



Learner Guide

Module 4: Facilitate and monitor development in ECD

SAQA ID 244480: Facilitate the holistic development of babies, toddlers and young children; NQF Level 4, 16 Credits
SAQA ID 244468: Prepare resources and set up the environment to support the development of babies, toddlers and young children; NQF Level 3, 5 Credits SAQA ID 244475: Observe and report on child development; NQF Level 4, 6 Credits
SAQA ID 119462: Engage in sustained oral/signed communication and evaluate spoken/signed texts; NQF Level 4, 5 Credits

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Programme Overview

Welcome to this learning programme that will lead you to greater understanding of:

- facilitating the holistic development of babies, toddlers and young children
- preparing resources and set up the environment to support the development of babies, toddlers and young children
- observing and reporting on child development
- engaging in sustained oral/signed communication and evaluate spoken/signed texts

As you work your way through the learning programme you will gain competence against the following Unit Standards:

Programme	Module 4: Facilitate and monitor development in ECD
Unit Standards	SAQA ID 244480: Facilitate the holistic development of babies, toddlers and young children; NQF Level 4, 16 Credits SAQA ID 244468: Prepare resources and set up the environment to support the development of babies, toddlers and young children; NQF Level 3, 5 Credits SAQA ID 244475: Observe and report on child development; NQF Level 4, 6 Credits SAQA ID 119462: Engage in sustained oral/signed communication and evaluate spoken/signed texts; NQF Level 4, 5 Credits

This learning programme is **intended for** all persons who need to:

- facilitate the holistic development of babies, toddlers and young children. This Unit Standard is for people who wish to enter or obtain recognition at an entry level of Early Childhood Development.
- prepare resources and set up the environment to support the development of babies, toddlers and young children. This Unit Standard is for people who wish to enter or obtain recognition at an entry level of Early Childhood Development (ECD).
- observe and report on child development. This Unit Standard is for people who wish to enter or obtain recognition at an entry level of Early Childhood Development (ECD).
- engage in sustained oral/signed communication and evaluate spoken/signed texts. Competence at this level will enable learners to participate effectively in oral/signed communication in most situations. Learners at this level are aware of their audiences and purposes for communication. They listen effectively and critically. They are able to identify or adopt the style and language register required in different situations. They can usually identify the assumptions and inferences in what people say/sign. They speak/sign fluently and confidently in both formal and familiar settings and can articulate their purpose and meaning clearly. They can use language to convey detailed information, and to express their ideas and feelings. They control complex sentence structures and language conventions in their spoken/signed communications.

Programme entry level requirements

It is assumed that people learning towards this Unit Standard comply with the following entry level requirements:

- Communication at NQF Level 3 or equivalent
- NQF Level 3 Unit Standard entitled Accommodate audience and context needs in oral/signed communication
- It is recommended that learners have:
 - an understanding of the development of young children

Programme Outcomes

This learning programme is outcomes-based, which means we take the responsibility of learning away from the facilitator and place it in your hands.

Your learning will begin in the workshop where you will identify the skills and knowledge you require in order to meet the specific outcomes and assessment criteria contained in the unit standard.

In this learning programme, we will be covering the following **learning outcomes**:

Learning Unit 1: Use facilitation approaches and appropriate activities	Learning Unit 2: Identify and prepare resources for ECD Facilitation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and apply child development and child development theories. • Ensure that the facilitation approach responds to cues provided by the children, while providing structure and experiences for their own development. • Ensure that the facilitation approach is multi-cultural, avoids bias and is sensitive to the existing knowledge, experiences and needs of the children. • Ensure that the facilitation approach takes advantage of teachable moments. • Ensure that facilitation uses developmentally appropriate activities that are fun, relevant and meaningful to the life-world of the children. • Identify activity purposes and ensure that they are consistent with given frameworks, guidelines and/or plans. • Ensure that activities identified are appropriate to the given context and support the developmental outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify resources and space needed as per the requirements of the activities. • Source and select resources. • Adapt resources.

Learning Unit 3: Set up the environment for ECD facilitation	Learning Unit 4: Facilitate the development of babies, toddlers and young children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how the environment impacts on child development. • Set up the learning environment. • Store materials and physical resources in an organised and accessible manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage children in a manner that promotes development and is sensitive to the needs of individual children. • Carry out facilitation in a manner that ensures the physical and emotional safety, security and comfort of the children. • Carry out facilitation such that behaviour and life-skills are modelled in a developmentally appropriate manner. • Ensure that facilitation assures the holistic development of children. • Ensure that communication is responsive and promotes development. • Ensure that verbal and non-verbal interactions are Developmental. • Use appropriate behaviour and conflict management.

Learning Unit 5: Reflect on own facilitation and use of resources	Learning Unit 6: Observe and report on child development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on own facilitation. • Evaluate spoken discourse. • Reflect on the use and effectiveness of the Resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe babies, toddlers and young children. • Record observations. • Give feedback on observations. • Use strategies to be an effective speaker in sustained oral interactions.

During the workshop you will complete a number of class activities that will form part of your formative assessment. During this process you have the opportunity to practise and explore your new skills in a safe environment. You should take the opportunity to collect as much information as you can to use during your workplace learning and self-study.

The workshop will be followed by summative assessment tasks to be completed through self-study in your workplace. In some cases you may be required to do research and complete the tasks in your own time.

Assessment

It is important to note that you, as the learner, have the responsibility to prove your competence. You therefore need to plan your time and ensure that your Portfolio of Evidence is kept up to date and handed in on time.

A Portfolio of Evidence is a collection of documents of work you have produced to prove your competence. You will compile your portfolio from activities, tools and checklists that are associated with the unit standard and relevant to the unit standard that is being assessed.

You will be given the following documents to assist you in creating a portfolio of evidence:

- **Learner Guide:** The Learner Guide is designed as a guide for the duration of your learning programme and as the main source document for transfer of learning. It contains information (the knowledge and skills that you need) and application aids that will help you to develop the knowledge and skills that are stipulated in the specific outcomes and assessment criteria. The Learner Guide also indicates the formative assessment class activities that you need to complete as part of your Portfolio of Evidence.
- **Learner Workbook:** The Learner Workbook contains all the class activities that you will be completing to show formative learning. These will be assessed as part of your Portfolio of Evidence as formative assessment. You will be handing in the Learner Workbook as part of your Portfolio of Evidence.
- **Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide:** The Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide provides details about the assessment, such as the assessment preparation, plan and specific summative assessment activities that you need to complete in the workplace.

Both formative and summative assessment is used as part of this outcomes-based learning programme:

- **Formative Assessment:** In order to earn credits for this Unit Standard you will need to prove to an assessor that you are competent. The Class Activities in your Learner Workbook are designed not only to help you learn new skills, but also to prove that you have mastered competence. You will have to develop a Portfolio of Evidence to hand in to an assessor so that you can be assessed against the outcomes of this Unit Standard. Where you come across a Class Activity icon, you must complete the formative assessment activity in the Learner Workbook. You can find the comprehensive guidelines for the development of your Portfolio of Evidence in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide for the particular learning programme that you are working with.
- **Summative Assessment:** The objective of the NQF is to create independent and self-sufficient learners. This means that you will also have to do independent research and assignments, such as Knowledge Questions, Practical Activity (completed in the workplace), Summative Project and Logbook.

The assessment process is discussed in detail in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide. When you are ready, you will advise your mentor that you are ready for assessment. He or she will then sign off the required sections in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide and you will be able to submit your Portfolio of Evidence for assessment. The summative assessment activities have been placed in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide for your convenience. If any of your assessment is conducted using observation, role plays or verbal assessment, you should place a signed copy of the checklists in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide, after your mentor or line manager has completed it.

The Training Provider will assess your portfolio. If you are successful, you will receive the credit value of this learning programme. The entire assessment process is explained in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide. Please read this guide as soon as possible, as it explains the assessment process in detail and clearly explains your rights and responsibilities that will ensure that the assessment is fair, valid and reliable.

If you are not successful, you will receive all the guidance needed to resubmit your Portfolio of Evidence within a specific time period, according to the requirements of the Training Provider.

Learning map (delivery structure)

Assessment	Formative Assessment 30%		Summative Assessment 70%	
Learning activities for 320 hours of notional learning	Contact Learning Theory input Formative Assessment (workbook activities): group activities, simulations	Prescribed reading, support, coaching	Learning and application at the workplace	Summative assessment in PoE: knowledge questions, practical workplace activity, summative project, logbook
	91 hours	5 hours	192 hours	32 hours
Portfolio of Evidence	← Compilation of Portfolio of Evidence →			
Complementary workplace practices	Coaching and Mentoring; Performance Management			

Learner support

Please remember that as the programme is outcomes-based – this means the following:

- You are responsible for your own learning – make sure you manage your study, practical, workplace and portfolio time responsibly.
- Learning activities are learner-driven – make sure you use the Learner Guide, Learner Workbook and Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide as they are meant to be used, and that you know and understand what the Portfolio requirements are.
- The facilitator is there to help you during the contact, practical and workplace periods of this programme – make sure that you have his/her contact details.

Dear Learner

Please note the following:

- The content of this course is organised according to the learning outcomes in the relevant Unit Standards. This means that certain content may overlap or be duplicated in and among Modules and Learning Units. You should see this is a useful opportunity to revise that particular information.

Learning Unit 1

Use facilitation approaches and appropriate activities

After completing this Learning Unit, you will be able to use facilitation approaches and ensure that facilitation uses developmentally appropriate activities, by successfully completing the following:

- Understand and apply child development and child development theories.
- Ensure that the facilitation approach responds to cues provided by the children, while providing structure and experiences for their own development.
- Ensure that the facilitation approach is multi-cultural, avoids bias and is sensitive to the existing knowledge, experiences and needs of the children.
- Ensure that the facilitation approach takes advantage of teachable moments.
- Ensure that facilitation uses developmentally appropriate activities that are fun, relevant and meaningful to the life-world of the children.
- Identify activity purposes and ensure that they are consistent with given frameworks, guidelines and/or plans.
- Ensure that activities identified are appropriate to the given context and support the developmental outcomes.

Use facilitation approaches and appropriate activities

As ECD practitioners, we know that babies, toddlers and young children move through particular stages of development as they grow and develop. We know that these stages have been analysed and documented by child development experts. The developmental stages are grouped according to the ages of the babies, toddlers and young children. However, we also know that each baby, toddler and young child is unique. Each child grows and develops at his or her own pace. Each child will go through each developmental stage when it is right for that child. We know we need to be sensitive to each individual child's needs, to help each child develop in a way that is just right for him or her. All this knowledge will help you to identify activities within a daily and/or weekly programme that support the development of babies, toddlers and young children in your playroom. This knowledge will also help you to identify the resources and space you need for these activities.

1.1 Understand child development and child development theories

In order to ensure that facilitation uses developmentally appropriate activities that are fun, relevant and meaningful to the life-world of the children, you have to understand the various domains and stages of development.

It will be useful to briefly revise the main theories of child development that you encountered previously.

Age (yrs)	Erickson	Freud	Piaget	characteristics
0 - 1	Basic trust vs mistrust	Oral	Sensorimotor (0-2 yrs)	Stranger anxiety
1 - 3	Autonomy vs shame and doubt	Anal	Pre-operational (2- 7 yrs)	Separation anxiety
3 - 5	Initiative vs guilt	Phallic-Oedipal		Imaginary companions
6 - 11	Industry vs Inferiority	Latency	Concrete operations (7- 11 yrs)	Logical thought
11 - 20	Identity vs role confusion	Genital	Formal operations (11-20 yrs)	Abstract thought

A comparative table of leading theorists

Developmental stage	Erikson	Freud	Piaget
Infancy (birth-12months)	“Trust vs Mistrust” - child in stable functional family tends to experience the world as a safe place to explore.	“Oral Stage” - child learns feeding is pleasurable, needs to be loved and nurtured.	Concrete vs Abstraction: progression from “Sensorimotor” (concrete) to “Object Permanence” (abstract) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensorimotor: children learn by interacting with environment directly. • OP: understanding that because something is not physically seen, it can still exist (peek-a-boo is no fun for a 1-year-old).
Toddler-hood (12-36months)	“Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt” - child is struggling between self needs and parental constraints on child's impulsive behaviours, results in shame and doubt felt by child	“Anal Phase” - needs to learn autonomy and self-control. Struggles with compromising the desires of the id and the constraints set by Mom. Develop a sense of “doing for one's own	“Pre-operational Thinking” - goal is to achieve Symbolic Thought - cognitive development. Interactive communication is critical for child to develop this and is dependent on kid's emotional attachment

	(typically from over control of parents) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of Willpower - results from sense of self-control (autonomy) without loss of self-esteem (because of limited over control by parents resulting in shame and doubt) 	self" as primary motivation.	to primary caregiver.
	"Initiative vs Guilt" : <u>Initiative</u> - child exercising will power to do what it wants to; <u>Guilt</u> - results from over restriction of the initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of Purpose - develops from Initiative without sense of guilt, child's developing conscience helps control the initiative; prepares child for competitive schooling. • Socialisation occurs. 	"Genital Stage" - learns whole body pride <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Castration Anxiety</u> - generalised concern for body integrity (children have concept their body is an oozing mass covered in skin). 	"Pre-operational Thinking - cont" - associate observations with experiences and personalise them (via magical thinking). Moral laws exist as indivisible parts of certain behaviour. i.e. obeying adults is "good" but doesn't realise why an act is "good" other than from the observation that adults don't get mad when you obey them so it must be good.
Elementary (6-Puberty)	"Industry vs. Inferiority" - focused on converting the energy of earlier stages to the task of learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry: ready to learn, successfully mastered other stages of development. • Inferiority: not ready to master new material, feel inadequate. 	"Latency" - sexual energy spent competing within the family is sublimated outward.	"Concrete Operational" - inductive vs deductive. Child can now reason and have scientific reasoning (replaces magical thinking). Stage of creative cultivation
	Infancy: develop notion that world is not a safe place and exploring is risky. Toddler: child does not enjoy learning and helping. Pre: children show aggressive initiative. Elem: sense of with challenges.	Infancy: apathy - can't experience pleasure (don't feel worthy, e.g. anorexics). Toddler: problems with dependency. Pre: gender identity (tomboy). Elem: homophobia - fear of being different.	Infancy: Toddler: delay in cognitive development. Elem: delay in creative cultivation.

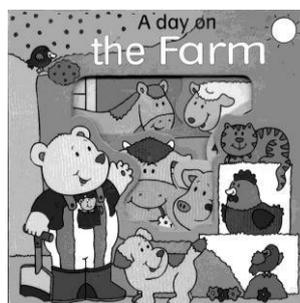
Appropriate activities

Having fun is the easiest way to learn something. Make sure you provide activities that are creative and exciting, drawing on the ideas, actions, and preoccupations of the age group you are working with. The children's developmental age must be the guiding factor in preparing your learning programme and in guiding your own expectations and responses.

Consider how your knowledge about child development can help you facilitate better, by knowing what kind of learning takes place at different ages:

Concrete learning experiences

Children from birth to three years of age primarily use their senses to explore concrete objects. During this phase they have to see, hear, touch, taste and smell to learn.



Semi-concrete learning experiences

Children between the ages of three and five years of age are able to relate pictures to the real objects that they explored earlier.

Abstract learning experiences

Children from age five can grasp the meaning of symbols and abstract concepts that cannot necessarily be explored by their senses.

(Maree & Ford 1996: 9, 10, 32)

Although these different learning styles are generally true for these age ranges, the learning process is like collecting apples in a basket. Once a child has a skill, he or she can use it during the phases that follow. For example, the five-year-old child who is capable of abstract learning (for example building with Lego or matching shapes in a complex puzzle) will still enjoy using his sense of touch to explore the texture of new objects (for example, the squishy feel of his baby brother's dummy).

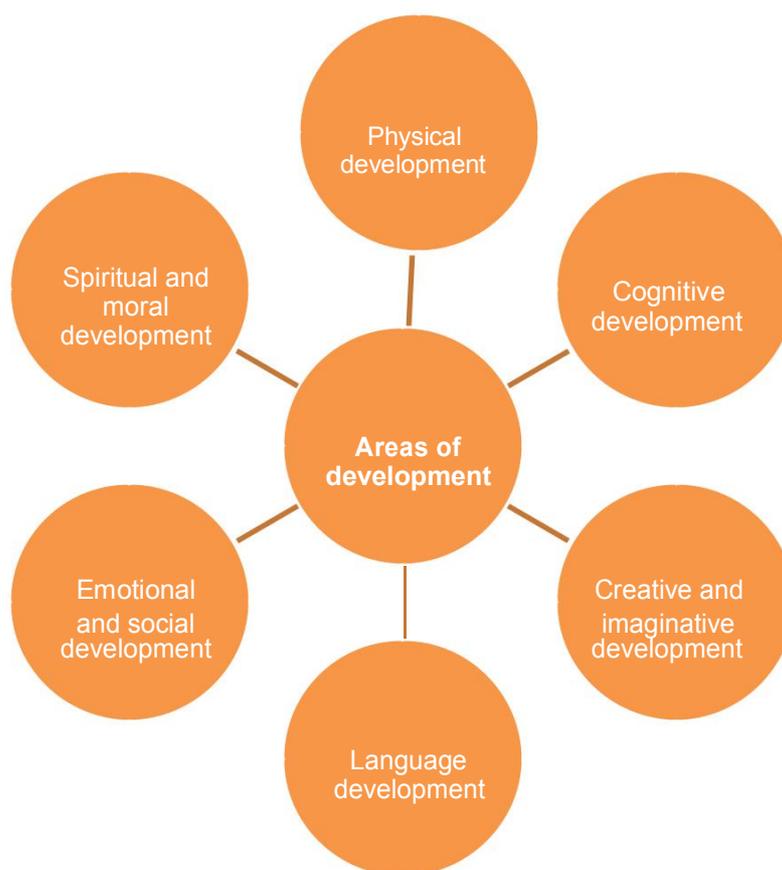
This knowledge will assist you as the facilitator to create activities that will specifically focus on the child's developmental stage. For example, include objects of different textures in the baby room.

Developmental outcomes

Suitably planned learning activities that support the developmental needs and abilities of the group will have a stronger chance of succeeding. This is because children will be working at a level that they can cope with and thus will learn more readily.

You should cover all of the following areas on a daily or weekly basis to ensure that holistic development is taking place.

The main domains of development



You need to plan appropriately to ensure that you cover the complete spectrum within the developmental age and stage of the children in the group.

For instance:

- Most of the development needed during the baby stage is physical. You will have to provide opportunities for them to be on the floor so that they have a chance to roll and crawl. Babies that are held all day or left in a cot will not develop appropriate skills.
- Young children also need physical stimulation but this involves more challenging equipment such as obstacle courses, jungle gyms, music and movement sessions. If you do not expose a child to galloping in time to music, they will not easily learn the skill.

Weekly programme

In addition to daily programmes, we need to consider weekly as well as longer term planning.

Often ECD centres will have a weekly routine that may allow for particular activities on certain days e.g. “make and bake” on a Friday. They may also need to accommodate extramural activities that often take place in the afternoons when the schedule is more relaxed. Themes will often slot into these weekly schedules too.

Themes help us to focus our learning objectives and encourage integrated learning. They also create a shared context for further meaningful interactions between practitioner and child, and between the children themselves. Choosing exciting

themes and including new information stimulates the child's curiosity about the world around them, helps them to make sense of what they already know and encourages active learning.

Activities in the playroom are usually linked to your selected theme. This includes outings or demonstrations and talks from outside visitors. For example, if your theme is the sea, you may read stories like *Eric the Hermit Crab* or *The Sailor Dog*. You may set up creative art activities like making shell collages or sand paintings. You may use movement activities that require children to "act" what it feels like to be a crab, dolphin, or shark. In other words, you provide opportunities for children to explore the theme experientially in many different ways.

Some ideas for themes can include:

- seasons
- transport
- families
- insects
- the sea
- wild animals
- pets
- sports
- health and nutrition
- musical instruments
- holidays

Long-term planning

Longer-range planning is also important so that themes can run in a logical sequence and so you can take outings and major events into account. These can be used to a positive effect to change your ECD classroom and to provide activities that stimulate further interest and learning e.g. Arbour day – your theme would be around trees and growing and you would have access to posters in the newspaper.

1.2 Use appropriate facilitation approaches

When you plan learning activities, try to include both known aspects as well as new aspects. This will ensure that children build on previous experience and face a challenge. For example, if children are making a nature collage, use leaves and twigs, but also provide seeds, seedpods or dried flowers that children have not seen before. The known objects - leaves and twigs - will give children context. They know that they find leaves and twigs in nature. The new objects - the seeds, seedpods and dried flowers - will stimulate children's curiosity. They may want to talk about how seeds grow into plants, or how flowers are dried and pressed. These new objects help to extend their world, and open up to new possibilities beyond the known.

Present themes or concepts that allow experiential learning

Choosing a theme or concept as the focus of activities makes it easier for you as a practitioner, but you should have a flexible approach for the sake of the child. Adapt themes from year to year, to be sensitive to the needs of your class. Keep the material fresh and challenging for you as a practitioner. The most important part of the learning experience for the child is the opportunity for concrete, sense-based experience. The children should be able to touch, smell, taste and explore. The point is not to introduce new knowledge but to allow the child to explore. This exploring will uncover new aspects of the family.

Make activities meaningful to the life-world of the child

This has already been mentioned in other sections above. To be sure that you are catching the child's interests with your activities, check whether your activities include the following references:

- the culture language and context that the child knows
- stories about children of the same age of the class
- the visible world outside your class building (garden, play area, other nearby buildings or houses, home activities like cooking, shopping with parents, helping parents with chores)
- fantasy content that is safe and appealing to the age group, for example a teddy bear's picnic for age 2-4 or traditional animal stories for age 5-6
- the developmental crisis points or growth that the child may be preparing to deal with, for example water play with containers to provide practice in problem solving for pre-operational or intuitive reasoning (children younger than 6)

1.2.1 Ensure that the facilitation approach responds to cues provided by the children

Your interaction with the children and attention to their verbal and behavioural signals and messages mean that you should respond to them all the time, whether you are aware of it or not.

From now on, that awareness must be sharpened so that you respond purposefully to any signals that the children are giving out, about their learning needs and preferences. With some practice, you will learn to tune in to their signals (which we call "cues").

A cue is a signal, in words or behaviour that implies a need for an appropriate response.

In this context, the cue comes from the child and the response should come from the playground facilitator.

Example 1:

Thando: (Grunting and stamping her feet at home time, struggling with the laces of her takkies).

Facilitator: Here Thando, let's practise together on this lacing board for a minute. Then in a few days it will be easier. I'll help you tie your laces when



we've done the practice. You can also practise once more at home when you take you tekkies off at bath time this evening.

The cue given by Thando was nonverbal, and was given at going home time, when the facilitator's attention should be focused on saying goodbye and handing over children to parents who are collecting them. So you should use the moment for teaching the skill in whatever way you can.

A good opportunity for teaching something is when the child voluntarily asks for input from the facilitator, by means of a question or request, or by indicating openness to learning. We call this the teachable moment, because it refers to the moment when the child is ready and motivated and shows a need for learning.

The response given by the facilitator above is an ideal full response. A shorter, more focused, response would be:

Example 2:

Practitioner (to Thando): Let's tell the laces where to go and I'll help you lace them up: Over, under, round, hold, over, under, THROUGH!

The practitioner should then make a note to offer Thando the lacing board to practise on the next day.

Another example of a cue might be when the child is busy playing outdoors and apparently having a good time but really feels out of control.

Example 3:

John (screaming anxiously): Watch out, Maria, watch out, I'm going to kick you, you're in the way!

Practitioner: It's okay John, I'm here with Maria and she's standing aside. But maybe you don't feel safe, swinging so fast? It's a good idea to practise swinging more slowly at first, just like the Olympic gymnasts do. They have to practise slowly so that they can become the stars in the end. I'm just going to slow you down a bit by pulling you back once. Okay?

This scenario on the swing indicates that John enjoys the gross motor activity of the swing but lacks the muscular control and understanding to manage his movements within a range he finds comfortable. The cue he is giving is his screaming and anxiety about possibly hurting his friend Maria. The practitioner responds not by humiliating him or pointing out his inadequate control, but encouraging him to model himself on sporting heroes who are impressive because they exercise control. John will eventually learn to monitor and control his own movements on his own, with practice, but he needs someone to take control of the situation for him immediately (as shown by his anxious screaming). The practitioner here should be calm, reassuring, normalising the event by encouraging him to play safely and slowly until he feels more in control. By one simple pull on the swing, she brings it under control for John and he can carry on and try again to go slowly.

The practitioner provides structure and experiences promoting child development.

The practitioner's response to cues from the child functions to promote child development in three ways:

- It takes into account the child's learning needs at that moment (as in the examples, for the skill of tying shoelaces or managing a flying swing). The

practitioner provides a corrective learning experience or the knowledge input so that the child can learn the skill.

- It supports the child emotionally to manage the stress of the situation so that she can feel more confident. This encourages her to try to find her own solution or attempt to learn the skill with a little help.
- It is also important to the other children to see the adult taking charge of the situation for them, and removing the anxiety from the situation. This modelling of a calm response and a supportive adult role prepare them for behaving similarly when they are adults. It also means that the responsibility for control of the situation stays where it belongs, that is with the adult practitioner. As a result the children feel safe and can continue to play without stress.

How to attend to cues (signals about skills or emotions)

Now that you have an idea what a cue is, you may understand that any request by a child for help or attention is a signal which you should respond to with empathy and assistance, to make the most of a learning opportunity and to promote the child's holistic development. Usually cues are requests for help with a particular activity which the child may be finding challenging. They may be signals from a child that she is keen to learn something which she cannot quite master and which she is finding frustrating, but could manage with a little help. This links cues to Vygotsky's idea that some skills may be not yet accomplished but in the zone of proximal development as the child cannot manage the skill without help, but is almost able to do so.



a. Active listening

This means that you should be listening and attending, observing not just the surface communication but also the underlying messages which the child's behaviour is giving out. Any changes may signal something significant, and also things staying the same when they shouldn't, may be a signal. As an example, you should question why a child who seems capable at gross motor tasks does not improve and enjoy the challenge of the new jungle gym, when his peers are all playing on it and acquiring new skills. A child who constantly asks for assistance may be sending out a signal, not about the task but about a general state of feeling helpless and vulnerable. To listen for cues means to use active listening, focusing on the child's communication and context with full attention.

b. Observation

To observe the context of cue, it is important to ask the following questions:

- What is the message in the behaviour?

- Does the child have a motive for this behaviour?
- Is there something else behind the behaviour that I'm not seeing?

For example, if Samba (5) who is a bright and capable child, suddenly wets herself two days in succession, this sudden lack of control may signal a serious physical or emotional problem.

The message in this behaviour is: it is very unusual for a five year old to wet herself (accidentally) for two days in succession. This message thus indicates that there is something wrong, which needs thorough investigation.

Does Samba have a motive to do this? Or perhaps is a way of seeking attention when other methods may not have worked? Is it likely that she would want to wet herself, and seem out of control?

What could be behind the behaviour? The first step would be to check her physical and emotional health.

1.2.2 Ensure that the facilitation approach is multi-cultural, avoids bias and is sensitive

It will help your facilitation skills if you know a little about each child's culture in their family of origin or their caregiver's family. It is useful to know about their home language, religious beliefs, cultural celebrations and lifestyle. This should form the foundation of your sensitivity to the child's culture. Stay respectful in your behaviour, by avoiding the use of discriminatory language, slang or culturally biased remarks, and keep in mind that the culture of the ECD centre may not match the home culture of the child.

This gap may affect the child's performance of tasks at the appropriate developmental level, because of language difficulties or attitudes to tasks. Some families may emphasise the importance of physical abilities and expect the child to do chores like cleaning shoes, helping to make sandwiches for school snacks, and making the bed, while other families may emphasise language abilities and may promote reading and storytelling at home, while not worrying too much about the child's practical skills like competent shoe-cleaning. There will always be things about the child's background that you may not know, so stay flexible and respectful and be willing to get to know the child slowly.

Being sensitive to disability

Not only culture, but also ability (or disability) may be a source of discrimination at the ECD centre. More and more children with physical disabilities are being integrated into mainstream classrooms as this provides good learning opportunities for both the disabled child and his or her peers. Your ECD centre may already include a child who has sight or hearing impairment or who is physically disabled in some other way. The children's acceptance of the disabled child depends on your own acceptance and the atmosphere created by your management of their special needs.

1.2.3 Ensure that the facilitation approach takes advantage of teachable moments

When facilitating an ECD session, you need to ensure that the facilitation approach takes advantage of teachable moments:

- “Teachable moments” refer to those unplanned opportunities for development that present themselves during the daily programme or routine if child is cared for at home by a parent figure.

Being a sensitive practitioner means having knowledge of the background and culture of each child and respecting it when interacting with her. This means always being careful not to use discriminatory language, or slang or culturally biased remarks, to keeping in mind that the culture of the class room may not match the home culture of the child. The gap between home culture and class culture may make it difficult for the child to perform tasks at the appropriate developmental level, because of language difficulties or attitudes to tasks.

Some cultures do not emphasise individualism and independence in the way that the western urban culture does, so a child from a more culturally focused background may struggle to perform tasks alone at first. Always be aware that there may be things about the child’s background which you may not know and be willing to learn about these over time or visit the child’s home in order to get to know the child better.

Suggested strategies for keeping teaching bias-free and for using teachable moments to reinforce the acceptance of diverse cultures:

Step 1: Encouraging awareness

Practitioners should meet once a month to develop anti-bias awareness and knowledge. The kinds of questions practitioners should be asking themselves are, “How did I become aware of the various aspects of my identity? What differences among people make me feel uncomfortable? When did I experience or witnessed bias in my life and how did I respond? ‘Group members should work towards facing bias and discomfort and eliminating their influence in teaching.

