

Stepping Stones to Success

**A Two Year Quality Circle Time Programme
For Early Years**



An
invaluable
resource

72 PSE lessons
promoting
continuity and
progression

A planned
journey through
the foundation
stage

Ideal
follow-up to
'Here We Go
Round'

Helen Sonnet & Pat Child

Foreword by Jenny Mosley

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Introduction

The Quality Circle Time book, 'Here We Go Round', written by Jenny Mosley and Helen Sonnet was published in March 2001 as a direct response to recent developments in early years education and specifically the publication in May 2000 by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) of the booklet 'Curriculum Guidance for The Foundation Stage'.

It has been recognised how critical these early years are to children's development and, for the first time, this age bracket, (from 3 – 5 years), has been given a distinct identity. The objective of the guidance was to help practitioners provide a high quality integrated, early education, enabling children to develop key learning and social skills and thereby have the necessary foundations for entering school. Its aim is to provide all children with the opportunity to 'experience the very best start to their education' and to 'help practitioners provide learning and teaching experiences of the highest quality'.

Six areas of learning are defined for the foundation stage, outlining the early learning goals for each area. These goals 'establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage'. 'Stepping stones' that show 'the developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that children need if they are to achieve these early learning goals', are used in the guidance to help practitioners plan an appropriate curriculum.

This book, a sequel to 'Here We Go Round', focuses in depth on one area of learning; Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Using a combination of familiar, well loved circle games and new ideas, it provides a unique two year programme of Quality Circle Time activities for the relevant stepping stones and early learning goals. Although these activities relate directly to the stepping stones and early learning goals in the Curriculum guidance, they are equally relevant to requirements of the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish Early Years Guidelines.

All the activities included in this book have been tried successfully in nursery settings and reception classes. A selection of written responses from practitioners and teachers collated during the book's 'trailing period' testify to the support it can offer:

“Brilliant, really helps me to fulfil the learning objectives of the foundation stage.”

“Gave me lots of ideas that the children love.”

“Children love talking to and about the puppets.”

“The activities definitely encourage the children to sit and really listen.”

“All my group enjoy taking part and often ask if it is time for Circle Time.”

“The plans are clear and save us a lot of time in planning.”

“It provides a time when we can observe and assess the children against the stepping stone objectives.”

“We learn so much about our children in the Circle Time sessions.”

How to use this book

The activities in this book are divided into the six sections of personal, social and emotional development as follows:

- ◆ For dispositions and attitudes
- ◆ For self-confidence and self-esteem
- ◆ For making relationships
- ◆ For behaviour and self-control
- ◆ For self-care. (This section also includes early learning goals for health and bodily awareness from the area of Physical Development.)
- ◆ For sense of community.

Each section contains twelve lesson plans for Circle Time which progress through the yellow, blue and green stepping stones to the early learning goals. You can select the lesson plans that are appropriate for your curriculum requirements and modify them for different settings. However, the plans should be used in a developmental way and different sections should not be used in isolation.

The lesson plans inform you of any resources that you will need and give examples and suggestions to follow, although the activities can be changed or adapted to fit in with any topic you are currently studying.

ELGs for self- confidence and self-esteem
Lesson 7

Pupils should be taught to:

Have a sense of self as a member of different communities

Resources:

A speaking object

Mood music - happy

Introductory phase:

Sing the 'Belonging Song' to the tune of 'The wheels on the bus'.

Children in this class/group like to play, like to play, like to play.

Children in this class/group like to play, all day long.

Add verses that mention children by name and let the child choose their own activity e.g.,
Jill in this class/group likes to skip,
Ben in this class/group likes to paint,

Involve as many individual children as possible. Actions can be added.

Middle phase:

Tell the children we all belong to this class/group. Can anyone think of another group they belong to?

If the children find this difficult give them ideas: family, school, church, swimming club, etc.

Round "I belong to..."

Are there any groups that they would like to belong to when they are older? e.g., Rainbows, Beavers etc.

Explain that usually if you are in a group you feel happy with the rest of the group and you all smile at each other.

Closing phase/plenary:

Smiling can make other people feel happy, so this week all of the class/group is going to smile as much as possible!

The children close their eyes and put their hands on their knees with the palms facing upwards and their fingers slightly curled. This relaxes their shoulders and most children find it easier to sit very still in this position. Using a mood music tape encourages children to close their eyes and listen to the music. Ask the class if the music made them feel happy? Finish the lesson by listening to more of the happy music.

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'This extremely practical book will be a very useful additional resource for all adults working in the Foundation Stage. The simple lesson plans are easy to follow and the content is consistently relevant for young children.'

The authors take great care to set Circle Time in context. They provide details and useful guidance to help the practitioners prepare for sessions, and so ensure that the experience of Circle Time really does promote children's personal, social and emotional well-being.'

Marion Dowling, Early Years Specialist
(formerly HMI)

