

# Getting the Most Out of Circle Time

As early childhood teachers, we are in the unique position for children to tell us about themselves every day. Through play, drawings, story-telling and many other activities, we invite children to express their feelings and ideas. In addition, as children observe parents and providers having conversations, they learn that school is a safe place to try out their new communication skills. With time and practice, children learn that school is a not only a place to talk with others, but to express their feelings with words; to be listened to and understood.

In your programs, you already have two important tools for encouraging an expressive environment – books and Circle Time. As you know, exposing children to books at an early age will encourage literacy and give them a chance to learn from pictures and stories. Books can also open up discussions about almost any subject, including some of the more challenging topics we encounter as teachers. Circle Time is a standard fixture in early childhood classrooms and usually involves a group of children sitting in a circle, responding to the teacher’s questions, or participating in daily routines such as calendar or sharing. Often, Circle Time also includes the teacher reading a story to the children. In this training, we will ask teachers to consider the unique challenges and benefits of Circle Time as an environment in which books and story-telling can promote important conversations with children.

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**Goal** To identify opportunities for positive communication during Circle Time.

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**Objectives** Participants will:

- Recognize the unique opportunities that Circle Time offers for communication in the preschool classroom
- Learn strategies to support Circle Time as an expressive environment
- Learn strategies for sharing books in Circle Time

## Method and Content

This workshop has four distinct sections, each designed to build on the other.

- Exercise One: Teachers and Reading
- Exercise Two: What We Know About Circle Time
- Exercise Three: Making Circle Time Even Better
- Exercise Four: Circle Time Action Plan

In Exercise One, we encourage teachers to explore their own feelings about reading and books. This gives the Workshop Leader a chance to learn about how each participant in the workshop relates to books, while encouraging the group to reflect on their own relationship to the subject of reading. The next step, “What We Know About Circle Time,” is designed for an honest discussion about the challenges and importance of this daily preschool activity. Exercise Three, “Making Circle Time Even Better,” provides an opportunity to discuss strategies for encouraging communication and engagement in Circle Time. Finally, Exercise Four, “Circle Time Action Plan,” is devoted to setting goals and considering next steps for improvement of Circle Time in each classroom.

### What You Need:

- ▶ Time – this training should take 2 hours, not including Workshop Leader preparation. For more information on **Time Management**, see the *Introduction to the Tell Me A Story Workshops*.
- ▶ A training space large enough to accommodate the members of the training to participate in large group discussion. For workshop groups larger than 20 participants, you may want to consider including two Workshop Leaders to help manage and respond to participant needs. For more information on considerations with **Group Size**, see the *Introduction to the Tell Me A Story Workshops*.
- ▶ Seating for the training group (e.g. semi-circle for more interactive exercises)
- ▶ Prepare a training packet for each participant with the following materials:
  - Handout 1: What We Know About Circle Time and Books
  - Handout 2: Making Circle Time Even Better
  - Handout 3: Circle Time Action Plan
  - A Workshop Evaluation
- ▶ A pen or pencil for each participant
- ▶ Seven large pieces of paper
- ▶ Five colored markers: Four for the participants to use in Exercise Two, one for the Workshop Leader

### Workshop Leader Preparation

Read through all the workshop materials first. Take time to reflect on your own responses to the exercise questions, focusing especially on your own preconceived notions about what effective Circle Time sessions should include.

Consider the fact that workshop participants may have different feelings about the workshop's themes, including expectations for how Circle Time is run, why Circle Time can be challenging, and the appropriateness of discussing certain topics with a group of children. Think ahead of time about the elements of the workshop that are most important to stress and how you can remain flexible in order to hear where your participants are beginning with this subject matter. For instance, if you have a participant who reports that certain strategies offered will never work in her classroom, ask "Why?" before coming to your own conclusions. That participant may be concerned with keeping the group under control, or may simply be uncomfortable with trying new things. **Everyone should approach this subject matter at their own level of challenge for making Circle Time a more expressive experience.** For example, if running smaller Circle Time groups seems like too big of a change, perhaps a first step would be to see how an additional staff member might be able to sit with the whole group during Circle Time.