Children are also a good source of ideas about how to deal with diversity. Practitioners can ask the children questions like “What do you know about Indian children? What makes you a boy or girl? What kind of work could this person do?” You do this while showing them a picture of a person in a wheel chair. The child’s answer will show where there are points of discomfort. The practitioner can then review the activities and plan to work constructively and sensitively around those issues, building known knowledge and acceptance of the culture which might be perceived as strange or threatening to the child. Practitioners must look critically at the learning resources in the classroom, to find out which materials may be giving a culturally-packed message. For example, a puzzle which shows a female teacher and a black male truck driver may seem at first to promote women in the role of teachers, but seems to imply that black people do manual work while whites do educated work. It is important to have a variety of images showing men, women, different cultures and ethnic groups in all sorts of combinations. It may be necessary to buy new materials that are not stereotypical.

It is important to discuss with parents what contribution they might want to make to the classroom environment to make it more representative of everyone’s culture. Their inclusion will also have a positive effect on the children’s perception of the classroom being a safe extension of the familiar culture of home.

Step 2: Engaging with children and parents:

In the second step, you begin to apply your understanding, and awareness of issues of bias, and to engage with the children and their parents.

Derman explains that an event in the class may provide a teachable moment in which the children may be receptive to understanding why we should be compassionate and accepting of others whom we see as different from ourselves.

For example, a new child who is an albino, or a child who wears a hand band (Isiphandla) or a child with a burn scar on her face, may provoke a lot of questions from the children.

You may find it difficult to deal with this when it happens, but your thinking and preparation in the first step should have provided you with some resources. It is important not to brush off the children's questions but to answer them as honestly and compassionately as possible.

To deal with gender issues, it may be helpful to invite visitors whose activities and roles are counter to stereotypes, or go on visits to workplaces where gender roles are not prescribed. It is also helpful to read books about children doing non-traditional activities, but experience is the most valuable way to show that gender roles can be flexible.

Draw the parents into participation to your anti-bias activities. Share information with parents' mornings/evenings and in newsletters. Schedule an educational evening for parents about how children develop identity and attitudes. Parents and caregivers at home can also be encouraged to recognise teachable moments and cues given by their children, and respond appropriately to deal with anti-bias issues as well as general developmental skills. At the same time you should keep your own staff support group going to maintain awareness and evaluate progress of the anti-bias work and to develop your own personal growth on these issues.

Step 3: Integration of anti-bias perspective

In this step, the issues of inclusiveness and diversity are familiar territory and naturally included in the curriculum and in your approach. As the children engage in activities, they respond with comments and questions that become further teachable moments. These teachable moments provide points for new activities to be developed.

Teachable moments are useful as they are a rich opportunity for the child to steer the learning process and content according to her developmental needs and individual preferences. For you they are a challenge to respond with creativity, compassion, knowledge, intuition and enthusiasm as you engage with the child in learning something vital and relevant to her development, her culture and her individual growth. Children provide cues to signal teachable moments, and your responsiveness and full attention should make them valuable learning experiences, not only about inclusiveness but about anything that is meaningful to the child.



Class Activity 1: Facilitate development of babies, toddlers and young children

Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

1.3 Identify activities to support the development of babies, toddlers and young children

Each age has specific developmental needs, so we need to adapt the ECD classroom and resources to suit the activities. In choosing which resources to provide, it is important to consider whether they are appropriate for the specific developmental ages of the children in your care. If the activity is too difficult for them, they will feel frustrated and discouraged. They may lose confidence in their ability to tackle that kind of challenge for a long time to come. On the other hand, if it is too easy, they will lose interest and become bored. You therefore need to maintain a balance between giving the children a sense of achievement and control, and at the same time stimulating them to learn new things and extend their skills.

How play aids development

“Play is key to every child’s well-being. Children learn about the world and experience life through play. One definition of play is “the spontaneous activity of children.” Through play, children practise the roles they will play later in life. Play has many functions. It increases peer relationships, releases tensions, advances intellectual development, increases exploration, and increases chances of children speaking and interacting with each other.– *Mary F. Longo*

1.3.1 Ensure that facilitation uses developmentally appropriate activities

When facilitating an ECD session, you need to ensure that you use developmentally appropriate activities that are fun, relevant and meaningful to the life-world of the children, within the context of your daily and/or weekly programme.

The developmental appropriate activities that you use during facilitation in a daily and/or weekly programme, need to be fun, relevant and meaningful to the life-world of the children.

Age-appropriate programmes

We can all agree that children at different ages and stages of development have different needs. We cannot have the same expectations of a five month old baby as we do of a three year old child. In order for children to feel happy, secure and supported, we need to cater to their needs. The various theorists such as Piaget, Erikson and Vygotsky studied particular areas of interest but there are overlaps. The major point of agreement, though, is that ***play is a means of learning***.

“To re-enforce learning, we always apply the skill we have learned, hence we learn by doing.”

No matter the age of the child, your daily planning needs to include time for the child to play freely and spend time exploring his/her environment in order to learn.

Suitable daily programme

The programmes below are suggestions and ECD centres may differ in their implementation of activity schedules. It is vitally important to cater to the needs of the various age groups, taking into account their particular developmental needs and abilities.

Daily programme for toddlers (6 – 18 months)

07:00 – 08:30	Arrival, talk to parents, breakfast
08:30 – 09:30	Individual activities, pampering
09:30 – 10:00	Nappies and feeding
10:00 – 11:00	Individual time – outdoors if possible
11:00 – 12:00	Nappies, lunch
12:00 – 14:00	Nap, individual time with those who are awake
14:00 – 14:30	Nappies, feeding
14:30 – 16:30	Individual activities , pampering
16:30 – 17:30	Nappies, get ready for home time, pack bags, complete message books

- Babies need individual attention and lots of pampering.
- Plans run according to individual routine needs such as sleeping, eating, nappy changes.
- Individual attention can be in the form of singing, toys, games, cuddles, stories, crawling or massages.

Daily programme for toddlers (18–30 months)

08:00 - 08:45	Breakfast and toileting (nappy changing)
08:45 – 09:00	Morning ring
09:00 – 09:40	Free play indoors
09:40 – 09:50	Tidy-up time
09:50 – 10:15	Snack time, toileting (nappy changing)
10:15 – 11:00	Outdoor free play
11:00 – 11:15	Quiet play & toileting (nappy changing)
11:00 – 11:30	Music and movement
11:30 – 11:45	Story telling
11:45 – 12:00	Lunch
12:00 – 12:15	Toilet time
12:15 – 14:30	Rest
14:30 – 15:00	Wake up/toilet/snack time
15:00 – 16:00	Outdoor free- play
16:00 – 16:15	Tidy up time
16:00 – 16:45	Toilet and wash
16:45 – 17:00	Snack time
17:15 – 17:30	Departure time

- Toddlers need a variety of play experiences.
- They need lots of language input in the form of rhymes, songs and stories.
- Remember they may still have individual sleep needs/times.
- Still need individual attention as they are still at parallel play stage.

Daily programme for young children (3 – 4 years)

06:30 - 08:00	Arrival & free play
08:00 – 08:30	Breakfast
08:30 – 09:00	Morning ring
09:00 – 10:00	Indoor free play
10:00 – 10:10	Tidy up time
10:10 – 11:10	Outdoor free play
11:10 – 11:30	Music and movement
11:30 – 11:40	Toilet time
11:40 – 12:00	Story
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30 – 12:40	Tidy up
12:40 – 14:30	Rest
14:30 – 15:00	Wake up/toilet/snack time
15:00 – 16:30	Outdoor free play/Departure time

- Young children need lots of variety and time for individual as well as group activities.

Many ECD centres plan their daily and weekly activities around weekly themes such as the seasons, transport, families, insects, the sea, wild animals, pets, sports, the dentist, musical instruments, holidays, and so on.

1.3.2 Identify activity purposes and ensure that they are consistent with given frameworks, guidelines and/or plans

- The developmental outcomes can be further broken down into goals for each particular activity that you present or provide in the class.
- Physical development includes fine motor, gross motor, balance and rhythm.
- Cognitive development includes concept development, thinking, reasoning, problem solving, counting, and predicting as well as emergent literacy and numeracy skills.
- Language development includes vocabulary-building through listening and speaking and non-verbal language such as gestures.
- Social and emotional development includes self-concept and identity, independence, affection, dealing with conflict, pro-social behaviour, accepting authority and empathy.
- Creative and imaginative development includes imaginative play skills, expressing ideas, curiosity and a desire for knowledge.
- Moral development includes values such as sharing, kindness, knowing right from wrong, acceptance of discipline and rules.
- These goals are often integrated as they cannot be separated and are closely linked and related. One activity may cover many of the goals above – either by design or accidentally.

You may set up an art activity that focuses on drawing with crayons. This most obviously covers fine motor and creative skills. However, as the children are engaged in the activity:

- They discuss the colours they are using.
- Take turns to use the favourite red crayon.
- They talk about what they are drawing.

The activity will thus cover cognitive, language, social and emotional as well as imaginative development.

Think about how an activity, such as drawing with crayons, can stimulate more than one area of development.



1.3.3 Ensure that identified activities are appropriate to the given context and support the developmental outcomes

As we said above, each age has specific developmental needs. Therefore we need to adapt the ECD classroom and resources to suit the activities.

Babies

They will sleep, eat, play and have nappies changed in one room:

- cots with bedding and mobiles
- nappy changing area that is hygienic and safe
- storage for bags, personal belongings
- large mat area with space to crawl and play with toys (must be able to be cleaned regularly)
- toys, balls, cloth/plastic or board books that have bright and bold pictures and different textures
- area for messy play/eating area that is tiled
- cushions, mattresses
- safe flat, grassed outdoor area with baby swings

a) *Supports a young child's physical development. Cognitive development, language development, social and emotional development, creative and imaginative development, and moral development.*

b) *Do you think this is a suitable activity for young children? Explain your answer.*

Figure: A mobile is an example of a resource that is suitable for babies



Toddlers

They will need a sleeping and nappy area but also close proximity to toilets for toilet training.

In addition, they will need:

- mattresses for sleeping
- storage for bags, personal belongings
- mat area for group activities like morning ring, story and music or movement
- classroom can be divided into basic areas – creative activities, books, toys, blocks and house corner
- suitably sized tables and chairs for eating and creative activities
- outdoors they need low jungle gyms and slides, tricycles or pushbikes and sand and water play resources

Figure: Young children and toddlers need suitably sized tables and chair for creative activities



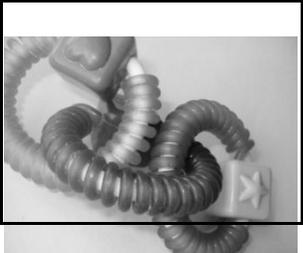
Adventure play: includes boxes, sheets and other movable items that children can use imaginatively in the garden. Equates to fantasy area inside.

Movement exploration: includes obstacle courses, balance beams, tyres, bats, ball etc., which allow children to handle objects and develop both gross and fine motor skills.

Also, remember that within any group of children of the same age, there will be some who are many months older than others, and six months at this stage of a child's life can make a very big difference to what a child can do.

The table below outlines which specific learning resources are appropriate for children at each age from birth to five. It is very important to bear in mind that this is a general guide only – every child is unique and each one has a different personal timetable of development. Often a child will be advanced in one area, but less so in another, for example, one child has an outstanding vocabulary and advanced reading skills, but doesn't manage well with gross motor activities; another is socially confident but is behind in cognitive activities. You have to be aware of their individual needs, and provide them with resources that will allow them to enjoy their strengths, as well as ones that will gently develop their weaknesses.

Appropriate learning resources according to age

Age	Appropriate activities and resources
2 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities are focused around routines of eating, sleeping and toileting. • Another area that is very important to a baby is the development and strengthening of muscles and muscle groups. The child needs to be able to roll over, sit, pull him/herself up against objects, crawl and stand up. • Noisy toys such as rattles that they can grip easily. • Oral exploration stage, so all toys etc., must be able to be washed and cleaned to prevent the spread of germs. • Language skills are being formed and the child will learn to speak during the first three years of his/her life. It will therefore be important to include activities that facilitate the learning of linguistic skills like songs, rhymes, animal noises etc. • During the baby and toddler stages, the child learns through exploring his/her world in a physical, concrete way. They use all their senses: seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting and smelling to discover the world around them. Children of this age needs to have access to objects of different shapes, sizes, colours and textures. Even food is an important object of discovery – some foods are soft, others textured and there are a large variety of tastes and smells to discover. • Talk in two- or three-word sentences and their vocabulary is expanding daily. • They are forever on the move and everything must be examined and tasted. • They have learned to jump and can climb up slides and jungle gyms. • They can take a couple of steps on a balance beam. 

Age	Appropriate activities and resources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy looking at picture books and listening to simple stories and rhymes, as well as music and singing activities. • They love make-believe games and play enthusiastically with props like toy stoves and telephones. • They love using “real” implements, like buckets and spades. • They push and pull cars, and play with a soft ball. • They thread large beads, make basic structures with blocks, can match simple shapes and do a three-piece puzzle. • They will learn to use scissors and paint with a brush. • They are not ready to play with other children, but rather beside them. • They are possessive with their toys and find it hard to share.
<p>3 years old</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk in sentences of three to five words. The “two-year-old’s “no” has turned to “yes” and they want to please you. • Physically very active, they play on tyre swings, slides, jungle gyms, tunnels, and love obstacle courses. • They enjoy ball play. • They can count to ten and name common colours. • They make towers and bridges with blocks, and can do jigsaw puzzles of six to ten pieces. • They love Lego and other construction toys. • They can do simple classifying and matching activities. • They have mastered the use of scissors, and enjoy crayons, paint and clay as well as chalk and a blackboard. • They are interested in books and can hear the same stories repeatedly. • They love singing and playing with musical instruments. • They are more able to play with other children; they have greater self-control and are learning to share.
<p>4 years old</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They speak in sentences that are more complex. They love to talk and are full of questions, demanding information about everything. • They are extremely active and run around at high speed. They can ride tricycles confidently and enjoy balancing and climbing equipment, skipping ropes, hula-hoops and stilts. • They like threading activities, building with blocks, playing with play dough or clay. • They can do puzzles and games based on sequencing (e.g.



Age	Appropriate activities and resources
	<p>smallest to largest), as well as sorting and matching in terms of numbers, size, texture and colour. They are building up the number of jigsaw puzzle pieces they can manage and need a range from four to 28.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are interested in books and recognise familiar words. • They enjoy using musical instruments to play along with songs and make sound effects for stories. • They love fantasy play, like setting up a “pretend” shop. • They like playing with other children and can take turns and obey simple rules.
5 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They can understand about 13 000 words, their thinking is more concrete and they like to argue and reason. • They are more independent and can sustain their own play without constant supervision. • Physically, they are much more coordinated, can jump with a skipping rope and catch a ball, and may start riding a bicycle with training wheels. They still play enthusiastically on all the swings and jungle gyms, and they like more challenging physical activities, like balance beams and Tarzan ropes.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They can cut accurately with a pair of scissors, and need lots of opportunity to draw and paint. They like constructing things from boxes and other scrap materials. They enjoy taking apart and trying to put together old machines and clocks. • They love being read to and also enjoy telling their own stories; it's very rewarding for them if you write down their stories and make books. They still enjoy making sound effects and rhythms on musical instruments. • They can do activities and puzzles involving classifying, matching, counting and sequencing. They enjoy card games, jigsaw puzzles, and board games like snakes and ladders. They still play with blocks and make-believe, with more complex ideas and stories. They invent fantasy games and organise other children to join in.

It is very important to remember that your role as the ECD practitioner is to facilitate learning. This does not only imply that you lead children in activities, but that the environment that you provide stimulates learning in the child. You need to be able to plan the areas, organise and oversee activities, communicate concepts and ideas to the children, manage behaviour and assess needs on an ongoing basis so that you can adjust the environment accordingly. In this way you will encourage active play as the children will use all their senses in learning.

An ECD classroom that remains stagnant will not provide opportunities for self-discovery and leads to unhappy, frustrated children who develop bad behaviour

patterns from boredom. By keeping children interested and stimulated through a combination of familiar and new activities and games, you will nurture their love of learning.



Class Activity 2: Identify activities to support the development of babies, toddlers and young children

Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

Learning Unit 2

Identify and prepare resources for ECD facilitation

After completing this Learning Unit, you will be able to identify and prepare resources for ECD facilitation, by successfully completing the following:

- Identify resources and space needed as per the requirements of the activities.
- Source and select resources.
- Adapt resources.

Identify and prepare resources for ECD facilitation

As an ECD practitioner, you need to know how to find and choose learning resources to use when you are planning activities. The learning resources you choose to use should meet many criteria. They must be appropriate for the activity you have planned, and be safe, durable, easily available and not too expensive. They should be both familiar and unfamiliar. Familiar resources help children to build on their previous knowledge while unfamiliar resources provide challenges for children. The resources you select need to be free from cultural, race and gender bias and be adaptable for children with special needs. They need to be appropriate to the developmental needs and interests of the babies, toddlers or young children in your playgroup. In this learning unit you will learn how to source and select appropriate learning resources.

2.1 Identify resources and space needed as per the requirements of the activities

As an ECD practitioner, you will need to be able to select appropriate learning resources to match the activities as well as the needs of the children in the class – and don't forget to think about the space that is needed. There are so many resources available that it may sometimes be difficult to choose what you really need and what is appropriate. We will look at the criteria you should use to guide you when choosing and buying resources such as objects, plants, people, animals, technology, toys, etc.

Key elements

There are five key foundation stones on which every learning activity rests and thus which determine the resources chosen in an ECD classroom.

- They should encourage the children to learn while they are playing.
- The variety of resources should cater for all developmental areas.
- They should facilitate integrated development where possible by addressing more than one developmental area.
- They should be developmentally appropriate.
- They should encourage emergent literacy, numeracy and life skills.

Example

Let us look at an example of five-year-olds playing a simplified version of “snakes and ladders”:

While playing the game the children are learning and working with counting, which is an emergent numeracy skill. It caters to fine motor (moving pieces on the board), cognitive (counting), social (group game), emotional (learn to cope with winning or losing) and moral development (do not cheat). It is integrated and age appropriate and thus a good choice of a resource.

2.2 Source and select resources

In the ECD playroom, we use many different types of learning resources. The different kinds of resources are used to develop different skills and to engage the interest of the children in the learning programme. The more variety there is the more you will be able to maintain the children's attention. It is also important that they learn about the world around them – both natural and man-made elements.

Definition of learning resources

Appropriate learning resources are resources that are suited to the activity in which they are used and support the purpose of the activity. If, for example, you are doing a learning activity to develop fine motor skills with toddlers, you can use strong, thick shoelaces and ask the children to thread four to six big beads onto the shoelace. The learning resources in this example are the strong thick shoelaces and the big beads. They are suitable for the threading activity and support the purpose of the activity which is to develop the toddlers' fine motor skills. Notice that thin shoelaces and small beads would not be appropriate for toddlers. The resources that you select should always be appropriate to the activity and its purpose, and the age and developmental stage of the playgroup.

Before we look in more detail at appropriate learning resources, let us make sure we understand the term. What does the term "learning resource" mean? Write a short definition (two or three sentences) of this term. Make sure you use your own words.

You have probably agreed that a learning resource can be anything that is used to facilitate the learning process. This could be:

- objects such as books, toys, games, puzzles and blocks
- plants and other natural resources that can be found (for example, leaves and pebbles)
- people such as other ECD practitioners and experts.
- animals such as pets and farm animals
- technology such as computers, tape recorders and cd players
- visual aids such as posters and diagrams
- resources for creative art
- outdoor equipment
- puppets, clothes or accessories for dress up and fantasy play
- bought resources (for example, puzzles) or hand-made resources (for example, posters or musical instruments made by the ECD practitioner)

Resource categories

Natural

Young children must be encouraged to develop a respect for and love of nature. For this reason, we include many different kinds of natural learning resources in the ECD playroom such as leaves for nature collages, seedpods and shells for sorting or beans and other plants that are grown from seed in the classroom. Pets and animals may be kept at the school or brought in to address certain themes.



They are most freely available and thus do not have to cost money. As an ECD practitioner, you can collect items or encourage children to collect leaves and other interesting items when they are out and about.

Improvised

Learning resources can be improvised or created to fulfil a particular purpose. For example, coloured blocks from the block play area can be used to sort into different coloured boxes to teach colours. The children's blankets, chairs and tables could be used to build a "tent" in the classroom where they can play "camping" or "picnic". Children are very creative – so provide them with basic resource to allow them to discover new things and new ways to apply old objects. Adventure play in the garden is one such activity that addresses this need.

As an ECD practitioner, you will need to use your imagination too and improvise as much as possible when working with themes. Your fantasy area can be transformed into a vet's surgery with a few animal soft toys, a desk and some medical items like stethoscopes and bandages.

Scrap

Often learning resources do not have to be expensive and can be developed from scrap materials. For example, you can involve the families by requesting them to help you gather empty boxes of breakfast cereal, plastic tomato sauce bottles, empty peanut butter jars, etc. You can use these scraps to create a corner inside or outside that could serve as a make-believe shop. The children can take turns in being the shop owner and the customers. You can also convert a big box into a doll's house by cutting a door and windows into the sides. The children can get involved too and help you to paint the box during a creative art activity.

Even tables and chairs that are strong enough for adults to sit on can be made from paper maché. It may require effort and time but can also be very beneficial in teaching children to recycle and conserve our precious resources.

People

Parents, grandparents and community members can also be valuable resources as they can share their experiences e.g. a mom who is a nurse could come to school in uniform and talk about her work when you are busy with a theme of "people who help us".

Commercial

The ECD playroom also includes learning resources that may need to be bought. Examples include jigsaw puzzles, picture books and board games or replicas of office equipment such as small computers, cash registers or cameras. It is often very tempting just to buy resources; however, many of them are imported and very expensive and your budget will often not stretch to accommodate all that you would like.

2.2.1 Ensure that resources selected are appropriate for use in planned activities and support their identified purpose

When you select resources to buy, keep in mind the following:

- Are they safe? This is the most important criteria and is often age dependent. A baby would choke on small pegs from a pegboard, whereas a young child knows not to put it in their mouth.
- Is the equipment appropriate? Does it adequately address the age and stage of the children who will use it?
- Are they suitable? The children in the class should be able to use it comfortably e.g. chairs and tables that are the right height and size.
- Do they address specific skills that children need to develop? Children should be learning self-help skills such as dressing or tying their laces.
- Do they have more than one use? An easel can be used for painting and drawing activities both indoors and outdoors. You can also use an easel to display pictures.
- Are they free from stereotyping? Children should not be exposed to stereotypical books and toys that entrench gender, cultural or racial bias. (ELRU have many suitable books as do Dorling Kindersley.)
- Do the resources provide for a balance of activities? Balance between more active and more passive activities, balance between individual and group use for young children or balance between too easy and too difficult.
- Is it interactive? Toys should encourage active participation, as we know that this is the only way that children learn. Battery-operated toys are generally not suitable but there are exceptions. Ask yourself if the play is in the toy or in the child?
- Are they attractive? Children naturally gravitate towards brightly coloured items.
- Are they easily maintained? Resources should be cleaned regularly and should have smooth surfaces that do not trap dirt and germs. Jungle gyms that are painted will peel and look unattractive whereas pre-treated wood may not look as colourful but does not require much attention.
- Does it cater to the interests in your group? Will the children enjoy using it? Unless it will be used, it is a waste to buy a toy. Certain toys have more appeal at certain ages.
- Are they both familiar and unfamiliar? While children do like to feel secure and use resources they know well, they also need to be challenged and to learn further skills by handling resources that are not familiar.
- Are they classic? Resources that have stood the test of time include building blocks, dolls, Lego, etc. Avoid buying the latest fad toy, as they are often not very suitable and have a limited life span in terms of appeal. These toys are often linked to movies or TV programmes that are soon forgotten when the latest one is being aired.
- Are they economical? Sometimes it is better to buy a more expensive toy that is stronger as it will last longer than the cheap toy that breaks within a few weeks.

- Are they easily available locally? Toys and books that need to be ordered from overseas will be expensive and the ordeal in getting them may not be worthwhile. It is also better to actually see a resource and handle it, before deciding that you would like to purchase it.
- Can they be adapted if need be to accommodate any special needs in your class?
- What do we have that is similar? Are you buying it because it looks good or because you need it? There are often many resources available on a particular theme e.g. “transport”, and you may find you have enough books, toys and puzzles to cover this theme but need more resources for “under the sea”. It is wise to make lists of needs rather than just to purchase for the sake of it.

2.2.2 Ensure that resources are available, safe, durable, and within the resource limitations of the programme

This is one of the most important criteria as briefly discussed in the previous topic. Safety may depend on the age group: for example, beads are suitable for three-year-olds but babies would choke on them. Safety may also depend on the resource itself: any item with sharp edges could be dangerous. We have outlined some important safety aspects below.

Safety

Safety is an extremely important issue when it comes to buying, making and maintaining resources. Become aware of all the dangers that resources can present, and be vigilant in looking out for them. Many toys and games that can be bought have age guidelines that you should take into consideration.

Make sure that the resources are not made with the following dangerous elements:

- toxic paint
- small bits that can be swallowed by little children
- brittle plastic or glass that will have sharp edges when broken
- sharp points: avoid pins, staples and wire
- things that can cause injury when thrown, for example arrows, must have soft cork or foam tips
- working parts that can pinch fingers or catch hair

When installing fixed outdoor equipment make sure of the following:

- The equipment is installed on grass or another soft flat surface – never concrete.
- Swing seats are not made of hard or heavy material.
- All the wood is smooth to prevent splinters.
- There are no climbing areas that would allow children ages three to six to fall more than one and a half or two metres.

- The fixed equipment is very secure in the ground.
- There are no sharp edges, broken parts or loose bolts.
- There are no openings that could trap a child's head.
- There is no part of the equipment that could cause scissoring or pinching injuries.
- There are no toxic materials used as preservatives.

Regularly do the following maintenance checks:

- Check for broken parts and sharp edges.
- Sand sharp or splintered edges on wooden toys and equipment.
- Regularly check outdoor toys for rust.
- Make sure that equipment to be stood or climbed on is still sturdy.
- Check for worn rope or chains.
- Check for rotting timbers.
- Ask if the resources are right for the age group. Things safe for the older age group may be dangerous to the little ones.

When supervising the children

- Instruct them carefully about what they can and cannot do on equipment.
- Enlist children's help in setting up riding rules such as no crashing into one another.
- Foster older children to help care for littler ones.
- Teach them to put things away and treat resources such as books with respect.
- Stand or sit near the equipment where safety is a consideration.
- Never allow young children in paddling pools unsupervised.
- Check that there are no foreign objects in the fall zones under and around fixed equipment.
- Limit turns on equipment that are very popular – set up a one-way traffic system to avoid children colliding into each other.
- Always cover the sandpit to prevent animals using it.

Durability

As you have seen, making sure that the large equipment is strong and durable is a big part of making sure that it is safe.

With smaller resources, too, it is important to make them strong and durable, so that you do not waste your precious time making something that is destroyed a short while later. ECD resources will be used by many little hands and they need to be tough. You want them to keep looking good too – it is discouraging for you and

for the children to see toys and games that look worn out and shabby. Resources need to be strong enough to survive the wear and tear of everyday use.

To make sure that the resources you make are durable, choose your materials wisely:

- Don't use flimsy things that will bend or tear or break easily. Use strong raw materials like tough plastic bottles and containers, wood, reinforced cardboard, pebbles and stones.
- When you make puzzles, card games and board games out of thin cardboard, use good quality glue so that pictures don't peel away. Strengthen them and keep them clean by laminating them with adhesive plastic, or have them laminated professionally. While it may seem expensive, it is economical in the long term as the resources will not constantly need to be replaced.
- When you paint toys, cover the last layer of paint with a layer of varnish.
- Keep each puzzle and game that has small parts in its own strong box and reinforce the corners of these boxes.
- Teach the children to put things away in their proper places so that there is no danger of losing parts or of them being trodden on.

Safety tips from www.childsafe.org.za

General guidelines

- Toys should suit the age and developmental stage of the child. They should be interesting and involving. Too easy: they become boring; too difficult: they become frustrating.
- Watch age recommendations for toys – they are there for children's safety. Toy labelling for under-threes is the most important. Under three-year-olds, more than older children, are likely to place small objects in their mouths, which present swallowing dangers.
- Be aware of any parts that can be broken or detached from a toy and might be swallowed. This means anything smaller than a ping pong ball and includes items like stickers and labels.
- Avoid badly made toys that could come apart – for example, buttons that could come loose. Again, these present swallowing hazards.
- Do not buy toys with moving parts that could pinch, cut or trap parts of a child's body.
- Toys should be solid, strong and well-made.
- Strings, cords or ribbons over 30 cm long on toys can strangle a child. Avoid them.
- Do not buy toys that need constant supervision; if a child always needs help with a toy, or has to be watched because the toy breaks easily, it is best not to buy the toy.
- Check children's toys for wear and tear; mend them or throw them away.

- Tidy away toys when not in use.
- Do not buy toy guns that could be mistaken for real guns or toys that fire objects that are potentially dangerous.
- Any guide for a toy relates to child development and is not an intelligence guide. Although it is tempting to buy toys that may be suited to an older child, you may not be doing your own child a favour.

Guide on age-appropriate toys at different ages is available from CAPFSA, PO Box 791, Rondebosch 7701. Tel: 021 6855208.

Acknowledgement: Kidsafe, summer 1995. The Magazine of The Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia)

2.2.3 Ensure that resources strike a balance between the familiar and unfamiliar

The resources that you use must maintain a balance between the familiar and unfamiliar, thus providing consistency and challenge for the children in their life-world experiences.

