



The detectives

In this activity the children sit as for circle time and one is chosen to leave the room. When they are gone, two people in the room can swap places and when the volunteer returns to the room, he/she has to guess what has changed. This can be varied in many different ways. For example, children may swap jumpers or other articles of clothing or some may take off jackets, jumpers, shoes, etc.

The idea here is not only to have fun in playing the detective but to also focus on the importance of really looking and observing people in order to see how they are acting and feeling. Obviously the game can be repeated with different volunteers leaving the room.

60 Sensory Minutes

Section **5**

CLASSROOM SKILLS



Jelly babies

The facilitator asks the children to sit as for a circle time and then passes around a bowl of jelly babies without telling them that it is part of the game, but does tell the children not to eat their jelly babies yet. Once everyone has five differently coloured jelly babies, the facilitator explains that for every one they have, they need to reveal something about themselves. For every red jelly baby, you tell embarrassing moments or memorable moments in your life.

For every orange jelly baby, you describe a goal that you have. For every purple one you describe an achievement, etc. When they have revealed each fact they can then eat the relevant jelly baby!



Simon says

In this activity the facilitator gives a range of instructions for the students to follow. For example,

- Put your hands on your head
- Smile
- Yawn
- Touch your left knee
- Raise your left arm
- Point to the door
- Touch your nose
- Sit down
- Stand up, etc

When the instruction is given with the sentence 'Simon says' in front of it, then the students have to follow the direction. If it doesn't start with this sentence, they shouldn't follow the instruction. If someone follows an instruction that didn't start with 'Simon says' then they are considered to be out. This is continued until a clear winner is identified.



Memory tray

The facilitator needs to arrange a selection of interesting small objects and arrange them on a tray, which they should keep covered with a tea-towel until they are ready to play the game. They can vary the number of objects according to the ages of the children.

- Give each child a pencil and paper and ask them to write their name at the top.
- Uncover the tray and place it where all children can see it.
- Give the children a certain amount of time to memorize the contents of the tray, then cover it up again.
- Ask the children to write down all of the objects that they can remember.
- Take the tray away and remove one or two objects. Replace it and ask the children to write down the objects which are missing.
- Vary the objects according to the abilities of the children.

Older children might be given some tiny objects such as a pin or a paper clip; younger children will remember better if they are given larger, brighter objects.

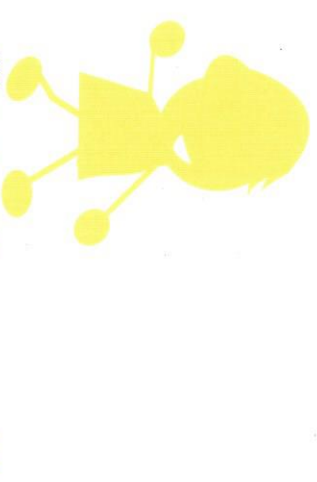
The facilitator can give hints on how to remember the objects, such as memorizing their position relative to other objects ("the pin is next to a needle and both are found in a sewing basket"), looking at their initial letters ("there are 4 objects on the tray beginning with the letter p and 2 with the letter m") etc.



Racing whispers game

Students are organised into two groups and each group is asked to stand in line, facing forwards, with a clear space between each student. This is to ensure that only the students at the front of the line are able to hear the whispered message.

The facilitator sits on a chair some distance from the two groups and explains to them that they are going to whisper an action to the two students at the front of the line. These students then whisper this action to the second student in their line, who then whispers it on to the third and so on. Once the whisper has reached the last one in the line, they run up to the front and perform the action to the facilitator. The facilitator can award points for how accurate this action is and then a new command can be whispered to this student who goes to the front of the line and the process is repeated.



Body language

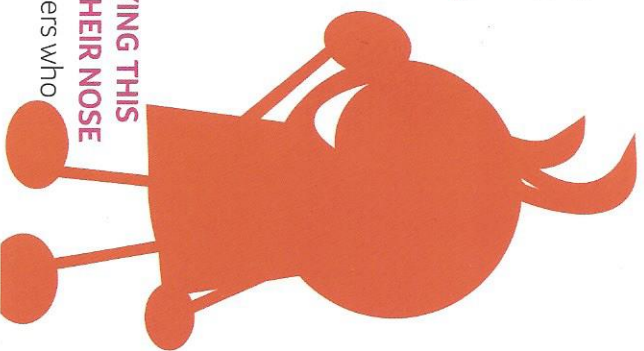
Body language speaks louder than any words we use. The facilitator can discuss this with the children and give them some examples so that they understand that whether you're telling people that you love them, you're angry with them, or don't care less about them, your body movements reveal your thoughts, moods, and attitudes. Both consciously and sub-consciously your body tells observers what's really going on with you.