**It is also strongly recommended that you observe your workshop participants in the classrooms during Circle Time before presenting this workshop.** These observations will give you an opportunity to understand what the real experience looks like, the unique qualities of each group of children, and the strengths and challenges each teaching team has. Of course, you would only do such observations with the teacher's full permission and support. Teaching teams should be involved in planning these observations, and be reassured that they are not being rated, but are merely providing you with a chance to plan a more effective training.

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### Preparing the Workshop Space:

- Prepare the training space by positioning chairs so that the participants can begin as a large group, and then move easily into smaller groups.
- Place a training packet on each chair in the room.
- Prepare one large piece of paper, entitled “Parking Lot for Ideas.”

Parking Lot  
for Ideas

- Prepare four large pieces of paper with titles listed below. These will be used for Exercise Two (What We Know About Circle Time).

Circle Time is  
when we...

Circle Time  
is important  
because...

Circle Time is  
hard when...

Reading books  
with preschoolers  
is...

- Prepare two large pieces of paper for Exercise Three: Making Circle Time Even Better, with the following headings from Handout 2.

### Making Circle Time Even Better

Preparation is Key:  
Choose the book carefully  
and read it ahead of time

Consider your group size  
and how to make it work

- Whole Class  
(10-20 children)
- Small Group  
(3-6 children)
- Individual Child

### While Reading the Book and Leading Group Discussion:

Draw attention to illustrations  
Use your voice, body language,  
and facial expressions

All staff members in the  
room should work as a team to  
support Circle Time

Productive conversation needs  
practice and encouragement

Model the behavior you would  
like to see in the children

Use open-ended questions to  
promote conversation

## Introduction to the Training

Workshop Leaders are encouraged to use their own words to introduce the training. Key points to consider are:

- Welcome the group and review logistics – general agenda, time frame, when to expect breaks, materials, sign-in sheet, etc.
- The topic of the training is “Getting the Most Out of Circle Time.”

*For example, you might say...*

**“Last time we discussed how to feel prepared for challenging conversations with children. Today we will turn to group discussion. The exercises will specifically focus on the importance of Circle Time and how to use it in order to promote discussion and conversation with the children. By reading books, asking questions, and giving children a chance to share their ideas, we can encourage expression and have a unique opportunity to create a community of children interested in reading.”**

- Describe the objectives of this training. Let participants know that the training will give them an opportunity to:
- Recognize the unique opportunities that Circle Time offers for communication in the preschool classroom
  - Learn strategies to support Circle Time as an expressive environment
  - Learn strategies for sharing books in Circle Time
- Explain the “Parking Lot for Ideas” sheet as follows: during the training, if a question, suggestion, or concern unrelated to the training exercise, but related to the topic is offered, the Workshop Leader will record it on the “Parking Lot for Ideas” sheet. Refer back to these ideas at the end of the training for further discussion as time permits.

- ▶ Review the *Training Ground Rules*, which are a short list of statements intended to promote a safe, positive environment for all participants. These can be printed on a piece of paper for all to see, but reviewing the rules and asking for group agreement is the most important step before beginning the exercise.

### Training Ground Rules

**There are no right or wrong answers** in any of the activities we will be doing today. Everyone's opinions and feelings are respected here.

**One at a time.** We want to hear what everyone has to say, so it is important to remember that group discussion requires strong listening skills.