According to didactic or teaching principles, we work from the known to unknown or familiar to unfamiliar. This can also be applied to resources.

Many of the books, games and puzzles that are produced overseas contain images that are not familiar to many children within a South African context. A typical example is of winter being depicted with snow – for most children in our country this is not a reality. We as ECD practitioners must be aware of our community context and provide the children in our class with more familiar images. This does not mean that we cannot expose them to snow for instance, but we need to look at their age and developmental stage and interests to ensure that we are not confusing them.

There are many resources that can be bought that are made in South Africa and have images that are more familiar to our children.

You will still need to use your discretion and understand the context of the children in your group as children living in a township will have a different understanding to those who are living in leafy suburbs nearby.

Some suitable children's books

The following books are all published by the Anti-Bias Project of the Early Learning Resource Unit and are available to purchase from ELRU directly. They are well-illustrated and include colour photographs:

- *Anjtie* – Xhosa, English, Tswana and Afrikaans book – about a girl who lives in Genadendal and what she gets up to, including driving a donkey cart.
- *Nkqo! Nkqo!* – Xhosa, English, Tswana and Afrikaans book – various families of different cultures are captured in daily rituals.
- *They were wrong!* – about the prejudices that exist regarding various cultures in Cape Town.
- *At School, What if...?* – about Ncebakazi who uses a crutch and the fears she has of going to a mainstream school for the first time.
- *Mhlanguli* – Xhosa, English, Tswana and Afrikaans book – about a boy who lives in Khayelitsha and does ballroom dancing as a hobby.

2.2.4 Ensure that resources are free from cultural, race and gender bias

We need to think carefully of the images and ideas that we are exposing the children to when using resources. Research has shown that children develop attitudes to colour and gender very early in life: by the age of two they notice skin colour and between the ages of three and at the age of five they attach values to it – values such as that you are a more capable and powerful person if you have a white skin.

What do we mean by anti-bias?

A bias is the same as a prejudice – it is a judgement about people based on a pre-conceived belief about the group that they belong to and not on fact or on who they are as individuals. A bias means that your expectations of people are defined by their race, culture, religion, gender or disabilities.

The first and strongest influence on children is their parents. Then they are influenced by the many messages around them – at the ECD centre, from friends, from television, from advertising, in books and in comics. Children model the behaviour they see around them. If adults think different roles and behaviours are suitable for boys and for girls, then children will also do so. If adults believe that some cultures are superior and others are inferior, this message will be passed on to their children. ECD practitioners have a large influence on children in their class as they are role models and the children spend many waking hours in their company.



ECD practitioners thus have a responsibility to ensure that the resources used in their classes do not reflect bias but show images of, for example, female doctors who are black or stay-at-home dads. What children *don't* see plays just as much of a part as what they do see; if they don't see disabled people or black people in successful roles, that will play a part in their expectations of people in those groups.

What is culture-fair?

It is very likely that the ECD centre where you work will include children from several different cultural backgrounds. Being “culture-fair” means recognising, respecting and affirming all the children’s different cultural backgrounds. Different cultures vary in some important areas of life:

- the size and structure of the family
- language
- food and the way of eating
- dress
- discipline
- customs and traditions
- religion

Children often tease others about differences like language. They need to be taught by your example to understand and value cultural differences.

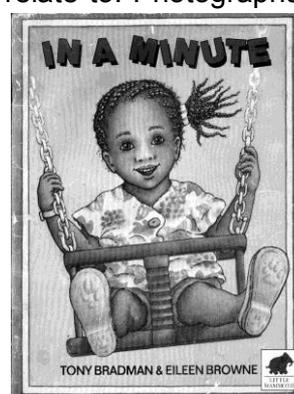
Simple ways to do this would include providing books on various cultures, celebrating festivals from all the different cultures of the children in your class. You can ask the parents of the children to assist by helping you understand and plan for these

celebrations. They can provide for example appropriate food, clothing, or candlesticks, that can be used in your classroom. A parent could visit your class dressed in traditional attire and explain the meaning of the festival. “Make and bake” activities could focus on the different cultures’ foods.

In pictures, books and games, it is important to have positive visual images of the groups that make up society. Whatever their characteristics or background, children should see positive images of themselves in the resources. An excellent example is the pack of “Happy Families” playing cards from ELRU, which show many different types of families.

When making resources such as jigsaw puzzles, card games, matching games, etc, you must make sure that the pictures you use reflect the children in all their diversity. Include pictures of cultures from all over the world, particularly with children over four years of age, as they are ready to learn about the diverse world:

- In the book corner, children need images they can relate to. Photographs of the children themselves are a very useful resource and give them an enormous sense of affirmation.
- Make books by using photos you take of them, for example when you go on an outing.
- Parents can write captions in languages other than English for homemade books and displays.
- In art, mix paints in all the different skin tones so that the children can produce a representation of themselves or others.
- In the imaginative play corner, reflect a variety of cultures in the dressing up materials, play foods, props and in the dolls.



Learning resources to encourage a gender-fair environment

If adults classify toys along gender lines, children will also do so. In a research study, a group of psychology students were asked to examine a list of 50 toys, and to mark which ones were appropriate for boys, which were appropriate for girls, and which were appropriate for both. The results were that there 24 toys were marked for boys only and 17 for girls only. The boys’ toys included guns, doctor sets, tricycles, remote control cars, microscopes and blocks. The girls’ toys included teddy bears, phones, dolls and dollhouses. The study then analysed the kinds of development promoted by these toys.

The boys’ toys encouraged being social, constructive, aggressive and competitive, while the girls’ toys promoted being nurturing and creative. This research shows that different toys promote different skills, and so have a profound effect on a child’s development.

Support a non-sexist viewpoint in your playroom – especially in areas that are traditionally for girls (like the home corner) or for boys (like science or construction activities). Boys and girls should have equal access to all experiences and should be encouraged to try out the various activities.

Be conscious of the messages that are given out by the children’s books. Is there a fair distribution of stories centred around boy and girl characters? What sort of

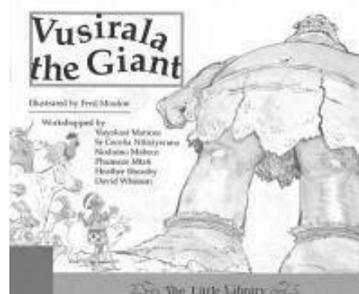


activities are men and women shown to be doing? If most of your books show only the traditional roles, then look for books in the library that show girls and boys, men and women, who are breaking the stereotypes.

You can create your own books, as well as posters, games, cards and puzzles that use images showing both sexes in a wide range of roles, for example, a father staying home to care for the children or a woman police officer.

Resources should be adaptable for children with special needs

Children with disabilities have the same need as the others to see themselves reflected in their school environment. They need to be surrounded by positive role models and to have a positive view of themselves. It is also important for other children to see images and hear stories about disabled people so that they understand and accept them.



Try to find books that show people with disabilities in active roles. Are there any books in your library that have a disabled person as the main character? Look for stories that have characters who are disabled but their disability is not the main focus of the story. (An example is *Vusirala the Giant*, a South African story in which the little girl who defeats the giant walks with crutches.) Again, create your own books by using photographs of all the children in the class.

If you have hearing-impaired children try and provide many stories on tape for them to listen to. For visually impaired children make tactile “touch me” books with textured pictures.

Display pictures of children with different disabilities. Include pictures of them interacting with others who are not disabled. Look for pictures of disabled adults in a variety of roles, as parents, sportspeople, teachers, etc. When you make dolls and puppets for imaginative play, you could add some characters wearing glasses, or a hearing aid, or in a little wheelchair.

Make posters with words like “hello”, “I love you”, “happy” and “sad” in different languages, and include sign language and Braille.

2.2.5 Ensure that resources are appropriate to the developmental needs and interests of the children

The resources you find are often not exactly what you need for a learning activity. You may have to adapt the resources so that they are more appropriate for your playgroup. The term “adapt” means to change to suit your situation. One of the easiest ways to adapt a learning resource for the specific needs of your playgroup is to make your own. For example, you could buy jigsaw puzzles but you may need one with a certain picture to fit in with a theme and a certain number of pieces to suit the development stage of the children. It would probably be easier (and cheaper) to adapt the idea of a jigsaw and make your own than search and search for one that meets your needs.

As an ECD practitioner, you may choose your resources very carefully according to the guidelines we have discussed but you may still find that they are not suitable for all the children in your class.

You may need to adapt or change them to ensure that they are:

- suitable for any special needs in your group
- appropriate to the particular activity
- safe and durable
- familiar but provide challenges and expand the child's life-world experiences
- bias-free
- developmentally appropriate
- reflect the interests of the children in the group



Class Activity 3: Source and select resources

Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

2.3 Adapt resources

As an ECD practitioner, you should know how to find and choose learning resources to use when you are planning your learning activities. But what do you do if the resources you find are not exactly suitable for the activity you have planned and do not meet all the criteria for appropriate learning resources? The answer is: you adapt the learning resources to suit your needs. You can change learning resources so they are appropriate to the developmental needs and interests of the babies, toddlers or young children in your playgroup. That includes making the resources suitable for children with special needs. You can adapt learning resources so that they are safe and durable and strike a balance between the familiar and the unfamiliar. You can change learning resources so that they are free from cultural, racial and gender-based bias. In this lesson you will learn about adapting resources to make them more suitable.

2.3.1 Ensure that adaptations are suited to children with special needs

These adaptations will depend on the special needs of each child – even two children with the same disability may have special needs that differ. Below are some suggestions and ideas but adaptations are only as limited as your creativity and problem-solving abilities!

There are many ways to adapt resources to suit children with special needs.

Creative art activities

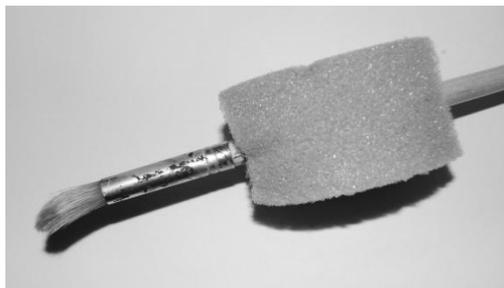
Children who have poor fine motor skills and weak pencil grip can be assisted by widening the grip.

Fine motor skills are problematic for many children with special needs. Common resources such as paint brushes are difficult for children with poor fine motor skills to hold. The handle of a paint brush is very thin and it quickly becomes slippery with paint. Fortunately there are some very simple ways to adapt a paint brush to make it easier to hold.

Adaptation 1 – rubber ball

Take a small soft rubber ball and make a hole through the centre. Push the paintbrush handle into the hole so that it fits snugly. The child can then grasp the handle by holding the ball. You can also take the foam from a hair curler and put the paintbrush handle into the hole in the foam. You may need to fasten it with tape. If you don't have a hair curler, you can trim a piece of sponge and tape it to the handle, as we see below.

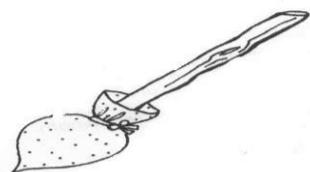
Figure: adapted paintbrush



Soft triangular shaped rubber grips are available commercially for kokis and pencils. Children may also find it easier to use thicker, triangular or animal-shaped crayons, which you can buy locally.

Adaptive scissors are available on the internet to suit various needs. The so-called “spring scissors” are very good for children who have poor fine motor skills. While they may be expensive, it could be worthwhile investing in one or two pairs. Provided that they are well cared for, they should last for many years.

Adaptation 2 – hair curler



Take an old-fashioned foam hair curler and put the paint brush handle into the hole in the foam. You may need to secure it with tape. If you don't have a hair curler, you can simply trim a sponge to the shape of a cylinder, as we did. Then push the handle of the brush through. (If this is difficult, push a knitting needle through first to make a “tunnel” through the sponge.)

As you can see from these examples, most adaptations are inexpensive to make, use very basic materials and just need a little creativity.

2.3.2 Ensure that adapted resources are appropriate for use in planned activities and support the identified

As you know, appropriate learning resources are resources that are suited to the activity in which they are used and support the purpose of the activity. You can adapt resources to suit an activity. You can also adapt the same resource to suit many different activities.

Let's read a case study about how an ECD practitioner used materials she found to make her own ECD resources to suit many different activities.

Case Study : Using river pebbles for learning activities

Tshidi Koli runs the “Brighter Futures” ECD centre in Soweto. Her centre, which caters for 30 children, is well-resourced. However, Tshidi likes to involve children in making resources themselves. The children then use these resources for educational play. Tshidi tries to expose children to natural materials whenever she can. She says that children

are often surrounded by plastic toys, games and apparatus, and they tend to forget the natural world they live in. She collected a bag of smooth river pebbles, and decided to use them as the basis for a range of learning activities. Here's what she did:

Toddlers' painting activity

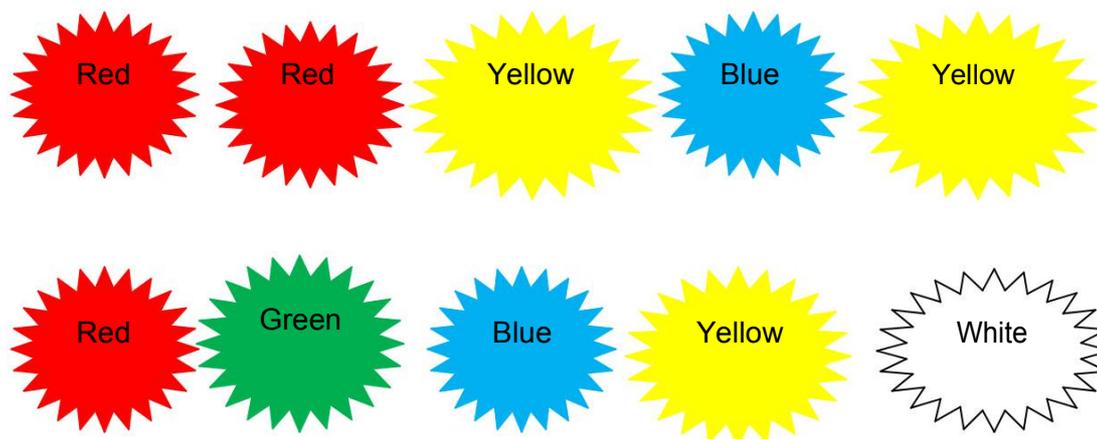
Tshidi set up a painting activity for toddlers. She gave each child five river pebbles. She asked the toddlers to paint each pebble a different colour: red, blue, green, yellow and white. Later, she used the painted stones for other activities.

Toddlers' sorting activity

Tshidi took five cardboard boxes. She painted a strip of colour on each box, using the colours red, blue, green, yellow and white. She gave each child a pile of different coloured pebbles, and asked them to sort the pebbles into the correct boxes.

Toddlers' patterning activity

Tshidi gave each toddler a pile of painted river pebbles. She used the river pebbles to create a pattern, and asked the children to copy the pattern.



Young children's painting activity

Next, Tshidi set up a more complex painting activity for a group of five year olds. She gave each child six river pebbles. She asked the children to paint the numbers 1 to 6 on the river stones. When the stones were numbered, she used the numbered stones to play games.

Young children's sorting activity

This time she needed six cardboard boxes. She painted a number from 1 to 6 on each box. She gave each child a pile of numbered pebbles and asked them to sort the pebbles into the correct boxes.

Young children's number recognition activity

For this game, Tshidi made a different bingo card for each child and also gave each child a pile of numbered pebbles. She then called out numbers to the group. The

children had to match their numbered pebbles with the numbers on the card. The first child to fill a card would call out “Bingo!”

Bingo!	
5	3
1	4

Tips: it would be a good idea to

- get it done professionally as it will be more economical in the long run.
- where possible, keep pieces of games and puzzles in boxes. You can strengthen boxes with clear packaging tape and cardboard pieces. Alternatives to boxes are plastic throw-away containers from ice-cream, cheese wedges, etc.

It makes no sense to spend money to buy or make resources for them that they will destroy after using it only once.

2.3.3 Ensure that adapted resources are safe and durable

It is not only the actual learning programme that can be an adapted resource. In the South African context ECD centres often have to be innovative with their resources because of the lack of funds.

For example: Use tyres as swings, or sand pits. These are durable and easily obtainable. Safety is of importance though. In this case ensuring that there are no wires protruding from the tyre and that the swing is secure in its post.

Before you use a resource that has been adapted (such as paint or equipment) check that the substitute materials are not toxic, and that the equipment is safe.

The term *safe* also implies that you are sensitive when adapting a learning resource, and that you make sure that all the learners feel secure with the changes.

2.3.4 Ensure that adaptations help to strike a balance between the familiar and unfamiliar

As an ECD practitioner, one of your many roles is to expose children to a variety of resources that are free from cultural bias. In our multi-cultural country, it is vital that children learn tolerance and respect for one another as well as an appreciation for diversity. You may need to adapt or create resources to ensure that they do not reinforce any gender, culture or racial stereotypes.

Songs, rhymes and poems can be adapted by changing words and names to suit a South African context. This also helps to make them more familiar. However, be careful when you change the words and make sure that you do not change the basic meaning, rhythm or rhyming of words.

Here are some examples:

- “Do you know the muffin man.....who lives in Drury Lane?” The words can be changed to
“Do you know the pizza man....who lives in Tableview?”
- Very traditional English names could be changed too. “Mary had a little lamb” could become “Thandi had a little lamb”.

Children love it when their opinions about the changes are asked and they may often come up with very imaginative suggestions. Five-year-olds who are comfortable in a language naturally participate in this type of activity as part of their developmental milestones.

Remember though that it may confuse children if you are reading from a book and merely change names. Children who are developing literacy skills may go back to the book later and not be able to match the name they heard to the one that is in print. A better option is to use a story as a basis and tell the story rather than read it. You can contextualise and localise the content and names using suitable illustrations or props that you have made. This approach is often used in theatre. For instance, every year at Maynardville Shakespeare plays are presented in contexts that are more modern than their original setting.

While you may not be able to change games and educational toys, you can use the base ideas to create your own resources. The concepts below are inter-changeable and are meant to get you thinking of your own idea.

- Lotto – instead of animals that are not endemic, you could have lions, hippopotami, giraffes, etc.
- Dominoes – use matching pictures of different cultural items or food.
- Puzzles – use pictures depicting local scenes or people.
- Flash cards – have fathers hanging up washing, women who are doctors, etc.
- Snap cards – use pictures of groceries including items like mealie-meal, pasta, samosas, etc.

2.3.5 Ensure that adaptations are free from cultural, race and gender bias

Puppets and dolls can be adapted by changing their clothes or accessories to make them bias-free. Here are a few typical examples of adaptations that can easily be made:

- Males can wear pink shirts.
- Wire glasses can be added to stimulate awareness of special needs.
- Not all grannies have grey hair and buns – change the hair on a bought puppet by colouring it with a koki.

When you create your own resources you can make puppets that are male nurses or female police officers. Use different flesh tones to depict various races.

2.3.6 Ensure that adaptations are appropriate to the developmental needs and interests of the children

We must meet children's developmental needs and interests in order for them to obtain the maximum learning opportunities possible from an activity. Three-year-olds who are very egocentric (self-centred) and show interest mostly in the things they experience, would not be interested in a theme or activity that is based on travelling into space. Five-year-olds, though, would be interested as they can conceptualise the ideas better.

Below are some suitable themes for various ages. Please note though that interests also depend on the media that the children are exposed to every day. Think of how popular certain comic characters become when a new movie is released, or the excitement around the Olympics, Soccer World Cup in 2010 or Rugby World Cup in 2011.

Themes for different developmental stages:

Toddlers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Me and my body • My family • My home • My school • Healthy food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping clean • My pets • Colours • Sounds around • Big and small
Young children	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My body – uses of limbs, etc • Feelings and moods • Senses and disabilities • My extended family • Types of food • Babies • Shapes • Farm animals • Wild animals • Baby animals • Animal homes • Transport – land, air, sea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who help us • Stranger danger and safety • Spring • Summer • Autumn • Winter • Opposites • The beach • Under the sea • The forest • Night and day • Hygiene and health
Pre-schoolers (5–6 yrs)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life cycles • Under the sea • Strange and different animals • Mammals vs Reptiles • Insects • Dinosaurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather • Seasons and how they change • Pollution and littering • Professions • Mining

These theme ideas are based on an adaption of the learning spiral from Jerome Bruner who is a contemporary educational theorist. He is one of a group of constructivists who believe that people are responsible for building their own ideas and knowledge. We do so by building on what we already know and understand. It all starts with knowing ourselves.



Class Activity 4: Adapt resources

Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

Learning Unit 3

Set up the environment for ECD facilitation

After completing this Learning Unit, you will be able to set up the environment for ECD facilitation, by successfully completing the following:

- Understand how the environment impacts on child development.
- Set up the learning environment.
- Store materials and physical resources in an organised and accessible manner.

Set up the environment for ECD facilitation

As an ECD practitioner, you have to set up the learning environment for your playgroup. The learning environment includes the indoor environments where the babies, toddlers or young children will spend their time. A learning environment should help children to explore and make meaning of the world through their senses and through the way they move in the environment.

You need to make the most of the space you have and organise the learning environment so it caters for individual and group space. You also need to be able to rearrange the learning environment on a regular basis according to the needs of the children and the activities. Your learning environment must make provision for the organised storage of resources so that they are easily accessible. Of course, the learning environment must be safe and healthy and must take into account the ages and special needs of the children who use it. In this lesson you will learn all about setting up a learning environment.

In many instances, the areas you will have to work in may not be ideal. You will need to be creative when you organise these areas so that you maximise the space and learning opportunities while you still maintain the health and safety standards.

3.1 Understand how the environment impacts on child development

The learning environment is the physical space provided both indoors and outdoors for babies, toddlers and children to play.

Remember that **play = learning**

It is no coincidence that we refer to these areas as the *playroom* and *playground* because the way that you set up these areas will encourage children to play – and thus to learn.

The learning opportunities that can be created for children both indoors and outdoors are almost limitless. The only limiting factor is the ECD practitioner.

A well-structured learning environment where safety is considered, storage is organised and space is maximised, will facilitate learning and the achievement of developmental goals.

3.2 Set up the learning environment

Many ECD practitioners focus on planning the activities such as morning ring, art, movement, music and story and forget that children learn incidentally too. A well set-out indoor area with sufficient resources can stimulate learning opportunities, as children become actively involved in the type of learning that they choose. When humans are involved in activities they enjoy, they learn best.

Indoor areas

Many schools have limited space available and this in turn limits the areas that can be set up in the classroom. Book, block, fantasy and educational toys and games are essential for both toddlers and young children.

Numeracy, literacy, nature, science and social studies tables are very important to young children, as they are ready to learn more about the world and these activities

will provide these opportunities. If space is limited, rotate these tables – either numeracy or literacy and either nature, science or social studies. (The contents of the tables will be explained in the table that follows.) You will need to use your themes as a guideline in deciding which table is appropriate. For example:

- “People who help us” lends itself to a social studies table.
- “Under the sea” lends itself to a nature table.
- Other activity areas that can be presented are music, handcraft and listening areas.

Extensions are extra resources that are added or changed on a regular basis and often relate to the theme being presented. Extensions are a means of changing the environment slightly for the children and introducing new concepts. In this way, you are able to keep your environment stimulating for the children and move them from the familiar to the less familiar. The extensions do not necessarily need to be major



changes, changing the colour of the cushion covers in the book area or a different theme related poster, can be all that is needed to spark children’s interest. Children are very visual in nature (they respond to what they see) and are attracted by colours – use this characteristic wisely to create interest in the learning activities.

Area	Basic furniture	Resources	Some extension ideas (usually theme related)
Book	Carpeted area Bookshelf for displaying books – ideally standing up so that the covers attract the children. Best in the quietest area in the class.	Should be comfortable with chairs or cushions. Variety of books – both fiction and non-fiction and different languages if possible.	Posters Soft toys Different coloured, textured and shaped cushions Puppets, finger puppets Illustrations from stories you have told.
Block	Carpeted area best or it becomes very noisy. Large area needed (mat used for ring times is often best). Low shelves on which blocks are packed.	Blocks – best if they are not painted. Need various lengths as well as cylinders and arches.	Plastic animals, cars, etc Floor maps Simplified building plans Pieces of carpet, cardboard, etc that can be used as flooring, Roofs

Area	Basic furniture	Resources	Some extension ideas (usually theme related)
Educational toys and games	Shelf area where they can be displayed and laid out flat (especially puzzles) Ideally should not be on top of each other but if space is an issue, only two games deep Can be near tables and chairs so that they can sit comfortably or otherwise a carpeted area	Variety of games will depend on age suitability Construction – duplo or Lego, stickle bricks, mechanic Educational – lotto, dominoes, heads and tails Puzzles – different numbers of pieces, jig saw, knob puzzles Fine motor – threading, daisy counters	Made resources that relate to the theme being discussed. This can include resources that the children have assisted in making.
Fantasy area	Toddlers and younger children need home-based furniture such as a bed, cupboard, stove, wash up area, mirror. These can also be provided but their uses can be changed to create other contexts such as a shop, doctor's surgery, etc.	Dress up clothes, hats, shoes Dolls and clothes Kitchen equipment like pots, pans, plastic plates and cutlery Empty food containers and plastic fruit/food items Empty self-care products e.g. powder, cream	Doctor's surgery : bandages, doctor's coat, stethoscope, syringes without the needles Bakery: playdough, bowls, chef's hats, cookie cutters, cookie cups, muffin pans, baking trays, aprons Hairdresser; brushes, broken hairdryer, soft curlers, mirrors, plastic aprons
Numeracy		Calculators, abacus, counters, paper, kokis Chairbags to store some of the resources like the kokis	Simple worksheets, number stamps, cut out numbers to trace, number stencils.
Literacy	Table and at least two chairs	Paper, different kokis, crayons, pencils, etc. Chairbags to store some of the resources like the Kokis	Simple worksheets, stamps, word flashcards that can be traced, cut out letters to trace, large stencils, rulers, scissors Punch, stapler (5 years and up) Highlighters, sticky tape, envelopes, postbox, glue sticks, stickers

Area	Basic furniture	Resources	Some extension ideas (usually theme related)
Nature	Table against a wall so that there is a space for a poster. Nature tables with cupboard space underneath are available commercially but quite expensive.	<p>Magnifying glass</p> <p>Items on this table MUST be natural – NO plastic animals, etc</p> <p>Labels for items – in different languages if need be (depends on class)</p> <p>Poster with theme printed on it and relevant picture to attract children's attention</p> <p>Relevant puzzles, games, worksheets, books</p>	<p>Pets: goldfish in a bowl, fish food, rabbit pellets, budgie feathers, dog food can, perhaps a rat or hamster in a cage</p> <p>Spring: seeds, flowers, growing beans in cottonwool so children can see roots, etc, fruit that is available.</p>
Science		<p>Science experiments – example of floating or sinking. Different objects, bowl of water, children place objects in the water and see if they sink or float, can have trays where they can sort items into sinking or floating.</p> <p>Water theme – can put coloured ice blocks into water and see them melt.</p> <p>Colour theme – different colours of paint or playdough to mix and see what colours they create</p> <p>Relevant puzzles, games, worksheets, books</p>	
Social studies		<p>Relates to people – can be combined with fantasy area.</p> <p>E.g. "people who help us" – fireman – get hat, boots, jacket, etc from fire department.</p> <p>Winter – have wellington boots, scarves, hats, etc – all items of winter clothing.</p> <p>Relevant puzzles, games, worksheets, books</p>	
Handcraft	Can be at a table, kneeling at a sturdy box or on the floor.	<p>Typically sewing, threading, gluing.</p> <p>It is a takeaway table – i.e. children will make things to take home.</p> <p>May be an art activity that you have presented to teach them the particular skills.</p>	<p>Under the sea – sturdy cardboard fish for children to thread wool around</p> <p>My family – basic puppet shapes that children can glue together with wool, buttons, etc for eyes, mouths, etc</p> <p>Reptiles: stockings to stuff with newspaper to make snakes</p>

Area	Basic furniture	Resources	Some extension ideas (usually theme related)
Music	Can be on the floor with cushions Shelf to display instruments (Can be very noisy – good to have in passage or on a veranda outside the class)	Musical instruments e.g. shaker, xylophone, drum , triangle Children can experiment with various instruments. Can have very basic musical scores for children to copy – colour coded – e.g. play “Mary had a little lamb” by following the colours on the xylophone.	
Listening	Can be on the floor with cushions.	Tape recorder/CD player Earphones	Stories to listen to – provide book so that they can try and follow. Songs to listen to. Games to play – follow instructions

Outdoor learning areas

The outdoor learning areas is often the most neglected area as many ECD practitioners do not specifically set up learning activities outdoors. In many instances, there is basic equipment such as jungle gyms and a sandpit and only a few resources, that seldom change. ECD practitioners often complain that the children are destructive outside but it is mostly because they are not being stimulated enough. The outdoor or garden area should be an extension of the classroom and should provide as many learning opportunities as the classroom itself.

The essential elements for young children are sand, water, adventure play and movement exploration. If there is space you may include woodwork, a pet corner and a vegetable garden, that all offer fantastic learning opportunities.

Important considerations:

Age of the children

Babies need a safe, grassed area with minimal equipment so that they can lie and enjoy fresh air and crawl around. It should not be too sunny and hot.

Toddlers need low climbing equipment, paved area for pushbikes, sand and water play.

In the table that follows, we will focus on the specific areas for young children.

Safety

The area should be fenced in; you should check that there are no poisonous plants; ensure there is soft ground-covering under equipment and make sure there is no broken or rusting equipment. Large equipment needs to be firmly anchored in the ground and there needs to be constant supervision.

Rules

Children need to know how to use equipment safely e.g. no wheel toys are allowed on the jungle gym, they are not allowed to throw sand.

