

Quick Ideas for Waiting Areas

(Outpatient Departments and Emergency Departments)

These are just some ideas to get you started. They can be adapted depending on the child's age, abilities and interests and what materials and space you have available.

- **Story time** – Bring along a story book or make up stories with the children. If there are older children in the area you could ask them to help tell the story with you.
- **Board game** tournament – set-up some games that don't take too long (like Snakes and Ladders, Guess Who or Connect Four) and invite the children to take turns playing each other
- **Noughts and crosses** (sometimes called Xs and Os)
- **Hangman** - one player comes up with a word or phrase and the other players guess the letters
- **Squares** (sometimes call dots and boxes or pigs in a pen) – starting with an empty grid of dots, players take turns adding a single line between adjacent dots – when a player finishes a box, they put their initial in the box and get an extra turn. The game ends when no more lines can be added and the winner is the one with the most boxes.
- **I spy** (I spy with my little eye, something beginning with ... / something the colour...)
- **Take the dog for a walk** - doodle one continuous line and then colour each section in
- **Draw around the child's hand or write the child's name** on a piece of paper and ask them to decorate it
- **Pretend play** – use simple props like toy phones or toy kitchen equipment to encourage children to use their imaginations
- Have a **silly dance competition** and see who can go the longest without laughing
- Play **'What Am I?'** with yes/no questions only
- Play **The Yes/No Gameshow** – one person asks questions and the others must answer without saying yes or no
- Play **memory games**, like 'I went to shop and I bought...'
- **Build a town** - use building blocks, Lego, Sticklebricks – whatever you can get your hands on
- **Categories** (sometime called Tutti Fruitti or Fish, Fruit, Flower) – come up with 4 to 6 categories like Boy's Name, Girl's Name, City, Country, Flower, Animal, Fish and ask each child

to come up with something for each category beginning with a particular letter – they get 1 point for every correct answer, and a bonus point for every unique answer that nobody else has said. As this requires some knowledge of the alphabet, younger children may need to pair up with a grown-up.

- Play **card games** - Snap, Go Fish, Old Maid, Beggar My Neighbour or any other games you know well.
- **Make paper boats, airplanes or fortune tellers** and get the children to decorate them