

A CITY ARTS
PRODUCTION

Express Yourself

An arts activity handbook for
Foster Carers & professionals
working with Looked after
children and young people

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Context

This handbook has been designed to encourage relationships between young people and their carers, to build and enhance positive attachments, encourage creativity and to assist in enabling young people to participate in experiential active approaches that are fun!

City Arts was funded by Lloyds TSB during 2012 - 2014 to deliver 'Express Yourself', a project targeting looked after children and young people from the Gedling Borough and of Nottinghamshire surrounding area.

The Express Yourself programme provides artistic opportunities that engage and support young people in a safe environment, thus enabling them to explore their own creative freedom whilst learning from professional artists. The programme's intention is to promote well-being and help maintain young people's interest in education, learning and community participation.

Throughout the project, the young people were able to use creativity to express themselves, to have fun and be playful and to build resilience (self-empowerment, self-confidence, strengthened relationships, social skills and increased participation).

Workshops included mask making, drama, clay modelling, digital animation, and arts and crafts.

This handbook is a continuation of the workshops giving carers some art ideas to start with, and enabling them to sustain and build on the activities within placements.

The creative arts and play have a natural affinity with attachment problems with children. When early attachment experiences are disrupted by trauma, abuse, loss or separation from caregivers it becomes essential to draw on interventions that use forms of expression to initiate and stimulate reparative processes in a brain focused way. These experiential sensory approaches are corrective experiences for young people even when the early development has been compromised.

What we know from research and experience is that activity-based communication can be really helpful to enable both children and young people to feel more comfortable expressing their feelings, and it can help build trust with those around them.

Art and creative work can help to activate the body's relaxation responses. Depending on the individual, experiences with art making, music, and/or movement can have a comforting and calming effect that decreases anxiety or fear. For example, even simple activities such as drawing a picture of a pleasant time or hearing a soothing, familiar song, story or rhyme are effective because of the capacity of the imagination to recall sensory memories and details of positive moments.

Creative arts help children find activities that are effective in tapping positive sensory experiences that can be practiced over time and eventually become resources for the child to regulate overwhelming emotions. Repetition of pleasurable experiential activities can become a source of self-soothing and the arts often allow people to experience themselves differently and in positive ways. Through carefully chosen opportunities for self-expression, individuals are able to exhibit and practice adaptive behaviors including the ability to induce calm feelings and self-soothe.

When art and play are used to build on relationships and enhance sensory experiences, they have the potential to recapture and restructure early experiences of bonding and attunement. This approach may help in the recovery of a child's experience of positive attachments and trust in secure relationships with others, which is important for success.

How to use the handbook

The aim of this handbook is to give some creative ideas as a starting point. All of the art activities can be used at a variety of levels, then be built on, adjusted and/or adapted according to age, ability, development and need of the young person.

You will not need expensive art equipment to do these activities. Just some basic materials like card, coloured papers, scissors, glue sticks, pencils, felt tips. We also suggest keeping an art box for each child that contains the materials and somewhere they can keep things they have made. Card boxes are great as they can also decorate these themselves.

Some of the activities may enable young people to express sensitive and difficult information as they engage in the activity. It is important that all carers remain sensitive and mindful of safety, working within the policies of their agency with regard to any safeguarding issues and seeking support and advice from the appropriate professionals if necessary.



Mask Making

by
Stephen Jon

A mask is a tool that can be used to temporarily alter a person's appearance or personality. This activity will help young people create a mask and use their imaginations to create a range of different characters.

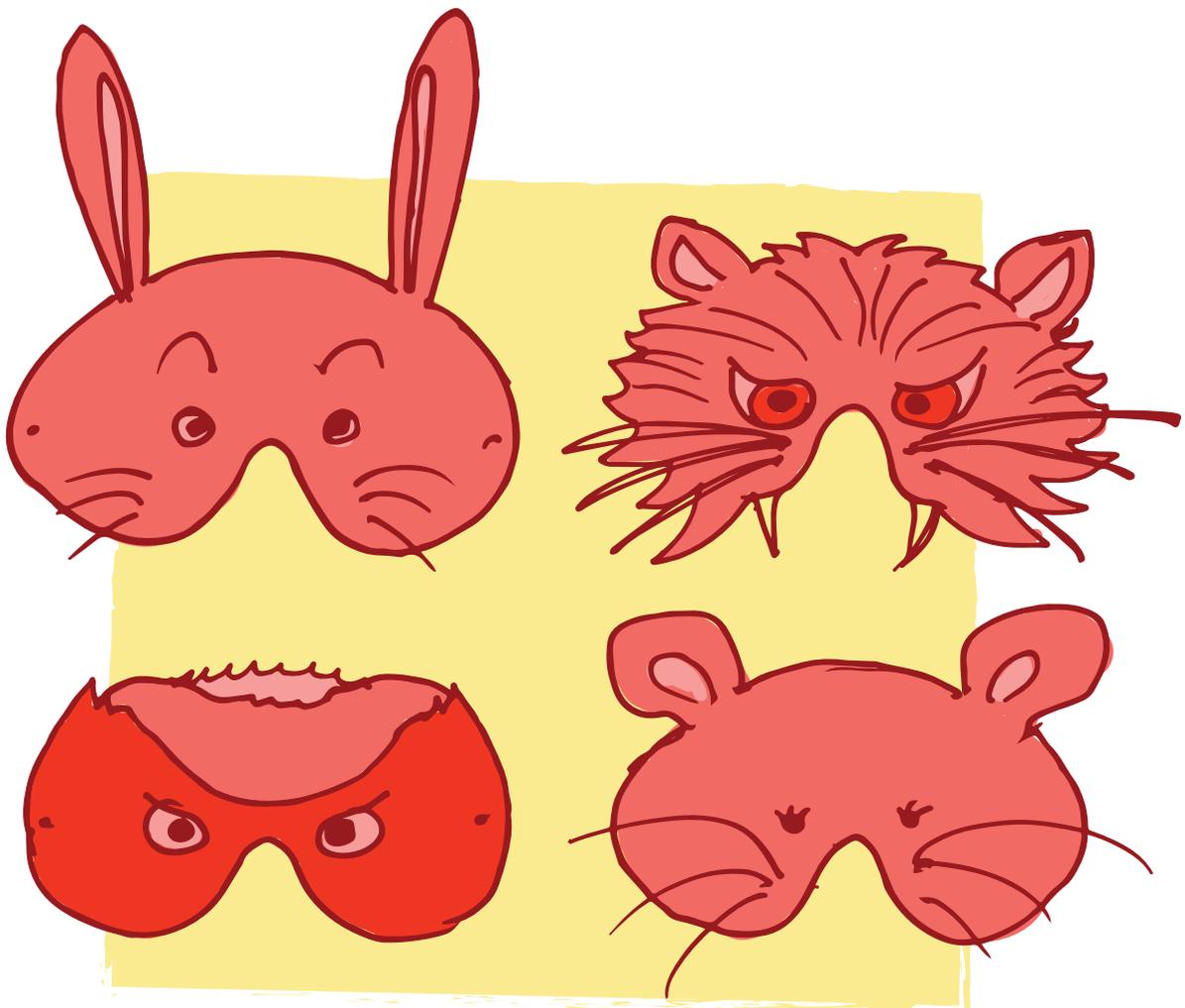
A template of the half mask to cut out is at the end of this handbook.