Space

There needs to be enough space around equipment like swings, so that children do not get hurt when walking past.

Light

The area should not be too sunny and hot, there must be shady areas (may be under a gazebo).

Variety of surfaces

There should be paved or tarred pathways or areas for wheel toys and grass.



Stimulation/noise

Not only is the outdoor area an active area where children are running around but there should also be quieter areas where children can relax.

Toilets

Need to be easily accessible as children often get engrossed (absorbed) in playing and only realise at the last minute that they need to go.





The outdoor area should include a variety of surfaces including grass and paved areas

The following table give some ideas for outdoor learning areas, furniture, resources and possible extensions:

Area	Basic furniture	Resources	Some extension ideas (usually theme related)
Water	Water trough or large basin that is not placed on the ground as this poses a drowning risk.	<p>Plastic items such as bottles, scoops, pipes, measuring cups, funnels, sponges, etc. Items should ideally be colour-coded with yellow, red, green and blue tape. They should also have holes on the bottom and sides in series from none to five. (This is such an important opportunity for children to learn maths skills)</p> <p>Waterproof aprons - can be made from plastic bags.</p> <p>Water must be emptied out daily and fresh water provided.</p>	<p>Sinking and floating – add boats</p> <p>Colours – use dye or food colouring in the water</p> <p>Add bubbles with nice smelling bubble bath or even dishwashing liquid</p> <p>Add warm water in winter</p>

Area	Basic furniture	Resources	Some extension ideas (usually theme related)
Sand	Sandpit or container of sand, which is covered at night to prevent animals from soiling it. Must be large enough for children to climb into. Needs to have drainage if it is built in.	Metal items such as tins, colanders, baking trays, etc, must be painted, have no sharp edges and not be rusting. They should pose no danger to the children. Plastic items: bottles, scoops, pipes, measuring cups, funnels, spades, buckets, sieves, rakes, etc. Balancing scale As with water – they should have holes in them to provide opportunity for maths Skills. Hardboard or plastic combs	Cars, plastic animals Sea theme: hide shells for children to dig out Water: wet sand is different to dry sand
Adventure play	Grassed space Paved area for wheel toys	Wheel toys –scooters, tricycles, bicycles, wheelbarrows, carts Boxes, crates, drag boxes, blankets, shade cloth, pots, pans, hats, etc (items for outdoor fantasy play)	Picnic: cooler bag with plastic plates, cups, etc. Camping: sleeping bag, mattress Beach: set up umbrella, towels, buckets, hats
Movement exploration	Fixed equipment such as swings, slides, jungle gym (wood preferably as it does not rust) – monkey bars, fireman’s pole, bridge, commando net, trapeze rings.	Balance beam, balls, beanbags, bats, tyres, rope ladders, hula hoops, balance boards, punch bag, stilts, kick boards, tennequoit rings, swing ball, hopscotch	Set up a “tennis match” – hit ball over a net or piece of string. Spider’s web – use elastic around poles to create a web that they climb over and under.
Wood	Woodwork bench or solid table	Real but miniature hammers and saws Nails, glue, soft wood, wool, material, wood chips, sand paper, leather, pliers This area needs CONSTANT supervision as the potential for a child to hurt himself is very high.	Collage: glue different materials to wood pieces

Area	Basic furniture	Resources	Some extension ideas (usually theme related)
Pet area	Depends on pet – must be secure so that pet cannot escape or be taken out without Supervision.	Tortoise, ducks, rabbits, hens Area must be kept clean or they will attract rats and other vermin.	Children can bring food for the pets. Petting time: under supervision of an adult.
Vegetable garden	Quieter area of the garden where the risk of damage from balls and children running through is minimised.	You can grow flowers, vegetables and herbs. Small spades Trellises for beans	Use vegetable in foods presented to the children at lunch or snack. Use vegetables in make and bake activities.

3.2.1 Ensure that the environment is conducive to sensory and motor exploration

The indoor as well as the outdoor environment needs to be carefully considered to provide as much as possible opportunity for the development of sensory and motor exploration. Here are some things to consider:

- Are there well-supplied dramatic play areas?
- Is there a large block area?
- What about sand and water activities, manipulative, art areas, and reading corners?
- Is the space arranged in such a way that children can make noise while playing without disturbing children in other activities?
- Can children make a mess in the art area without destroying the books in the reading area?

Environments should provide children with many suitable physical activities. Young children are naturally physical and learn most effectively through total physical involvement. They need a high level of physical activity, variety, and stimulus change (Hale, 1994).

Allow for many hands-on activities. Young children need this — playing in water, building mud pies, making things out of play dough. Include ways to practise and integrate new experiences into existing mental structures — dramatic play, drawing, using language, and building with blocks.

Make use of change and variety. Children seek out a constant change of stimuli — scenery, textures, colours, group play, sounds, and smells.

Early Childhood Environments should be functional for both children and teachers.

3.2.2 Ensure that the environment is organised

You have to make the most of the space you have available and organise the learning environment so it provides individual and group space. You also need to be able to rearrange the learning environment on a regular basis according to the needs of the children and the activities.

Maximising available space

You should plan your activities bearing in mind the space available to you as well as the needs of each particular activity. You should consider the following:

- Is it a group or individual activity? Is it indoors or outdoors? The garden should have a variety of trees, flowers, and shrubs with space for the children to grow seeds, flowers and vegetables, investigate bugs and collect rocks, leaves or other natural objects. It also needs space for climbing equipment, open areas to run and space for wheel toys. Remember that the outdoor area can also be used to set up art activities – particularly those that are very messy or need more space. You can also read a story in the shade of a tree on a hot day.
- Wheel toys such as tricycles, karts, etc. need a paved or hard surface for it to be used effectively.
- It is vital that items are stored as close as possible to where they will be used.
- Book areas need to be in a quieter area of the class and not right next to noisy play.
- Block areas should have lots of space for children to build imaginative structures.
- Levels available – sitting on the floor, kneeling at a box or sitting at table and chairs. Some activities like literacy and numeracy activities need tables to work at, while blocks should be built on a flat surface such as the floor or carpet. Some art activities like box construction can be done on a plastic mat, which can be packed away when not in use.



Creative activities are often messy and thus they should be planned for areas that are tiled and easy to clean. They should be close to a source of water to facilitate preparation of paints etc. and for cleaning up.

- Free play activities allow children to choose an area to play in. Areas such as the book area, block area, etc. should cater for about four children at a time.
- Take into consideration the traffic patterns in the classroom. Children and adults should be able to move freely from one area to another. There should no furniture blocking doorways. Children should not be bumping into each other or equipment when they move around.



Toilets should be easily accessible from both indoor and outdoor areas. Children often need to get to the toilet in a hurry and should not have to move around structures.

There should be display space on the walls for artwork and things that are relevant to the weekly theme. These art works and other objects must all be at the children's eye-level.

Storage space is needed so that all the resources and equipment are well-organised (have their place) and both the ECD practitioner and the children have easy access to it.

The indoor area should be well lit and airy. Windows must let in enough light, be low enough for the children to see out and have curtains or blinds that close tightly for sleep time.

Each child needs a storage area for his/her personal items.

Furniture that can be stacked on top of each other and moved around is ideal as it allows for flexible use of space. Chairs and tables can be stored out of the way when an area is needed for music, movement or other large group activities.

Adapting to change according to the needs of the children and activities

If you have children with special needs in your class, they will also need to be comfortable and to move around freely. This is particularly relevant to children with physical disabilities who rely on crutches or wheelchairs for mobility (movement).

You can assist the children by making sure that the following are in place:

- Ramps are available to enter the indoor area and so that the child has access to the outdoor area.
- Pathways are wide enough outdoors for a wheelchair to be pushed on them.
- Toilet doors are wide enough to allow wheelchair access and that there are bars on the walls of the toilet for them to hold onto.
- There are “pathways” in the class for the children to move without bumping into furniture.
- Resources and equipment are stored at a height that they can access so they are not dependent in all situations.
- Resources are adapted where need be to accommodate their needs.

You will have to be very sensitive to the physical needs of all children with special needs so that the environment does not hinder their learning opportunities even more.

3.2.3 Ensure that the environment is set up for individual and group space

Group activities obviously require more space than individual activities but it depends on the group size. Large group activities such as music or morning ring will need more space than smaller groups and you may have to move furniture to accommodate all the children.

3.2.4 Ensure that the environment is safe and healthy

The ECD practitioner in a class should be able to see into all the play areas so that she can supervise the children effectively. Cupboards and shelves should be low enough so that an adult can see over them.

Carpets and mats should not be loose to prevent people from slipping. They should also not have corners that are sticking up that could result in someone tripping.

Plugs should be covered or blocked by heavy furniture so that children cannot easily access them and shock themselves. Do not overload plugs or use electrical equipment with frayed cords. Children should not be able to pull on electrical cords. Wall-mounted heaters that are high enough to be above the reach of the children are the best choice.

The younger the child, the more supervision they need.

- *Babies* should never be left alone. They put everything into their mouths, so avoid resources that can be choking hazards or toxic. Also ensure that each baby's bottles, dummies and personal toys are clearly marked to avoid spreading infection. There must be no sharp edges on furniture to protect babies who are learning to crawl.
- *Toddlers* like climbing and get into dangerous situations if they are not constantly supervised. Once they are mobile (able to move around), gates are needed at the top and bottom of stairs. Storage boxes must either have lightweight lids, no lids or self-closing hinges. Cupboards that contain potentially hazardous items such as the first-aid kit or cleaning products must have safety latches or locks.
- *Young children* can manage certain activities on their own but you still need to be vigilant and keep an eye on them. Teach young children to put the resources away after an activity so that the resources do not get broken and so that no one trips over them and falls.

Clean up liquid spillages on tiled floors immediately as children and adults could slip on them.

Provide enough space for activities so that children can move without bumping into equipment. When children feel overcrowded they begin to argue and fight with their peers.

Provide enough resources so that children are stimulated and do not have to fight over equipment or wait too long for a turn.

Scissors and other potentially dangerous items must to be stored properly so that they are used only under supervision.

Equipment needs to be secure and well-balanced so that it does not fall onto a child if the child pulls on it.

Children must be supervised when using water. Empty all basins, troughs, etc, immediately after use.

Make sure that equipment is used for the intended purpose only as misuse might be a potential hazard.



Class Activity 5: Set up the learning environment

Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

3.3 Store materials and physical resources

You will need both indoor and outdoor storage areas, as resources should be stored close to where they will be used.

If there is enough space, it is ideal to have shared storeroom indoors for all ECD facilitators where the following can be stored:

- “junk” that is collected for art like boxes, polystyrene chips, etc.
- paint, glue, etc.
- paintbrushes, rollers, etc.
- theme boxes: photo copy paper lids or boxes are ideal for storing items that belong to a particular theme. They can be labelled and thus become easily accessible when needed. Extra puzzles, games, toys that are not being used can also be stored in these boxes.



An art trolley can be used to pack away art resources and then rolled out of the way when it is not being used

3.3.1 Ensure that the environment is set up to cater for storage of resources

Storage can be maximised in the classroom in many ways:

- Babies’ cots may have drawers underneath where toys or personal items can be stored.
- You can install high shelves within your reach but out of the children’s reach. This is ideal for items that are not needed on a daily basis.
- Drag boxes, boxes or crates used for children to kneel at can have lids fitted so that items can be stored inside.
- Art trolleys are available on castors where day-to-day items can be neatly packed and wheeled out of the way when needed.

It is very important for children’s sense of security that they know where things are and that the environment is well ordered. Teaching them that to sort and store items neatly and logically is an important life skill.

Boxes, tins and other items can be recycled and used to store items in the class. Here are some very basic ideas:

- Ice-cream tubs with lids can be stacked with items like crayons or kokis in them.



- Larger tins can be used for storing paintbrushes so that they can dry. Make sure that the bristles are stored upwards. A4 paper can also be rolled up and packed upright in a tin on the literacy table. The tins can be painted or covered with coloured paper to make them more attractive. Keep the plastic lid and put it on the bottom of the tin to prevent it from slipping or marking surfaces.
- A magazine or paper storage box can be created by cutting off the top of a large cereal box. Then draw a line from the top left-hand corner of the box to the middle of the right-hand side of the box. Making an identical line on the opposite side of the box. Once you have cut along these lines, you will have an upright storage box.
- Stacking paper trays can also easily be made. Take three or four cereal boxes and cut the top flaps off each of the cereal boxes. Stack the boxes on top of each other and stick them together with tape. Then cover the outside of the stack neatly with a large sheet of wrapping paper, brown paper, newsprint or newspaper. You can store your paper in this paper filing system. If your boxes start to bend, you can stick a piece of thin wood (for example, an ice cream stick) on each side to add extra support.
- A multi-sized storage unit or giant sorting tray can also be made to store a variety of things like wool, tinfoil or shiny paper, shells, fabric scraps, buttons, small machine parts and seedpods. Take a large cardboard box and cut off the top flaps. Turn the box on its side. Find smaller boxes that can fit neatly inside the bigger box like shoe boxes, porridge boxes or tea boxes. Arrange these small boxes inside the big box.

Children need personal storage space for their bags and snacks if they bring them to school, as well as for their art aprons, message books, change of clothes, sun screen, etc. It is ideal if this personal storage space is in a passage just outside the class so that the items can be accessed quickly. They will also need hooks in the toilet area for their personal face cloths.

The outdoor storeroom would be used for items such as the wheel toys, balls, sand and water play that cannot be left outside overnight. It should also be neat and cleaned out regularly as it can be the ideal nesting place for rats, spiders and other creatures. It is a good idea to use plastic crates as cardboard boxes rot easily – especially if it is damp.

Always remember that safety is crucial and that any poisonous or cleaning substances and medicines

should be securely locked away out of the reach of curious young children.



Class Activity 6: Store materials and physical resources

Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

Learning Unit 4

Facilitate the development of babies, toddlers and young children

After completing this Learning Unit, you will be able to facilitate the development of babies, toddlers and/or young children, and use communication effectively during facilitation, by successfully completing the following:

- Manage children in a manner that promotes development and is sensitive to the needs of individual children.
- Carry out facilitation in a manner that ensures the physical and emotional safety, security and comfort of the children.
- Carry out facilitation such that behaviour and life-skills are modelled in a developmentally appropriate manner.
- Ensure that facilitation assures the holistic development of children.
- Ensure that communication is responsive and promotes development.
- Ensure that verbal and non-verbal interactions are developmental.
- Use appropriate behaviour and conflict management.

Facilitate the development of babies, toddlers and young children

Facilitation that promotes the holistic development of babies, toddlers and young children should be characterised by nurturing warmth. By having a nurturing and emotionally warm tone in your approach to the children, you provide a solid foundation for their sense of security and self-acceptance. In such a climate of warmth the child feels free to play, explore, make mistakes and try again without fear of failure. Their self-image grows, they feel respected, can show initiative and try out new ideas and feel free to express their opinions.

4.1 Manage children in a manner that promotes development

Does nurturing mean there are no rules and limits? No, the opposite is true – the child experiences being cared for by having rules and limits too, as they provide structure, fairness, and containment (control). But the warm and caring attitude should come first, and the rules should be fitted into that, so that the child feels heard and understood and that his or her needs are being met. They then feel no anxiety about obeying a set of rules. The warm atmosphere allows children to succeed as they have a sense of inner security, and can do well at their particular level of skill.

Here are three ways in which you can become more of a nurturer:

1. Stay positive in responding to children

Keep a positive frame of mind for yourself and your learners. Respond consistently, notice their positive qualities, encourage the learners to stay positive too and start the day with a positive or caring greeting or message for each child. They will absorb and learn your positive attitude. Avoid saying “No, that’s the wrong way”; rather simply encourage and show them again the right way: “See if you can do it this way next time”.

2. Tune in and observe

Focus on the child’s unique qualities, strengths and capabilities, and respond with acknowledgement, praise and encouragement. Review each child’s well-being at specific points during the programme. For example, you could think back about the morning during snack time, and get a sense of how different children are coping with the demands of the programme or peer interaction. Listen whenever you can, and pay attention to their free play or chatter. In this way you will get in touch with the child’s mood and general well-being and have an opportunity to notice anything that may need your attention and support. (You will also learn to make observational notes about this tuning in.)

3. Take every opportunity to give positive attention

Always look for ways to encourage and be warm about any effort the children make, even if there is no effort – the children just want the sunshine of your love! Even if your style is not usually so jolly or outspoken, you can learn to pay attention first, and then to increase the warmth of that attention by degrees. Do this by reminding yourself of anyone who has been a caring or inspiring person in your own life. By being more nurturing, you do half the work of facilitating. And if you improve the child’s self-image and build self-confidence, you make it possible for the child to tackle developmental tasks with freedom and confidence.

4.1.1 Manage children in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of individual children

Since all the domains of development are linked, you can promote development in all domains by presenting them in a nurturing and warm way to establish the child's sense of security and acceptance. This provides a background of empowerment, trust and freedom which allows the child to play, experiment, be him/herself and make mistakes without fear. Research has shown that a nurturing environment enhances and improves self-image in the following ways:

- Children perceive a sense of warmth and love.
- They are offered a degree of security, allowed to grow and afforded the opportunity to try new things without fear of failure.
- They are respected as individuals.
- They are encouraged to develop initiative and new ideas.
- They are encouraged to express their opinions.

Nurtured (cherished) children recognise that there are clear and definite limits within the environment, that there are rules and standards that are reasonably, fairly and consistently enforced. This gives them a sense of what is allowed and a sense of where they fit into those boundaries. When they feel that they are heard and understood they can more easily accept the rules for behaviour, as their needs are being met. Most important, perhaps, is that nurtured children have a chance to succeed at their particular level of accomplishment.

4.2 Carry out facilitation in a manner that ensures the physical and emotional safety, security and comfort of the children

When facilitating an ECD session, you should carry out the facilitation in a manner that ensures the physical and emotional safety, security and comfort of the children.

How can the ECD practitioner be more nurturing? Here are a few ways in which you can become more of a nurturer:

- Build self-esteem.
- Be aware of the vulnerable child.
- Cultivate a positive attitude.
- Be observant.
- Be prepared to give approval and positive attention.

Building self-esteem

Self-esteem is the essential ingredient in human beings that increases personal growth, happiness and development on all levels.

By showing warmth, respect, responsiveness and sensitivity to the individual child, their context and their needs, the facilitator can promote the development of the children in his or her care. The facilitator's warm and caring attitude is the "fertiliser" that grows the child's self-esteem.

Be aware of the vulnerable child

Think of the child as a vulnerable plant that will bend and wilt if it hears unkind words. Try to speak kindly at all times. If you must raise your voice, do it only occasionally – think how much you dislike it when you have been shouted at in the past. Show warmth in the way you speak, use a bit of humour to show you are understanding, and avoid using negative terms such as “Don’t hesitate!” “Don’t be stupid!” “Can’t you understand?” or labels and judgements like “You’re so clumsy!”. Show tolerance, patience and kindness in all your behaviours, and the children will learn to communicate in the same way.

Good alternative ways to direct children to a better solution or better behaviour are through encouragement and a “try again” approach:

“Would you like to give it another try?”

“You’re trying hard; let’s just see if a different way will help.” “Keep trying, you’re on the right track.”

Cultivate a positive attitude

You can best help children to feel good about themselves by being consistent and having a good attitude yourself, especially about children’s positive qualities. Make a conscious effort every day to make your children aware of their positive attributes. Every day, remind yourself of how important it is to say something positive.

If you are working with younger children, start the day by deliberately greeting each child with a caring statement, even if it is as basic as telling the child that you like the way in which he/she said good morning! Remember that your talk becomes their inner self talk. Consistency is very important; make a conscious effort every day to help the children develop positive feelings about themselves.

Be observant

Whether the child feels loved or unloved has a big effect on his or her development. To foster a child’s positive self-image, you must notice and comment on the child’s unique qualities, strengths and capabilities. Any desirable trait of behaviour, act of thoughtfulness, display of creativity or special effort should be noted and acknowledged. The ECD practitioner should, therefore, work hard to be observant, by mentally noting children’s behaviour and characteristics. During the day you should have a quick check-in scan of each child at least three times during your programme, to get a sense of how that child is coping with the day’s challenges. Do this by looking at the child and listening to any interaction or free play. This allows you to tune into the child’s mood and general well-being and to notice anything different that may need your attention and support.

Be prepared to give approval and positive attention

Three- and four-year-olds believe parents and other adults are super human beings – they can even see through drawn curtains! The child accepts that these “all powerful gods” treat me as I deserve. What they say is what I am. All a child really wants and needs are your approval and positive attention. Do not neglect to provide these things.

As an ECD practitioner you can learn to be a nurturer (carer) to provide an environment that enhances and improves a child’s self-image.

4.3 Carry out facilitation such that behaviour and life-skills are modelled

In most case children learn what they see powerful or loved people doing. The most important person to the child is you, the classmates and teacher and her parents and siblings and friends. Your role as a practitioner is to engage with the child deliberately in order to encourage and promote her development. Her learning from you takes place not only because of the things that you do but also because of how significant you are and how that affects her motivation to learn.

Children learn and imitate behaviour they have observed in other people. There are certain conditions for social learning to take place:

- The child has to be paying attention.
- Once the child has seen the behaviour it can be remembered and practised and improved.
- If the child is motivated, the social learning progress will be successful and the child will imitate the behaviour.

Life skills are the social skills which humans use to manage their own lives and their relationships with others.

Modelling is the word used to describe the social learning that takes place when the child or observer identifies with a role model and unconsciously copies her or shapes his or her own behaviour to fit that of the model. “Modelling” here refers to the way in which the facilitator provides an example to the children concerning behaviour.

4.4 Ensure that facilitation assures the holistic development of children

Not only are you educating through the activities you are presenting, but you are also communicating knowledge, values, attitudes, life skills and physical habits simply by being in the presence of children.

Attending and problem-solving

- Every activity you present to the children shows that you are attending to them and to the activity. Your concentration, enjoyment of the activity, willingness to admit that you may not know everything and make mistakes sometimes, are all good qualities that the children will see and absorb.
- Your focus of attention when helping a child with a puzzle or with cleaning up after an art session, demonstrates how to get the job done, and how to solve problems through perseverance and effort.
- Attending and problem-solving are core behaviours in all learning and by modelling them, you set a good example for the children to follow and succeed at their own learning.

The other valuable skills which you model for the children can broadly be called, “**life skills**”. Life Skills include:

- Managing the self (care for the self and knowledge of the self); managing relationships with others (family and friends), and managing one’s relationship with society.

- To the child, the caregiver represents the outside world. The important skill which the children will learn from you by modelling, are cooperation and competition, conflict solving, building and keeping friendships, managing relationships with sincerity, sharing and loyalty. You are an example for the children to follow.

Care for the self

The basic building block of relationships is the relationship to the self. Your relationship to yourself provides you with the vehicle which carries you through your life, and it affects your work as an ECD facilitator. The following guidelines for a healthy relationship with yourself will also have an effect on everyone around you:

- Accept yourself.
- Be friends with your body and treat it kindly.
- Trust your intuition.
- Allow feelings their appropriate place and time.
- Comfort and reward yourself with the things that are familiar from your culture or religion or experience, to support yourself through tough times.
- Do not make judgments about yourself or others but take responsibility for the results of your actions and take corrective action if needed.
- Take physical care of yourself. Your clean hands and nails, clean clothes and fresh smile are reassuring to the children and show that you respect them as social beings. Teaching the children hygiene (hand washing, face washing) and noticing when they need their nails cut, or telling them to keep their hair out of their eyes with a hairclip while they play, will have no impact if your own nails are dirty and your own hair is hanging in front of your eyes.

Relating to others

In interacting with a baby, singing or talking to him or her, you show caring behaviour that any observer (another baby or child in the room, or a colleague passing by) will see and remember. In all your relationships, observers learn about your values from your behaviour and communication.

Why is holistic facilitation important?

These interrelated areas of development all continue to develop while the child is in your care. With your knowledge of child development, your commitment to children's rights and needs, and your personal values of caring and nurturing, you can successfully guide the child to experience all aspects of herself as equally valuable and important. If you don't do this, part of his/her ability may easily be neglected or part of his/her emotional development delayed or discouraged.

How to facilitate in a way that promotes holistic development

Holistic development can be achieved through interactive play, storytelling, listening to music, discussing feelings, drama and role play. Children also need to be exposed to a variety of resources that they can explore in a variety of ways.

Children need to be treated as special. When you plan your ECD programme you must take the children's individual learning needs into account.

Children learn best when they do and see, and when they can play freely, explore, discover and solve problems.

Holistic learning happens when learning areas are combined, for example teaching about water at a stream, using containers catching and releasing tadpoles, listening to stories about water like Noah's Ark, learning a water song.

Your example and effort

It is your responsibility to use your knowledge, skills attitudes and values and your own whole personhood to meet the child on all levels. Remember that the child is growing and changing and has the potential for becoming a balanced human being in a healthy relationship with the world. It depends on you as the representative of the outside world to guide, nurture and respect the child's changing abilities and interests.



Class Activity 7: Facilitate the development of babies, toddlers and young children

Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

4.5 Ensure that communication is responsive and promotes development

Young children do not have the language, communication and emotional skills that are necessary to express their thoughts and feelings, ideas and concerns. Language activities such as storytelling, rhymes and songs stimulate vocabulary and understanding of language so that they can begin to express their inner and outer worlds. When you talk to them, you encourage them to begin to verbalise their own thoughts, feelings and ideas. In this way, they become better at expressing the feelings and ideas through using language. You should make an effort to use your talking and listening skills, the two components of your communication, to promote the children's language development.

Overview aspects for discussion:

Your own communication

- Listen to the children.
- Respond with questions.
 - Ask leading questions.
 - Ask open-ended questions.

The children's communication:

- their communication about experiences
- their conversation with friends

Communication through activities:

- group time
- communication as a component of all activities
- stories
- praise and feedback

Listen to the children

Listening is probably one of the most important skills an ECD practitioner must develop. To foster good language skills, children must be allowed to say what they mean and be given the time to say it. It is very important for the practitioner to listen to what children say, and to respond to their messages.

Praise and feedback

Children feel encouraged and motivated when their creative efforts are discussed and praised; however, children can easily see through superficial or insincere praise. Avoid comments like these ones:

You're a clever girl!

That's the best hand print I've ever seen!

You're going to be a star when you grow up!

Children do not benefit from comments like these. In fact, this kind of praise can put pressure on children to compete for approval, rather than simply to create a means of self-expression.

Using appropriate questioning techniques

If you as facilitator respond with interest, use attentive questions that show you have listened and understood what the child has said, use leading questions to expand the topic or extend the opportunity for conversation, you build upon what the child has to offer. These are examples of how to communicate responsibly to promote development. It expands the communication for the child and provides recognised stimulation which promotes better understanding and social skills.

Ask leading questions

Leading questions are questions that provide direction or guidance. Here are some examples:

- What do you think will happen if you mix blue paint and red paint together?
- What does the rabbit think about when everyone goes home for the day?
- Why do the blocks fall over when you put the big ones on top of the little ones?

You can get children to participate out by asking them leading questions and asking for clarification. Children will not develop good language and communication skills if they are never asked to think and use their imagination to picture themselves in a situation.

Ask open-ended questions

Open-ended questions are questions that have no right answers. Some examples are:

- What would you like to take on the picnic?
- How do you feel when it rains?

Open-ended questions will help children to draw their own conclusions using their observations and cognitive and imaginative skills. Such questions give children a chance to express their very own answers without worrying about whether they're right or wrong. This keeps a positive atmosphere in a learning situation, as any answer is accepted as a good enough contribution and the child finds it rewarding to participate.

You will have many opportunities for conversation with children when they arrive at the school, when they need help in the bathroom or during lunch. Take advantage of these moments to help children communicate. Ask them how things are going at home or how their pet is. Keep the tone of your interest light and positive, not inquisitive or negative. Let them tell you about what their brother or sister did at lunch time. These are very special moments that not only foster (promote) language development but also make a child feel special and secure. Bending down to a child's eye level will also give the message that you respect him/her and want to listen. Your responses should focus on both the message and the feeling, or tone, to give the child the sense of being heard.

The children will benefit from the communication in every activity. For example, they may need to listen to a story and create a picture inspired by the story. They may need to talk and work with a partner. They may need to take turns to communicate in a large group. As these examples show, every learning activity that children do will require them to talk, listen and communicate. In this way they develop their communication skills in an integrated way. Your responsiveness lies in providing these opportunities that the children need, to build their communication skills and understanding, thereby promoting their holistic development.

Stories

Stories that you tell and stories from books, all increase the variety of responses you can offer the children in your care. Stories are a tool to identify the children's own concerns, fears and experiences. One way to do this is by asking questions when using an illustrated book: "Look, the puppy has run away. Has anyone here had a pet that ran away?" Or, "Thandi is afraid of having an operation, has anyone here had an operation? How did you feel about it?"

Remember, children can relate to books by making the pictures, words and themes apply to their own lives. This does not mean that the books we choose have to replicate (be a copy of) our learners' lives. For example, children may be interested to read a story set in another country, like India. You can relate this story to the children's lives too:

"Terry is lost. She is crying. What do you think she is feeling? Have you ever been lost? How did you feel?"

We can also use books and stories to help children to become more aware of their emotions and give them the vocabulary to express how they are feeling. There are many books for young children that deal with specific issues. These books are very useful to help children to come to terms with difficult situations (for example divorce, death, fear of the dark and adoption). When we deal with difficult issues, we usually have to confront strong emotions like death, sadness, bullying fear, divorce or anger. Therefore, issues-based books and stories may also raise the subject of how to deal with feelings like anger, jealousy, fear and joy. By seeing how the characters in the story coped with their strong feelings, children can learn to deal with their own emotions. Your role as a practitioner is to steer carefully through strong emotions, accepting whatever the child would like to express, and responding with empathy and warmth.

