Learner Guide

Module 3:
Plan and prepare for ECD

SAQA ID 244472: Prepare Early Childhood Development programmes with support; NQF Level 4, 6 Credits
SAQA ID 13643: Develop learning programmes to enhance participation of learners with special needs; NQF Level 5, 6 Credits
SAQA ID 244485: Design activities to support the development of babies, toddlers and young children; NQF Level 5, 8 Credits
SAQA ID 9016: Represent analyse and calculate shape and motion in 2-and 3-dimensional space in different contexts; NQF Level 4, 4 Credits

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Programme Overview

Welcome to this learning programme that will lead you to greater understanding of:
- preparing Early Childhood Development programmes with support
- developing learning programmes to enhance participation of learners with special needs
- designing activities to support the development of babies, toddlers and young children
- representing, analysing and calculating shape and motion in 2- and 3-dimensional space in different contexts

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

Programme	Module 3: Plan and prepare for ECD
Unit Standards	SAQA ID 244472: Prepare Early Childhood Development programmes with support; NQF Level 4, 6 Credits SAQA ID 13643: Develop learning programmes to enhance participation of learners with special needs; NQF Level 5, 6 Credits SAQA ID 244485: Design activities to support the development of babies, toddlers and young children; NQF Level 5, 8 Credits SAQA ID 9016: Represent analyse and calculate shape and motion in 2-and 3-dimensional space in different contexts; NQF Level 4, 4 Credits

This learning programme is **intended for** all persons who need to:
- prepare Early Childhood Development programmes with support. This Unit Standard is for people who wish to enter or obtain recognition at an entry level of Early Childhood Development (ECD)
- develop learning programmes to enhance participation of learners with special needs. All qualifications for Education, Training and Development (ETD) practitioners are required by law to include Unit Standards that enable ETD practitioners to accommodate learners with special needs. This Unit Standard is for environmental education practitioners who work fairly independently and need to be able to develop learning programmes or systems that take account of learners with special needs. Work contexts may include environmental education centres, heritage sites, community education projects, environmental health and safety training programmes in industry or environmental projects within government departments or the NGO sector
- design activities 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)
- represent, analyse and calculate shape and motion in 2- and 3-dimensional space in different contexts. This generic and/or vocational learning programme is intended for all persons who need to represent, analyse and calculate shape and motion in 2- and 3-dimensional space in different contexts. This Unit Standard is designed to provide credits towards the mathematical literacy requirements of the NQF at level 4. The essential purposes of the mathematical literacy requirements are that, as the learner progresses with confidence through the levels, the learner will grow in:
  - an insightful use of mathematics in the management of the needs of everyday living to become a self-managing person
  - an understanding of mathematical applications that provides insight into the learner`s present and future occupational experiences and so develop into a contributing worker

o the ability to voice a critical sensitivity to the role of mathematics in a democratic society and so become a participating citizen

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 4 or equivalent

- Mathematical Literacy and Communications at NQF Level 3

It is recommended that learners have

- knowledge of development of children

- an understanding of Child Development Theories

The candidate will be required to demonstrate an FETC or RPL equivalent in order to gain access to the National Diploma in Environmental Education, Training and Development Practice (EETDP) (NQF Level 5) for which this is a core Unit Standard.

This Unit Standard assumes competence in a number of EETDP Certificate Unit Standards at levels 4 and 5, including the following:

- Identify and describe learning processes.

- Identify and support learners with special needs.

- Demonstrate knowledge of environmental education goals, principles and methods and their appropriateness in different contexts.

- Select, plan and adapt a contextually-relevant environmental learning programme.

- Implement and evaluate an environmental learning programme.

The candidate should work towards this Unit Standard concurrently with the following Unit Standards from the Level 5 Diploma in EETDP:

- Design, organise and improve an original environmental learning programme.

- Manage a learning environment appropriately for a learner group.

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: Analyse the context of ECD programmes	Learning Unit 2: Design activities for ECD programmes
- Ensure that the analysis identifies the key factors that could have an impact on the programme. - Ensure that the analysis clearly identifies the developmental stages and particular needs of all the children within the given context. - Ensure that the analysis is informed by Early Childhood Development (ECD)-related frameworks. - Ensure that the analysis is sufficient in scope and depth to inform the development of the programme.	- Identify activities to support the development of babies, toddlers and young children. - Design the activities.

Learning Unit 3: Prepare an ECD programme	Learning Unit 4: Reflect on the ECD programme
- Ensure that the programme sufficiently addresses the developmental stages and particular needs of the children as revealed by the analysis. - Ensure that the programme provides flexible options for implementation. - Ensure that the programme specifies the sequence, timing and main resource requirements of the planned activities, including opportunities for assessment. - Ensure that the programme provides a balance of developmentally appropriate activities to support the development of all the children. - Ensure that the programme provides a balance between indoor and outdoor activities and individual, small and large group activities to support the development of the children. Ensure that the balance between such activities, particularly between individual and group activities is appropriate to the developmental stages of the children. - Ensure that the programme can be implemented in the given context and within available resources. - Ensure that the programme complies with relevant national policies and guidelines. - Develop learning programmes to enhance participation of learners with special needs.	- Reflect on the ECD programme. - Evaluate the design of activities.

During the workshop you will complete a number of class activities that will form part of your formative assessment. In this process you have the opportunity to practise and explore your new skills in a safe environment. You should take the opportunity to gather 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

PLEASE NOTE that it is your responsibility, as the learner, to prove that you are competent (that means, that you have acquired all the necessary skills and that you can successfully do all the necessary tasks). You therefore need to plan your time and make sure that you keep your Portfolio of Evidence up to date and hand it in timeously.

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 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 240 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
	70 hours	**2 hours**	**136 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 as a useful opportunity to revise that particular information.

Learning Unit 1
Analyse the context of ECD programmes

After completing this Learning Unit, you will be able to analyse the context of ECD programmes, by successfully completing the following:

- Ensure that the analysis clearly identifies the developmental stages and particular needs of all the children within the given context.

- Ensure that the analysis is informed by Early Childhood Development (ECD)-related frameworks.

- Ensure that the analysis identifies the key factors that could have an impact on the programme.

- Ensure that the analysis is informed by previous evaluations of activities, and assessments of children.

- Ensure that the analysis is sufficient in scope and depth to inform the development of the programme.

Analyse the context of ECD programmes

The ECD learning programme is the educational heart of the ECD centre. Think for a moment about why children attend an ECD centre. You may identify reasons like these ones:

- to be nurtured and cared for in a safe place

- to interact and socialise with peers

- to be stimulated and encouraged to learn and develop

- to learn through play in a flexible, creative learning environment that treats each child as a unique individual

- to learn self-reliance and independence

- to encourage exploration and self-discovery through learning

- to acquire the early building blocks for life skills, literacy and numeracy skills

The aims of the ECD centre and parents of young children for the young children who attend an ECD centre are similar to these listed above. How can the ECD practitioner ensure that the ECD centre achieves its purpose? He/she does this by designing an ECD learning programme.

Let's use a metaphor to make this concept of the ECD learning programme clearer. Imagine that you are going on a journey by train. The purpose of your trip is to travel from Cape Town to Durban in a safe and comfortable manner, perhaps learning more about South Africa en route. For this journey, many elements must be in place for the trip to succeed: wheels, carriages, seats, windows, a driver, an electricity supply, a train line, a schedule or timetable, scheduled restaurant or station stops to buy refreshments, ablution facilities and so on.

In the same way, an ECD learning programme includes all of the elements required for young children to learn, play, grow and develop in a safe, caring environment during early childhood.

Every ECD context is different. For example, one ECD centre may be very small, providing care for the babies of six working mothers in a middle-class suburb; another one may offer morning only care, but may be large with playgroups in all the age categories. Can you see why the ECD learning programmes for the two centres would need to be different? In Unit 1, you will see that the first step in preparing an ECD programme is to understand and analyse the context in which we operate. We have to look at our micro-environment within the ECD centre as well as our macro-environment, which includes our immediate environment and the country as a whole.

Every day at the ECD centre, the ECD practitioner uses a programme that shows the activities that will be done that day. Based on this programme with activities, the ECD practitioner can identify the resources that will be required for that day.

Sample ECD Learning Programme

TIME	ACTIVITY
7:00	Welcome and morning ring
7:30	Free choice activity (inside and outside)
8:45	Tidy up/Toilet and wash
9:00	Breakfast
9:30	Music/Movement
10:00 - 11:00	Outdoor free play
11:00 - 11:15	Tidy up
11:15 -11:30	Toilet
11:30 -12:00	Lunch
12:00 -12:10	Tidy up
12:10 -12:20	Toilet and wash
12:20 -12:30	Putting out mattresses
12:30 -14:30	Sleep time
14:30 -14:40	Pack away mattresses
14:40 -14:50	Putting on shoes
14:50 -15:00	Toilet and wash
15:00 -15:30	Snack time
15:30 -16:30	Outdoor free play/Departure time

Weekly Learning Programme					
Theme: The Circus		Date: 7-11 June 2009		Age: 5-6 years	
Day	Morning	Creative art	Music/Movement	Outdoor play	Story
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					

Morning Ring

Learning Outcome	Description of activities and teaching strategies		Aids and apparatus

Action research cycle

The action research cycle will be used throughout this programme. Action research is one of the key strategies which are being used across all stages of the Professional Learning Continuum in a range of programmes. During action research investigations are being done by educators for educators with the aim to improve student outcomes.

Action research

- tends to be cyclic – similar steps tend to recur, in a similar sequence

- participative – those who are working within the research are as partners, or at least active participants, in the research process

- qualitative -- it deals more often with language than with number (quantitative vs qualitative)

- reflective – critical reflection upon the process and outcomes are important parts of each cycle

The cycle consists of the following steps:

Planning

- Identify the issue to be changed.

- Look elsewhere for information. Similar projects may be useful, as might professional reading.

- Develop the questions and research methods to is used developing a plan related to the specific environment. In the school setting this could involve personnel, budgets and the use of outside agencies.

Acting

- Testing the change following your plan.

- Collect and compile evidence.

Observing

- Analyse the evidence and collating the findings.

- Discuss the findings with co-researchers and/or colleagues for the interpretation.

- Write the report.

- Share your findings with stakeholders and peers.

Reflecting

- Evaluate the first cycle of the process.

- Put into practice the findings or new strategy.

- Revisit the process.

Below is a table that compares action vs. more formal methods

	Formal	Action
Training needed	Extensive	Little
Goals	knowledge that is general and for a wider audience	results for improving practice in a local situation
Method of identifying problems	review of previous research findings and extensions of them	problems currently faced or improvements needed in a set of classrooms or a school
Literature review	extensive enquiry into all research previously conducted on this topic using primary sources	some primary sources but also use of secondary sources plus what practitioners are doing in other schools
Sampling	random or representative preferably with large populations	students and/or members of the school community
Research design	rigorous controls over long periods	flexible, quick time frame, control through triangulation
Approach	deductive reasoning – theory to hypothesis to data to confirmation	inductive reasoning – observations, patterns, interpretations, recommendations
Analysis of data	tests leading to statistical significance	generally grouping of raw data using descriptive statistics
Application of results	theoretical significance	practical significance

Educators should use action research because:

1. it deals with their immediate challenges on a personal level, not someone else"s

2. it is immediately implemented — or whenever they are ready — providing immediate results

3. this research provides them with opportunities to better understand, and therefore improve, their educational practices

4. it is a process: action research promotes the building of stronger relationships amongst staff

5. it provides educators with alternative ways of viewing and approaching educational questions providing a new way of examining their own practices

1.1 Ensure that the analysis clearly identifies the developmental stages and particular needs of all the children within the given context

As an ECD practitioner, you know that babies go through various stages of development on their way to becoming toddlers and then young children. You know that a group of babies has very different learning and developmental needs to a group of toddlers or young children. You know that although the developmental stages are grouped according to their ages, each baby, toddler and young child is unique and develops at his or her own pace.

This means that, while a group of children will have certain learning and developmental needs, each child within the group will also have his or her own particular needs. You need to use this

information about group needs and individual needs to identify the types of activities that are suitable for your playgroup. In this lesson you will learn how to conduct an analysis to identify the needs of your group and each individual in the group. You will also learn how to use that analysis to identify the types of activities that will meet the needs of the babies, toddlers or young children in your care, both as a group and as individuals.

What are learning and developmental needs?

Children grow, develop, and learn throughout their lives, from birth to adulthood. As you know from Module 2, babies, toddlers and young children move through recognisable stages of growth and development, according to experts such as Piaget, Whitbread, Erikson and Vygotsky. These experts tell us that during each stage of development a child has different learning and developmental needs. So, what are learning and developmental needs? They are the skills children need to learn, acquire and develop at a particular developmental stage in their lives.

- Are they able to identify three basic shapes and fit them correctly in a shape puzzle?

- Are they able to identify objects of different sizes such as biggest, longest?

- Are they able to copy objects that are made of blocks?

- Are they able to recall up to three numbers and remember where objects have been put away?

- Are they able to concentrate for at least ten minutes on one activity?

a.   Language development

- Are they able to describe simple actions when paging through a book?

- Are they able to use the plural such as "dog – dogs" and make negative statements such as "I don't want to"?

- Are they able to give their first and last names and understand longer more complex sentences?

- Do they ask a lot of questions and use functional sentences such as "I am hungry"?

b.   Social and emotional development

- Are they able to understand what is allowed and what is not?

- Are they able to sympathise with friends who get hurt?

- Are they able to dance and sing in small groups?

