

**A LOOK INSIDE
THE BRAIN'S
PLAYGROUND:
USING IMPROV
GAMES TO
TEACH SOCIAL
AND EMOTIONAL
LEARNING**

**This book is a hands-on
tool that supports
individuals in the area
of social and emotional
development using
improv games.**

This book was created for support providers (educators, interventionists, parents, teachers, caregivers, family members, one-on-one aides, specialists, and school administrators) that work and interact with individuals of all abilities and ages.

This book is designed in a variety of ways:

- as a textbook to be used for college courses
- a curriculum for schools and programs
- a reference for training and professional development
- ice breakers
- fun activities to play with others

The number one goal of this book is for anyone to just pick it up and begin using it, professionally or for enjoyment.

The Brain's Playground: Using Improv Games To Teach Social and Emotional Learning can be incorporated into many areas such as Education, Special Education, Communication, Psychology, Business, Theater, Healing Arts, and with Friends and Family.

Connection Activities

In this book, improv games are tools that help individuals learn and connect with one another while having fun in all settings.



Connection Activities are created when an improv game is connected to a Social and Emotional Learning Competency and social skills are worked on using an improv game.

Each Connection Activity is designed to allow all individuals to work on social skills in a fun and engaging way.

Connection Activities meet individuals where they are and build on the skills they already have.

For each Connection Activity, accommodations are provided for examples of how to incorporate individuals with different physical and communication abilities.

Questions for Reflection are also provided to explore deeper into the skills taught in the Connection Activities.



PLAYING A CONNECTION ACTIVITY

If you want to jump right in

Start on page 9 for an introduction to what Connection Activities are.

Continue to read pages
10-11

to get an idea of what happens during Connection Activities.



A quick way to decide which Connection Activity to start with:

- Go to pages 12- 14 for a Connection Activities Chart. In the chart:
 - Each Connection Activity is grouped into a Social and Emotional Learning Competency:
 - Social Awareness
 - Relationship Skills
 - Self-Management
 - Responsible Decision-Making
 - Self-Awareness
 - Each Connection Activity is listed with specific skills of focus.
- Pick a competency or a skill you want to work on.
- Then find the Connection Activity on pages 17- 116.

EACH CONNECTION ACTIVITY IS BROKEN DOWN THE SAME

The Connection Activities are numbered to help you access them easily (pages 17-116).

- If you want to jump right in, go to the Improv Game Section of the Connection Activity and follow the instructions.
- If you want to find out the specifics of the Connection Activity, read through all of the sections.

Objective and Competency: focus on skills

Instructions: step-by-step how to play the improv game

Accommodations: different ways for individuals of all abilities to play

True story: how the Connection Activity has been played before

Example Questions: Suggestions on what you can reflect on after playing the Connection Activity

Another way you can start

- On page 138, complete a Pre-Assessment Form
 - This form can be completed by reflecting on your own skills to know which Social and Emotional Competency (social skill) to focus on.
 - Or you can complete the Pre-Assessment form on another individual to give you direction on which skills to build on when working with them.
- Once the form is completed, you can use the information to determine which Connection Activity to play.

For example

After you have completed the Assessment:

- Look to see what was marked as skills to build on.
 - Say in Section 1 Self-Awareness you marked Recognizing strengths as a skill to build on.
 - You would go back to page 14 and choose one of the Connection Activities checked (#41, #42, #43, or #44).
 - Then go to the respected page that the Connection Activity is described on (pages 17-166).
 - Read the instructions and you can begin to play the Connection Activity.

