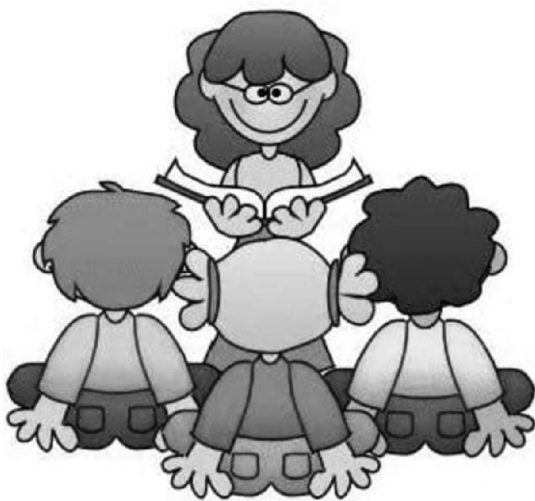


# Nurturing Holistic Development in Pre-Primary Children through Circle Time Activities

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## ABSTRACT

Circle time activities play a crucial role in nurturing holistic development in pre-primary children. This article explores three impactful activities that facilitate Pancha Kosha (physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and social development.) 'Simon Says' engages children in fun and interactive movements, promoting physical skills, cognitive processing, emotional resilience, and teamwork. 'Feelings Dice' helps children understand and manage emotions, fostering emotional intelligence and empathy in a safe and inclusive environment. 'Storytelling' during circle time enhances language development, imagination, critical thinking, emotional engagement, and social bonding. The combination of these activities creates a well-rounded and nurturing environment where children feel valued, encouraged, and supported in their growth and learning journey. Implementing these activities in pre-primary classrooms will promote a positive and enriching circle time experience for young learners.



Source: <https://clipart-library.com/teacher-time-cliparts.html>

## INTRODUCTION

Circle time is an essential component of pre-primary education as it promotes a conducive environment for children to learn and develop various skills. By incorporating a well-thought-out mix of activities during circle time, educators

can foster the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of children. It engages everyone through fun activities such as stories, games, songs, and structured debates to help them gain confidence and build healthy social skills.

Circle Time Success: Key Points for Effective Planning and Engagement

To conduct circle time in a pre-primary classroom one requires careful planning, a positive and engaging approach, and a selection of age-appropriate activities. Here are some steps and tips to make the most of circle time:

1. Plan: Prepare a weekly or monthly schedule for circle time activities. Ensure a variety of activities that cater to physical, cognitive, emotional and social development.
2. Create a Welcoming Environment: Arrange the seating in a circle to promote inclusivity and community. Use colourful rugs or mats to define the circle area and make it visually appealing.

3. **Establish Rules and Expectations:** Set clear and straightforward rules for circle time, such as raising hands to speak and listening to others respectfully. Reinforce these rules consistently.
4. **Start with Greetings:** Begin each circle time with a warm greeting, where children can say "good morning" to each other or engage in a fun greeting song.
5. **Use Songs and Chants:** Introduce songs and chants that involve movement and encourage participation. It can be a great way to start circle time on a high note and grab children's attention.
6. **Incorporate Movement Activities:** Include physical activities such as stretching, dancing, or simple exercises to promote gross motor skills and energy release.
7. **Celebrate Achievements:** Acknowledge and celebrate individual and group achievements during circle time to boost children's self-esteem.
8. **Time Management:** Keep activities short and varied to match the attention span of pre-primary children. Transition smoothly between activities to maintain their interest.
9. **End with a Farewell:** Close circle time with a farewell song or activity to provide a sense of closure and end the session on a positive note.
10. **Observe and Adapt:** Pay attention to children's responses and interests during circle time. Adapt activities based on their feedback and preferences.
11. **Be Enthusiastic:** Show enthusiasm and positivity during circle time. Your enthusiasm will influence the children's engagement and excitement.
12. **Remember, circle time is a special moment for children to learn, interact, and bond with their peers and teachers. Make it a fun and nurturing experience where each child feels valued and encouraged to participate.**

In this article, we will explore three impactful activities that facilitate the Pancha Kosha development (physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual and social) of pre-primary children.

### **ACTIVITY 1: Simon Says**

**Objective:** The main objective of the Simon Says activity is to engage children in a fun and interactive game while promoting their physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development.

**Setup:** Gather all the children in a circle, either sitting or standing and designate one child as "Simon" for the first round.

**Instructions:** The game starts with "Simon" giving simple instructions to the rest of the children, but the instructions must be preceded by the phrase "Simon says." For example, "Simon says, touch your nose," "Simon says, hop on one foot," "Simon says, clap your hands," etc.

**Rules:** The children must follow the given instructions only when the phrase "Simon says" is included. If "Simon" instructs without saying "Simon says," the children must not act. If a child mistakenly follows an instruction without the "Simon says" phrase, they are out for that round.

- **Physical Development:** Simon Says is an excellent activity to promote physical movement and enhance gross motor skills. Children are encouraged to perform various actions, such as jumping, hopping, clapping, and balancing on one foot, which helps develop their coordination, balance, and overall physical abilities.
- **Cognitive Development:** During the game, children need to listen carefully to the instructions given by "Simon" and process the information to determine whether they should act or not. This improves their listening skills, attention span, and ability to follow directions.
- **Emotional Development:** Simon Says elicits a range of emotions in children. When they successfully follow the instructions, they experience feelings of accomplishment, excitement and joy. On the other hand, if they make a mistake and are out for a round, they may feel disappointed. This helps children learn to manage their emotions, practice resilience and cope with minor setbacks in a light-hearted setting.
- **Social Development:** The game encourages social interaction and cooperation among the children. Taking turns being "Simon"

fosters leadership skills, as the child in this role gets to guide the others. Additionally, when a child is out for a round, they remain engaged in the activity by observing and cheering for their peers. This promotes a sense of camaraderie and teamwork among the children.