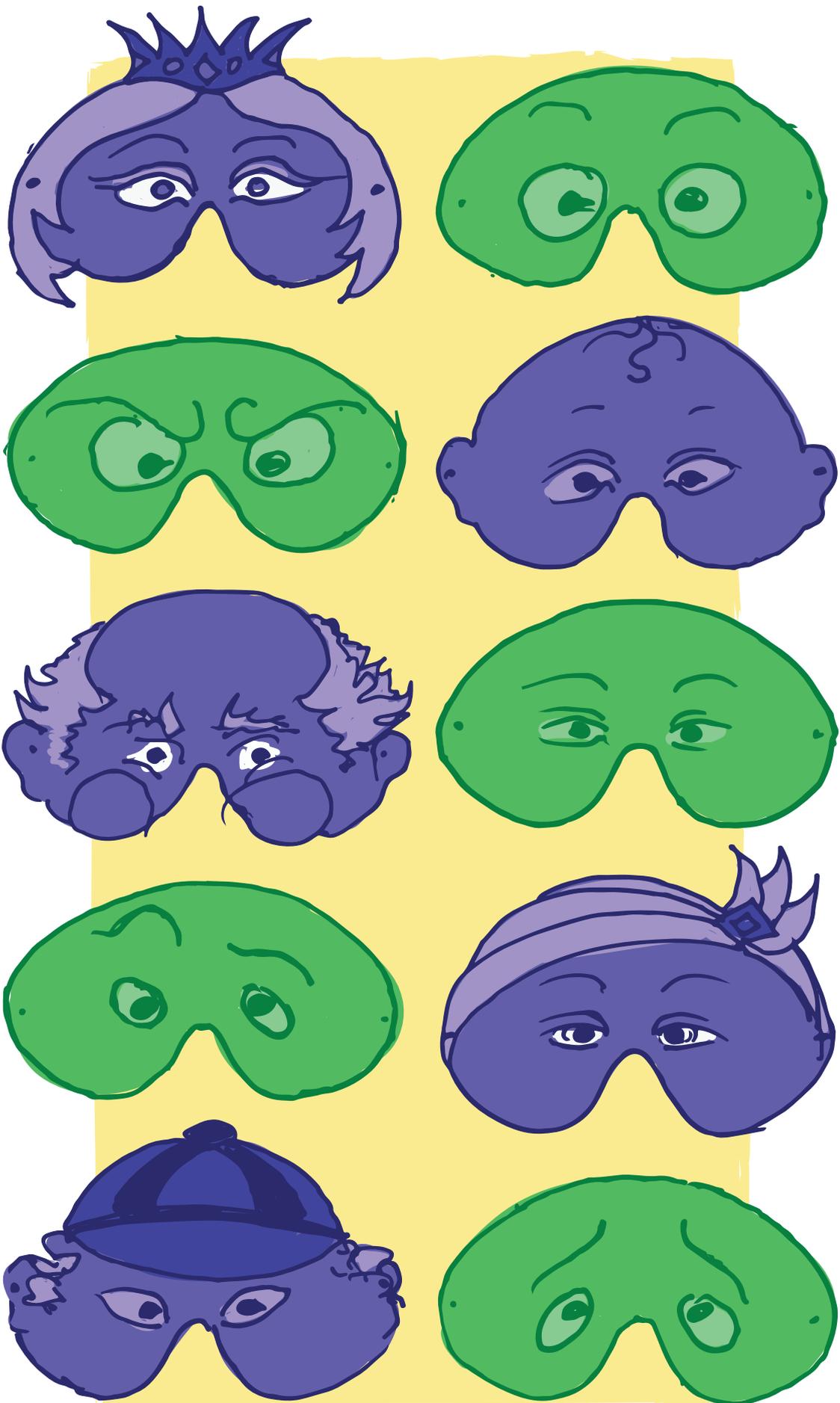
The template for a half-mask will fit comfortably onto a sheet of A4 card.

Get the child to draw it out, make changes to the outside shape to suit, but keep the relationship between the eyes, nose and attachment holes constant.

They can then draw onto the mask with felt tips, crayons, or cut and paste with different coloured paper. They can decorate any way they like to create a character, human, animal or emotion.

These pages contain some ideas to get them started.





Once they have cut out and decorated their mask, add string or elastic through the holes indicated. Then they can wear the mask and 'become' the character they have created.

As the adult carer, you may ask them...

"I wonder who this character is?"

"I wonder where they may have come from?"

"I wonder where they might be going too?"

You and the child can make up stories to suit the mask and make more masks to play with.

You can also use 'emoticon's' you might find on mobile phones and computers as a starting point if the child needs further inspiration, or the illustrations in the *Face & Body Play* section of this handbook.

Notes to carers

Masks can be powerful therapeutic tools so be clear to differentiate between the wearing of a mask - being in character - AND taking off the mask to return to being usual self.

The mask or any object can be a trigger so look out for any signs of distress in the child so that you can bring the child out of role and back into the present.

As a carer, you may be asked to take on a mask role yourself, which can give you the opportunity to be other than your usual self.

Enjoy the stories that may emerge as you try out different characters that the child may act out.

Ask questions that encourage imaginative play.

"What is it like to be a King, a Princess, a Frog, a Dog, a Zombie.....?"

Question the mask rather than the child.

The background of the entire page is a solid red color. Overlaid on this background is a repeating pattern of simple, stylized faces. Each face is circular with a thin outline, two small eyes with curved eyelids, and a simple upward-curving smile. The faces are arranged in a grid-like pattern, slightly offset from each other.

Mirroring

by
Jo Stockdale

'Mirroring' is a basic activity that children can grasp from a young age. As well as stimulating playfulness and curiosity, it fosters acceptance because one person leads a partner or a small group who must accept what is 'offered' to them.

Mirroring can range from the very basic (1) to the sophisticated (4). When we mirror the movements of another person, we generally play closest attention to their face, using our peripheral vision to lead or follow the movement.

Although mirroring doesn't necessarily feel therapeutic, attention from a kind and accepting face is a very safe experience for a vulnerable child and sends a powerful subliminal message; especially for children whose emotional needs haven't been met, have lacked control in their personal circumstances, and for those who need to practice positive control in their relationships with other people;

"You have my undivided attention. At this moment in time you are the centre of my world"

1. Full body mirroring

One person leads a partner or small group through movements with their whole body, using a constant flow of controlled movements, so it is barely possible to tell who is leading and who is following; younger children will probably need some help with this.

2. Incorporate touch

Decrease the proximity between partners so that there is contact between parts of the body such as the hands or the forehead. This enables children to experience appropriate physical adult contact.

3. Facial mirroring

Mirror using only the face, explore expressions without using any words. Begin with 'caricature' or humorous faces so this does not immediately feel like an 'emotional' exercise.

4. Use face and body to explore emotion

Use the body and facial expressions, moving in ways that depict the same emotion as the face

