

Child Friendly Spaces

About Course	The Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) course equips learners with practical skills to support children's emotional wellbeing in times of crisis, displacement, or community disruption. Designed for educators, frontline volunteers, and psychosocial support providers, this course introduces the core principles of CFS and how to translate them into meaningful activities for children. Learners will explore the psychosocial needs of children, learn how to design safe and engaging CFS sessions, and develop their facilitation skills through realistic group scenarios. By the end of the course, learners will be able to plan and deliver child-appropriate CFS sessions in various contexts, including emergency shelters, schools, community centres, and temporary safe spaces. This course supports learners in building resilience-promoting, inclusive environments where children feel safe, seen, and supported.
Duration	8-hours
Learning Unit(s)	Learning Unit 1: Understanding Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) Learning Unit 2: Emotional Wellbeing and Psychosocial Needs of Children Learning Unit 3: Designing and Facilitating CFS Activities
Prerequisites	Participants are encouraged to review the following resources to build foundational understanding prior to the session: • PFA for Children – Module 3 (IFRC) Pages to focus on: pp. 5–27 • Hopeful, Healthy and Happy Toolkit • CFS At-Home Activity Cards (World Vision & IFRC PS Centre)
Class Size	Min. 10 and Max 20
Learning Outcomes	At the end of this course, you will be able to: • Develop an understanding on Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) and explain their purpose in humanitarian and developmental contexts • Explain the importance of emotional safety, routine, and play in supporting children's resilience and recovery

	Design and facilitate structured, age-appropriate activities that address children’s psychosocial and developmental needs in a CFS setting		
Introduction			
Time	Instructions to facilitators	Instructional method(s)	Resources
5 mins 9:30am – 9:35am	G1: Gain Attention Facilitators to: - Display the QR code for the pre-course survey and course reference materials - Instruct all learners to complete and submit the evaluation - Share name, background, and relevance to the course	Digital engagement	
5 min 9:35am – 9:40am	G2: Inform Learners of Objectives Facilitators to: Briefly introduce the group charter, programme overview and course objectives to set expectations	Presentation	
20 mins 9:40am – 10:00am	G3: Stimulate Recall of Prior Learning Facilitators to: - Distribute blank paper and colored markers/pencils - Invite each learner to draw their favorite superhero, character, or symbolic figure that they resonate with. - Once drawings are completed (keep it simple, 5 mins max), ask each person to: - Introduce themselves by name - Share who their chosen character is and why it resonates with them, especially in the context of protecting, helping, or inspiring others	Icebreaker activity, peer interaction	

Learning Unit 1: Understanding Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) LO1: Develop an understanding on Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) and explain their purpose in humanitarian and developmental contexts			
20 mins 10:00am – 10:20am	G4: Present Content Facilitators to: • Introduce the definition and purpose of a Child-Friendly Space (CFS) • Present the 4 core principles: Safety, Inclusion, Structure, Participation • Use visual examples of CFS settings (photos/videos if available) • Emphasize how CFS helps children cope, recover, and thrive	Presentation	UNICEF Guidelines for Child-Friendly Spaces in Emergencies IFRC: Children's Resilience Programme
20 mins 10:20am – 10:40am	G5: Provide Learning Guidance Facilitators to: • Ask: "Why do children need spaces like CFS in emergencies or stress situations?" • Break into small groups. Ask them to brainstorm: ○ What makes a space child-friendly? ○ What are key risks children may face in unsafe environments? • Debrief and connect responses to CFS principles	Group discussion	
20 mins 10:40am – 11:00am	G6: Elicit Performance Facilitators to: • Share a short scenario: "Imagine you are creating a CFS in a local community centre. What 3 things will you prioritize?" • Share responses and discuss choices made	Scenario-based discussion	
	G7: Provide Feedback Facilitators to: • Affirm key observation and offer clarification	Facilitator feedback	
15 mins 11:00am – 11:15am	BREAK		

