

SESAME WORKSHOP

Watch **PLAY** Learn

FACILITATOR GUIDANCE TOOL 2

Facilitating *Watch, Play, Learn* in Humanitarian Settings



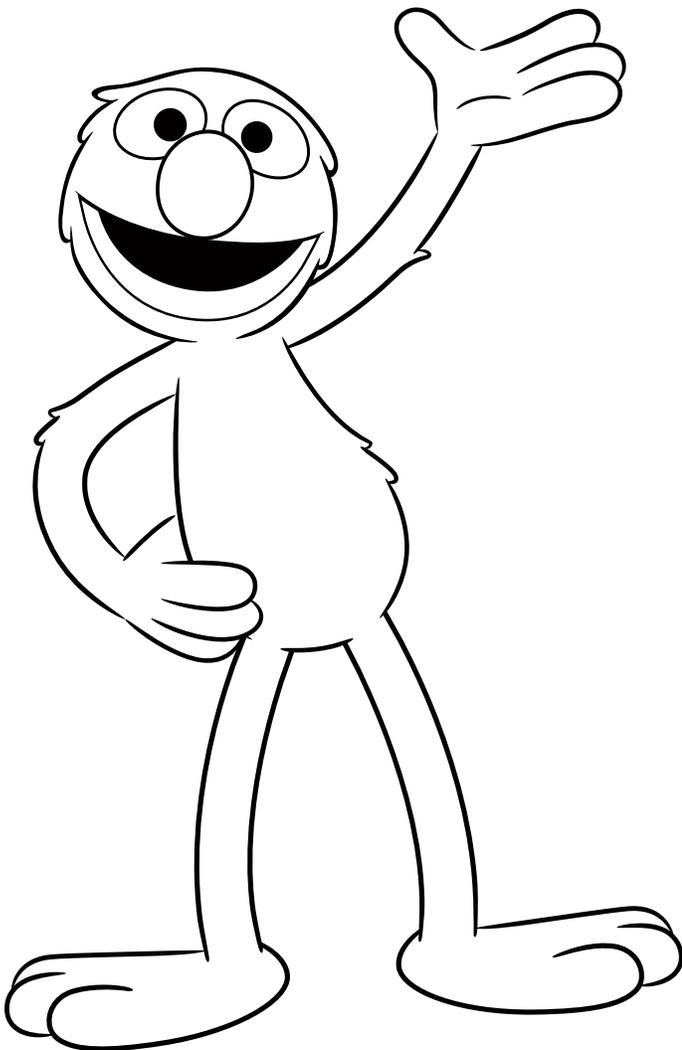
WATCH, PLAY, LEARN TOOLKIT

SECTION 3

Everybody is Important

This section provides guidance on how to create inclusive learning environments for all children.

First you will learn about child protection considerations and how to prioritize the safety and well-being of all children. Then you will learn how to support specific groups of children, such as girls, boys, or children with disabilities.



KEY POINTS

- ▶ As a facilitator, your role includes creating safe and inclusive learning spaces and environments for all children. This requires a focus on child protection, gender equity, and disability inclusion.
- ▶ The scripted session plans are your most important resource and model strong facilitation practice. They can be found in the accompanying session plans.

3.1 Child protection considerations

Safeguarding children from physical or psychological harm is one of the most important roles that you play as a facilitator.

Children who have experienced war, an environmental disaster, and/or forced displacement are often living with or recovering from injury or disability. They may also be experiencing social neglect, physical, sexual, and gender-based violence, or psychosocial distress.²

In some places, children might also experience forms of corporal punishment which are physically, psychologically, and socially harmful. In addition, children in settings affected by conflict, disaster, and/or displacement are more likely to be exposed to child trafficking, child labor, and forced child marriage.

Children with special needs are often the most vulnerable to poor treatment from adults and therefore require a facilitator's special attention.

Girls and boys also face unique risks to their safety. Girls are more likely to face different forms of sexual or psychological violence, while boys may be subject to corporal punishment, or at a higher risk of being recruited into armed groups.

