

Peace Education Activities Suggestions for Children with Circle Time Practices¹

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Abstract

Peace as a value makes sense when there is no war. Peace is living in harmony and not fighting others. Peace is a calm and relaxed state of mind. By reflecting on the full and serious meaning of peace, new and creative ways can be found to facilitate people's understanding of friendship and cooperation. It is important to teach peace in these ways in early childhood. Circle time, also called group time, refers to any time when a group of people, usually young children, sit together for an activity in which everyone is involved. This study is about how to introduce peace to kindergarten students as a circle time practice. Peace as a value is included in the twelve living values. Peace as a philosophy and value is the practice of not being hostile to each other in the education of friends. It is based on the expression of feelings and thoughts by a large number of participants, especially at a young age. The circle time practices developed by Mosley (2006) are practiced all over the world at all levels of education, especially in kindergartens. Circle time practices are structurally democratic. Opinions are expressed in turn. Each participant should respect each other's opinions. In this study, the circle time practice was outlined and four activities that can be used in peace education were introduced. The effects of the practices on different age groups are suggested for future research.

Keywords: Peace, circle time, kindergarten student.

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Introduction

Circle time, also called group time, refers to any time when a group of people, usually young children, sit together for an activity in which everyone is involved. Circle time provides a tried and tested framework for increasing self-esteem and positive behavior for everyone in the school. A typical circle time is a meeting once a week for an hour to discuss and try to solve common problems (Mosley, 1993: 6-9). Circle time is a universally used approach to enhancing social emotional learning in schools around the world. Murray White was the first British author to publish a book on circle time and Magic Circles raised the profile and popularity of circle time in the 80s. In circle time, children are encouraged to develop their social emotional learning in a caring and safe environment with a child-centered and child-led approach (Mosley, 2006). As the teacher takes on a more facilitative role, students take a more active role in their learning within a structure that facilitates and encourages them to respect each other, listen to each other, appreciate each other's views and perspectives, and engage in collaborative problem solving. Learning is experiential, involving strategies such as games,

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role playing, small group work, singing and physical activities. In such an environment, students not only learn specific targeted skills, but the process itself is embedded in a powerful social and emotional learning experience.

There are limited studies on the effectiveness of circle time practices in schools (Cooper & Jacobs, 2011; Lown, 2002; Mosley, 2009). In addition, it has been observed that there are undesirable situations caused by untrained teachers (Taylor, 2003). This study is about how to introduce peace to kindergarten students as a circle time application.

Method

This research was carried out with qualitative research and document analysis techniques. In qualitative research, data is collected through observation, interviews and documents (Creswell, 2007). This is followed by data analysis. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), qualitative data analysis; consists of three stages: collecting data, reducing data, displaying data, drawing conclusions, and validating. While analyzing the collected data, techniques such as discourse analysis and document analysis are used in addition to descriptive and content analysis (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). Document analysis is a scientific research method defined as collecting, reviewing, questioning and analyzing various documents as the primary source of research data. While this method often complements other research methods in the literature, it is also used as a stand-alone method. The research is a descriptive study, and the data were obtained from the related literature by document analysis method and analyzed. In addition, distance education practices in the teacher training system in different countries and Turkey were examined and evaluated.

Findings and Discussion

Education should also teach children the values of preventing violence, respect, equality, democracy, dialogue and cooperation. Education aims to develop and liberate children's ideas. Teaching how to make the world livable for future generations is also one of the basic tasks of education (Hakvoort, 2010, 292). According to views that advocate the teaching of the value of peace in pre-school education, people do not forget the values they acquired as children throughout their lives and it is easy to acquire these values at this age. Therefore, peace should be taught to children as a value in pre-school education (Bar-Tal, Rosen & NetsZehngut, 2010: 34). In this section, after briefly explaining the concept of peace, peace education and the Circle Time model as an approach to providing peace education in the pre-school period are introduced and sample activities are given.

