



التعليم فوق الجميع  
Education Above All

# LET KIDS BE KIDS

## Facilitator Manual

Guidelines to use the 'Let Kids Be Kids' activities effectively.



# About Us



**Education Above All (EAA) Foundation** is a global foundation established in 2012 by Her Highness Sheikha Mozabint Nasser. EAA Foundation aims to transform lives through education. We believe that education is the single most effective means of reducing poverty, creating peaceful and just societies, unlocking the full potential of every child and youth, and creating the right conditions to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through our multi-sectoral approach, unique financing models, focus on innovation as a tool for social good, and partnerships, we aim to bring hope and real opportunities to the lives of impoverished and marginalised boys and girls.

Know More: [www.educationaboveall.org](http://www.educationaboveall.org)

**Innovation Development (ID)** at EAA works towards identifying persistent challenges in global education, designing, and developing innovative solutions to make learning accessible to all, particularly to the hardest to reach children and youth in underserved communities. Amid escalating conflicts, ID strives to uphold every child's right to education. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ID launched the 'Internet Free Education Resource Bank' - cost-free, open-source, low-resource-requiring project and play-based learning materials which help children learn from the world around them, despite the lack of teachers, formal schooling, and online education. The content is customized to the need, curriculum requirements and unique contexts of the learners. Some of our [award-winning emergency content](#) include:

- For Afghan refugees, ID created customized modules to meet their unique educational needs such as learning 'Survival English', Life Skills, and integrating with their host countries. These were implemented across four countries and endorsed by national and international platforms.
- For the Ukraine crisis, ID created award-winning learning resources which blend SEL, academic standards, and intercultural skills, benefitting 12,000+ host and refugee community learners in Poland. ID also produced a ground-breaking three-part Ukrainian TV series that delivers mental health and educational support at scale, reaching over 1 million viewers and counting.
- For Palestine, given the dire lack of resources and the power of play in crisis, we created a set of 40 educational and engaging games, made available in a single sheet of paper, that could be facilitated by anyone, anywhere. They do not require any resources.

**Access all our learning materials here:**  
[www.resources.educationaboveall.org](http://www.resources.educationaboveall.org)

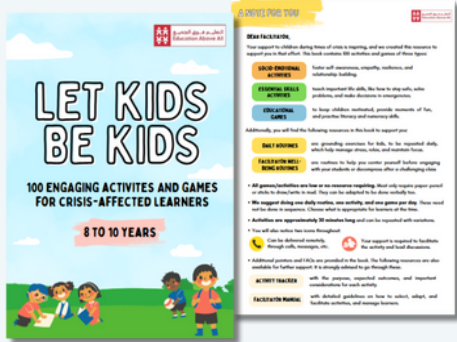


# Let Kids Be Kids Activity Books

The 'Let Kids Be Kids' Activity Books are available for: **5 to 7 years** **8 to 10 years** **11 to 14 years**

EAA developed these to provide engaging activities for socio-emotional learning (SEL), crisis-preparedness, and play-based education. Each book consists of **100 activities** and other resources for facilitators, and can be used for 3 to 6 months in immediate crisis settings.

## What do these books contain?



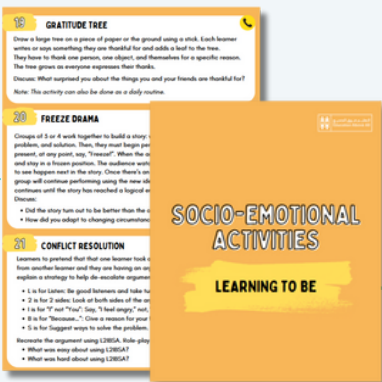
**Cover Page and Overview** introduce the key elements of the book.



**Frequently Asked Questions** share important pointers for facilitators.



**Well-Being Routines** help facilitators manage stress and decompress.



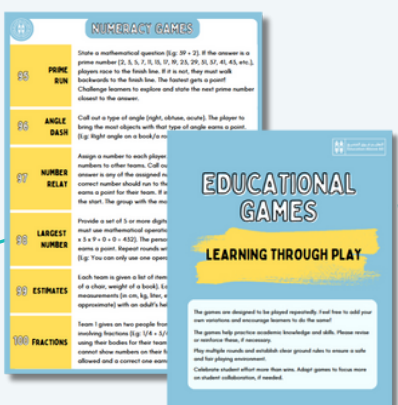
**Socio-Emotional Activities** foster self and social awareness, empathy, and relationship-building.



