



*Making  
Inclusion  
Happen*

# Circles of Friends

[www.inclusive-solutions.com](http://www.inclusive-solutions.com)

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Inclusive  
Solutions



# THE INTENTIONAL BUILDING OF RELATIONSHIPS

*Strong  
relationships are  
based on the  
accommodations  
we make to each  
other*



The Opposite of Circles  
of Friends...




Dumbo says it all...





Difference is cool...



A group of approximately 12 students in school uniforms (dark blazers, white shirts, and patterned ties) are posed in a classroom. Some students are standing in the back row, while others are kneeling or sitting in the front. A female teacher with red hair, wearing a yellow cardigan, stands on the far left. The background shows a classroom setting with bookshelves and a window looking out onto greenery.

In an intact group the pool of shared understandings is like a shared bank account of the group wealth..... Since it is spiritual or psychological wealth, *it does not diminish by being spent*. Rather the more lavishly it is circulated, the greater inner wealth and “security” each member feels to have.

Ted Hughes  
Winter Pollen



# Background

- ◆ NOT CONCERNED WITH WHAT IS “WRONG” WITH THE FOCUS CHILD ... ACCEPTANCE LEADS TO CHANGE
- ◆ NOT A BEHAVIOURAL APPROACH -LISTENS “DEEPER”.
- ◆ RECOGNISES THE ROLE OF THE FOCUS CHILD’S PEER GROUP.





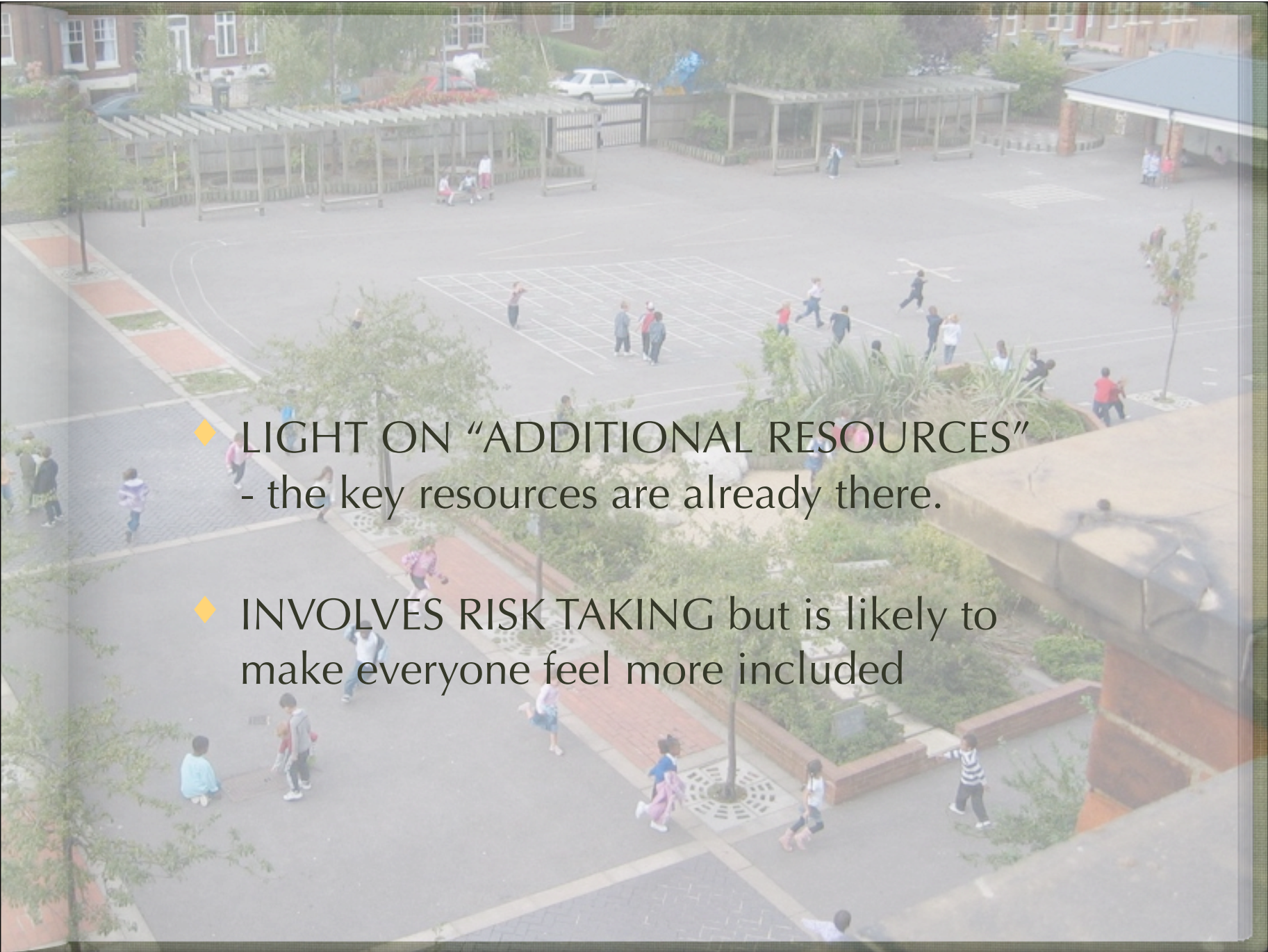
◆ RECOGNISES “PUPIL CULTURE”



