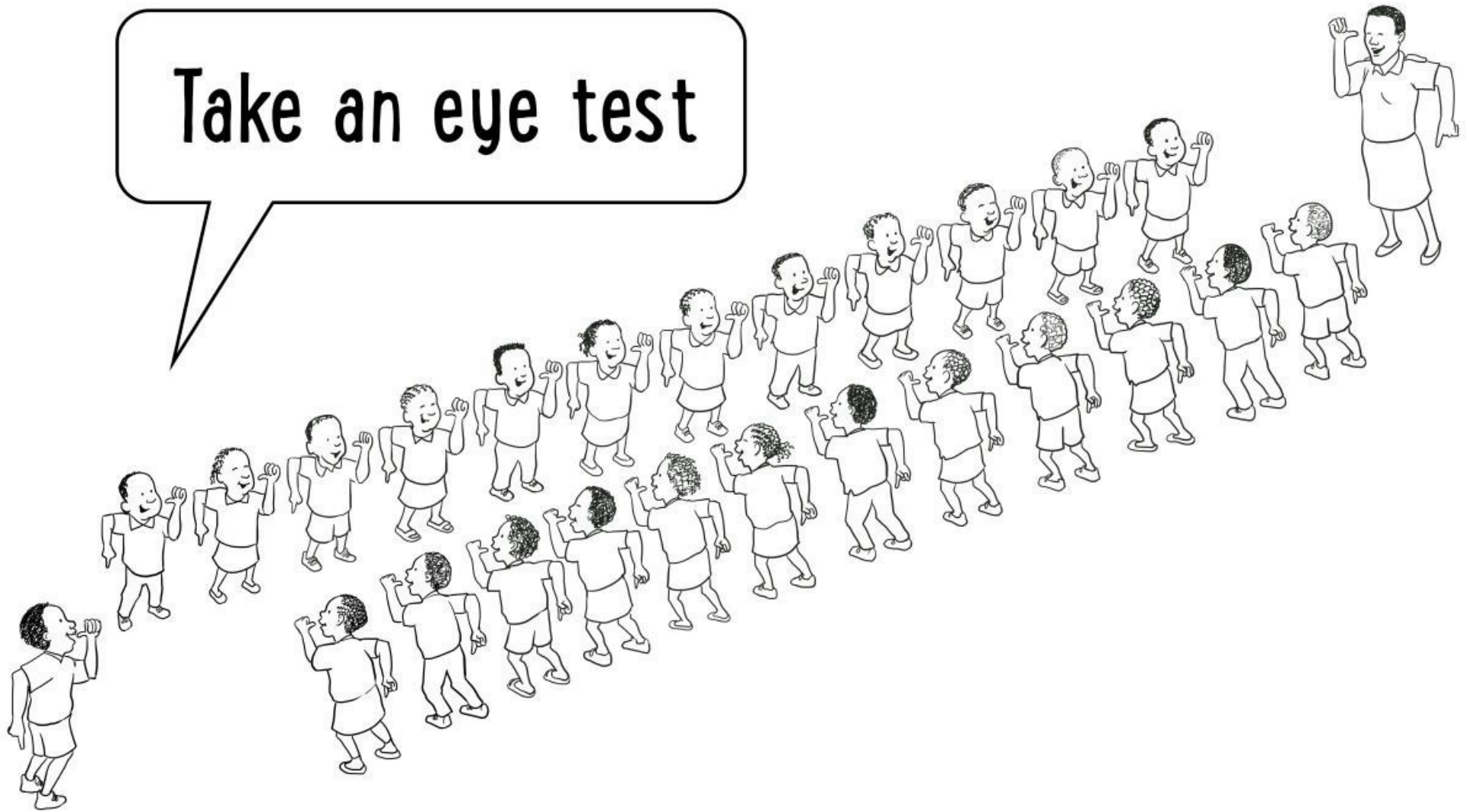
This is a fun way for children to learn health messages from any of our topics.

This will them memorise and repeat the messages in a supported group way. We suggest you make this game something you do at the start of each health education session, each time you do the memory line they will learn the messages better.

When they have learnt all the messages, then you can continue using this method to get the group to memorise the messages.

1. Give each child a piece of paper with one message to memorise. If there are more than 20 students in the group, repeat messages as needed.
2. Ask them to find another child with the same message and form pairs or threes (if there is an uneven number of children).
3. Ask them to form a circle with the pairs standing side-by-side.
4. Ask each pair to take turns coming into the circle and saying their message aloud. The whole group repeats it after them.
5. Tell the pairs that it is easier to remember the messages when actions are added.
6. Ask children to create actions to go with their messages and practice saying the words with the actions.
7. Ask children to create actions to go with their message and practice saying the words with the actions.
8. Repeat the group work where each pair comes into the middle, and then the group repeats it.
9. Ask the group to stand in a line with the pairs facing each other.
10. Rearrange the line so that the 'messages' are arranged in the correct order.
11. Ask the first pair to say their message with the action and then the whole group repeats.
12. Ask the second pair to repeat the first message and then add their message.
13. The whole group repeats message one and two.
14. Continue down the line until the whole group has repeated all the messages with the actions.