Some of these risks are more common for older children, but it means that young children participating in *Watch, Play, Learn* may also be exposed to these risks through their older siblings or family members.

There may not be enough professionals who can identify children who are suffering from the negative effects of a humanitarian emergency. This means that you, as a facilitator, may be responsible for informing child protection professionals of your concerns for a child's safety.

Because you have multiple children in front of you each day, you may notice behaviors or symptoms of a child's trauma. You may see or hear signs of abuse or risk, for example. In this sense, it is important that you know what to look for and what actions to take in order to protect all children. The following section provides examples of some of the signs to look for.

✓ FACILITATOR CHECKPOINT

Preparing for child protection

Who are the people who focus on child protection in your community? In the spaces below, write their names, roles, and contact information so you know who to communicate any observed risks to.

Name _____

Role _____

Organization _____

Contact details _____

Name _____

Role _____

Organization _____

Contact details _____

Name _____

Role _____

Organization _____

Contact details _____

Name _____

Role _____

Organization _____

Contact details _____

Name _____

Role _____

Organization _____

Contact details _____

Name _____

Role _____

Organization _____

Contact details _____

3.1.1 Signs of trauma or abuse to be aware of

Not all of the behaviors or signs listed below mean that a child is traumatized or the victim of abuse. Many behaviors might be part of a child's development stage. All children have difficult days, meaning a one-off incident of concerning behavior might just be a difficult day for a child.

However, when the behavior happens on repeated occasions, this may be a reason for you, as facilitator, to take action. It is important to use your professional judgment: check any concerns you may have with a child protection professional.

A child protection professional can assess whether your concern is valid. If it is, they can provide the child with the right support.

When facilitating *Watch, Play, Learn*, there are six signs to be aware of and respond to:

1. Emotional distress

Some children might be very anxious. They may be in a state of worry or fear about their current situation or the future. They might show signs of depression, meaning they do not respond with joy, happiness, or enthusiasm when they are shown care, provided with connection, or introduced to new activities.

2. Challenges with social behavior

Some children may react to you or other children with aggression if they feel unsafe. Other children might be withdrawn, meaning they avoid interacting with you or other children. Due to past experiences, they may fear neglect and struggle to trust the care of adults or friendship of peers.

3. Difficulties thinking

Some children may seem confused when they are given simple instructions. They may also have difficulty concentrating and get easily distracted. Some children might be forgetful and repeat information or stories about their lives. A child might also daydream a lot and become agitated without reason. When this happens, they might be coping with traumatic memories. These might occur as flashbacks and disrupt their ability to participate in class.

4. Hyper attention

This means that a child might be extremely aware of or very interested in a specific activity. They may also be extra attached to an adult, wanting to be close to them and regularly seeking their attention. The child may also have a difficult time staying calm when their needs are not being met.

5. Developmental delays

This means that a child is not meeting their developmental milestones (e.g., academic learning, communication, or motor skills). Some children may even start to regress, meaning that things they could once do they no longer can do or they refuse to do. For young children, this might also include behaviors like wetting the bed or thumbsucking.

6. Physical distress

This can include invisible pain such as headaches, stomach aches, or painful limbs that represent the child's trauma. These are called psychosomatic symptoms. Physical distress might also be visible and the result of violence, sexual abuse, or deprivation. A child may have cuts, bruises, or rashes, they may be startled when approached, they might be sensitive to physical touch, or they may appear weak in their movements.

WORKING WITH ADULTS: PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

Children are not the only ones who experience trauma in settings affected by conflict or crises.

Parents, caregivers, and other adults in the community may also face feelings of distress, isolation, and loneliness. They may also experience physical harm or injury due to conflict or disasters.

Facilitators working in parent-facing programs should be aware of this, as you may come across an adult who requires additional protection or safety support.

If this happens, the information that you have included for yourself in Facilitator Check Point in Section 3.3) can be useful for the adults you work with.