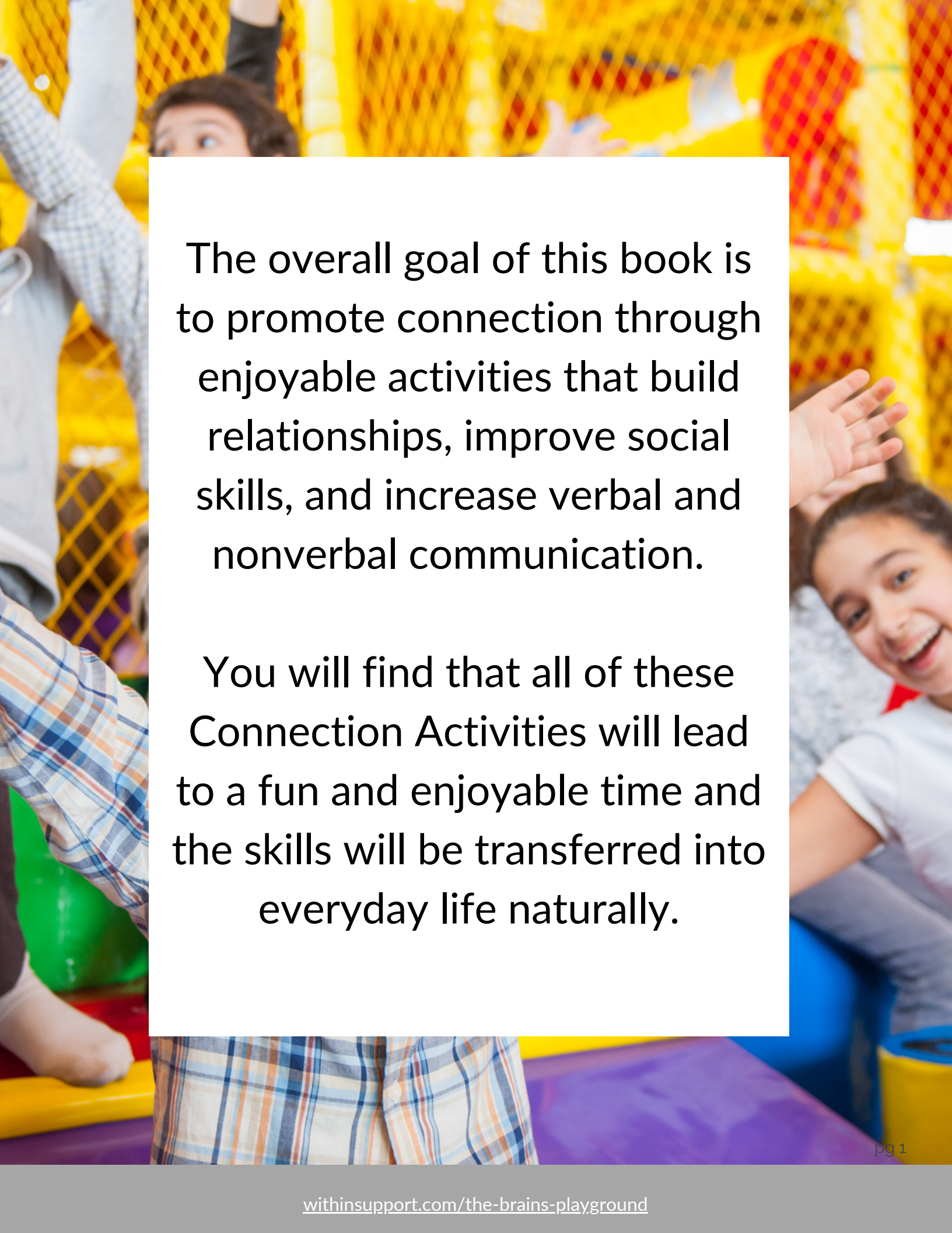
*Note: It is important to also review and play Connection Activities that are strengths (yours or others) to keep those social skills strong as well.

This whole textbook is worth a read:

You will learn valuable information such as:

- What Social and Emotional Learning Competencies are?
- What the Building Connections Method is?
- The research behind how Connection Activities were created.
- Social and Emotional Skills Assessments Chapter 7 (page 137)
- How to be in the moment when teaching and using social skills in all areas of your life!



A vibrant, colorful playground scene with children playing. The background is filled with yellow and red mesh structures. In the foreground, a child in a plaid shirt is visible on the left, and a smiling girl in a white shirt is on the right. The overall atmosphere is bright and joyful.

The overall goal of this book is to promote connection through enjoyable activities that build relationships, improve social skills, and increase verbal and nonverbal communication.

You will find that all of these Connection Activities will lead to a fun and enjoyable time and the skills will be transferred into everyday life naturally.

Thank You!

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