- Are they able to share and take turns?

This sample questionnaire has been developed in the plural form (for more than one child). To collect information about an individual child you can simply develop a similar questionnaire with the questions in the singular form for each individual child in your playgroup – for example: "Can (s) he sympathise with friends who get hurt?" At the top of the questionnaire you would fill in the child's name and his or her exact age. For example, the cognitive development section of an individual questionnaire would look like the one below:

1.1.1 Development of children

When you analyse the context for your ECD learning programme, your analysis should clearly identify the developmental ages, stages and needs of all the children within the playgroup. This understanding will help you later when you prepare your ECD learning programmes. As you know, it is important that the ECD programmes that you prepare for young children are appropriate to their ages and stages of development. This is known as developmentally appropriate practice (DAP).

Age-appropriate programmes

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 whenever 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 the 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.

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 way to learn.

"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 to explore his/her environment in order to learn.

Here is an example of how you would identify the development stages and special needs of the children in your charge:

Step 1: Identify developmental stages

- Refer to Table 1 below.
- In order to complete the table, you will have to gather information through a combination of observation, getting to know the children in your chosen group, interviewing the ECD practitioner and possibly the principal and, if possible, also interviewing the parents/caregivers.
- Complete the table for the ECD playgroup.

Step 2: Identify particular or special needs

- Look at Table 2.
- Investigate the history of any child with special needs by making enquiries from ECD practitioners and the family and find out what remedial measures (corrective steps) have been taken. We suggest that you use a class list to note each child's special needs and remedial action taken.
- Complete the table for the ECD playgroup (below).

Table 1: Identify developmental stages		
	ECD Centre analysis	**Possible effect on ECD programme**
Age of children in group		
Piaget's stage		
Erikson's stage		
Holistic development:		
Cognitive		
Physical		
Emotional/social		
Language		
Creative/imaginative		
Moral and spiritual		

Table 2: Identify particular or special needs			
Name of child	**Special need**	**Remedial action in place**	**Possible effect on ECD programme**
Mark children "At Risk" with an asterisk (*).			

Step 3: Identify the needs of particular learners:

In South Africa, we have an inclusive education system. This means that learners with special needs (for example, a child with specific learning disorder (SLD) or dyslexia) are integrated into the mainstream of the education system. The mind map below shows the different categories of learners with special needs:
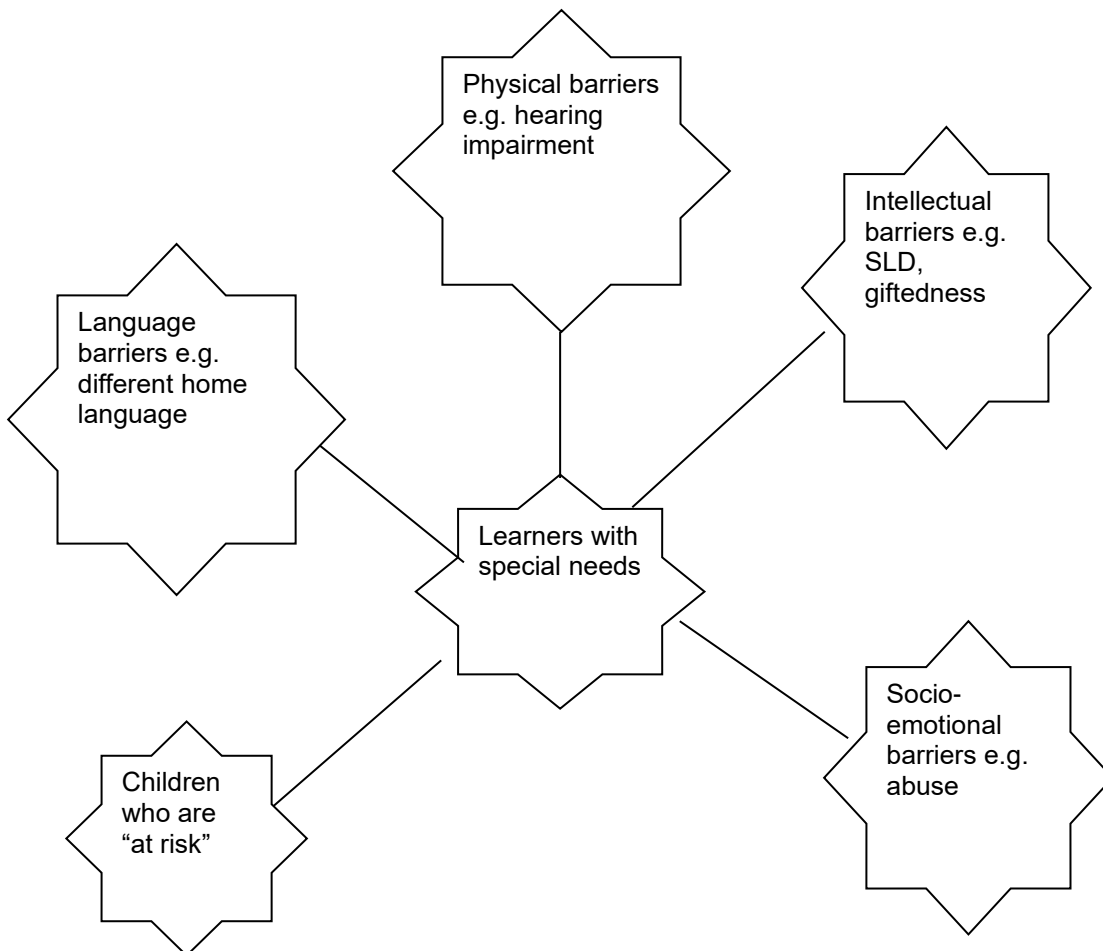
According to Education White Paper 6 Special Needs Education, one of the most significant barriers to learning for special needs is the learning programme. Barriers to learning arise from different aspects of the learning programme, such as:

- the learning activities (in other words, how learning happens)
- the main language of the ECD playroom
- how the ECD playroom is organised and managed
- the methods and processes used in facilitating
- the space and the time available to complete activities
- the learning materials, resources and equipment that are used
- how learning and development is assessed

Within the context of inclusive education, each child is viewed as a whole person with a barrier (obstruction) or barriers to learning. It is your task as the ECD practitioner to adapt the ECD programme and your presentation techniques to also make provision for the special needs learner. Every child is different, and a child with a specific barrier to learning will have unique challenges in the ECD playroom. As the ECD practitioner, you must first recognise that the child has a special

need, understand the nature of these needs and then make appropriate adaptations to the ECD programme. For example, if a child has a hearing impairment (barrier), you may need to ensure the child sits next to you during story time; you may need to repeat instructions clearly to the learner or appoint a helping partner to repeat instructions.

The key factor is for you as the ECD practitioner to show that you are willing to respond, adapt, be flexible and ensure that the child with special needs feels safe and happy in the ECD environment. Remember, every disability is different; every child is different. There are differences in the kind and extent of any given disability and also differences in how people cope with it. Different families can have children with similar challenges (disabilities) but they learn to cope very differently depending on their own situations, finances, and the support they get from other family and friends.

Children with special needs can lead positive, happy lives and bring joy to themselves and many people. Quality of life is about the child blossoming at various levels. These include being safe and comfortable, having experiences to enjoy, feeling that he/she is a lovable person, and having some skills and abilities that he/she can feel proud of being able to perform.

Needs of children at risk

"At risk" children are those children who are, while currently healthy, at risk of developing learning challenges such as emotional behavioural problems or physical disabilities in the future. Babies or children from poor backgrounds or who are exposed to drugs, abuse, neglect and those with genetic pre-dispositions to mental illness and physical disabilities are described as being at risk. Action research can be very beneficial here as it provides an immediate platform for assistance.

I. **Conditions that can indicate that a child is at risk include:**

- low family income
- divorce or separation
- violence or neglect in the home or community; low parent education levels and/or underage parents
- low birth weight
- parent chemical addiction

Children from low income families often need additional care and their parents may need more help by means of educational talks and/or support, for example on how to apply for grants; or parent education programmes on topics that range from coping with abuse by their spouse (husband or wife) to how to use recycled or everyday items to encourage the child's development and curiosity.

An example of how children at risk would affect your daily programme plan is that children who are hungry might have to start the day off with a snack or children with no proper ablution facilities might need to be bathed at the ECD centre. Those using public transport may need extra time to sleep during the day, because they had to wake up early. Generally speaking, the practitioner would need to closely monitor the emotional development and wellbeing of "at risk" children.

II. **Coping with prejudice**

Our society often labels children with disabilities as "different" or damaged or not good enough. As a result, children with disabilities are at risk of being teased, bullied or ill-treated by other children at the ECD centre. You, as the ECD practitioner, need to have a zero tolerance policy for bullying, blaming and shaming of any learner, including those with barriers to learning. You also need to have an unbiased (fair and impartial) approach towards the children in your care, and treat children equally regardless of their gender, race, language and learning barriers. In this way, you demonstrate an attitude that is open and inclusive to the children in your care towards bullying in any form. Encourage parents to adopt this attitude as well.

Remember! While young children often reflect the prejudiced and discriminatory attitudes of their society by treating learners with special needs in unkind ways, they can also learn values of empathy, compassion and helping others. Let them learn that from you. This is an important part of children's moral or spiritual development.

Here are some strategies for handling prejudice in the ECD centre.

- Create ECD policies and active practices to deal with discrimination. These should include zero tolerance towards bullying in any form.

- You might ask the parent to tell the class about their child and answer any questions.

- If teasing is a problem, you might help the child to learn ways to respond to it by modelling responses for her. You might practise them with her, for example by holding her head up and ignoring the teasing, pretending there is a magic screen around her so it can"t hit her, staying near a group and so on.

- Let the child know that if she is being bullied it is important to always tell an adult.

- Perform an action research incident with other staff members and even the community.

III. Identifying particular children's needs for ECD programme purposes

Questions you can ask to identify children's needs

Start with identifying learners with particular or special needs:

1. Are there learners with special needs, for example SLD, hearing impairment, giftedness, shyness?

2. Are there learners who are at risk?

3. What do you already know about this special need or at risk circumstances?

1.2 Ensure that the analysis is informed by Early Childhood Development (ECD)-related frameworks

The ECD learning programme is often developed based on a particular model of early childhood education. There are many different programme models available. In your search for employment in early childhood development, you will undoubtedly come across many different techniques for teaching young children. If you observe different playschools, you will note differences in the ECD practitioner's role; the playschool's objectives, the scheduling of time, the arrangement of the playroom and the type of materials that are available.

We will introduce you to five different programme models below. These models can be used from playschool through Grade R, and the Foundation Phase. Some models can be used throughout formal schooling. As you read the following section, take note of the important differences between the various programmes. This will help you when you analyse your context. The models we will look at are:

A. the open-plan model

B. the high scope model

C. the academic or direct instructional model

D. the Montessori model

E. the eclectic model

A. The open-plan model:

The programme emphasises that the teaching approach for children should focus on co-operation, sharing, making free choices and creative play. Children learn best through interactions with peers and adults in an environment that allows maximum exploration and discovery and experimenting.

In this type of programme, children are provided with many activities to choose from.

- creative activities
- discovery
- make-believe
- blocks
- educational
- books
- sand and water

These are some of the material and equipment provided. Having fun-filled educational activities available provides motivation for learning. The ECD practitioner's role is to be caring and supportive when using this material and equipment.

The daily schedule is structured but flexible. Independent and small group work is encouraged, and many activities may take place at the same time. Reading and writing are an important part of the programme too. The ECD practitioner often reads to children, and they are encouraged to write their own stories. The teaching is arranged around themes, which may include topics such as organising chores, cooking, caring for pets and building. For example, a simple task such as making biscuits can provide children with the opportunity to count, measure, weigh, observe, read and write.

B. The high scope model

The cognitive-oriented curriculum (previously known as the Perry preschool), was developed by David Wilkart and others at the High Scope Institute in Ypsilanti, Michigan. It relies heavily on the teachings of psychologist Jean Piaget. As we discussed in Module 2, Piaget recommended that children should be actively involved in their own learning and learn through their interactions with people and things. You will remember that Piaget proposed the following series of developmental stages for children:

- sensori-motor (birth to two years)
- pre operational (two to seven years)
- concrete operational (seven to eleven years)
- formal operational (over eleven years)

Children reach these stages in a predictable sequence, one after the other. You will remember, however, that the age at which children reach these milestones may vary from child to child. The cognitive-oriented curriculum promotes active involvement in learning. It also recognises the different developmental level of each child and provides activities that are appropriate to each child's level.

The cognitively-oriented curriculum, as its name indicates, includes a strong emphasis on children's mental development. The playroom is arranged so that there is a central, open area for group activities and games. Around the edges are play areas and quiet areas. The daily routine is important, and ECD practitioners and assistants are expected to follow it. The routine includes planning time, activity time, cleaning-up time, recall time, snack time, a second recall time, outside time and circle time.

During planning time, children make and present their own plans for the day. They are asked to communicate about where they will do activities, what resources they will use, the sequence they will follow to complete the plan and the problems they might experience. There are countless activities the children may include in their plans – for example, planting seeds, drawing a picture, reading a book, or putting on a skit (a humorous imitation).

As children mature and gain writing skills, they can begin to communicate their plans to others by means of pictures and written works. Planning involves children in their own learning and is considered to be central to the programme. During recall time and small-group time, children meet with the ECD practitioner in small groups to share and discuss their activities. At some point during the day, the ECD practitioner will also observe each child doing certain tasks that were chosen by the ECD practitioner.