The facilitator can explain to the group that he/she is going to give them a series of instructions, which they would like them to copy as fast as they can.

The facilitator then states the following actions as he/she does them:

- Put your hand to your nose
- Clap your hands
- Stand up
- Touch your shoulder
- Sit down
- Stamp your foot
- Cross your arms
- Put your hand to your mouth – **BUT WHILE SAYING THIS THE FACILITATOR WILL PUT HIS/HER HAND TO THEIR NOSE**

They can then observe the number of group members who copy what they did rather than what they said.



Pass my feeling

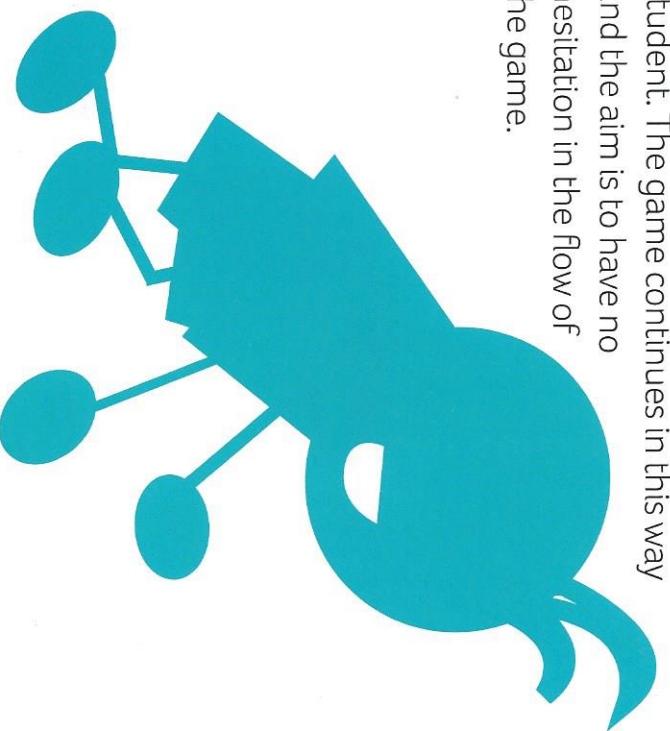
The facilitator arranges the students in a circle and model this game at the outset. This involves miming a feeling to the person sitting next to them in the circle and that person then having to mime the feeling with an action. For example, if the first person mimes feeling afraid, then the second person should mime cleaning their teeth when they are afraid and so on until the feeling has been passed and actioned

around the whole circle.



