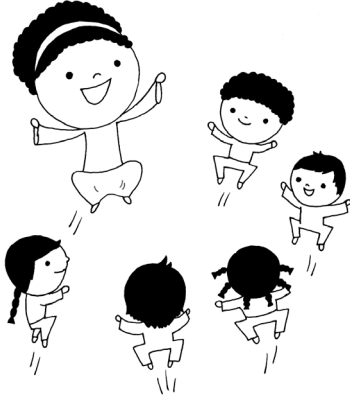


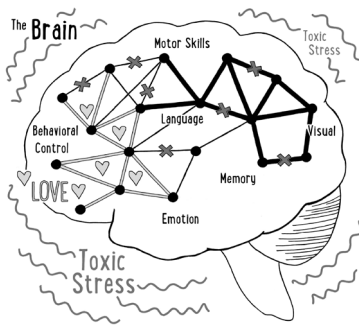
SAFE HEALING AND LEARNING SPACES TOOLKIT

What is a Safe Healing and Learning Space?



A Safe Healing and Learning Space (SHLS) is a secure, caring and predictable place where children and adolescents living in conflict and crisis settings can learn, develop and be protected. Research shows that regular access to caring and predictable learning spaces, combined with a safe and supportive home environment, can have a profound and lasting impact on children's learning and well-being. To be effective, the activities and lessons that take place in an SHLS must include an explicit focus on social and emotional learning, along with more traditional academic skills, and must be delivered by a Facilitator who is supportive, responsive and has foundational knowledge in the content being taught.

What are the outcomes of an SHLS?



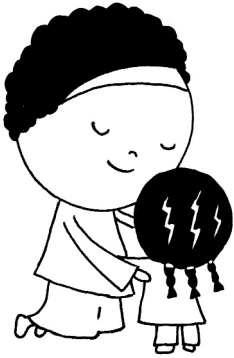
During conflict and crisis, children are exposed to multiple and severe adversities, such as violence, abuse, displacement and an absence of support in the home and community. Frequent or prolonged exposure to such adversities without protective adult relationships can result in a form of stress known as toxic stress. Unaddressed, toxic stress can have a damaging effect on children's brain development and, over time, can have cumulative effects on their overall health and well-being. But evidence shows that ensuring children have a safe, predictable environment with supportive adult relationships is a powerful way to mitigate or reverse the effects of toxic stress.

The SHLS Toolkit was made possible by the generous support of the American people through the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). The content and conclusions are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.



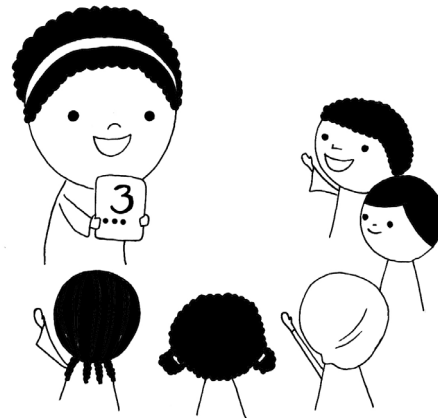
An SHLS program seeks to achieve multiple outcomes for children, including improvements in social and emotional skills and reading and math outcomes; and reductions in emotional distress and violence in the home. Achieving these outcomes requires strengthening the knowledge and skills of SHLS staff and parents to create a home and learning environment conducive to children's healthy development and well-being.

What makes the SHLS Toolkit unique?



The SHLS Toolkit is a timely and important contribution to the global resource base available to child protection and education practitioners:

1. The Toolkit provides **all of the content needed** to initiate an SHLS in an emergency setting. The content is holistic, including tools for social-emotional learning, reading and math, and parenting support.¹
2. The tools are **evidence-based and practitioner-tested**, developed by the IRC's in-house technical experts, field tested with displaced communities and frontline staff in Nigeria, Chad and Iraq, and refined through feedback from academic and peer reviewers.²
3. Materials are **open source, user-friendly and designed for managers and facilitators** in the form of structured yet adaptable training and learning content, ready for immediate download and use at SHLS.rescue.org.








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1. Reed, R., Fazel, M., Jones, L., Panter-Brick, C. and Stein, A. 2012. Mental health of displaced and refugee children resettled in low-income and middle-income countries: Risk and protective factors. *The Lancet*, 379: pp. 250–65.
 2. Ager, A. and Metzler, J. 2012. *Child friendly spaces: A structured review of the evidence base*; see also *Key concepts: Toxic stress*. Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University.