Learning Unit 2: Emotional Wellbeing and Psychosocial Needs of Children LO2: Explain the importance of emotional safety, routine, and play in supporting children's resilience and recovery			
15 mins 11:15am – 11:30am	G4: Present Content Facilitators to: • Present typical emotional and behavioral reactions children may show during distress • Link to how these affect learning, sleep, behavior, and social interaction. • Highlight differences by age groups: 4–7, 8–11, 12–18.	Interactive presentation	Harvard Center on the Developing Child Childhood Trauma Toolkit – Australia
15 mins 11:30am – 11:45am	G5: Provide Learning Guidance Facilitators to: • Introduce and demonstrate the Emotion Wheel. • Ask learners to reflect on how this tool can help children name and understand emotions. • Ask learners: “What can we do when a child feels this way?”	Interactive presentation, didactic question	
45 mins 11:45am – 12:30pm	G6: Elicit Performance Facilitators to: • Divide participants into 3 or 4 small groups (20-min) • Assign each group a group-based child profile ○ Group A: Primary school group exposed to peer violence (ages 9–11). After a violent incident in another school made national news, this group became fearful and anxious. Some children ask questions about death or safety, others are withdrawn and easily startled. ○ Lower primary group with history of bullying (ages 7–9). Several children have been teased for their appearance or academic ability. The group shows signs of insecurity, avoidance of group work, and sensitivity to criticism. Some children bully others as a coping response. ○ Preschoolers from low-income rental flats (ages 4–6). The group includes children from families under financial stress. They exhibit separation anxiety, cling to teachers, and display difficulty regulating emotions (frequent crying or tantrums). Some mimic aggressive adult	Group discussion, peer sharing	

	language. ○ Mixed-age group post-pandemic with social withdrawal (ages 5–10). Children struggle to connect with others. Some are overly quiet, avoid eye contact, or disengage from play. There's minimal interaction and teamwork. A few demonstrate “shutdown” behavior during group activities. ● Ask each group to (5-minutes each): ○ Identify common emotions the group may be experiencing ○ List observable behaviors in a CFS context ○ Choose 3 CFS activities or psychosocial strategies to support the group ○ Draw a simple "Feelings Flow Map" showing: ▪ Group Situation → Emotions → Behaviours → Support Strategies ○ Each group presents their map in 3 minutes		
	G7: Provide Feedback Facilitators to: ● Affirm key observation and offer clarification	Facilitator feedback	
60 mins 12:30pm – 1:30pm	LUNCH		
Learning Unit 3: Designing and Facilitating CFS Activities LO3: Design and facilitate structured, age-appropriate activities that address children’s psychosocial and developmental needs in a CFS setting			
20 mins 1:30pm – 1:50pm	G4: Present Content Facilitators to: ● Recap: What makes a CFS activity “child-friendly”? ● Present a typical CFS session flow (welcome, core activity, reflection, closing) ● Emphasize: activity goals, facilitator role, flexibility & safety	Presentation	Save the Children – HEART Toolkit
55 mins 1:50pm - 2:45pm	G5: Provide Learning Guidance Facilitators to:	Group planning and design	

	- Ask learners to work in their existing groups (based on child profiles from earlier). - Each group is to develop a 1-hour CFS session flow tailored to their profile, including: - Session structure (welcome, warm-up, main activity, close) 1 CFS activity - Materials needed, rules, age adaptations - Safety protocol and facilitator roles - Groups may use flipcharts or whiteboards for visual planning and will later present their session plan		
15 mins 2:45pm – 3:00pm	BREAK		
120 mins 3:00pm – 5:00pm	G6: Elicit Performance Facilitators to: Ask learners, to present using flipcharts or whiteboards to present their session plan visually and instruct them to prepare a 15-minute dry run of the core stimulation activity	Group facilitation, group presentation	
	G7: Provide Feedback Facilitators to: Affirm key observation and offer clarification	Facilitator feedback	
20 mins 5:00pm – 5:20pm	G8: Assess Performance Facilitators to: - Gather learners to stand in circle, and ask them to share 1 sentence takeaway - Share some final thought and clarifications of the session	Interactive presentation	
10 mins 5:20pm – 5:30pm	G9: Enhance Retention and Transfer Facilitators to: Have learners complete the post-course survey to gather feedback on their learning experience	Digital survey	

	• Thank participants for their engagement and contributions • Close the session on a positive note		