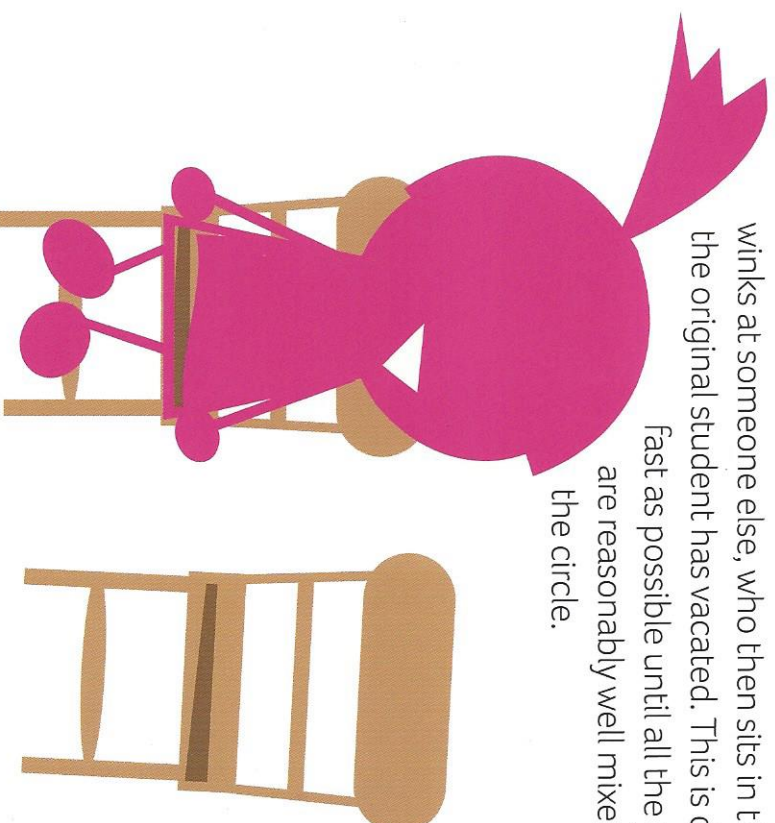
The clapping game

The students stand in a circle and the facilitator begins the game by performing a simple action – for example, crouching down and touching the floor. The students all then clap twice and then the facilitator names and points to a student. They then think of a new action to show the rest of the group. The students again clap twice and the performer names and points to another student. The game continues in this way and the aim is to have no hesitation in the flow of the game.



The winking game

Students are seated on their chairs in a circle, with one empty additional chair. The student sitting next to the empty chair is asked to wink at someone on the other side of the circle. That student who has been winked at then crossed the circle in silence, sits in the empty chair and winks at someone else, who then sits in the chair the original student has vacated. This is done as fast as possible until all the pupils are reasonably well mixed up in the circle.



Pass the ball

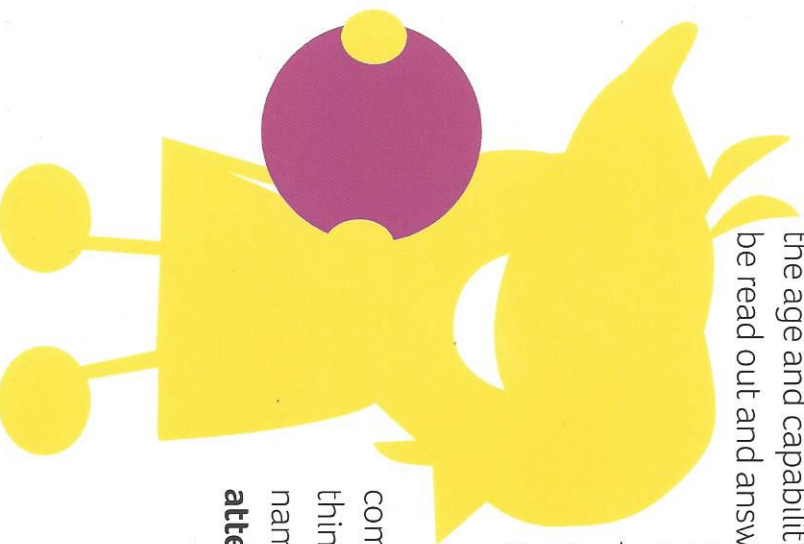
Here the children are encouraged to further use and develop social interaction and attention skills that are all essentials for the classroom. The facilitator formulates a series of simple questions that can be made more or less difficult to match the age and capabilities of the children. These will be read out and answered by the children as they

take it in turns to pass and then hold onto a large ball.

These might include the following: when you have the ball tell us what your happiest time was like, your favourite food, your best

computer game, name three things that live underwater, name a mineral etc. **Pay**

attention! It's your turn!

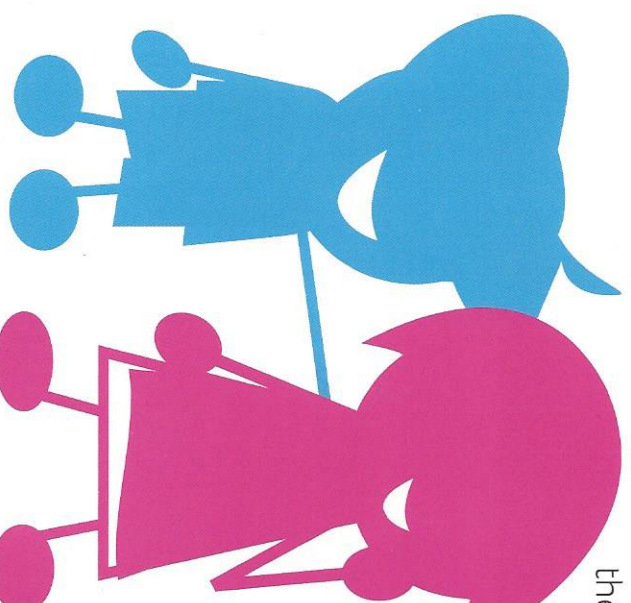


Guess the letter

The facilitator asks the children to get into pairs. Each then takes it in turns to draw a letter on the back of their partner with their finger—imagining that they are writing on a large sheet of paper, the top of the page being at the base of their partner's neck and the bottom near their lower back. When they have guessed a letter the child who is writing then rubs their partner's back as if they are erasing the letter from the page. They

then swap roles. This can be made more

complicated for older students by writing whole words and secret messages! This helps increase motor memory for letter formation through touch while also prompting social interaction.