4.5.1 Respond in a manner to show a clearly developed understanding of complex issues under discussion

Effective communication only takes place when the reaction of the receiving person is positive, according to the expectations of the sender. For example, by altering the intonation of the voice a customer may either receive the message that a waiter is really pleased to see and serve him or that he is merely another nuisance demanding to be served.

Effective internal and external verbal communication has a direct effect on a company's image and success in the following ways:

- Good, clear, concise communication eliminates time wastage in trying to resolve confusion, errors and conflicts.
- Customers/guests/patrons like feeling important and will return and recommend the establishment to others if they are treated with politeness and helpfulness.

This often results in returning customers and more business. If staff members display positive attitudes and speak to each other with respect, they reflect a positive company image. This results in customer having confidence in the establishment.

Types of verbal communication

Internal

Internal verbal communication may be categorised as follows:

- Intra-personal communication is communication with oneself. Talking to oneself is an example.
- Extra-personal communication (as illustrated above) refers to communication to an inanimate object or non-human (plant or animal).

EXAMPLE:

Talking to a cat/dog or saying: "You naughty table!" after a toddler bumps his head on it.

Interpersonal communication refers to an ordinary conversation on a one-on-one basis, or a very small group. It may also refer to communication between groups of individuals (group discussions or informally in a crowd).

EXAMPLE:

Communication within and between departments in an organisation

In general, as the size of the organisation increases, communication decreases and morale declines. The ever-increasing size of organisations means that lines of communication are further and further extended.

The more communication “centres” (e.g. departments within an organisation) a message has to pass through, the greater the chance of distortion (misrepresentation) or breakdown in communication.

Instead of trying to improve communication abilities of all employees, there are steps that may be taken to alleviate the situation:

- Establish open channels for feedback.
- Lay down policies and procedures for communication.
- Top management should communicate directly to all staff members using the public address system or public notice boards.

External

This refers to communication with an audience or people outside of an organisation.

EXAMPLES:

Suppliers, cleaning services, and out-sourced facilitators who conduct lectures in a corporation

When people are communicating face-to-face, body language plays a vital role to convey the appropriate messages.

4.5.2 Identify characteristics of a speaker’s style and tone that attract or alienate an audience

In the business culture, it is imperative (essential) that you make eye contact if you want to make a positive impression on guests and maintain a relationship that is based on trust. Consider the following:

- Maintain eye contact without staring, as this is arrogant and threatening.
- Avoid blinking too much as this communicates nervousness and can be interpreted as an indication of dishonesty.
- Try to keep eye level on the same level as the guest. Stand if the guest is standing. If the guest is seated, accommodate this by standing back a little.

Facial expressions

Be aware of facial expressions when you speak to people. Professional service providers (e.g consultants or training providers) who deliver excellent service have alert, lively and appropriate facial expressions.

Avoid the following facial expressions:

- An expressionless or deadpan face that shows no emotion in response to what guests say makes them feel uncomfortable. This may be interpreted as boredom, rudeness or indifference.
- An arrogant or stern (strict) expression creates the impression of being superior to others.
- Grinning continually makes one look stupid. It creates the impression that the person does not understand what is being said or done. It may also create the impression of being deliberately unhelpful or even spiteful.

Gestures

Head and hand movements (gestures) often accompany speech:

- Smooth and wide gestures with the palms facing upwards are seen as warm and welcoming. People react positively to friendliness and helpfulness. Guests are naturally drawn to people who use calming gestures.
- Sharp, short gestures with the palms facing downwards, are aggressive and negative.
- People react by wanting to enter into or avoid disputes. When you are upset or if there is a need to discuss problems, you should make an effort to control your gestures. Problems are never resolved through aggressive gestures.

Posture

The way the speaker stands, sits or walks, indicates a great deal about the speaker's attitude, mood and self-esteem.

A correct posture entails the following:

- Stand upright with your arms comfortably at your sides.
- Keep shoulders dropped and slightly back.
- Stand with feet slightly apart to maintain balance.
- Walk briskly because it creates a professional impression.
- Sit upright with shoulders back. Slouching creates an impression of laziness.
- When speaking to guests either face them or turn the body slightly sideways towards them.
- Do not lean against walls or furniture.
- Do not fold your arms – they create the impression of being shy or arrogant.
- Standing with hands on hips creates an impression of arrogance.
- Swinging when speaking to people suggests a lack of self-confidence.
- Resting the face on hands while leaning on counters makes one appear lazy.

Personal space

This refers to the space each person has around him/her and into which intrusions (invasions) are unwelcome. The exact size of the area around each person differs and depends on a variety of factors including, personality, culture, family background and even the type of sport played.

Shy people usually need a wider personal space than outgoing people do. People instinctively indicate when their space is invaded - they either move away slightly, look uncomfortable, blink their eyes to show their discomfort, or look behind the speaker to avoid eye contact.

4.5.3 Identify and challenge the underlying assumptions, points of view and subtexts

A person's **point of view** is his/her manner of viewing things and describes an attitude or a position from which something is observed or considered. Your point of view is also referred to as your standpoint and reflects your attitude or outlook on events.

Subtext refers to the content underneath the spoken dialogue. Under dialogue, there can be conflict, anger, competition, pride, showing off, or other implicit ideas and emotions. Subtext refers to the unspoken thoughts and motives of participants in a conversation - what they *really* think and believe. Subtext just beneath the surface of dialogue makes life interesting, but it can also cause people to be and feel misunderstood.

An **underlying assumption** is something you believe to be fact, and therefore you base whatever follows on that underlying assumption.

4.6 Ensure that verbal and non-verbal interactions are developmental

Language helps us to make ourselves understood through using a united system of words. We take our language for granted until we suddenly cannot find the right words to explain ourselves, or when someone asks us to explain what we mean.

Have you ever tried explaining yourself to someone who is not a first language speaker of your language? It is much easier to be misunderstood in those circumstances. Even when you are not speaking loudly, you are using language to think and create meaning. We call this intra-personal communication. **Inter**personal communication happens between you and others, and **intra**-personal communication happens within yourself. Speech and language includes but is not limited to:

- verbal or spoken communication
- written communication
- art, e.g. poetry, music, literature

Non-verbal

The term “non-verbal communication” is used when we refer to communication that is not written or spoken. Researchers have found that when we interact with each other, we interpret more meaning through non-verbal behaviour than through the verbal message. In fact, they claim that as much as 65% of the meaning is understood through non-verbal communication.

Body movement, posture and gestures

Body movements are strong indicators of how you feel. You can tell how your boss is feeling sometimes just by the way she is walking! Some people walk as if they are in a daze (research tell us that those are the ones who are likely to get mugged first – they are communicating: “come and get me!”), others walk with purpose. Sometimes you can see if a person is feeling dejected (sad) by the way they walk.

Your posture can also communicate a lot about your personality, your status, how you are feeling today, your self-image, and your gender. Have you ever noticed how a tall person who is uncomfortable with being tall may slouch their shoulders, whilst some 6-foot models “strut their stuff” on the catwalk? Do you see how this shows a difference in their self-image? But remember, a slouch may just be a temporary indication of a person’s emotional state for the day – perhaps they only feel dejected now, and will bounce back when they have overcome their particular emotional hurdle. We must be careful not to generalise our interpretations.

Gestures are movements of the hands, arms, legs and feet. Hand gestures generally describe or emphasise verbal descriptions or communicate attitudes.

EXAMPLE

Crossed arms communicate a less aggressive attitude than putting your hands on your hips.

Facial expressions and eye contact

Facial expressions communicate how we are feeling and our reactions to the messages we are receiving. These are generally the real sign to how strongly we feel about the message we have received. Have you ever received unwelcome news, and you did not want to show people your reaction, but your face and eyes gave you away? After all it is said that “the eyes are the mirror of the soul”.

The way we use our eyes is also a way of interpreting meaning. Who will be viewed as more confident?

- (a) a public speaker who does not look at her audience, or
- (b) a public speaker who looks up during her speech?

I am sure you answered (b). Sometimes if someone is not being truthful they cannot look you in the eye. Can you think of other instances when people do not maintain eye contact?

Perhaps you are aware that in some African cultures, it is respectful to drop your head when having a conversation with a superior. Or think of someone who is distracted or bored. They will find it very difficult to maintain eye contact if they are not concentrating on what you is saying or the presentation at hand. Share any additional ideas regarding eye contact with your fellow learners.

Use of space

People convey messages about themselves by using space. Consider for example a new student who decides to sit either in the back or front of the class, or a staff member who sits far from the head of a table or at the head of a table during a meeting.

Most teachers will tell you that the mischief-makers mostly sit at the back of the class and the more serious students choose a position near the front.

Use of touch

Touch can also communicate the nature of the relationship between people.

EXAMPLE

Lovers will touch each other more frequently than friends. You could pat someone on the back to calm them down. Can you think of other examples?

Touching behaviour is different for people of different cultures, and we also need to be very aware of what makes other people uncomfortable and what is inappropriate. Also find out what touching behaviour could be understood as sexual harassment.

Use of time

People can use other people's use of time to interpret messages. If someone phoned you at 03:00, you would probably expect it to be bad news. Similarly if you do not return a client's call within a time frame that he thinks is appropriate, he may interpret your non-verbal behaviour as an indication that you do not care about his business. Time is often a reflection of status, the higher your status, the more control you have over time. For example, the executives in your organisation will control how long you will wait for an appointment. Different cultures and personality types view time differently, often resulting in misunderstanding. Organisations therefore need to have company standards for time keeping that everyone adheres to.

Personal appearance

Personal appearance includes the way you look, including but not limited to:

- the clothes you wear
- your personal grooming
- the symbols you wear (badges, tattoos, etc.)

Your sense of style, etc. and can influence first impressions, job interviews, consumer buying behaviour and even courtroom decisions. Your personal appearance can give away clues about your age gender, identity, personality, attitudes, social standing, and income, to name but a few.

A job seeker looking for a position as a professional in a leading investments company who arrives for an interview wearing jeans and "tekkies", will probably not get the job, even if he has all the right qualifications and experience because the interviewer may interpret that the candidate is not professional.

What do the appearances of the people below communicate to you?

			
Age: Culture: Social Standing: Income:	Age: Culture: Social Standing: Income:	Age: Culture: Social Standing: Income:	Age: Culture: Social Standing: Income:

“One’s perception is one’s reality”

The above saying means that even if someone else’s perception of you is incorrect or unfair, it is real to the person who perceives it. Our role is to manage other people’s perceptions of ourselves. We can do this by taking care of our physical appearance, without compromising our unique individuality.

Vocal qualities

In South Africa we have a variety of accents and ways in which people speak.

This adds to the diversity of our nation and we do not want to make everyone a clone of the other. Only when our vocal qualities lead to miscommunication, do we need to work on refining it.

We need to use our vocal qualities to enhance the meaning of our message.

Therefore we change our vocal qualities according to our situation:

Volume

Some people speak softer or louder than others. We can increase or decrease the volume of our speech to change our meaning. For example:.

- A client will use a louder voice to shout out his dissatisfaction at having his call transferred for a third time.
- A soft voice would be used to show sympathy towards a client who has called in to enquire about benefits after her spouse has passed away.
- You have to speak louder when you are interacting with a client if the air conditioning unit is faulty and making a noise.
- Speaking too loudly in inappropriate situations can be irritating, and interfere with meaning. Speaking too softly can make it difficult for listeners to hear and understand you.

Inflection

Inflection is the rise and fall of the voice. People who do not use inflection in their voices have a monotonous “drone”. However, overusing inflection can create childlike (“singing”) speech. You would typically use more inflection when you are talking about something exciting.

Pitch

When interpreting emotions from the highness or lowness of the voice, we can typically infer (conclude) a range of emotions from calmness, cosiness, lack of interest through to depression from a low-pitched voice. A high pitch can indicate extreme emotions such as fear or excitement.

Resonance

This is the quality and fullness of your voice, or how pleasant or unpleasant your voice sounds to the listener.

Rate

Rate refers to the pace of your speech. Speaking quickly usually indicates excitement, anger, volatility, whilst a slower speech would indicate being relaxed, trying to make a point, depression, lack of interest, etc.

Note: Speaking too quickly can cause your listeners not to hear all your words, and speaking too slowly can be monotonous and boring for your listeners.

Clarity

Clarity refers to the cleanness of your pronunciation. Your accent is acceptable, but only if the listener can understand what you are saying.

A final note on vocal qualities (characteristics): For some of these vocal qualities the emotions indicated are very opposite for the same vocal characteristic.

EXAMPLE

How do you differentiate if the speaker is calm or depressed, when the pitch of their voice is low? Answer: You need to look at the whole situation. You would need to observe the body language that accompanies the vocal message and the words that are being sent.



Class Activity 8: Ensure that communication promotes development

Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

4.7 Use appropriate behaviour and conflict management

Most psychology books suggest that conflicts come from two sources: approach and avoidance. To approach is to have a tendency to do something or to move in a direction that will be pleasurable and satisfying. To avoid is to resist doing something, perhaps because it will not be pleasurable or satisfying.

These two categories produce three kinds of conflicts:

- Approach-Approach Conflict – this is due to the pursuit of desirable but incompatible goals.
- Approach-Avoidance Conflict – here is a desire both to do something and not to do it.
- Avoidance-Avoidance Conflict – this indicates there are two alternatives, both of which may be unpleasant.

Other causes of conflict are:

- a lack of communication
- a lack of understanding
- ambiguous (unclear) lines of authority
- conflict of interest
- disagreement on issues
- the need for agreement
- generational of differences
- religious disagreements
- diverse perspectives
- majoring in minors (this means paying too much attention to small details)
- negative environment and dysfunctional relationships

4.7.1 Language features and conventions can be manipulated

Language has certain features and conventions which can be manipulated to suit different contexts, audiences and purposes.

Conventions are the surface features of communication - the mechanics, usage, and sentence formation:

- **Mechanics** are the conventions and customs of written language, including spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, and paragraphs, which will affect the way you verbalise the content; for example, punctuation will determine how you say, “You did!” versus “You did?”.
- **Usage** refers to conventions of both written and spoken language that include word order, verb tense and subject-verb agreement.
- **Sentence formation** refers to the structure of sentences, the way that phrases and clauses are used to form simple and complex sentences.

The physical nature of writing allows writers to craft and edit their sentences, combining and rearranging related ideas into a single, more compact sentence, but in oral language, words and sentences cannot be changed once they have been

spoken. This places a great responsibility on the speaker to choose words carefully and plan verbal communications carefully.

Following conventions are a courtesy to the audience; it makes your writing easier to read or listen to by putting it in a form that the audience member expects and is comfortable with.

To use language features and conventions effectively in oral communication, you would therefore have to use your knowledge of the mechanics, usage and sentence formation correctly in order to ensure that you are communicating in a manner that suits the context, audience and purpose of the communication.

Example:

When communicating with your boss you would use different words and tones than when you are communicating with a child.

4.7.2 Ensure that behaviour and conflict management is positive, sympathetic, constructive, supportive, respectful and in line with current legislation

To manage children's feelings, behaviour and conflicts, you should have techniques that you can rely on.

Managing children's feelings

What can you do, as an ECD practitioner, to help children learn how to recognise and deal with their feelings? Your task is to help children develop the emotional skills so that they can manage their feelings. These emotional skills won't only help them while they are children. The skills will also form the foundation of the emotional maturity they need when they are teenagers and as adults.

What is allowed and what is not?

In short: feelings are allowed; socially unacceptable behaviour is not allowed.

Feelings can be managed by listening to them with attention and patience, acknowledging them, and naming them so that the child is clear about them. By offering your acknowledgement of the feelings (for example, "It sounds like you feel really sad and jealous of Leo's new friend?") you make it possible for the child to clarify his feelings for himself. Again, don't worry about anything else at this point, like whether you agree with the child's behaviour or not. If you acknowledge the child's feelings, this makes her feel safe while she struggles to manage them.

Feelings can be given an outlet that is more appropriate than the "acting out" that the child may be doing. Provide safe expression for feelings by offering these safe ways as alternative outlets for intense feelings:

Express anger by tearing newspapers or old telephone directories, stamping feet, punching a punch bag, running around the garden, or doing a "wood chopper" expulsion breath: clasp hands together above head, bend knees slightly with feet hip width apart, breathe in and then swing hands down between bent knees in a chopping action, breathing out fast with a loud breath, repeat a few times.

There are also other creative ways to express feelings: by using voices – singing, chanting, growling, whispering or using a nasty voice; through art activities like painting; and through stress management tools (examples follow in the next section).

Behaviour that is socially unacceptable, such as throwing toys in anger, should be limited. It is more constructive to do something with the feelings that will lead to a resolution, like expressing them safely and trying to fix relationships. Set limits for children to help them stop destructive actions and offer them an alternative outlet for the feelings. For example say, “I know you’re sad, but hiding here and chewing on a book is spoiling the book and that isn’t allowed. We could go to the bottom of the garden together and sit there behind the tree so that you can cry in private until you feel better. Maybe we could count the yellow butterflies when you have finished.”

Stress management tools

You can build stress-releasing exercises into your ECD programme to release the build-up of unexpressed feelings and stresses. These techniques help to keep the pot from boiling over, as their regular use will keep the children calmer and better able to deal with everyday frustrations. Choose a few techniques, demonstrate them once a week and use them as part of your response to cues whenever tension is building. Do them as part of your intervention when the children are struggling with feelings. Allow at least five minutes to do one of these stress-busters:

- **Slow breathing:** Sitting cross-legged on the floor, or comfortably on a chair, take deep breaths, breathing in through the nose, out through the mouth, slowly. (This slows down the heart and has a calming effect.)
- **Guided imagery:** Get the children to lie down on their backs with eyes closed, and guide them through these images: “Let’s imagine ... a beautiful field of green grass where you can lie on your back and look at the soft clouds floating in the sky; feel your body relaxing into the earth, getting heavier as you let go of all the feelings”; OR “Imagine your heart glowing like a golden light with love, peace and quietness” (or similar guided imagery).
- **Massage:** Children sit in a circle for a massage, all facing left, so that they can massage each other’s backs gently and slowly; they could also use this circle to do a back tickle.
- **Floppy bodies:** Stand and shake out hands, feet, shoulders, arms, legs, wiggle hips, shake head, shake out the feelings, and become all floppy.
- **Lie down** straight with feet flopping to the side and hands gently resting palms up. Begin to relax your toes; when they are all relaxed, focus your attention on your legs, imagine them relaxing completely... (and so on, progressing up to the top of the head, and end with a deep breath in, and a stretch and breathe out).

These relaxation techniques are good for facilitators too.

Helping children manage their feelings

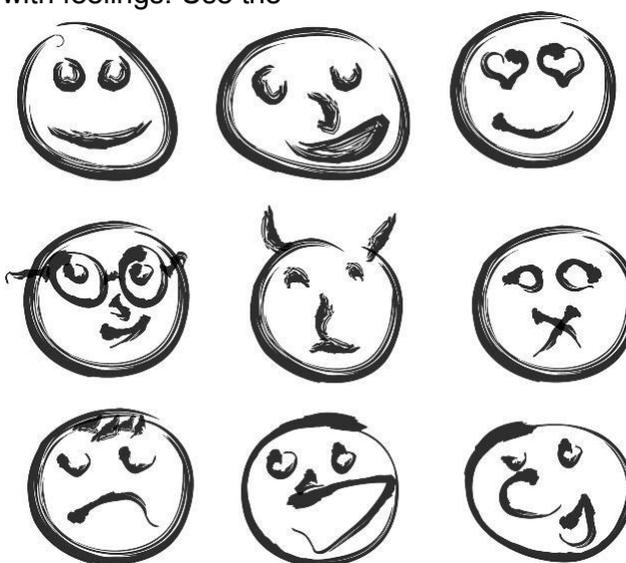
It is important that you demonstrate a process of dealing with feelings that show that there is a beginning, a middle and an end to strong feelings.

- The first step is to check what you are modelling for the children – are you stressed, are your voice and your manner tense? You should be sharing

appropriate feelings and showing appropriate ways of working through them, for example, “I’m sad that my dog died. Today I need to be a bit quiet and remember her; maybe I’ll feel a bit better tomorrow or the next day.” This will help the children to cope with their own feelings in a similar way.

Here are some other techniques you can use to help children learn to deal with their feelings constructively:

- Allow all feelings: don’t encourage “good feelings” or discourage “bad feelings”.
- Teach “feeling” words, like “angry”, “sad”, “jealous”, “happy”, “excited”, “disappointed”, “lonely”, to support children who are struggling with vocabulary (expressions) and with feelings. Use the issue books mentioned earlier as a starting point.
- Help children accept, express and move through their feelings to a new point of understanding.
- Remind children that feelings don’t last forever, that another day will come when they will feel a bit better.



It is slow work to focus on feelings, allow their expression, deal with the process of accepting and healing, but it is best to do this work carefully as it is an investment in teaching children to manage their feelings healthily for the future.

Acknowledge the child’s feelings

Make sure you acknowledge the child’s feelings, thereby allowing her to express them more clearly. Try not to think about whether or not you agree with the child’s behaviour at this point. Acknowledge the child’s feelings by saying, “You are really angry” or “You looked sad”. “That must have hurt”. If you acknowledge the child’s feelings, you tell the child that you care about her and support her. This will help to make her feel brave and controlled while she still struggles to manage her feelings.

Set limits to their behaviour

Redirect their feelings

There are many techniques you can use to help a child redirect his feelings. Here are a few ideas.

- Express anger by tearing newspapers, stamping feet, punching a punch bag, running around the garden.
- Express feelings by using voices – singing, chanting, growling, using a mean voice.

- Express feelings through creative art activities. Say: “That’s a strong feeling. I wonder what colour it would be if you drew it. I wonder what that feeling would look like”.
- Express feelings by using a stress management tool. You’ll find out about these tools in the next lesson.

Managing stress

We don’t always realise it, but children can suffer from stress. Often when children are unable to manage their feelings, they bottle them up inside, which cause body tension and stress. You can build stress-releasing exercises into you ECD centre’s learning programme. Choose a few techniques and use them regularly. Make sure you tell the children what these techniques are called. Then when an individual child is struggling with feelings, you can give her some time out by saying, “Phindi, take some deep breaths” or “You look frustrated - take a break and do the body shake”.

Stress management techniques:

- deep breaths
- let’s imagine
- the massage train
- the back tickle
- the body shake
- relax your toes, relax your nose

Deep breaths

Tell the children to breathe slowly and rhythmically in through the nose and out through the mouth. It is helpful to some children if they close their eyes and keep one hand resting on their heart area, monitoring their heartbeat, while they take deep breaths. This exercise can slow down the heart rate and help the children feel more relaxed.

Let’s imagine

Tell the children to close their eyes. Then say, “Imagine you are at a beautiful beach. The sun is shining overhead. Your body feels warm and happy”. Or say, “Remember a time that you felt really happy. Try to make a picture in your head of that time. Why are you feeling happy? What does the happy feeling feel like in your body? ‘Give them enough time to create the mind picture in each step.

The message train

Get the children to sit in a long queue. Then ask each child to place his/her hand s on the shoulders of the child in front of her. Tell the children to gently rub and pat each other’s shoulder (you can massage the child at the end of the queue). After a minute, ask them to turn around and massage the child who massaged their shoulders before.

The back tickle

Tell the children to find partners. Then let them take turns to gently stroke each other's backs.

The body shake

Tell the children jump up and down and wiggle their arms, legs and bodies to shake out any physical tensions.

Relax your toes. Relax your nose.

Let the children lie down and close their eyes. Guide them to relax different parts of their bodies, starting with toes, working up slowly through the body. Say, "Wiggle your toes. Let them relax..., wiggle your feet..., now let them relax..., move your ankles from side to side..., then let them relax.." and so on, ending with the nose.

Helping children manage their feelings

Here are some other techniques you can use to help children learn to deal with their feelings in a healthy and constructive ways.

- Teach feelings words.
- Teach children to describe their feelings.
- Don't encourage "good feelings" or discourage "bad feelings".
- Help children process their feelings.
- Remind children that feelings don't last forever.
- Be a role model.

Teaching feeling words

Young children have limited language and communication skills. They are still learning to use words to express their thoughts and feelings. Even for adults, it can be difficult to find words to express strong feelings. You can help children develop a "feeling vocabulary" by using words that express feelings. Some examples are "happy, sad, ashamed, shy, angry or hurt".

Teach children to describe their feelings.

Sometimes children cannot find the words to describe their feelings. Their feelings may not fit neatly under the labels "happy" or "angry". You can help children to name their feelings, by asking them to describe exactly what they are feeling inside their bodies. Young children can be very descriptive. They may say things like, "I feel like I want to hide under a rock where no one can see me", or "If I can't fit the pieces together this time, I am going to explode".

Don't encourage good feelings or discourage bad feelings

As adults we often label some feelings good feelings and other feelings as bad feelings. Examples of good feelings are feeling happy, or excited. Examples of bad

feelings are feeling angry, or sad. However, it is not bad to feel angry or sad. In fact, it is healthy to express your feelings, whatever they are. It's not okay to express our difficult feelings in ways that harm people or property.

This is true for children and adults. But if we express our feelings in healthy ways (through talking, drawing, stamping feet and so on), this is good for our mental health. So, as an ECD practitioner, you need to let children know that we all have difficult feelings sometimes. We need to express all our feelings, even the difficult ones. But we need to do so in ways that are healthy.

Help children process their feelings

When you encourage young children to describe their feelings, you also help them to express their feelings fully, and move beyond those feelings. It takes practice and patience to work with children in this way, but it is the best way to help children learn to manage their feelings successfully.

A conversation between an ECD practitioner and a child with a strong feeling:

ECD Practitioner	Child
I can see a small person with a big feeling. I wonder what that feeling is.	a) I don't know.
You don't know. What does it feel like inside your body?	b) I feel like my heart is broken into a thousand pieces.
Your heart feels completely broken up. That must feel bad.	c) It does, it feels like I will never be happy again. It feels like I will never have a friend again.
It sounds like your feelings really got hurt.	d) They did get hurt. I thought Adam was my friend but now he's playing with Thami.
You want Adam to play with you; your feelings get hurt when he plays with Thami.	e) Yes! Although sometimes I play with Solly. So maybe it's okay to have more than one friend.
Children can have more than one friend.	f) Sure they can. But they can only have one or two special friends. Adam is playing with Thami now, but I'm still his special friend.
You and Adam are still special friends.	g) I think so. We've been friends since we were two. Next week I'm going to Adam's birthday party.

Reading through this conversation, you will realise that the ECD practitioner is helping the child to describe and talk about his feelings and finding his own way of coping, to also come up with strategies and solutions.

Remind children that feelings don't last forever

Children need to know that feelings don't last forever and that feelings do change. They also need to know that often people will feel differently about the same thing and that it is okay.

Be a role model

How do you manage your own feelings? Think about it. Do you have strategies that help you to express your difficult feelings in a healthy way? This is important, because children will learn from you how to manage their feelings. You are a role model for the children. Make sure that you stay in touch with your feelings, and that you have healthy ways of coping with stress, frustration, anger and irritation. This will help the children to learn and apply these coping skills in their own lives.

4.7.3 Manage discussions and/or conflicts sensitively

It is important to manage discussions and/or conflicts sensitively and in a manner that supports the goal of group interaction or one-on-one interaction, because there might be various group issues that should be worked through and managed, e.g.:

- disagreements in groups
- personality clashes
- conflict management
- resolving deadlocks
- positively summarising conclusions

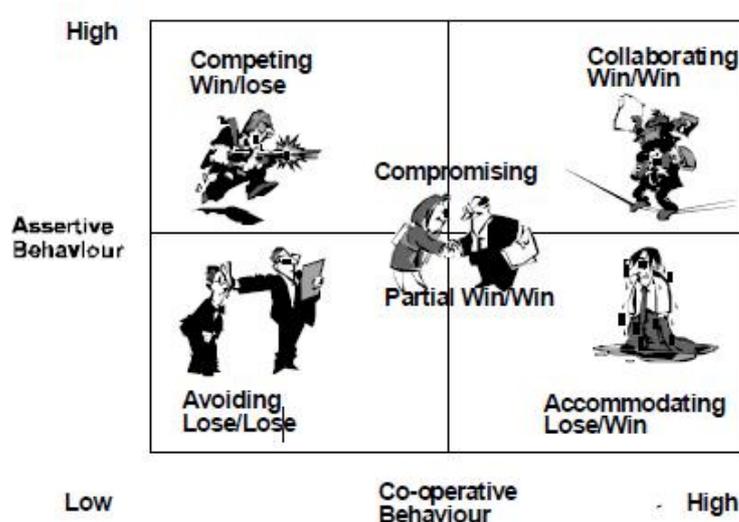
As with leadership styles, different writers present models of conflict management styles. There is not one best conflict handling style, but rather a best style for a given situation. We consider a few models and styles and indicate when each style is most appropriate:

Model 1. Here we can distinguish between five styles

1. **The Problem Solver** – refuses to deny or flee the conflict, presses for conversation and negotiation of the conflict until a satisfactory conclusion is reached. Most effective with groups that share common goals and whose conflict stems from miscommunication.
2. **The Super Helper** – they constantly work to help others and give little thought to self. This is the “Messiah” who is often passive in their own conflicts but always assists others to solve their conflicts. This style is to be avoided as one must deal with personal conflicts to be able to effectively help others.
3. **The Power Broker** – for this person, solutions are more important than relationships. Even if a person leaves the group, as long as a solution was achieved, they are satisfied. It can be used when substantive differences are so conflicting that mutually inclusive goals are not possible.
4. **The Facilitator** – they adapt to a variety of situations and styles in order to achieve a compromise between competing factions. It is effective for conflicts where differences are based on attitudes or emotions.
5. **The Fearful Loser** – this person runs from conflict probably because they are personally insecure. This tends to produce hostility and result in a weakening of leadership in the group.