**Learning takes time.** We will not rush one another when trying to understand and participate.

**Maintain Confidentiality.** While sharing our experiences we do not need to use names of children, parents or staff.

## Exercise One: Teachers and Reading

This exercise will give your participants a chance for an informal way to share how they feel about reading and books. While reading is a part of every teacher's experience, they may have very different feelings about reading, both personally and professionally. You may have some participants who love to read and others who only read when they must. Some participants may be very comfortable reading aloud to groups of children, while others may only enjoy reading to one child at a time. Still others may be uncomfortable with the level of their own reading skills, especially in regards to first and second languages, and therefore do not read for pleasure and avoid sharing books with children as much as possible. As the Workshop Leader, you can set the tone by saying that all responses to reading are welcome and will not be judged as good or bad. It is important that participants are assured that they should "start where they are" in terms of their feelings about books.

- ▶ In the large group, facilitate a discussion about reading. You might begin, "Before we think about how reading books can support children, let's think about reading in our own lives."
- ▶ Ask participants to give a show of hands for the following questions:
  - Who spends time reading?
  - Who reads for pleasure?
  - Who reads for work or school?
- ▶ Ask participants to think for a moment about the following questions:
  - What do you read?
  - When do you read?
  - Where do you read?
  - How are you most physically comfortable when you read?

The Workshop Leader may ask for volunteers to share their responses to the last three questions. It is important that everyone feels valued no matter what their response may be.

## Transition to Exercise Two

Use the discussion from the first exercise to inform the next one. Highlight which aspects of the reading experience are most meaningful and positive (e.g. content and story, where you read, the time of day you read, whether you sit or lie down, how reading makes you feel, etc.) to the group. Were there common themes? Did everyone feel the same way or were there a variety of responses? Acknowledge that a variety of responses is natural. Just like the children we serve, we do not all feel the same way about books or reading. The participants should be encouraged to think about their own reading preferences as they progress through the reflective exercises in this workshop.

*For example, you might say...*

**"Let's reflect on what we've shared about our own reading experiences. Many of you mentioned that personal reading is the only time you set aside to be alone. Others see books as a place to escape the stress of daily life. Some of you only have time to read what is required by work or school. Let's remember our own experiences when we think about creating positive reading opportunities for children. One of the places in the classroom where we do the most reading is Circle Time. In the next exercise, we'll think about Circle Time and reading."**

## Exercise Two: What We Know About Circle Time and Books

The goal of this section is to give participants the chance to share how they really feel about Circle Time and reading. Again, this may vary from person to person. You will get positive and negative feedback. Be aware that there are some challenges that you cannot address in this particular training. Still, getting everyone to share ideas will allow the group to discover and clarify what makes Circle Time and reading such unique and powerful tools.

This exercise will be used as a jumping off point to discuss the real challenges and benefits of Circle Time. Themes will be discovered within the responses in order to shift discussion to the benefits of an expressive environment overall and to advocate for the use of books as a tool to inspire and focus conversations at Circle Time.

► Direct the group's attention to the four statement prompts on the large pieces of paper, reading them aloud.

### 1. Circle Time is when we (activities)...

Make it clear that this question is asking the participants to describe what is happening in the circle during Circle Time and in the rest of the room (e.g. set-up for lunch).

### 2. Circle Time is important because...

### 3. Circle Time is hard when...

### 4. Reading books with preschoolers is...

- ▶ Ask participants to move around the room and write responses to each prompt directly onto the large pieces of paper.
- ▶ Stress to the group that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers to the prompts. This is a chance to discuss the real experience of Circle Time – so their honesty is essential.

