

### *Preface*

The Cognitively Oriented Programme for Preschool Children (COPPC), an approach that has evolved over the years, emerged in response to two major problems identified in the area of preschool education. The *first* problem is the passivity and lack of communication, social and thinking skills in preschool children, as observed in Anganwadis, Balwadis and other preschool centres. The *second* problem is that those working with preschool children have very limited knowledge of how children learn. Children are taught largely through the rote-repeat method, be it rhymes, stories, the alphabet, or numbers. There is very little opportunity provided for activities initiated by the child that encourage creativity and the freedom to make choices and work independently. Children are not provided with the stimulation that is necessary for intellectual growth. There is a great need to tackle these problems, for, given the right support; children can be helped to develop into useful, happy, intelligent adults.

The specific COPPC techniques to address these problems were developed as a result of my experience with the Playhouse Nursery School in Bangalore. As interest in the approach grew, a programme for training workers in the COPPC method was worked out. Beginning in 1985, an experimental curriculum in preschool education and an innovative training approach based on COPPC was developed and implemented in the state of Karnataka. During 1985-87, 140 ICDS field workers in seven districts of Karnataka were trained. In addition, 6,500 field workers, 85 block level officers and 20 ICDS trainers were exposed to this training through a follow-up field-based training programme. The project was funded by Aga Khan Foundation (AKF).

Because of the success of the programme a second phase was implemented, with AKF support, to cover 650 supervisors from 86 ICDS projects in Karnataka during the period 1987-90. In addition, key trainers from ICDS and training centres within Karnataka and from other states were trained in the Cognitive Approach.

The COPPC Manual describes the Cognitive Approach and the preparation of the Kit of play materials. It is designed to be useful to child care workers, adults working with preschool children, supervisors, child development project officers and trainers of ICDS workers.

The Manual is divided into four chapters. The first gives a basic outline of cognitive development in preschool children and suggests how their cognitive abilities can be strengthened. The second chapter focuses on the role of the adult in managing the classroom, children, and activities at the preschool centre. The third chapter begins with a brief discussion of the concepts on which the Cognitive Kit has been developed and goes on to describe the preparation and use of the Cognitive Kit materials. The fourth chapter discusses the Next Step, integrating COPPC and the Thematic Approach, and the fifth with COPPC and the Infant Stimulation Programme.

My thanks are due to the Directorate of Women and Children, Karnataka, for their continued cooperation and coordination; to the Karnataka State Council for Child Welfare, whose infrastructure facilitated in the administration of the project; and to Aga Khan Foundation for their financial support and encouragement.

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## ***1. Cognitive Development in Young Children***

Children often show a remarkable ability to imitate the adult and are able to do what the adult directs them to do. This is seen in a large number of preschool centres where children repeat rhymes and answer questions exactly as the teacher wants them to. Yet, in a large group of children, there may be many who do not have the confidence or the competence to stand up in front of the class to recite rhymes, the alphabet or numbers, in spite of being prodded by the teacher.

What adults, both teachers and parents, need to understand is that while children 3 to 6 years of age can memorize, mere repetition of language as heard from the adult is not learning. Language used with creative and self-initiated activities leads to understanding and helps in the formation of concepts. Further, children are constantly growing physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually, and they need to be involved in activities which support these different areas of development.

It is also important to note that the preschool child develops concepts through direct contact with objects, people and situations. It is difficult for him/her to comprehend abstract information and understand symbols. Direct interaction with the environment enables the child to understand the basic concepts of time, space, position, shape, size, colour, number, movement and sound.

### **Importance of Play**

Play is the most natural and a necessary medium of learning for the child. While providing a lot of enjoyment, play-based activities allow for differences between children's levels of development. The child gets fully involved in an activity only when he/she finds it interesting and derives happiness from it. Therefore preschool education is most effective when developed around play-based activities.

### **Development of Concepts in Preschool Children**

It is important for adults, teachers and parents, to have an understanding of the basic differences in mental development during the preschool years, in order to programme activities suitably. The following is a brief description of the development of concepts in children during the preschool years.

#### ***Colour***

##### **Age**

- 3+ Should be able to recognise, identify, and match the basic colours.
- 4+ Should be able to put three things in order from lightest to darkest shade of colour.
- 5+ Should be able to recognise and identify blended colours like orange, purple, green, etc.

### *Shape*

- 3+ Should be able to recognise, identify, and match three basic shapes (e.g., circle, triangle, square).
- 4+ Should be able to recognise, identify, and match other geometrical shapes (e.g., rectangle, cylinder, star, cone).
- 5+ Should be able to copy simple designs.

### *Size*

- 3+ Should be able to recognise and make simple comparisons of size (e.g., big-little, large-small, long-short, wide-narrow, fat-thin).
- 4+ Should be able to grade things according to relative sizes (e.g., line up six to seven things from biggest to smallest, or longest to shortest).
- 5+ Should be able to understand and demonstrate measurement through the appropriate use of a ruler, yardstick, or measuring tape.

### *Position*

- 3+ Should be able to recognise simple positions (e.g., over-under, top-bottom, front-back, in-out, between, across, around, here, there, near, close, far).
- 4+ Should be able to identify and give examples of the above positions.
- 5+ Should be able to make finer distinctions within these positions (e.g., putting things in order from nearest to farthest).

### *Number*

- 3+ Should be able to recognise, identify and describe basic concepts of number (e.g., some, many, few).
- 4+ Should be able to recognise and identify fractional parts (whole, half, quarter); put things together that are alike; match things one-to-one; count real objects like beads, pebbles, sticks, etc.
- 5+ Should be able to identify which of two groups of objects has 'one more' or 'one less' object, or when they are 'equal'; should be able to identify a given number (between 1 to 10/20) as being 'greater than' or lesser than' another given number.

### *Volume*

- 3+ Should have a general awareness of 'more' and 'less'.
- 4+ Should be able to recognise and identify relative volumes (e.g., some-more, most, some-less-least).
- 5+ Should be able to measure exact amounts of liquid and dry substances using a teaspoon, tablespoon, cup, etc.

### *Texture*

- 3+ Should be able to identify things as being hard-soft, thick-thin, rough-smooth, sharp-blunt, dry-wet, frozen-melted, where the differences are obvious.
- 4+ Should be able to identify and put three things in order based on texture (e.g., hardest to softest).
- 5+ Should be able to put more than three things in order based on texture.

### *Temperature*

- 3+ Should be able to tell the difference between, recognise and identify things that are hot, warm, cold.
- 4+ Should be able to tell the difference between, recognise and identify relative temperatures like hot-hotter-hottest, and cold-colder-coldest.
- 5+ Should be able to understand in a very basic way, how a thermometer is used.

### *Weight*

3+ Should be able to tell the difference between, recognise and identify extreme conditions of weight (e.g., heavy-light).

4+ Should be able to put five to six objects in order based on their weight.

5+ Should be able to demonstrate the use of scales (balances) to measure and compare weight.

### *Movement*

3+ Should be able to recognise, identify and reproduce movements like back-forth, up-down, in-out, stop-go, run-walk, hop-skip-jump, etc. 4+ Should be able to identify specific movements and name animals which use these movements (e.g., jump, swim, dive, fly, gallop, hop, climb). 5+ Should be able to tell the difference between, recognise and identify relative speed (e.g., slow-slower-slowest, fast-faster-fastest); should be able to follow instructions to move in different directions and at different speeds.

### *Sound*

3+ Should be able to tell the difference between and show understanding of loud, quiet, noisy, silent; should be able to identify where different sounds (e.g., animal sounds, object sounds, voices) come from.

4+ Should be able to tell the difference between and identify specific and simple sounds; know where they come from, and when more than one sound can be heard at the same time.

5+ Should be able to listen and detect the beginning sounds of more complex words, detect the ending sounds of words, tell the difference between sounds of different pitches.

### *Taste and smell*

3+ Should be able to tell the difference between and identify specific tastes (e.g., sweet, salty, sour), pleasant and unpleasant smells.

4+ Should be able to identify familiar foods by tasting, familiar substances by their smell.

5+ Same as above with increased complexity.

### *Feelings*

3+ Should be able to tell the difference between, identify and show feelings such as happiness, pleasure, sadness, anger, fear, pain, excitement, shame, shyness.

4+ Should be able to identify the causes of the feelings mentioned above.

5+ Should be able to say what someone who has the above feelings might do.

### *Scientific concepts*

3+ Should be able to identify common foods; identify animals in the immediate environment (e.g., dog, cat, rat, horse, bullock) and their habits; understand at a simple level the different uses of water (e.g., cleaning, drinking).

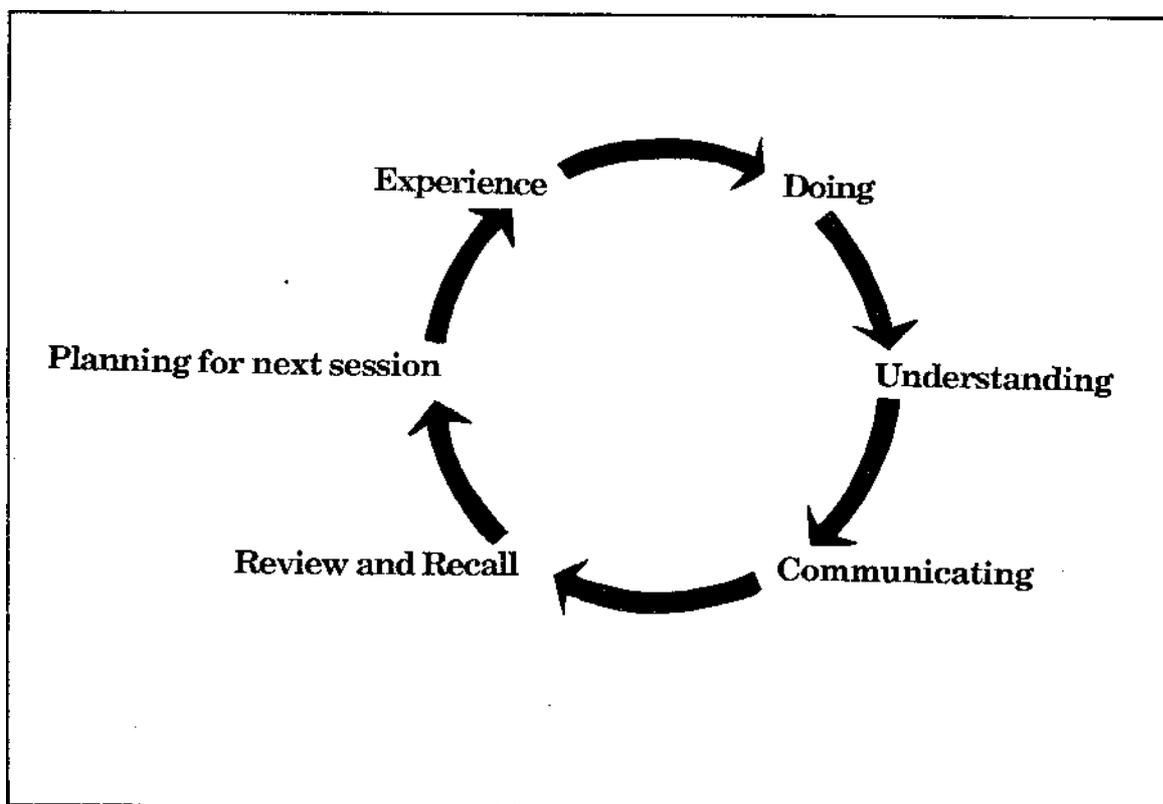
4+ Should begin to develop an understanding of the properties of wind and air; weather and temperature; shadows and how they are formed; growth of plants, their uses; kinds of foods (e.g., fruits, vegetables, milk); sources of light; the concept of time; domestic and wild animals, their habits, etc.

5+ Should show an understanding of the concepts mentioned under 4+ through demonstration and the conducting of simple experiments.

## The COPPC Wheel

Keeping this pattern of development of concepts in mind, the Cognitively Oriented Programme for Preschool Children aims at making possible meaningful learning which is not only educative but also enjoyable for children in preschool centres. It uses the following model. The worker plans out activities aimed at providing the children with interesting experiences so that they are motivated to participate. These activities would also ensure that the children **do** things on their own. Participation in such activities stimulates the children and they are able to **understand/learn** concepts which enhance their cognitive skills. This understanding or learning is reflected when the children **communicate** through speech, gestures and movement. To strengthen the understanding of the children the worker conducts **review and recall** sessions, which could again be in the form of interesting and enjoyable activities. Based on these sessions the worker **plans** the activities for the next session.

The above model provides a useful base for building up an effective preschool programme. It may be represented diagrammatically in terms of the COPPC Wheel.



## Some Basic Principles of Activities under COPPC

The worker might find it useful to keep to the following basic principles when planning or organising activities at the preschool centre.

- *Freedom and Independence:*

The activities should be organised in a tension-free, happy atmosphere. The children should be allowed to act, react, and create *on their own*, to enjoy freedom.

- *Variety:*

Children should be given the opportunity to experience a wide variety of activities. This will ensure the participation and involvement of all the children.

- *Choice:*

Children should be allowed to make choices whenever possible. This will encourage them to take decisions on their own and build their self-confidence.

- *Encouragement:*

The worker should encourage, observe and guide the children at every step, but without disturbing or interrupting them,

- *Time:*

Each child should be given enough time to handle the play/learning material, to play with it and talk about it.

Children who have been exposed to COPPC show themselves as being independent, and reflect the ability to effectively interact and communicate through language, movement and gestures. They also demonstrate an ability to solve simple situational problems.

## ***2. The Role of the Adult / Teacher in COPPC***

The adult, or the teacher, has many roles to play in the COPPC programme. She has to participate in the activities with the children; learn by observing them; listen to the children and encourage them to speak spontaneously, without interrupting; give opportunities to make choices; ensure the involvement of all the children in the group; and provide a secure environment.

In this chapter the focus is on how the teacher can provide a secure and stimulating environment and how she can evaluate the children's progress. The environment would include the seating arrangement, the time schedule, and specific activities that can be done as part of the day's schedule.

### **The Seating Arrangement: The COPPC Circle**

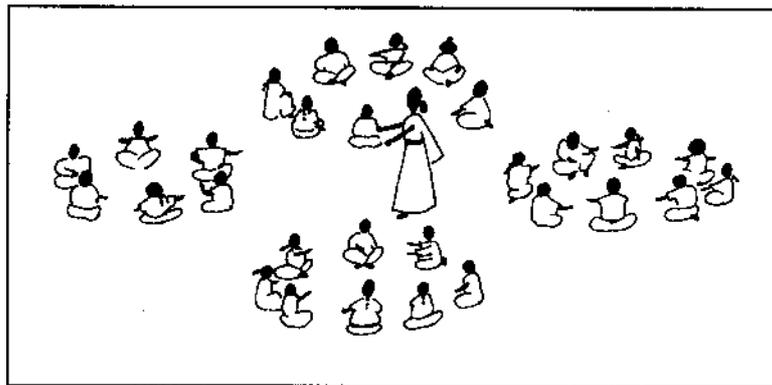
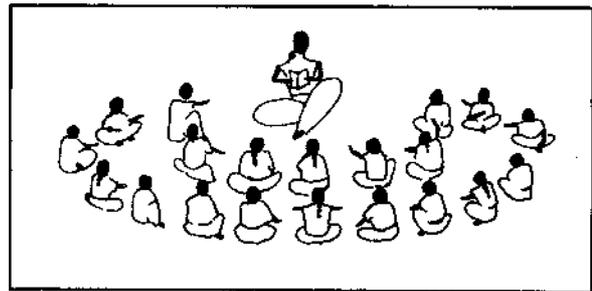
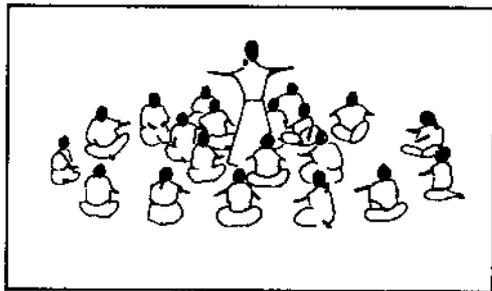
One of the major modifications that needs to be made in the existing preschool classroom is the seating arrangement. Generally children are found sitting in rows as in a primary school. The seating would be more appropriate if it is in a circle, particularly for small children. The circle formation enables all the children to face one another, and the teacher is also able to see all the children at once. It links everyone and activities initiated in the circle ensure participation by everyone.



