QUALITY CIRCLE TIME

Quality Circle Time (QCT) is time for children to gather together to share their personal feelings and ideas about things that are significant to them. By showing children that their opinions count, encourage them to express their feelings and make real choices. You will enhance their self-esteem. QCT is an independent and imaginative approach used to support teachers in managing a variety of topics that affect the whole learning community. The circle format or arrangement is the symbol of unity, peace and harmony. It enables everyone to have a perfect and clear view of everybody else. Any time during the school hours is perfect for a QCT session as it is a team building activity.

Initially, the sessions should be weekly meetings lasting half an hour where children sit in a circle. Gradually increase to daily sessions of half an hour or till the children are engaged. A bright coloured circle can be painted on the floor of the classroom and the children can sit on that for the session. The group should not be very large.

Child development takes place during QCT. The children learn the need to behave in a group setting, have compassion for others and understand emotions, their own and others. With the child’s consent, rules for QCT should be set up. Activities should be explained to children and let them decide which one they would like to do in the first week. Let one activity continue for at least a week. You can make small variations. Always end the session with a fun note. A QCT session is part of the curriculum in the sense that it is there in your daily work schedule. But it has nothing to do with your curriculum themes or topics. Activities here should be different from daily alphabet, numbers or theme topics that are done in the classroom. In the senior classes, human behaviour, stress management, self-awareness etc can be discussed while the junior children can sing, dance or even pass a ball. The idea is to maintain the focus of children. It is very important to be sensitive when tackling negative behaviour. You as an educator or a facilitator should always be a part of the QCT group.
QCT activities suggestions

- **Passing a ball:** Let children sit in a circle, preferably on a mat or a cushion. You should be a part of the circle. Hold the ball with both your hands, talk to children about its texture, how it feels, its colour etc. Then slowly and carefully, pass or give it to the child on your right, try that you do not drop the ball. This sounds very simple but a lot goes on behind the scene. As the child holds the ball, he/she feels the texture, knows whether it is heavy or light, soft or hard, its colour etc. He/she looks at it carefully and intently before passing it on. In the process, the child develops his/her attention span, concentration, patience, fine motor movements, eye hand coordination, balancing, tactile sense, sense of weight, chromatic sense etc. Most important, the child is learning to share, bond with his/her peers, to give and take and to wait for his/her turn. In case you feel the activity will get monotonous, change the ball after 2 days.

- **Sway to soft music:** Let children sit or stand in a circle. Let them hold their hands high above them. You will be a part of the group. Play soft music and sway to the rhythm. You can suggest to children to close their eyes if they want. Here the child develops concentration, attention span, gross motor movement, sense of rhythm and music, patience etc. His/her interest for exercise or aerobics gets enhanced.

- **Follow the leader:** Children should take turns to come to the centre of the circle, be the leader and ask everyone to follow his/her actions. A variation in this game can be that one child is sent out of the room. The rest decide a leader and as the leader starts an action, the child from outside comes in. The leader has to change the actions while the child gets three turns to guess who the leader is. The children gain confidence, become expressive, alert and imaginative in a non-verbal manner and learn to follow directions. They expand their thinking capabilities, decision-making abilities, concentration etc. Children of senior school can play this game as well.

- **Memory game:** On a tray, keep a few articles that are familiar to the child. Let them see the objects carefully for about 2 minutes. Then cover the articles with a piece of cloth. Ask each child to name or draw at least 2 items. This will sharpen their memory and enhance their observation skills, attention span, concentration, communication skills, patience etc. The child will automatically learn to take turns or talk when it is his/her
turn. Children of senior school can play this game as well. They can write all the objects that are kept in the tray.

- **Figures with clay or play dough:** Let children sit in a circle. Give children a small portion of clay or play dough and ask them to make objects from it. Give them more dough if they want. They will look and learn from one another. They will enhance their fine motor movements, eye hand coordination, concentration, attention span, art skills, thinking capabilities, decision making abilities etc. They will learn to give and take, share and bond with one another.

- **Chinese Whisper:** Whisper a small simple sentence in a child’s ear and ask him/her to repeat it into the ear of the child sitting on his/her right. Let the last child say the sentence aloud. This activity will enhance the auditory or acoustic sense, listening skills, comprehending ability, verbal capability and the concentration level of the child. Senior school children can also play this game. They can use lengthy and more comprehensive sentences.

- **Who am I?:** Let children sit in a circle. Keep name chits in a bowl. Let the child on your right pick up first chit. Whosever’s name is on the chit, that child will speak a few sentences about himself/herself. Through this activity students gain confidence, they communicate well with people around them, develop patience, listening skills, verbal capability, learn to wait for their turn, understand what the others are saying etc. They will learn to share and bond with each other. Senior school children can talk more about themselves, their likes and dislikes.

- **Breath fresh air:** This is an outdoor activity. Let children cross their legs and sit comfortably. Talk about the importance of fresh air, the air we breathe in, what we breathe out, about our lungs and how they are protected by the ribs. Let them feel their rib cage. Now ask them to keep their hands on their knees, close their eyes and take a deep breath and release it. Ask them to do that 10 times. Initially, you can say ‘in’ and ‘out’ for them. With this activity they learn about the importance of breathing clean fresh air, they become healthy, learn to exercise, enhance their concentration, attention span and gross motor movements. They become more alert, attentive and observant and can grasp well.
**Draw:** After an outing or a picnic, let children draw what they saw, ate or liked. Give each child a sheet of paper and pencil. This develops their sense of artistic expression, creativity, fine motor skills, concentration, love for drawing etc. They become more alert, attentive and observant and can grasp better.

**Music:** Let children stand in a circle and sing songs they like. If you want, you can choose a topic and sing songs related only to that particular subject. Suppose you take a topic ‘Friends’. Then you can sing:

*Be My Friend*
*(Sung to “Mary had a little lamb”)*

‘Will you come and play with me, play with me, play with me?  
Will you come and play with me? Please be my friend’

This will increase the child’s concentration, attention span, interest in music and listening skills. It will help him/her appreciate music, rhythm and rhyming words. Exposure to music can help kids increase their coordination, understand their culture and relax. Those who have a high level of musical-rhythmic intelligence display greater sensitivity to sounds, rhythm and music. They make good dancers and sing and tap while learning, appreciate and compose music.