

## Group Discussion: What is it?

### What is the Group Discussion?

Group discussion is **a time for children to share** their thoughts and feelings after a game. There are 3 steps in a Group Discussion:



- 1 **Feel** – Children talk about how they liked the game and the feelings they experienced.



- 2 **Think** – Children reflect on their behaviour (during the game and in other situations) and make connections to human rights values.



- 3 **Act** – Children propose actions for incorporating these values into their daily lives.

### What is the purpose of the Group Discussion?

The Group Discussion encourages children to **think about what happened during the game and to draw life lessons** that they can then apply in other contexts. The Group Discussion gives children the opportunity to discover – for themselves – the importance of human rights values. It also encourages them to propose ways of actually living according to these values. The Group Discussion encourages children to fully participate by giving them the opportunity to exercise their right to express themselves and to be heard.

### Why is the Group Discussion essential?

The Group Discussion builds children's awareness and understanding of human rights values. Positive behavioural changes can be observed at different levels:

- **Development of positive attitudes**

Group Discussions encourage children to make links between what they experience in the games and their own lives. For example, they become aware that while it is difficult to feel excluded during a game, it is even more difficult and challenging to actually experience rejection in their daily lives. Drawing on the experience of the game, the children identify concrete actions to promote a positive group dynamic. Not only do the children gain greater awareness of how important it is to cooperate and to respect others, but they also gain the skills to live these values.

- **Development of self-esteem**

When children are listened to by a group, without being judged, their self-confidence will increase. They become aware that what they experience, think or feel is important and is worth sharing with others.

- **Increased participation**

Each child has their own life experience and their own way of thinking. This diversity is an asset to the group. When leaders take time to listen to the children, they can develop a better understanding of the children's needs and interests. They can increase children's involvement in the selection of activities as well as in decisions affecting the group. Building on the children's good ideas not only improves the quality of the activities, but also makes the leader's job easier.

- **Stronger sense of responsibility**

Group Discussions provide the opportunity for children to reflect on their behaviours. They learn to observe themselves in action and to analyze their attitudes during a game. They become more aware that their words and actions influence group dynamics and can be hurtful, reassuring, or encouraging to others.

## What role does the leader play during the Group Discussion?

The leader's role is to **facilitate the Group Discussion**. Leaders are responsible for:

- Asking questions
- Listening carefully to the children's ideas, without judging them
- Encouraging children to express themselves
- Ensuring that each child can speak and be listened to
- Being responsive to the group's needs and the overall dynamic in the group

## How will children react?

Children enjoy discussing and sharing what they experience, feel and think. When they feel listened to and confident, they generally express themselves with spontaneity and enthusiasm.

At the beginning, children may be surprised to be invited to take part in a Group Discussion. They may ask what the discussion is for. One way to explain the purpose of the Group Discussion is to present the idea of a body (heart, head and hands).

Over time, both the children and the leaders will become more familiar with Group Discussions, finding it easier to participate and enjoying themselves more and more.

## How often should the Group Discussion take place?

It is recommended that a Group Discussion be **held after each game in the Toolkit**.

If you repeat an activity, it is important to have a Group Discussion every time. A game will always take a slightly different course, and the Group Discussion makes it possible to express any new ideas that emerge. A new Group Discussion allows for deeper discussion and for reinforcing the learning from the activity.

## How long does the Group Discussion last?

On average, the Group Discussion lasts from **3 to 10 minutes**. Leaders need to adapt the Group Discussion to the number of children, their ages and interests. If the children want to continue the Group Discussion, the leader should encourage them to do so.

## Am I able to facilitate the Group Discussion?

Facilitation is a technique that can be learned. It is normal to feel a bit uneasy at first. However, with experience, both you and the children will find Group Discussions to be easier, richer and more interesting.

Facilitating Group Discussions gives you the opportunity to really get to know the children in your group and to better understand their needs and interests. Over time, it will become easier for you to facilitate Group Discussions, or any other activity, with your group.

Reference Sheets 14 to 17 are specially designed to help you lead Group Discussions. Please refer to them as needed.

**"You have the right to express your opinion."**

*Convention on the Rights of the Child  
in Child Friendly Language, Article 12*