The cognitively-oriented curriculum stresses active learning, language, seriation (putting things in series), numbers, spatial relationships, experiencing and representing, classification and time. Children accomplish these learning goals in different ways: by manipulating and transforming materials; by describing objects, events and relationships; by recognising objects by sound, taste and touch; by making models; by sorting and matching objects; by making comparisons; by putting countering (putting opposite one another) and rearranging objects and by understanding time units.

The practitioner's role in the cognitively-oriented curriculum is as follows:

- to assess what developmental stage the child has reached

- to provide an environment where children can become decision makers and problem solvers

- to guide children in their learning

The ECD practitioner must know the developmental level of each child, so that he or she can provide learning experiences that match the child's developmental level.

C. The academic or direct instructional model

The academically-oriented preschool programme was developed by Carl Bereiter and Siegfried Engelmann at the University of Illinois, USA. It is now known as the Bereiter-Engelmann model or DISTAR. This programme is based on the idea that it is not good educational practice to wait for academic readiness to develop in children, especially for disadvantaged learners. ECD practitioners who support the academic programme believe that children can be encouraged to achieve well in academic settings when academic performance is positively reinforced. You will see that this programme is much more structured than the programme models we have discussed so far.

The academically-oriented programme emphasises instruction in reading, writing, language and arithmetic. The objective of the programme is to help children acquire very specific skills in these subjects. Children are organised into groups of three to eight for instruction. The groups are organised according to ability. During the course of the day, children attend "classes" in each of the subject areas.

The ECD practitioner follows specific instructions from the programme handbook, and works with the group on specific skills. The pace is fast and there is little tolerance for misbehaviour; and children are expected to work at the pace of their group. Tasks are taught with a lot of repetition, drill exercises and hand-clapping to mark out the rhythm of language patterns.

The ECD practitioner carefully arranges questions in sequence in order to get the correct responses from the children. Correct answers are rewarded with praise and prizes (such as biscuits). Incorrect responses are not accepted, and the problem is asked again and again until a child gives the right response. You will find that there are very few of the "play" materials found in other types of playrooms, because they are seen as distractions to learning. The playrooms are

uncluttered and toys are limited. The materials used in this programme include paper, pencils, chalk, puzzles, books, crayons, miniature houses and model farm animals.

In the academically-oriented programme, time is tightly scheduled and certain subjects are taught within specific time periods. Children are expected to be quiet and controlled, and free play is limited. Talking out of turn is discouraged, and children are expected to remain seated during work periods. Following rules is very important. A child who misbehaves may be punished by being isolated.

D. The Montessori model

At the turn of the century Maria Montessori implemented an early childhood education programme that has been widely adapted in the USA. There are also Montessori schools in many other countries; including SA. Montessori believed that a child's development is an unfolding of natural aptitudes. These aptitudes need certain environmental conditions in which to develop. If these conditions are provided, children will develop to their full potential. The Montessori approach emphasises an open playroom in which children can choose their own activities. The role of the ECD practitioner is to provide choices that are appropriate to the developmental level and abilities of each child and to show children how to do the activities.

The Montessori model emphasises special learning resources that children can play with on their own in a flexible manner. The resources are arranged in sets that gradually increase in complexity. As children become bored with one set of resources, the ECD practitioner introduces them to the next set, at a higher level of complexity. These resources are of the following three types:

- academic material (for language, reading, writing and mathematics)
- sensory materials (for visual, olfactory, tactile and auditory stimulation - in other words seeing, smelling, touching and hearing)
- daily living materials (for cooking, cleaning and grooming)

The following are some examples of resources you will find in a Montessori playroom:

- sand paper letters that introduce children to the feel of the letter shape
- individual wooden alphabet letters that can be used to create words
- number rods of varying length that represent one through ten and are used for counting
- graduated blocks that teach counting and sequencing
- everyday materials such as knives, irons, sponges, brooms and combs, which children use in adult activities
- command cards with actions such as run, walk and jump printed on them

The child reads the cards and then does what the word says.

At first, the ECD practitioner tells the child how to use the resources. For example, the ECD practitioner shows the child how to take a particular resource from a shelf; arrange the resource so that he or she can play with it, and how to replace it properly. In the Montessori playroom, there is a place for everything, and everything is in place. After this initial instruction, the child will not need the ECD practitioner's help. The children will play with whichever set of materials they want to, until they are ready for the next level of resources. Children must wait until their playmates are finished with particular resources before they may use them.

The Montessori playroom can be called a prepared environment – a place where children can do things for themselves. A great deal of care goes into creating a nurturing environment. Learning resources must be put in a specific place so that children will know where to find them. Resources with a similar function are grouped together and then arranged in order of complexity or difficulty.

Fantasy is not a part of the Montessori Method. It is believed that children should actually learn to do things that adults do, not just play at being adults. As a result, children in Montessori playrooms will prepare food with real knives, clean and wash dishes, do garden work and other tasks that are typical adult occupations.

E. The eclectic model

Eclectic childhood programmes are more common than any other type. "Eclectic" simply means that you use elements derived from a variety of sources. For example, you may find that even though a programme identifies itself with one or another particular model, in certain aspects it may differ significantly from what its founder intended it to be. Each programme you encounter will reflect the background and philosophy of its founder and its ECD practitioners, as well as the needs of the community that it serves.

For this reason, you may find cognitively oriented or Montessori playschools that deviate from the descriptions given above, because they have borrowed elements from other programme models. The eclectic programme is truly a hybrid, that is, a combination created from elements that were borrowed from all four of the basic programme models we have discussed.

There are a variety of frameworks, approaches and models when it comes to the ECD curriculum. While researchers have not yet identified one model as being better than another, it is always important that whatever programme you choose have established goals for children. Educational programmes should be sensitive to the age group of children they serve, and the individual needs of the children in the group.

You should use ECD-related frameworks as a guideline for your programme. In South Africa we also have a national curriculum and national policies available. In addition, there are educational groups and organisations that can help you keep informed about all the policy requirements related to ECD.

1.2.1 Theories of child development and learning

When you design activities that meet children's developmental needs you will use the theories of child development. For the sake of clarity and organisation, child development is divided into stages. It is important to remember, however, that the age ranges at approximate and flexible in any scheme of developmental stages. Variation in achieving certain milestones, whether they are physical, cognitive or social, is normal. All developmental stages are a guide, but remember that each child is unique, and will develop at his or her own pace.

A learning activity that meets the developmental needs of a particular child is an activity that the child can do with a strong chance of success. Why? Because the learning activity is designed to fit with what the child is able to do at his or her stage or level of development. In other words, you need to design activities to match the developmental stages of the children in your playgroup.

Some examples of small interventions are:

- A daydreamer might find verbal instructions difficult to remember in sequence so the practitioner encourages this child to repeat the instructions to her and corrects or affirms them.

- A short-sighted child could be placed near the front of the group for any poster or board activity.

- A hearing-impaired child could be placed close to the source during verbal instructions or storytime.

Bigger interventions include:

- Traumatised children need special attention. The abused child can probably cope better with reality through a puppet show, or by using a doll in "play" to express and, through a process, to overcome emotional trauma.

- "At risk" children are broadly identified as those who, whilst currently happy and integrated into the school life, come from a family or neighbourhood where there are inherent risks e.g. a family history of mental illness, alcohol abuse, or a community where drug abuse is rife. These children are subjected to influences that are difficult to avoid. "At risk" children include those whose parents are separated or getting divorced, or where the child is in the "care" of a poor and/or sick caregiver who is unable to attend to their needs, where no constructive activity is available and where opportunities for positive interdependence with others are minimal. Children in this broad category cannot depend on parental or community support, and will need special attention at the ECD centre e.g. with regard to washing of body and/or clothes, food to start the day, rest or sleep.

- Another possible barrier to learning could be that the language of teaching and learning could differ from the children's home language.

Ironically the Special Needs Education White Paper 6 identifies the learning programme as the most noticeable barrier to learning. You as the ECD learner-practitioner should remember this when you develop your Learning Programme. You will have to use your analysis of the children in your group to choose appropriate:

- learning/play activities

- methods of facilitating learning

- learning processes

- resources for the age or developmental levels

- assessment methods – and then have the ability to apply the Learning Programme flexibly

Questions you can ask to let developmental stages and needs to inform your analysis:

- What age are my learners?

- What are the developmental milestones for this age group in the different domains of development i.e. physical, cognitive and language, socio-emotional, creative and imaginative, moral and spiritual?

- What do key child development theorists like Erickson say about children at this stage?

Activity outcomes

"Play is a 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*

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 have confidence in them and 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:
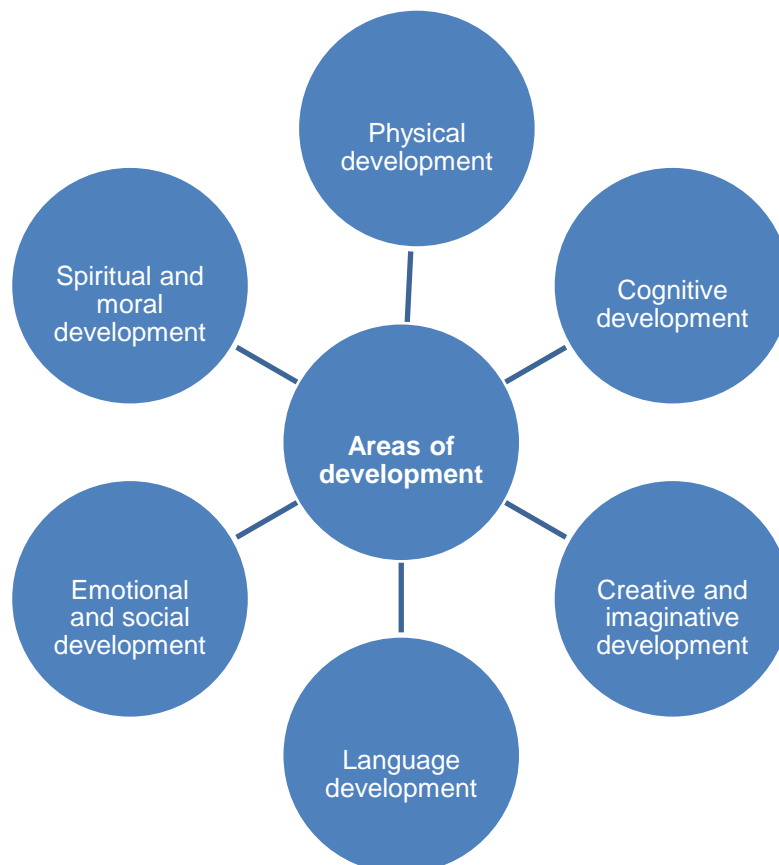
You need to plan properly to ensure that you cover the complete spectrum within the developmental age and stage of the children in the group.

For instance:

- Most of the development needed during the baby stage is physical. You will need to provide opportunities to be on the floor so that they have a chance to roll and crawl. Babies that are carried around 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.

a. Activity purposes

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 on purpose 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.

- They 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:

1.2.2 Policies impacting on Early Childhood Development

As an ECD practitioner you have to do more than keep in touch with the national curriculum. You owe it to the children at your centre and to yourself to make time in your busy schedule to stay informed of all the things related to early childhood development.

A good idea is to have monthly or quarterly meetings with the other ECD staff where you spend time reading and talking about existing and new ECD related policies, news, and trends.

Aligning your programme with the national education policy

Remember, you cannot plan your own learning programme in isolation. You need to do so within the context of the national school curriculum. A national education policy is never fixed and absolute. So (if you have not yet done so,) you will need to contact the National Education Department for the most up-to-date educational guidelines. You will then use these guidelines to help you plan your learning programme.

Key considerations

The interim policy for Early Childhood Development includes five key considerations in planning for ECD policy, namely

1. correcting past imbalances
2. the need to provide equal opportunities
3. issues of scale
4. affordability
5. increasing public awareness and advocacy

Policy pillars

The interim policy also sets out the seven policy pillars of government's ECD policy:

1. a policy for ECD provision
2. a policy for ECD curriculum
3. a policy on accreditation
4. a policy on training in ECD
5. a policy on the employment of ECD practitioners
6. a policy on the funding of ECD services
7. a policy in respect of policy development structures

ECD guidelines provided by the White Paper on Education and Training

The White Paper sets out the Government's commitment to the provisioning of Early Childhood Development and provides a broad policy framework for the involvement of the Department in ECD.

The White Paper acknowledges that a child's development and growth is affected by a combination of a number of inter-related factors that constitute the overall environment.

The Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grade R

This Curriculum Statement outlines the learning outcomes for Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills at Grade R level. In other words, it outlines what learners should be able to do by end of Grade R in each of those areas.

As an ECD practitioner, you may use these learning outcomes as a guideline. You may adapt them to create learning outcomes that are developmentally appropriate for your learning programme.

National Education Policies

You will find these in the Department of Education website. An interim policy for early childhood development was created in 1997 and can be downloaded from their policies page.

Support material and documented socio-economic trends:

You will find support material on the South African Council for Educators (SACE) website. SACE aims to enhance the status of the teaching profession, and to promote the development of educators and their professional conduct. Its website includes information on how to become a registered ECD practitioner as well as sections on News and Events, Legal Affairs and Ethics, Professional Development, Publications and other links and information.

Below is a direct extract from UNICEF"s WEBSITE.