If parents and caregivers show signs of distress, refer them to the available services and resources in your community. You should not have to bear the hardships of the community by yourself. Reduce your own burden and use your support network.

✓ FACILITATOR CHECKPOINT

Find the signs

Try to find the following keywords for child protection signs in the puzzle below:

- aggressive
- anxiety
- attached
- distress
- distracted
- delayed
- hyperactive
- pain
- regress

D I S T R A C T E D T D
V A N X I E T Y J D B E
P D I S T R E S S V J L
P A I N Z B J B Q M K A
A G G R E S S I V E Z Y
G V A T T A C H E D X E
H Y P E R A C T I V E D
R X N M R E G R E S S E

3.2 Equity and inclusion in *Watch, Play, Learn*

All children learn in their own way. Like the characters in our videos, children have different dispositions, interests, and abilities that affect their learning process.

This is why lesson planning requires you to think about the specific personalities, behavior, and physical abilities of each child. It is important that you can create conditions where everyone can participate in learning and play.

3.2.1 Gender-responsive facilitation

Social and cultural norms shape how we behave and act. From a very young age, children learn what ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ ways of behaving are. In some cultures, what is considered right or wrong for girls and boys may be different.

For example, you may have heard comments such as ‘boys don’t cry,’ or ‘be a strong boy.’ You may also notice how it is more common for girls to help with household chores or take care of their younger siblings.

This is due to gender norms, which leads to gender inequality. Research shows that gender socialization begins at birth. Children as young as three years old learn gender stereotypes from their peers and adults. By age six, children form their own gender biases.³

As a facilitator, you can be aware of gender biases and stereotypes. You can challenge them by:

- Treating all learners equally
- Ensuring your language does not communicate unequal gender norms to children, and
- Encouraging all children—girls and boys—to value their unique identities, and
- Encouraging all children—girls and boys—to follow their dreams, passions, and interests

The table on the next page highlights key considerations when working with girls, boys, women, and men across *Watch, Play, Learn* programming. It gives you strategies for how you can address unequal gender norms and create more inclusive learning environments.

WORKING WITH ADULTS

The same is true when working with adults. In many cultures, gender norms create unequal power relations between men and women.

Women are expected to take care of the household and childrearing, while men are expected to work and earn an income to support their family. However, children develop and grow best when they have the love and support of all family members. Boys need male role models just as much as girls need female role models.

How gender norms impact all children?

Certain subjects, topics, toys, or books, may be considered more 'appropriate' for girls or boys. For example, girls may be expected to play with dolls or host tea parties. Boys are often encouraged to play sports and explore outdoors. Some people believe girls are better at reading and writing, while boys are better at math and science.



What can you do to help?

Allow all children to choose what they like to play with, what interests them, and what books they want to read. Encourage children to explore new hobbies or interests. Do not respond negatively if a girl or boy chooses something that does not "fit" into traditional gendered expectations.

How gender norms impact women and girls?

Women and girls are often viewed as more 'nurturing' than men and boys. Because of this, they are expected to take on childcare responsibilities or household chores. In the classroom, girls may be asked to clean up more than boys.

Women and girls may be expected to let men and boys speak first. This can make them shy or too embarrassed to participate during a lesson, activity, or other events.



What can you do to help?

Make sure girls and boys share equal responsibilities in the classroom. Ask them to take turns cleaning up. Remind them that we all care for each other and for the media or materials used in the classroom.

Encourage women and girls to speak up. Do not force them to if they do not want to, but remind them that their perspectives are valued.

How gender norms impact men and boys?

Men and boys are often expected to be strong, to not show weakness or emotions. This may result in some adults scolding boys for crying. It can also lead to increased use of corporal punishment against boys.



What can you do to help?

Ensure you use kind, respectful, and gentle language with all children. Remind boys and men that feeling vulnerable is something that all humans experience. Encourage men to participate in their child's education, including by attending parent meetings.