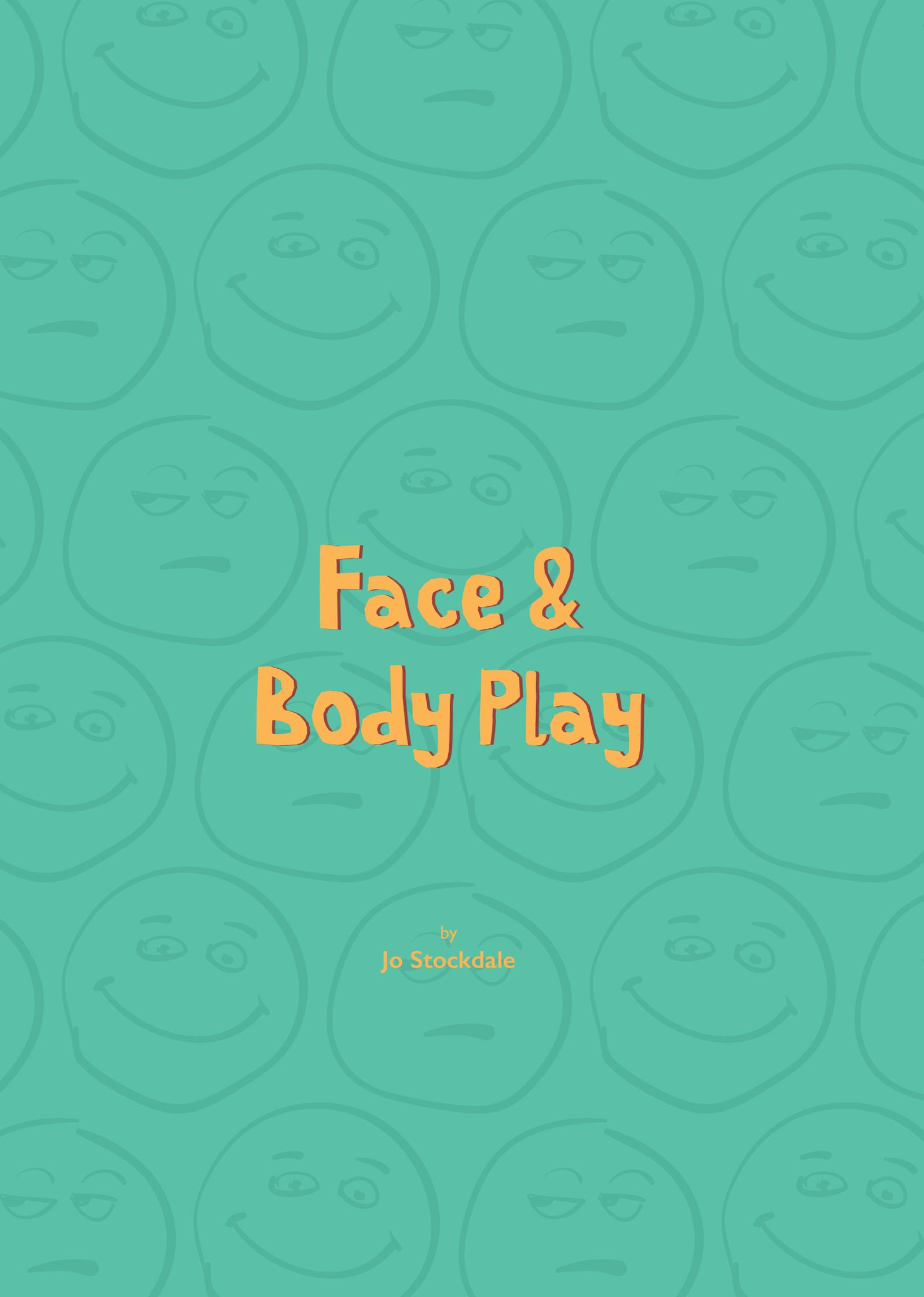


Notes to carers

Exploring emotions might prompt children to open a dialogue with you about their feelings or experiences, so be prepared to help them with this.

Mirroring is great for developing and strengthening:

- Attachment and attunement
- Non-verbal communication
- Trust
- Empowerment/control
- Reading social cues through facial expressions and body language (empathy)



Face & Body Play

by
Jo Stockdale

Helping children with their emotional vocabulary is enormously important; many behavioural problems are borne of frustration because children either don't understand feelings, their own or others', or don't know the words to express them. Once you have used these activities with children, you can help them transfer much of this understanding to other areas of their lives.

You can start by using rubber-face finger puppets (you may be able to buy them online or from vintage toyshops). Although you can't create a broad range of expressions with them, children can have great fun contorting the puppet into all manner of silly faces while learning about the faces' role in conveying emotion.



You can also make masks with a range of emotions (see previous mask activity) as a starting point. This section contains different levels to explore from basic (1) to sophisticated (4). This depends on the children's ability.

1. Silly Faces

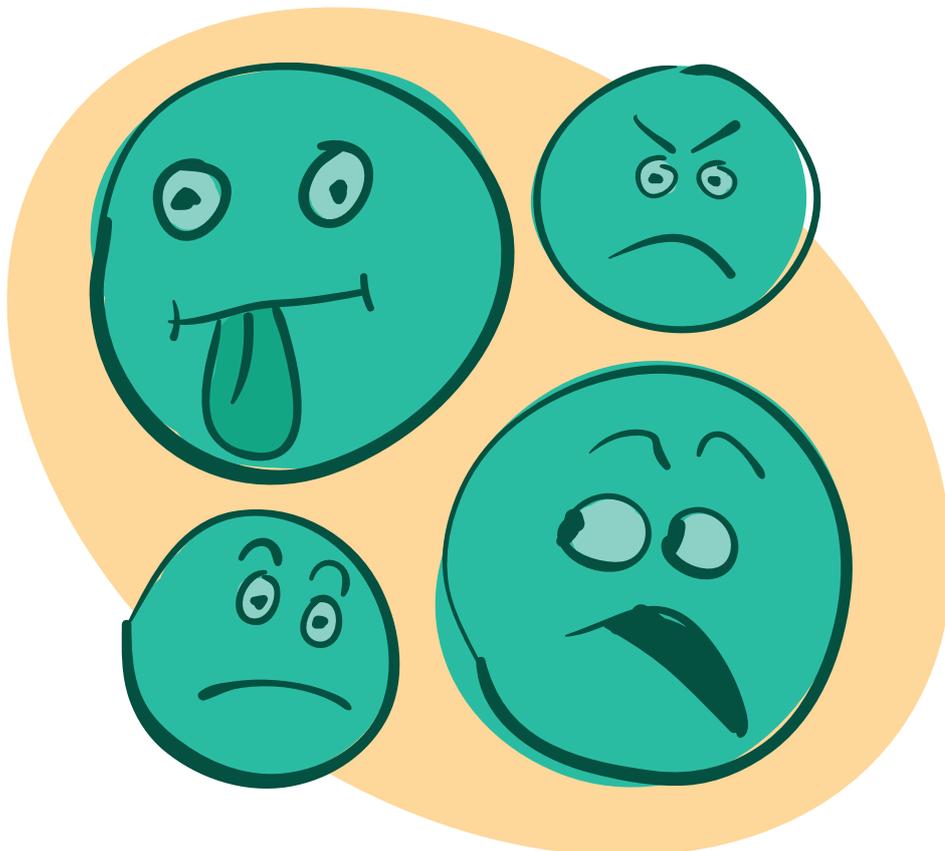
Use your own face to explore expressions with the child or children. Start by pulling very silly faces, then move onto warm and positive expressions before exploring a basic spectrum of emotions such as 'happy' and 'sad'. Ask children questions like "what do you think I feel like?"