In South Africa, children from birth to four years old, some 4,45 million of them according to the latest census data, represent almost 10% of the country's total population. Three of the four provinces - KwaZulu Natal, Gauteng, Eastern Cape and Limpopo, where UNICEF focuses its Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme are among those with the highest number of children in this age group. The lives of children in these provinces, especially in the deep rural areas, are directly affected by HIV and AIDS, unemployment and grinding poverty.

UNICEF is supporting the development of a National Integrated Strategy for Early Childhood Development and to increase national, provincial and local understanding of IECD in a practical and accessible manner. Special focus is being given to the development of materials for primary care-givers focused on the psycho-social support of 0-3-year-old children and to promoting skills development at community level for these groups, particularly child-headed households.

Inter-sectoral collaboration values the contribution and role that different service providers play in ensuring the well-being of children. An approach that is holistic places the child at the centre of a protective and enabling environment that brings together the elements needed for the full development of that child. Parents, or primary caregivers and the family, need access to basic social services such as primary health care, adequate nutrition, safe water, basic sanitation, birth registration, protection from abuse and violence, psychosocial support and early childhood care.

One of the main policy documents impacting on early childhood development is the Ministry for Social Development's White Paper on Social Welfare. This guides the ministry in terms of service provisions in the social development sector. Key points include:

- provision for children 0-9, with a special interest in the 0-3 year old age group;

- placing early childhood development within the family environment, especially for those children under the age of 5 years. There is recognition of single parent families and families caring for children in especially difficult circumstances;

- it calls for an inter-sectoral national Early Childhood Development Strategy bringing together other government departments, civil society and the private sector;

- it emphasizes service delivery in early childhood development targeting all care givers, parents and social service professionals;

- the registration of early childhood development services.

Access to social grants is the key to life-saving support for many young children and their families.

In addition, the Child Care Act 1983, as amended, provides for the regulation of early childhood facilities for children and the payment of subsidies/grants to early childhood facilities. These provisions are being reviewed within the new Children's Bill that is being developed under the auspices of the Department of Social Development. The Department is the main body responsible for the payment of the child support grant for young children in situations of extreme poverty. It is also assigned a key role in the care and support to orphans and vulnerable children in terms of the National Integrated Plan for Children affected and infected by HIV/AIDS.

Another important policy document, the Child Care Act 1983, as amended, provides for the regulation of the country's day care facilities for children and the payment of subsidies or grants to day care facilities. These provisions are being reviewed within the new Children's Bill currently before Parliament. Within this policy environment UNICEF South Africa is working to strengthen and formalise relationships with key government stakeholders such as the Department of Social Development to ensure that access to the Government's child support grants for children in situations of extreme poverty; and with other government and civil society partners to ensure that the health, education, water and sanitation, social services and protection needs and the well-being of very young children are met.

http://www.unicef.org/southafrica/early_childhood.htm

1.3 Ensure that the analysis identifies the key factors that could have an impact on the programme

Your analysis should identify all key factors that impact on your ECD programme, such as:

- *the Early Childhood Development setting*
- *the environment*
- *the broad needs of the child/children*

There are of course many factors that you can include. Let's start by looking at seven basic key factors that should always be included.

Seven key ECD programme factors

The American National Association for the Education of Young Children uses the following seven factors to judge the quality of ECD centres:

  I. Staff child ratio

 II. Group size

III. ECD practitioner qualification

IV. ECD practitioner stability and continuity

 V. Space and facilities

VI. The needs of the parents community

VII. Multilingual and multicultural needs.

These factors will be discussed in more detail in section 1.5, but we can note that they are related to the Early Childhood Development setting, the environment and the broad needs of the child/children, which we will now discuss.

1.3.1 How the environment impacts on child development

As we already mentioned earlier in this module, the ECD environment can be defined as all the indoor and outdoor space in which the children move and interact at the centre. The physical environment in which the children spend many hours each day has an important bearing on what the ECD experience means to them. The physical environment can influence the children's behaviour. A cheerful, challenging, stimulating and secure environment will help to meet a variety of the child's needs. When space is more limited, children become easily frustrated and often more aggressive and destructive.

Having an outside area to play in will greatly contribute to the children's physical development. If you do have an outside area, make sure that it is safe and preferably fenced in. If you cannot provide a permanent outdoor play area, think of ways you can compensate for this i.e. walking to a park or creating an outdoor area i.e. space to move and feel physically challenged indoors.

The play environment

Indoor and outdoor environment should be designed to encourage play. You can achieve this partly by making sure that there is plenty of equipment that children can integrate into their play. This equipment includes realistic props such as pots, pans and tools, and other more versatile items such as blocks, old bed sheets and boards. Make sure there is a variety of equipment from time to time so that the children do not get bored. For example, you can move farm animals and small cars and trucks into the block area or sand box, or introduce new items such as cleaning equipment or tools into the housekeeping corner.

The learning environment: resources and physical space

We now look at another important aspect of preparing an ECD learning programme: the learning environment and the resources needed. As an ECD practitioner, you should ensure that you have organised your playroom so that your physical environment matches the way in which you wish to teach. For example, if you want a flexible, interactive playroom, you need to make sure that your space, equipment and materials are well organised and attractively arranged so that children can play in an interactive and flexible way. Let's find out how to do this. We will look at the main activity areas, space and resources.

Space

Whatever the space and facilities available, the activities in the playroom can be grouped into the following play areas:

- the fantasy area
- the block play area
- the quiet area
- the creative art areas
- the outdoor area
- other areas

Remember, you need to plan in a creative way to make the most of whatever space is available. Even a small playroom can offer learners many exciting opportunities and activities. Children's play is how they work at learning (at grassroots level).

As an ECD practitioner, you should be well organised and plan ahead. Such planning satisfies a child's need for security. The available space should have separate play areas for different kinds of activities. For example, if all construction materials are kept in the same area of the room, the children will be able to find them more easily. They will soon learn that when they want to build,

they need to go to the construction area. They will also learn that the construction materials have to be sorted into the right containers and placed back on the shelf after play.

Accommodating special needs

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

You can assist the children by making sure that:

- ramps are available to enter the indoor area 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 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 necessary to accommodate their needs

You will need to be very sensitive to the physical needs of all children with special needs so that the environment does not further compromise their learning opportunities.

1.3.2 Cultural and traditional experiences of development

When choosing resources we need to think carefully of the images and ideas that we are exposing the children to. 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. They are also influenced by the many messages around them – at the ECD centre, from friends, from television, from advertising, in books and in comics. Children copy the behaviour they see around them. If adults think that different roles and behaviours are suitable for boys and for girls, then children will also believe 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 *do not* see is just as important as what they *do* see; if they don't see disabled people or black people in successful roles that will influence 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 such as 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 may ask the parents of the children to assist by helping you understand and plan for these celebrations. They could provide appropriate food or clothing, candelabras, etc., 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 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 should 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.

- Create books using photos you take of them, for example about 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.
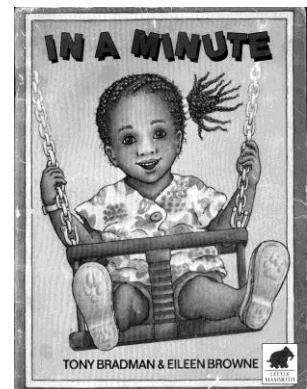
Learning resources to encourage a gender-fair environment

If adults classify toys along gender lines, children will too. 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 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 (caring) 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 that are 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.

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.

Learning resources to encourage a disability fair environment

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 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.

Are resources suitable within the community context?

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 Christmas being depicted with snow – for our country this is not a reality. As ECD practitioners, we need to 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. (A list of these resources has been included at the end of this Unit Standard for your convenience.)

You will still need to use your discretion and common sense and understand the context of the children in your group. For example, children living in a township will have a different understanding to those 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:

1. *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.

2. *Nkqo! Nkqo!* – Xhosa, English, Tswana and Afrikaans book – various families of different cultures are captured in daily rituals.

3. *They were wrong!* – about the prejudices that exist regarding various cultures in Cape Town.

4. *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.

5. *Mhlanguli* – Xhosa, English, Tswana and Afrikaans book – about a boy who lives in Khayelitsha and does ballroom dancing as a hobby.

How to design bias-free activities

When you were preparing learning resources, you looked at how to make those resources free from cultural, racial and gender-based bias. The same criterion applies to designing activities. The activities you design must be bias-free. This means that the activities must not reinforce biased ideas about different people in the world around us. Remember that when we are biased, we have a fixed opinion that is not based on fact. A bias is a belief, often based on erroneous information that can lead to the unjust, unkind, or unfair treatment of others. Some of the most common forms of bias and discrimination are racism, sexism and stereotyping. Let's look at each of these in turn.

- **Racism** dismisses whole groups of people as inferior because of skin colour, race, religion, or national origin, claiming that such characteristics determine a person's abilities and behaviour (Cronbach, 1977).

- **Sexism** is the discrimination against someone on the basis of their sex (or gender). Societies assign different roles to people based on their gender. The nature of the diverse roles that male and female children play in our society unfolds at a very early age. For example, toys for boys often include action figures, such as toy soldiers, while toys for girls are typically those that require nurturing and caring, such as dolls.

- **Stereotypes** simplify the way we view the behaviour of a certain race, or gender, or culture or people who are physically challenged. Stereotypes give the impression that all people who share a particular characteristic will behave in a certain similar manner. The truth, however, is that not all Italians like pasta and not all black people can sing and dance well. It is only the common generalisations (stereotypes) that would have us believe this.

The activities you design for your playgroup should not only be free of bias such as racism, sexism and stereotyping; they should also celebrate diversity. When you design activities that are free of bias you are helping children to celebrate their diversity in various ways:

- A bias-free activity can portray differences positively. An understanding of differences and accepting those differences, helps to encourage respect.

- A bias-free activity can stress similarities. When people discover that they are all just people, like everyone else, co-operation becomes possible.

- A bias-free activity can examine attitudes and values, thereby drawing attention to bias and at the same time trying to reduce it.

- A bias-free activity can develop the skills and capabilities that the children need to realise their potential in our complex society.

Usually, children who are exposed to bias-free activities that celebrate diversity will positively respond to individual differences. Understanding, respect and positive interactions form the cornerstone of bias-free activities that celebrate diversity.

As our society changes, so the make-up of our playgroups changes too. More and more playschools have a diverse child population with a variety of races, religions, and language groups. In addition, more and more playrooms include children with special needs (due to learning difficulties or physical limitations). It's important that you as the practitioner are aware of any bias in children and deal with it effectively. If you work closely with the babies, toddlers or young children in your care, you will be able to notice and deal with inappropriate behaviour more easily. If you do find some biases, you need to spend time with the children, openly discussing these feelings and beliefs. Ask yourself questions like: Is the bias a result of misunderstandings or misconceptions? Can you counsel the biased child effectively? You must constantly be aware of the need to be an appropriate role model. Nothing less than the fair, consistent, caring treatment of all children is acceptable.

Providing a variety of bias-free activities is a good way to challenge bias and discriminating behaviour. One good place to deal with bias is in the morning greeting ring. The morning ring provides time for children to get to know one another. For example, you can provide opportunities for the children to discuss their backgrounds, families and where they live. This allows you to explore diversity within the context of each child's own family life. By doing so, you do not portray all members of a particular race, gender or culture as living in the same way. You should start these conversations. You can assist and support those children who may feel uncomfortable by sharing their information in a large group. Some of the topics you can raise for discussion include:

- **Family lifestyles** – What occupations do members of the family have? What hobbies do family members have? Who are the various members of each child's family? What are the extended family ties?

- **Family traditions** – What holidays are celebrated? What foods are typically served? Who joins the family for celebrations? What religion is observed (if any)?

- **The home** – What is the child's house like? Where do they live? Who lives there with them?

- **Gender role in the family** - Are children of both sexes disciplined in the same manner? Do children of both sexes participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities? For example, do boys and girls do ballet and practise their ball skills? Are boys rewarded for being aggressive, and girls rewarded for being placid? Are girls encouraged to consider the same career options as boys?

Let's look at some other bias-free activities that you can use:

- activities for reducing bias against children with special needs

- gender identity and gender role activities

- roleplaying activities

- critical thinking activities

- group action activities

- reading activities

Let's look at each kind of activity in more detail.

a) Activities for reducing bias against children with special needs

Children with special needs may be different from other children in either a negative or positive sense. Sometimes they are physically challenged in some way, and sometimes they are so gifted or talented that it sets them apart from the others just as much as a physical or mental difference does. Children with special needs may have fears or problems that form the basis of, or are the result from their uniqueness. You need to design activities to help both children with special needs and the other children in the class to accept each child as a valuable member of the group.

You may for example design activities where children change places with different classmates; for example, sighted children may wear blindfolds for a while in order to better understand the world of the child who cannot see well. Similarly, physically mobile children may spend time trying to manoeuvre a wheelchair. This will give them an idea of the frustration and misery that people in wheelchairs have to deal with.

Another activity is to make a wall display of photographs that challenge stereotyping. For example, use photographs of amputees (people who have lost an arm or a leg) on skis and basketball players in wheelchairs. Discuss the photographs with the children in your playgroup and introduce the concept of people being "differently-abled" rather than disabled.

b) Gender identity and gender role activities

Gender identity and gender roles are areas where stereotyping is so common and so widely accepted that the stereotypes go unrecognised and are not even criticised in the playroom and outside it. For example, in many playrooms, girls still are assigned the cleaning up tasks, while boys get the chores that require skill or muscle. You as the ECD practitioner assign tasks, and you should be very aware of the effects of delegating such tasks in stereotyped ways.