- **Inclusivity:** It's important to emphasize that Simon Says is a game for fun and learning, not for exclusion. Encourage the children who are out to rejoin the game in the subsequent rounds to ensure everyone feels included and valued.

Overall, Simon Says is a versatile and enjoyable activity that provides a holistic learning experience for pre-primary children. It is a combination of physical movement, cognitive engagement, emotional experiences and social interactions, thus, making it an ideal addition to circle time or any group activity for young learners.

## **ACTIVITY 2: Feelings Dice**

**Objective:** The main objective of the Feelings Dice activity is to help young children understand, identify and manage their emotions effectively, fostering emotional development and building emotional intelligence.

**Setup:** Gather the children in a circle and provide soft and colourful dice with different emotions depicted on each side. Emotions can include happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, and more.

### **Instructions:**

1. **Roll the Dice:** Each child takes turns rolling the feelings dice. When the dice lands on a specific emotion, the child identifies and shares that emotion with the group.
2. **Share Experiences:** After identifying the emotion, the child is encouraged to share a personal experience when they encounter that particular emotion. For example, if the dice lands on "happiness," the child might say, "I felt happy when I got a new toy."
3. **Create a Safe Space:** It is crucial to create a safe and non-judgmental environment during this activity. Encourage all children to listen actively and respond with empathy and understanding when their peers share their experiences.

4. **Empathy and Support:** As the activity progresses, children may share experiences related to challenging emotions such as sadness or fear. In such instances, emphasize the importance of empathy and support from friends and teachers.

### **Benefits:**

- **Emotional Identification:** The Feelings Dice activity exposes children to a range of emotions, allowing them to identify and name these feelings. This is a fundamental step in building emotional intelligence and self-awareness.
- **Normalizing Emotions:** By sharing their experiences, children learn that experiencing different emotions is a normal part of life. It helps them understand that it is okay to feel a wide range of emotions and that everyone experiences them.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Discussing emotions and experiences in a safe space empowers children to develop healthy coping strategies and emotional regulation skills. They learn that emotions are temporary and can be managed effectively.
- **Empathy and Communication:** Through active listening and responding with empathy, children learn to be more understanding and supportive of their peers. This fosters strong communication skills and emotional bonding.

In conclusion, the "Feelings Dice" activity creates a valuable opportunity for young children to explore and understand their emotions, fostering emotional development and emotional intelligence. By providing a safe and supportive space to discuss feelings, educators can equip children with essential tools to manage their emotions effectively, leading to healthier emotional well-being and better interpersonal skills.

## **ACTIVITY 3: Stories with Moral Values**

Let's dive deeper into the significance of storytelling during circle time for language development and emotional growth in pre-primary children:

- **Language Development:**
  - **Vocabulary Expansion:** Storytelling introduces children to new words and phrases that they might not encounter in their everyday conversations. This exposure to a variety of words helps expand their vocabulary and enhances their language skills.
  - **Language Comprehension:** Listening to stories helps children improve their language comprehension abilities. They learn to follow the sequence of events, understand cause and effect, and make connections between different story elements.
  - **Language Production:** Storytelling also encourages children to express themselves verbally. After listening to a story, they might retell or recreate parts of it, fostering language production and communication skills.
- **Imagination and Creativity:**
  - **Visualization:** Listening to stories sparks children's imagination as they create mental images of the characters, settings, and events. This imaginative process enhances their cognitive development and creativity.
  - **Storytelling Play:** After hearing stories, children often engage in storytelling play, where they reenact scenes or create their narratives using toys or props. This imaginative play promotes problem-solving and narrative-building skills.
- **Critical Thinking:**
  - **Open-Ended Questions:** During circle time, educators can ask open-ended questions related to the stories. These questions encourage children to think critically, analyze situations, and make connections to their own experiences or the world around them.
  - **Predictions and Inferences:** As children listen to stories, they learn to make predictions about the plot or characters' actions. They also draw inferences based on the information provided in the story, stimulating their cognitive abilities.
- **Emotional Engagement and Empathy:**
  - **Identification with Characters:** When children connect with the characters in the stories, they experience emotional engagement. They may feel happy for the protagonist's success or sad during challenging moments, building their emotional understanding.
  - **Learning Moral Values:** Many stories have characters facing dilemmas and making decisions that carry moral lessons. Through these narratives, children learn about kindness, honesty, perseverance, sharing, and other essential values.
  - **Empathy Development:** By relating to the characters' emotions and experiences, children develop empathy and understanding towards others' feelings. This fosters their emotional growth and social skills, promoting harmonious interactions with their peers.
- **Bonding and Social Development:**
  - **Shared Experience:** Listening to stories during circle time creates a shared experience for all the children. They engage in the same narrative, fostering a sense of belonging and community in the classroom.
  - **Discussion and Collaboration:** After the storytelling, discussing the story collectively allows children to exchange ideas, listen to different perspectives, and collaborate in group discussions. This enhances their social skills and teamwork abilities.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, storytelling during circle time is a powerful tool for pre-primary children's language development and emotional growth. By immersing them in rich narratives, educators provide opportunities for vocabulary expansion, imaginative play, critical thinking, emotional engagement, empathy development, and social bonding. These benefits contribute to well-rounded development and lay the foundation for a love of learning and reading as children continue their educational journey.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Abha Arora is an acclaimed Pre-Primary trainer and soon-to-be-published book (Primers for Pre-Primary). She has gained a prominent position in society due to her exemplary work in the field of pre-primary education during her career of 18 years. She can be reached at kapoor2401@yahoo.com