Peace Education

The word peace is generally used to mean the absence of hostility. The concept of peace can also be defined as salvation from evil, fights, wars, harmony, unity, integrity, tranquility, silence, and living in peace (Royce, 2004). In world history, periods of complete peace are very limited, and wars have always continued, more or less. The Latin term *pax*, meaning peace, is used for periods that have been relatively peaceful for certain regions at certain times (Özerdem, 2013). Three basic definitions of peace stand out in the literature of peace studies. These are; peace according to John Burton's theory of needs, the distinction between negative peace and positive peace put forward by Johan Galtung in his approach to peace through peaceful means, and Kenneth Boulding's stable/sustainable peace concepts. Peace is generally perceived as a weak and passive situation, often equated with passivity in society. In other words, what generally comes to mind is negative peace, meaning the absence of armed conflict and hot war. However, another form of peace is called positive peace, which includes everything from a stable economy to social equality and the absence of all forms of discrimination, as well as access to basic services such as education and health. For example, if a person lives without being able to use all their talents and potential, this means that complete peace cannot be achieved. True peace is possible only when everyone can live their full potential without interruption (Galtung, 1969).

The most important skill that we urgently need to learn and develop as humanity at the beginning of the 21st century is to completely change our way of thinking about war and violence; to learn and teach ways to solve problems, disagreements and conflicts in every context and level with constructive and peaceful means using scientific and multidisciplinary methods. Although traditional social sciences discuss violence and conflict within the framework of their own disciplines, each of

them evaluates human behavior within the narrow sections of their own fields of interest (Kök-Arslan, 2015).

Peace education also encourages empathy and compassion, teaching individuals to understand the experiences and emotions of others. By cultivating empathy, individuals develop a greater sense of unity and connectedness to others, enhancing their willingness to help and support those in need. This empathy-driven approach empowers individuals to be agents of peace and play an active role in making a positive difference in their communities (Zembylas, 2007). Furthermore, peace education helps individuals develop conflict resolution skills. It equips them with the tools to resolve conflicts through dialogue, negotiation, and mediation, rather than resorting to aggression or violence. These skills go beyond personal conflicts and can be applied to various levels, from interpersonal relationships to international conflicts (Bercovitch & Dean, 2009).

Jenny Mosley's Circle Time Core Model for Peace Education

Over the last three decades, Jenny Mosley has developed her highly successful school and classroom management models based on teaching experience, research and collaboration between Consultancy, Local Education Authorities and schools. Jenny's core model, Quality Circle Time (QCT), encompasses a whole school approach to boosting self-esteem and building positive relationships in your school communities (amazon, 2021). Jenny Mosley's quality circle time model involves creating an ongoing, timed process of circle meetings for adults and children. As a foundation for teaching relationship skills, increasing self-esteem, and establishing a positive behavior management and anti-bullying policy, circle time will not only increase confidence and "emotional intelligence" in students, but also contribute to a positive whole school ethos (Mosley & Tew, 2013).

Creating the Right Conditions

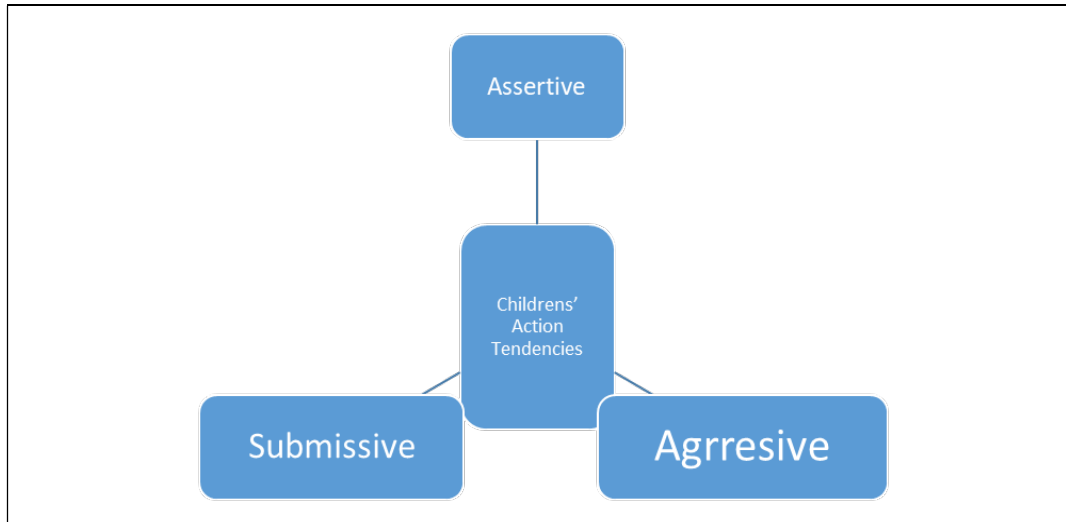
Between 6 and 18 participants is the best number. Any more than that and it becomes difficult for everyone to take a full part in the proceedings. An open chair or a circle of cushions is all the equipment needed. There should be no tables or benches to act as barriers or to support collapsing heads!