Children should receive plenty opportunities to explore their male and female roles. You can make the children aware of what society expects of them and encourage them to think critically about these "given" roles. Discussions could include how males view their roles in the playroom and in society, or how females see their changing role. These are big issues, but you could touch on them subtly with simple examples. The question of how gender obstructs or facilitates success can be addressed. If gender is seen to be a barrier, how can you correct such a perception? A good activity is to invite visitors who will challenge conventional thinking to give talks in your playroom, for example a male nurse, a female police officer or a black female doctor.

c) Roleplaying activities

Children like to tease each other. Children who refer to classmates who wear glasses as "four eyes" are cruelly insensitive to their friends" feelings. You cannot and should not ignore such behaviour. If you do, you encourage the children who are name-callers and labellers to think that you accept the statements and related actions as truths. Your children need opportunities to examine the circumstances that lead to such hurtful behaviour, and they need also to be challenged to rethink both their attitudes and their actions.

In the dress-up corner or make-believe area, you may provide opportunities for children to role play biased behaviour. These activities are intended to evaluate the injustice, and to suggest strategies for change. You could set up scenarios for children that allow girls and boys to try roles usually considered "male" or "female".

d) Critical thinking activities

Children can probably point out biases that they find in magazines, see on television, or recognise in playroom materials. A bias can be something like society's idea of what the perfect female body should look like. Think of all the models in women's magazines. You could have the children page through such magazines and discuss what they see, and assess the images that are presented to them.

Certain dolls found in some playrooms have come under criticism because they reinforce a stereotyped image of all women being "thin, curvy and sexy". Some experts believe that dolls like these reinforce a picture of an idealised or perfect body that children, especially in their adolescence, will aspire towards. A bias-free approach does not mean that you need to throw out your doll collection. Instead, you can encourage children to talk about what they think, feel and understand. Say, "Here's a woman doll. Do all women look like this doll? No? That's because women in lots of different shapes and sizes and colours. If you were going to make a "mommy" doll, what would your doll look like? If you were going to make a granny doll, what would your doll look like?"

e) Group action activities

The process of seeking out, defining and examining playschool bias that is related to race, gender, culture and special needs is just the first step in dealing with these issues. Actually, planning to make the necessary changes when inconsistencies and biases are uncovered is the hard part. Derman-Sparks (1989) tells the story of a preschool class in which there was a wheelchair-bound child. After the child was enrolled, the group began to consider the special needs of their playmate.

By talking with the practitioners, parents, school directors, and other significant people, the children discovered that there were no parking spaces for children with disabilities in the preschool's parking lot. The pre-schoolers were not satisfied with simply noting this oversight; armed with buckets of paint, they painted the necessary lines themselves! On top of that, they asked their ECD practitioner to help them make notes to be left on the windshields of cars informing the motorists that these parking spots were reserved for children with disabilities. Obviously, young children cannot and do not embark on projects like this on their own. The teaching staff must serve as catalysts for putting such ideas into action. You as practitioner can arrange for representatives of a variety of interest groups to visit the playroom and address the children. Individuals from various religious organisations, ethnic groups, and social service organisations could come to discuss needs in the community that require that some type of action is taken to meet a desired goal. Children may be encouraged to volunteer time, participate in drawing pictures, make posters, or take part in similar activities, with the objective of working co-operatively to achieve a common goal.

f) Reading activities

Reading books is an activity that can be used to identify bias and counter it, or to reinforce and celebrate anti-bias and diversity. For example, you could look at books for discriminatory portrayals of men and women in the words of the story or the pictures. Or you could read stories that portray men and women in a variety of different roles, such as books on cowgirls, or pictures of men caring for babies.

In South Africa, we live in a society that is characterised by differences. Young children are exposed to people with different skin colours, of different ages and genders, from different cultures, with different languages, different ways of dressing, different customs and rituals. In other words,

young children see the differences among people around them every day. Obviously, this prompts children to ask questions, "Why does the mother with white skin have a child with brown skin?" or "Why does Mustapha wear a hat to school?" or "Why does Tumi wear glasses?" Young children who are trying to understand the world around them often ask questions like these. When they do, be patient. Remember that the children are trying to understand and make sense of the differences between people and their cultures are very different; underneath those differences we are all human beings with many similarities.

You may use children's books and stories to normalise differences for children. For example, if children read a story about a young boy much like themselves who is Muslim, they will find out about what it means to be a Muslim. By understanding more about the religion and its associated culture, they will probably become more accepting and understanding of people they meet who observe this religion.

In the past, some groups of children were left out of South Africa storybooks. The following quote by academic and writer Phyllis Ntantala explains how this was done:

> Looking back at my schooling, I see there was too much emphasis in our Units in England, English culture and Europe. Hardly anything was said about Africa, and very little about South Africa. In the Adventure with a Shark, we were shown Peterkin and his friend in the boat with the shark after them (and I can still hear Mzimkhulu Maphukatha read: haul up the line. Peterkin! Quickly, it's a shark!" We never learned that somewhere on the Zambezi, Lozi boys of the same age were paddling their dugout, dodging crocodiles. (Ntantala, 1992)

What does it feel like to be a young child and never see images of yourself and your experiences reflected in the stories you hear and the pictures you see? This experience is deeply alienating – it crushes, rather than reinforces the young child's self-concept.

So the books and stories we provide must affirm each individual child. If there is a child in your playgroup who lives with his grandmother, find a story about a child in a similar family situation. If there is a child in a wheelchair, find picture books with pictures that include children with special needs, especially children in wheelchairs. In this way, you will affirm and encourage each child's unique identity.

You may also use books and stories to affirm children's own heritage and present models for future opportunities. For example, a book about a young girl who dreams of becoming an astronaut, and finally succeeds, shows young children the possibility of dreaming of whatever future they choose, whether they be boys or girls, rich or poor, black or white.

There are many excellent books that are appropriate for dealing with stereotyping, challenging racism and sexism and celebrating diversity in the playroom. Here is a list to get you started.

- **All kinds of families** written by Norma Simon, is a children's picture book about family love and continuity. Many ethnic groups are represented as the author points out that family come in many different packages and in many different forms. The main thing is that all families love one another.

- **Black is brown is Tan** written by Arnold Adol and illustrated by Emily Arnold McCully (Amistad Books) is a story poem about children of all colours of the human race, growing up happy in a house full of love. It is a song about a family delighting in each other and in the good things of the earth.

- **Don"t call Me Special**, a first book of disability written by Pat Thomas and illustrated by Lesley Harker, is a children's picture book that explores individual disabilities, special equipment that is available to help the disabled, and how people of all ages can deal with disabilities and live happy and full lives.

- **Horns only** written by Fatima Dada and Leon Hofmeyer and illustrated by Heather Moore and Jiggs Snaddon-Wood, is a colourful South African children's book about the importance of accepting others and their differences. The animals are having a party but it's only for animals with horns.

- **Knock! Knock!** by Reviva Schermbrucker is a multilingual glimpse into the lives of a range of South African families. The book is illustrated with photographs of children in their houses, their township homes, in the hospital and at their parents" shop. The simple text is repeated in four languages: isiXhosa, English, Afrikaans and Tswana.

- **My Hero, My Dad:** The Nurse by Maggie Dorsey is a colourful children's book about an African American little boy who thinks about different careers, but decides that he wants to follow his dad's example, and become a nurse.

- **The Cool Nguni,** written by Maryanne Bester and illustrated by Shayle Bester, is a richly illustrated story about a young Nguni calf who questions his identity in relation to other cattle breeds from around the world. It is a story of diversity and being happy with your own identity.

- **They were Wrong** by Reviva Schermbrucker is a South African children's book illustrated with photographs and paintings. It is part of the mielie books series, which is a series of issues-based picture books. This book deals with the issues of stereotypes and prejudice.

Class Activity 1: Analysis of child development and related activities
Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

1.4 Ensure that the analysis is informed by previous evaluations of activities and assessments of children

A questionnaire is a form that contains a set of questions used to gather information. Obviously the children in your playgroup cannot complete a questionnaire, so you will have to complete the questionnaire you design. The aim of your needs analysis is to identify the developmental stages and particular needs of all the babies, toddlers or young children in your playgroup. So, a good place to start designing your questionnaire is with the age and expected developmental stage of your playgroup. You can divide the developmental stage into the following five major developmental areas:

- physical development

- cognitive development

- language development

- social-emotional development

- creative and imaginative development

Developmental and learning needs questionnaire:

<u>Nosipho</u>

Age 3 years 4 months

Cognitive development

- *Is she able to identify three basic shapes and fit them correctly in a shape puzzle?*
- *Is she able to identify objects of different sizes such as biggest, longest?*
- *Is she able to copy shapes that are made of blocks?*
- *Is she able to recall up to three numbers and remember where objects have been put away?*
- *Is she able to concentrate for at least ten minutes on one activity?*
- *Questionnaire*
- *Observation*

You can use your knowledge of developmental stages to come up with developmentally appropriate questions for your questionnaire. For example, if you have a group of three year olds, your questionnaire might look like one in the previous example.

Physical development:

Gross motor skills

- *Is she able to walk on a straight line?*
- *Is she able to walk upstairs with good balance?*
- *Is she able to run and kick a ball, catch and throw a ball and bounce a ball on the floor with two hands?*
- *Is she able to stand and walk on tiptoes?*
- *Is she able to jump down from the last step of stairs, keeping her feet together?*

Fine motor skills

- *Can she hold the crayons with the thumb, index and middle fingers and mostly use elbow movements when drawing?*
- *Is she able to build a tower of at least 10 blocks?*
- *Is she able to cut paper into pieces?*
- *Is she able to handle scissors correctly but are unable to cut on lines?*
- *Is she able to thread at least six big beads on a shoelace at age 3 and 12 beads at age 4?*

Cognitive development:

Now that you have developed your questionnaire, the next step is to answer the questions. The best way to do this in an ECD environment is through observation.

Observations

Observation means to look carefully at something. In this case you are looking carefully at the developmental stages and needs of your playgroup. Answering the questions on your questionnaire will form the basis of this observation.

You know that recording your observations is very important. So, when you develop your questionnaire you need to leave space under or next to each question to write answers and comments. You will use this questionnaire while you are observing the children in your playgroup so you will probably use your own shorthand way (unique note-taking) style to take notes. It might look a bit like the language you use to type an SMS on a cell phone! Here is an example that is based on the cognitive development of Nosipho, age three years and four months.

Developmental and learning needs questionnaire

<u>Nosipho</u>

Age 3 years 4 months

Cognitive development

- Is she able to identify three basic shapes and fit them correctly in a shape puzzle?

  Can do but also calls?

  Can fit shapes in a shape puzzle but takes a while and gets frustrated if it takes too long

- Is she able to identify objects of different sizes such as biggest, longest?

  If objects are the same e.g. bottles but if objects are different – can't

- Is she able to copy shapes that are made of blocks?

  If objects are familiar e.g. house but (struggles) if objects are unfamiliar/abstract

- Is she able to recall up to three numbers and remember where objects have been put away?

  Very helpful at tidy up time - seems to enjoy

- Is she able to concentrate for at least ten minutes on one activity?

  Can concentrate for longer if something interests her e.g. learning new song

Once you have developed your questionnaire and made your observations you will have done the information-gathering part of the needs analysis. Now you need to analyse the information you have gathered.

How to analyse information in a needs analysis

When you analyse something, you examine or think about it carefully in order to understand it. There are different ways to examine information. Which one you choose depends on the nature of the information and the purpose of the analysis. You have gathered information about the learning and development needs of the babies, toddlers or young children in your care. The purpose of the analysis is to now identify those needs and use the analysis to identify the types of activities that meet the needs of your playgroup.

A gap analysis is an excellent way to deal with this type of information and achieve this purpose. A gap analysis does exactly as its name suggests: it helps you to identify gaps. In this case the gaps are between the actual, observed development of the children in your playgroup and their potential development. The questions in your questionnaire indicate what children at that stage of development should be able to do and your observations tell you what the children can actually do. Any gap between the two is an opportunity for you to design an activity to help an individual child or the whole group to reach their full potential.

When you identify the gaps or needs, you may end up with a very long list of needs. You may ask yourself questions such as "there are so many needs, which ones should I deal with first"? And which one is most important?" At this stage in your analysis, you need to identify the priorities and importance of the needs. One way to prioritise is to first deal with any needs that are common to many children in your playgroup. Another way to decide is to see whether the lack of one skill is getting in the way of developing other skills.

Another very useful way to prioritise and decide on the importance of identified needs is to use other sources of information. So far your needs analysis has involved two sources of information, namely the stages of development and your observations. The stages of development are an example of an ECD-related framework. They provide a framework within which ECD practice takes place.

Your observations are a form of evaluation of the activities inside and outside your playroom as well as an assessment of the children in your playgroup.

You can use the stages of development to identify the stage of development at which a child is functioning. You know that all children are unique and develop at their own pace. However it can also be helpful to know on which developmental level a particular child is in order to help the child to progress and fulfil his or her potential.

As an ECD practitioner you have probably assessed and evaluated your group before. There was probably an initial assessment of the child when he or she started playschool. There may be reports or observations from other ECD practitioners. You can speak to the children's parents. All of these sources of information can help you to analyse and prioritise the needs you have identified.

1.5 Ensure that the analysis is sufficient in scope and depth to inform the development of the programme

Your analysis should identify all key factors that impact on your ECD programme. You could of course include many factors. Here are seven basic key factors that should always be included.

Seven key ECD programme factors

The following seven factors to judge the quality of ECD centres are used by the American National Association for the Education of Young Children.