**Table 1. Sample Responses for Exercise Two**

Initial statement prompt	Examples of potential responses	Themes for workshop leader to develop in the discussion
<p><b>Circle Time is when we (activities)...</b></p>	<p>In Circle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greet each other</li> <li>• Read books</li> <li>• Sing songs</li> <li>• Talk about activities for the day</li> <li>• Do the calendar</li> <li>• Go over the rules</li> <li>• Do a word activity</li> <li>• Talk about how to treat our friends</li> <li>• Take attendance</li> <li>• Play a game</li> </ul> <p>In the classroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up for lunch</li> <li>• Clean up from breakfast</li> <li>• Take kids to the bathroom</li> <li>• Set up art projects</li> <li>• Clean up from Choice Time</li> <li>• Help kids get into their coats</li> <li>• Talk to the Educational Coordinator</li> <li>• Deliver attendance to office</li> <li>• Have kids wash their hands</li> <li>• Set out cots/mats for naptime</li> <li>• Write notes from the morning for afternoon teachers</li> </ul>	<p>A lot of things are going on in the classroom during Circle Time.</p> <p>Lots of things need to be considered if any changes are going to be made to this time of day.</p>
<p><b>Circle Time is important because...</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It encourages a feeling of community</li> <li>• We have to do it</li> <li>• Singing and sharing books is an important part of the curriculum</li> <li>• It helps the kids settle down before lunch</li> <li>• It promotes early literacy</li> <li>• It gets kids ready for kindergarten</li> </ul>	<p>Circle Time is important because of activities in the circle, and because of what needs to be done in the classroom during circle time.</p> <p>As a fixture of the day, it is a consistent opportunity to connect with the children.</p>

**Table 1. Sample Responses for Exercise Two** *continued*

Initial statement prompt	Examples of potential responses	Themes for workshop leader to develop in the discussion
<p><b>Circle Time is hard when...</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other staff come into the classroom or ask me questions while I’m leading Circle</li> <li>• You pick a book that is too long</li> <li>• The kids think the story is boring</li> <li>• The kids can’t sit still</li> <li>• Kids are fighting</li> <li>• The group is too big</li> <li>• There is only one teacher in the circle</li> <li>• There are too many other things going on in the room</li> <li>• There are lots of younger kids in your group</li> <li>• There are a lot of boys in the group</li> <li>• The kids won’t listen</li> <li>• The kids won’t leave each other alone</li> <li>• A child says something about his/her personal life in circle that is scary or upsetting</li> </ul>	<p>Circle Time is often not honored as a time when the classroom is left uninterrupted – and yet it is seen as a mandatory, important activity. That can be a frustrating contradiction.</p> <p>How the kids behave in Circle is often directly related to what activities we offer in Circle. The level of preparation can make a difference, though we may sometimes have to let go of a preconceived vision of how it will look.</p>
<p><b>Reading books with preschoolers is...</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important</li> <li>• A way to teach them English</li> <li>• A way to help them learn about other kids</li> <li>• The first step in learning how to read</li> <li>• Hard to do in a big group</li> <li>• Hard when you don’t have many good books in the classroom</li> <li>• Hard when English is not your first language</li> <li>• Not my favorite thing to do</li> <li>• Wonderful</li> </ul>	<p>Sharing books is another mandatory activity that may hold a range of comfort levels for teachers.</p> <p>Book selection and prep are important.</p> <p>Tie to opening exercise, pointing out that preschoolers may have their own preferences about what, where, how, and when they hear books.</p>

- Once participants have had a chance to record their responses, reassemble the group in their seats for a discussion of the responses.
- Read responses aloud, identifying themes and developing themes for discussion (examples of discussion themes are provided in Table 1).
- Encourage participants to record notes on their own and others’ responses on Handout 1: What We Know About Circle Time and Books.
- Listen for themes that might lead you into the next exercise where the focus is setting the stage for a better Circle Time.



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# Handout 1

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## What We Know About Circle Time and Books

Work in small groups to respond to the following

1. Circle Time is when we (activities)...

2. Circle Time is important because...

3. Circle Time is hard when...

4. Reading books with preschoolers is...

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### Transition to Exercise Three

Use the discussion from Exercise Two to inform the next one. Acknowledge the strengths in current practice indicated from the responses and from examples gleaned from your classroom observations. Then highlight the areas that seem to indicate challenges for the participants. These challenges provide opportunities for change and improvement. Explain to the group that the next exercise will shift towards a discussion of strategies designed to make Circle Time even better. Remind them of the reasons they shared concerning why Circle Time is important.