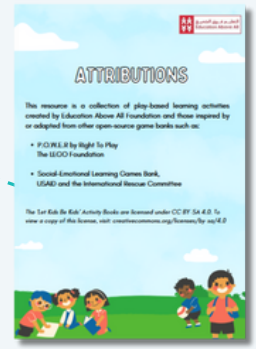
**Daily Routines** are exercises for children to center themselves and improve focus.



**Essential Skills Activities** teach how to navigate crises safely and improve decision-making during emergencies.



**Educational Games** reinforce literacy, numeracy, science and social studies concepts through games.



**Attributions**

# Activity Domains

Each Activity is mapped to one or more of the following domains.



The Activity Books were thoroughly reviewed by EAA's Education Experts and Psychologists and Child Counselors. Furthermore, sample activities were piloted by our implementing partners in Lebanon in crisis settings through remote (hotlines) and in-person modes of delivery.

Several iterations incorporated feedback from experts and facilitators alike to ensure practical applicability, clarity, and increased engagement amidst an active crisis.



# Before We Dive Into the Books,

It is important to remember:



As a facilitator, your role is pivotal in creating a safe, supportive, and engaging environment for your learners. But in the midst of supporting others, it's equally important to prioritize your own mental well-being. Just as children need resilience, empathy, and calm guidance to thrive, you need the same care and compassion for yourself. Taking time to nurture your emotional health not only strengthens your ability to lead but also sets a powerful example for your learners, showing them that self-care is an essential part of navigating challenges. **Remember, your well-being is the foundation of the support you offer.**

**Prioritize doing the 'Facilitator Well-Being Routines' provided in the book. These will help you walk into a class with confidence and decompress after or during challenging classes.**

Often, while working with children who have undergone significant hardships, one may experience '**Compassion Fatigue**'. It describes the physical, emotional, and psychological impact of helping others – often through experiences of stress or trauma. Pay attention to the signs:

- Physical: Headaches, Fatigue, sleep problems, tension, digestive issues, cardiac symptoms.
- Emotional: Poor focus, feeling overwhelmed, apathy, pessimism, withdrawal, irritability and anger, memory problems
- Work-Related: Decreased productivity, reduced sense of accomplishment & joy, feelings of inadequacy

**Some ways to take care of this, and your general emotional well-being, include:**

- Ensure that you are getting enough rest, and are eating healthy, as much as possible.
- Build and use social support. Find people in your personal and professional life that you can talk to about what's important to you (emotional support) and that you can ask for help when you need it (instrumental support).
- Engage in mindfulness practices. This could be prayer, spending time in nature, or engaging in meaningful contributions to others.

# Let's Get Started.

## Refer to the Activity Tracker

The Activity Tracker gives you the following information on each activity:

- Activity name and description
- Purpose and the domain it addresses
- Minimum time and no. of learners required
- Whether it can be done remotely
- Whether more facilitator support is needed
- Resources required
- Important considerations

Access the books and tracker here:



[www.resources.educationaboveall.org/refugee-response/let-kids-be-kids-activity-books](http://www.resources.educationaboveall.org/refugee-response/let-kids-be-kids-activity-books)

## I have the tracker and the book. Now, how do I select activities?

The activities are numbered from 1 to 100, but need not be done in sequence. There are three main things to keep in mind while choosing activities:

### Time Constraints

The minimum time required per activity is provided in the tracker. See if you have enough time to conduct it.

### Mode of Delivery

All activities can be done in-person. If you are facilitating remotely (eg: over a phone), select activities marked with the 📞 icon.

### Available Resources

The tracker mentions what is needed for each activity (if any) and with the minimum number of learners required. Select activities that you can facilitate with the things and the number of learners around you.