Model 2. Speed Leas in “Discover Your Conflict Management Style” mentions six styles

1. **Persuading** – trying to change another’s point of view, way of thinking, feelings or ideas. Techniques used include: rational approaches; deductive and inductive arguments; and other verbal means. Persuade when there is great trust; when one party is admired; when goals are compatible; and when one party does not have strong opinions on the subject.
2. **Compelling** – the use of physical or emotional force, authority or pressure to oblige or constrain someone to act in a desired way. Use compelling infrequently; when you are threatened or under attack; when rights are being violated; when you have authority to demand compliance; when there is inadequate time to work through differences; and when all other means have failed.



3. **Avoiding** – This is actually a category that combines four styles: avoidance (to evade or stay away from conflict); ignoring (act as if the conflict is not going on); fleeing (actively remove oneself from the arena in which conflict might take place); and accommodation (going along with an opposition to keep the relationship). Strategies include: procrastination (postponing unnecessarily); saying “yes” to requests but then not acting on them; showing concern for the other without responding to the problem; resigning; and studying the problem with no intention of doing anything about it. Avoid this style when people are fragile or insecure; when they need space to cool down; when there is conflict on many fronts simultaneously; when differences are trivial (small); when parties are unable to reconcile differences; and when the relationship is unimportant.
4. **Collaborating** – This is a process of co-labouring with others to resolve difficulties that are being experienced. It is also called joint or mutual problem solving. Collaborate when people are willing to play by collaboration rules; when there is ample time for discussion; when the issue lends itself to collaboration; where resources are limited and negotiation would be better; and when conflict and trust levels are not too high.
5. **Negotiating** – Also called bargaining, this involves collaborating with lower expectations. It is a process where both sides try to get as much as they can, realising there must be give and take. Where collaboration is a “win/win” strategy, negotiation is a “sorta-win/sorta-lose” strategy. Negotiate when there is something that can be divided or traded; when compelling (forcing) is not acceptable and collaboration has been tried and failed; when all parties are

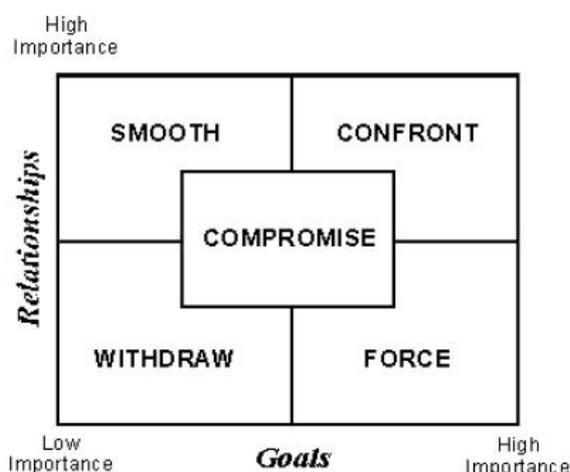
willing to negotiate; when the different parties have equal power; and when trust is high.

6. **Supporting** – Here one person will provide a support to the person who is experiencing conflict. It involves strengthening, encouraging or empowering one party so they can handle their difficulties. It involves support when the problem is the responsibility of someone else; when a party brings problems outside of your relationship with them; and when one party in the conflict is unwilling to deal with issues.

Model 3. Tension between relationships and goals

A third model focuses on the tension between relationships and goals in conflict handling. When a leader becomes involved in a conflict there are two major concerns to deal with:

- (a1) Achieving personal goals and (b2) preserving the relationship.



The importance of goals and relationships affect how leaders act in a conflict situation. The following five styles of managing conflict are found:

1. **Withdrawing** – people with this style tend to withdraw in order to avoid conflicts. They give up their personal goals and relationships; stay away from the issues over which the conflict is taking place and from the people they are in conflict with; and believe it is hopeless to try to resolve conflicts. They believe it is easier to withdraw (physically and psychologically) from a conflict than to face it.
2. **Forcing** – people in this category try to overpower opponents by forcing them to accept their solution to the conflict. Their goals are highly important but the relationship is of minor importance. They seek to achieve their goals at all costs; are not concerned with the needs of other people and do not care if other people like or accept them. They assume that one person winning and the other losing settle conflicts. While winning gives them a sense of pride and achievement, losing gives them a sense of weakness, inadequacy, and failure. They try to win by attacking, overpowering, overwhelming, and intimidating other people.
3. **Smoothing** – for those who fall into this category, the relationship is of great importance, while their own goals are of little importance. They want to be accepted and liked by other people; they think that conflict should be avoided in favour of harmony and believe that conflicts cannot be discussed without damaging relationships. They are afraid that if the conflict continues, someone

will get hurt and that would ruin the relationship. They give up their goals to preserve the relationship. They try to smooth over the conflict in fear of harming the relationship.

4. **Compromising** – people with this style are moderately concerned with their own goals and about their relationships with other people. They seek a compromise. They give up some of their goals and persuade the other person in a conflict to give up some of their goals. They seek a solution to conflicts where both sides gain something.
5. **Confronting** – people in this category highly value their own goals and relationships. They view conflicts as problems to be solved and seek a solution that achieves both their own goals and the goals of the other person in the conflict. They believe conflict improves relationships by reducing tension between people. By seeking solutions that satisfy both themselves and the other person they maintain the relationship. They are not satisfied until a solution is found that achieves their own goals and the other person's goals and they want all tensions and negative

Supporting the goal of the group or one-on-one interaction

Within conflict management there is the danger that the group think may be flawed and negotiating your way around changing this can be challenging. To reach consensus (agreement) to support a more balanced or negotiated outcome it is important to know what kind of group think could have a negative influence:

- The group overestimates its power.
- The group becomes close-minded.
- Group members experience pressure to conform.

Here are some principles for leaders to prevent group think and promote cohesiveness (interconnectedness) :

- Establish a norm of critical evaluation.
- Leaders should not state their preferences at the beginning of the group's decision-making process.
- Make sure that the group does not get insulated.

Cohesiveness come about when people are supporting group goals and within a one-on-one interaction.

Here is a list of four things that can be done or worked on within a more established group to make to create better cohesiveness:

1. Heighten the awareness of the values of membership. Stress the positive features of the group by speaking of the benefits the group offers. Therefore they will see the group as more attractive to them.
2. The group needs to appeal to satisfy everyone needs. One on One interaction to bring this home would be advised. Remember fulfilling individuals needs is a big factor that contributes to the level of cohesiveness in a group.
3. Enhancing of the group's status will also help increase a sense of cohesiveness. This helps to make each member feel they have a higher status by being in the group. Therefore each member knows they have an esteemed place within the group.
4. An increase in group interactions helps to increase togetherness.

4.7.4 Put forward own position when confronted by opposing views

Parties should be asked to describe recent disagreements. What were the issues, who were involved and how was the conflict handled? What are the differences between conflicts that were handled effectively and those that were not? Can you see the different conflict styles evolving? If the parties can provide answers to questions like these they will be ready to work on clarifying goals, reconciling differences, and finding ways to resolve conflicts.

Clarify goals

Even when people are in conflict they usually share many of the same goals in spite of their differences. Both sides usually want to see the conflict resolved in a way that will be mutually agreeable, beneficial to both, and inclined to enhance the relationship so that future communication will improve. The youth leader should try to discourage bargaining over positions and work from the basis of the common goals that people are striving for. People should first be reminded of the goals that they share, and then they should discuss their differences.

Reconcile differences

The guidelines for reconciling differences are:

Step 1: Take the initiative and go to the person who has wronged you

This should be done in person and in private. In making this move, it is best if the person goes with a spirit of humility, with a willingness to listen, with a determination to be non-defensive and to forgive.

Step 2: Take witnesses along

If the person will not listen or change, a return visit with one or two witnesses becomes necessary. These people are to listen, evaluate, determine facts and try to arbitrate (settle) and bring a resolution to the dispute.

Resolve conflicts

When individuals or groups are in conflict, they have four main choices about the direction they will take. They may avoid conflict, maintain, escalate, or reduce it.

Sometimes people do not want conflict resolution and may decide to go in different directions.

Conflict resolution means that the youth (ECD centre) leader will be involved in negotiation and mediation. It is not always wise for leaders to get involved in someone else's conflict even when they are asked to do so, as they will feel pressurised to take sides; be required to make quick analytical decisions; and be responsible for keeping communication open.

When youth leaders do choose to get involved they should try to show respect for both parties; understand both positions without taking sides; reassure people and give them hope; encourage open communication and mutual listening; focus on things that can be changed; try to keep the conflict from escalating; summarise the situation and positions frequently; and help the parties find additional help if the mediation is not effective.

We propose that you use the following four-step method in conflict resolution:

Step 1: Separate the people from the problem

This means treating one another with respect, avoiding defensive statements, or character judgments, and giving attention instead to the issues. Each side should be encouraged and helped to understand the other's fears, perceptions, insecurities and desires. Parties should think of themselves as partners in a side-by-side search for a fair agreement, which is advantageous to each side.

Step 2: Focus on the issues, not the positions

When people identify the real issues and stop trying to defend rigid (inflexible) positions they are on their way to resolve their conflict.

Step 3: Think of various options that might solve the problem

In the beginning there is no attempt to evaluate the options or to arrive at a single solution. Each side makes suggestions for options in a brainstorming session. After a number of creative and perhaps new alternatives have been proposed, each option can be evaluated.

Step 4: Insist on objective criteria

Conflict is less likely to occur if both sides agree beforehand on an objective way to reach a solution. If both sides agree to abide by the results of a coin toss, a judge's ruling, or an appraiser's evaluation, the end results may not be equally satisfying to both parties but everybody agrees on the solution because it was determined by objective, fair and mutually accepted methods.

4.7.5 Use and adapt approach or style appropriate to interaction context

The most important information that is exchanged during conflicts and arguments is often communicated nonverbally. The style that you communicate in is important. Nonverbal communication includes eye contact, facial expression, and tone of voice, posture, touch, and gestures.

When you are in a conflict situation, you must pay close attention to the other person's nonverbal cues; this will give you clues on what the other person is really saying, respond in a way that builds trust, and get to the root of the problem. Simple nonverbal signals such as a calm tone of voice, a reassuring touch, or a concerned facial expression can go a long way toward defusing a heated exchange.

Your listening skills will be tested too, as language that has conflict undertones must be managed. When aggressive language is used, it is pointless to become engaged with the poor behaviour. Here are some tips to manage this.

Do the following:

- Keep your voice calm and even.
- Keep your facial expression as neutral as possible to avoid showing emotion.
- Ensure eye contact to show you are paying attention.

- Make sure the person has enough physical space.
- Take a few seconds to calm yourself down before interacting.



Class Activity 9: Use appropriate behaviour and conflict management

Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

Learning Unit 5

Reflect on own facilitation and use of resources

After completing this Learning Unit, you will be able to reflect on own facilitation and the use and effectiveness of the resources, by successfully completing the following:

- Reflect on own facilitation.
- Evaluate spoken discourse.
- Reflect on the use and effectiveness of the resources.

Reflect on own facilitation and use of resources

Reflecting on your practice is a way of evaluating your effectiveness. It is also a way of finding opportunities to improve your facilitation skills. New children who enter the playground, new insights you develop from your own experience and a willingness to try new things, all contribute to good facilitation. The objective of your facilitation is to meet the development aims of the group of children you are working with.

5.1 Reflect on own facilitation

You will need a reflection journal to help you reflect on your own facilitation. You will also use your reflection journal for the tasks in this study unit. Hopefully, you will continue to use your journal during the rest of this course, and after you have completed it. Let's begin with an activity in which you make your own reflection journal.

5.1.1 Reflect on own facilitation approach in relation to the developmental aims

We reflect on our own practice for many reasons:

- To learn from our mistakes.
- To identify our area of strengths and our areas of challenge.
- To make sure that we facilitate activities effectively.
- To check the developmental appropriateness of our activities.
- To ensure that our activities match children's interest.
- To identify ways in which we can change and grow.

It is easy to see why we need to reflect on our practice. So how we do this reflection?

Let's explore this question by reading a poem called "What is a teacher?" This poem will help you to think more deeply about your role as an ECD practitioner.

***What is a teacher?
A guide, not a guard.***

***What is learning?
A journey, not a destination.***

***What is discovery?
Questioning the answer not answering the questions.***

***What is the process?
Discovering ideas, not covering the content.***

***What is the goal?
Open minds not closed issues.***

***What is the test?
Being and becoming, not remembering and reviewing.***

***What is the school?
Whatever we choose to make it.*** Alex A Glathorn

This description of a teacher helps to inspire us, and helps us to realise that we are constantly learning, growing, discovering and changing. When we feel truly alive and creative as ECD practitioners, our minds and our ears are open. We can use our skills, experience and training to provide a creative, well-structured, educationally rich environment. Within this environment we can allow ourselves to learn, explore, change and grow together with the learners in our care.

As a nation we grow and change in our families, our school, and our culture. We learn to choose a career and stick to it; we learn to become competent at our chosen job, through studying. We learn to keep our work and our lives neatly controlled.

These words that you read from the poem covering the content, closed issues, remembering and reviewing, guarding, destination, answering the question, these words describe the ethos of our studies. Ethos means the sense of beliefs we have, about our social behaviour and relationships. To some of us it describes the ethos we that carry into our work as ECD practitioners.

Let's reflect on the inspiring words we read from the poem: guide, journey, questioning, the answers, open minds, being and becoming. These words are alive with explanation and adventure; they allow and encourage growth and change.

Reflecting on your own practice means to look carefully and critically at your work as an ECD practitioner in your classroom.

The two reasons for reflecting on own practices:

(A): You reflect on your own practice because you are told to do so by your facilitator, your manager, the inner voice, which tells you to do your job as you were taught to do it. When you reflect in this way, you try to defend yourself and the teaching choices you have made. You try to get the self-reflection over with. You answer the self-reflection questions on your list. You cover the content. You remember and review. When you are done, you feel satisfied that you have reflected on your own practice.

(B): You reflect on your practice because you want to think deeply about your work, and use what you discover as an opportunity to change and grow. When you reflect in this way, you keep an open mind. You hope your self-reflection will help to guide you towards a richer and fuller experience as an ECD practitioner. This is a journey that will continue for you as long as you are open to reflecting, changing and growing. You question yourself, you question your answers. You affirm where you are now and you feel inspired to become even more than this. When you have finished, you feel inspired to change, grow and rise to the challenge of making your ECD centre a more creative and enriching experience for the children at your centre.

As an ECD practitioner, you will reflect on your own practice. It is part of your job to do so. The question is, how will you reflect on your practice?

As an opportunity for change and growth within yourself, and within your school?

OR

As duty you want to perform accurately, before you continue teaching just as you did before?

Only you can answer these questions. Think about it. Your attitude to self-reflection is what is important here. Which choice will you make?

Often, the nature of ourselves that we present to the outside world is different from the way we truly think and feel about ourselves. For example, we may be confident and assertive at home, within the safety of our family; but outside the home we are shy, unsure and self-evaluating. Sometimes, we believe that others see us in a more negative light than they actually do.

When our outer and inner selves are different from one another, it does not mean we are being dishonest or untrue. Usually, we contain all of these qualities – both the inner and the outer ones. However, when we split our personality in this way, it can be hard to be who we truly are. It can be hard to draw on our inner qualities in the outer world.

That's why it helps us to try to be congruent (harmonious). That means to claim ownership of all our qualities, so that we have the freedom to be who we are.

5.1.2. Obtain feedback from a variety of relevant sources

The value of your facilitation can be demonstrated by the happiness, positive adjustment, growth and holistic development of the children in your playgroup. But this is generally only clear after a year or so in which to measure these changes. A more useful and immediate way of getting a sense of your effectiveness is to ask colleagues and parents for feedback.

Feedback from colleagues

In your ECD environment, there are colleagues who may overhear you with the children or see your group outdoors. They may give you informal feedback or comments which may upset you. To get more comprehensive, accurate and useful picture of how you are managing your facilitation, you could use the following criteria and strategies (remembering always to keep a running commentary in your reflection journal to support your thinking and your efforts to improve).

Criteria for observation

Bear in mind that every facilitator has a personal style. The two main criteria for anyone to evaluate the facilitator should be:

- the clear communication with the children which supports them to engage with the activity productively (attending the promoting)
- the warmth, attention, support and good behaviour management the facilitator shows the children (the quality of the relationship)

Share an activity

Invite a colleague to share a structured activity with the group (like an obstacle course, including balancing and skipping) and schedule it to take place while her group is having free outdoor play. Ask her to get another staff member to watch her children while she joins you to observe your facilitation. Again, identify for her any specific points of facilitation, or an input, that you may be finding difficult.

Your colleague should make accurate observation and reflection notes and the two of you should have a structured meeting with your supervisor present, to discuss the feedback.

Regular observation

This process of observing and giving feedback to colleagues should happen regularly for all facilitators so that they can share expertise and improve the quality of facilitation.

Support group

Have a fortnightly staff support group in which you and your colleagues share your collection of notes about any activity that has been a problem or has presented difficulties. Together, discuss and brainstorm solutions. Then put those suggestions into practice and feedback your results to the group at the next session. You should keep reflection notes in your journal about the group at the next session and about this process and which kinds of feedback are helpful.

Stop look, correct, take action

Use your reflection journal to take some private time to think about solutions, or corrective actions that you could try. All the feedback you receive needs time to settle and you may be able to identify a common theme or single behaviour that may be the effective solution to different problems. After this reflection and after deciding which actions to take, specify those actions in your reflection journal. Then follow through on the feedback with an action stage in which you try out suggested changes to your facilitation (if any). It is essential to keep building your skills and experiences through this constant feedback and correction process.

Feedback from parents

There are many informal opportunities for feedback from parents, who often enjoy sharing stories their children have told them about activities in the playgroup. Bear in mind that the children's report from a parent about a child having some negative experience in any activity may quite possibly be a reflection of the child(ren)'s perspective.

Orientation of parents

Before your year begins, send an introductory letter to parents explaining your facilitation style and philosophy very briefly. Give a concrete example of how your style works (for example, "I attend to each child's individual learning needs and encourage participation to the best of the child's ability. There is no pressure to create any specific product or to compare work with other children. The focus is on the individual child's development.") This helps parents to recognise that your approach is child-centred and not parent-centred (because some parents are product-focused rather than process-focused regarding what their children are learning). In the same letter invite feedback from parents via the telephone in the afternoons, or via the suggestion box, or by attending the feedback session in the regular parent meetings.

Parent meetings

To provide better feedback opportunities for you, try to set aside 15 minutes of any parent meeting for feedback from parents to you. When you notify the parents about any meeting, list this feedback time on the agenda for the meeting so that parents can come prepared to talk about any issues that concern them. This may or may not include feedback on your facilitation, but your facilitation will benefit from being informed by what is of concern to parents.

Suggestion box

You could draw up a feedback or suggestion slip for parents to fill in at any time and have a locked box at the front door of the playgroup where they could leave these slips.

Dealing with parents' feedback

It is unusual for a parent to give feedback specifically about the facilitator's approach and style of facilitation. However, it remains important to give them the opportunity to give you feedback and for you to listen respectfully to whatever they may say. Your decision as to how to use the information depends on the nature of the information. Use these general guidelines in responding to parents:

- Keep an open mind.
- Keep communication lines open.
- Keep the child's interests your top priority.
- Be willing to do what you can to make it easier for the child and her parents to accept the playgroup and you as the facilitator.
- Keep record of any feedback from parents.
- Use your reflection journal to help you arrive at conclusions or strategies.

Feedback from other sources

Stay informed on early childhood education by reading and continuing to discuss your work with other playgroup facilitators in your community. Remember to keep the children's details confidential.

5.1.3. Reflect on strengths and weaknesses of the way in which development is facilitated

Since it is so important to be open to feedback, you should try to analyse the feedback calmly and make sure it can be useful to you. If you like, ask the person giving open feedback to help you by using the tools you will explore in this lesson.

Here are three devices or tools you can use to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of your facilitation:

- SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)
- Mind maps
- Drilling down information

You have already learned how to record feedback and reflect on it. In this section we look briefly at how to implement changes and build a better facilitation practice.

The value of reflection for the ECD service

Building better facilitation practice is important to the Early Childhood Education service in South Africa. It is your duty to maintain standards of practice and to participate in generating new knowledge and expertise about facilitation. In this way the fields of knowledge can grow and practitioners increase in effectiveness, which will have a positive outcome for children's development.

Commitment to a good quality ECD service, for the sake of children's rights, means that you should work together with other ECD practitioners or organisations to maintain standards of facilitation. When you are working towards promoting a high quality ECD service, you need to ensure that the service you offer is the best. This can be achieved by constant reflection, evaluation and improvement on the quality of your facilitation.

Reflecting on your own practice may provide you with experience to which you can refer, but you should also reflect on the knowledge you gain from:

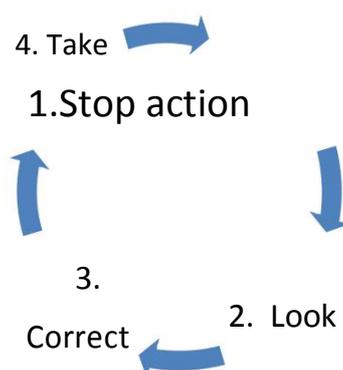
- attending workshops
- reading useful articles
- listening to or watching relevant radio or TV programmes
- learning from others
- asking questions

How to implement changes

It takes courage to try something new. But the children are forgiving (as long as you do no harm) so at the risk of making a mistake or making a fool of yourself, feel free to try new strategies. Use your mass of experience, insight and knowledge of the children and of your reflection, to record your conclusion about what needs to be done and then simply do it.

The most important part of this process is the assessment that you make after implementing the change, to evaluate the effectiveness of your new strategy. Share your results with your colleagues so that others may also try to apply the new strategy, and everyone may benefit. The strategy may be further modified: the feedback loop shown in the diagram below can be repeated again and again, in a sequence "Stop, Look and Correct, Take Action".

Sample of the feedback loop for implementing changes



How to build better facilitation

While you should reflect on the strategies suggested to deal with feedback from parents, we should also check whether those strategies worked and make recommendations about them:

1. Keep an open mind.
2. Keep communication lines open.
3. Keep the child's interests on your top priority.
4. Be willing to do what you can to make it easier for the child and her parents to accept the playgroup and you as the facilitator.
5. Keep observational records about any feedback.
6. Use your reflection journal to help you arrive at conclusions or strategies.
7. Implement the strategies or solutions.
8. Check their effectiveness.
9. Make recommendations to build on strengths.

5.1.5 Provide recommendations to build on strengths and address identified weaknesses

Having your facilitation evaluated by an observer provides enough of a stimulus for change. So hopefully you will be able to let go of any problematic techniques, behaviours or attitudes which you discovered in your practice.

When you are writing formal documents, it can be hard to express yourself naturally. To make recommendations about the necessary changes to facilitation, simply write them the way you would say them to a friend or colleague. Then make sure that they are in clear and simple language. Would a friend understand them if she knew nothing about ECD? That's how clear they should be. Work with friends to get them logical and clear enough for her to understand. Use short sentences for each point.

As an example, you might want to recommend that a colleague changed her habit of clapping her hands loudly at the start and end of every activity because it frightens the quieter children and disturbs the other staff. You find it slightly aggressive and disturbing.



5.1.6. Record findings and recommendations to support future facilitation

It is always good to have clear guidelines when listening to and evaluating a presentation. Simply giving verbal feedback is not sufficient and it is considered correct practice to record the recommendations on a sheet, as in the example below:

PRESENTATION COMPONENT	POINT VALUES
Introduction:	
Purpose	
Practical significance (i.e. to industry)	
Academic significance (i.e. how is existing research advanced?)	
Recommendations	
Literature Review:	
Summary of key findings	
Linkage to the current study	
Recommendations	
Slide Show/Presentation:	
Quality of slides (colour, animation, readability)	
Time of presentation (i.e. not too long or too brief)	
Logical order of delivery of information	
Speak clearly & make eye contact (don't read to audience)	
Gestalt professionalism (e.g. practised-rehearsed delivery)	
Recommendations	
Bonus Areas:	Discretionary
Professional appearance	
Effective creation of discussion	
Other	
Total Score:	100



Class Activity 10: Reflect on own facilitation

Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

5.2 Evaluate spoken discourse

In writing and speaking we can use different types of language. In discussions at work, with clients, strangers, and other people we follow certain unwritten rules. Using these unwritten rules are called “register use”. Register use can help you to communicate effectively. Incorrect register use can cause problems at work, cause people to ignore you, or, at best, send the wrong message. Of course, correct register use is very difficult for many learners of English. This feature focuses on different situations and the correct register used in the various situations. To begin with, let us look at some example conversations.

Formal

In the business environment it is customary to address your client in a formal register. If you see your client more frequently, the degree of your formality may decrease.

Informal

You use this type of language with people who are familiar to you. You may make good use of this register in verbal communications with clients, but you should first find out whether or not your client would be offended by your use of this register.

Slang

Slang is used by a specific group of people who understand the meaning of the words that are used. Different geographic communities may use words that are only understood in that community. For example, a group of friends may have made up their own words and “group language” which outsiders will not be able to understand.

In an organisation, slang is company-specific jargon that is NOT formally accepted. Slang may be appropriate to use in interacting with your colleagues, but is not acceptable for use with clients.

Jargon

Jargon is subject-specific or technical language that is used by a specific group of people, which is normally not clear to others who are not part of this group. Jargon is useful when speaking to experts and members of the groups as it avoids long-winded explanations. But when dealing with a non-layperson, avoid jargon and use language that explains the concept to them clearly.

Verbal mannerisms

Verbal mannerisms are the phrases we use subconsciously such as “uhm”, “well”, “you know”, “er”. Sometimes we use these to “buy time”, when we are thinking about an appropriate answer, “uhm” or to lead into a subject – “well...”. Sometimes we use them if we are nervous. Beware that they can interfere with meaning, give away a lot about your emotional state and be distracting for your listener.

Plain language

Do not use convoluted words. See! “Convoluted” is a word that shows off my vocabulary but could cause misunderstanding. To ensure that readers or listeners understand your language the first time round use plain language that is simple to understand. So - Do not use words that are difficult or complex when a plain word will do. This is not to say that you should not build your own vocabulary, to ensure that you understand people who do not use plain language.

5.2.1 Identify points of view and describe the meaning in relation to context and purpose of the interaction

We will discuss evaluation in the next few sections. The author of the text could be considered to be the narrator (story teller) and you are the observer.

There are five possible viewpoints from which a text can be narrated:

First-Person: The narrator tells “I” or “my” story. Also, this may be “we” or “our” story.

e.g.: We went to the dam.

Second-Person: The narrator tells “you” or “your” story, usually used for instructions.

e.g.: The first thing you need to do is jump.

Third-Person Objective: The narrator tells “his” or “her” story and does not reveal any character’s thoughts or feelings. Characters may reveal their feelings through actions or dialogue.

e.g.: She walked into the gym. A man walked past and said, “Hey, you are looking mighty fine.”

Third-Person Limited: The narrator tells their story and reveals one character’s thoughts or feelings.

e.g.: She was overjoyed at the fact that Sally liked her and she wasn’t paying attention as she walked down the street. A man drove by and yelled, “Hey, watch where you’re going!”

Third-Person Omniscient: The narrator tells “his” or “her” story and reveals more than one character’s thoughts or feelings.

e.g.: Jenny was overjoyed at the fact that Sally liked her and she wasn’t paying attention as she walked down the street. Jenny was having a good day, and as he was driving by her, Tom tried to startle her: “Hey, watch where you’re going!” Tom yelled in a fun way.

Modes of narration (storytelling)

As we saw above, there are six key terms used in the study of narrative view point: first-person, second-person, third-person, third-person objective, third-person limited, and third-person omniscient. Each term refers to a specific mode of narration (method of storytelling) that is defined by two things: the distance of the narrator from the story and how much the narrator reveals about the thoughts and feelings of the characters (narrative access). Let’s take a closer look at each term.

First-person narration

In this mode, the narrator is usually the central character in the story. But even if this character is not the protagonist, they are directly involved in the events of the story and are telling the tale “first hand.” First-person narration is easy to identify, because the narrator will be telling the story from the “I” perspective. Readers should watch for the narrator’s use of first-person pronouns- “I, me, my, our, us, we, myself, and ourselves,” as these will usually indicate that the passage is narrated from the first-person perspective. Remember, with this skill readers are trying to identify the perspective of the narrator; therefore, one must ignore the dialogue of characters (indicated by “quotation marks”) and solely focus on narration, otherwise one is not analysing the narrator’s point of view.

Second-Person Narration

In this mode narration “you” are the star, such as in this example: you jumped up and down. As it is generally awkward for a story to be narrated from “your” perspective, this mode of narration is not used very often in narratives and stories. There are some exceptions, however, and second-person perspective is the primary mode of narration for your own adventure books and similarly styled writings. More frequently, directions and instructions and usually narrated from second-person perspective. In most cases, directions will be written in short imperative sentences, where the implied subject is “you”. But even when “you” is not clearly stated, it is understood that “you” are the subject of directions and instructions.

Third-Person Narration

With this mode of narration, the narrator tells the story of another person or group of people. They may be far removed from or not involved in the story, or they may be a supporting character supplying narration for a hero. Frequent use of “he, she, them, they, him, her, his, her, and their” by the narrator may indicate that a passage is narrated from third-person perspective. There are three distinct modes of third-person narration: objective, limited, and omniscient. Which mode the narrator is using is determined by a single variable - how much the narrator accesses the thoughts, feelings, and internal workings of the characters and shares them with the reader through narration. Characters’ feelings and motivations can be inferred and understood through their behaviour and dialogue in each of the three modes of third-person narration. However, when readers want to determine in which mode the narrator is operating, they should try to find instances where the narrator explicitly reveals a character’s thoughts or feelings.