In centres with limited space the circle formation is suggested in concentric circles, i.e., an inner and outer circle.

Individual activity can also take place within the large circle. This is most enjoyable for children who want to play alone, yet wish to be in the group. There are materials in the Cognitive Kit which meet the needs of young children who choose to play alone (parallel play) as well as of those who want to work with others.

The circle formation is useful for small groups too. Thus, there could be three to four circle groups in the same room, each group doing a different activity simultaneously, independent of the teacher. The teacher would be able to observe the various activities of the different groups by moving about.



For story-telling and other activities where the teacher is the focal point, half concentric circles are very useful, for the children can sit close to each other and nearer the teacher.

### **Time Schedule for Preschool Activities**

The teacher at the preschool centre interacts with children in large numbers at times, and in smaller groups of five to ten at other times. It would be useful for the teacher to divide the day's schedule into 'time blocks' to work with children individually as well as in groups.

The materials in the Cognitive Kit may be used in different activities during the above-mentioned time blocks. Each activity can be designed to strengthen the concepts of shape, size, space, position, direction, time, numbers, sound and movements. Each play item can also be used in a variety of ways so that these concepts are developed.

The time blocks suggested here are intended only as a guideline to help the teacher plan and organise activities effectively. They indicate how a typical day at the preschool centre can be worked out in terms of units of time. Each time block is described in terms of: (i) what happens, and (ii) what it provides for the child.

#### ***Greeting time***

(i) The first thing the teacher does in the day is to welcome the children. After this the children can interact with each other in free play indoors/outdoors; a regular health check-up can be done; and activities and games based on health, hygiene and body growth can be planned, (ii) The child is taught environmental hygiene and communication skills.

#### ***Choice time***

(i) Children are encouraged to choose their own activity during choice time. They can work independently or in cooperation with other children. They can be involved in solving problems, working with materials, learning about texture, shape, size, colour, and creating with odds and ends. Planning should be a part of choice time.

(ii) Planning helps children to organise and use what is available in an effective way. It helps in developing sequential thinking, inner discipline, and concentration to complete a task. In the everyday routine, planning helps in 'What next?' and 'How?' During choice time children come to understand relationships between objects and events in the environment. It is also a time to strengthen communication through language, gestures and movement.

### *Clearing up time*

(i) Clearing up activities help children take responsibility for the preschool environment. Appropriate activities include ‘putting away’ play materials, taking stock of materials, caring for and storing materials and equipment.

(ii) The concepts developed during clearing up time relate to space and time.

### *Work time on specific concepts*

(i) Children work in small groups of four to ten on specific activities following the teacher’s instructions. The teacher is expected to organise activities and provide interesting play materials for different groups, working with the cooperation of co-workers and older children.

(ii) Children are asked to focus their attention on activities that promote the development of concepts related to science, environmental awareness, language, reading readiness, writing, numbers, or on creative arts, crafts, and music.

### *Wash up time*

(i) Washing up and preparing for snacks.

(ii) This helps children to learn healthy hygienic habits relating to the self and the environment.

### *Snack time*

(i) Children should be given nutritious snacks. During this time discussion can take place on different kinds of nutritious foods, food hygiene, and food sources.

(ii) The concepts that can be developed include shape, size, texture, taste, colour, change caused by heat and the process of cooking, etc.

### *Quiet time*

(i) Children listen to stories, music; look at picture books, and so on. The teacher is expected to ensure effective communication and appropriate presentation of material to encourage listening skills.

(ii) Children learn to appreciate stories and music, and increase their concentration span. This time can also be used for memory training.

### *Communication time*

(i) This includes free conversation, learning rhymes, making up rhymes, songs, dancing to music, making musical compositions with simple melodies using instruments. It also includes the use of puppets, masks and role playing to enhance language abilities.

(ii) The time can be used for vocabulary building and understanding words in different contexts.

### *Recall / Evaluation time*

(i) This is a specific time block when there is discussion on what has happened during the day. Children are encouraged to talk about what they have done, and how each one of them participated in the different activities. It should also be a time for encouraging children to plan the following day’s work, in relation to the activities and concepts they are already familiar with.

(ii) The teacher’s role is to encourage children to communicate more effectively, to solve simple problems, and to make independent choices. Simple and open-ended questions are most useful in making children more communicative. It is not to be expected that the child would answer correctly or as the teacher expects. The objective is to make the child think on his own and answer on his own. Children should be encouraged to ask questions, and to find creative ways of answering a question. The question-answer form can be used for recalling the different activities and for thinking about the various aspects of the children’s interaction with each other and with the play materials.

### *Goodbye time*

(i) This is the end of the day. A prayer may be said or a simple song may be sung, giving thanks for a busy and happy day.

## Evaluation of Children

Evaluating children is suggested as a part of the daily routine of the teacher in any preschool centre. The primary aim of the evaluation should be to facilitate progress in all aspects of the child's development—physical, emotional, social, and mental. Evaluation of each child should take place as often as possible. It is possible to evaluate one child every day. This would mean each child will be observed once every six weeks. A record may be maintained for each child to enable the teacher to note the stages of progress.

### *A Checklist for Evaluation*

#### Social

- What is the level of participation of the child?
- How well does the child interact with other children and with the teacher?
- Does the child share with other children?
- Is the child/willing able to wait for his/her turn?
- Is the child able to volunteer to make plans for the next day's activities?
- How does the child react to new visitors and their questions?

#### Language

- Is the child able to respond spontaneously to questions?
- Is the child able to say and sing rhymes, songs on his/her own?
- Is the child's language clear?
- Has the child acquired new vocabulary since the last observation?
- Is the child able to name and describe the activities?

#### Memory

- Is the child able to follow instructions and remember them?
- What did the child recall about the day's activities?

#### Concepts

- Is the child able to differentiate size, shape, colour?
- How many objects can the child sequence, by size, by weight?
- Is the child able to create different ways of using the same materials? Give an example.
- Is the child able to give different answers to a question?
- What tastes, smells, sounds is the child able to differentiate?

The above check listed items are not exhaustive, but they indicate what to look for while evaluating an individual child as well as a group of children.

### *Self-Evaluation*

Though difficult, and often subjective, it is very necessary and important for the teacher to evaluate herself. Ask yourself the following questions at the end of the day.

- Did I have a good day?
- Did my children have a happy time?
- Was I able to help a particular child who was behind the others yesterday?
- Did I learn something new today?
- Did my children show me new things?

- What questions did children ask that I am not sure how to answer?
- How independent have I made my children today?

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS—SOME DOs AND DONTs**

### **Materials**

- Make your centre attractive by displaying play materials.
- The play materials should be displayed at the child's eye level and in such a way that they are readily available to them.
- Give time to every child to handle the play material.
- After each activity put away the materials to avoid distraction during the next activity. The materials can be stored in bags if shelves are not available. Let children learn to be responsible for putting things away.
- The same play materials should be used in different ways on different days. This would keep up the interest of the children and encourage creativity.

### **Activities**

- Plan activities beforehand. *Do not have all activities on one day,*
- Introduce the activity to the children before starting — initially in a large group, and then in smaller groups.
- Encourage all the children to participate in the activity. Find friendly ways to draw out the shy or restless child. *Do not force the children to participate.*
- Let children choose activities whenever possible.
- During an activity go from simple to complex processes Encourage children also to think this way.
- Observe and guide children during an activity. *Do not disturb or interrupt while observing or guiding. Do not make play activities into formal teaching lessons.*

### **Language abilities**

- After each activity recall that activity by asking simple questions. This recall can also be done at the end of the day.
- Encourage the children to talk to the teacher. Learn to listen patiently.
- Encourage questions and answers relating to all activities. *Do not ask questions that are not related to the child's ability to answer.*
- While teaching rhymes and songs practise 'saying together' rather than 'say after me'.
- Encourage children to express their opinions on the different activities — what they liked, what they did not like.

### **General**

- At the end of the day make sure the preschool centre is clean, attractive and ready for use the next day.

### ***3. The Cognitive Kit Materials***

The materials in the Cognitive Kit are designed to give children experiences which will strengthen the development of basic concepts such as shape, size, number, position, time, sound, colour, etc. Use of the Cognitive Kit materials by workers in preschool centres has revealed the creative features of all the items listed here. Many workers have gone beyond the initial activities. After regular use of these materials following the Cognitive Approach, you will also be able to develop appropriate variations.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a list of the materials contained in the Cognitive Kit, and to describe the method of preparation and use of these materials. These guidelines can be used by any adult working with young children. It is envisaged that older children may also be involved in making the playing/learning materials for younger children, as the method of preparation is very simple. Substitutions can be made in the materials depending on locally available resources.

It is suggested that every worker has a bag for the Cognitive Kit materials, with pockets inside and/or outside, and a broad shoulder strap for carrying the bag comfortably and conveniently. In places where the preschool programmes are conducted in make-shift spaces, the bag with the Cognitive Kit has been found immensely useful as it can be carried around or stored easily.

Three stages of these low-cost multipurpose articles need to be emphasised:

- preparation for play,
- use during play, and
- care and safe keeping after play.

In the preparation of the Cognitive Kit materials the importance of aesthetics and durability should be kept in mind. Another important suggestion is to keep all the items in a good state of repair. Children should also be made aware of these principles. The aim should be to eventually give the children the task of caring for the materials. It builds their sense of responsibility. These suggestions are of special relevance to ICDS workers in rural and slum areas, where the major constraints are lack of space and lack of materials. The following are some of the basic and general features of the Cognitive Kit.

- The activities are divided into *simple units*. This is helpful in making concepts comprehensible to children, at their level.

- All the play items are *interrelated and progressive*. They support language development, creativity, environmental awareness, socio-personal relationships and reading, writing and numeracy readiness. These areas form the basis of any preschool curriculum. Activities in one area would reinforce the development of concepts in all the areas.

- In addition, the activities are numbered under each item, suggesting a *sequential progression*. The aim is to help children to form basic concepts and make extensions by providing a series of similar but varied experiences.

- The measurements given for the materials are based on an *appropriate size* for the average child between two-and-a-half and five years of age.

*Note:* The COPPC materials may also be used for parent education, for providing parents with ideas on how to facilitate children's learning, and prepare them for formal education in later years.

#### **LIST OF COGNITIVE KIT MATERIALS**

- Name Cards
- Anandi and Ananda
- Rope
- Ribbon

- Shape Toss Toys
- Seriation Dolls and Mattresses
- Wool
- Puppets
  - Cone puppet
  - String puppet
  - Card puppet
  - Pocket puppet
- Doctor's *Kit*
  - Stethoscope
  - Thermometer
  - Badge
  - Bag
- Manipulative Board
- Card Games, Colour Board
- Science Toys
  - Colour filter
  - Merging toy
  - Spiral bead
- Signal Board
- Music Kit
  - Metalophone
  - Drum

## ACTIVITIES BASED ON THE COGNITIVE KIT

### NAME CARDS

#### Materials Required

Cardboard or hard cover of notebook Cloth (waste pieces) White paper Gum

#### Method of Preparation

Cut out three 2.5" x 1" pieces in cardboard, cloth and white paper respectively, for each name card. Paste the cloth piece on one side of the cardboard and the white paper on the other side. Punch a hole on the top middle of each card for a pin to be inserted. Write the name of the child on the side with the paper face, in bold letters. The cloth piece at the back prevents the card from tearing. Make sure that each child has a card. Let the children bring their own safety pins from home.

## Use & Activity

1. Introduce the name card activity by calling out each child's name and pinning that child's name card on to her dress. Talk to the children about the name card which belongs to each child. Each child gets his/her name card when she comes to the centre and before going home it is removed and kept safe for wearing the next day. By doing this every day the children get into the habit of wearing and removing their name cards and learn to recognise their names on the cards.

2. *Name singing*: Each child sings his/her name when you ask the question, 'What is your name?' You could also sing every child's name in sequential order or at random. Another variation in the name singing activity is for you to sing a child's name and then all the other children point to that child. Through such activities children learn to recognise their names and that of others in a friendly atmosphere.

3. *Sounds in names*: Draw attention to the sound with which each child's name begins and ask which are the other names beginning with the same sound— e.g., with the sound (M)

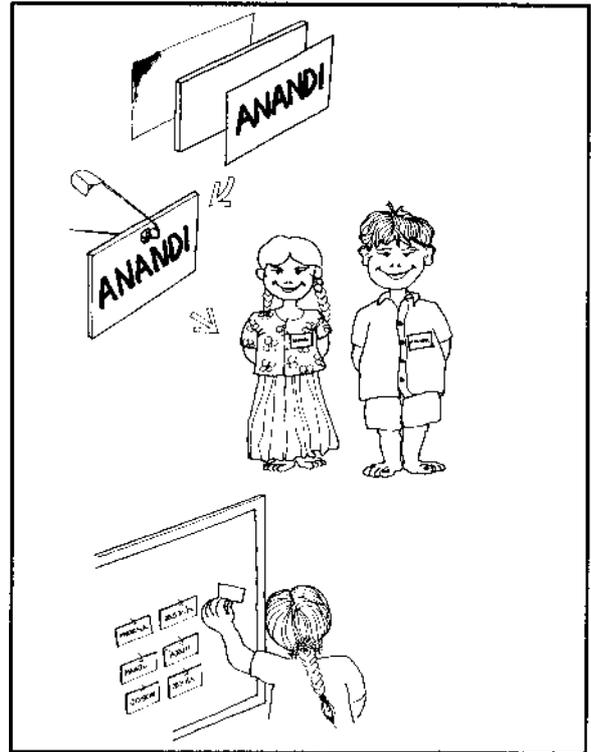
you can have Malati, Meera, Moni, etc.. If children find this difficult a variation may be tried. Ask 'Whose name is this?' giving the children the first two sounds of the name—'Ma-la', for instance. The children have to complete it with 'ti'.

4. *Whose is this? What's her name?*: Ask a question which helps identify a child and then ask who the person is: e.g., 'Someone is wearing a red dress. Who is it? What is her name?'

5. *I have come today*: This can be played after the children have learnt to recognize their names and that of others. Take a board approximately 2.5 to 3 feet square, or less, according to what is available. Write 'I have come today' on the top. Hang the children's name cards on the board. Keep all the name cards in an open tray or box and let each child pick out her card and fix it on the board. The children will learn to look for their names and to recognise the letters in their names- This is an initial stage in reading readiness and counting. It is also a novel way of marking attendance. The children are able to know who is present and who is absent. Learning of numbers can also be initiated—how many children, how many boys/ girls, etc.

## Value

- (i) Name card activities are very valuable in developing the concept of *self* in every child.
- (ii) Having individual cards gives the children a sense of belonging, responsibility and social awareness.
- (iii) Visitors to the centre will also find the name cards convenient. They can address any child by his/her name.
- (iv) Name cards can be used to introduce reading, writing, counting, recognition of symbols, and recognition of sounds.