Additionally, consider the following as you select activities:

#### Start With Activities You Feel Confident About

Start with simpler activities and slowly work your way through ones that require more facilitation support (these activities are marked with 🧑 icon).

Additional considerations/tips for each activity is also provided in the Activity Tracker.

#### Balance Activity Types

Include a mix of SEL, essential skills, and games to provide a holistic experience.

Alternate between team-work and individual, collaborative and competitive, and high-energy and reflective activities.

#### Be Sensitive to Learner's Emotions and Context

Select activities that align with the learner's context. For example, if learners are new to each other, pick activities which would help break the ice instead of diving into heavy topics. Observe the kinds of activities they really enjoy and build on those.

Be sensitive to their emotions. For instance, if learners are experiencing acute hunger, be mindful about facilitating activities which mention it.

## While selecting activities, be mindful of potential triggers.

Though each activity has been thoroughly reviewed to minimize triggers, there still may be instances of it. So let us be mindful.

For example, if the learner was a recent victim of a fire, avoid activities related to fire safety and facilitate these at a later point.

If you are selecting emotionally intense activities, prepare a safe environment and be ready to provide support if needed. More on this, later!

A **trigger** is a stimulus—such as a sound, word, or event—that evokes an emotional response, often linked to past trauma, and can cause distress or difficulty in focusing on the present.



## Activities Selected! Do I need to adapt them, and if yes, how?

These activities are open-source, which means that they can be adapted to suit your needs. Let us explore some ideas on how to do this, through an example. Consider the following activity:

### 18 CREATE AN EXERCISE ROUTINE

Discuss why exercise is important for our well-being. Choose one exercise movement inspired by nature (Eg: stretching like the sun), one by an animal (Eg: hopping like a frog), and one that targets a specific body part (Eg: squats for legs). Share and combine the movements into a sequence. Adapt the sequence for people with physical disabilities (Eg: upper body stretches for those in a wheelchair).

Do 2 minutes of each exercise. Explain what your exercise is inspired by and why you chose it.



If this works for your learners as is, go ahead and implement it! However, if there is a need to adapt it further, below are some ideas.

### Learner's Skill-Level

**Simplify:** Break down complex tasks into smaller, more manageable steps for easier understanding.

**Enrich:** Add extra layers of complexity or creativity to challenge advanced learners.

Suggest simple exercises first (eg: walking). Learners think of one animal and imitate it. Then modify it into an exercise movement.

Learners do an exercise and others guess which element of nature it is inspired by. Sequence exercises by a theme (Eg: things in the sky, related to plants, etc.)

## Learner's Abilities

Modify activities to accommodate physical, sensory, or cognitive needs, ensuring full participation for all children.

### For visually impaired learners:

Call out an animal's name (Eg: elephant). Everyone does an exercise movement based on that. After everyone showcases their interpretation, guide the group to combine elements from different interpretations into a unified pose or movement.

## Available Resources & Space

Modify activities to accommodate physical, sensory, or cognitive needs, ensuring full participation for all children.

If there is not much space for movements, learners can get creative with standing/sitting exercises, or those involving their hands and upper body. If there are props available, such as a heavy backpack, try and incorporate them into the routine!

## Mode of Delivery

Adjust activities for in-person or remote delivery (through phones, SMS, etc.)

### Through a phone call (only audio):

Share step-by-step instructions. Eg:

- Why is exercise important for our well-being?
- Think of an animal and perform a movement based on it.
- Guess each other's animals and discuss why they chose it.
- As a group, create an exercise routine using all the movements. Is everyone able to do it?

## Increased Engagement

Introduce challenges or more discussions to make activities more dynamic and engaging.

- Create variations of the same animal's movements to exercise different parts of the body. Eg: A back exercise to crouch like a cheetah, or a leg exercise to run like one!
- Apart from movements, challenge each other to do a pose inspired by an animal and see who lasts the longest without losing balance!
- Repeat the exercises sequence daily by adding one new movement.

## Cultural Context

Tailor language, examples, and scenarios to align with the learners' cultural backgrounds and experiences.