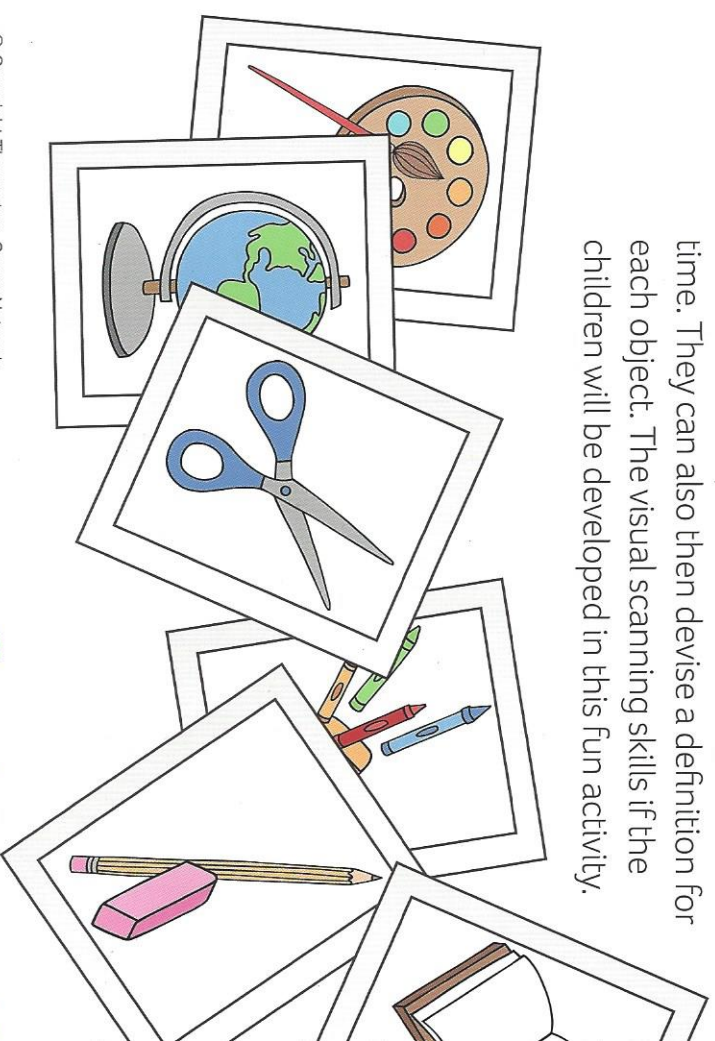
Hunt the letter

The facilitator will need two sets of plastic letters. The children are given one from the second set held by the facilitator. They then have to go and find the letter from the first set which will be hidden somewhere semi-visible in the room. This can be differentiated upwards for older children and they can be asked to find all the letters to spell a word **e.g. dog, cat, snake, submarine, happiness, situation, etc.** The children then write out the words once correctly formulated with the plastic letters. The visual prompts support writing and make this fun.



Match the picture speed test!