## ANANDI AND ANANDA

### Materials Required

Cardboard for each doll—8" x 14"

Two 8" x 12" pieces for the body

Two 2" x 4" pieces for the arms (cut separately and fixed with board pins) Two board pins per doll (totally 4)

Cloth-1/8 metre (coloured, printed) for Anandi and 1/8 metre (coloured, plain) for Ananda. White cloth for underwear

Paint—black for hair, eyes; red for lips

### Method of Preparation

For each doll, draw a figure to resemble a child with head, body and legs within the 8"x 12" piece of cardboard. Cut out 2 separate pieces for the arms, each 2"x 4". Fasten the arms onto the shoulder of the doll with board pins. Attach pieces of cloth between the cardboard pieces before fixing the pins to prevent tearing. Paint the face, hair, eyes and lips, and hair at the back. Both the dolls are made in this way. The dresses for Anandi and Ananda may be simple with buttons for Ananda in the front. The underwear may be of the same cut for both. Make a loop at the back of each doll for hanging on the wall. Place them in a prominent place at the eye level of the children. The total height of each doll should be about 12".

### Use & Activity

1. *Introduce Anandi and Ananda as a part of the Anganwadi/Balwadi:* Every girl is an Anandi and every boy an Ananda. Play games related to 'name calling' by adding Anandi/Ananda. For example, ask questions like, 'What Anandi are you? Sheela Anandi or Gopi Ananda?' etc.

2. *Anandi Ananda greeting song:* Come Anandi, Come Ananda Come to preschool, Let us play and let us dance. Let us work and eat together. To this add the name of each child as in the name singing activity.

3. *Talk with Anandi Ananda:* Sit with the children in a large circle, with the Anandi and Ananda dolls on your lap. Develop conversations about dress, the need to wear underwear, body hygiene: clean eyes, nose, ears, teeth, etc. Any topic of conversation may be centred around Anandi/Ananda as this would draw the attention of all the children.

4. *Anandi Ananda week days song:*

Monday Anandi/Ananda

Tuesday Ananda

Wednesday Anandi

Thursday Ananda

Friday Anandi

Saturday Ananda

Sunday holiday for Anandi and Ananda and all of us.

Ask questions such as 'what comes after/before?' with reference to the days of the week as well as Anandi or Ananda. Include Anandi/Ananda in the daily activities of the children.

### Value

(i) Enhances concept of self and sense of belonging to the group.

(ii) Facilitates socialisation among children

(iii) Provides an attractive and realistic medium to reinforce learning about body hygiene and sequential thinking through simple and meaningful language.

(iv) Anandi and Ananda add colour and life to the preschool environment.

Anandi/Ananda, which means joy, is a universal concept to which the child can easily relate. Parents also need to be exposed to Anandi and Ananda.



## ROPE PLAY

### Materials Required

A minimum of 3 metres length of soft rope of medium thickness is sufficient for use in small spaces, involving 12 to 15 children at a time. The length may be varied depending on its availability and whether or not there is space available to include more children.

### Method of Preparation

Tie the two ends of the rope length with a reef knot. It is then ready for various activities performed in a circle.

### Use & Activity

1. *'Being together' activities:* Children sitting in a circle hold the rope and swing their arms up, down and sideways to the rhythmic repetition of words. It is better to do simple sequences of the different positions in the beginning. Then go to variations of the same position. The child may do these actions standing up, sitting down or moving around.

- Up up, down down, sideways here and there
- Up down and middle
- Up down, here and there
- Up down, left and right.
- Forward backward, up and down
- Up middle down

These may also be sung. Variations of the positional rhymes are left to you. The children may be encouraged to add lines to the rhymes.

2. *Boat game:* Children sit down with legs outstretched and sing:

*Boats boats boats*

*Boats in the lake*

*Boats in the river*

*Boats in the sea*

*Look up and see the sky*

*Look down and see the earth*

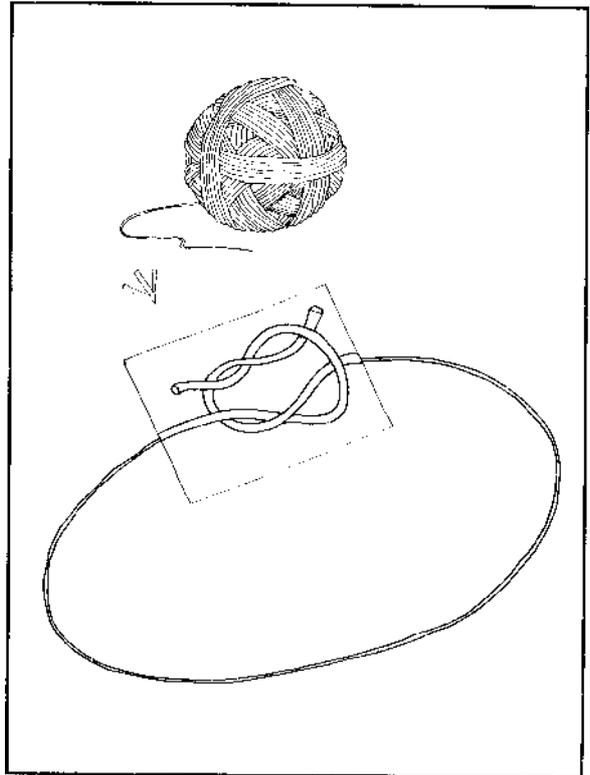
*In the middle is water*

*In the water is the fish*

*In the boat am I.*

3. *Lying down game* (another variation): Children do all the positional rhymes with actions in the *lying down* position. Draw the children's attention to the position of the whole body when lying down, what they see when lying down, what is above and below, etc.

4. *Going in a bus:* Children move the rope standing in one place, singing the song 'going in the bus, buying a ticket, giving the money, moving on, halting when they arrive at the destination', etc. Several variations may be tried, incorporating movement with the words and coordinating the actions of the group. Example: Going in the bus, what do you see in the hills? What do you see by the river? Can you see the forest? Halt halt, here comes our town.



**5. Going to the temple/mosque/church:** Walking in a circle, holding the rope, saying prayers, bending down and rising, taking *prasadha* with hands folded, turning round in one position for *pradakshanae* (an essential ritual performed as a mark of respect to god). Introduce the appropriate actions for each place of worship (temple, mosque, church).

**6. Seriation size game:** Children move outward as far as possible to the words 'Big Sun'; come inward midway to the words 'Middle Moon', and come further inward to the words 'Small Star'. Put the words to a tune.

*The sun sun, big bright hot sun.*

*The moon moon, middle-size moon*

*Cool and bright on a full moon*

*Stars stars, small small stars*

*Twinkling twinkling in the night.*

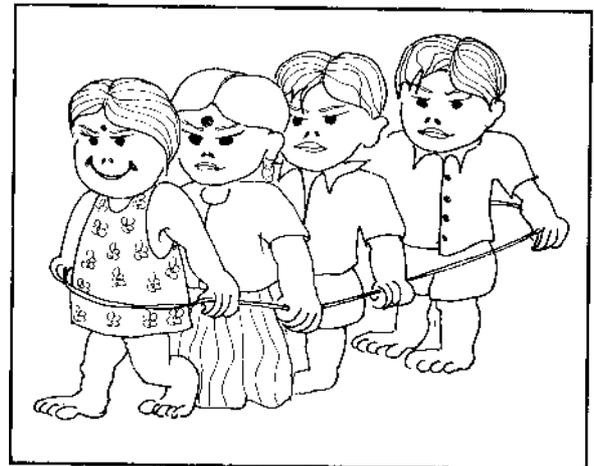
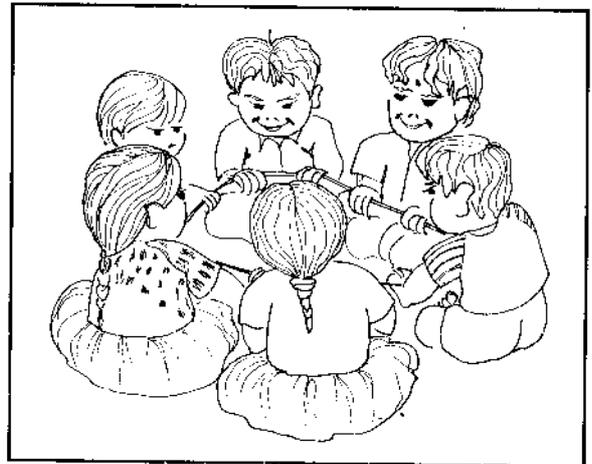
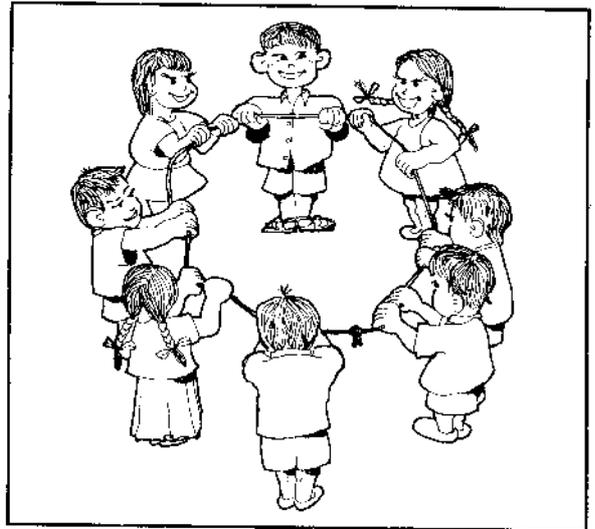
**7. Caterpillar/snake walk:** Children line up one behind the other, hold the rope on either side and walk forward following a path. It may be a *zigzag* or straight path. The experience is to be together and represent one thing, through cooperative play. Using the same method, the activity can be adapted for training games, etc. Give directions and indications to 'Start' and 'Stop', encouraging the children to follow simple rules.

**8. Bullock cart and driver:** A smaller length of rope may also be used for this. Two children in front are the bullocks, holding the rope in front at the waist. The driver holds the rope together at the back and drives the bullocks forward. The rest of the children are involved in giving directions to the driver to go places. For example, first go to the temple (mark a space), then go to the market (another space), so on and so forth. All the children may be eventually involved in groups of 3 at a time. Try out other activities using ideas given by the children. Using several lengths of rope, a number of smaller circles can be formed. Everyone gets a turn this way.

**9. Rope track:** Make different shaped tracks with the rope and encourage the children to walk in different ways following the rope without touching the rope; e.g., walk with both feet on either side of the rope, walk on all fours, with hands on the ground beside the legs to resemble an animal walk, zigzag walk, etc.

**10. Jump and crawl game:** Two children hold either ends of the rope at a certain height. The rest of the children crawl under the rope or jump over it.

**Note:** It is a lot of fun to play with a rope as suggested above. There are many variations of play activities with just one length of rope.



One such variation is as follows. Paste 1" pieces of coloured cloth (red, blue, yellow) at equal distances of 12" apart in the same order r,b,y, r,b,y and so on. It would be better if there are equal numbers of each colour.

Let the children leave the rope. Pull the rope holding the knotted end and wind it over your hand loosely, up and down. Let the children talk about the winding process: up and down, round and round over the hand, one two three, till the rope ends. Ask questions such as: What happened to the rope ends? Why is the rope looking smaller? How can it get long? How many windings? etc.

#### Value

- (i) Provides experiences that help children understand concepts of space and time.
- (ii) Using language to describe actions, situations and experiences helps reinforce the learning process.
- (iii) The rope activity is very suitable in small spaces and practicable with small and large groups. It can also be done outdoors.
- (iv) Encourages creativity in sensory-motor and language abilities. (v) The rope games enhance spontaneity.
- (vi) Children learn cooperation as the learning experiences occur in a social group.

## RIBBON PLAY

#### Materials Required

Crepe paper or cloth in different colours. Four strips—1 metre in length and 1.5 to 2" in width.

#### Method of Preparation

If the full length of 1 metre of material is not available several pieces may be joined to make a metre. The width should not be less than 1.5 inches. If thin ropes are used fix different coloured paper/cloth pieces to hang as bunting.

#### Use and Activity

Ribbon play activities are effective in small groups of 4 to 8 children. The same game can be played in all the groups at the same time. Taking turns encourages children to watch and appreciate other children. Each group can also be encouraged to try variations, thus making room for creativity.

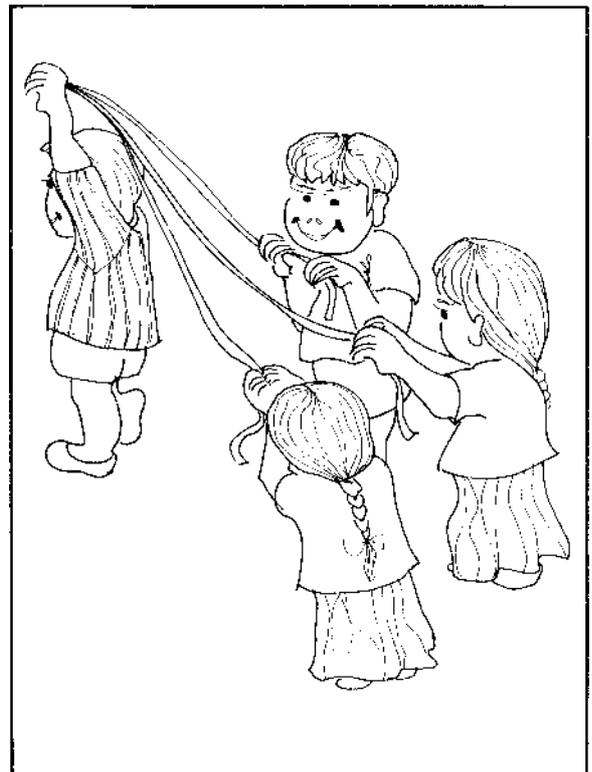
If crepe paper is used, children should be shown how to hold it carefully—not pulling it, but holding it firmly and gently. This encourages discipline and concentration.

**1. Introducing the game:** Ask a child to hold one end and another child to hold the other end of the ribbon loosely stretched, not pulled, or else it will tear.

The second strip is to be held in the same way by 2 other children with the ribbons intersecting. In this manner, 4 strips can be held by 8 children. A positional rhyme—'Up-down-middle, in-out, round-and-round'—may be sung with corresponding movements. Do the same with 8 strips, in which case the total number of children involved will be 16. It is possible to have enough ribbons so that all the children get to participate in the activity.

**2. Other activities:** Let the children sit down, place the ribbon strips on the floor, and sit back. Observe the shapes created by the ribbons and ask how many things can be seen in the formations—e.g., cycle spokes, the wheel of a cart, etc.

**3. Finger games:** Positional rhymes can be created. Use two fingers to move between the colour strips laid on the floor; forward—backward; this way—that way; inside—outside; and so on.



**4. Movement games:** Make the children walk on the outer circle of the strips, step over each strip without touching them, stand with feet on either side of each strip, and try walking sideways.

**5. Temple chariot game:** Hold one end of all the strips together. The other end of each of the strips is held by the children. You walk ahead and the children follow you. The movement is like that of a temple chariot, a common sight in the village. The rest of the children may also follow and they may go round the streets in a procession, one following the other, encouraging community activity.

**7. Forming a room in the intersected position (8 children with 4 ribbons):** The ribbons are held high in the 'Up' position and the gap between two children each holding one end of the same ribbon, is indicated as the 'Door'. Other children can come into the 'Room' and go out of the 'Room' through the 'Door'.

