

Unit 1

Introduction to English teaching activities for children



★ Learning goals

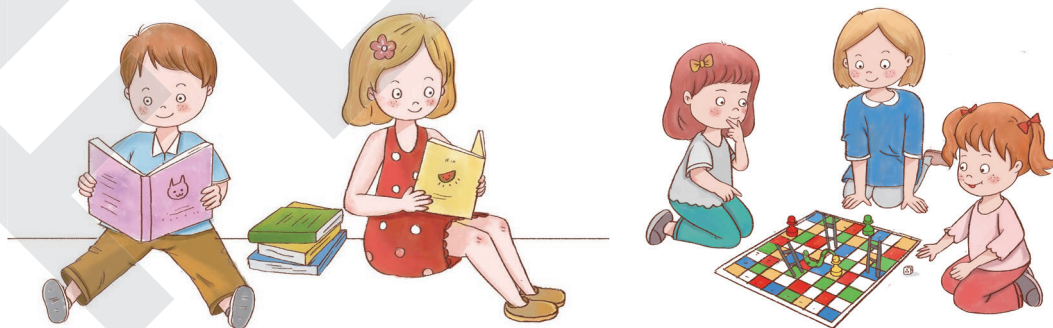
At the end of this unit, students will be able to

- ▶▶ have a good understanding of young language learners;
- ▶▶ have a good understanding of types and principles of English teaching activities;
- ▶▶ manage the class and group the children.

1.1 About young language learners

Are there any learning characteristics that are specific to children? Here is a list you can refer to:

- ★ Children are energetic. They need to move a lot.
- ★ Children are noisy. Allow them to be noisy in a positive way by getting them to play action games or speaking to each other while working.
- ★ Children are quick. They are quick to learn and quick to forget!
- ★ Children love to use their other senses like smell, touch, taste etc.
- ★ Children have boundless imagination.
- ★ Children are children. Don't expect too much and take your time.



Children can be divided into two age groups: the 3—6 years old and 6—9 years old. There are some differences between their development.

	The 3—6 years old	The 6—9 years old
Emotion	unstable, feel insecure, can't wait	begin to cooperate with others, have greater control of emotions
Intelligence	subjective, form symbolic thoughts, confuse fantasy and reality	more realistic, rational, and objective
Language	express themselves clearly	understand and use tenses correctly
Behavior	keen to communicate, physically aggressive without a motive, interrupt others to gain attention	become calmer, keen to read and write, admire teachers



Your Turn

Do you know any other characteristics of children? Add some to the chart above.

1.2 Types and aids of teaching activities

There is a variety of activities in English teaching for children, such as songs, games, dramas, stories etc.

English teaching activities may involve the use of many aids such as crayons, pencils, round-tipped scissors, paints, glue sticks, picture cards, balls and buttons.



Your Turn

What other aids are usually used in English teaching for children? Can you list three of them?

1.3 Principles of designing English teaching activities

1 Scientificity

The design of English teaching activities for children should be scientific. When designing the activities, teachers must consider the development stage of children and design activities scientifically and reasonably.

2 Fun

When designing children's English teaching activities, teachers should keep the principles of fun and variety in mind, which help to attract children's attention and ensure that more children can participate.

3 Creativity

Children's English teaching activities need to be creative, stimulating children's curiosity and imagination.

4 Safety

Teachers should always pay attention to the safety of the activities and the potential safety hazards in classrooms and activity venues, for example, the electrical wires on the ground, sharp desk corners, and whether all equipment can be used normally.

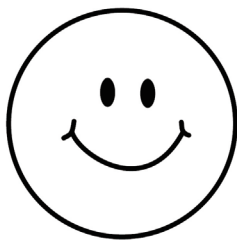
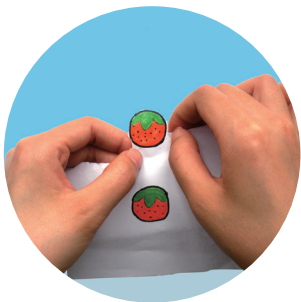
1.4 Class management

Attitude

Always respect children and be realistic about what they can learn, then the teacher's expectations will be realistic, too. Teachers should treat their students equally because young children have a very keen sense of fairness.

Help the children to feel sure by doing the following things:

- ① Children need to know what is happening, so always explain the situation to them if they have any doubts.
- ② Respect every child in the class.
- ③ Listen to whatever the children are trying to tell, even if it's hard to understand. Don't constantly or directly interrupt them.
- ④ Allow children to make mistakes.
- ⑤ Establish routines: To help the children speak English, it is a good way to start each English class by greetings, with questions like "Good morning. Is today Monday?" or roll-calls in English.
- ⑥ Give rewards: When a child has worked well or made a special effort, it's important to reward them to show that the teacher values their progress. Teachers can give them stickers or draw smiley faces on their exercise books. These rewards will make the children feel close to the teacher.



Classroom arrangement

Different lessons require different ways to arrange desks. Here are three ways to arrange desks in an ordinary classroom.

◎ Arrangement 1

Arrangement 1 works for individual work and whole-class work. It is also easy to do pair work if half of the children turn their backs to the teacher. However, it's not the best way to arrange desks in an English class for children.



◎ Arrangement 2

With arrangement 2, it's easy to create a feeling of involvement and make children feel relaxed and intimate. It's also good for children to take turns to play games.



◎ Arrangement 3

With arrangement 3, teaching the whole class with group work for some of the time, or with the class working in groups of four can be easily carried out. It's also good for doing pair work and creating a sense of participation.



Group work of children

It is good to know that not all children can do pair work and group work at once. They need to learn how to cooperate. If the children are sitting in groups of four most of the time, they can often develop a sense of group identity. So some regular groupings are recommended, especially for children in the 5—7 age range.

Children should not choose their groups randomly, because it takes much time and someone may be left out. They are normally grouped according to their English levels, because in mixed-level groups, children who learn faster can help the others.



- Always remember to use “please” and “thank you”—it helps a lot.
- Try to speak English as much as you can. Use mime, puppets or any other means to help children understand more. Remember that teachers can express the meaning by their tones of voice and body language.



Your Turn

If you have a class of 16 children, with 4 fast learners and 12 ordinary learners in it, how will you group them and why?