*For example, you might say:*

**"Now we're going to shift our Circle Time discussion from observations to strategies. How can we make Circle Time an inviting place for the kids? How can we make it a time for conversation and, as you said in the earlier exercise - a place to build community? Let's look at some suggestions about how to make Circle Time even better."**

### Exercise Three: Making Circle Time Even Better

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This exercise provides the opportunity to share and discuss strategies for improving Circle Time. The goal here is to consider a range of strategies in order to respond to the range of participants' professional needs. Some teachers may be highly skilled and have a special interest in Circle Time or sharing books effectively. Others may be uneasy or lack confidence in leading Circle or planning a discussion. It is important to consider the range amongst your workshop participants while encouraging them to support each other.

- ▶ Direct the group's attention to Handout 2. Introduce it as a resource for addressing some of the challenges of leading Circle Time and encouraging group discussion.
- ▶ Ask participants to consider each one of the suggestions and open the group to a discussion about how the suggestions apply to their classrooms.
- ▶ Encourage participants to share any additional strategies they have found useful.
- ▶ Using the large pieces of paper prepared with the headings from Handout 2, record additional suggestions.

# Handout 2

## Making Circle Time Even Better

### Preparation is Key:

- ▶ **Choose the book carefully and read it ahead of time.** Take some time to think about your group of children, their developmental abilities, interests, and needs. Try to anticipate what the story might help them learn. Think about your own comfort level with the subject, vocabulary, illustrations, and length.
- ▶ **Consider your group size and how to make it work.** Is this a book, discussion, and/or activity you want to bring to Circle Time? Or would it be better to present it to a small group or one-on-one with a child? What are your goals for the activity? Here are some things to consider while planning the presentation of the book and encouraging conversation:
  - **Whole Class** (10-20 children). If you are reading to a large group, consider breaking out of the circle formation, so that children can move closer to you and all face the book. This may help each child to see the illustrations and print more clearly, and in turn, cut down on the number of children frustrated or fidgety. If you like, you can reform the circle after the story is finished.
  - **Small Group** (3-6 children). You may be more comfortable encouraging a conversation with a smaller group. Plan which children might benefit most from being together.
  - **Individual Child.** Consider sharing books with individual children before or after large group Circle Times. Some children enjoy listening to a story again immediately upon hearing it the first time. Other children are reassured by more personalized attention right before or after being in a large group experience.

### While Reading the Book and Leading Group Discussion:

- ▶ **Draw attention to illustrations**, especially facial expressions of the characters. Encourage children to use these elements as a way of better understanding the story. For instance, “What happened here?” or “It says she is surprised. Does she look surprised to you?”
- ▶ **Use your voice, body language, and facial expressions** to help the kids stay engaged and keep the story interesting. Try using a range of volume and emotion in your voice, as well a variety of expressions and gestures.
- ▶ **All staff members in the room should work as a team to support Circle Time.** If it is not possible for other classroom staff to sit with the group during the book, they can still support the effort. Let your teammates know in advance that you’ll want the children’s full attention and may need help if the conversation gets challenging. Other staff can do their work quietly, listening to the story from across the room and prompting children to focus on the story through eye contact or verbal prompts.

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## Handout 2: Making Circle Time Even Better

Page two

- ▶ **Productive conversation requires practice and encouragement:** Consider how much experience your classroom group has had with group discussion. Good conversation practices, such as listening while another person is talking, or allowing others to share different opinions, may seem simple, but can in fact be difficult rules to understand and follow. Do the children understand your expectations for how they must behave during a group discussion? For instance, are they allowed to share their thoughts about the story while it is being read or are they expected to hold their questions and comments until the end? Are the children expected to raise their hands if they want to speak? In order to follow such expectations, children will need opportunities to practice and your patience while they are learning. Expect group discussions to get better over time.
  