**8. Merry-go-round:** The ribbons are held in the 'Up' position as in the earlier activities, forming a radial pattern. All the children move in unison to the verbal rhythm of round and round on the left; round and round on the right', etc. The ribbons will appear to move with the children and create the effect of a merry-go-round.

**9. Umbrella:** Stand at the centre where all the ribbons intersect in the 'Up' position, while the children hold the ends of the ribbons at a lower level. This is an Umbrella. Children move to the rhyme of:

*Umbrella closes inward*

*And opens wide, outward*

*Open the umbrella—Out, Out, Out*

*Close the umbrella—In, In, In.*

Encourage all the children to participate.

**10. Ribbon in the wind:** Go outdoors, preferably on a windy day, and hold a ribbon at one end while the other end is free to fly. Encourages the children to do the same with shorter ribbons; give each child one ribbon. Ask the children to describe the ribbons' movements.

**11. Ribbon dance:** Each child holds one end of a ribbon and the children sing together the positional rhyme 'Up, up, up, to the sky', 'Down, down, to the ground', 'Round, round, over my head', etc. Encourage the children to make different patterns with the ribbon by moving it in different ways. This activity is ideal when done to a tune. Putting the ribbon away is part of the activity. While each ribbon is being wound or folded, ask questions about the change in the size of the ribbon.



### Value

- (i) Children gain varied experiences in coordinating words with movements.
- (ii) They learn to concentrate in order to coordinate within the group.
- (iii) They are encouraged to be creative in their movements. The children are introduced to basic mathematical forms as used in many of the radial games.
- (iv) A sense of cooperation is developed among all in the group.

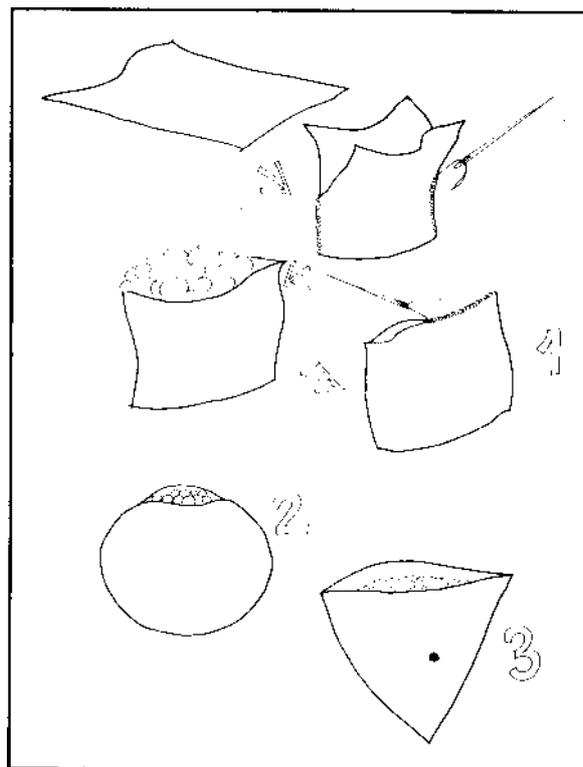
## SHAPE TOSS TOYS

### Materials Required

Cloth- Three 5" x 10" pieces in the three primary colours, red, blue, yellow Sand, seeds, cotton or any other material suitable but safe and non-poisonous, for filling shape bags.

### Method of Preparation

Fold each piece of coloured cloth once to make a 5" x 5" piece. In the middle of one such folded piece of cloth cut out a square. Cut out a circle with the second piece of cloth, and a triangle with the third piece. Make each shape well within the 5" x 5" area. Stitch the sides of the three shapes leaving one side open and turn inside out. Each of them now looks like a bag. Fill each bag with different materials, e.g., sand in the square bag, seeds in the round one, and cotton in the triangular bag. Stitch closely so that the filling does not trickle or fall out. There are now three *shapes* in three *colours* of three different *weights*.



### Use and Activity

**1. Touch, see and pass game:** Seat the children in a large circle. To make the circle, a knee-to-knee activity game may be played. The children sit on the floor and each one's knee touches another's knee till all the children have automatically formed a perfect circle. Take one shape toss toy at a time. To start with, have each child examine the shape toy and pass it on to the next. Each child says 'Touch, see and pass'. The activity is continued till all the children have handled that particular shape. The other two toss bags are passed around similarly.

In the next game, all three shape toys can be passed on at regular intervals in the manner in which rounds are sung. The first toy is passed, and, after a gap of 10 children, the second toy is passed, and then after another gap the third. In this activity the circulation of the toy is faster, and the waiting for a toy shorter.

Another way of playing this game is to keep the toy on the shoulder for a second before passing it on. Like this, many variations may be tried out. You could ask the children to give verbal descriptions of what each of them does with the shape. While doing so children also learn to recognise the different parts of the body.

**2. Nutrition games:** Children sit in a circle, and are asked what vegetables, fruits, things they like. Select about 5 familiar items from these. Draw each one of them on the floor in the centre. Give each child a chance to toss a shape toy on to any one item he/she likes. Ask the children to describe where the shape toy fell (far, or near, or on the item). The use of prepositions is encouraged in this activity, e.g., *on* the car, *near* the apple, *far* away from the mango, and so on. Objects may also be used as targets, instead of just pictures of objects.

**3. Riddle games on nutrition:** Place pictures of fruits, vegetables and other foods that help body growth on the floor. Ask the children to toss the shape toy on the right object, based on your instructions. For example: What helps bones become strong? What helps eyes become bright? And so on. If the shape toy falls in the right place, praise the child. If it falls elsewhere, ask the child what that item does for the body. Do not say it is wrong. Children will soon learn about all the items. Numbers may also be introduced in this way.

**4. Sequence games with shape toys:** Seat the children in a circle to introduce them to the road-making game. The road is to be made from one end to another within the circle. Point out the direction of the road with your finger.

Distribute the shape toys to any three children to begin with, letting the other children know that they will also get their turn in order. Let the first child place his/her shape at the beginning of the 'road'. The second child places her shape toy in front of the first child's toy, and the third child's shape toy goes in front of that of the second child. Then, ask the next three children to continue moving the toys in this manner 1,2,3 ... 1,2,3. In this activity every child is involved in making the shapes move forward. Gradually encourage each child to describe what is happening; e.g., the blue square is in front of the red circle, the yellow triangle is now in front of the blue square, and so on. Variations of the road-making activity can include making a curved path or a zigzag path. If necessary draw the shape on the floor with a piece of chalk.

5. *Where is the shape toy?:* Hold the 3 shape toys out on your palm, one on top of the other. Ask the children where a particular shape toy is: Is it on top, in the middle, or at the bottom? Alternate the questions, asking where each shape is while changing the positions, by holding the shapes between the two hands, for example. Such activities help the children name colours, shapes and positions, and describe the activities as they take place. Be sure you are standing in a place where all the children can see your hands.

8. *Weight game:* Which is heavier? Make the children place one shape toy on either palm, and ask which weighs more. Then they can throw each shape toy and see which one has been thrown the farthest.

9. *Memory game:* Ask the child to close his/her eyes and feel the shape. Ask him/her to say what shape it is, and then what colour. Or you could cover the 3 shape toys with paper or cloth. Let the child feel under the cloth and say what shape it is.

#### Value

- (i) Children gain experience in recognising shapes by sight and touch, becoming aware of variations in weight.
- (ii) Enhances vocabulary and encourages socialisation and inter-personal relationships. (iii) Children learn to coordinate movements of the eyes with that of the hands.

### SERIATION DOLLS & MATTRESSES

#### Materials Required

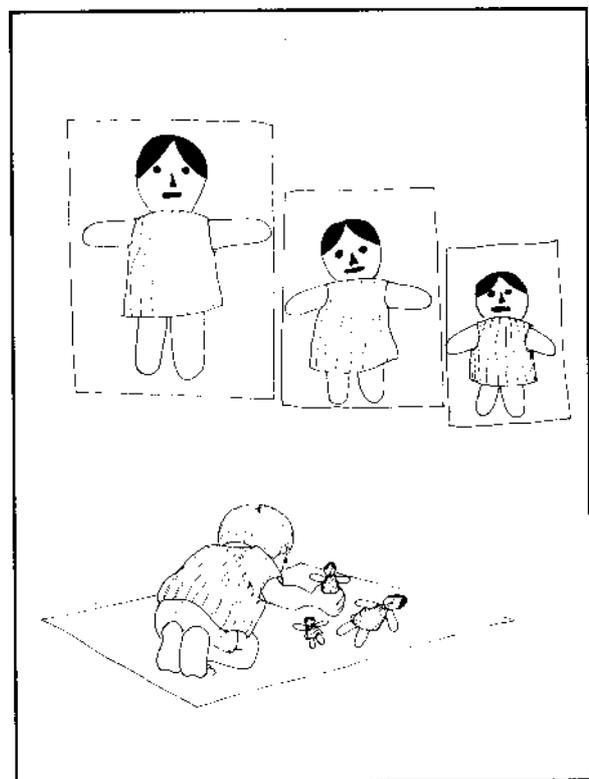
*Kara* cloth—half a metre Cotton for stuffing Jute cloth mattresses Cloth for dresses

#### Method of Preparation

Cut the *kora* material using templates for three dolls, each one smaller than the other. Stitch the edges, leaving space for stuffing. Stuff with cotton and stitch up the edges. Draw faces and make simple dresses for the dolls. The mattresses for the dolls should be made in accordance with the size of the dolls. They could be embroidered with coloured wool. Suggested sizes of the dolls: 16", 12" and 8" in height, subject to variation, depending on the availability of cloth.

#### Activity & Use

The seriation dolls may be given to the children to play on their own, taking turns at sharing within the group. Encourage role-play in caring for the baby dolls—dressing them, bathing them, feeding them, etc.,



1. *Naming the dolls:* The dolls can be named according to size. The dolls being unisex, their names can be changed to denote boy or girl. Family play and conversations pertaining to family life situations may be initiated.

2. *Recognising sizes:* Activities can be created to help the child recognise size differences in the dolls. The child can see which mattress belongs to which doll, how many dolls can lie or sit on each mattress, can the big one lie on the smallest mattress, or can it be made to sit down, how many can sit on the largest one, and so on. Questions like these encourage problem solving and independent thinking.

3. *Group activities:* Make the children sit in a circle and pass the dolls to each other as in the *touch, see* and *pass* activities.

4. *Lullaby play:* As the children touch, see and pass the dolls, introduce the lullaby song, of '*Jo Jo Bala*'.

- In the first round the action is that of cradling the doll in the arms across the waist.
- In the second round the action of cradling is holding out the doll in front with both arms.
- In the third round let the doll rest on the child's chest so that it can be stroked.

All these activities go in coordination with the lullaby song with sequential changes in action. The dolls should be stored within reach of the children so that they may play with them or fondle them when they wish to.

### Value

- (i) The activity enhances concept of self, sense of belonging and emotional security.
- (ii) It also strengthens inter-personal and relationships.
- (iii) Children are introduced to concepts of one-to-one correspondence, seriation (small to big) and recognition of 'bigger than' and 'smaller than'. These concepts can be learned through individual play as well as during cooperative play.
- (iv) Several mathematical concepts of number, ordinal position, big and small, etc., can be incorporated into the seriation doll play.

## WOOLPLAY

### Materials Required

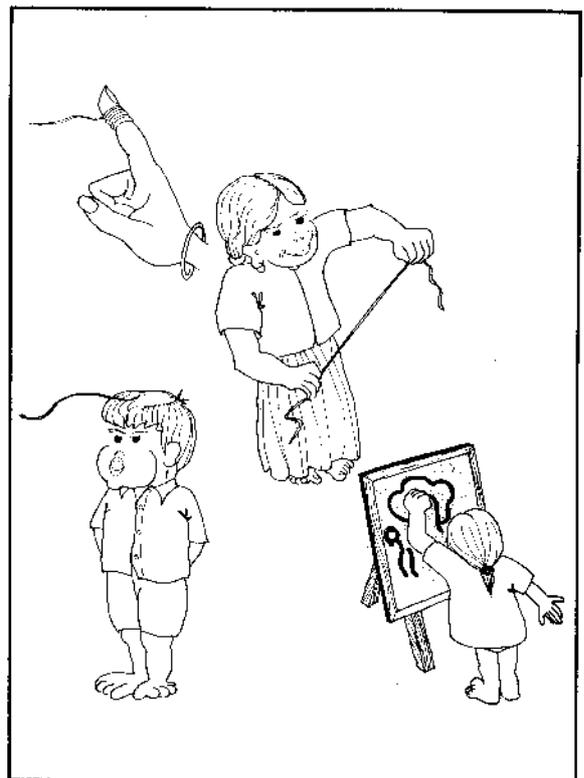
Wool in a variety of colours—10" to 12" long (at least 40 lengths per Anganwadi / Balwadi is suggested so that each child can be provided with enough wool)

### Use & Activity

Wool play is basically aimed at the individual child, for him/her to create, manipulate and react independently. Activities can include free play with wool and play in circle formation. Provide each child with wool of a different colour so that the children can see the colour differences all around.

1. *Jumping game:* Holding one end of the wool with one hand between the forefinger and thumb, pull the other end forcefully downward with the other hand. Then let go. See what happens. The wool jumps'. Do it again. Encourage the children to do this and to say what happens as they create different movements with the wool.

2. *Blowing game:* Blow the wool horizontally/vertically and let go of it as you blow. What happens? Where has the wool gone? Which one is yours? Which one is his and hers? Such questions encourage many variations.



Let the wool hang from the hair in front. Blow and see what happens. It does not fall down. Why? In this game the children focus on the wool with both eyes from a close range. This is an interesting exercise in eye coordination and blowing.

**3. Wool winding over finger:** Wind wool over each finger and sing: Up and down, up and down. Then it's over. Unwind down and up. It's full again.

**4. Making designs on the floor:** Using both hands encourage the children to make various shapes with the wool on the floor, and then letters, numbers and geometrical forms.

**5. Creating wool designs on a jute mat:** Throw the wool on a jute mat. It does not fall off. Shape it into a design as it hangs on the mat.

**6. Put away:** Let each child collect wool of a particular colour from the other children. Group the strips according to colour. Count the number of groups. As many children as possible should be given opportunities to help collect and count the wool.

*Note:* There are innumerable creative ways of playing and learning with just a string of wool.

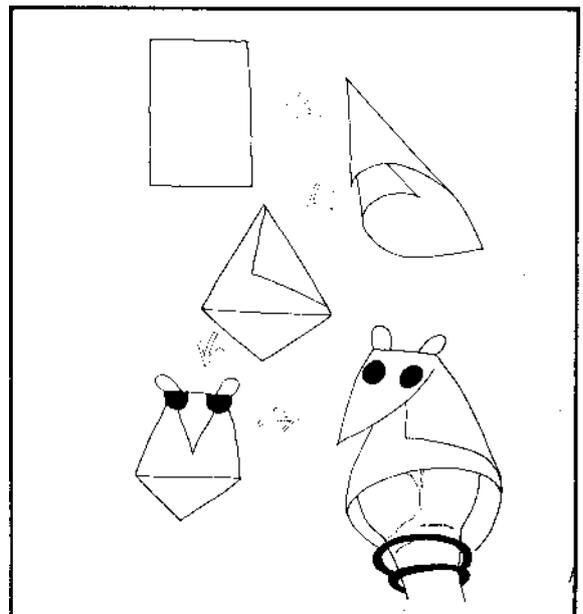
### Value

- (i) Finger skills are developed.
- (ii) Helps in creativity, eye-hand coordination, use of language, social play.
- (iii) It is a way to prepare children for writing. The holding and controlling of the wool between fingers is similar to holding a pencil.
- (iv) The experience teaches the basics of scientific experiment. What happens when? Do it again. Did the same things happen?
- (v) 'Putting away' procedures instils a sense of responsibility and inner discipline in the children. They are encouraged to conserve, preserve and use again another day.