  I. Staff child ratio

  II. Group size

  III. ECD practitioner qualification

  IV. ECD practitioner stability and continuity

  V. Space and facilities

  VI. The needs of the parents community

  VII. Multilingual and multicultural needs

Let's consider each factor in turn.

I. Staff-child ratios

Good quality childcare programme can only be provided if the ECD practitioner is not responsible for too many children. The number of children cared for by a single staff member is a key factor of quality childcare. Staff-child ratios refer to the number of adult staff members there are to care for

the total number of children in an ECD centre. Many childcare studies on staff-child ratios indicate that when ECD practitioners have fewer children to care for, children's performance improves.

II.   Group size

Group size refers to the number of children who form part of a group at a large ECD centre. Depending on the staff-child ratio a group may have one or more ECD practitioners assigned to them. If group size is restricted, and children are divided into groups according to their age, staff members will be better able to pay attention to the differing needs of children at various developmental levels.

III.   ECD practitioner qualifications

The ECD practitioner is at the very centre of the children's environment and experiences during the hours they spend at the ECD centre. The practitioner is responsible for the day to day operation of the centre. In addition her function is to provide intellectual and physical stimulation, encourage the children"s social skills, and promote emotional development.

When an ECD practitioner is properly qualified, she will most probably be effective in promoting the full and healthy development of children.

IV.   ECD practitioner stability and continuity

The relationship between the child and the ECD practitioner is the most crucial factor that impacts on Early Childhood Development care. Ideally, this should be a caring, safe, and stable relationship in which the child learns about herself and how to get along well with others. Stability and continuity of ECD practitioners at the centre promotes good quality care.

V.   Space and facilities

The ECD environment can be defined as all the indoor and outdoor space, in which the children move and interact at the centre. The physical environment in which the children spend many hours each day has an important impact on what the ECD experience means to them. The physical environment can influence the children's behaviour. A cheerful, challenging, stimulating and secure environment will meet a variety of the child's needs. When space is more limited, children become easily frustrated and often more aggressive and destructive.

Having an outside area to play in will greatly contribute to the children's physical development. If you do have an outside area, make sure that its safe and preferably fenced in. If you cannot provide a permanent outdoor play area, think of ways you can compensate for this i.e. walking to a park or creating an outdoor area i.e. space to move and feel physically challenged indoors.

VI.   The needs of the parent and community

Who are the parents? What are their needs? Are they full-time working parents? Are they stay-at-home parents? Do they require half or full day care/what is the economic environment of this community? Can parents afford extras like extramural activities and visits, or should these be limited? What time do children leave home in the morning? Do they need breakfast before the day begins? What time can parents fetch children? Does the centre need to stay open later to accommodate working parents using public transport?

VII.   Multilingual and multicultural needs

In South Africa, many ECD centres have children from many different cultures and who speak different languages. This has certain implications for the ECD
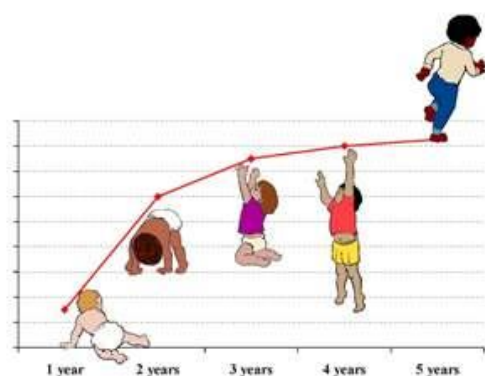
centre. What are the cultures and main languages of learners? How can all cultures be acknowledged and affirmed? How can children with different main languages from the ECD practitioner be incorporated in the programme, so that they can participate and understand? How does the programme promote and encourage all the learner's languages?

Class Activity 2: Analysis takes into account a variety of needs
Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

Learning Unit 2
Design activities for ECD programmes

After completing this Learning Unit, you will be able to design activities for ECD programmes, by successfully completing the following:

- Identify activities to support the development of babies, toddlers and young children.
- Design the activities.

Design activities for ECD programmes

Careful consideration and planning are necessary when preparing an ECD programme. When you prepare a learning programme for your ECD centre, you should think about the leaning activities and experience you need to provide for children daily, weekly and in the longer term. You also think about the children's interests and developmental needs. In fact, there are a variety of different elements you need to include. The mind map below provides an overview of the key elements in the ECD learning programme.
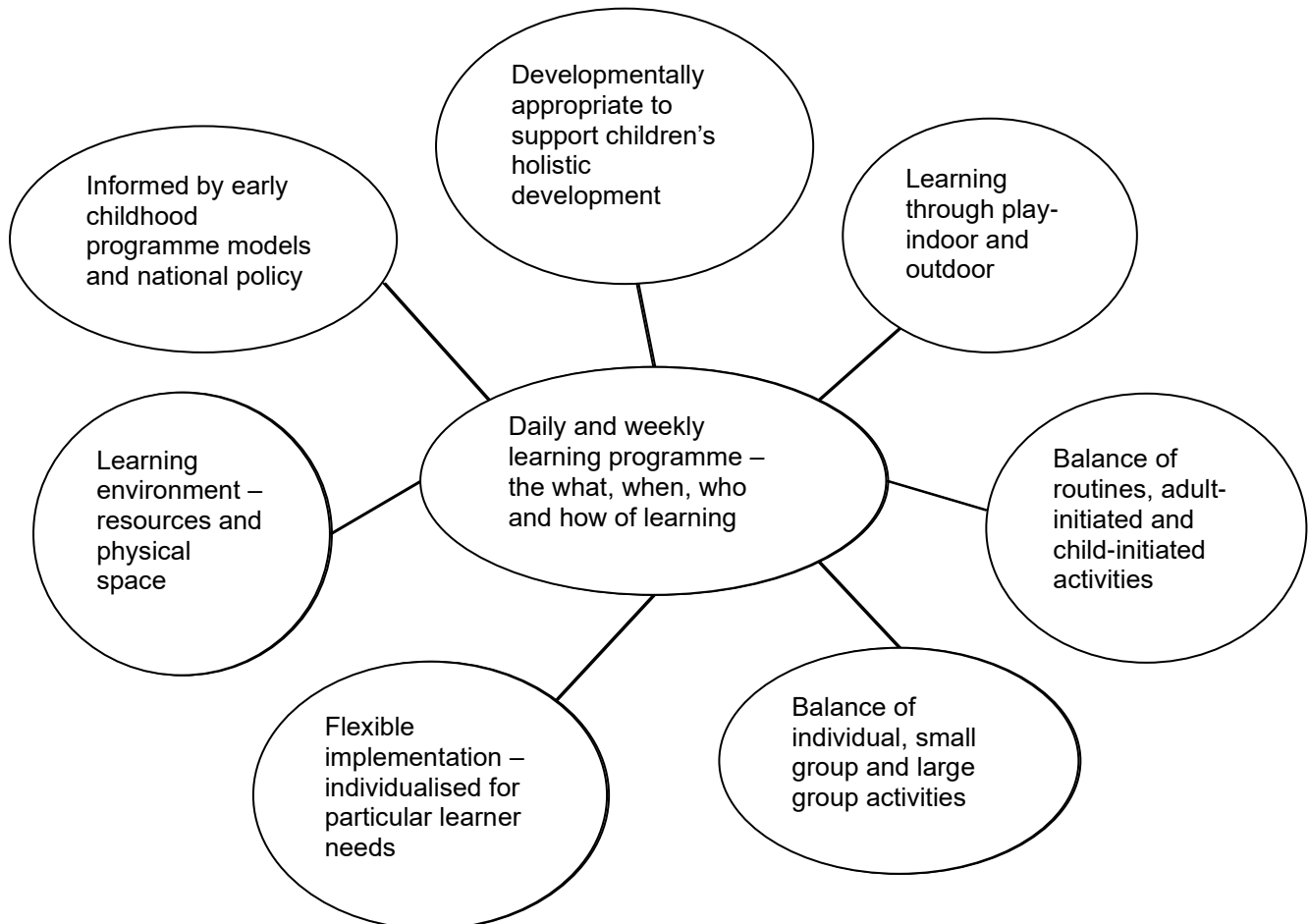
2.1 Identify activities to support the development of babies, toddlers and young children

As an ECD practitioner, you need to know how to design activities to meet the developmental needs of the babies, toddlers or young children in your playgroup. You need to be able to define the purpose of activities in terms of their contribution towards achieving identified developmental outcomes. You also need to be able to design activities that are appropriate to the individual developmental needs of all the children in your playgroup. The activities that you design should provide scope for progression through the developmental stages. These activities should also be integrated so the children can develop in more than one area or skill at a time. In this unit you will learn how to design activities that meet children's developmental needs.

The programmes below are suggestions and ECD centres may implement their activity schedules differently. It is vitally important to cater for 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

Note:
- 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, 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 and 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
17h15 – 17h30	Departure time

Note:

- 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 and 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 time
12:40 – 14:30	Rest
14:30 – 15:00	Wake up/toilet/snack time
15:00 – 16:30	Outdoor free-play/Departure time

Note:
- 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.

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 so that the interactions between practitioner and child and between the children themselves are meaningful. Choose exciting themes and include new information that stimulates the children's curiosity about the world around them. This helps them 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 by means of experiences in many different ways.

Some ideas for themes may include:

- seasons

- transport

- families

- insects

- the sea

- wild animals

- pets

- sports

- health and nutrition

- musical instruments

- holidays

Long-term planning

Longer-term planning is also important so that themes can run in a logical sequence and so that 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 Arbour day posters in the newspaper.

2.1.1 Identify the types of activities that address the needs revealed in the analysis

Now that you have identified the developmental learning needs of babies, toddlers and young children in your playgroup, you should use that analysis to identify the types of activities that will address those needs.

The types of activities you are most likely to use are the ones that meet the needs of:

- physical development

- cognitive development

- language development

- social-emotional development

- creative and imaginative development

Let's look at each type of activity in some more detail:

Physical development is divided into gross motor skills and fine motor skills. In this context, "gross" simply means "big", "fine" means "small" and "motor" refers to "movement". Gross motor skills are about movements that involve the big muscles such as running and jumping. Fine motor skills are about movements that involve the small muscles such as holding a crayon and picking up jigsaw puzzle pieces.

1. Activities for gross motor skills development

Children need an opportunity to practise their gross motor skills both indoors and outdoors. This can be done by providing activities that allow children to crawl, climb, balance, swing, hang, run, skip, bounce, throw and dance. Here are a few ideas for activities that encourage gross motor function in ways that are fun:

- an obstacle course

- lions, tigers and bears

- caterpillar hopscotch

- a walk through the jungle

a) An obstacle course

Young children love a physical challenge. Lay out an obstacle course for them to complete. You can use existing playgroup equipment, like ladders, monkey bars or swinging ropes, to form parts of the obstacle course. You could also include challenges like these:

- Lay out a length of rope that children must try to walk along.

- Place a long, narrow plank on sturdy bricks for children to try walking over.

- Lay a long, strong tree trunk or branch on the ground to provide an excellent balancing challenge, as the surface of the trunk is usually uneven.

- Hang an object, like a ball on a string, on a branch, so that children can be challenged to jump up and touch the object with their hands.

- Mark out a section of ground and ask children to move across it by hopping, skipping, jumping, and so on.

- Make coloured chalk circles or lay out coloured paper and tell children to cross the area by walking on, say, only the blue circles.

Plan your obstacle course in advance, using about five different physical tasks. For example, your obstacle course could include these challenges:

- Walk along the tree trunk.

- Jump up to touch the ball on the string.

- Climb the ladder.

- Jump from the platform.

- Run to the finish line.

Make sure that you encourage children not to compete with each other, but to simply do their personal best. Let children line up, and let them begin the course one by one, so each child can move throughout the obstacle course quickly and easily.

b) Lions, tigers and bears

This is a good activity for rainy days, when children are stuck indoors and need to use up extra energy. Let the children sit in a circle, then call out the name of an animal. The children then have to jump up and pretend they are the animals you named. This activity encourages children's imaginative play, and it also helps them to exercise different gross motor skills as they hop like a kangaroo, slither like a snake or fly like a butterfly and so on.

c) Caterpillar hopscotch

Use chalk to draw a long caterpillar made up of circles of different sizes. Make a face and antenna on the first circle and draw simple legs on the other circles. Most children like to help draw the caterpillar. Draw a vertical line down the middle of some of the circles, and leave some of the circles, with the lines. Children may jump with a foot on each side of the line, then jump into the plain circle with both feet together. Sometimes they hop on one foot on the unlined circle and both feet on the lined ones. You may like to introduce the activity by reading "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Garle.

d) A walk through the jungle

Take children on a pretend walk through the jungle. Here's what you need to do and say for this activity:

- Walk quickly around the playground. Let's warm up our bodies and loosen our muscles.

- We have reached a thick jungle. If it is too thick to walk through we need to crawl!

- There's a big lake up ahead. Run to it. Stop at the edge and jump in. Let's swim in the lake.

- Let's get out of the lake. There's a giant mud puddle. Let's jump in! Roll around in the mud. Rub it on our faces and arms. Let's have a mud fight.

- Now we've arrived at a mountain to climb. (Climb a climbing structure on the playground or slide down a slide.)

- Look what's at the bottom of the mountain! A merry go-round. Go for a ride! Everyone hold hands to form a circle. Start walking slowly around. Now faster. Lean back.

- Our jungle walk is almost over. Walk slowly. Look around. What do you see? What do you hear? Lie on the grass. Let your bodies sink into the earth. What a wonderful walk.