Care should be taken to make the circle as perfect as possible and to allow every face to be seen by all other participants. Many schools also use a "talking object" to facilitate discussion. The talking object can be anything - a teddy bear or other cuddly toy, a cushion or a decorated piece of wood or plastic. This talking object is passed around the circle and the only person allowed to speak is the person holding the talking object.

- 1- *What does the teacher do?:* The teacher is part of the circle and sits on the same kind of chair or cushion as everyone else. This helps to point out that what happens is a special type of classroom activity where the teacher is more of a facilitator than a director. He or she has a special responsibility to ensure that the agreed rules are followed, that the feelings of individuals are protected and that appropriate activities are prepared. The teacher should also be prepared to end a session if students are persistently breaking the rules. This can happen especially in younger circles and it is important that the failure of a session does not lead to abandonment of the method. For some students this type of activity, where they are encouraged to take responsibility for their own words and actions, is new and takes some getting used to.
- 2- *What are the rules?* The most important thing about circle time rules is that they need to be discussed and agreed by all members. This is one of the first activities to be done. Here are the three basic rules that need to be discussed: Only one person should speak at a time - the speaking object helps with this rule About something you can "pass" if you don't want to talk. The first one helps to create order and encourage people to listen to others. The sending and third help to ensure the emotional safety of the children involved: no one should be forced to talk about something they find embarrassing, and no one should be ridiculed for saying something they really believe - but others may disagree with their views. The group can articulate these rules in other ways and add extras.

A children behavior can be submissive, aggressive or assertive. In general parents and educators requires show assertive behaviour from children (Deluty & Usakli, 2009). According to Deluty & Uşaklı (2009), childrens’ action tendencies in the Figure 1.

Figure 1. Childrens’ Action Tendencies



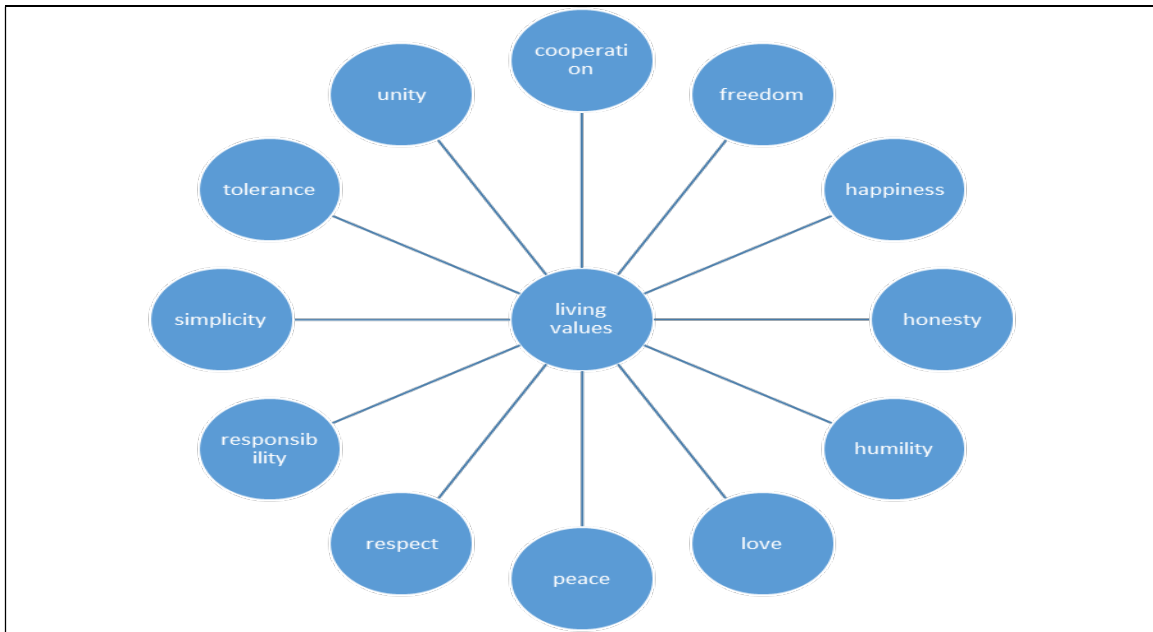
The living values series offers a variety of experiential activities for teachers and parents to help them teach children and young adults to develop twelve critical social values.