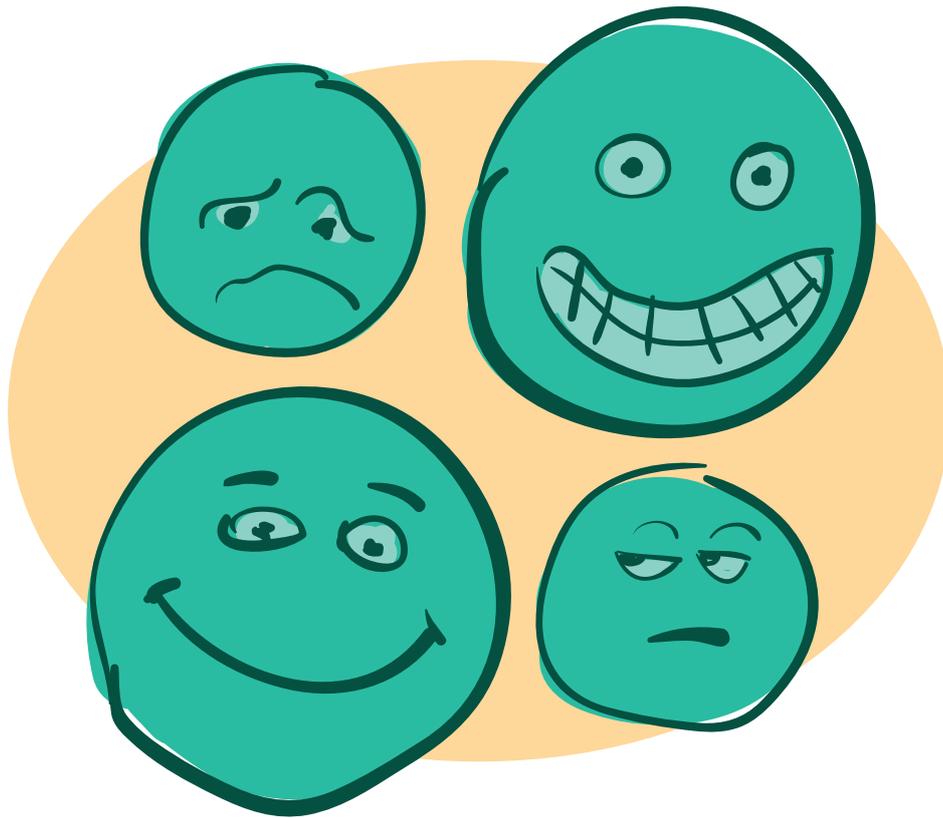
2. Abstract emotions

Using the same principles as above, explore a broader range of emotions, such as 'lonely', 'anxious', etc. Children's answers to the questions will give you an indication of how extensive a child's emotional vocabulary is, enabling you to track their development over time.

3. Expression

Expand the questions that you ask about the feelings expressed, which can be theirs or yours; i.e. "why might I be feeling like this?", "what might I do to help me feel better?" etc.





4. Body language

Incorporating the whole body and the face to help children explore body language, using the following stages:

- a. The 'leader' pulls a face
- b. The 'follower' mirrors the facial expression, then uses their whole body to personify it
- c. The 'follower' walks around or carries out an action as this 'character'
- d. The 'leader' can then ask the 'character' questions to explore his or her feelings and emotions

Start by using basic and/or positive emotions before exploring a broader range

Children often have difficulty distinguishing physical feelings from emotional ones, especially when physical feelings like 'tired' which have an emotional component. Use these exercises to guide children in exploring emotions and distinguish the difference between these and physical feelings.



Notes to carers

With the development of new language, children may start to talk about their experiences or disclose information to you. This is a good indicator that you are also building their trust, so ensure you are able, with support if necessary, to use these exercises to help children with talking.

Pulling Faces and Making Body Language is great to help children to:

- Read and understanding social and emotional cues
- Develop verbal and non-verbal communication
- Improve and manage their own behaviour



Mime

by
Jo Stockdale

Mime includes a broad range of activities that are great fun. You can work through different levels depending on the child's ability.

1. Simple action

Working in pairs or small groups, one person freezes while portraying a simple action like 'playing football', 'eating an ice cream' etc., and the other person guesses what the action is.

2. Characters

Develop simple actions by adding facial expressions and body language and explore the 'character's' emotional state; how they feel and why.

3. Freeze frame *for small groups*

A freeze frame is a dramatic scene stopped mid-action. Create a freeze frame in a pair or small group. This added component requires children to use social skills to negotiate what they are depicting and how they should depict it. If children have difficulty with the concept of 'freeze', compare it to a photograph or pausing the TV.

4. Freeze frame 'live' *for individuals or small groups*

Bring the freeze frame to life to create a short spontaneous scene: three or more related freeze frame that tell a story. Before you begin, establish a 'Re-freeze' rule to stop the action in case children get carried away or start to make any inappropriate disclosures.

5. Explore the freeze frame

When using Levels 2-4, children and adults observing can describe how they think the 'character' feels, or you can ask children questions to explore the emotions of the characters like "why are they doing that?", "what might happen next?", etc.



Ways to Use Mime:

What is in the Box?

This involves one person pretending to take something out of an imaginary box, and others guessing what this is. You can become quite sophisticated with this exercise, exploring the weight and size of the box, and incorporating the senses by miming objects that make a noise, have a scent, are edible, etc. Close the mime by putting the object back in the imaginary box before passing it on.

Help children understand the exercise by demonstrating and then telling them what your imaginary object was.

What is in my Hands?

This exercise is much the same as 'What's in the Box?'; miming an object that is passed on between the hands of two people, making the exchange very important (younger children may need help to understand this). Pay attention to factors such as size, weight, feel, noise, smell or taste of the imaginary object.

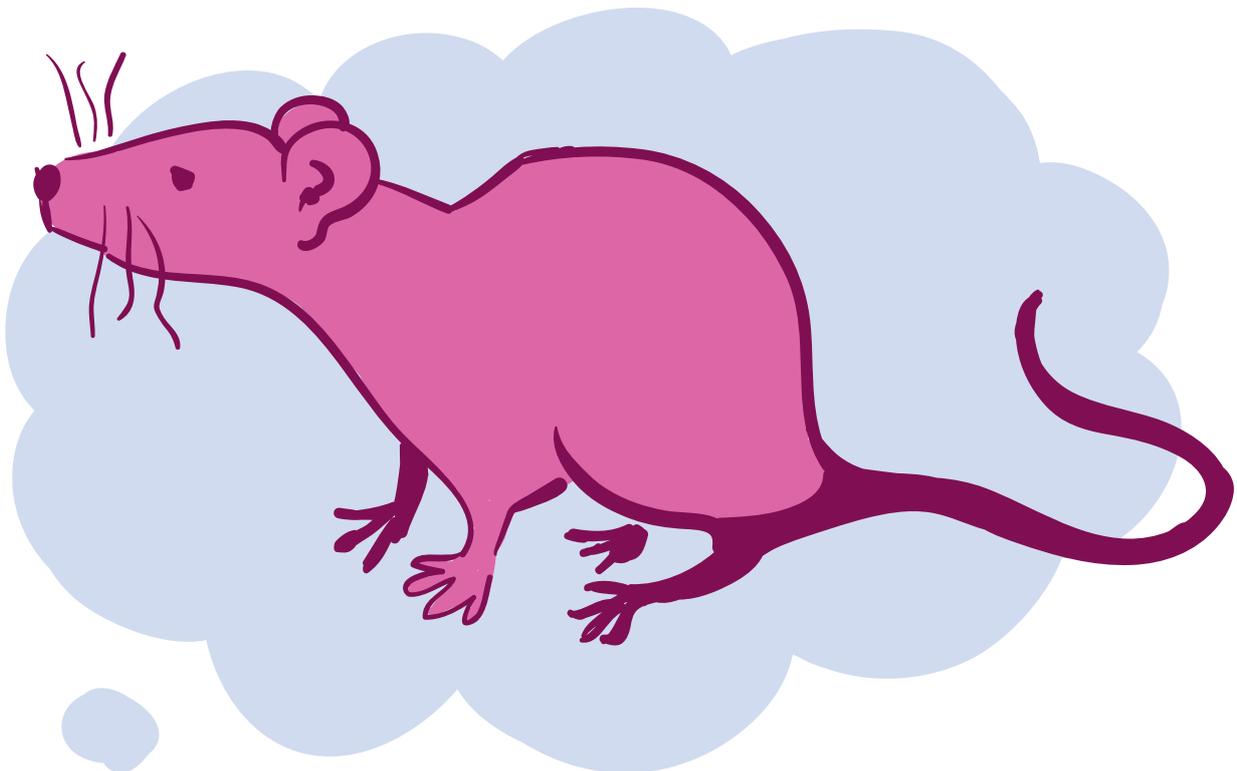
1. Objects

Initially tell the child or children what the object is, choosing something which requires detailed handling, such as a small diamond, a needle, a broken egg, etc.