Use locally meaningful or relatable inspirations for movements. For instance, for learners in Lebanon, try these:

- Olive Picking: Mimic reaching up and plucking olives from a tree.
- Wave: Sway side to side like the waves of the Mediterranean Sea.
- Baking Bread: Pretend to roll and shape dough as part of communal bread-making


It is important to ensure your adaptation of the activity **does not compromise learning or derail from its purpose.**

For example, discussion questions are crucial in each activity, While you can break them into smaller chunks to guide the discussion, they must not be omitted.





# I have my activity. How do I implement it well?

Let us understand how to facilitate an activity. The  icon indicates additional guidelines if you are doing it remotely.

## 1 Prepare For the Activity.

Read and understand the activity carefully. Refer to the Activity Tracker for tips on the activity. Gather necessary materials. Plan for the number of learners and how you would organize them. Ensure the learning space is clean and safe.

## 2 Be Warm and Welcoming.

If you are meeting the learners for the first time, introduce yourself and encourage others to do so. Begin the day with greetings and positive phrases (Eg: “I’m so happy to see you here today!” or “We’re going to have a great time together!”). You may also ask learners how they are feeling and share your response too.

Note: Do not try to “solve” their emotions. Just acknowledge and validate them. (Eg: Thank you for sharing how you feel.)

## 3 Begin with a Grounding Exercise, If Needed.

If the energy levels are high, and you need learners to stay calm, facilitate one of the ‘**Daily Routines**’ from the book. Else, you can directly begin.



We recommend beginning every activity with a daily routine, since you cannot easily judge the student’s energy levels remotely.

## 4 Introduce the Activity.

### **Start with a hook to capture attention, where possible:**

This can be a question related to the activity (Eg: If you could be any animal, which one would it be and why?)

### **Briefly share what the activity is going to be about:**

Eg: “Today, we’re going to do a fun activity. You’ll work with a partner to guide them to a treasure through obstacles using only your voice. It’s all about trust and communication!”

## 5 Facilitate the Activity.

### **Explain the activity with clear instructions:**

Break down the activity into simple, manageable steps.

Ask a learner to repeat the instructions to ensure it was well-understood.

Demonstrate the activity or do a trial round if needed.

### **Highlight Key Rules:**

Emphasize important guidelines to keep the activity fair and safe. In fact, ask learners what rules they would like to have, if possible. Frame the rules positively.

(Eg: We should not interrupt each other --> We will respect everyone’s ideas by listening to them attentively.)

### **Clarify Participation:**

Assign clear roles. For instance, some activities may require an observer, a score-keeper, etc. Get learners to rotate roles as much as possible.



Some activities may be challenging to facilitate through a phone (only audio). Use vivid language to describe actions. Ask clarifying questions to confirm understanding, while doing a trial. Consider this activity:

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## TRUST WALK



One pair creates a path to a 'treasure' with obstacles (The treasure can also be a hug from someone!). One person from another pair is blindfolded. Their partner should guide them to the treasure through the obstacles using verbal instructions only. Discuss with your partner:

- How did you feel when you were blindfolded?
- What was challenging about giving instructions?
- What helped you trust your partner?



### TRUST WALK THROUGH A PHONE (AUDIO)

We need two volunteers to help us with a trial round. Who's ready?

**HOSSAM AND TARA!**

Thank you for helping us! Now, can someone blindfold Hossam? If you cannot, Hossam, you can just close your eyes. Are we ready?

**WE HAVE PUT A CLOTH AROUND HOSSAM'S EYES. READY!**

Now, someone should place an object far away from Hossam. Do not let him know where it is! This is the treasure. Can you let me know when you are ready?

**WE ARE READY!**

Now, Tara has to guide Hossam to the treasure, only using her voice. She cannot move. To make this interesting, let us place obstacles along Hossam's path to the treasure.

**BUT WE DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH THINGS TO PLACE.**

No problem! You can create obstacles using your bodies! Hossam should reach the treasure without touching anyone! Can you arrange the obstacles?

**YES! WE ARE READY!**

Thank you for volunteering! Let us begin. Tara you may start now.

**AND SO ON...**

5

### Emphasize the main learning from the activity.

This will happen organically through the discussion questions. However, do make it a point that learners understand the core learning. The purpose of each activity is provided in the Activity Tracker.