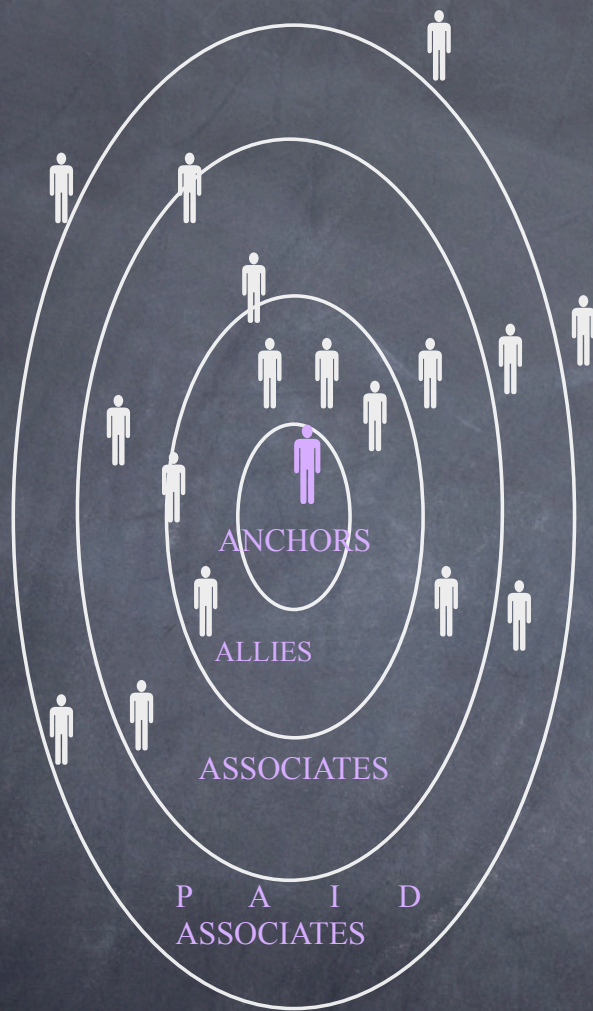
An aerial photograph of a schoolyard. In the center, a group of children is playing on a large grid marked on the asphalt. To the left, there is a red brick path and a small garden area with plants. In the background, there are several rows of red brick school buildings with white windows. A white car is parked near the buildings. The sky is overcast.

◆ A TOOL FOR INCLUSION AND BUILDING  
COMMUNITY



- 
- An aerial photograph of a schoolyard. In the center, a group of children are playing on a paved area marked with white lines. To the left, there is a long wooden pergola structure. To the right, there is a covered walkway. The yard is surrounded by brick buildings and trees. The overall scene is a typical school environment.
- ◆ LIGHT ON “ADDITIONAL RESOURCES”  
- the key resources are already there.
  - ◆ INVOLVES RISK TAKING but is likely to  
make everyone feel more included





Circles of Support



# School Strategies for enhancing inclusion, building relationships and tackling conflict

Circle Time

Peer Mentoring (combats disaffection or loneliness)

"Buddies" (1-1 befriending)

Peer Mediation (conflict resolution)

Peer Counselling (Bullying, Health Education)