- ▶ **Model the behavior you would most like to see:**
  - Be focused on the book and the discussion. Circle Time can be a busy time in the classroom. Avoid becoming distracted by other activity or conversations.
  - Direct your attention to the child speaking and gently remind others to do the same. For example, one might redirect one child interrupting another by saying, “I hear you Richard, but Ellen is talking right now and I am listening to her. Let’s give her our attention.”
  - Make sure a variety of children get to speak. Nothing is more frustrating than attempting to wait one’s turn, only to have the turn missed.
  - Be prepared for some children to remain quiet. Try to provide these children with the opportunity to have one-on-one conversations.
  
- ▶ **Use open-ended questions to promote conversation,** such as: “What did you like about the book?” “What was your favorite part?” “Did you like the pictures?” Feel free to share your own responses to these questions after children have had a chance to share theirs.

### Transition to Exercise Four

Now that the group has discussed strategies, shift the focus to making some plans for next steps. Encourage the group to begin thinking about how today's discussions applies to the work in their classrooms.

*For instance, you might say:*

**"It's time to start plugging these ideas into the work in the classrooms. This last exercise is going to be about making an Action Plan in order to plan our next steps to improving Circle Time."**

## Exercise Four: Circle Time Action Plan

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In this final exercise, participants will combine their own reflections with the strategies discussed in order to devise Circle Time Action Plans for their classrooms. You will need to first divide the participants into small groups for this exercise. Allowing them to work with the other members of their teaching teams is strongly encouraged, if possible.

- ▶ Direct participants' attention to Handout 3.
- ▶ Ask them to consider today's reflections on what makes reading enjoyable, what is important and challenging about Circle Time AND the strategies that have been discussed in the previous exercise.
- ▶ Direct participants to consider their own classrooms, and, through small group discussion:
  - Agree on a **Focus of Improvement** for Circle Time in their classrooms. Ask them to consider what the overall end result to this improvement effort would be? What would you like to be able to observe in the end?
  - Describe the **Goals** necessary to achieving this improvement. Ask them to consider what steps they will need to take in order to improve in this way?
  - Set some **Strategies**. What are some strategies you could use in order to reach these goals?
- ▶ Keep in mind that the participants may be new to the process of creating an Action Plan. Be sure to move amongst the small groups in order to offer support and make sure participants are on task.

# Handout 3

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## Circle Time Action Plan

Date:

Classroom:

Focus of Improvement:

Goal(s):

Strategies:

**Table 2. Sample Responses for Circle Time Action Plan**

Action Plan Sections	Examples of Potential Responses	Workshop Leader Guidance in Developing the Action Plan
Focus of Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better organized Circle Times</li></ul>	What would be the overall end result to this improvement effort? What would you like to be able to observe in the end?
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be more prepared for Circle everyday</li><li>• Share a variety of books</li></ul>	What are the steps you will need to take in order to improve in this way?
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organize classroom team to make weekly plans for Circle Time, who will lead, etc.</li><li>• Review a variety of books</li></ul>	What are some strategies you could use in order to reach these goals?

## Wrapping Up

Pulling things together at the end of the training is an important step for everyone. As a workshop gets close to the end and people are feeling tired, it can be tempting to skip this part. Let people know that you will get them out of the workshop on time, but want to take a few more minutes to wrap up the time you've spent together.

### 1. Review Key Concepts

- Circle Time is a vital part of the classroom schedule and a golden opportunity to encourage discussion about social-emotional themes.
- Circle Time has to be supported by the whole teaching team and the program in order to be productive and fruitful.
- Experimenting with how you do Circle Time can help fine-tune this activity and encourage a more supportive climate in the classroom.

**2. End on a positive note.** Encourage teaching teams to continue this examination of Circle Time in their classrooms and team meetings. Suggest that they refer regularly to the Action Plans they created today to remind them of their goals and strategies. Remind them that groups of children (and adults) respond best to change when it is taken one step at a time.

**3.** If time permits, **review some or all of the comments written on the “Parking Lot for Ideas” sheet posted on the wall.** Consider responding to one comment, then asking participants which of the others they would like discussed in the time remaining. These comments should also be considered in preparation for the next training.