2. 'Alive'

Introduce living things such as a delicate butterfly, a prickly hedgehog, or a small rodent; these are great fun because they can bite, and you can tell the child or children that it has escaped and send them on a frantic mission to retrieve it.

Draw attention to the kindness that children show their imaginary animals, and discuss it with the child if they drop the mouse or squash the butterfly etc.



3. Metamorphosis

The object changes with each exchange, so a caterpillar may morph into a very heavy box.

4. Letting go - closing the exercise

Everyone 'releases' their imaginary object. Tell the child or children that whatever they are holding has turned into a butterfly that flies away, a helium balloon that floats away, a letter you post into an imaginary letterbox, for example. If you sense that a child wants to keep their imaginary object, they can fold it up and put in a pocket etc.

It's not important that the group knows what the imaginary object is but it can matter a lot to children that you correctly guessed theirs; in this case don't be afraid to ask questions if you don't understand; "Does it make a noise?", "Can you show me how it feels?" etc.

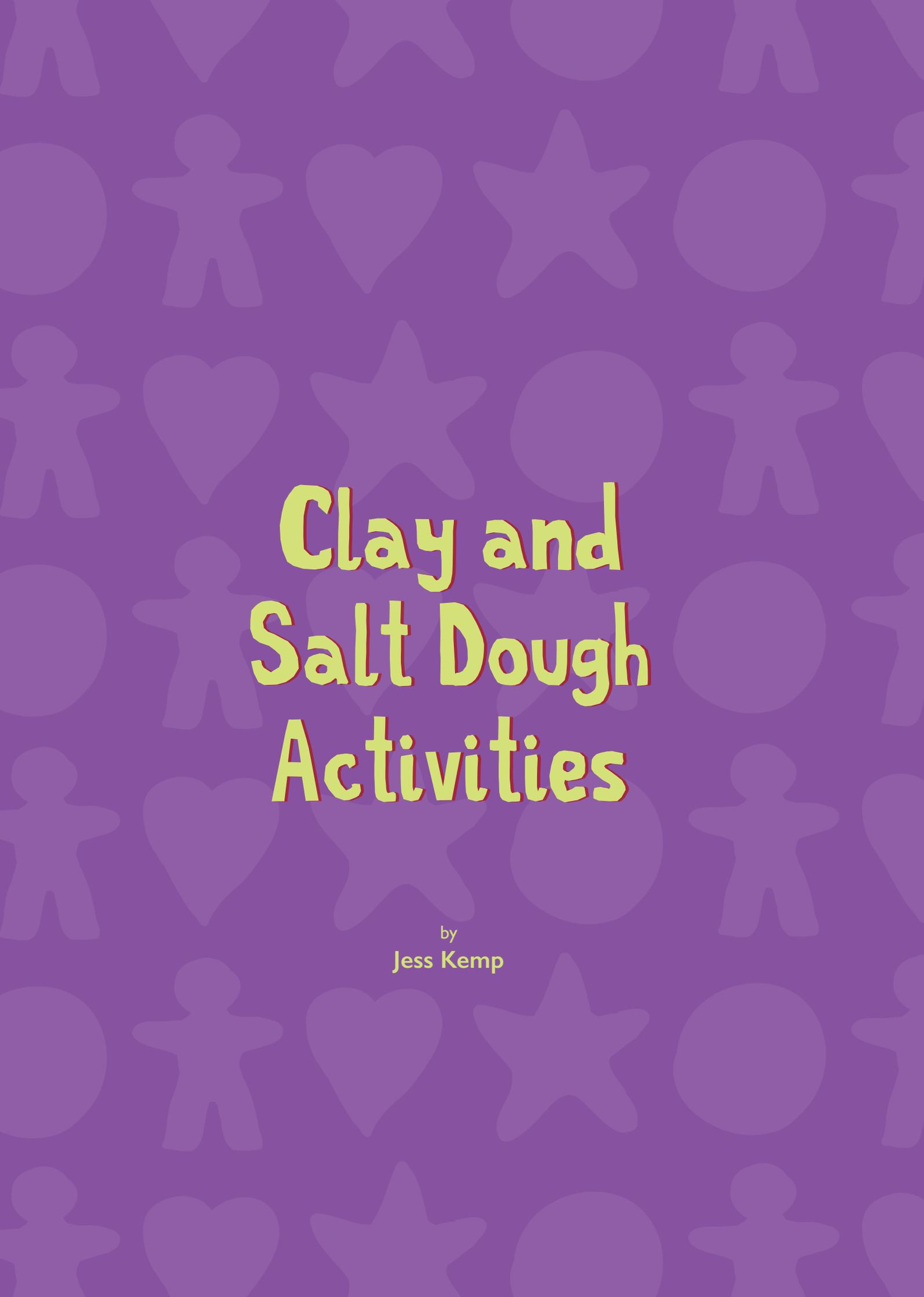


Notes to carers

These mime exercises are great for:

Curiosity · Acceptance · Empathy · Play

- Working in a group or as a whole family unit
- Practicing non-verbal communication by reading social & emotional cues
- Developing emotional vocabulary
- Strengthening attunement, attachment
- Developing Acceptance ('Accepting the Offer') and reciprocity
- Using imagination
- Practicing control and attention
- Practicing kindness and nurturing
- Being curious and spontaneous



Clay and Salt Dough Activities

by
Jess Kemp

Playing and working with clay and other modelling materials is a very tactile sensory experience suitable for all ages and abilities. There is something about rolling, thumping, pulling, bashing and moulding a piece of cool clay that appeals to most people and it's very non-threatening - if you don't like what you've created you can simply roll it all up and start again!

A bit about clay and salt dough:

Clay

The best form of clay to use at home is air drying clay, as it does not need firing in a kiln or baking in any way. Simply put it to one side to dry thoroughly, preferably overnight, after which it can be painted if you want. Air drying clay is readily available in craft shops and places like the specialist toyshops or on-line.

Salt Dough

A cheaper and more immediately available modelling material to work with is homemade Salt Dough. It's easy and fun to make, uses everyday ingredients of flour, salt and water and behaves in a very similar way to clay. It can be left to dry like the clay but may take a bit longer. It can also be baked in an oven. Full recipe and instructions are at the end of this section.

Practicalities

Both clay and salt dough can be sticky and messy; you will need a wipe-able surface to work on and possibly protection for your clothes.

Hands can get messy too but are easily cleaned with soap and water. Some children don't like to get their hands messy in which case there are a variety of tools and techniques you can use which lessens their contact with the clay, but it's nice to encourage the 'hands on' approach if possible with gentle stroking and patting of the clay.

Both clay and salt dough needs to be kept in an airtight container between sessions. Clay lasts for quite a while and if it starts to dry out it can be revived by mixing with a little water. The salt dough will last only a few days but it's easy to mix up a new batch and that's all part of the fun.

Using the clay and salt dough

Air drying clay and salt dough have similar modelling properties but there might also be slight differences; it's good to try a variety of modelling materials over time and find out which you prefer working with. From this point on we shall refer to both air drying clay and salt dough as just 'clay'. There are a number of ways to experiment with the clay, games to play and things to make. There are a variety of tasks to suit all ages and abilities. They start quite simply, but all tasks can be developed to become more refined. Feel free to try them in any order and mix them up when you feel more confident. Let's explore...