# Strategies To Help You.

Here are some tips to help you facilitate the activities effectively:

## Try, Fail, Improve, Repeat

Do not feel disheartened if activities don't go as planned. Make a note of what worked and what did not. Feel free to collect feedback from learners too and try incorporating them. Not only does this makes learners feel heard, but also exemplifies a growth mindset.

Revisit activities with improvements. Repetition reinforces learning.

## Activity Discussions

Most activities encourage discussions with partners. This helps everyone feel included.

However, invite one or two learners to share what they discussed to the larger group too.

## Pre-Requisite Knowledge

If there is a skill or concept learners need to know to do the activity well, take time to teach or revise it.

You can gauge this by asking simple questions in positive ways. Eg: "Close your eyes. Show a thumbs up if you feel confident about multiplication and thumbs down if you don't.

## Reflection

It is a good idea to get everyone to reflect on their experience at the end of the day. They can journal their thoughts or discuss verbally. Below are some prompts:

- How do you feel?
- What was your favourite moment today?
- Did you learn something new?
- Is there something you would like to try differently?


## Grouping Children

Encourage learners to pair up with new people each activity. Here are some ideas:

- Stand in a circle. Assign numbers based on the number of groups. Eg: If three groups are needed, each learner in the circle calls out a number from 1 to 3, in sequence: 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3., and so on. All the 1s form a groups, all the 2s form one and the 3s too.
- You can also make pairing fun! Eg: Pair up with someone who has the same number of siblings, who is wearing the same colour, who you know the least about, etc.
- Create a rotation system through which partners rotate after each activity.
- Assign pairs based on your discretion, ensuring a mix of quieter and more outgoing learners or those with different skill levels to balance dynamics and encourage inclusivity.

## Participation

Encourage learners to participate gently, but don't force participation. Here are some strategies to nurture active participation:

- Allow them to observe first if that makes them comfortable.
- Offer other roles such as time-keeper, score-keeper, etc.
-  Assigning a leader and a co-leader to help facilitate activities, especially if done remotely, is useful. Ensure these roles are rotated among learners.
- Pair them with a buddy for a week or so, who can help them engage.

Remember that not every child will enjoy every activity, and that is okay. If their attention drifts, try to bring their focus back with an engaging prompt or by adjusting the activity to make it more exciting. You can also incorporate a quick physical break, when needed.

## Positive Reinforcement

Your words matter. Positive reinforcement is a powerful way to encourage learners to participate, try their best, and feel valued. Below are some examples of what this could look like:



- Acknowledge effort over outcome, even in competitive games.
- Highlight everyone's contributions and celebrate milestones.
- Give encouraging feedback and prompt reflection.

**I APPRECIATE HOW YOU KEPT TRYING, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS CHALLENGING!**

**I NOTICED HOW EACH OF YOU HELPED YOUR GROUP FINISH THE DRAWING.**

**YOU HAVE IMPROVED IN HOW YOU WORK AS A TEAM. HOW CAN WE GET BETTER?**

## Important Considerations.

The guiding principle, 'Do No Harm', is paramount. Keep in mind the following aspects of it.

### Confidentiality

Be extremely careful about the data you collect from learners as it can affect their safety. For example, in the activity 'Make ID Cards', where children create their own ID card for emergencies, personal information may be shared. Obtain informed consent from concerning authorities or guardians, wherever possible.

Ensure that this kind of data, personal stories or emotions shared during activities are kept confidential. Share concerns about a child only with relevant supervisors or professionals directly involved in the child's care and protection, and never disclose details unnecessarily.

## Child Safety

Ensure the environment is free of hazards and activities are appropriate for all abilities to prevent injury. Be attentive to potential emotional triggers in activities and address them sensitively (explained below). Maintain clear professional boundaries and avoid any behavior that could be misinterpreted.

## Response to Triggers

Given the trauma experienced by children, it would not be unnatural for some of them to be triggered with activities that help build SEL and Essential skills. While the activities have been designed and reviewed to keep them light and playful to minimize triggers, they may still occur.



