Haywood Grove School
Proud to be Special - Proud to be Different

Appendix D

Play Time and Motional Activities

Play is an important part of our timetable at Haywood Grove because play provides the opportunity for children (and adults) to be creative and have fun, using a whole range of mediums including role play, arts, sensory activities, games and music. If you are choosing to follow the school timetable at home, you will see there is a dedicated session for play, however you can choose to do any of these activities at any time.

At Haywood Grove we believe that play provides nurture through 1:1 time where the child is free to explore and interact. Play is essential for children's development and is their natural method of self-expression. It fosters imagination and creativity, whilst providing opportunities for learning. Play also improves wellbeing and releases chemicals that make children feel safer and happier.

We have put together some suggestions for play activities that you may want to engage your child with at home.

There are "General Play" suggestions in Part A and "Motional" play suggestions which will be explained in Part 2.

PART 1 GENERAL PLAY

Charades

Choose a character/object/film/animal. Instead of using the usual charades' hand gestures just say what it is. It's an animal! Then act it out and give verbal clues when needed.

Pictionary

Think of an object, draw it and see if your child can guess what it is. You might need to give verbal clues too. When they have guessed, it's their go!

Pass the Face

Make a funny face. They have to copy it. They then make a funny face and you have to do the copying.

Music with Household Objects

Before you start, grab a few objects that make different sounds. For example, a bottle with pasta in it (if you have any!) to shake, a saucepan and spoon for a drum, a brush to swoosh, a pencil to tap. Show your child the instruments and tell them that they are the conductors. They can tell you to play more softly, louder, slower or faster. Or even which instrument to play. They can join in with their own instruments. Or let them take the lead and copy what they do.

Find Me .....

A dashing around game. Tell your child they have ten seconds to find something and bring it back to you. It could be something of a certain colour or texture or shape or size. Bring me something yellow. They have to run off and bring it back before you have counted to ten (as slowly as they need!).

Guess the Song/Sound

If you can, you could make a playlist of songs for them to guess. Or you could find some objects that make a noise. For example, see if they can guess the sound of a stapler.

Read a Story

We all love stories! In times of stress, children can revert back to much younger interests. So don't worry about offering a Charlie and Lola story to a 10 year old.

Tray Game

Place a few objects (start with four) so your child can see them. You then ask them to remember what they are. Tell them to close their eyes so that they can't see them anymore and take one object away. Ask your child to Position the screen so that they can work out what is missing. You can build up to more objects or they can gather objects themselves and test you.

Show and Tell

You can begin by showing your child an object. An old toy would be great or it could be the cat or your favourite mug. Describe it and talk about why you like it. Ask them to get something that they would like to share with you.

Noughts and Crosses

You can draw a noughts and crosses list or be more creative and make your own e.g. using pebbles, toy soldiers, tiddlywinks or homemade counters to be the Os and the Xs.

Draw a Monster

You and the child draw a big triangle (or other shape) on a piece of paper. You then have a minute or so to make it into a monster.

Make a Sock Puppet

Make a sock into a puppet. Put the band around the hand to fashion a mouth. You could sing some songs together!

Photo Diary

Keep a diary for the child of all the positive things they were doing during this difficult time. When things go back to normal they will have some positive memories of their time.

PART 2 MOTIONAL

At Haywood Grove we use a programme called Motional, which is a tool to help identify, assess and improve the emotional health and wellbeing of our children. The activities are fun and engaging and help adults to interact and build relationships with children.

If you are choosing to follow the school timetable, you will notice that there is a dedicated slot for Motional activities during "Play time".

Each activity has a thorough description and step-by-step guide, together with key relationship-building approaches to help support and focus the impact this has on the child.

Bubbles –

Resources:
Washing up/ or mixing bowls
Water
Washing up liquid
Straws

1. In preparation for the activity, have the washing up bowls, washing up liquid and straws etc ready on the tables.
2. The adult then shows them the bubble game – a bowl of water with washing up liquid inside it and encourage him/her to have a go at blowing into the water with a straw. As the bubbles emerge and swarm, the adult models the fun and the laughter and matches the expression of the child as they blow the bubbles and see them emerging.
3. The adult shows fun in their facial expressions and matches the noises and exclamations that the child make, then naming the experience for them…. "Wow… look! There are loads of bubbles!" "Bubbling up and out of the bowl." The adult models, matches and laughs whilst naming the sensation… "Those bubbles are like when I'm nervous or when I'm excited in my stomach…." Bubbles of fun……"
4. Encourage the him/her to see how many bubbles they can make together. Allow them to have a go… to just be in the moment with the activity and to be together in blowing the bubbles bigger and bigger as they begin to raise up and fill the bowl.
5. It is important to be completely alongside the child in holding the atmosphere as fun and open and explorative in a safe and calm way. The child can then just go with the activity enjoying the sensation, the flow of the bubbles and the safety of the activity.
6. Notice and express the child's experience… e.g. "oooooh the bubbles are rising and coming up out of the bowl… eeeeek…..' 'I can see you taking in big breaths as you blow… 'I am noticing…..'
7. Watch and notice expressions on the faces of the child as they concentrate, or play or laugh… and wonder aloud what their experience might be.
8. Encourage them to notice their breathing and to change it … what effect does that have on the bubbles and on their experience?
9. Then offer them the challenge of seeing if they can blow a bubble into a bubble….
10. Be alongside the child and share in their experience and the 'just being' in the moment of the fun of the bubbles.