## PUPPETS

Puppets may be effectively used for communication and social interaction. Children, whether forthcoming by nature or shy, find them a very positive medium with which to express their feelings. Puppet play can be of great value in preschool education, for it has a variety of uses: it encourages the use of the imagination, facilitates language development and social interaction by including music and movement, teaches manipulation and develops spontaneity through free play.

The puppets in this kit are basically meant for preschool children. They are small, easy to handle, and simple to make. After some time the children will be able to make their own puppets. All the puppets listed here may also be used for puppet shows involving children performing for other children, children performing for parents, or teachers performing for children.



## **CONE PUPPET**

### Materials Required

White paper or newspaper—half a sheet

Coloured paper—small bits

Gum

### Method of Preparation

Make a cone out of a rectangular sheet of paper and paste up the narrow end with gum. Press the sides and fold 2.5" from the apex (the pasted, narrow end) to form the beak or mouth of the cone puppet. Fix coloured pieces above the folded portion and fix eyes on the front of the folded portion. The size of the cone puppet may be big or small depending on the availability of materials.

### Use & Activity

Put your hand inside the cone and move the beak up, down, sideways, or round and round to resemble the movement of lips when talking.

1. *Chee chee birdie*: Let all the children have one cone puppet each. Let them hold the puppet in their forearms and move it with their hands to the words of the 'chee chee birdie' song.

*Birdie Birdie flying high*

*Birdie Birdie flying down*

*And round and round*

*Birdie Birdie eating fruits*

*Birdie Birdie eating worms*

*Birdie Birdie drinking water*

*Flying flying here and there.*

2. Cone puppets may also be used for question-answer activities, story-telling, singing and rhymes.

### Value

- (i) Gives experience in coordinating movements, developing language, and role playing of different characters.
- (ii) Creates social awareness in children.
- (iii) Can be used for creating awareness of issues of social significance, such as preservation of environment and hygiene, and for cultural shows.

## STRING PUPPET

### Materials Required

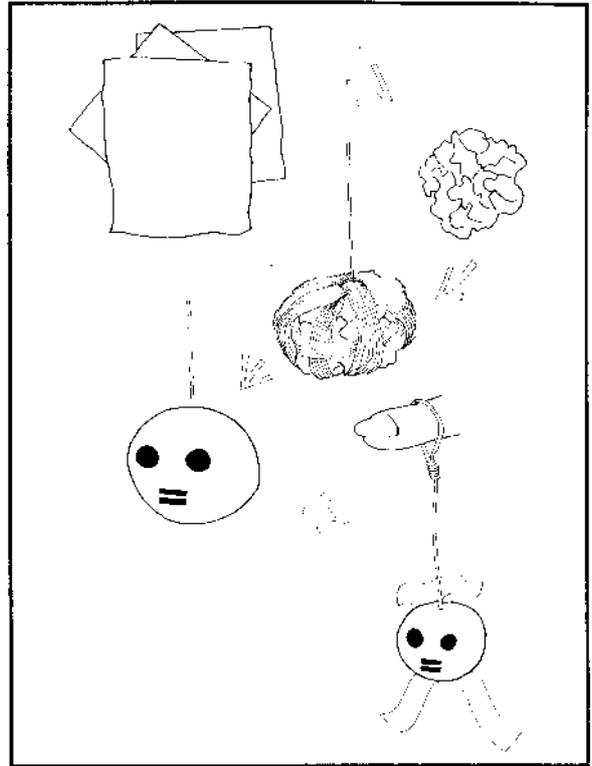
- Newspaper—half a sheet
- Coloured paper
- String or twine—about 22" in length

### Method of Preparation

Make a ball with a quarter sheet of newspaper and tie it with thin thread so that it is firm and round. Fasten one end of the 22"-long twine over the ball with a knot, and at the other end make a loop 2" wide. See that the loop is neat and does not come loose or change size. Decorate the ball with coloured paper in any way you wish. It is possible to provide each child with a ball as the materials are easy to get from waste. The puppet may be manipulated by slipping a finger into the looped end of the twine, so that the ball hangs down.

### Use & Activities

Manipulating the puppet is very easy and comes naturally to children because it moves with even a little jerk. Make the children sing and move to the rhyme about the string puppet; it is full of adverbs on movement.



*String puppet doll, you dance and walk,  
Crawl and jump, roll and swing.  
Forward and backward, up and down,  
Dancing all the way, and never standing still.  
Let's go to the temple, go round the temple,  
Say our prayers bending down,  
Take the prasadam with both hands.*

The children are to move the string puppet within the circle formation. Let them move to a musical tune played on an instrument or even to the beat of a drum. The movements are best left to the children's own imagination.

Show the children by demonstration how to love and take care of the puppets, put them away after play, etc.

### Value

- The activity provides experiences of movement to rhythm as it can be used very effectively with music.
- When coordinated with meaningful language it helps build vocabulary.
- The activity encourages cooperative play.
- It helps dull and shy children get over their inhibitions and at the same time helps active children channelise their energies.

## CARD PUPPET

### Materials Required

Cardboard—5" x 6" (one piece for the face)

Stick—12" x 1/2" x 1/2" (one length) Coloured paper (for the dress, eyes, lips, etc.)

### Method of Preparation

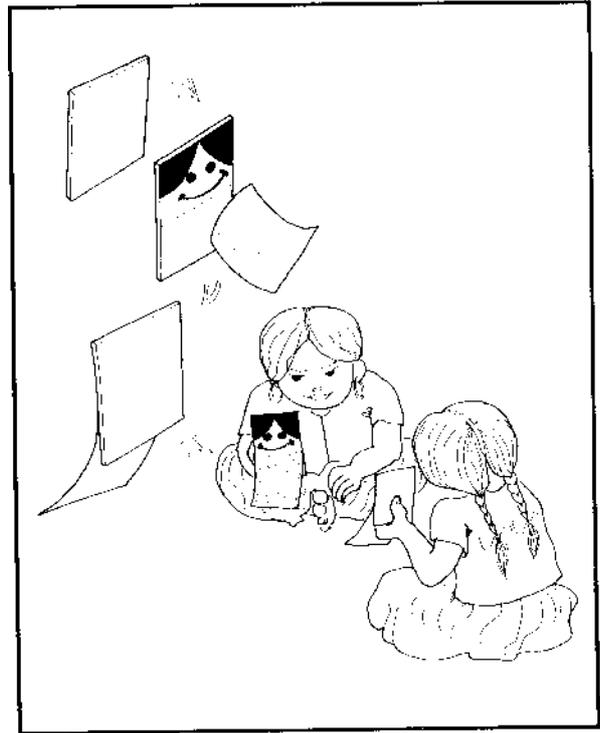
To make the face of the puppet take the cardboard piece and paste eyes and lips on the top part of it. Paste the coloured paper on the lower part of the cardboard, slightly below the lips. This will be the dress of the puppet. Hold the puppet from below with the flap of the dress covering the hand.

### Use & Activity

The card puppet is easy for the child to use. The child will be able to see the front and back of the puppet by moving the hand. Hand and wrist movements are involved in moving the puppet forward and backward, up and down. Card puppets are most appropriate for developing conversations, telling stories, and recitation. Encourage each child to handle the puppet while sitting in a circle. The child can talk, sing to the puppet—e.g., say ‘good morning’ and pass it on to the next child. For a puppet show, let two children hold a sheet or shawl across to serve as screen. The children with the puppets go behind the screen and manipulate their puppets to the singing of rhymes. You can also participate in the puppet play by asking questions and encouraging responses.

### Value

- (i) The activity provides opportunities for socialisation.
- (ii) Children learn the use of language as a means of conversation, for story-telling and fantasy play.
- (iii) It teaches eye, hand, and language coordination.



## POCKET PUPPET

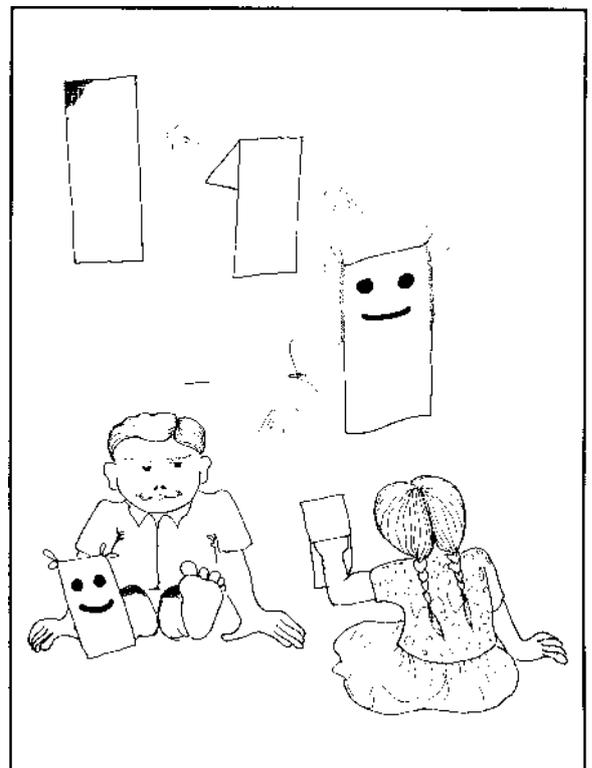
### Materials Required

Coloured cloth for one pocket puppet 5" x 10" (It would be desirable to have more than one puppet if possible).

Waste bits of cloth or paper in black and red for eyes and lips.

### Method of Preparation

Fold down 2" of the 10" strip of cloth. Stitch the 2" portion on the sides. There will be a pocket with a long flap on one side. The side with the long flap is the front and the side with the short one is the back. Paste eyes and lips in black or a contrast colour on the side with the long flap. For a girl puppet a bow may be fixed on the top corner of the puppet.



## Use & Activity

Insert your hand from the back to fit into the pocket. To manipulate the puppet, move the fingers inside. Move the hand sideways and towards the front and back while talking and singing to/with the puppet. The pocket puppet can also be used on the foot. The face of the puppet could be on the sole of the foot or on the front of the foot. It is best if each child can have his/her own pocket puppet; it is very easy to make and manipulate. Pocket puppets may be used for positional rhymes: up, down, middle and round, and with rhymes such as 'Sing with me Puppet', 'Talk with me Puppet' and 'Play with me'. Such conversational rhymes help children play different roles at the same time and to act independently. All the rhymes used with the other puppets can be used with pocket puppets as well.

## Value

- (i) The activity encourages the use of language for specific conversation.
- (ii) It helps in strengthening finger, hand and forearm movement and foot-leg coordination.
- (iii) It provides opportunities for socialisation.

**Note:** All the different puppets may be used together in a group. You could prepare a large number of puppets, if materials are available, so that many children can be involved at one time. Children should be encouraged to manipulate, play and relate to all the different kinds of puppets. If there are not enough puppets for all the children, the children can be divided into groups so that each group takes turns to play with the puppet. The need to put the puppets away after play should be stressed. This encourages the children to care for their playthings. They should use them carefully and put them away after use. At no time should the puppets be flung around or thrown about.

## DOCTOR'S KIT

Consists of (a) Stethoscope (b) Thermometer (c) Badge and (d) a Bag to keep all these items in.

### STETHOSCOPE

#### Materials Required

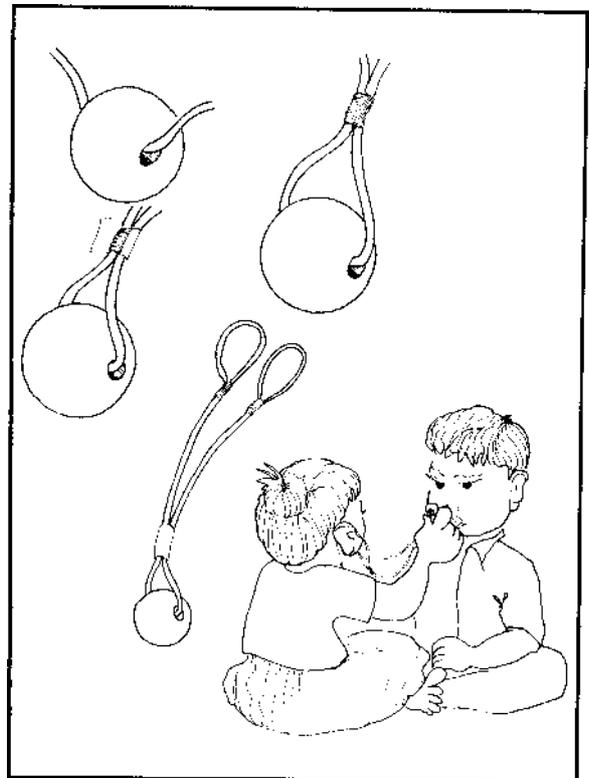
- Rope or thick cord—1 metre
- One bead
- Piece of cloth—1/2" long
- Sewing thread—1/2" long

#### Method of Preparation

Thread the bead on to the cord. Move the bead to the centre so that the cord length is equal on both sides. Bring the two ends together over the bead and wind with sewing thread tightly so that it does not fall out. Smear gum on the piece of cloth and roll over the threaded area. Smoothen the edges. This enables one to hold the bead while 'examining' the 'patient.' For the ear loops, loop the two ends of the cord large enough to fit over the ear. Strengthen the ends of the loop with thread and gum. The ear loops will keep the stethoscope from falling off.

## Use & Activity

Fix the loops over the ear, hold the bead to examine the patient, ask the patient to breathe deeply, go over the chest and back. Allow children to play with the stethoscope freely. This will also reduce fear of the doctor. This is useful for role-play activity.



## THERMOMETER

### Materials Required

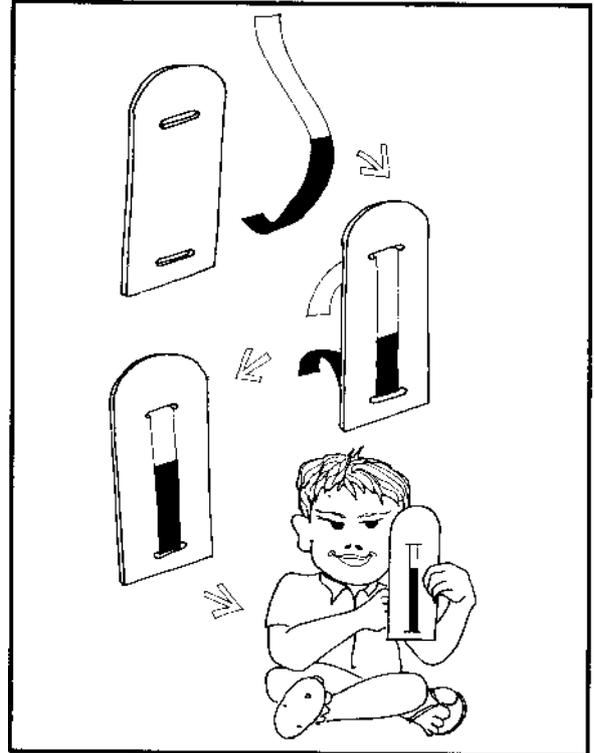
Cardboard piece—2" x 6"

Satin ribbon in red and white—0.75" thick and 5.5" long

Gum

### Method of Preparation

Take the cardboard piece and make two slits on it, half an inch away from the top and bottom ends. The gap between the two slits should be approximately 5". Join one end of the red and one end of the white ribbon with gum and thread the other ends through the slits and join in the same way on the other side. Now the red-white strip can be moved up and down easily. The red part indicates a rise in temperature and the white, normal temperature. While manipulating the ribbon, draw attention to the increase or decrease of red on the card. When it is three-fourths red there is a rise in temperature and when less than three-fourths is red, the temperature is normal or low. To indicate the top and bottom of the thermometer, curve the corners on the top. Let the red ribbon be below the white.