The text emphasizes the significance of living values in personal, relational, and societal contexts, calls for individuals to prioritize and practice these values in their daily lives, and concludes with a discussion on their potential global impact.

Teaching living values (Figure 2), not only important for children but also for young people (Uşaklı, 2016).

Living Values Education Program (LVP) is a global collaborative of educators and others dedicated to creating a values-based atmosphere in homes, schools, and communities. Globally, children are impacted by acts of violence, escalating societal issues, and a lack of regard for one another and their surroundings. Many educators and parents feel that implementing programs that raise students’ knowledge of universal moral standards in the educational system is the way to address the growing degree of conflict (Hassan & Kahil, 2005). The objectives of LVEP are as follows: (a) to assist people in considering and thinking through various values and the practical consequences of expressing them; (b) to enhance comprehension, motivation, and responsibility regarding making positive choices in the personal and social spheres; (c) to motivate people to make choices based on their own moral, ethical, and spiritual principles; and (d) to encourage educators and caregivers to view education as giving students a philosophy of living (Tillman, 2000). Cooperation, freedom, happiness, honesty, humility, love, peace, respect, responsibility, simplicity, tolerance, and unity are the twelve main global ideals of the program.

Figure 2. Living Values



Matters to be followed in practice and Application Examples

In today's fast-paced world, teaching children's values has become more crucial than ever before. In an era where technology dominates our lives and instant gratification is highly valued, instilling moral and ethical values in children has become paramount. While academics are important for a child's growth and development, teaching values ensures that children grow up to be responsible, compassionate, and respectful individuals (Eyre & Eyre, 1993). One of the key reasons why teaching values is crucial is that it helps children distinguish between right and wrong. Values act as a compass, guiding children towards making ethical decisions and treating others with kindness and empathy. By teaching children about values such as honesty, integrity, and fairness, parents and educators equip them with a moral framework that shapes their behavior in various situations.

Below are some examples of teaching peace to preschool children as a circle time activity:

In Appendix 1 the meaning of peace is illustrated and sloganized.

In Appendix 2 peace is taught by friendship ring play. Yarns and scissors materials are needed.

In Appendix 3 two concepts illustrating these are peace and quiet. Large sheets of paper, marker, tape player, tape cassette with familiar sounds recorded are those materials needed.

In Appendix 4 theme of being fair is taught. This activity illustrates all circle time activities in whole.