3.2.2 Children with disabilities

Identifying a child with a disability or other special education needs can be a difficult task. As a facilitator, you are not expected to know all the details of how to identify and support a child with special needs. However, in this section we provide some basic guidelines that you can use to make a more inclusive environment for all children, including those who may have special needs, disabilities, or developmental delays.

If possible, you should work with a skilled special education or disability specialist in your context. They can assess if your concern about a child is valid. They can then provide you and the child with further support if it is needed.

First, it is important to remember that children with disabilities are diverse. Disabilities may be physical, sensory, psychosocial, or developmental.⁴ They can also be visible or invisible.



Visible disabilities can be seen or observed.

- They include physical disabilities such as amputations or mobility difficulties caused by paralysis, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, or other health conditions.
- At times, you may also be able to visibly tell if a person has a sensory disability such as blindness or communication and language disorders. But this is not always the case.
- A disability can be more visible if a person has an assistive device or technology to support them. For example, they may use a wheelchair, a walking cane, or a hearing aid. However, most people with disabilities do not have access to assistive devices, which can make it more difficult for them to act independently.



Invisible disabilities cannot be seen or observed.

- These may include people who are blind, deaf, or have other auditory or communication disabilities. It may also include people with brain injuries, cognitive dysfunction, intellectual impairments, learning disabilities (such as dyslexia or dyscalculia), as well as developmental disabilities such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or attention deficit hyper-activity disorder (ADHD).
- In conflict-affected settings, mental health disorders, post-traumatic stress, or delays in social or emotional development are also common invisible disabilities.
- These disabilities, though invisible, may manifest through children's behaviors or mannerisms when socializing and interacting with their peers and teacher.

To best support all children with disabilities, follow guidelines below:

▶ Children with disabilities or special needs should not be separated from other children in learning or play space.

It is better to integrate all children into the group, while at the same time ensuring that all children feel welcomed and have the support they need.

▶ Don't avoid talking about children's differences.

Encourage children to be curious and ask questions. Speak about differences, emphasizing that being different is normal. (See Examples 1 and 2)

▶ Don't use harmful or stigmatizing language to speak about disabilities.

Avoid using words such as "handicapped" or "ill" or referring to taboos such as witchcraft or demonization. Avoid saying what the person cannot do. Instead, use positive language, recognizing how people with disabilities simply do things differently.

▶ Create a learning space without physical or sensory barriers, where every child is able to listen to audio and watch videos.

This may require moving desks and other furniture to make more open space available for children who use mobility aids, such as wheelchairs. It may also require providing special seating arrangements for children with physical or sensory disabilities. (See Example 3)

EXAMPLE 1

Teaching children about visible disabilities

If there is a child with a visible disability, such as an amputation, or a mobility difficulty that requires the use of a wheelchair, say:

"Some people need help to move from one place to another."

Or if a child is using a feeding tube you can say, *"Some people eat through their mouth and others eat through their stomach with help from a tube."*

You can also ask children to think of different tools they use to get from one place to another, or to help them do different tasks. Say, *"See we all need help and support sometimes to do different things."*

Remove risks to physical harm or emotional trauma in your learning and play space.

If you see anything that can be dangerous, such as exposed foundations, cracked walls, exposed wires, hanging roofs, or blind spots that could cause accidents or injuries, inform your program manager. Avoid using loud abrupt sounds, like bells, horns, or bangs, which may create anxiety for children who have experienced war.

All children play differently. Support inclusive play by adapting activities so that all children can participate.

Some students may prefer to play alone, others may enjoy playing with their friends.

Some children may not understand complex instructions or require additional help to play.

You can help by providing simple instructions, fewer steps or rules in a game, or visual cues and aids to explain.

Make sure all students can access any toys or materials that are being used.

One way of doing this is by drawing on their senses. (See Example 4)

Always be prepared to change what you have planned if you see the lesson does not work.

Together with the children, find an activity that will help them learn the subject better.