### Use & Activity

Let the children get to know what the red and white on the card indicate. Children may be initiated to respond to red as fever and white as no fever. Soon they will understand what the increase and decrease in the red/white mean. The main thing is to manipulate it gently, so that the ribbons do not come apart. The thermometer may be used under the arm also. By allowing children to play with it, their fear of the doctor will be reduced. You can talk to them about body care, healthy food, how to avoid colds, what to do when one gets fever, etc.

## BADGE

### Materials Required

A round piece of cardboard—2" in diameter

2 strips of red paper or cloth

White paper

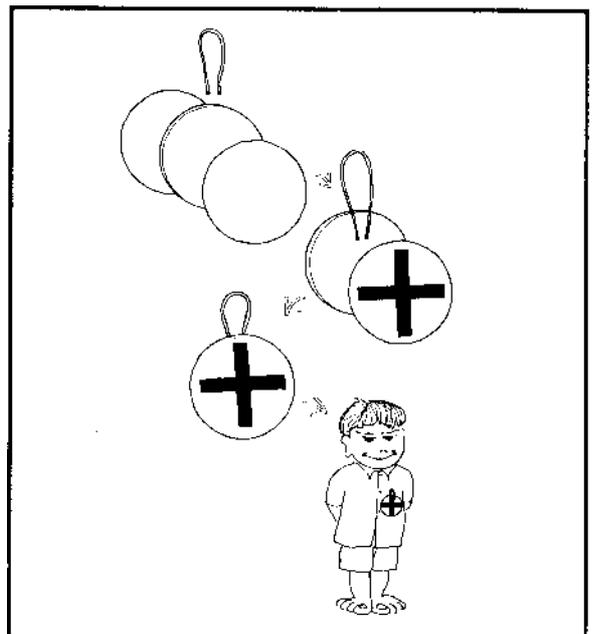
Gum

### Method of Preparation

Paste the white paper on the round cardboard disc. Over that paste one red strip vertically and a second red strip horizontally to make a 'plus' sign. On the top end of the red strip punch a hole and fix a pin. The badge is ready to be worn by the child who wishes to play doctor.

### Use & Activity

Introduce the badge as the doctor's badge and let children wear it like they wear the name card. Talk about the doctor as a friend who helps us when we are ill. Draw attention to the red cross sign seen at a doctor's clinic, chemist's, on the ambulance, etc.



## BAG

### Materials Required

A large piece of cloth—5" x 8"

2 strips of red cloth—2" x 1" each, or felt paper—1" x 1/2". (If more cloth is available, the bag may be of a bigger size with a longer handle.)

### Method of Preparation

Stitch the bag out of the 5" x 8" cloth, each side measuring 2.5" x 8". At the opening fix 2 handles made out of the 2" x 1" strips and stitch or paste on the red cross on one side of the bag, on the outside.

### Use & Activity

Place all the items in the doctor's kit—stethoscope, thermometer and badge in the bag. The kit can be used for encouraging health awareness in children, for daily health check-ups, for encouraging body hygiene. Children can play the role of doctor to see if everyone has washed his/her eyes, nose, ears, etc. Allow the children to play freely with all the items, first, to get familiar

with them, and second, to accept the doctor as a friend. In the Anganwadi centres many children fear the doctor because she gives injections. The doctor's kit can be used effectively to reduce this anxiety/fear.

### Value

- (i) The children are able to recognise a symbol and interpret it.
- (ii) The activities encourage role-playing,
- (iii) They also enhance concept of self and language skills.

## MANIPULATIVE BOARD

### Materials Required

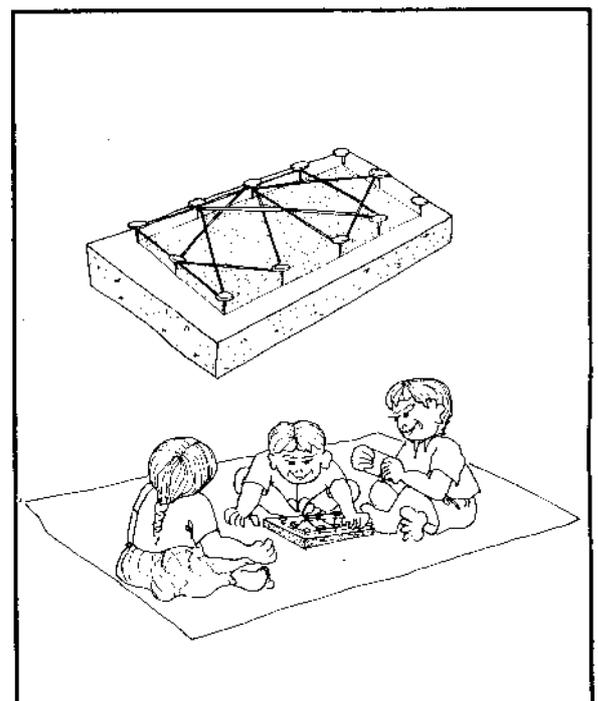
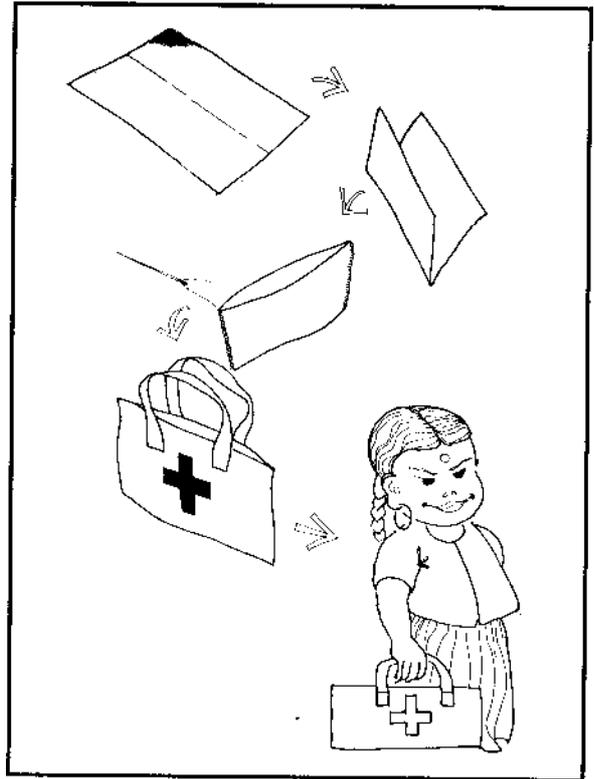
Piece of wood—3" x 5", half an inch thick (type and size may vary according to availability) 10 small nails 6 to 8 rubber bands

### Methods of Preparation

On the outer edge of the wooden board mark 10 positions all around, equidistant to each other. Hammer in the 10 nails on the marked positions. See that the nails do not come off or go through the board. Also ensure that it is raised.

### Use & Activity

The manipulative board is to be used with rubber bands. Even though there are only 6 to 8 rubber bands and only one board, it is possible for all the children to have a turn by involving 6 to 8 children at a time, followed by another 6 to 8 and so on. It would be appropriate to use this board in a small circle. However the materials could be introduced in the large circle.



Distribute the rubber bands, one to each child; let each child fix his/her rubber band on a nail and stretch it over another nail and see how it looks. The next child puts his/her rubber band on a third nail and stretches it over a fourth. The activity is thus a process of seeing different forms emerge by fixing/placing and pulling the rubber band. Draw attention to the shape/form each child has created, and ask him/her how it appears, what are the shapes that can be seen, and so on. The second group of children could then remove the rubber bands and make their own designs.

It would be desirable to have at least 4 to 5 such manipulative boards so that less time is spent on waiting for turns. The manipulative board should be made available whenever a child wishes to play with it.

### Value

- (i) The activity provides motor experiences coordinating the muscles of the fingers and eyes.
- (ii) It encourages imaginative play.
- (iii) The children learn to describe shapes and forms.
- (iv) It allows for creativity.
- (v) It helps in the development of concepts of shape, size and area.

## COLOUR BOARD

### Materials Required

3 pieces of thick white card—each 2" x 6"

3 pieces of red, blue and yellow paper each 2" x 6"

### Method of Preparation

Take the 3 coloured pieces of paper and fold each of them at the 2" mark along its 6" length. Thus each piece of paper will be divided into two sections, one a square 2" x 2" and the other a rectangle 2" x 4". Cut along the folds. Now you will have 3 small square pieces of paper and 3 bigger rectangular pieces of paper from the original large pieces of coloured paper. Take the white cards and fix one rectangular (large) coloured piece on each card, leaving blank square pieces on each card. Note: no colour combinations should be repeated, i.e., it should be something like red blue, blue yellow, etc.

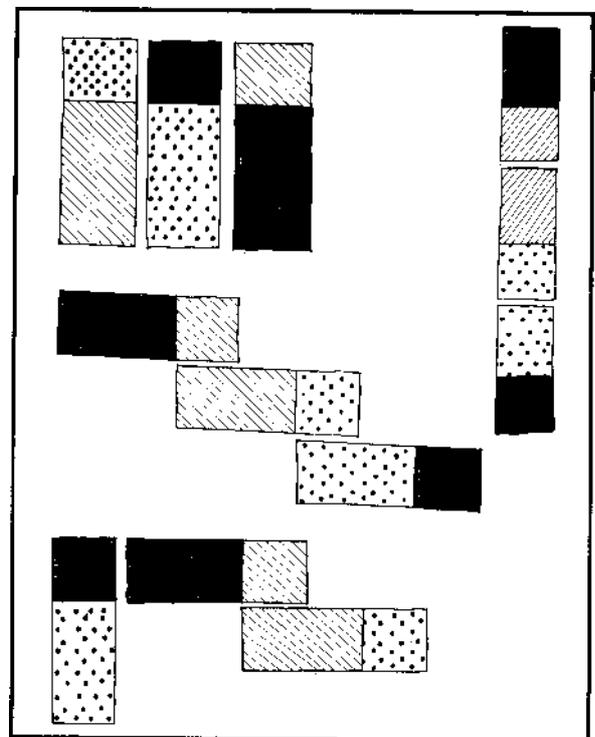
### Use & Activity

Make the children aware of the colours on each card. Let them name the colours and the sizes, describe the sizes, describe the shape and colour, and count the number of colours and shapes.

1. *Passing game:* Let each child look at and name the colours, then pass it on to the next child, and then the next in a circle. The next round would be to describe both the size and the colour, e.g., small red square, big yellow rectangle, and so on.

2. *Matching game:* Lay the cards out one after another so that the colours at each end match.

3. *Multisided game:* This involves asking the child to match colours from different sides. A colour board song may be sung while placing the cards.



Colour board, colour board

Red, blue and yellow

Match the small

Match the big

Match the same colour

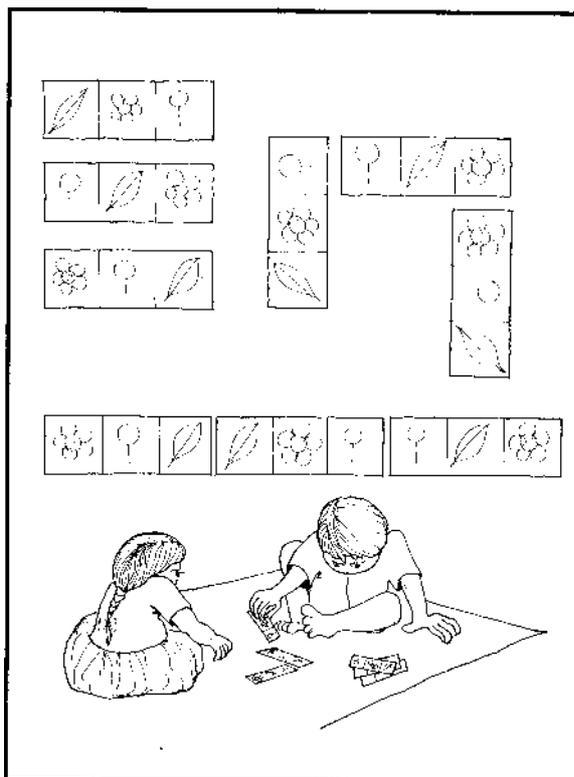
Forward, backward in a line

This way, that way and any way.

Learning the rhyme while playing helps children remember the rules of the game.

### Value

- (i) Visual perception and discrimination of size, shape and colour is encouraged.
- (ii) There is enhanced use of language to describe the actions.
- (iii) The activities can be in the form of simple problem-solving lessons appropriate for individuals and social play.
- (iv) The activities reinforce learning of the primary colours verbally and visually.
- (iv) Mathematical concepts of position, size, and possibilities of endless combinations are also incorporated into the game.



## SCIENCE TOYS

### COLOUR FILTERS

#### Materials Required

Thick paper—3 pieces, each 4" x 8". Transparent coloured paper—red, blue, yellow—each 4" square.

Gum.

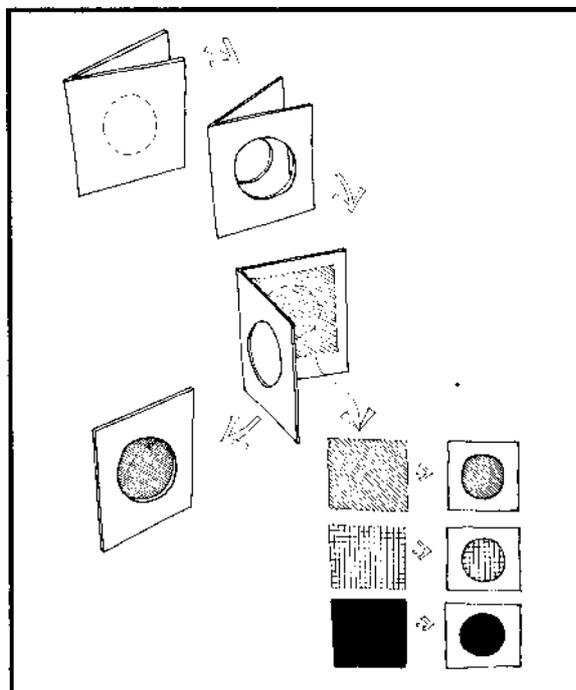
#### Method of Preparation

Fold each of the 4" x 8" pieces of paper down the middle. Cut a hole 3" in diameter in the centre (preserve the discs, 2 pieces from each sheet). Insert the 4" square coloured paper between the folds and paste firmly. Ensure there are no gaps and that the coloured paper fills the cut-out. When you look through the hole, objects take on the colour of the filter.

#### Use & Activity

1. *Identifying colours:* Let each child look through the different colour filters and so name the colours.

2. Introduce the concept of mixing two colours and getting a third colour. Let's mix and see and name the colour:



Red and blue give purple.

Blue and yellow give green.

Yellow and red give orange.

Red, blue and yellow together give brown.

Ask the children: What colour is this? Which colour filter is the same? Point to objects and ask the children to name the colour and let one of them pick up colour filter(s) to match.

3. *Singing*: Sing the song of the primary colours in the group. Allow the children to do these activities every day using these materials.

Use the filters in sunlight outdoors. The colour filters can also be hung near the window as mobiles in the Anganwadi. The children should be told to use and store these filters carefully.