Conclusion

According to UNESCO (2005), the purpose of Peace Education can be explained as instilling the purpose and importance of peace culture, re-accepting and confirming the value and dignity of each person, creating an environment of justice and respect, providing the ideal equality they think of for women, developing activities that include developing the skills and values that structure the culture of peace, considering both peace and peace education as a reflex that integrates them even more, combating prejudices between societies, developing relations between societies, seeking disarmament for peace in the world and peaceful solutions to wars, examining international cooperation and conflict, studying current problems and events, presenting information that is true, developing tolerance education and moral thinking skills, critical thinking and judicial independence. The basic idea here is to teach holistic thinking. The skills that are desired to be acquired in this learning; It can be expressed as being aware of our prejudices, knowing ourselves, being able to empathize, having critical thinking, respecting all individuals without discriminating against anyone and without being stuck with a single identity, protecting everyone's rights equally, learning to control anger and forgive, and searching for ways of tolerance by emphasizing the words compromise and solution.

In conclusion, this research paper highlights the significance of cultivating living values in both personal and societal contexts. It emphasizes the role of education and upbringing in instilling these values in individuals, as well as the importance of role models and mentorship in promoting them. By recapitulating the main findings and arguments presented throughout this paper, it is evident that prioritizing and incorporating living values in our lives and practices is crucial for creating a harmonious and ethical society. Therefore, it is imperative for individuals and institutions to take action and make a conscious effort to embrace these values in order to foster positive change.

During circle time in the classroom or at home, teaching children about peace can be a powerful and impactful experience for them to learn valuable life skills at a young age. Here are some ideas for activities and discussions that can promote peace:

- 1- Encourage active listening: Encourage children to listen carefully to others when they are speaking. This can help them understand different perspectives and learn to respect others' opinions.
- 2- Practice empathy: Help children understand how others might be feeling by asking questions like, "How do you think she's feeling right now?" or "What do you think he might need right now?"
- 3- Teach conflict resolution: Discuss ways to resolve conflicts peacefully, such as taking a deep breath, listening to the other person, and finding a solution that works for everyone.
- 4- Promote kindness: Encourage children to be kind to others and to treat others as they would like to be treated. This can help them develop a sense of compassion and empathy.
- 5- Practice gratitude: Encourage children to express gratitude for others and for the things they have. This can help them develop a positive outlook and a sense of appreciation for others.

School is a place where children build a foundation for their lives. While academic excellence is predominantly emphasized, schools also need to focus on character development through the dissemination of moral values. It is important to prepare children for an honest and virtuous life. The need is greater at a time when many evils have crept into every sphere of life. Teachers need to devote time to the character development of children. There is a widespread attitude among children that values are picked up automatically or have no relevance in modern practices. It is very necessary to change that attitude from school itself. Values require knowledge and understanding. Since values have to be dealt with while seeking shade for the mind in the fast-running world, it is necessary to use some instructional techniques. The whole desirable value system in society can be understood either uniquely and individually or in a combined way. Either way, common values can be discussed. It is noted that using Circle Time for teaching moral values generates a lot of interest among children. Children from various backgrounds are able to understand common moral values better. Circle Time, in itself, is a very interesting activity to engage students in discussions. Here, moral values are discussed openly. Children are free to express their views. They are given importance. More than lecturing, debating is given priority. The worth of an individual is appreciated. One's understanding is broadened, generating respect for other individuals. Different values like speaking the truth, helping the poor and needy, and achieving goals are discussed, elaborating on their importance for being a good and virtuous citizen. education, especially in kindergartens. Circle time practices are structurally democratic. Opinions are expressed in turn. Each participant should respect each other's opinions. In this study, the circle time practice was outlined and four activities that can be used in peace education were introduced. The effects of the practices on different age groups are suggested for future research.

Research and Publication Ethics

In this study, all rules specified in the "Directive on Scientific Research and Publication Ethics of Higher Education Institutions" were followed. None of the actions specified under the second section of the Directive, "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", have been carried out.

Disclosure Statements

1. Contribution rate statement of researchers: First Author 50%, Second Author 50%
2. No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Hakan Usakli: Writing – review & editing, Methodology, Conceptualization.

Zeynep Eren: Writing – review & editing, Methodology, Conceptualization.

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Appendix 1.

Activity 1 What does it mean peace?