Adult Mediation

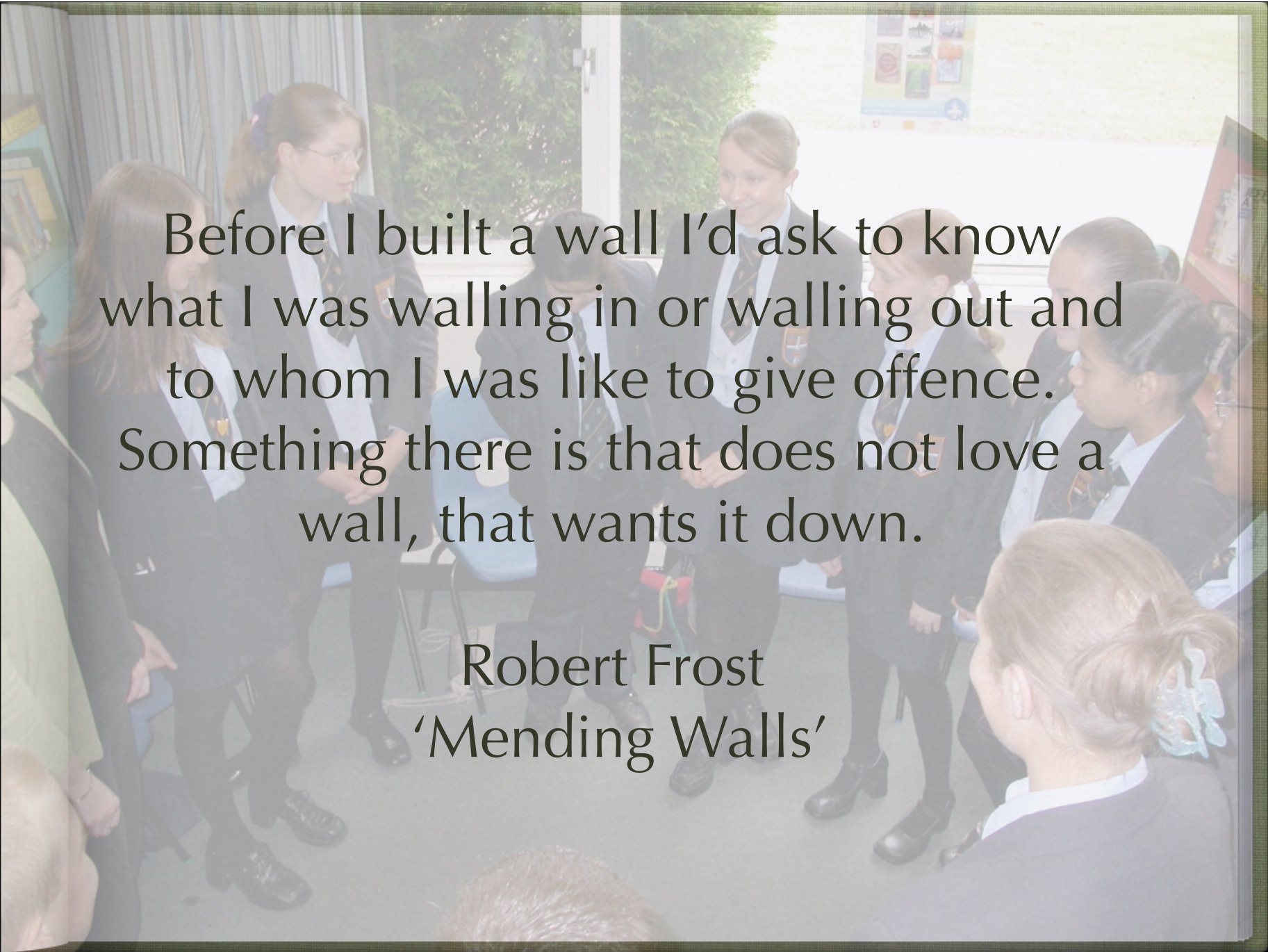
Circle of Friends

Restorative Conferences

The key resources:

OTHER PUPILS, are ALREADY and ALWAYS there.



A group of schoolgirls in dark uniforms are sitting in a circle on the floor of a classroom. They are looking towards the center of the circle. In the background, there is a window with a view of greenery outside and a bulletin board with various papers pinned to it. The text is overlaid on the image.