**Watch out for these signs:** withdrawal, agitation, tearfulness, hyper-vigilance, rapid breathing, avoidance behavior, sudden physical complaints, aggression, shaking, clinginess, freezing or silence.

### In this incident:

- Check in on the child, by taking them aside. Avoid making this very explicit by keeping the other children occupied (Eg: clean-up, writing, continuing with the activity, etc.)
- Give the child a safe space to express their feelings (children when triggered are often unable to rationalize) and provide comfort. Validate and help them name their feeling.
- Offer some calming techniques (if applicable) such as the breathing exercises.
- After an appropriate amount of time, if the child is calm, circle back and discuss what happened to understand the trigger and give them a chance to opt in/out of the activity. Invite the child to participate in an alternative individual activity or give them a different role (observer, time-keeper, score-tracker, etc.)
- Be sure to inform the incident to the parent/guardian or raise it through the referral system, if applicable. for additional support from a manager/trained psychologist.
- Reflect on the activity and adapt it or other activities keeping the reaction in mind. If multiple children are getting triggered, change the activity and do some grounding or game activities to help reset the mood.

**I KNOW YOU ARE FEELING VERY ANGRY RIGHT NOW AND IT IS OKAY TO FEEL THAT WAY.**



### In the case of remote delivery via phone (audio only):

It can be challenging to spot triggers when facilitating activities remotely. Hence, careful attention and proactive strategies are required:



**Watch out for these signs:** Sudden silence or minimal engagement, repeated excuses to leave the session, abrupt changes in tone or hesitancy, frequent interruptions or avoidance behavior, mentioning physical complaints, speaking with frustration or urgency.



## If you notice such signs:

- Gently check in with the child without putting them on the spot. Offer the child the opportunity to step away from the activity temporarily.
- Guide them through a simple grounding exercise they can do while on the call. To ensure they do not feel singled out, get all learners on the call to participate.
- If the child is calm, suggest an alternative role that involves listening or observing, such as a time-keeper or score-tracker. Ensure you position this as a request.
- If the child is comfortable and if possible, schedule a one-on-one follow-up after the session to discuss what happened and provide reassurance. If needed, inform concerned authorities about the incident.

I NOTICED YOU WENT QUIET FOR A BIT. ARE YOU OKAY? IT'S ALRIGHT TO TAKE A BREAK IF YOU NEED TO.

LET'S TAKE A DEEP BREATH TOGETHER. BREATHE IN SLOWLY FOR 4 COUNTS, HOLD FOR 4, AND BREATHE OUT FOR 4.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP ME KEEP TRACK OF TIME FOR THE GROUP? THAT WOULD BE REALLY HELPFUL!

I'LL CALL YOU AFTER THIS TO SEE HOW YOU'RE FEELING. IS THAT ALRIGHT?

## Suggested Reading

The above guidelines will enable you to get started. However, to be familiar with best teaching practices and child safety and protection, especially in crisis contexts, we recommend going through these resources:

1

### [The Teachers in Crisis Context Training and Coaching Pack](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/teachers-crisis-context-training-and-coaching-pack-ticc/)

Save The Children

<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/teachers-crisis-context-training-and-coaching-pack-ticc/>

2

### [Guidance Note on Psychosocial Support: Facilitating Psychosocial Wellbeing and Social and Emotional Learning](https://www.mhpss.net/toolkit/mhpss-and-eie/resource/guidance-note-on-psycho-social-support-facilitating-psycho-social-wellbeing-and-social-and-emotional-learning)

Inter-Network Agency for Education in Emergencies

<https://www.mhpss.net/toolkit/mhpss-and-eie/resource/guidance-note-on-psycho-social-support-facilitating-psycho-social-wellbeing-and-social-and-emotional-learning>

3

### [Educator Wellbeing Guide](https://www.rescue.org/uk/resource/educator-wellbeing-guide)

International Rescue Committee

<https://www.rescue.org/uk/resource/educator-wellbeing-guide>



**Every child deserves a champion—an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection, and insists that they become the best they can possibly be.**

**Rita Pierson**

We wish you all the best as you inspire and guide young minds on their journey! For additional queries or support, email us at [innovations@eaa.org.qa](mailto:innovations@eaa.org.qa)