Third-Person Objective Narration

In this mode of narration, the narrator tells a third-person’s story (he, she, him, her), but the narrator only describes characters’ behaviour and dialogue. The narrator does not reveal any character’s thoughts or feelings. Again, readers will be able to understand characters’ thoughts and motivations based on characters’ actions and dialogue, which are narrated; however, the narrator will not explicitly reveal character’s thoughts and/or motivations in narration.

Third-Person Limited:

When a narrator uses third-person limited perspective, the narrator’s perspective is limited to the internal workings of one character. In other words, the narrator reveals

the thoughts and feelings of one character through explicit narration. As with objective narration, readers may be able to infer characters' thoughts and feelings based on the behaviours and dialogue of those characters, which are narrated, but the narrator also directly reveals the central character's internal perspective.

Third-Person Omniscient:

In this mode of narration, the narrator allows readers the most access to characters' emotional state and thoughts. With third-person omniscient narration, the narration will reveal more than one characters' internal workings. The base word *omni* means "all," and *scient* means "knowing," so omniscient roughly translates to "all knowing". So in omniscient narration, the narrator is all knowing.

5.2.2 Identify values, attitudes and assumptions in discourse and describe their influence on the interaction

Discourse is a particular phenomenon; it is NOT the same as text analysis. Below is a table showing the difference.

Text	Discourse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is made up of sentences - is made up of sentences having the property of grammatical cohesion <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Text Analysis: deals with cohesion</p> <p>Written</p> <p>Text analysis: investigates written form</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is the use of such sentences - is made up of utterances having the property of coherence <p>Discourse analysis: investigates coherence</p> <p>Spoken</p> <p>Discourse analysis: analyses spoken form</p>

Discourse is generally "spoken" text; it is therefore longer than only one sentence. To find values, attitudes and assumptions in discourse and to understand the "conversation" you have to consider the following questions:

- Are there hidden relations of power in the text?
- Who is exercising this power? (i.e. who presents it).
- Who is the audience?
- What is left unsaid?
- Is the passive voice used?
- To what extent is descriptive language used for emphasis?

5.2.3 Identify and interpret techniques used by speaker to evade or dissipate responsibility for an issue

In this type of analysis, it is as if you are listening to a conversation. Therefore you have to be aware of the various ways the speaker could use in order to try to avoid responsibility.

- What is the tone of the speaker?
- Is there an element of power play?
- The discourse will have elements such as issues of identity, dominance and resistance.
- Does the language contain obvious or subtle words that may stigmatise the vulnerable, exclude the marginal, or dominate?

In speaking or writing there will always be evidence of the world view, and you need to identify taking perspectives on what is “normal” and what is not; what is “acceptable” and what is not; what is “right” and what is not.

5.2.4 Describe, explain and judge the impact of spoken discourse

The impact of spoken discourse is just as powerful as that of the spoken language. How you listen in your own language and use it varies in different social situations – for example, how your language changes when speaking to different people (such as your friends as opposed to your parents) Speech can also give you the sense of belonging to a group – for example a regional group, an age group, an interest group, or an ethnic group (note that this unit is not just about spoken English, it is about spoken language in general).

Studying the spoken language also includes looking at the way culture and identity is reflected in the way we use language. It also considers how our language changes with society and new technologies.

The impact of spoken languages varies according to its intent, which may be to:

- explain
- persuade
- defend
- recount
- encourage
- instruct
- entertain

The way that spoken language is delivered also determines the impact. There are many different ways, for example:

- spontaneous
- scripted
- formal
- informal
- conversation
- debate
- presentation

You could think of written language as static or unchanging, whereas spoken language is dynamic.

5.2.5 Analyse own responses to spoken texts

The act of reading is like a dialogue between the reader and the text, which has meaning only when the two are joined in conversation. Therefore the text now gains a “life” as it can only exist when it is read by and interacts with the mind of the reader.

Thus you are no longer a passive recipient of what the text says, but rather have taken an active response. What occurs then is that your own inner world become linked to the text. In that way you begin to fill in the spaces left by the text. So this means that every reader will attribute a different meaning to the text, an inner dialogue that differs from person to person.

This form of analysis as deep as what the words and phrases in the text play when interacting with the reader. Furthermore, the sounds and shapes that words make or even how they are pronounced or spoken by the reader can fundamentally change the connotation (association) of the text. As the reader goes deeper into the topic, it will also create a different response to text. For example, a spoken discourse on violence towards woman will have a different response from a perpetrator, a victim or even a lawyer. Culture too plays a role in response.

Taking all of this into account, the context of the spoken text and the response may not always match its purpose. Therefore the reader should remember that, instead of emotionally responding, it may take a while before a more appropriate, less biased response arise present.



Class Activity 11: Evaluate spoken discourse

Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

5.3 Reflect on the use and effectiveness of the resources

Now we return to using resources. Once you have made or adapted and used a resource, you need to reflect on how effective it was in achieving its purpose and whether any improvements or changes are needed. The act of reflection implies that you are willing to make changes whenever necessary. Your resources are not adjustment only once, since a variety of children will pass through your hands. Therefore this (resource adaption and use is not a static, once-off, and it requires an ongoing reflective attitude.

Why reflect?

Reflection is about examining and reviewing a product or process. It is defined as: “*to think, ponder, or meditate*”. We need to reflect on our resources in order to do the following:

- Ensure that the resource supported the activity adequately and did not distract from the planned learning outcomes.
- Identify whether it was useful, effective and appropriate for the activity and the developmental needs and interests of the children.
- Identify its suitability in terms of an ECD context and learning programme.
- Look at possible improvements as regards its safety, durability, bias and ability to meet any special needs of learners.

We do not always willingly reflect on our work – we normally only do so when it is required of us and somehow feel that we are on the defensive. Unless we are honest in our reflections, we will never be able to improve on our efforts or the resources we have provided. There is a difference between being overly critical and reflective. When we reflect we do so because we want to grow and learn.

As an ECD practitioner, you will need to develop these skills and reflect on your practice so that you can develop yourself and your facilitation skills. You have to challenge yourself to become more creative and to grow. As you grow, so the children in your care will benefit and you will find that dealing with the challenges of each day in a school become easier.

Instead of seeing reflections and evaluations as a burden, you should rather see them as an opportunity.

Remember, “***Attitude determines altitude***”.

5.3.1 Reflect on the extent to which the resources support the purpose of the activities

We have discussed the theory of reflection. Now we need to put this into practice and apply it to the resources that you have adapted or made. Let’s look at the questions you should reflect on in a little more detail.

Does the resource support the purpose of the activity?

What was the purpose with the resource? Why did you make it or use it?

This refers back to the developmental outcomes we looked at earlier in this programme – namely, physical, cognitive, language, social, emotional, creative and moral development.

For example, you have drawn a hopscotch game outside and provided the children with colourful plastic counters to mark their places. Your intention was to facilitate two areas, namely gross motor development (hopping and jumping) and social development (taking turns). You would then reflect that it had supported both areas as Mary, Alicia and Thembi had played there.



5.3.2 Reflect on the usefulness, effectiveness and appropriateness of the resources

The resource will need to meet the interests of the children, be developmentally appropriate, suited for any special needs, bias-free, safe and durable.

Let's go back to the hopscotch:

- Only three children played with it so it may not meet the interests of the twenty-seven other children in your group.
- It is developmentally appropriate as you are teaching the five-year-olds who are able to hop on one foot and enjoy group activities.
- Mandla could not play as he is in a wheelchair but he could have been encouraged to throw the counter for another child. (It must be noted that not all children can always be accommodated in every activity but we strive to include them as far as possible. As long as there are activities that they can do or a level of involvement that they can achieve, it is acceptable.)
- There was no cultural or gender bias even though only the girls wanted to play.
- The game was safe as it was played on a flat part of the paved area, away from the wheel toys.
- Durability is not really an issue as it can easily be redrawn with chubby chinks as needed.

5.3.3 Reflect on the usefulness of the resources and suitability of the environment

Not all resources will be suitable to be used by all ages as babies, toddlers and young children have varying developmental needs. Some resources, though, may be used by different ages and stages, for instance generic (general, non-specific) toys like dolls or balls or equipment like shelves, furniture for the house corner and mirrors. The more uses a resource has, the more valuable it is.

When setting up an ECD centre, including the various playrooms and outdoor areas, you will need to bear in mind that they should form a cohesive whole and that the children will normally move up class by class until they leave to go to formal schooling. The learning environment that you create should:

- support the philosophy and ethos of ECD – most importantly that children learn through play

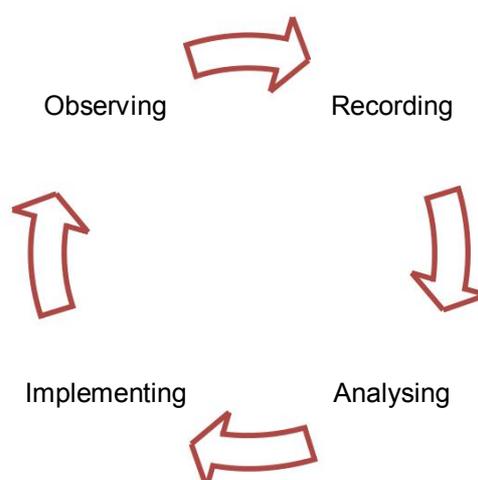
- allow for sensory and motor exploration as this is the predominant mode of learning at this age
- be developmentally sound for the children
- incorporate both the familiar and unfamiliar
- be free from cultural, gender and racial bias
- be flexible and adaptable so that changes can be made to accommodate special needs of children and special events or circumstances
- be healthy and safe for the children as well as the adults

Remember that your class may only be a part of the whole and that you also need to take responsibility for common areas such as passages, entrance halls, etc.

5.3.4 Identify and note ways to improve upon the selections and adaptation for future resourcing

There are four basic stages in reflection, which are cyclical in nature (it follows on each other in a cycle): you observe, record your observations, analyse your observations, and implement them. You then start again: observe the changes, record these observations, analyse whether the changes have worked, implement further changes if need be.....and so it continues. Each time your practice improves.

The cycle of reflection:



Observing

You cannot observe something unless you look at it very closely. Observations are also not haphazard (random) but planned and structured to be as effective as possible. While you may not realise it, you are observing children all the time while working with them. You notice when they are not feeling well or their behaviour is unusual; you get to know their likes and dislikes in terms of food, activities and friends. This coincidental, unintentional observation is valuable to get to know the children you are dealing with and to plan appropriate activities for them.

There are two kinds of observation:

1. **Incidental observation:** occurs when you are busy with children and note “by the way” what they are doing, what skills are weaker or stronger, what activities the child likes or dislikes, how they are behaving, who they are interacting with, etc.
2. **Focussed observations:** are more formal and directed towards a specific skill or behaviour. Combined with the observations are recordings – in notebooks, journals, on tape, on camera, with a checklist or a rating scale. These are the observations that you will use to reflect on your resources.

Observations can only be effective if the following conditions are met:

- Time is set aside and the content of the observations and methods are planned in advance. You cannot multi-task and must use focused time where you will not constantly be interrupted.
- You observe more than once. You will not get a true reflection if you observe during only one session.
- They are comprehensive and include details.
- You contextualise the behaviour and reactions of the children in terms of their age, needs, environment, stage of development, etc.
- You do not jump to conclusions or allow your perceptions to impede on the process.
- Children do not feel that they are being judged or uncomfortable in your presence.

Recording

There are several ways to record these observations. Recording is vitally important as we cannot remember all that we observe and if we rely on our memory, we may forget important points. We will also not have a factual reflection of events or reactions. Recording may take the form of anecdotal notes, rating scales, checklists and journals.

Anecdotal notes

These are useful when observing children’s behaviours or particular children. You can use a notebook and allocate a page per child and you could record observations over a period, by noting as a heading each time, the date, time and activity being observed. The observations can be:

- Factual – based on yes/no answers.
- Descriptive – you use your own words to describe what you see, more subjective in nature as you are interpreting actions that you see.
- Quotes – use quotation marks to indicate what a child has said. The words must be transcribed verbatim (word for word).

You could use this method for recording the use of your resources. You could observe children playing with a resource that you have made or adapted and observe their reactions, record what they say and describe how they use the item.

Rating scales

The rating scale is normally 1–10 or 1–5. You would again need to prepare this ahead of time and determine the questions you want answers to. This may be a good way of determining how popular the resource is or how safe and durable. The rating scale should also have space for you to write an explanation for the ratings so that you will know what changes to make to improve the scores.

Checklists

This helps you to focus your attention on important aspects that need to be observed. This would be very useful when looking at skills such as cutting. You could have columns with questions such as the following:

- Does the child hold the scissors correctly?
- Can the child cut straight lines?
- Can the child cut around shapes?

Checklists must be developed before you start observing. If they are assessing a skill, they should be based on developmental expectations.

Checklists may be very useful to determine whether the resource you have used is developmentally appropriate, suits the interests of the children and is free from gender, cultural or racial bias.

Journals

You should be familiar with this method as you are sometimes asked in your study guides to reflect on issues in journals. Journals are very personal and give you the opportunity to reflect honestly about your feelings, thoughts and experiences.

They can also be used for you to record how you felt about the resource, what your expectations were and how you felt once they had been used. It is also a good place to note possible improvements or adaptations that may be needed.

Analysing

Observations and records have little value if they are not used. Analysis involves breaking the whole into smaller parts so that you can understand them more clearly. You will need to use your recordings on your resources to help you understand:

- what worked or didn't?
- why children reacted in the way that they did?
- in what ways you can improve on the resource?

Hint: the more comprehensive your recordings, the easier you will find the analysis.

While this sounds very easy, you will need to use your knowledge of developmental norms and child behaviour to assess whether it was effective and supported the activity, the needs of the children and their interests.

Implementing

Implementing means putting something into practice (such as recommendations). Once you have analysed your observations and decided on changes that are needed, you should make these changes.

For example, you may have made a book for the children. You noted that the children enjoyed looking at the photos of themselves, but that some pictures became worn and started tearing because the children handled the book so much. You will then reprint those pictures if possible and cover them with laminating plastic so that they can better withstand the wear and tear.

Sometimes we do not implement the changes immediately as the resource is not worth saving or has served its purpose. We will note, though, for future reference, what should be done and we can go back to our analyses to look at our suggestions.



Class Activity 12: Reflect on own facilitation and use of resources

Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

Learning Unit 6

Observe and report on child development

After completing this Learning Unit, you will be able to observe and report on child development, by successfully completing the following:

- Observe babies, toddlers and young children.
- Record observations.
- Give feedback on observations.
- Use strategies to be an effective speaker in sustained oral interactions.

Observe and report on child development

What is observation and why is it important, you ask?

- Observation takes place in an environment in which the child is comfortable and secure.
- Observation fits in with the child's daily routines and activities.
- Observation takes place in a real context, enabling you to observe the way in which the child copes positively and negatively with other children in day-to-day activities.
- Observation allows you to assess the whole child in her unique, personal surroundings.
- Observation helps you to identify what the child does well and the factors that help her to perform well.
- Observation allows you to see from the child's point of view.
- Observation allows you to be objective.
- Observation allows you to check children's progress and adapt your activities and practices accordingly.
- Observation allows you to be both factual and descriptive.

These are core techniques for every ECD practitioner. You'll find yourself using them every day in your playroom. The more you use these techniques, the more familiar they will become to you. As you gain more experience, you will find that you use these techniques automatically. You will constantly be observing the children in your care and altering and adapting the learning environment to meet their changing needs.

You'll find yourself reflecting on your own practice at all times and making the relevant changes needed. This is an ongoing process of observation, reflection, change and growth, which will help you to become an ECD practitioner who is both competent and inspirational.

6.1 Observe babies, toddlers and young children

If you want to observe children differently, you have to pay attention to the following aspects of your observation:

- a) the purpose
- b) the duration or length
- c) the timing
- d) the setting
- e) the context

The purpose of the observation

Your observation should have a clear purpose, in other words you must be clear about whom you are observing and why. Are you gathering information for the child's year-end assessment? Do you want to help the child develop social skills? Keep your purpose in mind. Don't be distracted by other events or children.

The duration or length of the observation

You will need to decide for how long to observe the child. However, you must try to make sure that you observe for long enough to provide a true picture of the child's behaviour.

The timing of the observation

At which times of the day will you observe the child? Remember children's behaviour tends to vary over the course of the day. You may want to observe the child several times during the day. Or you may want to choose times that match the child using particular skills, for example social skills or gross motor skills.

The observation setting

In a baby care facility, you would observe the baby:

- while you are changing and feeding her
- while she is playing with toys or interacting with you in play
- while she is being quiet, inactive or sleepy
- while she is responding to other people or children in the environment

6.1.1 Methods of observation

When you observe toddlers and young children in an ECD centre, the different settings that are available would be the creative art area, discovery area, book area, fantasy area, puzzle area, outdoor play area and so on. You may also want to observe the child in settings in which there are different kinds of interactions - with adults and with parents. Again, this will depend on the purpose of your observations.

If you want to check which factors encourage the child to perform well and which factors limit her performance, you'll need to select settings and time in which her performance is at its best as well as those when her performance is at its worst.

If you want to observe the child from a holistic point of view, you'll need to select a variety of different settings, different activities and different times. You may also ask the child's parents or caregivers to observe her at home. Make sure you explain the purpose behind the observation clearly. In this way, you can add additional information from the home setting.

The context of the observation

You will have to observe and take note of any contextual information that may have an effect on the child being observed. Contextual information include:

- the child's age
- the time of the day
- environmental factors
- the child's health and equilibrium



The child's age

Knowing the child's age can help you to reflect on the developmental appropriateness of the child's behaviour. Your knowledge of the stages of social and intellectual development is important for you to be able to judge whether behaviour is appropriate for a particular age or not.

Checking on a particular skill, you need to choose a setting or activity that requires children to use this skill. Then observe three children per day, each for five minutes. Observe each child twice if there is enough time.

To observe the child holistically, you could focus on one child per day. Observe the child for five minutes in each different activity in the programme or each setting.

6.1.2 Ensure that observations contribute towards assessment of individual development

When you observe in order to assess a child, you must take into account the *zone of proximal development*. This term was used by the psychologist Vygotsky and refers to the difference between what a child can do alone and what she can do with help. What children can do on their own is called their level of potential development. Two children might have the same level of actual development, but given the right help from an adult one might be able to solve many more problems than the others. When you are observing the baby, toddler or young child, you must observe both what the child can do alone and what she can do with help. The stages overlap at times and it may be helpful to refer to the next stage if a child shows proximal development (can do those tasks in the next stage with help).

From infancy to adolescence:

Stage	Age	Characteristics
Infancy sensory motor	Birth – 1 year Birth – 2 years	Trust vs mistrust Develops object permanence; coordinates motor and sensory skills
Toddlerhood	2-3 years	Autonomy vs shame and doubt
Pre-operational	2-7 years	Egocentric; learns use of symbols.
Young child	3-6 years	Initiative vs guilt
School-age child	6-12 years	Industry vs inferiority
Concrete operational	7-11 years	Capable of conservation and reversibility
Late childhood, beginning puberty	12-20 years	Identity vs role confusion
Formal operational	11+ years	Able to deal with abstractions, form hypotheses, solve problems systematically

When you make observations of babies and toddlers, you may use the reference chart provided below to check whether the child is reaching his/her milestones at the appropriate time.

Infant physical developmental milestones

0 months	Foetal position
1 month	Lies on tummy, lifts chin
2 months	Lies on tummy, raises chest and head
3 months	Lying on back, reaches for object and misses
4 months	Sits with support at the back
5 months	Sits on lap and grasps an object
6 months	Can sit alone in chair and grasp a dangling object
7 months	Can sit alone
8 months	Stands with help
9 months	Starts holding onto furniture
10 months	Crawls on hands and knees
11 months	Walks when led
12 months	Pulls self-up to stand next to furniture
13 months	Stands alone
14 months	Stands alone
15 months	Can walk alone

Observing, in the ECD context, means looking, listening and asking questions. When you look at a child you should have in mind a checklist of her age, her family background, her mood on that day, or any other information you already have about her.

Begin by observing parts of the child's behaviour by looking. Looking must be done actively so that you are actively trying to find out anything and everything about the child simply by observing her. You should keep an open mind and be willing to be surprised by new information. (See also Unit 4 on minimising bias.) This is an active and conscious seeing of the child. You should then make notes of what you see, as soon as possible.

Listening should also be done actively and with an open mind. This can be done overtly (openly), so that the child knows you are listening, for example when you engage her directly or she is aware that you are present. Alternatively, your listening could be done covertly (secretly), perhaps from an adjacent room or at a distance in the playground. You may want to listen to a conversation or play interaction between the child and a playmate. Your attention should be focused on the verbal (and pre-verbal sound) interaction so that you can later make notes. You may even be able to make notes while the interaction is going on if you are not part of it.

Active questioning means asking open-ended questions for the child to respond to. Examples of such questions could be:

- Can you tell me what you see on this page of the book? What's happening to the dog in the picture? (to assess language skills and understanding of meaning)
- What should we do with Gugu's hair band that we found under the swing? (to assess moral, social and emotional understanding)
- Will you please pack all the blocks away into this box? (to assess gross motor coordination, ability to hear and understand simple commands, concentration span, positive response to caregiver)

Rotating your observation

Develop a system that will allow you to observe every baby, toddler and young child in your play group or care facility. You can do this best if you rotate your observation. In the next section, you'll learn how to keep observation notes.

6.1.3 Carry out observations in a way that minimises bias and subjectivity

As a practitioner you'll have to decide for yourself which kind of observations are most appropriate in different circumstances.

1. Types of observations:

- a. factual and descriptive observation
- b. participant and non-participant observation
- c. overt (visible) and covert (hidden) observation

a. Factual observation

Sometimes when you observe children, you may be looking for clear, factual information, e.g. "Can Mpho count to 10?", or "Can Nomsa hop on one leg?" Usually your factual observations will give you information like "yes" or "no" as an answer, or a number.

b. Descriptive observation

At other times you want to observe in a more open-ended way. You may need to draw on your own thoughts and opinions to describe and interpret what you see. Your observation findings are more likely to take the form of a description, including questions and descriptive observation findings: "How popular is Nomsa with her peers?" or "Can Mpho complete activities independently?"

2. Participant and non-participant observation

a. Participant observation

When you are engaged in participant observation, you observe the child while actively participating in a few activities with him or her. As a participant, you will be able to observe the child closely, ask questions that may provide additional information and probably gather a large number of observation notes in a short time.

b. Non-participant observation

In the case of non-participant observation, you observe the child without becoming actively involved in the activities yourself.

3. Overt and covert observation

a. Overt observation

Overt means openly. During overt observation, you make observation notes openly and the child is aware that she is being observed. You are aware that the child may behave differently because she knows you are observing her.



b. Covert observation

Covert means hidden. During covert observation, you observe the child without allowing her to become aware that she is being observed; you make notes privately, when the child is no longer present.

You should use these different methods in a flexible way. Use your common sense. For example, if you want to observe Tumi's interaction with peers, your observation techniques should probably be descriptive, non-participant and covert. Why? You'll need to describe the way in which Tumi interacts. If you participate in activities with Tumi, he will probably interact with you rather than with his peers. If you make it obvious that you are observing Tumi with his peers, he will probably become shy or show off.

6.1.4 Ensure that observations are guided by given frameworks, assessment guidelines or instruments

Observations are part and parcel of the method of ECD. Therefore observations should be done from an assessment mindset. The tools that are used to record and assess the child must be of a high standard.

Anecdotal records

The simplest form of direct observation is a brief narrative account of a specific incident – this is called an anecdotal record. Anecdotal records are used to develop an understanding of a child's behaviour. Anecdotal records do not require charts or special settings. All you need is paper and pen to document what happened in a factual, objective manner. The observation is open-ended, and continues until everything has been witnessed.

During your observations, you will record how children communicate, both verbally and nonverbally. You will record how they look and what they do. Physical gestures and movements should be noted. You will also detail children's interactions with people and materials. Record as many details as possible.

Contents of anecdotal records:

- identifies the child and gives the child's age
- includes the date, time of day, and setting
- identifies the observer
- provides an accurate account of the child's actions and direct quotes from the child's conversations
- includes responses of other children and/or adults, if any are involved in the situation

Checklists

Another form of assessment is the checklist. Checklists are designed to record the presence or absence of specific traits or behaviours. They are easy to use and are especially helpful when many different items need to be observed. They often include lists of specific behaviours to look for while observing. Depending on their function, they can vary in length and complexity. Checklists may be designed for any developmental domain — physical, social, emotional, or cognitive. A checklist that is carefully designed can tell a lot about one child or the entire class.

Example:

Name of child:	Programme:
Age:	Date of observation:
Domain:	Observer:
Action	Completed
Cuts paper	✓
Sticks with glue	✓
Copies a circle	✓
Draws a straight line	✓
Able to pick up small objects	✓

Participation chart

A participation chart can be developed to gain information on specific aspects of children's behaviour. Participation charts have a variety of uses in the classroom. For instance, children's activity preferences.

These three samples (anecdotal records, checklists and participation charts) are only the tip of the iceberg for assessments. The bottom line is that using proper formats for recording and observation is critical to keep track of progress and possible interventions where needed.

6.1.5 Ensure that observations are continuous, based on daily activities and provide sufficient information to establish patterns of development

At the beginning of each year, initial assessments need to be performed. This will provide a baseline to use for each child. Culture, economic status, and home background will impact each child's development. Therefore, the purpose of an initial assessment is to get a "snapshot" of each child in your class.

Ongoing assessments of individual children as well as the group need to be performed regularly. This may take more time, but it will also provide more comprehensive information. This will be useful in tracking each child's progress and recording change over a period. It should provide evidence of a child's learning and maturation. These observations will assist in the modification of resources in the classroom environment if needs be.

Ongoing assessments may happen during classroom activities. Watch children as they work on art projects and listen to them as they tell stories. Observe children as dress up or play with toys. Listen in on children's conversations. Take notes without being obvious during free-choice activities. This is when children are most likely to reveal their own personalities and development. These notes will provide significant assessment information.

6.1.6 Ensure that observations cover the full spectrum of activities in the routine or daily programme

To be an authentic assessment, observations must be done over time in play-based situations. This type of assessment is best because it is the most accurate. It is used to make decisions about children's education.

In order to ensure that the observations are accurate, the full spectrum of activities must be able to be observed on a children's developmental status, growth, and learning styles. Therefore there needs to be observation tools within the structure of your daily activities.

Proper assessment is best done when children are performing tasks in natural settings. Ensure that you include all developmental areas — physical, social, emotional, and cognitive. The information that you gather should indicate each child's unique needs, strengths, and interests. You will also gain an idea of progress over time as you chart your findings.

6.2 Record observations

As an ECD practitioner you will need written observation notes on all the babies, toddlers and young children in your playgroup. If possible, you should record your observation notes at the time of the observation. If this is not possible, for example because your observation is covert, write up your notes as soon afterwards as possible, so that your observations are still fresh and clear.

Your observation notes should:

- provide facts, accurate details and careful descriptions
- detail the following information:
 - the child's home language
 - the date
 - the duration
 - the time
 - the setting
 - the method of observation
- describe what you observed of the child's behaviour
- include relevant comments or exchanges made by the child
- explain any contextual factors that might have affected the child's behaviour

Developing your own shorthand

You may need to develop a form of shorthand, so that you can make notes quickly and easily. Tips for quick note taking:

- Use quotation marks to record the child's actual words.
- Use a number in brackets to indicate behaviour that is repeated.
- Use a single first letter instead of the child's full name.

- Use abbreviations (e.g. = for example; & = and).
- Create your own abbreviations for frequently used words or phrases (FMS = fine motor skills; SS = social skills).

Analyzing observation notes

When we analyse, we examine or think about something carefully in order to understand it. When you analyse your observation notes, you'll need to draw on your understanding of child development. Some behaviour may seem problematic, but when they are viewed within the context of what is expected of a child developmentally within that age range, you may discover that the child's behaviour is developmentally appropriate.

When you analyse your observation notes, you should:

- describe the behaviour you observed
- explain what you think about that behaviour

Here are examples to show you what you need to do for each step.

EXAMPLE

a) The behaviour you observe

You may think that Moni may have developmental delay because he has not started crawling yet at age 10 months. He is a very fat baby. When you observe his behaviour, you notice that he tries to crawl but he rocks back into a sitting position. He does not easily stand with help.

OR

Nono cannot stay still during story time. When you observe her behaviour, you record that during a 15-minute story, she got off her cushion seven times, for about 30 seconds each time – a total of 3 minutes and 30 seconds.

b) What you think about the behaviour

You may think that Moni is not able to crawl because he is a fat baby, but if he still has not crawled but has begun pulling himself up to stand at 12 months, then he is one of those babies that has skipped the stage of crawling. Or he may start crawling late (11 months) because of floppy muscles (a genetic condition). It may be necessary for him to have a developmental assessment from a paediatric specialist at a later stage to check that he has no other gross motor problems. Simply continue to observe his motor coordination to see whether he crawls later or begins to pull himself up to stand.

You may think that Nono needs to be physically active to keep her concentration levels high. However, if Nono behaves this way only at story time, she may have difficulty understanding the story. This could mean that Nono has a short concentration span. Or it could mean that she struggles to understand in a language that is not her first language.