You can adapt these ideas to include many other scenarios. For example, you might see a lion in the jungle, and run and hide. Use your imagination. But make sure your pretend walk gets children moving and using different muscle groups.

2. Activities for fine motor skills development

Although young children's fine motor skills are not all that well-developed, that does not mean they should not practise them. Indeed, children need to strengthen their fine motor skills by learning how to maintain small objects and use tools. Sewing, using pegboards, playing with blocks, stringing beads, doing jigsaw puzzles, cooking and working with art materials are just some of the activities that help children develop the use of their fine motor skills.

Let's look at some specific kinds of learning activities that encourage fine motor development, namely:

a) the use of tools

b) jigsaw puzzles

c) cooking

a) The use of tools

When children use tools in a learning activity, they are using their fine motor skills. Make sure you set up learning activities that require children to use tools such as:

- pencils

- crayons

- felt-tipped pens

- paintbrushes

- scissors

- pastry rollers

- cookie cutters

- large blunt needles
- screwdrivers
- hammers

When children participate in creative art activities, baking and cooking activities and simple construction activities, they will use some of the tools listed above. Be sure to help children to use the tools properly and safely. In this way you will help them to develop their fine motor functions.

b) Jigsaw puzzles

Jigsaw puzzles are extremely useful for developing fine motor skills, as children are required to manipulate small puzzle pieces. Jigsaw puzzles also aid the development of observation skills and concentration. Children learn to recognise shape, colour and size. Jigsaw puzzles must be challenging enough, yet at the same time be suitable for the child's stage of development. Selection is very important here: a puzzle should never cause a child to become frustrated or angry. The children use logic and manipulative skills together with repetition, as they enjoy doing the same puzzle over and over again.

You, as an ECD practitioner, can be resourceful by making your own jigsaw puzzles for the playroom. An appropriate picture that is pasted onto firm cardboard and then laminated can be cut into different shapes. This is inexpensive and it enables you to include pictures that fit in with your theme or topic.

c) Cooking

Cooking can be a fun, creative activity that encourages children's fine motor development. Children love to make simple things such as icing Marie Biscuits and decorating them, making Rice Crispies biscuits or ice cream cone clowns.

Making biscuits with dough is a wonderful activity for fine motor development. Children manipulate the dough with their fingers by pounding and kneading. They roll the dough using a rolling pin. They use cookie cutters to cut out the dough. Later, they use spatula or blunt knife to spread icing. And they manipulate small objects – "hundreds and thousands", small sweets, silver balls – to decorate their biscuits.

In the process, they also learn measuring and counting. You can use cookie cutters in the shapes of triangles, circles and squares when you discuss the names of shapes. Children can count how many they made and how many they ate. If the dough cannot be made from scratch, pastry is available in the frozen food section of the supermarket. Use nuts, raisins, "hundreds and thousands", Smarties, liquorice and other small edible decorations. Children feel very involved in the process, and it is a valuable practical learning experience.

3. Activities for cognitive development

Activities that are designed to promote cognitive development should encourage children to practise reasoning, thinking and problem-solving, and help them to create original ideas. Here are some activities that encourage cognitive development:

1. matching games
2. memory games
3. sorting games
4. what's missing?
5. patterns – what comes next?
6. quick change
7. construction games

a) Matching games

Matching games can teach colour, shape and numeracy, either together or separately. Use a wide variety of sizes and shapes of pieces to teach grading and scale. Matching games encourage children to use their senses and specifically develop their tactile (touch) and visual (seeing) senses.

Picture cards are easy to make yourself. Ensure that the pictures are clear and colourful, and that the design is uniform. This means that designs that are repeated should be similar. For example, if you use a life-like picture of a spaceship and then you have another picture of a wooden one, you will not have informality of design.

Dominoes are useful to use for matching games. They help the children to see similarities and differences as they match up numbers or pictures. You could use pictures and numbers, but remember to use age-appropriate activities. Matching games can be used for individual or group activities.
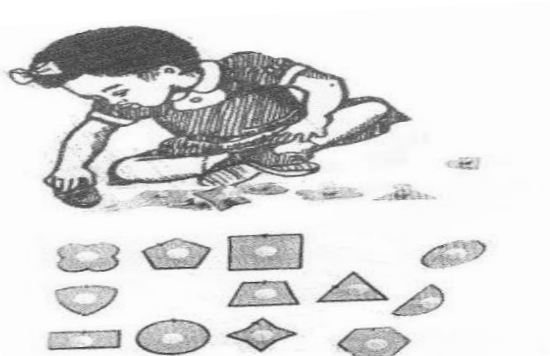
b) Memory games:

It is important to encourage children to develop their memory skills, both visual (seeing) and auditory (hearing). Visual memory is the ability to remember what the eyes have seen. Memory cards are an enjoyable way to train the memory and improve concentration.

Memory games are usually played with a set of matching cards. The cards are played in rows, face down, on the floor or table. The aim of the game is to pair off matching cards by remembering the position of the cards one has seen before. The players take turns to turn up two cards. If the cards match, the player removes the pair from the game. If they do not match, they are replaced face down in the same position. The players try to remember the position of each card that has been replaced, should they turn up its partner. The player with the most pairs wins. The number of cards in the game depends on the age and capability of the group. Two-to-four-year-olds will enjoy matching simple shapes, pictures, colours and textures. Children may also enjoy making their own memory cards to be used individually or in a group.

c) Sorting games

Sorting games require the children to look for similarities and differences in objects. Here you can be really creative and use a variety of everyday objects and waste material, for example marbles, nuts and bolts, buttons, beads, aerosol can lids, bottle tops and pictures, to name a few.
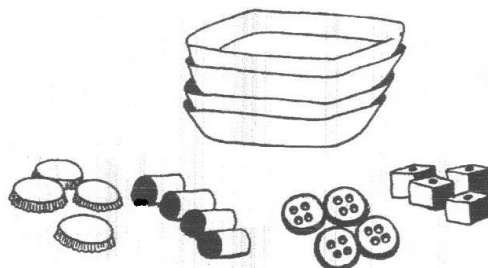
d) What's missing?

This is a problem-solving game that develops observation skills and memory. It is sometimes known as Kim's game.

i.   Set out a variety of household objects on the table.

ii. Ask the child to look at these carefully.

iii. Hold up a cardboard screen and remove one object.

iv. The child must now guess which object is missing.

Depending on the age group, you can make it easy or difficult. At first, put out only a few objects, then gradually add more or change them altogether. You could even reverse the roles. Let a child hide an object, while you try to guess.

Suggested objects for this game are:

- a variety of small toys

- an assortment of coloured crayons

- some pictures cut from magazines

- kitchen utensils such as a knife, fork, spoon, tin opener or ladle

Patterns – what comes next?

This learning activity develops learners" ability to recognise the repetition of certain objects in patterns.

- Use coloured plastic pegs or toothpicks that have been stained different colours with food colouring. Let the children watch while you set out the sticks according to a set pattern.

- The pattern that you choose should be one that repeats over and over.

- While you are setting up the pattern, ask questions that will help them to see the pattern that emerges.

- When you see that they have the idea, ask what comes next? See if the children can choose the correct sticks and place them correctly in the pattern.

- The children can copy the pattern themselves either individually or as a group.

You can vary this activity by using twigs, leaves, stones, buttons, ice cream sticks and so on.

e) Quick change

Memory can be very selective (we seem to choose what to remember and what to forget). Often we seem to remember only the things that interest us. This game tests powers of observation and memory. It is fun to see what we miss in front or our eyes. This game is played in an open space and will last about 15 minutes.

The children form pairs. The partners face each other, observing each other's clothes, hair, accessories and so on.

Next, partners turn their backs on each other and each makes changes to his or her personal appearance, such as unbuttoning a button, removing a bracelet, unbuckling a belt and so on.

When both are ready, they turn around and each tries to identify the changes the other has made.

Let the players switch partners and make four changes this time. Keep switching partners and adding to the number of changes, depending on the age of the children.

f) Construction games

There are a variety of construction sets available, consisting of units that can be joined together to make things. Some popular examples are Lego bricks, Meccano, Tinkertoy, Lasy and Dizzy Discs. These sets can be used to make abstract representations of just about anything a child can imagine. You could make up your own inexpensive construction sets using boxes, small wooden planks, wheels, cones, cotton reels, axles, ropes and pulleys. This encourages the children to be creative and to use their imagination.

4. Activities for language development

Language acquisition in children (in other words, the process of "picking up" a language) cannot really be taught but there are many ways to encourage language development. These skills are not usually taught at one particular time of the day. Instead, they should be demonstrated throughout the day in both play-based and routine-based activities. You can provide children with activities that develop their oral (speaking) and listening (aural) skills and increase their vocabulary during lunch, outdoor play and art activities, as well as during ring time. Let us look at some of the ways you can encourage language competence and good communication in your playroom during routine-based activities and play-based activities.

Routine-based activities for language development

Routine-based activities are activities like eating, toileting, washing and arriving at school. These types of activities offer many opportunities for encouraging language development. Here are some things you can do to use routine-based activities for language development:

a) Listen

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 you to listen to what children say, and to respond to their messages.

You will have many opportunities for conversation with children when they arrive at 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. Let them tell you about what their brother or sister did at breakfast. These very special moments that foster language development as well as convey the message that you respect him or her and want to listen.

b) Provide experiences

Children will want to talk if they have something to talk about. If you provide many interesting and engaging experiences for them, they will have no problem choosing a topic for conversation. It is important to let children talk about what's happening during an art or discovery activity; don"t wait until the activity is finished.

c) Ask questions

You can also draw children out by asking questions (questions that provide direction or guidance) and asking for clarification. Ask them questions like "What do you think will happen if you mix blue and red clay together?"… "What does the rabbit think about when everyone goes home for the day?" and "Why did the blocks fall over when you put the big ones on top of the small ones?" Children will not develop good language and communication skills if they are never asked to use those skills.

Asking open-ended questions (questions that have no right or wrong answer) will help children to draw their own conclusions using their observational, cognitive and imaginative skills. Questions like "What would you like to take along for the picnic?" Or "How do you feel when it snows [rains/is very hot/is freezing cold]?" Give children a chance to express their own answers without worrying about whether they are right or wrong.

d) Encourage conversation

You can play an important role when you ask children to talk to each other. This opportunity frequently arises during arguments, but should be encouraged at other times, too. You can encourage children to share their feelings or ideas with others by making comments such as "Why don't you tell Jabu about that?".... "Ask Mpumi about her new baby brother."

There are many opportunities to encourage conversation during mealtimes. The smaller the group, the easier it is to get a conversation started. Make sure that you sit with children at mealtimes, to encourage conversation. Spend some time thinking of good topics to introduce. Mondays, grandparents, friends, new clothes, favourite toys and pets all make good topics of conversation. Make sure that some of the quieter children are drawn into the conversation by directing conversation to them.

Play-based activities for language development

Every learning activity you facilitate in your playroom will have a communication component. For example, children may need to listen to follow instructions. 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. They may sing songs, play with finger puppets or talk about the calendar and the weather. These are all good ways to encourage children to use their communication skills. 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.

Activities to encourage children's language development skills:

1) Musical activities

2) Let's tell a story

3) What's that sound?

4) Simon says

5) Using props to tell stories

1) Musical activities

Children love musical activities that allow them to sing, hum, chant, make music and dance. Besides being fun, musical activities encourage children to listen to and communicate with each other. Here are a few ideas for musical activities.

The name game: Tell the children to sit in a circle. Pass around a beanbag or small ball. When the child gets the beanbag, he sings "hello (name of child on his right), how are you? Who is sitting next to you?" Then the beanbag is passed to the next child, who repeats the song. Continue until everyone has had a turn.

The waves on the sea: sing this song to the tune of "The wheels on the bus"

1. The waves on the sea go up and down, up and down, up and down

The waves on the sea go up and down, and up and down- all day long

2. The shark in the sea goes snap, snap, snap, snap.

3. The fish in the sea go swish, swish, swish

4. The boats in the sea go toot-toot-toot

What's the beat? Choose three or four different musical instruments. Explain to children that when you bang the drum, they must march to the beat; when you clap your hands they must jump to the beat, when you shake the tambourine, they must shake their bodies to the beat.

2) Let's tell the story

Let children co-operate to create a story. Begin with the line, "Once upon a time….. "Give each child a turn to add one sentence to the story. If you can, write down the story, so you can read it over to the children. This fun activity exercises children's imaginations and gets them talking and listening.

3) What's the sound?

Tell children to co-operate to create a story. Begin with the line, "Once upon a time… [We went to the zoo/we visited a farm/we went on a train journey".] Give each child turn to add one sentence to the story, telling of the noises that [the elephants, the lions, cats, horses, dogs, trains] made. If you can, write down the story, so you can read it over to the children. This fun activity exercises children's imaginations and gets them talking and listening.

4) Simon says

Play "Simon says": Stand in front of your group of children and say, "Simon says stand up! Simon says sit down! Simon says turn around!" Children must follow your instructions. However, if you give the instruction leaving out the words "Simon says", that is, saying only "Put your hands on your head", they must not move.

5) What am I feeling?

Give each child a chance to act a feeling – sad, cross, happy, tired or excited and so on. The rest of the group must try to guess what the feeling is. This game helps children explore how we use body language to communicate.

6) Using props to tell stories

Storyteller and artist Sarah Pleydell believes that children understand new language concepts more easily if they are presented with sensory experiences (to do with the senses). This is particularly true for learners who are acquiring a second or additional language. In the following text, she describes how she uses simple sensory story props (supporting materials) during storytelling activities.

