

The importance of play and how to use games in the classroom

SMALL-MOTOR (FINE-MOTOR) PLAY

Activities such as threading beads, buttons and reels, peg and pegboard games, and playing with puzzles all contribute to developing learners' small-motor skills.

Why small-motor play is important:

This kind of play develops fine-motor skills which are important for drawing and writing. Many daily activities such as buttoning and zipping clothes and tying laces all require fine-motor proficiency.



What you can do to encourage fine-motor play:

Provide daily opportunities for learners to exercise their small-motor skills. Make sure that the literacy learning area is always well stocked with paper (even newspaper will do), as well as with drawing and writing tools. Place puzzles, beads and pegboards in accessible areas of the classroom for learners to use during work time.

GAMES WITH RULES

Young children enjoy playing games with rules. They also enjoy making up their own games and negotiating the rules amongst themselves.

Why rules-based play is important:

These kinds of games teach life skills. They teach children how to differentiate between fair and unfair play, how to participate in a group, how to take turns, and how to work cooperatively and manage conflict.

What you can do to encourage learners to play games with rules:

Begin with simple games that involve two players – for example, Snap. Provide lots of opportunities for non-competitive group games like 'I wrote a letter to my love', 'Ring-a-ring-o'-roses' and 'Broken telephone'. Competitive games like races and catch have their place, but try not to emphasise the aspect of winning (or losing).