Den building –

Resources:
Fabrics
Tables
Chairs

1. In preparation for the activity have a range of den making materials available such as large pieces of material, sheets, cushions, fabric etc.
2. Support and give your child time to create and build their own dens using material, blankets, rugs, sheets. Notice how the children are absorbed in the activity and give them time to bring cushions, rugs or special things into the den once they have made it.
3. Allow your child the chance to enjoy being inside the den once it is made and perhaps play a game, read a book or have a snack time in the den.

Guess the picture –

1. We understand that some children may find this activity difficult. Especially children who find touch difficult and it is important we help them to feel acknowledged, safe and understood. Enable the game to be safe and non -threatening so that the child feels able to have a go or not, as the case may be.
2. With your child, take it in turns to draw a picture on each other's back using their finger … then guess what each other has drawn.
3. This could extend to be a word written on each other's back or a symbol.
4. Notice the sensations that the child might be feeling, gently naming the sensations, whether it tickles, feels comfortable… strange etc but most importantly be present with them.

Mirror game –

1. The child is 'the mover' in the game and the adult 'the mirror.' Invite the child to put their hands up palms outward by their chest and the adult mirrors their hands as if they are the mirror image. The child can then move their hands in circle movements or to the side or up and down and the adult 'mirror' follows the movement. Allow the child to move their hands for a few minutes and then swap over so the child becomes the mirror in the game.
2. Do this in a calm and friendly way to engage and encourage the child to participate in the activity. Then show the children some variations of the game how it can include a leg moving or funny facial expressions. (This activity enables the adult and child to begin to make safe and reassuring eye contact and for the child to experience an adult who is completely emotionally available to them, caring about their response, responding sensitively and openly. It is important that the adults face is open, kind and compassionate to enable the child to feel safe and nurtured through this activity.)
3. It is important that the child feels contained and safe and able to be with their partner in the game. You can notice the sensations and expressions the child make and again validate and notice, model and mirror their responses with an open face, reassuring and a response that shows the child you are completely with them in the moment.
4. While the child is involved in the activity, the you will need to notice and name the sensations and the experience for them, understanding that children may be unable to name and think about the experience and need the adult to name and give them the language to shape their experience.

Feathers –

Resouces:
Feathers

1. The adult reveals some colourful feathers. Notice the sounds the child may make and 'answer' their responses by mirroring and modelling surprise, interest, excitement and a sense of anticipation that feels safe and calm. The adult shows in their response that it is ok to wonder, to stimulate and mirror the children's responses so that they feel recognised and responded positively to.
2. The adult then shows the child some of the colourful feathers and begins to stroke one along his / her hand naming how it feels, the sensations and openly shows the delight or tickly feeling or sensation with an open and expressive face. "Oooooh it's a tickly feel,", "It feels silky…… I can sense a softness as it brushes over my hand."
3. Invite the child to touch the feathers and to have a go at stroking them along their hand / arm. Notice the sensations and expressions the children make, again validate, notice, model, and mirror their responses with an open face, reassuring and a response that shows the child you are completely with them in the moment.
4. When the child has had a chance to feel the feathers on their skin, the adult can then model the sensation of the feather on their face and again name the sensation – the tickle of the feather, the softness, the prickly sensation of the feather.
5. The adult can then see if the child is willing to allow the adult to demonstrate imaginatively painting their face with one of the feathers. Gently and softly brush the feather around the face of the child around the eyes, the cheeks, the mouth. Watch and notice the reaction and name the sensation that the child seems to be showing. "I can see how you are smiling when I brush your cheeks…." "ooooh I can see how that tickled you a bit too much as you pulled away but then you moved closer again for me to have another go." "I'm wondering how that might be feeling soft on your face and silky….." Notice, name and reassure, showing the child all the time that you are there with them in that exact moment. (This activity enables the adult and child to begin to make safe and reassuring eye contact and for the child to experience an adult who is completely emotionally available to them, caring about their response, responding sensitively and openly. It is important that the adults face is open, kind and compassionate to enable the child to feel safe and nurtured through this activity.)
6. The child could then be encouraged to have a go to 'paint' the adults face with the feathers. Some children and adults might just want to have their hand or arm brushed instead of their face, and ensure that you enable this to happen so that the child feels safe and not in a situation which is uncomfortable for them. Some children may just want to watch or to brush the feathers on their own skin and again, make sure you notice this and help them to do this.
7. While the child is involved in the activity, the adult will need to notice and name the sensations and the experience for them, understanding that children may be unable to name and think about the experience and need the adult to name and give them the language to shape their experience.

Friendship hands –

Resources:
Pens/pencils
Paper

Exploring
Draw around your child's hand and then on each finger write a word to describe what you like about them e.g. kind, friendly, smiley, funny. Then ask your child to draw around your hand and do the same thing.

Reflecting
Help the children to notice how it felt to do this activity and how it felt to draw around their/your hand. What descriptive words did they come up with to describe you? How did it feel to hear the words they chose about you? Which is the word you liked best that most describes you? Ask your child how it felt to them.