**4. Express your appreciation.** Let the group know how much you appreciate their time and hard work. Thank them for sharing their ideas and for being willing to think about change together.

**5. Make yourself available.** After the training, be willing to answer questions and respond to concerns on an ongoing basis. If a Workshop Leader cannot be available, an on-site staff member should be designated in this role and announced at the end of the training.

**6. Collect Attendance and Evaluation Forms.** Ask participants to sign an attendance sheet and complete an evaluation form. Remind participants that these forms are anonymous and collected for the purpose of improving future trainings. During this time, you might also want to title and date any large group work so you can save it for future reference.

## Extending Learning and Supporting New Skills

In order to extend the workshop's content to changes in professional skill and behavior, the Workshop Leader and administrators should consider these follow-up activities:

**Provide Supportive Supervision for Individuals and Teams.** Teachers need additional opportunities to discuss integrating books and discussion into Circle Time with a supervisor or a mentor. Reviewing the current list of Circle Time responsibilities is a useful way to decide what tasks can be rearranged in order to support Circle Time more fully. Teachers may also need more discussion in order to ask questions about how to employ the strategies shared in Handout 2: Making Circle Time Even Better.

**Implement Classroom Observation & Social Service Support.** Consider making Circle Time a regular activity for observation. Take notes in order to keep track of change over time and the outcome of new strategies. Make time to follow up with discussion of these observations with the teacher teams.

**Create Action Plans.** In order to target Circle Time as an activity for improvement, teaching teams and supervisors must agree on the steps to be taken in that effort. Make sure to set a variety of short-term and long-term goals in order to acknowledge all levels of growth and success.

## Workshop Leader Reflection

The Workshop Leader should take some time to review the training experience once it is over, read through and tally the evaluation forms, and review the results. Some additional questions to consider are:

**Was I prepared?** Did I have all the materials I needed? Was the room adequate? Did I feel confident with the topic?

**Did the training go as I imagined it would?** Did the group respond the way I thought they would? Were there any surprises? Were there any elements of the training that went especially well?

**Were the participants engaged?** Did the group size seem appropriate? Who seemed comfortable enough to share their thoughts with the group? Who did not seem comfortable? Do I know why? Did I get the feeling that the participants understood the exercises and materials? Who was present and who was missing today? Is there anyone I need to follow up with immediately?

**What were some of the themes that people talked about in this training?** Was there a group of issues that the responses and discussion had in common? Are any of those issues a surprise? How can I use those issues in future trainings to make the exercises more effective?

**What would have made this training better?** In hindsight, what could I have done differently? Why? How can I use that information to make the next training even more successful?

**Did I gain new knowledge from this training?** What did I learn? In addition to new information on the training topic, did I gain any new knowledge about the training group or individuals in the training group? Did I learn something new about myself as a Workshop Leader?



# Workshop Evaluation

## Title of the Workshop: Getting the Most Out of Circle Time

Location \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate how well the training met the objectives below:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Not Good
Objective 1: To recognize the unique opportunities that Circle Time offers for communication in the preschool classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Objective 2: To learn strategies for sharing books effectively in Circle Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Objective 3: To learn strategies to encourage discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Overall rating of this workshop:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Usefulness of information presented:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Usefulness of workshop activities:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creativity of workshop activities:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trainer's knowledge of subject:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trainer's presentation style:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there anything you would like to learn that was not presented in this workshop?

Would you like more trainings that expand on this topic? Yes No (Please circle one)  
I would like more training on:

Additional Comments:

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## Additional Resources

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For more support on this topic please see the following Family Connections materials:

**Short Papers for Staff:**

*Encouraging an Expressive Environment: Supportive Communication From the Inside Out*

*Fostering Resilience in Families Coping With Depression: Practical Ways Head Start Staff*

*Can Help Families Build on Their Power to Cope*

*Better Communication With Children: Responding to Challenging Subjects*