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know  
what I was walling in or walling out and  
to whom I was like to give offence.  
Something there is that does not love a  
wall, that wants it down.

Robert Frost  
'Mending Walls'





## **PREREQUISITES FOR USING APPROACH**

- 1 Key member of staff is committed to using approach and able to give sufficient time to supporting circle of friends. (Following initial meeting with class, there will be weekly meetings of circle).**
- 2 Child's parent/carer supports this approach being taken.**
- 3 Child accepts this approach being taken.**



# AIMS of Circles of Friends

- ◆ To create a support network for child
- ◆ To reduce child's challenging behaviour
- ◆ To enable child to deal successfully with victimisation
- ◆ To increase child's understanding of their own behaviour and give them more choices
- ◆ To help child make friends



# Jazz

“Its tough to define, but I know it  
when I hear it”

Miles Davis (1984)



My definition of a  
friend is one who  
knows all about you  
and won't go away.

Anonymous



**"Natasha is more sparkly when she knows William will be in school. She gets up and says 'It's a William day today'. She never wants to miss school when he is there, even when she is ill. They have a special friendship"**









# Whole class session

- ◆ Ground rules
- ◆ Talking about who?
- ◆ What we like about them?
- ◆ Where things do not go so well?
- ◆ Our own circles?
- ◆ What can we do to help?



# HOW WOULD YOU FEEL?

LONELY

BORED

UNHAPPY

EMBARRASSED

SAD

ANGRY

LIKE YOU DIDN'T EXIST

UPSET

LEFT OUT

INVISIBLE

UNWANTED

AS IF YOU HAD NO CONTROL

FED UP WITH OTHER PEOPLE

DEPRESSED

LIKE YOU'RE DIFFERENT

SCARED



# HOW WOULD YOU ACT?

BE BAD TEMPERED

RUN AWAY

BE ANGRY - BEAT UP PEOPLE

STEAL PEOPLES THINGS

SWEAR

TRY TO GET ATTENTION

DO NOT WORK

CALL NAMES

TRY AND BE FUNNY

THROW THINGS AT PEOPLE

CRY

DAYDREAM

GO AND HIDE

BREAK THINGS



## *Circle Meetings*



- ◆ *Why did you volunteer?*
- ◆ *What do we like about you?*
- ◆ *When things do not go well?*
- ◆ *Ideas to help*
- ◆ *Never diving alone*
- ◆ *Problem solving together*



# Circle Stories

- ◆ Being new
- ◆ From special to mainstream
- ◆ What to do when you don't know what to do...
- ◆ 'Can he go in line yet?'
- ◆ Nursery circles?
- ◆ Excluded 'stalker'...
- ◆ Feeling suicidal
- ◆ Who benefits? Andrew's story.....
- ◆ Predicted failure Arousha's Circle



Q. What was easy?

A. Giving up one lunchtime a week

Talking to Arousha, now we know her....

Q. How have you changed?

A. I won't panic around disabled people, I will approach them  
now...

I am more open to people now...

I feel more confident to communicate with people with  
disabilities....



**Never Dive Alone**





## RISK

Author unknown

To laugh is to risk appearing the fool  
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental  
To reach out to others is to risk involvement  
To expose feelings is to risk exposing your true self  
To place your ideas, your dreams before a crowd is to risk  
their loss  
To love is to risk not being loved in return  
To live is to risk dying  
To hope is to risk despair  
To try is to risk failure  
But risks must be taken,  
because the greatest hazard in life is to do nothing.  
The person who risks nothing,  
does nothing, has nothing, and is nothing.  
They may avoid suffering and sorrow,  
but they cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love, live.  
Chained by their attitudes, they are a slave,  
they forfeited their freedom.  
Only the person who risks can be free



Never doubt that a small  
group of committed citizens  
can change the world;  
indeed it's the only thing  
that ever has.

(Margaret Mead)





to be **INCLUDED** is  
not merely to be  
present but to  
**participate**, to  
**influence** and be  
influenced by, the  
community in  
which one lives and  
works.....

Mallory and New



# 3 Gargoyles of Change



FEAR



CONTROL



COMPLACENCY



'Its no good giving up.  
Keep on inviting him  
swimming.

I'm inviting James to my  
party.

I'm inviting James to my  
disco later this year.

I'm inviting James  
trampolining.'

The Listening Group:  
(Aged between 9 and