Take an eye test



Think-Pair-Share Method

The Think-Pair-Share (TPS) method is a great way to guide conversation between children and is often used at the beginning of a session. This method could be used for helping children remember any of the Children for Health messages.

How to Use

1. Introduce the material to the children and repeat it together at least once.
2. **Think:** Ask the children to think by themselves about something like an answer to a question, For example: *After the last time you or a friend or family member had diarrhoea, how did you/they feel? What were you/they given to eat or drink? How long did it last and what made you feel better?* You could also ask them to draw something or write key words that relate to the question/s.
3. **Pair:** Talk about it with one other person (or in pairs and one three if there is an odd number of children).
4. **Share** ideas in a small group and/or a larger group or the whole group.

This method can be used regardless of what sort of material is being presented; verbal from an educator, written in in books, magazines or newspapers, from a film or video clip or just as a way to brainstorm ideas together.

You can also use this activity to help with listening skills. In the **Share** part of the exercise, children can only share their partner's thoughts, not their own.

There's another optional step between 3 and 4, instead of coming straight back to the group, you can pair the pairs and create **Squares**.



Vote with Your Feet

'Vote with Your Feet' is a method to check that children have learned health facts well. It can be used with any yes/no quizzes.

Before the Session

1. Create or find a suitable quiz.
2. Write "YES", "NO" and "DON'T KNOW" on three pieces of paper or card.

In the Session

1. Start the session by teaching children the facts about the Children for Health topic. This needs to be done using a mixture of:
 - o teacher directed learning;
 - o pair work where one child acts as the teacher asking questions and the other answers them and then swap around;
 - o group work whereby children ask and answer questions in groups of 5 or 6.
2. Conduct a whole group Q&A BUT have the CHILDREN ask the teacher the questions. It is VERY good to involve a health worker in this Q&A if at all possible. Try to dispel any myths or misinformation.

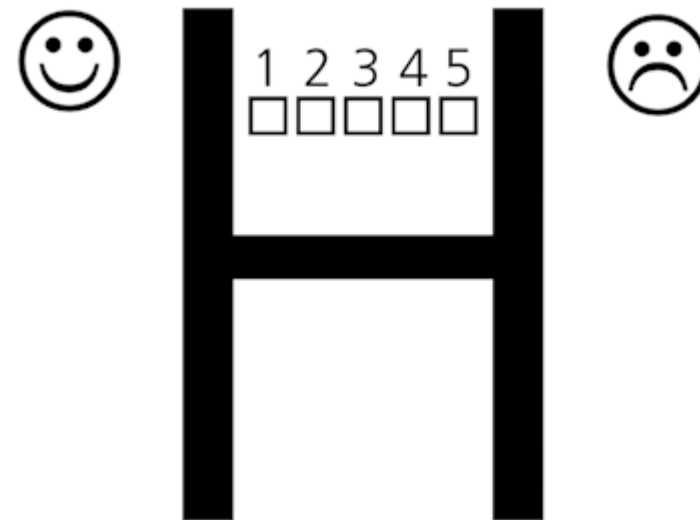
3. Ask the children to stand in a circle and give the three signs to children standing at equal distances around the circle. Alternatively, put the signs on the wall or on a chair with some tape and position the "YES" & "NO" signs at opposite ends of the room with the middle being "DON'T KNOW".
4. Then, read out statements or questions about your topic one by one. At the end of each statement ask the children to run and line up behind their answer ("YES", "NO" or "DON'T KNOW"). Follow this by discussing the correct answer.
5. Continue the game until you feel that the children all know the correct answers. Make sure you read out the whole set of statements at least twice and if using the children to hold the signs, swap over with other children after you have finished one complete set, so every child has a turn as a 'runner' (not every child needs to have a turn as a sign holder!).

H Assessment

- Divide the children into groups. The groups sit around a large piece of paper with the letter, 'H' written onto it (see illustration to the right).
- Under the happy face, children should list all the things they liked about the activity.
- Under the sad face, children should list all the things they didn't like.
- Ask the children how good they thought the activity was and make a mark (or use pebbles or seeds instead) in one of the 1-5 boxes. Work out the average score for each group and write it in the upper middle section of the 'H'.
- In the lower middle section, children are asked to list ideas for the future improvements of the activity.
- Using the H diagram, each group feeds back their scores and their ideas. (If there are more than three groups, each group can put up their diagram and the whole group visits each other's diagrams.)

If the children do not write easily then do this verbally, with the children giving their responses and the adult worker recording them in writing, drawing or using the agreed symbols.

The children could also fill one out individually.



**There is so much more available
for free on our website!**

<https://ChildrenForHealth.org>