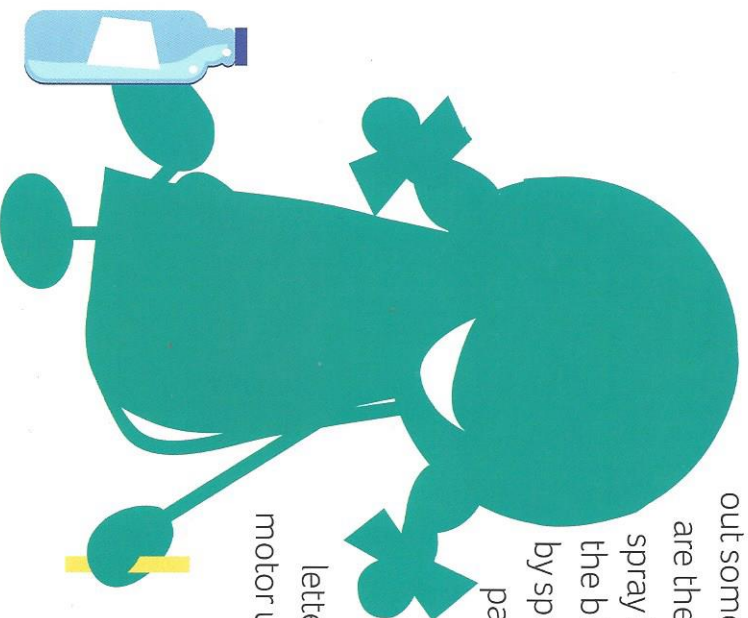
Here the facilitator will have a series of pictures or photos of key classroom objects and tools. Initially younger children can simply be asked to move around the room and match the pictures to each object. Older children can be timed and challenged to match all the pictures in the shortest amount of time. They can also then devise a definition for each object. The visual scanning skills if the children will be developed in this fun activity.



The big clean up

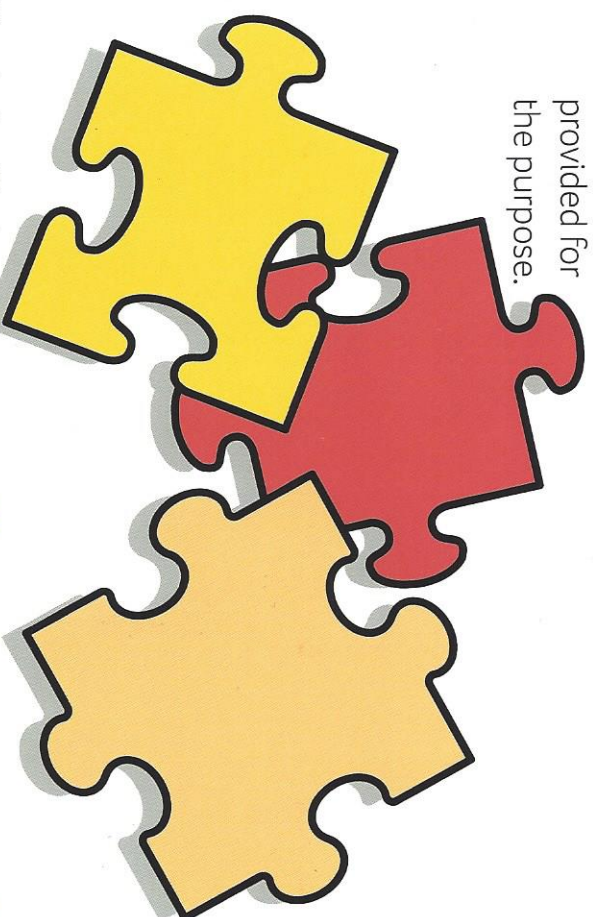
This activity can be conducted in the playground. The children will need a range of coloured chalks along with a spray bottle filled with water. The younger children draw different letters on the ground while the older children may wish to draw

out some 'chalk graffiti'. They are then asked to use the spray bottle and engage in the big clean up process by spraying in the same pattern used to create the letters or graffiti. This activity is great for basic letter formation and motor understanding.



