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13 November 2014

Dear Friends,

We hope you enjoy this week's edition of the Newsflash!

Sincerely,

The Firelight Team

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(Resource) Overview of the Importance of Play

## **What is Play**

Play is recreation, amusement or fun. It is grace, innocence, wonder and creativity. Being able to play is one of the developmental tasks of childhood. Children need time to play for the sake of playing. They also need support of adults to become master players. Play is characterized by the active engagement of the players. Most experts agree that children's play can be divided into categories

- Active play - running, jumping, climbing, riding, and other use of physical activity
- Quiet play - reading, coloring, creating things with one's hands
- Cooperative or social play - games and activities with other children
- Solitary play - drawing, imagining, or doing something alone
- Manipulative play - putting together puzzles, building with blocs, cutting and pasting, or any activity that involves eye-hand coordination or fine motor skills
- Creative play - painting, molding, solving problems, making music, telling stories or other activities that stimulate children's imagination
- Dramatic play - dress up, make believe, or any play that involves pretending

## **Why Play is Important**

The developmental literature is clear: play stimulates physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development in the early years. Play and learning are inseparable in early

childhood development. The learning in play is integrated, powerful, and largely invisible to the untrained eye. Much of the learning through play happens without direct teaching. It is learning that is important to the learners. Children don't play in order to learn although they are learning while they are playing.

- Block building, sand and water play, for example plays the foundation for mathematical thinking and problem solving
- Rough and tumble play develops social and emotional self-regulation
- Imaginative play fosters creativity and flexibility in thinking

### **Promote and Value Play**

In order to promote play for children:

- Create safe play environments and toys. Play spaces should be clean and safe for all children
- Provide a wide variety of play experiences and materials. Young children learn by trying new things, including touching, talking, singing, dancing, exploring, listening
- Allow time for free play in which children choose their play. Balance that with structured play, which give children more guidance and direction of what they should do
- Adopt a playful attitude. Play with children. And be playful yourself to model playing
- Show children that you value play - notice and comment on healthy play to show that you recognize the importance of play
- Use play as a means to teach and support children's development

Monitor play and step in when conflict or challenges arise

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(Resource) Posters on Play, Communicating with Children, and The Grieving Process

A collection of 3 posters, each in English and isiZulu, illustrating the importance of play for children, how to communicate with children to show you care, and the stages in the grieving process. Posters were developed by Dlalanathi (meaning play with us). Dlalanathi's mission is to bring hope and healing to children, their caregivers, families, and other caring community members using play for communication in communities affected by HIV, poverty, and loss.

To view the posters, visit: <http://bit.ly/1Ebw2KE>

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(Resource) Play in the Early Years: Key to School Success

A publication by the Action Alliance for Children. The overview provides a simple guide of

how learning can be integrated into early childhood development programs to support children's success in school.

View or download the publication at <http://bit.ly/1qtWZ62>

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(Accepting Applications) RESURJ - Africa Feminist Dialogue, Applications for Participation

Between January 12th-15th 2015, RESURJ will host an Africa Feminist Dialogue with the aim of bringing younger feminist activists together to mobilize constituencies for Sexual and Reproductive Justice at national and regional levels.

The meeting will take place in Accra, Ghana we are seeking applications from young women who meet the following criteria:

- Age 18-35
- Self identify as a feminist
- Ability to speak, read and write in English
- Affiliated with an institution working in any country within the African continent
- Currently lives and works in any of the 53 countries in the African continent
- Passionate about and committed to girls' and women's human rights
- Significant experience advocating for the Sexual and Reproductive Rights of adolescents girls and young women
- Strong links and connections to decisions makers at national and regional level
- Committed to participating in the 3.5 day meeting and doing all pre and post meeting tasks and activities (please note: participants will be expected to prepare a short presentation on a topic related to their national contexts prior to the meeting)
- Able to arrive on the 11th and depart on the 15th of January
- Able to secure the necessary travel documents, including visa, to travel to Ghana

All travel, accommodation and visa expenses will be covered by RESURJ

**Deadline for applications November 26th**

To apply, visit: <http://bit.ly/13SGFqT>

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(Call for Applications) USAID Funds for Vulnerable Population in Rwanda

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications from qualified and eligible organizations for a five-year activity to improve and sustain the health and social well being of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) and People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) in Rwanda.

## **Program Objectives**

- Increased capacities of families and communities to provide better care for vulnerable individuals.
- Improved household and community care and support practices for vulnerable populations, especially children.
- Increased access to education and social services for vulnerable populations.

The funds available are approximately \$37 million to be allocated over the 5-year period. The estimated start date for funds allocation is on 24 February 2015. Applicants are required to submit both technical and cost application separately. The best application evaluated will be chosen for award.

## **The following development challenges impact this program**

- Malnutrition
- HIV and AIDS
- Family Planning and Sexual and Reproductive Health
- Orphans and Vulnerable Children
- Education
- Early Childhood Development (ECD)

## **Eligibility criteria**

- Applicants must be U.S. or non-U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), private voluntary organizations (PVOs), for-profit companies willing to forego profit, and Public International Organizations (PIOs).
- Faith-based and community organizations that fit the criteria above are also eligible to apply.
- Potential new partners are encouraged to apply.
- Applicants having previous experience with USAID are ineligible to apply.
- Applicant should match the cost sharing of at least 15% of the total estimated amount of the USAID support which must be used for the accomplishment of program objectives.
- Applicants must submit only one (1) application.

For more information visit [grants.gov](http://grants.gov) (<http://1.usa.gov/1Gy7rUs>) and search for funding opportunity number RFA-696-14-000002.

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As part of the Firelight Foundation's Capacity Building Program, Firelight provides "Newsflashes" to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for

children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website:

<http://www.firelightfoundation.org/resources/newsflash>

We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at

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