Age: 5 +

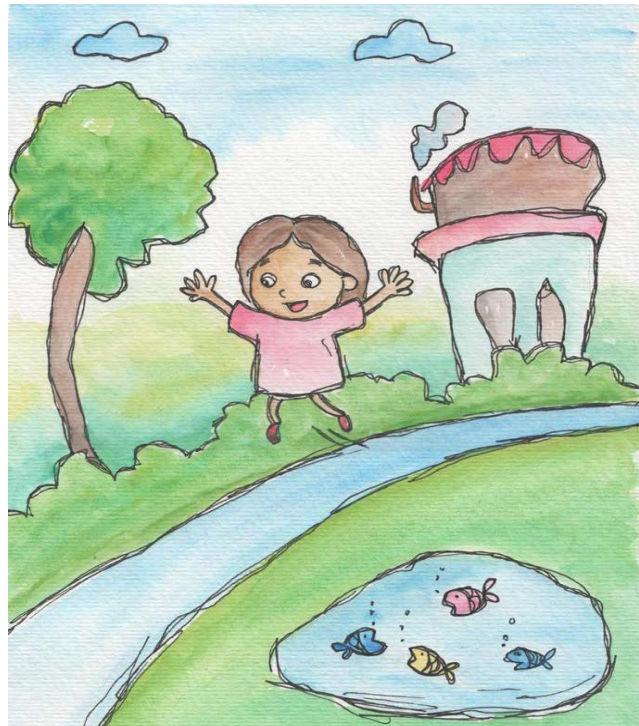
Materials: Picture

Process: Teacher hangs on the picture. Reads the what is peace look like and the students repeats after.

Peace is living in harmony and not fighting with others. If everyone in the world were peaceful, this would be a peaceful world. Peace is being quiet inside.

Age group: 3-7 years

- Peace is being quiet inside
- Peace is having good feelings inside.
- Peace is when people get along and don't argue or hit.
- Peace is having positive thoughts about myself and others.
- Peace begins within each one of us.



Livingvalues, 2023

Appendix 2.

Activity 2 Friendship Ring

Age: 6 +

Materials: Yarn, Scissors

Process: Cut a length of yarn long enough for each child to hold onto part of it. Tie the ends of the yarn together to make a circle. Spread the yarn circle out on the floor. Have the children stand around the circle, hold onto a section of yarn in front of them, and pick it up while you recite the following rhyme:

"There is a friendship ring. That holds us all together. Each part that is there Is as important as the other No matter who you are, No matter where you've been, We're all together In the ring of friends. The friendship ring Holds our hands and hearts. There isn't anything That could keep us apart."

Tell the children that the yarn circle they are holding is their friendship ring. Have them hold their friendship ring high in the air and low to the ground. Ask them to wiggle it and move it slowly up and down. Have them think of other ways to move the yarn. Tell the children that each of them has a friendship ring filled with friends and people they've met people who should be cared for and respected. Then ask two or three children to let go of the yarn ring. What happens? The friendship ring starts to fall down. Explain that this is just like our real ring of friends; we need everyone to make it complete (Bitinger, 2004: 18)

Appendix 3.

Activity 3 Peaceful and Quite by Melissa Browning

Age: 4 +

Materials: Large sheets of paper, Marker, Tape player, Tape cassette with familiar sounds recorded.

Process: 1. Draw a vertical line to divide the paper in half. 2. Children sit in a circle where they can see the paper. 3. Ask each child to think of a sound that is peaceful and quiet. 4. List the children's responses on one side of the sheet of paper. 5. After the list is completed have children name things that are loud and not peaceful. 6. List these things on the other side of the paper. 7. Ask the children to listen to the tape of familiar sounds. 8. On another sheet of paper list, the sounds as the children identify them. 9. Ask the children to sort the recorded sounds into the two categories of peaceful and not peaceful. More to do: Encourage the children to become aware of peaceful sounds they hear during the day and how they feel when they hear these sounds (Charner, 1996:127).

Appendix 4.