- **Value**

(i) The activity provides practical experience in recognising primary colours, and emergence of secondary colours while mixing colours.

(ii) It encourages experimentation and seeking results.

(iii) It helps eye-hand and thinking coordination,

(iv) It encourages the use of expressive language.

### MERGING TOY

- **Materials Required**

6 cardboard circular cut-outs—each 3" in diameter  
Sticks—each 8"

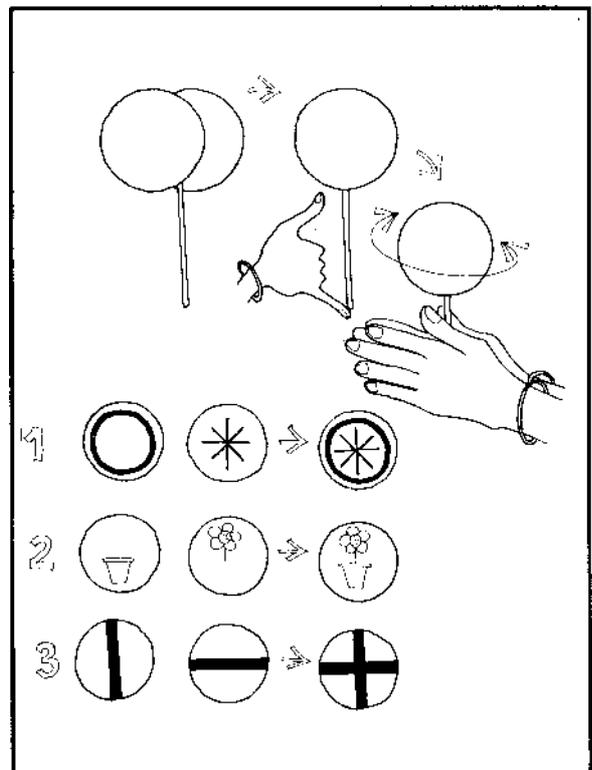
Gum

- **Method of Preparation**

Paste two circles together with the 8" stick positioned in the middle. Be sure one end of the stick is fixed flush with the top of the circle. The other end is the handle. Draw a different picture on each surface of the flat disc. The pictures may be different, but related to each other, e.g., one side can have the picture of a flower on the top part of the circle and on the other side there can be a picture of a pot on the lower part of the circle. When the handle is twirled the flower and pot will seem to merge and appear as one picture—a flower in a pot. The second merging toy may have a rim on one side and spokes on the other. When merged it will appear as a wheel. The third could have a vertical red line in the middle on one side and a horizontal line in the middle on the other side. When merged it would appear as a red cross.

- **Use & Activity**

1. Give each child a chance to twirl the merging toy before passing it on to the next child. Draw attention to the different pictures on both sides. Give each toy a label such as 'flower pot', 'wheel', 'doctor badge' and so on so that the children can ask for the toy by name.



2. Sing this song while playing with the toy:

Whir, whir, whirling toy  
Two separate pictures  
Whirling together, makes one picture  
Whirling whirling very fast  
Whirling whirling very slow  
Whirling up and whirling down  
Whirling whirling round and round

- **Value**

- (i) The activity helps in developing eye-hand coordination.
- (ii) It provides experiences in visual/perceptive skill and manipulative skill, (iii) It encourages independent play.
- (iv) It encourages the development of thinking skills, language and experimenting.
- (v) Children learn the concept of movement (fast-slow).

### **SPIRAL BEAD**

- **Materials required**

Wire—14" long

Big bead

Empty thread spool

- **Method of Preparation**

Take the wire and make a loop at one end. Thread the bead on to the wire from the open end and then make a loop at this end also. Make sure that the sharp points of the wire on both loops are pressed firmly down and does not prick the user's finger. Wind the looped beaded wire over the spool to shape the wire into a spiral.

- **Use & Activity**

Remove the wire carefully from the spool and stretch it by gently pulling it lengthwise, creating an elongated spiral. Hold up the spiral—the bead rolls down. Hold it up by the other end—the bead rolls down. Give the spiral bead to each child in the circle to play with, as in the passing game. Sing this song as the activity continues:

Spiral bead, spiral bead

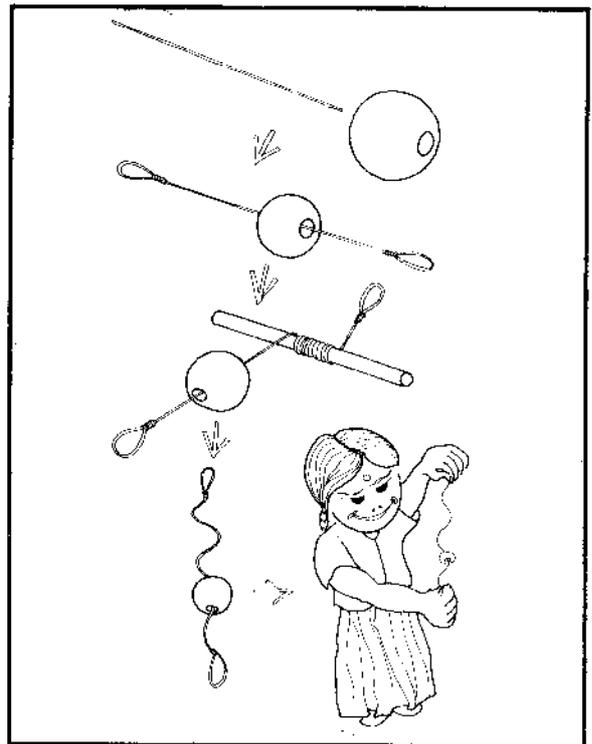
Rolling, rolling down

When I hold the spiral up

The bead comes rolling down

When I don't hold the spiral up

The bead stays right down.



Ask the children questions such as: What happens when the hand goes up? Why does the bead come down? Why doesn't the bead go up? How can you make the bead move? Give children time to play with and try out the toy many times. If it is possible, make several more spiral beads so that more children can use it at the same time. Even the smallest child can play with this toy. Straighten the spiral and let the children see how the bead moves, fast or slow. Bend the wire, see what happens.

Why doesn't the bead go beyond the bend? When putting away the toy after play, straighten the wire and roll it over the spool. In this way the toy is kept in good shape for endless fun.

- **Value**

- (i) The activity encourages eye-hand coordination,
- (ii) It provides scope for experimentation and manipulation,
- (iii) It encourages simple problem solving.
- (iv) It provides language experience and experience related to the scientific concepts of movement and gravity.

## SIGNAL BOARD

- **Materials Required**

3 cardboard pieces—5" x 6"

Black paint or paper

Coloured paper (red and green)—4" x 4"

Black Paint or Paper

- **Method of Preparation**

On one piece of cardboard, paste green paper on one side, leaving the other side blank. Do the same with the second piece, this time pasting red paper on one side, leaving the other side blank. On the third piece, paint or paste an arrow sign in black placed horizontally across the width of the cardboard.

- **Use and Activity**

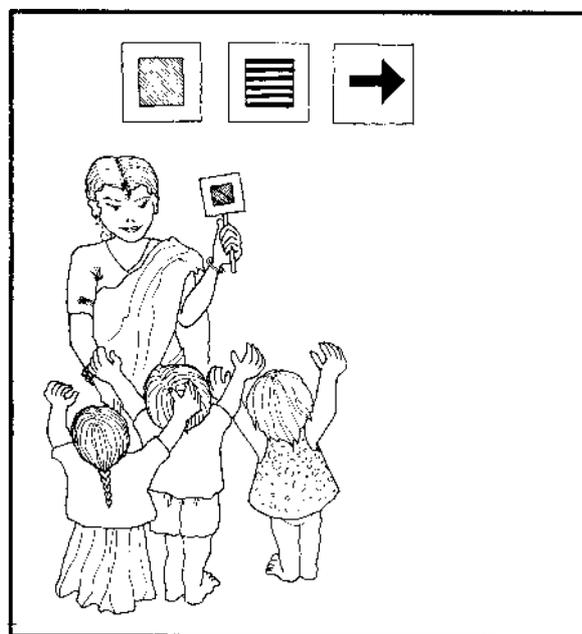
Let the children learn to recognise the colours as red and green.

1. *Stop and go game*: When the red board is shown it is Stop and when green is shown it is Go. Let the children clap when green is shown and stop when red is shown.

2. *Bus game*: Children make the sound of the bus when the green signal is shown and stop when the red signal is shown.

3. *Music game*: You could give a simple tune which the children hum or sing when using the green signal board. They continue the music and stop only when red is shown. Introduce the idea of loud singing when the signal board is held high and soft singing when the board is held down. Gradually shift from low to high, and then sing low, low, low and low, followed by high, low, high and low, and so on. Children soon learn to recognise not only the 'Go' signal but also the position of the signal indicating loud and soft. This encourages alertness and readiness to read the symbol on the board. Use the red board in the two positions (high and low) and see how they react.

4. *Direction game with the arrow board*: Children first need to understand the direction of the pointer, so let them point their finger as on the pointer board.



5. *Road games*: Preferably in the outdoors, let children sit in a large circle so that the area in the centre is large enough for road game activities. Make a path on the ground. Let any three children choose to hold the three signal boards—red for stop, green for go, and the pointer to direct. Discuss with them what happens on the road. Why do buses stop? How does one know which way to go? Thus the three children may be introduced as guides on the road, while the other children ‘travel’ on the road and follow directions. Let the children take turns holding the signal board. This gives them confidence and a sense of responsibility.

- **Value**

- (i) These activities helps children become aware of civic responsibility.
- (ii) They help children learn to concentrate while coordinating seeing, hearing and doing.
- (iii) They encourage social participation and communication,
- (v) They enhance environmental awareness.

## MUSIC KIT

It is not necessary to have a harmonium or piano to play tunes and rhythms for children’s songs and dances. What is needed is some instrument with which melody and rhythm patterns can be created that are simple, easy and enjoyable for both the adult and the child.

### **METALAPHONE** (*Melody Instrument*)

- **Materials Required**

3 aluminium rods—1 /2" diameter and

13", 12", 10" long respectively

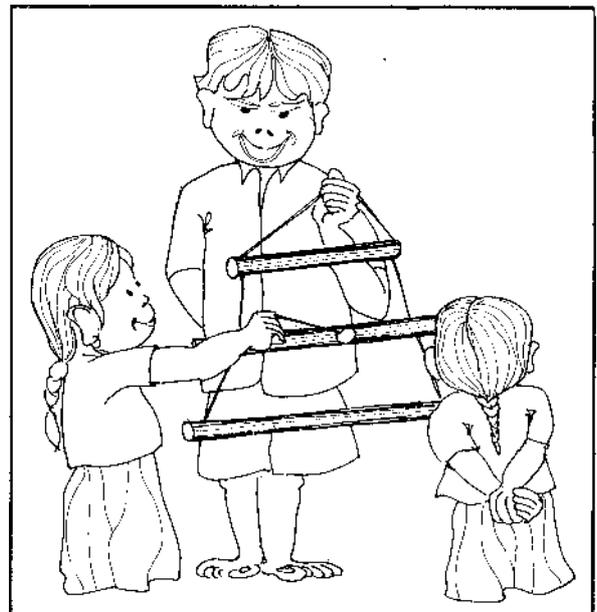
Cord or string—1 metre

Bead

Stick—6" long

- **Method of Preparation**

Pierce holes, 2" in diameter at each end of the three tubes. This can be done by using a sharp nail and hammer. This should be done carefully so that the tube is not flattened. That would change the sound. Pass the cord through the holes at one end of each tube. It is best to put the tubes in order of size with the longest tube at the bottom then the middle-sized tube, and then



the smallest. Make a knot in the cord between each tube to keep the tubes in place. After threading the three tubes on one end bring the cord over to the other side and thread back through the tubes. For making the striker fix the wooden bead on the stick using *fevicol* before inserting the stick on to the bead. *Note*: Instead of aluminium, any other metal or even bamboo can be used. Try to get three different notes by striking the 3 different lengths separately as individual instruments hung with a string loop for each.

- **Use and Activity**

The three tubes of the metalaphone produce three notes, the longest tube giving the lowest note, the middle one the middle note and the shortest the highest note.

1. The metalaphone may be strung up as one unit as suggested and played with the striker by one person to accompany songs and rhymes. Several tunes can be made with the 1,2,3 notes, viz. 1,1,3, 1,2,3, 1,3,1, 2,1,3, and so on. Each set of three notes may be repeated to make a melody, and children can be asked clap to the rhythm.

2. Each child can be given a chance to play the notes and pass it on to others. This would encourage appreciation and the ability to listen quietly.

3. String the three tubes separately. Give one each to three children. Each child can strike alternatively and listen to the melody they produce on the metalaphone. They can be encouraged to play a melody or pattern which can be continued for a short time while others listen or sing along with it.

- **Value**

- (i) The activity enhances memory skills,
- (ii) It helps build the ability to follow simple instructions,
- (iii) It encourages children to compose tunes.

*Note:* Sing as you talk, making your voice go up and down, soft and loud, and with expression, making what you say sound musical, children often talk musically.

## **DRUM**

- **Materials Required**

Small mud pot or coconut shell Paper, Gum

- **Method of Preparation**

Cut the paper in a round shape 2" wider than the rim of the mud pot or coconut shell. Smear one side of the paper with gum and let it dry. Once again smear paste along 1.5 to 2" of the rim. Place the gummed portion over the mouth of the pot and fold the overhanging wet gummed portion over the sides of the pot. Neatly smoothen out the creases and tighten the top over the mouth. Use only after it is completely dry.

- **Use & Activity**

The drum is a rhythm instrument. Use the fingers to beat the prepared top of the drum. Let the children try drumming with each finger and listen to the difference in sound. Wooden blocks, empty coconut shells, a pair of sticks 9" each, are also suggested as materials for percussion. Use the drum along with the metalaphone. Let children form groups to play with these simple musical instruments and get first-hand experience of what makes music.

- **Value**

- (i) Listening abilities and auditory discrimination are enhanced.
- (ii) The activity introduces children to musical language. The child gets an opportunity to experiment with imitating different sounds and matching notes,
- (iii) Social interaction and participation by all is encouraged,
- (iv) Concentration and recall abilities are enhanced.

*Note:* You may use any easily available instrument besides those mentioned here.

## **4. COPPC and the Thematic Approach**

The Thematic Approach, *if merged* with the COPPC Approach, presents the possibility of an extremely useful and enjoyable preschool programme. While the 'Theme', is essentially an approach to a well-planned preschool programme, COPPC provides a wide range of materials and skills that can be used in the Thematic Approach. The *merging* or *integration* of the two approaches could provide children with learning experiences that meet their developmental needs.

In the previous chapters significant aspects of organizing activities and preparing play materials have been discussed with emphasis on the Cognitive Approach—that is, stimulating the child to *act, react, think* and *create*. The *next step* would be to guide the child to explore further, to seek newer and wider horizons in the learning process. From simple, known and immediately relevant facts the child is guided to facts and information beyond his/her environment. This is achieved by planning, preparing and conducting activities on specific themes which appeal to the growing interest and curiosity of the child. Thus, the next step entails movement from general playing and learning to specific playing and learning around topical themes. The Thematic activities could be worked out for a period of one week to begin with, and then extended to monthly and yearly activities.

## **What is the Thematic Approach?**

Different themes related to the immediate environment of the child are selected—e.g., trees, animals, birds, flowers, insects, rivers, etc. Various activities are developed around the themes and used at the centre. Normally each theme is used for a week. During that week children are involved in various activities related to that particular theme. All basic concepts like size, shape, colour, number, time, space, position, etc., can be brought out using the theme. The child thus not only acquires important information related to the theme, but is also able to form concepts in relation to the self and the environment.