Playing and exploring

1. Using your hands

Let the child find out how many ways they can handle the clay. Try:

- Stroking, patting and making it as smooth as possible.
- Push fingers into the clay, make lots of holes, make the clay as lumpy and rough as possible.
- Pick it up and drop it on the table, thump it, push it, pull it and rip it into pieces.
- Now gather it all up, scrunch it into a ball or sausage shape, roll it round and round the table. And make it all smooth again.

Adult carers can ask the following questions like : "What did you enjoy doing the most? Why?", "Which bit didn't you like? Why?", "Can you find any other ways of playing with the clay?"

2. Using objects

Together you can hunt around the house for objects that can make marks in the clay:

- Try using a pencil to poke holes or draw lines, what marks can you make with a ruler?
- Do you have a rolling pin/bottle of water/un-opened tin can which you can use to roll the clay flat? If you have any old cookie cutters use them to cut shapes.
- What sort of marks and patterns can you make with a spoon or fork?

"What else can you find that that makes marks in the clay?"

3. Making imprints

This activity requires to roll out or push a lump of clay into a flat shape, find objects with a texture on them and press them onto the clay to see what pattern they leave behind.

- Try leaves, flowers, twigs, fir cones etc.
- Use toy cars to make tyre tracks. Try textured building blocks or plastic cups.
- Search for other household objects like coins, buttons, mesh/net fruit bags etc.

Once a favourite pattern is found, use it to make a picture or pattern on a fresh piece of rolled clay. You can:

- Leave this to dry then paint or varnish it. They could make small squares with different patterns like on tiles or perhaps a coaster to put your mug on.
- Paint a thin-ish layer of paint over the top of your imprinted patterns, then gently press a piece of paper on top to make a print. You can roll the clay up and make another picture but be aware that the paint will be mixed up inside and you will get messy hands. You might like to keep your coloured clay (in an air tight container) for model making later.

Notes to carers

As we've already mentioned working with clay is a very tactile experience, it's great to touch and handle. Having a lump of 'something' that you can thump, slap, bang, prod, poke, pull apart and re-form without harming anything is very therapeutic and great for releasing energy, excitement, frustrations and anger in a controlled environment. It's also great for stroking, rubbing, smoothing, rolling and folding which can stimulate a sense of calm restfulness, exploring gentle, soothing and meditative qualities.

As with all creative activities some of these explorations may result in disclosures from the child, please be aware of this and seek professional support and guidance.

Games to play:

Here are some other ideas and simple games to play with the clay.

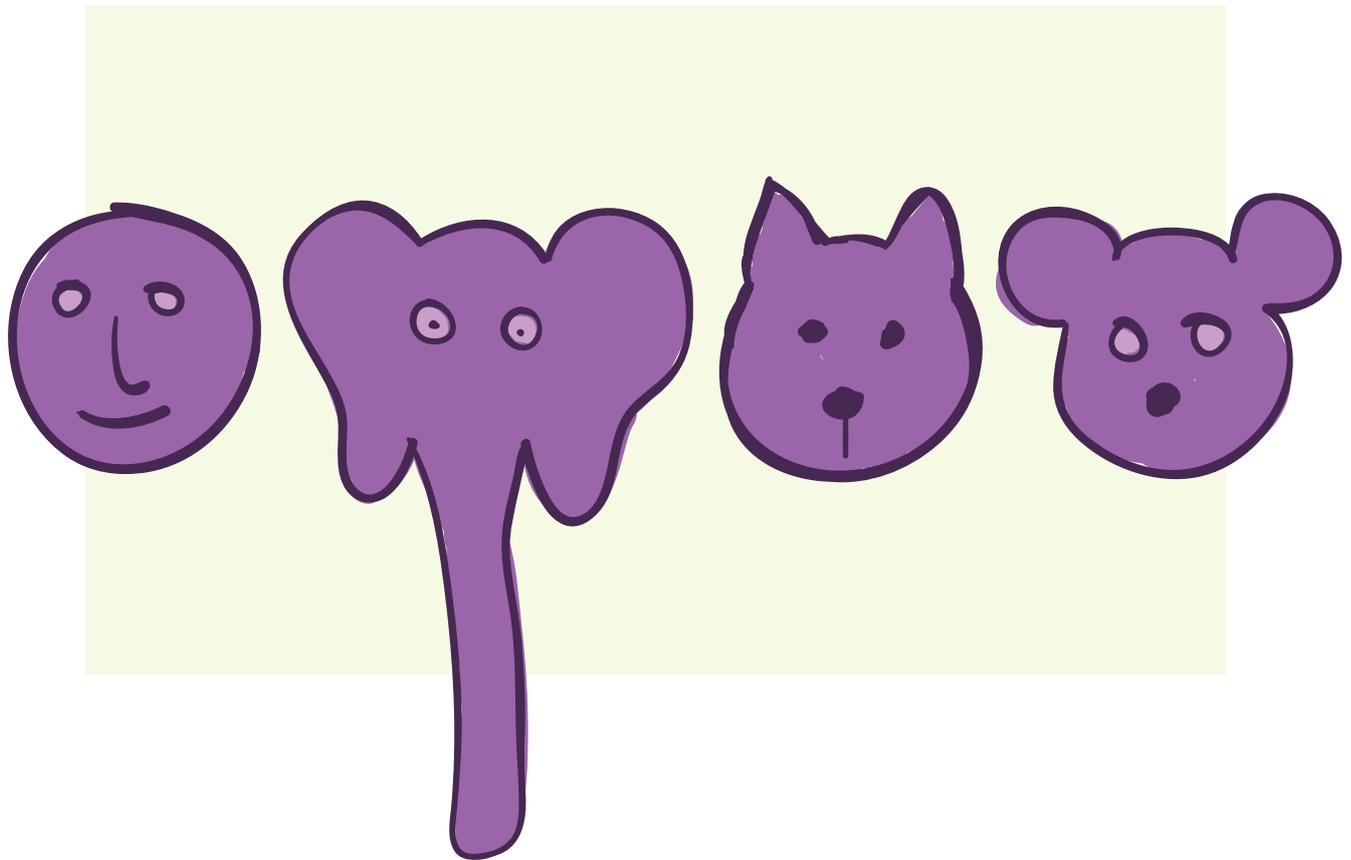
These are fun exploring games, it's not a competition, don't worry if no-one can do the tasks 'properly' or can't guess an object. Simply roll up the clay and play another game.

1. Copying and mirroring

- Make a shape with the clay. Show the other person, can they copy it and make the same shape?
- Try the other way round, can you copy the other persons shape?
- With the other person sitting opposite you, they have to try copying you at the same time as you're making your clay shape, this is called mirroring. Do it slowly to start with so they can follow you.
- Try mirroring them. When you've both practised a bit you could try going faster – it could get quite messy!

2. 'Don't look' modelling

- Person 1 has to 'not look' - they could be blindfolded or turn their back for a while
- Person 2 makes a model shape – it could be a random shape and texture, an object, or an animal, fruit etc. Make sure to tell person 1 which you're doing so they're not trying to guess it's an animal or something when you've just made a strange shape to fool them!
- When the model is ready, person 1, with eyes still closed/blindfolded, has to feel the model shape:
 - Can they guess what it is, if it is anything?
 - Does it remind them of anything else?
 - Can they describe what the shape feels like? Is it smooth, lumpy, flat, has it got different parts to it etc
 - Do they have a favourite part of the shape and why?
 - If the person exploring the shape can't find it or is missing an important part of the shape you can gently guide their hands and help them find it.
- Now swap over so person 2 isn't looking and person 1 makes the shape.