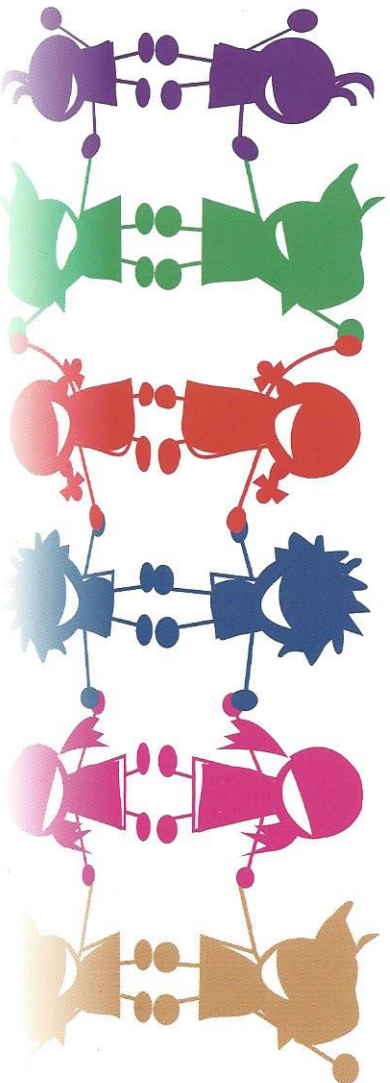
Jigsaw obstacles

The facilitator sets up an obstacle course in the room – use cones, crawl tunnels, trampoline, hula hoops etc. A jigsaw puzzle is provided loose in a box at the start. The size and complexity will be dependent upon the children's skills and ages. Larger and simpler puzzles for younger children and smaller and more complex ones for those with greater skills level. Each child can take a jigsaw piece before moving through the obstacle course when he/she will then set the piece on a table top provided for the purpose.



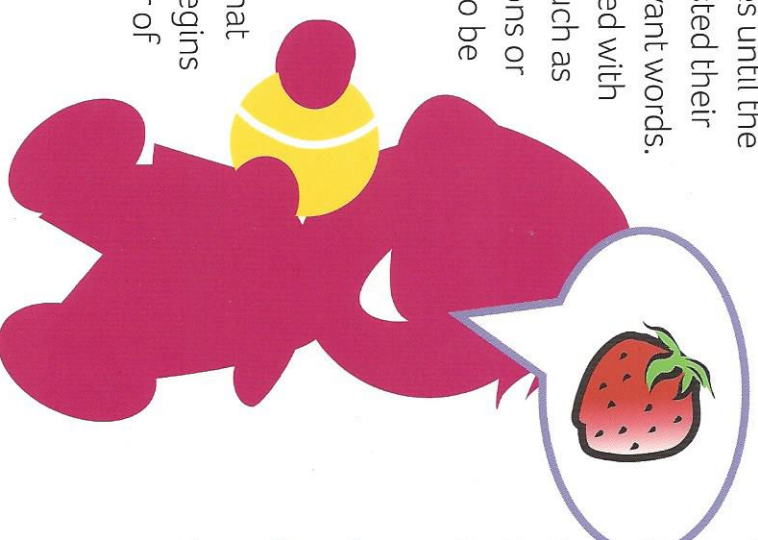
Get in order!

The facilitator asks students to stand in a straight line. They then have to organise themselves into age order. Once this has been achieved, the facilitator checks this has been done correctly. They are then asked to organise themselves into alphabetical order using their last names. Clearly, this can be varied according to the age and ability of the group being targeted. For younger children it may be helpful to pin the letter to their clothing so that it is visible and acts as a prompt.



Bag the ball

For this activity the facilitator will need a soft ball and some music and a tape or CD player. The students sit in a circle and while the music plays, they pass the softball from student to student around the circle. When the music stops, the student holding the ball must name a fruit. This continues until the pupils have exhausted their knowledge of relevant words. This can be repeated with other categories such as animals, occupations or food, etc. It can also be made more complicated for older students by playing the game alphabetically so that each item name begins with the next letter of the alphabet.



Tangled web

This activity needs a ball of wool and, once again, involves all the students sitting in a circle. One student is given the ball of wool by the teacher and told to throw it to someone they have a connection with, but keeping hold of the end of the wool and saying what that connection is. The connection can be anything from someone having the same colour hair, living in the same road, going to the same club, etc. The recipient grabs the wool so it forms a bridge between themselves and the person who has thrown it. Keeping hold of the wool, they then throw the ball of wool to someone else, identifying a new or different connection.

This ends up a looking like a spider's web and is a very visual and striking demonstration of the ways in which we are all linked and connected to one another. It highlights similarities and differences and reminds students of the need to value everyone in the class.



The shape game

The teacher randomly distributes sticky shapes among the students, sticking these onto the students' foreheads. However, it is important that the students do not see what their shape is. The teacher can make use of two or three different shapes, eg circle, star, triangle, moon etc. Different coloured stars can be used if shapes are unavailable. The aim here is for the students to then group themselves according to the shapes on their foreheads. For example, all the circles together, all the stars together, etc.

They are not allowed to talk during this activity and are also not allowed to mime what someone's shape is. The teacher can time how quickly they are able to get into the correct groups. Subsequent to this activity it may be useful to focus on how it felt to be helped and supported by others in this activity and to reinforce the fact that all of us need help and support at various times and for various reasons. Being able to support and help each other are key skills for the classroom!