## **Why is the Thematic Approach necessary?**

From the teachers' point of view, the Thematic Approach helps in giving a direction to the planning of activities. She is able to plan specifically around a theme rather than organize activities in an ad hoc manner.

From the child's point of view, the Thematic Approach provides planned opportunities for joyful and meaningful learning, and prepares him/her for entering primary school.

## **How is the Theme to be handled?**

The Thematic Approach requires a *methodology* and *media* that are child-oriented. Themes selected should be from the child's immediate surroundings, and at the comprehension level of 3 to 6-year-old children. While developing activities related to a theme the child should not be over-burdened with too much information. The focus should be on helping the child *learn* rather than *teaching* him/her.

The COPPC methodology of experience, doing, understanding, communication, review and recall may be effectively used to plan and link the thematic activities from day to day. Non-formal media such as free conversation, music, rhymes, stories, puppetry, arts, crafts, dance, etc., may be used to highlight the significant aspects of each theme, keeping *play* as the primary medium.

## **Where and When?**

These are questions related to the requirements of space and time and other facilities. The emphasis should be on utilizing situations and facilities as they exist in preschool centres, as discussed in earlier chapters detailing the COPPC Approach. Planned, regular outings or excursions would be of benefit in making the learning experience even more relevant to the children.

## **What?**

This relates to the interest of the children in their environment, which would vary from one preschool centre to another. The following list of possible themes might serve as a useful guide.

### *List of Possible Themes*

1. Trees
2. Vegetables
3. Wild Animals
4. Birds
5. Domestic Animals
6. A Bazar/Market
7. Places of Worship
8. Divali
9. Rain
10. River
11. Water

12. Transport
13. Post Office/Postman
14. Health Centre/Doctor
15. School
16. Home
17. Family
18. Insects
19. Farming
20. Seasons
21. National Leaders
22. National Days
23. School
24. Personal Hygiene
25. Vegetable Garden
26. DurgaPuja
27. Ganesh Puja
28. Christmas
29. Muharram
30. Communication
31. Cloth/Dresses
32. Sun
33. Moon
34. Flowers
35. Fruits
36. Fish and Water Life
37. Trades—Blacksmith, Cobbler, Mason, Carpenter
38. Sand/Earth
39. Vehicles
40. Sea
41. Teacher
42. Forest
43. Railway
44. Our Country
45. Human Body
46. Our State
47. Our Village/Town
48. National Flag

- 49. Radio/TV
- 50. Newspaper

*Note:* Four themes could be taken up each month

### **For Whom?**

The imperative answer to this question is—*for the child*, taking into account his/ her social background and level of readiness to relate to Theme-oriented activities. The most important requirement of the Thematic Approach is *effective planning* by the teacher to ensure that children are not pressurized to merely learn facts. The emphasis is not so much on the learning of facts as on learning from experience. This would lead to greater awareness in the child.

An integrated strategy incorporating the Thematic Approach and the Cognitive Approach would be most effective in meeting the developmental needs of children. In what follows such a strategy is detailed to serve as a guideline for teachers of preschool children.

### **A Sample Plan for a Thematic Schedule**

The *topic Animals* is chosen as an example as it is both familiar to and of interest to preschool children. Animals are a natural part of their environment, be it rural or urban. There is also a natural curiosity about animals, which grows with widened awareness and experience. The common conceptual features of most animals are their size, shape, the sounds they make, the way they move, the food they eat, and how different they are from each other and from the child. In other words, children have the ability to perceive similarities and differences in objects, persons, and other beings that are around them. Such perceptions form the basis for concept development in the early years. Concept formation is enhanced by the use of language and practical experience. It is in this that the Thematic Schedule, if well planned, could facilitate greatly.

### **Planning**

The planning of the Thematic Schedule requires to take the following into account.

### *Goals*

The week's programme should enable children:

- To gain specific information on animals that are known and familiar to them, as well as lead to knowledge about animals that are not so familiar, thereby exciting curiosity for later learning.
- To identify, define, differentiate and use language with reference to the theme.
- To think independently, create and become more self-confident.
- To prepare themselves for Primary School.

### *Resources required by the teacher*

- Information about animals.
- Stories, songs, rhymes related to the theme.
- Puppets, games and ideas for creative incorporation of varied aspects of the theme.

### **Materials and Media**

Specific playing/learning materials may be prepared by the teacher for use by the children. The teacher could be assisted by children in the preparation of these materials. COPPC Kit materials may also be used in creative ways to help in the learning process.

*Examples of use of COPPC Kit* (Think of how to use other items too)

*Rope:* In the form of drama or music—animals in the forest going forward, backward, crawling, creeping, etc.

*Paper play:* Mask play—'identify me'; sounds of animals.

*Puppet play:* May be used in conversation to communicate information about the different animals in relation to self. Stories may be developed through the puppets.

*Card games:* Colour board, tromino, etc. may be used to reinforce concepts of colour, shape, size, etc.

*Shape toys:* May be used in road games, riddle games, etc.

*Doctor's Kit:* What happens when an animal is sick—references to food, sleep, etc. can be built in.

The media used by the teacher in the Thematic Schedule should emphasize, once again, *the play* aspect of learning. Apart from activities with the COPPC Kit materials, free conversation, stories, songs, and outings such as a walk in the neighbourhood would be beneficial in adding to learning through direct observation and experience. Children should be encouraged to see, hear, touch, and to recall their experiences after a visit. Organize visits to meet people who care for animals—a farmer, or a veterinarian, for example.

*Note:* Let children handle all the materials individually as well as in a group.

### **Method**

The method should be the same as in the COPPC Approach—allow children freedom and independence to explore, ask questions, make choices, play with varied materials; provide opportunities for children to gain awareness beyond familiar, known things; encourage children to act, react and think; provide time every day to every child to act and react at his/her own pace. Encourage the children to talk; ask questions and seek answers. However, let them learn naturally, without pressures to give answers to questions. Let them *do* and *communicate* their understanding of what they have done through language, gestures or movements. Evaluate their understanding in regular review and recall sessions from time to time in a day and in a final review at the end of the week. There must be planned and smooth progression of the theme linking the day-to-day aspects of the theme to the activities.

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation helps the teacher to plan her schedules better. Pointers as to how to conduct evaluation are given at the end of Chapter 2. This may be classified as follows:

- Evaluation of the programme and materials, and their relevance to and effect on children.
- Self-evaluation of teacher/planner.

### **How to make the Theme grow over a week**

Some hints:

- Use the wall spaces to highlight the activities, e.g., pictures, charts, mobiles of animals, etc.
- Add an item each day related to the topic: e.g., picture of bull among other animals, some more animals added to the group, a bullock cart, picture of donkey with washer man's clothes, etc.
- Add lines each day to songs/rhymes that are sung—involve children in this.
- Arrange for visits **to see** animals—cat/kitten, lamb, cows in a cowshed, etc.
- Use children's responses to develop the theme further even if it does not conform to your original plan.
- Encourage children to bring information, materials, etc. related to the theme.
- Put up the art and crafts of the children on display.
- Keep the centre open to the community on the last day or the week. Organize community singing, puppet show, drama and free conversation on the theme covered over the week. This could also be a review session. Make this a regular feature.

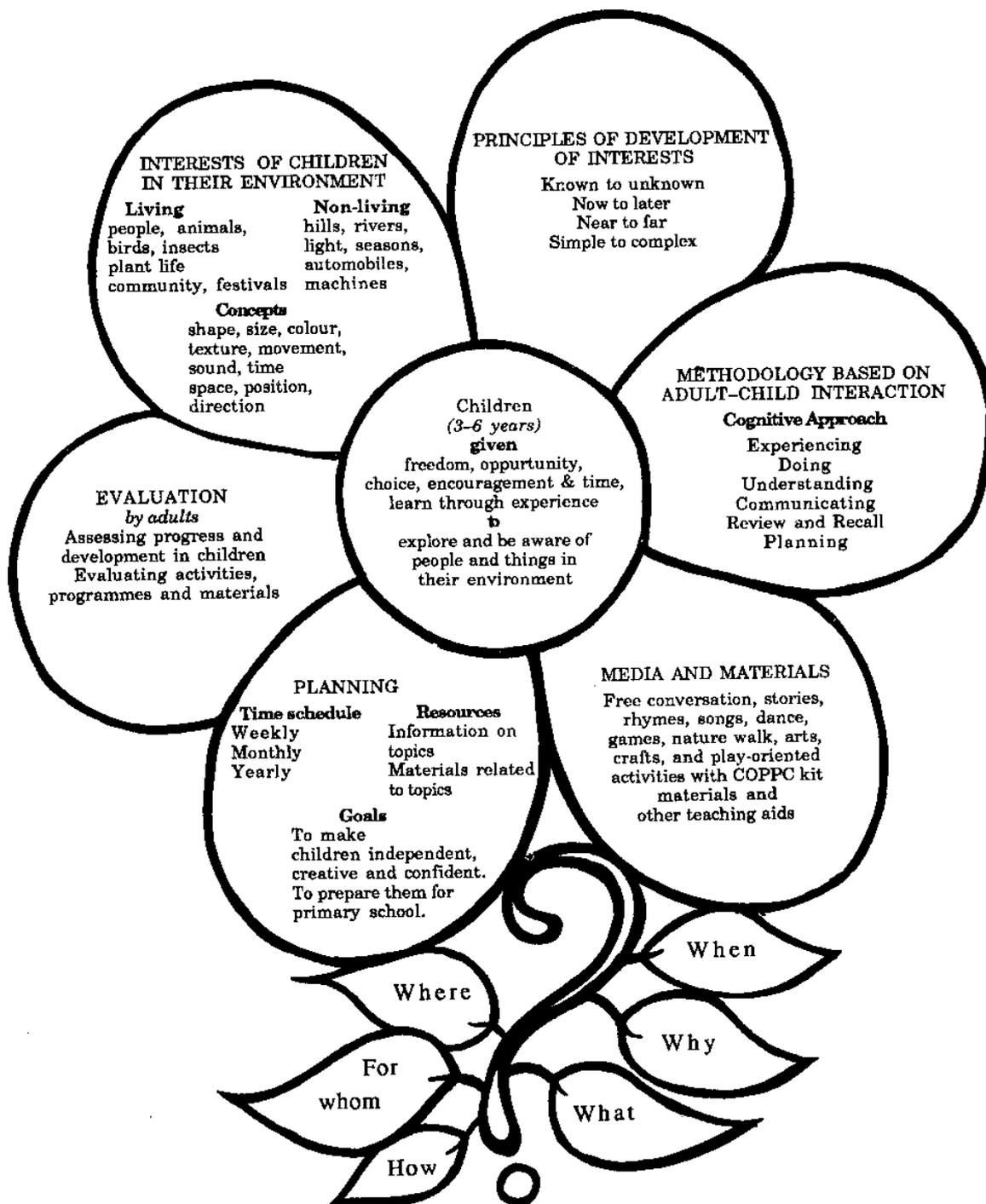
The weekly theme of Animals could develop into specific themes on specific animals and get into the monthly programme.

A year's plan could be worked out on interrelated topics with the children's interests in mind—based on seasons, festivals and other local features.

## Advantages of the Thematic Approach

1. It gives the teacher a sense of direction and provides her with enough scope to plan and prepare. She is able to initiate activities in a sustained manner, and becomes creative in her approach and methodology.
2. It helps in giving a minimum basic knowledge on selected themes, while at the same time helping concept formation. It also provides opportunities for fixing priorities according to the needs of the children.
3. It provides scope for a variety of creative activities and an adaptable frame of work.
4. It promotes a sense of healthy competition among the teachers at various preschool centres. It motivates them to think of new ways of discussing various bits of information.
5. There is scope for systematic monitoring and evaluation of the programme.
6. It caters to the developmental needs of the child and prepares him/her for Primary School.

## LET THE CHILD BLOOM



## 5. COPPC and the Infant Stimulation Programme

The downward extension of COPPC for children under 3 years of age was found necessary when it was observed that a large number of them regularly visit the Anganwadi centres for their daily supplementary nutrition. These children do nothing but wait passively at the centres and are not involved in any activity whatsoever. It is a recognised fact that the perceptions of the child related to the senses are most ready for stimulation at infancy. Hence COPPC has been extended to include children of this age group, through simple activities that can be easily adapted by the mother or the child care worker.

### General Activities

Activities to stimulate infants should basically relate to their ability to *see*, *hear* and *touch*. Such activities are of a general nature and maybe practised by anyone anywhere. For instance, the mother who does not have enough time to spend with the infant otherwise due to the pressures of house work can:

- Talk to the baby while feeding him/her at the breast—make soft sounds, talk about what the baby is doing, sing simple rhymes or folk songs; put the baby to sleep with a lullaby or song.
- Stroke the baby gently while feeding him/her;
- Name each part of the body while bathing the infant, as the water is poured; and so on.

The value of these simple activities in helping the development of the perceptual skills of the infant should be communicated to mothers. They should also be told of the value of *of play* in making the infant comfortable, secure and responsive. Some time should be set aside every day for play with the infant through simple and short activities.

### Specific Play Activities with Cognitive Kit materials

Some of the Cognitive Kit materials can be used effectively in the Infant Stimulation Programme by mothers, child care workers and older children. When the infants are at the Anganwadi centres play activities can be organised for them using the Kit materials, away from the main activities of the preschool children.

#### *Song for Infants:*

This little baby is my sister/brother  
This sister/brother is mine  
Come let us play together  
You and I  
I and You  
Play play play  
We shall play

This could be sung and repeated in a rhythmic sequence, with movements like touching, rocking, etc.

#### *Shape Toy Play*

Choosing any one of the 3 coloured shape toys, the 'Give-Take' activity ('Do you wanted toy.. Take take take', 'Give it to me.. Me me me') could be played with infants. Seat the child on the older child/mother's lap if the child needs support, or seat the child in front of the older player if the child can sit firmly.

#### *Throw and Pick up*

Make a silver ball, tie a string round it and hold with the finger (make it like the string puppet in the Cognitive Kit). The silver ball would be attractive and stimulate eye movement in the young child. Remember to keep the length of the string short. Hold the ball at a short distance away from the eyes of the baby and let it move forward and backward. As it moves say 'forward backward, up down, to you and now to me'. After some time hide the object and see if the child looks for it: 'Where has the ball gone?' followed by 'Here, it has back.'

### *Sound Games*

Use a bell or the metalaphone and let the child move as the direction of the sound changes. This would encourage the child to look for the sound.

### *Ball Game*

Make a ball with a piece of cloth 5" x 5" as follows. Cut out a circle of diameter 5", making running stitches on the edge of the circle. Pull the thread half way till the cloth wrinkles and stuff the inside with soft cotton till it forms a round ball. Pull the string till the outer edge is closed up. Stitch up and fix another small round cloth to cover up the stitched areas.

Let the child be encouraged to hold the ball and roll it. In the beginning you may help in getting the ball back. 'Roll the ball', 'Go and get it', 'Hold', 'Throw', are some of the words which can be used. It is most likely the child would take the ball to the mouth. There is no need to prevent this. After use by the child, the ball could be washed and dried in the sun and the ball would retain its shape.

The cotton ball has several uses in play with the infant. It is easy to handle for the child; it encourages the grip and release movement; it encourages throwing and catching; as the ball is light it would not go too far and the child can easily crawl towards it to get it back.

In organising these activities make sure that an activity never becomes a command or threat to the infant. It should be a joyful experience and the infant should be encouraged to respond on his/her own.

END