3. Faces

Roll out and flatten a roundish shape, create a simple nose, eyes and mouth. Now let's play with the face:

- Can we turn it into an animal by adding ears, changing the nose, eyes and mouth?
- Perhaps we could create some human characters?
- You could work with someone else to create a face together, or you could make one each and guess what animal or character each other has made.
- If you have two faces perhaps they could 'talk' to each other? Tell a story or a joke – can you make your face smile or laugh? Perhaps it was a sad story and your face is crying or a bit cross because they didn't understand the joke!

The mask making section has many ideas on how to make different faces and emotions.

At the end of the game, roll the clay up into a ball – roll it round and round the table and put it all away.

Making finished items to keep:

Here are three ideas of things to make and keep by letting the clay dry out.

1. Models

Mould a shape out of the clay. To join two pieces together put a bit of water on the join and rub a little to make it sticky then push together firmly. If after it is dry and any bits have dropped off, use a bit of glue to re-attach it.

Leave the model to dry then paint and decorate. You could glue pieces of paper or fabric on and decorate with glitter and beads or buttons.

Ideas of things to make:

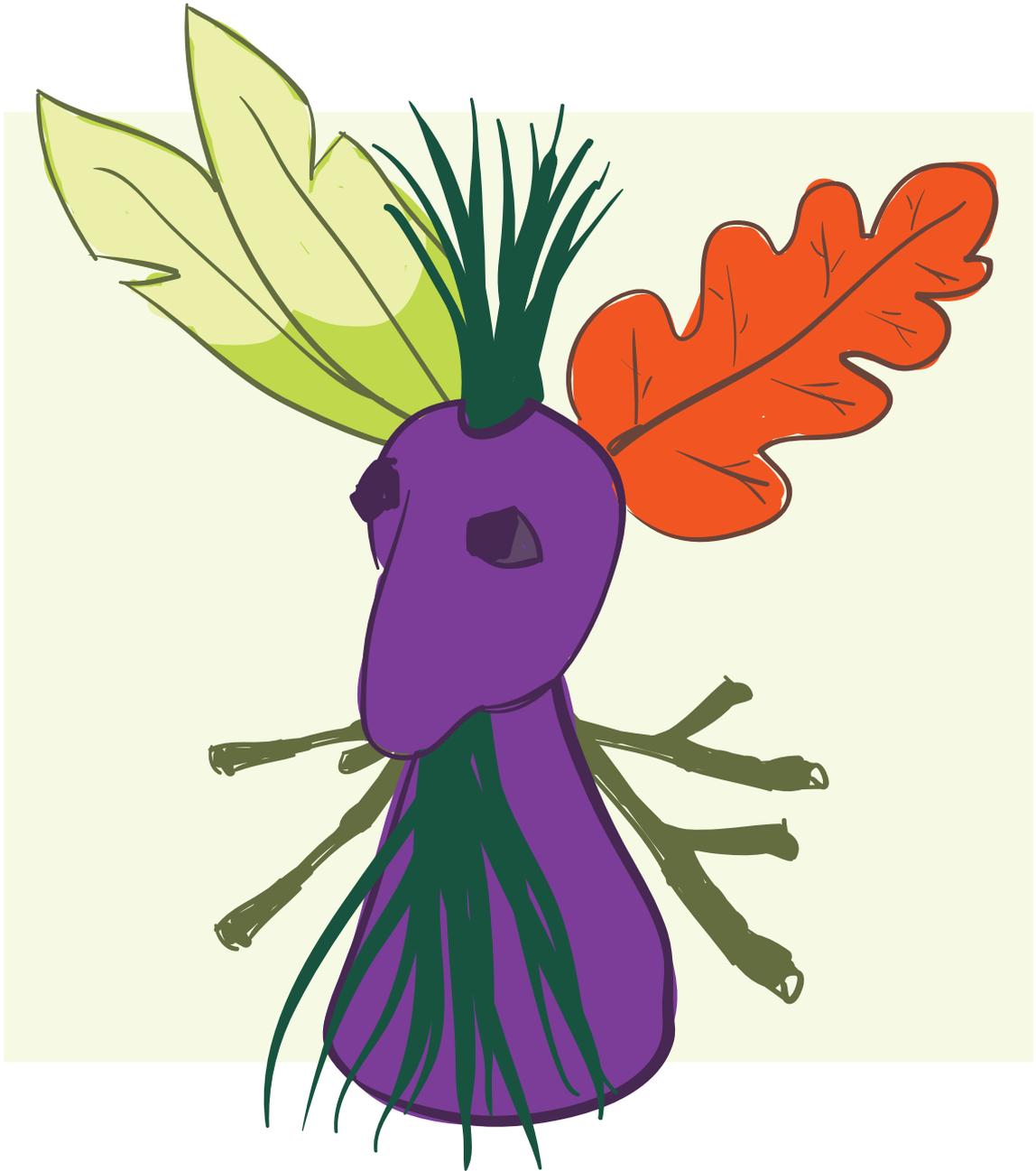
- Animals, people, houses, flowers, a small vase or bowl to keep favourite little things in.

2. Make a Boggart

A Boggart is a strange creature from the earth who might live in woods, the local park or at the bottom of the garden!

- Make a clay body and head, they can be any shape you wish.
- Add any arms, legs or tails that it might have.
- Now decorate it with found things from outside – little pebbles, feathers, leaves, twigs or seashells if it's a Sea Boggart! Push things into the clay firmly so they're less likely to drop off when the Boggart is dry.
- Leave to dry.
- Boggarts like to sit inside on a windowsill or table to be looked at for a while but they are happiest outside. Find an out of the way corner in a rockery, tree or on a wall, anywhere where you think the Boggart will be happy.

Please note that if the Boggart is made from air drying clay it will stay outside for quite a while but eventually the wind and rain will slowly wash it away back into the earth where the clay came from. A salt dough Boggart is more likely to go mouldy after a while and may need to visit its friends the 'Rubbish Boggarts' who live in the Dustbin!



3. Decorations

Many different sorts of decorations can be made as gifts or for other events such as special holiday celebrations i.e. Christmas.

- Roll the clay out flat and biscuit thin
- Use cookie cutters to cut out your chosen shapes
- Make a hole at the top of the shape with a pencil
- Leave to dry (or bake salt dough as per instructions - see page 30)
- Paint and decorate with beads or glitter (varnishing it is optional)
- Thread a ribbon through the hole and tie into a loop for hanging or thread a number of decorations onto a ribbon to make a garland.

Salt Dough Recipe

There are a variety of recipes available, this is one of the simplest. A cup can be any size or container; as long as the ingredients are kept in proportion with each other the dough will work.

½ cup of salt

½ cup of water

1 cup of flour

- Mix the salt and flour in a bowl.
- Add the water a bit at a time, mixing as you go. You may not need all the water, the dough should be fairly dry. If it gets too sticky add a little more flour.
- Knead the dough into a smooth lump.
- Your dough is ready to use.
- When not using store it in an airtight container. It will last for a couple of days.
- When you're ready to dry your creations you can bake them in an oven. Let them air dry a little first then bake on the lowest heat for around 3-4 hours. Keep an eye on them so as not to burn them and they may need turning over half way through.
- Or you could microwave them for 3 minutes. If it's still wet then put back in for a further 20 seconds at a time until they are fully dry.
- Sometimes flat shapes can puff up a bit when using a microwave or may go too brown in the oven, use which ever method works best for you.
- Once dry they are ready to paint and decorate.

The added bonus of making your own modelling material is not just the fun of using it but also the fun that can be had making it in the first place. The measuring and mixing of ingredients is interesting in itself but the best bit is that you can experiment with added ingredients.