EXAMPLE 2

Teaching children about invisible disabilities

If there is a child with an invisible disability, such as autism, ADHD, or social and emotional delays that shape their behavior in the classroom, explain: *“We all have different ways of learning and interacting with the world around us. Some of us might find it easier to sit still and focus, while others might need to move around a bit more. That’s okay! It’s what makes us unique!”*

If the child is having difficulties getting along with his or her peers you may also want to say: *“[He/she] just wants to be your friend, but has a different way of communicating that with you. [He/she] does not want to hurt you or annoy you. So, maybe we can try to have more patience and be more understanding with [him/her].”*

Remind children that we all have strengths and weaknesses. Ask them to consider sharing some things that they are good at and other things that they want to get better at.

EXAMPLE 3

Removing environmental barriers for children with disabilities

For children who have trouble hearing or seeing, allow them to sit closer to the projector, speaker, or other technology. Check with your program manager to see if there are any other assistive technologies (such as headphones) that can provide additional support to these children.

Other children may need to use cushions or pillows to help them sit in a comfortable position. It may also mean propping up technological devices and supporting materials if a child does not have the fine motor skills to hold it or use it independently.

EXAMPLE 4

Including learners with disabilities through sensory stimulation

If children have mobility challenges, allow them to play with a toy or object from their seat or wheelchair. If children have sensory disabilities, make sure they are able to use the senses available to them to interact with an object or toy.

When using materials from the natural environment, allow children to feel them or smell them. Use sensory components that the child can enjoy. And if the child is not enjoying it, make sure to stop, to not cause sensory overload or discomfort.⁵



✓ FACILITATOR CHECKPOINT

Removing barriers to inclusion

Inclusion is about removing barriers that exist in the environment, curriculum, or in facilitation strategies, so that all children can play and learn happily.

Each of the scenarios with barriers (#1-6) below have a matching facilitation strategy on the right (A-F). However, in the table below they are not aligned. Use a line to match the scenario on the left (1-6), with its inclusive facilitation strategy on the right (A-F). Work with a colleague or a group to discuss your answers. When you're done, use the answer key below to review and check your understanding with other pairs or groups.

Scenarios with Barriers

- 1 In a child friendly space, the teacher notices that a non-verbal 6-year-old is struggling to communicate what they want during playtime. As a result, the child becomes frustrated and feels lonely.
- 2 After watching a WPL video, the children are asked to demonstrate how fast or slow they can run or walk. A child in a wheelchair tries to participate but cannot move freely between all the tables and chairs.
- 3 In a crowded classroom in a refugee camp, a 4-year-old who has experienced trauma becomes overwhelmed by sensory stimuli and withdraws from social interactions during playtime.
- 4 During a play-based activity, the facilitator uses competitive games. This triggers one of the children who becomes scared, anxious, and starts to cry.
- 5 After watching a WPL video, the facilitator wants to check that the children understood the story. The facilitator asks all children to write down the key message. Several children who do not know how to write, stay quiet in their seat, but do not participate.
- 6 During play time, the boys are given a football, and are encouraged to go outside and run around. The girls are asked to stay inside, and are given plastic food and dress up clothing to play house.

Inclusive Strategy/Solution

- A Ensure there is a quiet space prepared where children can retreat when feeling overwhelmed. If possible, the space should have soft lighting, comfortable seating, and sensory toys or materials to help calm the child down.
- B Provide different options for children to demonstrate their understanding. For example, allow them to draw a picture, act it out, or pair them with a partner who can support them.
- C Rearrange classroom furniture to create more open space. This will help promote equal participation in play-based learning activities.
- D Allow all children to choose what they want to play. Be sure to not impose gendered expectations or gender roles that restrict them or limit their options.
- E Use alternative communication methods such as visual aids, picture schedules, or communication boards. This allows the child to point to different pictures or images to express how they feel.
- F Use cooperative play by organizing group activities that emphasize teamwork, support, and collaboration. This may help create a safer and more inclusive environment for all children to participate comfortably.