What is inside the SHLS Toolkit?

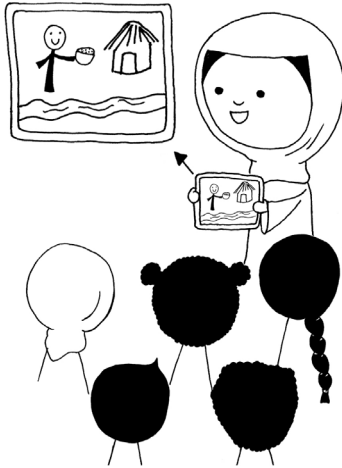
The SHLS Toolkit provides frontline humanitarian staff with practical implementation guidance, adaptable sample tools, comprehensive training materials, and scripted instructional content. Resources are provided for a 9-month program, and applicable in both rural and urban areas, based on locally-defined needs and priorities. The table below provides an overview of the tools included in the SHLS Toolkit and is followed by a brief description of each component.³

	SHLS Approach	Social-Emotional Learning	Math	Reading	Parenting Skills
Tools					
	Manager's Guide				
	Foundational Training – Trainer's Manual	SEL Trainer's Manual	Math Trainer's Manual*	Reading Trainer's Manual*	Parenting Skills Trainer's Manual
	Foundational Training – Trainee's Handbook	SEL Trainee's Handbook	Math Trainee's Handbook*	Reading Trainee's Handbook*	
		SEL Lesson Plan Bank	Math Lesson Plan Bank	Reading Lesson Plan Bank	Parenting Skills Curriculum for Parents of Children Ages 6–11
					Parenting Skills Curriculum for Parents of Adolescents
		SEL Games Bank			

* Available in English and French.

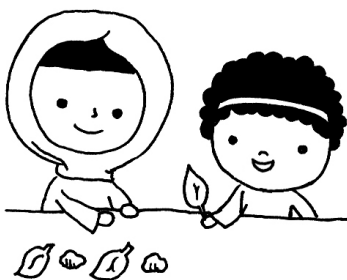
3. Please refer to the SHLS Manager's Guide and respective Trainer's Manuals for detailed information about each intervention and the tools provided for delivering the content.

- The **Safe Healing and Learning Spaces Approach** is cross-cutting. It includes practical guidance and adaptable tools to set-up, monitor and evaluate the implementation of an SHLS. It also includes foundational training on the concept of child well-being, essential child protection information and key pedagogical practices required for SHLS Leaders and Facilitators. *Save the Children's Psychological First Aid Training Manual for Children Practitioners* is an integral piece of this component.



- The **Social-Emotional Learning Intervention** is at the core of an SHLS program, and is designed to strengthen the 5 SEL competencies – Brain Building, Emotion Regulation, Positive Social Skills, Conflict Resolution and Perseverance – for children ages 6–11. The intervention is delivered through structured 2-hour sessions, that include a 15-minute opening activity, a 30-minute SEL lesson, 60 minutes of SEL Games and a 15-minute closing activity. Mindfulness is part of every SEL Lesson.
- The **Reading and Math Intervention** is designed as 30-minute reading lessons and 30-minute math lessons, totaling 1 hour, for children ages 6–11 who are at the ‘emerging’ ability level. The content seeks to develop a love for reading and seven reading competencies – Print Concepts, Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Comprehension, Fluency and Writing, along with a love for problem solving and four math competences – Number Sense, Operations, Measurement and Data, and Geometry. There is also a linguistic translation of the reading and math training materials into French.
- The **Parenting Skills Intervention** aims to promote the well-being of children and adolescents through improving parents’ stress management, fostering positive parenting practices and providing parents with strategies to support children’s and adolescents’ psychosocial needs. Caregivers attend a series of 12 interactive sessions (13 for parents of adolescents), appropriate for higher and lower literacy populations in diverse contexts.

TELL US HOW YOU USE THE SHLS TOOLKIT!



The SHLS Toolkit has been developed for use, adaptation and contextualization by child protection and education practitioners. All resources can be viewed and downloaded at [SHLS.rescue.org](https://shls.rescue.org).

The IRC is eager to learn from the experience of organizations using these tools. Please reach out to children@rescue.org for more information and to share your feedback!