Once you've practiced making the dough a few times you might like to see what happens if you add colour, smell or texture.

- Colour: add some food colouring to the water when mixing the dough or divide your plain dough into pieces and knead a few drops of colour into each piece. Be aware that the food colour will stain hands and clothes, perhaps see what happens if you mix in a little poster paint instead?
- Smells: use food flavourings such as peppermint or vanilla to add smells or try natural scents like chocolate powder, coffee, spices and herbs but don't forget that the dough is not edible! It's far too salty to be good for you no matter how nice it smells.
- Texture: how about adding glitter, sand or small beads to the dough and see what it feels like. Warning don't try baking the dough if it's got plastic beads or glitter in it, they will melt! You could leave it to dry naturally, this may take a few days. Leave the dough on something like a cooling tray so that the air can dry underneath too.

Finally: When you have tried everything you can think of with the air drying clay and salt dough try looking on-line for other interesting crafty recipes and 'how to make' such amazing things as - slime, goop, flubber, and silly putty!

Index

Policy and legislation

“The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child’s choice.”

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (September 1990) Article 13

The Fostering Services and Children’s Residential services have statutory obligations to support foster carers to ensure that standards are met and can be evidenced to meet the values and standards as set out.

The activities in the handbook can be used to evidence a number of the values and standards. For example

Standard 7- Leisure activities:

7.1) Children develop their emotional, intellectual social, creative and physical skills through the accessible and stimulating environment created within the foster home. Children are supported to take part in school based and out of school activities.

Research has highlighted that there are gaps in the way that social workers and other professionals communicate with children and young people. It suggests that foster carers and social workers may need to find and use creative ways of communicating with children, other than talking.

Numerous findings regarding how social workers/professionals are failing to observe, engage, talk to, play with, and consistently focus on children/young people especially during assessments (e.g. Cleaver et al, 2004; Horwath, 2010; Munro, 2011).

Theoretical Approach

Within the ‘Express Yourself’ looked after children and young people’s projects that we have delivered, we adopted a PACE (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, empathy) attitude taken from the DDP (Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy model - Dan Hughes).

DDP is a therapy and parenting approach that uses what we know about attachment and trauma to help children and families with their relationships. DDP recognizes the vital role that adoptive parents, foster parents and caregivers have in helping children.

PACE model - An attitude or stance of DDP:

Playfulness

This is about creating an atmosphere of lightness and interest when you communicate. It means learning how to use a light tone with your voice, like you might use when storytelling, rather than an irritated or lecturing tone. It's about having fun, and expressing a sense of joy.

Play is the earliest of our socio-emotional systems; it helps young people to feel good, to experience joy and laughter. It is central in social interactions ensuring social bonding. As Panksepp says, "the brains PLAY network may help stitch individuals into the social fabric that is the staging ground for their lives".

Acceptance

Acceptance is about actively communicating to the child that you accept the wishes, feelings, thoughts, urges, motives and perceptions that are underneath the outward behaviour. It is about accepting, without judgment or evaluation, your inner life. The child's inner life simply is; it is not right or wrong.

Accepting the child's intentions does not imply accepting behavior which may be hurtful or harmful to another person or to self. The parent may be very firm in limiting behavior while at the same time accepting the motives.

Curiosity

This is a not-knowing, non-judgmental, open, engaged, and sometimes tentative stance towards another person's inner life. It arises from a deep interest in, and wish to make sense of, the other person's thoughts, feelings, behaviours, wishes and intentions. It is not asking "Why?" questions that expect an answer, but a wondering that seeks meaning.

Empathy

The capacity and willingness to be and stay with another person in whatever their emotional state. Empathy is standing in the other person's shoes, recognizing and responding to their emotional experience. Qualities that are helpful when creating emotional safety and when trying to stay open and engaged with another person. This, in turn, helps the other person stay open and engaged with you. These traits are similar to the attitude that parents routinely show when communicating with infants.

Neuroscience

What we find exciting about applying the creative arts and play is the progressive understanding of these approaches as brain-wise interventions.

These approaches fit with our knowledge about the brain and attachment. They capitalise on non-verbal and right hemisphere communication, active participation, and the self-soothing nature of creative expression through images, sound and movement.

About the authors



Sally Falkner - Teacher/Social Worker/Therapist

Teacher and social worker by profession, Sally has always been interested in developing and delivering creative strengths based therapeutic interventions for children and young people to facilitate change.

In the last twelve years as a CAMHS (Child and adolescent mental health) worker Sally has become particularly interested in working with looked after young people and their carers.

Attachment theory and the work of Dan Hughes has had a big influence on her practice, particularly the PACE attitude of parenting. This has inspired and influenced her work with children and young people and their carers as a way of communicating with others.



Stephen Jon - Freelance practitioner/maker

The world of “The Mask” is the culmination of Stephen Jon's experience of visual and physical theatre, allied with a lifelong exploration of personal and cultural mythologies.

His work investigates the interface between art and craft, between art and therapy, and between the collaborative and individual processes of creativity. He draws on a wide range of skills including clay sculpture, painting and drawing as well as vocal and movement techniques.



Jo Stockdale - Creative facilitator/drama practitioner

Jo Stockdale has worked in the arts for over 10 years; in Arts Development and as a creative facilitator and drama practitioner.

During this time she has developed a particular interest in supporting the social and emotional growth of children and young people, especially those who are vulnerable; such as children in care, young offenders and young people with disabilities.

Jo is also programme director and trainer with the Child Learning and Development Advisory Centre (CLADAC).

www.childlearninganddevelopmentadvisorycentre.com



Jessica Kemp - Designer/maker

Specialising in theatrical work, carnival costumes and decorative textiles, Jessica uses silks and mixed media to explore the world around us through colour, scale and texture.

She is a practicing participatory artist in both educational and community settings, facilitating creative activities with a wide range of ages and abilities including Sure Start groups, special schools and social care settings. In particular she enjoys working with groups to create celebratory events both large and small, making lanterns, costumes, puppets, flags and banners.



Alma Solarte-Tobón - Creative Programme Officer for City Arts

Alma has worked with children and young people in a variety of roles for over 20 years: teaching English in Colombia, as support worker and as a freelance artist. As a Creative Programme Officer for City Arts, she has coordinated and evaluated art-based projects, and delivered creative consultations, specialising in working with children and young people.

“I have real passion for the arts. In my role, I have seen so many children and young people thrive throughout the arts projects City Arts deliver, with amazing positive results. I have met some as adults’ years later and they often tell me how the arts have helped them in some way.”

About City Arts



City Arts Nottingham develops arts opportunities that bring people together, stimulate change and create stronger, healthier communities. We believe participation in the arts can enrich and transform people’s lives and have been pioneering this approach for over 30 years.

A registered charity, we work creatively and collaboratively with communities and particularly target resources towards vulnerable groups. Our projects include music, performance, visual and digital arts and are all facilitated by artists particularly skilled in working creatively with people

www.city-arts.org.uk

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Feedback form

We would be grateful for your feedback. This will help us improve any of our future handbooks. Please could you answer the questions below and send to:

City Arts, 11-13 Hockley, Nottingham, NG1 1FH

Alternatively, email answers to alma@city-arts.org.uk.

Have you found the handbook useful?

Yes No

Why?

Did you find anything difficult to understand?

What activities did you enjoy most?

Why?

P.T.O.

What age range were the children / young people who did the activity?

4-6 7-9 10-12

13-15 16+

Did they enjoy them?

Yes No

What did they enjoy?

Would training about how to use the handbook be useful?

Yes No

What other activities would you like to see in the future?

Any other comments:

Thank you!

**Cut out & keep
mask template**