Activity 4 Being Fair

Age: 4 +

Materials: no

Aim: To help the children to understand what being fair means and too consider:

- the citizenship aspect of fairness to all equal opportunities and human rights
- the importance of including everyone in games and work people's right to think differently
- respecting others' opinions respecting others' possessions
- the importance of sharing.

Process: Children begin with a Circle Time activity which provides a starting point for the topic. Further activities include role-play, discussion, story endings and art and craft work. The way in Start Circle Time by:

- asking the children to tell you what 'being fair' means
- talking about letting people play with your friends
- thinking about sharing things and time
- talking about being loyal to people
- talking about it being easy to be fair to friends, but what about other people who are not your friends?
- making sure we don't exclude people from our groups
- listening to other people's views
- taking care of people's feelings and possessions.

Then:

- ask the children to close their eyes and think of a picture of themselves being fair to people at school
- ask them to keep their eyes closed and to think of how they can show they are being fair show them the paper you have prepared for their drawings
- explain that they are all going to draw a picture today, but that you want their pictures to be like the picture they had in their own head - not to look at what someone else is drawing.

Draw and Talk activity

Ask the children to draw a picture of themselves being fair to someone at school.

When all the children have drawn their pictures, take the children to a quiet area, one at a time, to talk about their pictures. Start by asking the child to tell you about their picture and write down the keywords s/he says in the top right-hand corner of the picture. Then ask the following questions:

"Who are you being fair to?" "What are you doing that shows you are being fair to them?" "What other things do you do to be fair to other people?" Again, write the appropriate keywords on the child's drawing. Explain that you want to keep these pictures safe and put them in a pile until all the children have had their turn at talking with you about their picture. You can count the number of relevant responses if you want to make a comparison with the reflection activity. Tell the children that in Circle Time they can talk about some of the things that they have told you about their pictures. Make a display with the children's pictures. Ask the children to suggest a title for the display and to suggest questions, words or phrases to add to it.

Circle Time activity

Talk about the pictures that the children have drawn. If they have been displayed on the wall, look at each one, talk about it and praise the child who drew it. Ask the children to remember the different ways in which people can be fair to each other. Ask for volunteers to tell the circle what they have drawn. Jot down these ways of being fair until you have a list. Ask the children if they can add to the list. Do they listen to and respect what friends and other people say even if they don't agree with them? Being Fair waiting your turn not pushing in let people play with you let them have a turn share the toys not splash in the water careful with sand wait for drinks think how people feel look after people listen in Circle Time don't interrupt

Read out the list with the children and ask them if they can put the list into order important way of being fair first. Ask the children to touch their ears if they can tell you how to be fair to new/different children and wave a hand if they can tell you how they look after other people's things with the most touch their chin if they can tell you how people in shops are fair to waiting customers put hands together if they can tell you how people waiting for a bus are fair.

Select volunteers to tell the circle how people are fair in these situations. Now ask the children to think about when they or other people at school say, "It's not fair!" Ask volunteers to tell the circle about these times. *"Can they make a list of these things? Can they put them in order - with the most important one first?" "Can they think of things that are fair at home? Does everyone there get the same pocket money, go to bed at the same time, do the same amount of helping?" "Ask volunteers to tell the circle how their families make sure that things are fair at home".*

Reflection and evaluation in Circle Time

Use the display you have made with the children's pictures – praise the work and read the captions. Remind the children of all the ways that people can be fair.

Remind them about how people feel when everything is fair - when people are fair to others, everyone feels good about it. Can they find on the display, the words they gave you describing how good you feel about being fair?

Remind the children about playing fair and being fair. Can they think of examples of when sportsmen have been fair in their games? Can they think of examples of when people have done something brave to help someone else, even though they might not have enjoyed doing it? (You may find examples in local newspapers or on TV.) You could do the Draw and Talk again to see how many more examples of being fair the children now depict.

You can make a new and longer list of all the keywords and phrases used in the second Draw and Talk activity.

Student

waiting not pushing taking turns sharing

thinking of other people letting people play

not hurting smaller people choosing different people listening to people

staying friends even when you don't agree (Collins, 2006: 11-35)