

# Learning Through Play

## Welcome to Our Place



### Objectives:

- To understand the purpose of Welcome Time.
- To observe the key activities of Welcome Time:
  - greeting
  - welcome song
  - attendance chart
  - choosing a child of the day
  - breathing for relaxation

### What is Welcome Time?

Welcome Time is a teacher-led group activity to start the early childhood education session. Children choose activities on the mat or gathering area while they wait for their friends to come to the programme.

### Why do we have a Welcome Time?

1. Helps children make the transition from home to the ECD programme.
2. Welcome each child and remember the children who are not at the centre today.
3. Provides a regular routine at the start of each session to build a sense of belonging to the group for each child.
4. Helps the child to start the day in a positive way.

### How to implement Welcome Time?

The teacher prepares the mat or gathering area before Welcome Time:

- Open the door to the centre when the learning environment is prepared.
- The teacher greets the children by name.
- Caregivers can help the child put their name card on the attendance chart or the teacher can help them to choose their name cards.
- Children choose a book to read or an activity on the mat with their friends or their caregivers.
- When most of the children have arrived at the programme, the teacher will start Welcome Time.
- Caregivers leave and children pack away the books and toys at the edge of the mat.

### How do we use scaffolding with children?

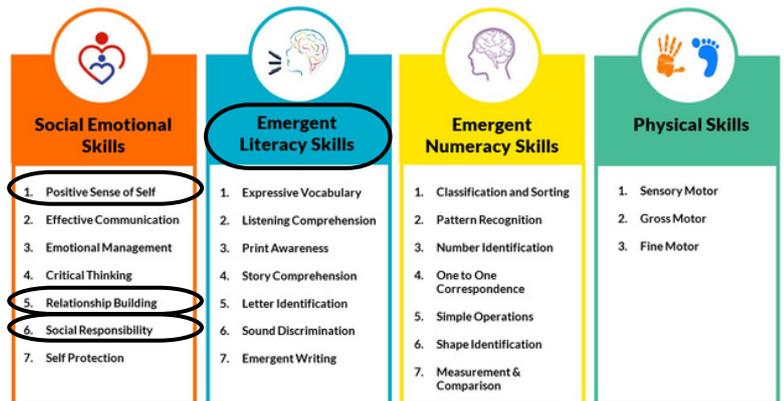
- When most of the children are on sitting on the mat or in the gathering area, sing a welcome song.
- Check the attendance chart.
- Count the children who are here today.
- Talk about the children who are absent from the group today.
- Use a relaxation breathing exercise to calm the children and be ready for learning.
- Some programmes may have a Child of the Day. Teacher or children select the child of the day.
- The Child of the Day may select children to transition to Child-Led play activities.

### Adapting Welcome time for Children with Diverse Needs

1. For group activities it is important to consider how to adapt the group time or mat activities for children who are in wheelchairs. Do you have enough chairs for all the children to sit on chairs at group time so all children are at the same height? The child in a wheelchair can play music or clap if they are not able to physical join in the game.
2. Take time when making the name card for children with diverse needs -help them to draw a picture they are familiar with or the teacher can draw the picture or use a photo for the name card.



### Learning Skills Set



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3. The teacher can make a star, heart or smiley face symbol for the child of the day and they can wear the symbol so all children are able to recognise who will help the teacher during the session.
4. Add actions to the welcome song so children who do not use spoken language can still join in at their level. Build the communication skills of children with limited spoken language.

### Reflection question for teachers about welcome time

- What strategies do you use to welcome children at start the day?
- What other strategies will you use to ensure welcome time activities are inclusive for children with diverse learning needs, those with impairments, from ethnic communities or at a different stage of development?
- What did you learn from the video that you will add to your daily practice to welcome children to the centre and start the day in a positive way?