6.2.1 Ensure that the records accurately reflect the observations and are culturally sensitive and bias free

When you work as an ECD practitioner, observing children it is a natural and normal part of what you do. You observe children to see if they are bored with an activity and whether they need a break. You observe children to see whether they have managed to follow your instructions. You observe children to check that they are sharing and playing cooperatively. As you observe, you make small and subtle changes to your learning programme to match to the children's needs. This is called **observation for facilitating learning and development**. Observation for formative assessment feeds into the natural cycle of assessing, planning, implementing and reflecting within the learning programme:

1. assess
2. plan
3. implement
4. reflect
5. assess
6. plan
7. implement
8. reflect
9. assess
10. plan
11. implement
12. reflect
13. assess

However, we also observe children for another purpose, namely to assess their progress within the ECD playroom. This is summative assessment. The people who want to know about this progress include your supervisor, the team of colleagues, parents, and other service specialists.

The observations you record for the purpose of assessment may be used for:

- assessment of development of babies, toddlers and young children
- referrals
- designing of programmes and activities
- evaluation of activities and programmes

All the records we have discussed so far, namely anecdotal records, checklists, rubrics and reports, can be used for assessment development. This was discussed in the previous Learning Unit.

In order to use your recorded observations for assessment, you need to define first what kind of assessment you want to make, using those records.

Different types of assessment:

Assessment type	Definition
Baseline assessment	This kind of assessment is used to check learners' existing skills, knowledge, attitudes and values.
Evaluative assessment	This kind of assessment is used to compare and summarise information about learners' achievements. The information gathered can be used to assist in curriculum development and evaluate teaching and learning.
Formative assessment	This kind of assessment is used to recognize and discuss the learner's positive achievements, and plan how to adapt the learning programme to help learners develop further.
Summative assessment	This kind of assessment is used to record the overall development of learners systematically.
Diagnostic assessment	This kind of assessment is used to identify learning difficulties, so that appropriate remedial advice and guidance can be provided.

6.2.2 Ensure that the records are structured in a clear and systematic manner, and include any information that may be needed for tracking progress

The children in your care are constantly growing and changing. Their growth may go through spurts, or they may take a long time to learn a particular skill or recover from an emotional upset at home. For example, Khosi may be feeling very angry because his father has moved to another town and remarried, leaving him behind. Your observations should chart this process of change, so that by the end of the year you have a picture in your mind of the high points, the low points, the fast-paced weeks when the child's language or co-ordination suddenly leaped forward and the difficult times when the child struggled with relationships or impulses. "Recording should be done continuously across activities."

To create an orderly and comprehensive description of all these changes it is necessary to keep more structured records than simply anecdotal notes about things that happened.

Some recording tools which can be used for assessment in ECD classroom are:

- checklists
- profiles
- questionnaires
- rubrics

Checklist

You have been introduced to a checklist. Be aware that most people tend to favour the average or middle score when using checklists e.g. good, on a rating of 1–4. It is important to think carefully about each score and to make it as accurate as possible, rather than going for the average or middle score most of the time.

Developmental checklist 24-36 months	
Child's name:	
Date of birth:	
Parent/guardian:	
	Date observed
Movement	
Climbs well (24- 30 months)	
Walks down stairs alone placing both feet on each step (26- 28 months)	
Walks up stairs alternating feet with support (24-30 months)	
Swings leg to kick ball (24–30 months)	
Runs easily (24 26 months)	
Pedals tricycle (30-36 months)	
Bends over easily without falling (24-30 months)	
Hand and finger skills	
Makes vertical, horizontal circular strokes with pencil or crayon (30-36 months)	
Turns pages of a book one at a time (24-30 months)	
Builds a tower of more than 6 blocks (24–30 months)	
Holds pencil in writing position (30–36 months)	
Screws and unscrews jar lids, nuts and bolts (24-30 months)	
Turns rotating handles (24–30 months)	
Language	
Recognises and identifies almost all common objects and pictures (26-30 months)	
Understands most sentences (24-40 months)	
Understands physical relationships (on, in, under) (30-36 months)	
Can say name, age and sex (30-36 months)	
Uses pronouns (I, you, me, we, they) (24- 0 months)	
Strangers can understand most of the words (30-36 months)	
Cognitive	
Makes mechanical toys work (30-36 months)	
Matches an object in hand or room to a picture in a book (24-30 months)	
Plays make-believe with dolls, animals and people (24–36 months)	
Sorts objects by colour (30-36 months)	
Completes puzzles with 3 or 4 pieces (24-36 months)	
Understands concepts of two (26-32 months)	

Social and emotional	
Separates easily from parents (36 months)	
Expresses wide range of emotions (24- 6 months)	
Objects to major changes in routine (24-36 months)	
Developmental red flags (24–36 months)	
Frequent falling and difficulty with stairs	
Persistent drooling or very unclear speech	
Inability to build a tower of more than 4 blocks	
Difficulty manipulating small objects	
Inability to communicate in short phrases	
No involvement in pretend play	
Failure to understand simple instructions	
Little interest in other children	
Extreme difficulty separating from primary caregiver	
Comments:	

Rubrics in observations

A rubric is a grid that is used to make a quantitative assessment. It may be used to assess children's learning and development. A rubric usually itemises the skills or qualities in that which is being assessed.

While you may use rubrics and checklists within the formative assessment, their purpose here is not so much to evaluate a child's mastery of a particular learning outcome as to provide feedback on the child's overall learning and development, as well as on the effectiveness of the ECD programme itself.

We usually use rubrics to make quantitative, rather than qualitative assessments. For example, we may use a grading system to assess how competently a child manages various fine and gross motor skills.

Rubric to assess the child's social abilities at age 24-30 months

Social skills	With difficulty	With some help	Can do independently
Separates easily from parent			
Expresses a wide range of emotions, for example joy, anxiety, anger, sympathy, fear, humour			
Object to major changes in routine (this shows social awareness)			

Guidelines for creating a rubric: The following steps will help you create new rubrics more easily:

- 1 Identify what it is you want to measure. Make this the name of your first column.
- 2 Identify the levels at which you want to measure it. Use these levels as headings for your remaining columns (for example “Screw 1,2,3” or, as in the example).
- 3 In the first column, describe the behaviour or skill you want to assess. Use simple language and use a new row for each idea.
- 4 See if you can break down the items in the first column any further to make the rubric easier to use. For example, under “Skills” we could break down the items further to express a wide range of emotions into positive emotions and negative emotions.

6.2.3 Ensure that records are useful for contribution

In the course of running your playgroup or simply teaching at a large day care centre, you may be asked to report on a particular child. The purpose of the report is usually to provide a summary and evaluation for others to understand the child’s progress. Usually, such a report has the following structure:

- 1 name and identifying details of the child and the purpose of the report
- 2 brief summary of observations (a copy of the original observations can be made and attached as an appendix or addition, at the back of the report)
- 3 discussion and evaluation of observations, evaluating the child’s skills, abilities and behaviour against the developmental milestones
- 4 conclusion and recommendations, indicating the next step or further help or treatment for the child

The report can also be used as a summary of information, simply for feedback to colleagues who need information. Some examples of reports on developmental assessments are:

- for school readiness
- for referral to a specialist e.g. audiologist to assess the child’s range of hearing
- for discussion with the team members e.g. about a child who has emotional and behavioural problems which must be addressed by every member of the team in working with that child
- for parents who may want a useful summary of their child’s progress to help with transfer to another day care centre
- for end of year evaluation in order to move a child to a more advanced group in the new year

An important part of writing a report is that it gives you an opportunity to reflect again on your observations. By the end of the report writing process, your understanding of the child should be clear and you should be familiar with all the information.

Present the report

Prepare to present the report by reading it over and asking yourself questions about important issues. This preparation is an important part of report writing. You should be able to answer questions about your observations and your recommendations, when you have presented the report to a meeting of colleagues.

Steps to follow when you want to use your records to assess development:

1. Make a baseline assessment with anecdotal records and checklists.
2. Use rubrics and checklists for formative assessment.
3. Use written reports to refer for diagnostic assessment.
4. Use an assessment rubric for summative assessment.

Look at each step:

1. Make a baseline assessment with anecdotal records and checklists

You will need your observation notes and anecdotal records, as well as a developmental checklist when the child first enters the preschool or baby care centre, to check the child's existing levels of learning and development in a specific area. In other words, you want to establish what knowledge, skills values and attitudes a child already has. You use baseline assessments to help you determine how to plan your learning programmes to best meet the developmental needs of the child. You also use this type of assessment to help you measure a child's progress over a period of time.

2. Use rubric and checklist for formative assessment

Formative assessment is ongoing. The purpose of formative assessment is to provide feedback of what children are learning; formative assessment helps the child to recognise achievements and possibilities for further development. While you may use rubrics and checklists within formative assessment, their purpose here is not much to evaluate a child's mastery of a particular learning outcome as to provide feedback on the child's overall learning and development, as well as on the effectiveness of the ECD programme itself.

Always supplement your use of rubrics and checklists with at least two anecdotal observations so as to get a closer view of the child's abilities. This will add a qualitative perspective and a more holistic understanding to the quantitative assessments of grids or checklists. Your insight and knowledge of the child is essential to supplement these records.

3. Use written reports to refer for diagnostic assessment

When you refer a child to a specialist for a diagnostic assessment, you are relying on your records of development assessment to identify potential or existing learning difficulties that may require specialised interventions, e.g. occupational therapy or physiotherapy. First check to see whether the learning activities you have provided are developmentally appropriate. For example, a gifted child may become bored with tasks that are too simple and may consequently not perform well. A diagnostic test will usually reveal the origin of the problem. Professionals are better equipped to

conduct diagnostic assessments and the ECD practitioner may want to consider referring a child to the relevant professional for diagnostic testing. The written report is the tool to use for such a referral.

4. Use an assessment rubric for summative assessment

Summative assessment helps the practitioner to develop an overall assessment of the child's learning and development according to specific criteria. For example, a summative assessment would be used to check whether a child has acquired the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required to move from a Gr R playroom to school readiness in a Gr 1 classroom. Because summative assessment measures the child's progress against a range of specified learning outcomes, it is usually done by means of a closed-ended assessment tool like a checklist, rubric or assessment grid.

Using records in the design and evaluation of activities

When you conduct an evaluation, you survey the work of the children in your playroom. You should do this once a term. You use your survey of children's work to help you evaluate the effectiveness of your learning programme. In other words, the purpose of an evaluative assessment is to evaluate the effectiveness of your own learning programme and your teaching.

By surveying your records of all the children once a term, you may notice a trend in areas of development in which many children are struggling. For example, if your records show that 80% of the children in the group are struggling with fine motor development, you will need to check that your activities are interesting, stimulating and can be performed by most of the children, while still offering scope for change or extension. Perhaps you need to make your activities simpler and yet more stimulating until you can check on the children's acquisition and development of skills again and then increase [or raise] the level of difficulty of the activities. Perhaps these are activities which you find boring or difficult to manage without an assistant and so you tend to cut down the time allowed to the children to do them.

Protocols for referrals

Your report may be very valuable to a specialist e.g. speech therapist or physiotherapist, who must work with the child to correct a developmental problem. For this reason it is most important to be accurate with your observations. Do not try to predict the outcome of your conclusion and recommendations before you get to that part of the report. The meaning and validity of your observations may look very different when you review your observations as you write the report. The parents are also important audience for a report, so keep the language and explanations clear and simple. In the next unit you will find out more about presenting your report to the parent. Do not add jargon to try to impress anyone. Never forget that the main purpose of the report is to communicate clearly about the child, for the child's sake.

6.3 Give feedback on observations

In this section you will find out how to present your observations and records to the target audience in the most effective way. The information you have collected about the individual baby, toddler or young child remains confidential and should be handled carefully. You should evaluate your notes, reports and conversations about the child with sensitivity and handle your verbal interactions with parents sensitively too. Present written reports to the parents only after you have discussed the terminology with them. Make sure that your written reports for referrals to specialised services are accurate. Store the recorded observation on which these reports are based safely in case you (or other staff) need them in future.

Keep in mind the following ways to maintain confidentiality when discussing a child in your care:

1. The child should not be present or within earshot when he or she is being discussed.
2. Only the relevant team members, the parents or the relevant service specialists who are going to receive your information should be included in any discussion of your observations and assessments.

Information should be filed and stored in an orderly and secure way, so that it does not get lost or abused by people who have no understanding of the issues

6.3.1 Give feedback using appropriate feedback mechanisms and in accordance with confidentiality requirements

In this Unit we help you to build on what you've already learned about reporting to families on children's progress. We will focus on:

- oral feedback in an interview situation (formal, or informal)
- formal written feedback in a report

We will highlight ways of ensuring that the methods you use to discuss children's progress with family members are:

- a) appropriate to the setting
- b) supportive
- c) meaningful to the families

Let's examine each of these requirements in turn.

Contextually appropriate reporting (oral feedback)

Parents and caregivers are usually sensitive about their children and their progress at school. For this reason, it is appropriate for you to take extreme care when you report or give feedback on children's progress. You should make sure that the feedback you give is appropriate to the setting or context.

For example, if you are having an informal chat with a parent, it may be appropriate to mention an area in which the child has improved. So, if a child previously been struggling to complete jigsaw puzzles and had been avoiding puzzles as a consequence, you could say, "Stephan seems to be able to build jigsaw puzzles now."

Can you believe it? Today he asked if he could do a jigsaw puzzle during free play!” This is an anecdotal form of reporting, which indicates positive progress in a conversational way. If another parent or caregiver overhears this conversation, it will not throw up issues of comparison between children, as the comment is so specific to the child at hand. In addition, if the child concerned or another child overhears the comment, it is still not harmful, since you have probably commented on Stephan’s eagerness to him in front of the playgroup already. So, this is an example of a feedback comment that is appropriate in an informal, conversation setting.

Most often, however, the ECD practitioner should try to give structured, meaningful feedback on the child’s progress at a formally arranged parent interview. In this context, the child concerned is not present, so he or she will not be affected by overhearing what is said. In addition, no other parents, caregivers or children are present, so the interview context is protected and confidential. Since you will set aside time for this particular interview, you will ensure that there are no interruptions or distractions, enabling you to give the child’s family your undivided attention. In this way, the parent interview provides a highly appropriate context to offer substantial feedback to the child’s family.

What do you do if you have a fairly significant assessment issue to discuss, but your parent interviews are not scheduled for some time? The best way to handle this is to set up a time to telephone the parent or caregiver. Ask the parent or caregiver to choose a time when the child will not be present to overhear the conversation – usually after bedtime is a good time. Alternatively, set a special parent interview to discuss the issue. Make sure you conduct the interview in a separate room, of earshot of other children or parents. In this way, you show parents that you take confidentiality seriously, and that they can trust you.

Supportive reporting in an interview with parents

When you provide feedback on a child’s progress, remember to be supportive and communicate constructively. You can do this in three main ways, namely by:

- emphasising the child’s strengths and achievements
- being sensitive and caring about a child’s difficulties
- being sensitive to ethnic and cultural differences which may affect the child’s performance in activities

6.3.2 Ensure that feedback is clear and relevant to the child’s development

Always begin a feedback session by focusing on the child’s areas of strength and achievement. Every child shines in particular areas. For example, the child may be a highly inventive thinker, she may enjoy and excel in activities that require detailed planning and fine manipulation, or she may be extremely caring and generous with others. Remember, families know their own children well, so they also know their children’s strengths. If they hear you affirming the child’s strengths with which they are already familiar, they will have more respect for your ability to identify areas of difficulty. In addition, all parents like to have their children affirmed and praised. This helps them to feel proud of the child’s achievement and to feel more competent as parents. Make sure your reporting includes plenty of positive feedback, so that parents feel supported and feel positive towards their child.

When you report on a child, you must also draw parents' attention to their child's areas of difficulty. Again, although parents can be blinkered about their children, at some level many parents would already have noticed that the child struggles with everyday routine tasks like brushing teeth, eating with cutlery and tying shoelaces. Most parents will have observed that the child struggles with tasks of this nature, so your feedback about the child's fine motor function being weak may not come as a total surprise.

However, even if parents are prepared, it is not easy for them to hear that their child is struggling. If parents are unprepared or resistant, it can be even more difficult to help them to hear, understand and accept that their child has problems. Often the child's difficulties may be well within the acceptable range for the child's development age, but weaker than the child's other areas. You can explain this to the parents to put their minds at rest. Each child has some areas that are weaker than others. Otherwise the child would have no strengths either, but would achieve equally in every area.

Parents can be helped to understand that we are all more competent in some areas than others and this often relates to our personalities, learning styles, likes and dislikes and the activities to which we have been most frequently exposed. If you provide a context like this, parents will more readily accept that their child has areas of relative weakness. You can then move on to discussing strategies to help the child with these difficulties.

At times, a child's difficulties may require specialised assistance and you will need to use the parent interview as the context to suggest referral to a professional, for example a psychologist, occupational therapist or physiotherapist. Again, emphasise that the professional will be in a better position to judge whether the child needs special attention or early identification and intervention. Also, help parents to understand that remedial interventions are highly effective at a young age and that by making the responsible decision to assist the child while he or she is still young, the parents can help the child to cope more successfully when he or she reaches primary school. You should discuss with the parents your formal written referral report to the professional, so that they understand everything you are saying about the child. (See section (c) below for details of the formal written report.)

Be sensitive to parents' feelings. Remember that people show their feelings in a wide variety of ways. They may become defensive and angry; they may deny the problem, or they may feel overwhelmed and guilty. Make it okay for the parents to express their feelings in whichever way they need to. Be caring. Say something like "This has been a shock for you. You must be feeling very upset/angry/sad. That's okay. It's always hard to hear that your child needs help.' In this way you make it possible for the parents to be part of a constructive outcome for the child.

6.3.3 Give feedback with appropriate sensitivity to diversity and emotions

Parents, whose ethnic or cultural group is in the minority at the playgroup, may be especially sensitive to negative feedback about their child. You should give positive and encouraging comments about the child's progress first and then show that you accept them and the child by acknowledging their culture. Without blaming the culture for any possible difficulties, explain to the parents that the child's innate ability may need more patience and encouragement to blossom in an environment which may be different from her home culture. When sharing information about a child whose difficulties may be due to having a culture or language different from that of the

playgroup, be sensitive to how much may be real developmental delay and how much may be language or culture related, which will improve as the child adapts to fit in with the group (and the group adapts to include her more and more). The parents could be encouraged to repeat some relevant activities at home in their own language, to give the child a sense of familiarity with the activities.

6.3.4 Ensure that the type and manner of feedback is constructive and meaningful

Make sure that the reports you give on children's progress are meaningful. This means that you make sure that your reports are an authentic reflection of the child's strengths and areas of difficulty and of the child's learning and development over a particular period of time. If you choose the most appropriate assessment methods and the correct assessment tools, your assessment reports will be meaningful to families.

Another way to ensure that your assessment reports are meaningful to parents is to make sure they understand the criteria used to assess their children. In many ECD centres it is usual to give parents an assessment report on their child twice a year. Often these assessments reports take the form of grids or rubrics, with learning outcomes for the main developmental areas. These learning outcomes can be difficult for parents to understand, yet many ECD practitioners do not make an effort to eliminate jargon from their assessment grids, nor do they explain these assessment criteria to parents. This is not an example of meaningful reporting. If the parents do not understand the terminology used in the assessment criterion (for example, "crossing the midline"), how would this assessment report would have any meaning for them? Remember, some parents may not want to show their ignorance, so they may feel too embarrassed to ask you to explain terms that are specific to ECD, or assessment criterion that are difficult to understand.

You can help to explain these assessment criteria to parents in two ways. Firstly, you can make sure your written assessment report, rubrics or grids are free of jargon. Secondly, you may sometimes want to include an important ECD term and if so, make sure you explain what the term means by providing an example to help parents understand.

Ways of making jargon easy to understand	
ECD jargon	Accessibly written term
Eye –foot coordination	Eye–foot coordination for example, kicking a ball or walking down five steps.
Basic gross motor movements	Basic gross motor movements such as walking, running, jumping, crawling and rolling.
Visual closure	Visual closure (the activity to identify an object if parts of it are left out).
Body concept	Body concept (the ability to identify different parts of the body).

Secondly, you can explain difficult terms or concepts face-to-face during the parent interview. It is good for parents to have the interview before handing out the written assignment reports. In this way you have a chance to explain the assessment criteria to parents before they see the reports. You then have an opportunity to clear up any difficulties or areas of confusion, so that when parents sit down to read the reports they understand the terminology. This will help to make the assessment report more meaningful for them.

6.3.5 Provide sufficient information to enable the purpose of the observation to be met, and to enable further decision-making

Before you give feedback indicating that a decision must be made, check the criteria on which the decision must be made. For example, if you know that a decision to send Mpho for a hearing test rests on the criteria of her lack of response in a group setting, then you need to provide evidence of trying to get her attention in a group setting four or five-times without success. The number of times you observe the same responses improves the likelihood that a poor response is a sign of a problem.

Your information-gathering about the child is a continuous practice and as such should provide you with plenty of information in your observation records. The whole child should be observed in the whole programme. The observation should always include personal anecdotal observation, so that your experience of the child and knowledge of her playgroup is much bigger than simply checklists and rubrics.

To summarise: the information should be sufficient in terms of both quantity (number of times observed) and quality (personal insight and knowledge about the child gained through interaction and anecdotal record keeping).

Providing sufficient information to interventions referrals and further observations:

You should have enough recorded observations to allow you to make knowledgeable input into a team discussion of the child's developmental problems. You should keep the collection of records so that you can refer to it at any time. Even if you have written up a report after the observations, you should remain open to discussion of the observations by other professional colleagues.

You may also have to provide feedback to specialised services and any professional help to the child will rely on the foundation of your observations to provide a background to the problem and the child's functioning.

To sum up, it is extremely important that your observations should be properly recorded, so as not to disadvantage the child or provide misleading information to those concerned. The records should be kept safely so that you can build on and extend them with later observations. There will be further decision-making, relying on your records, as the child grows and progresses out of the playgroup and into Grade 1.

6.4 Use strategies to be an effective speaker in sustained oral interactions

Being an effective speaker also requires input from your ECD colleagues. The following strategies may be used for self or to assist a colleague to improve.

Being able to have effecting sustained oral communication skills will enable you to always have clarity within your ECD setting. These are some effective tools to use in order to refine your communication:

Body language

Maintain a relaxed posture without slouching no matter what the listener is doing or if you are the listener ensure that you do this. Some other tools would be:

- Maintain a comfortable sense of eye contact.
- Nod your head to indicate that you are listening.
- Keep your hands in a clasped or open position and do not cross your arms.
- Keep nervous habits to minimum such as nail biting, fidgeting or anything that the person communicating with you will view as a distraction from their conversation.

Speech and attentiveness

Be clear and concise when speaking. Get to the point when discussing important matters. Ensure that they are listening by asking if they understand you, and be willing to further explain any of your points. In addition, one of the most important aspects of verbal communication is the ability to practise active listening. This is not just actively waiting to talk. Always make mental notes of key points when someone is speaking to you. Thus when you can reply, you can respond effectively. When listening think about the exact words that they are saying, this will ensure that you will understand at least 75% of what they are communicating.

Communication consistency

Excellent communicators practise the ability of consistent communication by remaining open to communication. Be bold and voice concerns or difficulties. This kind of communication style will prevent the small issues from becoming large ones by making those in your life aware that you are open to discussing issues at any time.

Patience

Give people the time and space to say what they need to and remain focused on what they are trying to communicate therefore indicating that you are willing to act if needed. By being patient communication need not break down. Control your reactions appropriately.

If you are unsure of what they are saying, than repeat back to them what you have understood and ask if that is correct. They therefore will be more clear and precise about their needs, assisting you to understand them fully.

Knowledge of formats, conventions, protocols and contexts

When communicating, we need to take into account that each **format** (letter, dialogue, report, spoken presentation, etc.) has its own **conventions** (e.g. a dialogue will mimic natural spoken language, while a presentation to management will use more formal terminology), **protocols** (the etiquette or correct order of doing things) and **contexts** (i.e. a dialogue will take place in the context of a real conversation, while a formal presentation will be required by management as part of the performance management process.)

6.4.1 Show planning of content and presentation techniques in formal communications

Formal communications need careful preparation, if you want your audience to listen and possibly enact on what you are saying the following will ensure that they will see the evidence of you having spent time researching and planning your topic.

At the start of your presentation:

Identify the audience – The principal of matching the audience aims, within the statement of objectives will be allow them to be reassured that they are understood and that this will not be a waste of time.

Formulate your objectives – This is a simple, concise statement of intent. Focus is the key in this opening statement. Isolate the main topic and to list at most two others that will be covered providing they do not distract from the main one. Ensure that the following is built into your communication:

- Get their attention.
- Establish a theme.
- Create a rapport.
- Administration (details from a business point of view such a previous minutes, etc).
- Use visual aids.

Ensure a structure – there must be a definite flow from one topic to another creating a cohesive communication that the audience is able to follow.

At the end of your presentation:

Summarise the main points of your presentation, ensure that the audience is clear with what to do next if this is the context this presentation is given in. changing the pace and tone of your voice is also a queue to that fact that you are winding down to an end.

6.4.2 Analyse the impact of non-verbal cues/body language and signals on audiences and use it appropriately

Your job as the presenter is to use the potential of the presentation to ensure that the audience is motivated and inspired rather than disconcerted or distracted. The five body language and nonverbal skills that deserve attention in presentation skills: the eyes, the voice, the expression, the appearance, and how you stand.

The eyes

As you are delivering, use eye contact to enhance your rapport with the audience try and do this with each and every member of the audience as often as possible. Smaller groups are easier to deal with but it can also be achieved in large auditoriums. Using your glances in the form of a Z starting at the beach and moving forward then back again allows you to convince each of them individually that they are the object of your attention. By holding your gaze fixed in specific directions for five or six seconds at a time you will also enhance audience attention.

The voice

Aside from eye contact, the most important aspects for public speaker are projection and variation. Using a conversation voice will not gain any attention nor will you really be heard. In normal conversations the listener's body cues will tell you if what you are saying has been heard. The best thing to do is SLOW DOWN. Speak to the audience in a slightly louder voice is a good start. Asking them if they can hear you does also help. Variation in tone is another aspect that will keep the audience's attention.

Expression

A plain dead pan uninterested facial expression will not win any audience you are speaking to. Smile often if the topic requires you quite simply: make sure that your facial expressions are natural, only more so.

Appearance

Dress the part, dress for the audience. If they think you look out of place, then you are. Do some research regarding the dress code for your target audience and dress accordingly. Rather err on the side of neatness (i.e. rather be too neat than not neat enough)!

Stance

Your posture needs to convey that you are confident. Use your whole body as a dynamic tool to reinforce your rapport with the audience. Make sure that your hands remain in a neutral state; waving them about or fidgeting is distracting.

6.4.3 Analyse the influence of rhetorical devices and use them for effect on an audience

Good presentations are full of rhetorical device, intonation (this is the rise and fall of your voices pitch) and structure are weakened without the all-important pause. Apply a solid pausing technique to your speeches and you can expect to become a more effective speaker. Rhetorical devices are the parts that make a communication work. Separately, each part of is meaningless, but once put together they create a powerful effect on the listener/reader.

Putting emphasis on HOW you say a word can cause a great impact, such as drawing out a word slowly, saying it softly or loudly. You need to keep your audience engaged. Stressing particular topics or words is also helpful. In this group of devices just as you would use an exclamation mark in writing, using an exclamatory word or phrase will certainly add verve. Such as using one word, with a pause “Sit!” (pause) yes I said SIT”

When using rhetorical questions, ask a question of your audience and you look for their engagement. Ask a question and pause ... and you have their engagement. They will be engaged then, given them thought. Your pause brings their focus straight to your question. Answer your question. Pause ... and then continue. This can be also emphasised with your body language (non-manual features) facial expression and how you hold yourself.

Using an inclusive pronoun gives an effect of unanimity as it addresses everyone as a whole, whereas it contrasts with exclusive nouns that create distance.

An example would be: ‘what we need’, the ‘we’ being the inclusive noun.

Repetition can be effective in creating a sense of structure and power. In both speech and literature, repeating small phrases can cement ideas in the listeners mind.

Sound-based rhetorical devices add a poetic melody to speeches. This allows your speech to be easier to listen to, a device such as **alliteration** — repetition of the same sound at the beginning of nearby words e.g. “what was Wendy waiting”, “She saw souls soaring” and **assonance** — repetition of the same vowel sound in nearby words, e.g. “how now brown cow”. Creating this kind of rhythm keeps your audience engaged.

Using analogies can also be effective in bringing the point home and it could possibly be the one thing your audience walks away with. Here are some examples:

“The hitchhiker in her scruffy clothes was a guru of travel talk” or a more famous example - “They crowded very close about him, with their hands always on him in a careful, caressing grip, as though all the while feeling him to make sure he was there. It was like men handling a fish which is still alive and may jump back into the water.” - George Orwell, *A Hanging*.



Class Activity 13: Observe and report on child development

Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.



Reflection

Individually, complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.



Facilitator Observation Checklist

The facilitator will provide you with feedback about your participation during the class activities in your Learner Workbook.

Summative Assessment

You are required to complete a number of summative assessment activities in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide. The Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide will guide you as to what you are required to do:

- Complete all the required administration documents and submit all the required documentation, such as a certified copy of your ID, a copy of your CV and relevant certificates of achievement:
 - Learner Personal Information form
 - Pre-Assessment Preparation sheet
 - Assessment Plan Document
 - Declaration of Authenticity form
 - Appeals Procedure Declaration form
- Place your complete Learner Workbook (with the completed Class Activities) in the specified place in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide.
- Complete the Knowledge Questions under the guidance of your facilitator:



Knowledge Questions

Individually, complete this summative activity in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide.

- Complete the other summative assessment activities in your workplace:



Practical Activities

Individually, complete this summative activity in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide.



Summative Project

Individually, complete this summative activity in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide.



Logbook

Individually, complete this summative activity in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide.

Once you have completed all the summative activities in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide, complete the Assessment Activities Checklist to ensure that you have submitted all the required evidence for your portfolio, before submitting your portfolio for assessment.

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