> When I first introduce the word "sunshine" I have the children dip their fingers in a pool of honey served on a paper plate (to keep this hygienic, have the children wash their hands before story time and rotate the plate before serving each child). Honey suggests some of the sensations we all associate with sunny days.

> The best way to start working with sensory props is to identify one per story. For example, if a story involves rain or a rainy day, bring in a spray bottle; if it's about winter or cold, use ice; if flowers are in the story, put perfume on each child's nose; if a story involves food or a meal, work the story into snack time.

> The props can be introduced either before beginning the story or as they occur wherever the storyteller feels most comfortable, taking time to organise and distribute the props. Remember children will wait for something interesting and exciting, and an aide can help with the logistics. (But remember, if the children's hands are sprayed with rain before the story begins, they will already be wet when the rain section comes up.)

> As story tellers grow more comfortable working with props, they can gradually add more to the story circle. When I tell the story Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wisebrown, a flashlight (torch) is my primary prop. I close the drapes (curtains) and shine it on the ceiling to represent the moon. I tell the children that this is a story about the moon and talk about its shape, colours, and appearance. Next I shine the flashlight on the pages of the book as a reading light. After all the objects in the rabbit's bedroom have been named, I take the flashlight and shine it on some of the objects in our playroom. This way the bedroom in the story becomes part of our classroom and the classroom is part of the story.

> Working with sensory props is intimidating at first, but when storytellers take the plunge they will discover how successful it is. Props are a lot of fun, and they do not distract the children. And storytellers will have fun too, and they can surprise themselves with new ideas that they can come up with. (Pleydell, 1994 – 95)

As this text shows, using appropriate story props can help to bring a story to life for young listeners. Using story props also encourages young children to think about creative props to use when they tell their own stories.

Most activities can be used as an opportunity to practise language skills. Encourage the children to discuss anything that has to do with their activities. Ask challenging questions, then help the child to communicate the answer. Making labels for objects and dictating stories are other good ways to incorporate language into both routine-based and play-based activities, making the playroom a language-rich environment.

5. Activities for social and emotional development

As you know, children tend to become increasingly social and independent as they grow and develop. However, it is not always easy for children to make the change from being self-focused, and interacting mainly with parents or caregivers, to becoming group-focused and interacting with peers in healthy ways. However, it is critical that children learn to socialise and learn easily with their peers. Within the ECD playroom, many of the learning activities you organise will be group

activities. This means that the children will need to work together. Your task, as the ECD practitioner, is to encourage young children to communicate, interact and work together, so that they can develop their social and emotional skills.

If children's social skills are well developed, they will learn more easily in a group. Researchers have found that children who are popular and well-liked by peers tend to have the following qualities or skills:

- sharing and co-operation
- good listening skills
- being themselves
- happiness
- enthusiasm
- self-confidence
- thoughtfulness

Encourage the children in your care to develop these qualities and skills. Make sharing, co-operation and thoughtfulness the norm in your playroom. Use what you've learned about effective listening to help children develop good listening skills. Respect and affirm children for being themselves. Encourage them to feel happy and be enthusiastic during their time at playschool. And provide them with experiences of success to build their self-confidence.

You need to provide children with many opportunities to practise working together with others. Here are a few ideas of ways in which you can help children work together and develop their social and emotional skills:

a) Give them paired or grouped activities about responsibilities.

b) Set up activities in which they are required to work together.

c) Use routine-based activities.

a) Give children paired or grouped activities on responsibilities

When children have to perform playroom tasks or chores (for example, handing out snacks or tidying up the art area), you could group the children into pairs or small groups. Encourage them to take responsibility for the task or chores together. This will mean they need to make a few decisions together about how to manage the task. They will need to ask questions like: "How many snacks must each one of us hand out?" Or, "Who will put the paints away and who will tidy the papers?"

b) Set up activities in which the children are required to work together

When you plan learning activities, try to create opportunities for children to work together and to manage their group work interactions. In other words, say, "Find a partner and choose a puzzle to do together." Or, "Form groups of four and choose a board game you would like to play together."

c) Use routine-based activities

During the typical playschool day, you have several times that involve the whole playschool, for example the morning circle or ring time. Use these routine-based activities to teach and reinforce social skills like taking turns. The social skills you can introduce include asking questions if they don"t understand and not interrupting the speaker.

Young children are impatient. If they have something to say, they want to say it now. However, you need to teach children the self-discipline to wait for the person to finish speaking, instead of

interrupting. This is simply good manners and a vital social skill that children need to develop. If you allow children to interrupt, the speaker may lose track of what he or she is saying, and other children may become bored and let their attention wander. You could suggest that the child with something to say puts up her hand, or lightly touches your arm. In this way, you know the child has something to say. Teach the children to wait peacefully and listen. When the person has finished talking, they'll get a chance to say what they need to say.

If you follow these simple suggestions, you'll go a long way towards helping children develop the social and emotional skills they need to learn together in a group.

6. Activities for creative and imaginative development

Stimulating creativity and imagination development in children promotes independent, spontaneous learning. You will first look at activities that promote creative development and then at activities that promote imaginative development. But before you look at activities, let's look at eight ways to encourage children's creativity and imagination.

Eight ways to encourage children's creativity and imagination

   a) Encourage children to follow their own interests.

   b) Encourage children to select their own materials and tools.

   c) Encourage children to express their own ideas in their own way.

   d) Treat children's creations with respect.

   e) Provide meaningful praise and feedback.

   f) Focus on both the process and the product.

   g) Encourage children to talk about their creations.

   h) Provide children with inspiration.

Let's consider each of these ways in turn:

a) Encourage children to follow their own interests

When children create, they often use their own lives as a starting point. Their creations reflect their inner worlds, for example their feelings, worries, concerns or delights. Their creations also reflect their outer worlds. For example, a child who is fascinated by dinosaurs may often express this interest in open-ended art activities by painting and drawing dinosaurs.

In other words, children express through their creations those things that are currently meaningful and relevant in their lives.

Make sure that you encourage children to follow their own interests. Encourage them to find inspiration from their own lives, so that their creations are real and meaningful to them. Encourage them to use their imagination to represent their lives and interests in their creations.

b) Encourage children to select their own materials and tools

Children often have something inside them – a thought, a feeling or an experience- that they want or need to express. You can help children to express themselves more fully if you encourage them to select their own tools and materials. They may want to paint with a paintbrush rather than use finger paints. They may want to make a clay sculpture rather than draw. They may want to cut their paper into a shape before painting or colouring, rather use a standard rectangular sheet of paper.

The best way to encourage children to decide for themselves which tools and materials to use is to provide choices. Always provide at least five creative art activities every day. Make sure you always provide paint, play dough and drawing activities. Provide two additional art activities each day as well, for example printing, collage-making, paper maché, clay sculptures and so on.

c) Encourage children to express their own ideas in their own way

Always allow children the freedom to express themselves in their own way. This freedom of expression is what makes creative and imaginative activities especially meaningful to young children. Sometimes you may feel puzzled by what children create. Or you may be tempted to offer your own ideas of how they could express a particular thought, feeling or experience. Resist the temptation. Children need to know that in this area of their lives they have the power to do things their way. It is far healthier for a child to express his creativity and imagination freely and uniquely than to reproduce textbook pictures that will meet with adult approval. Allow children free expression.

Remember, when you facilitate children's creative art activities, your main task is to ensure that the children feel free to express themselves in a creative and original way.

Your task is not "teach", or to steer children towards drawing "correctly". This will only hamper children's freedom to express themselves in truly unique and creative ways. Instead, you need to encourage and promote a sense and appreciation of free expression.

d) Treat children's creations with respect

Children put time, energy and care into their creations. Their creations reflect their inner world of feelings, thoughts and dreams. Always treat children's creations with respect. Creativity is natural and spontaneous in children, and they never stop to consider (as adults do) whether or not they have "artistic ability". Too many teachers and parents confirm a lack of respect for the child's effort when they show the youngster how to paint or draw. The effect of showing a child "how" is negative.

e) Provide meaningful praise and feedback

Children feel encouraged and motivated when their creative efforts are discussed and praised. However, they can easily see through glib or insincere praise. Avoid comments like these:

- You clever girl!

- That's the best picture I've ever seen!

- You're going to be an artist 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 as a means of self-expression. Instead, try to make your comments or praise meaningful. Comments like the ones below affirm and encourage children. The comments are open-ended. They encourage children to talk about their creations:

- You took a lot of time and care over this picture.

- I like these wavy lines. They make me feel peaceful. How did you make them?

- What a lot of colours! Which colour did you start with?
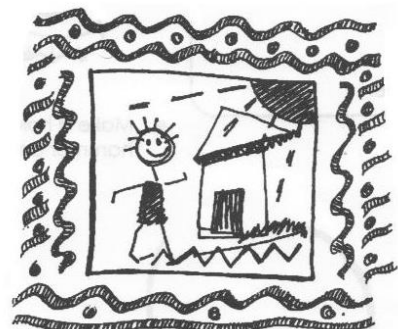
f) Focus on both the process and the product

When you comment on children's creations, pay attention to both the process (how they made it) and the product (the finished artwork). In the process of creating, the child may have:

- cooperated well with other children at the art table

- mixed the paints carefully without spilling

- chosen an interesting variety of objects for a collage

- maintained attention and interest throughout the activity

Notice what the child does while he or she creates. Make sure you give positive feedback on how the child produced the artwork, but also focus on the final creation.

g) Encourage children to talk about their creations

It is important that the children feel that their creations are understood, commented on, appreciated and taken seriously. You may find that in a caring, supportive atmosphere, young children feel able to use their creations to help them verbalise their fears, worries, hopes and dreams.

h) Provide children with inspiration

Children often use their creativity and imagination to express their thoughts, feelings and impressions about their lives and their world. They use their memories and emotions to help them imagine and create. However, children sometimes need inspiration to help them get access to these memories and emotions, and thus to their creativity. As an ECD practitioner, you can help by providing props that will help to bring their thoughts, feelings and memories to life.

To give you some ideas of ways to do this, let's look at:

- music

- self-portraits

- field trips or outings

Music: Through the ages, people have used music to inspire their creative endeavours. You could play music while children participate in a creative art activity, allowing the music to influence their moods and enhance their creativity. Gentle, classical music may calm and soothe children while they work, whereas lively music may trigger their more fiery creative spirits. Feel free to experiment with different kinds of music in your playroom.

Alternatively, you could play a particularly powerful piece of music for a few minutes, while the children close their eyes and listen. Ask them to use their imagination to think about what colours and shapes they would use to paint the music they hear. Then allow them the space to create their own unique impressions of the music they heard.

Self-portraits: Put up a mirror or photos of the children in the art area. Let the children study their own faces as they draw their self-portraits.

Field trips or outings: Encourage the children to use art to show their thoughts, ideas and feelings before and after they have participated in a field trip or outing.

Now that we have looked at ways to encourage children's creativity and imagination, let's consider different activities you can do to help with their creative development.

7. Activities for creative development

Every day, if you can, try to provide children with five different creative art activities from which to choose. (Obviously, this will depend on the space you have available, and the number of children in your playgroup.) You should always try to provide the three core creative art activities of painting, drawing and modelling. Try to also offer two additional creative art activities each day as well, such as printing, collage and construction activities. Here are some ideas for creative art activities.

Painting

Painting does not always need to be done with a brush. Fingers, sponge, ear buds, sticks and feathers may be used instead. Children can also paint with brushes of different thickness. Resist painting, tie dying and batik and other creative painting activities can be fun for the children. Here are some of the many activities for stimulating children's creativity through painting:

Blob painting

Put blobs of thick paint on to a sheet of paper and fold it into two or four so that the marks are transferred from one side to the other. You could even give the children paper that has been pre-cut into shapes such as a flower or a butterfly for a lovely result.

String painting

Stick a piece of thick string on a rope onto a block of wood in an interesting shape. Dip the raised pattern into thin paint and apply it to paper or fabric.

Place a little thin paint on the paper. Let children create designs by using a drinking straw and blowing the paint in different directions with their straws.

Splatter painting

Each child has an old toothbrush. They then dip the toothbrush into the paint and tap off the excess paint. Hold the brush with the bristles facing the paper and run a finger over the bristles. The splatters create a lovely effect. Leaves on cardboard cut-outs can be placed on the paper with a little prestick (or other temporary adhesive) before starting the activity and then be removed afterwards.

Mirror or window painting

Water-based paints easily wash off a glass surface. Involve the children in the cleaning- up activity afterwards for an enjoyable learning activity.

Drawing activities

Children can draw with wax crayons, pencil crayons, pencil crayons, felt–tipped pens, oil pastels and large, fat beginners" pencils. They can also do mixed-medium drawing, for example paint and

crayons or pencil and oil pastels. They can use different surfaces to draw on, such as chalkboards, rough and smooth paper or even drawing with a stick in the sand.

There are countless ideas for stimulating drawing in young children. Speak to colleagues and read widely, so that you can build up a variety of ideas for yourself. We will discuss two ideas that you may like to use: magic pictures and fingernail etchings.

- *Magic pictures*

With white or yellow crayons, children draw a scribble picture on paper. They should leave a lot of the paper clean. They will have a picture that is almost invisible.

Now children paint the entire picture with dye or fairly watery paint in a dark colour. Suddenly the invisible pictures come to life, and they have a magic picture to hang up to dry.

- *Fingernail etchings*

Children use all the coloured wax crayons except the black one to cover the paper with areas of colour. They should press down hard as they colour.
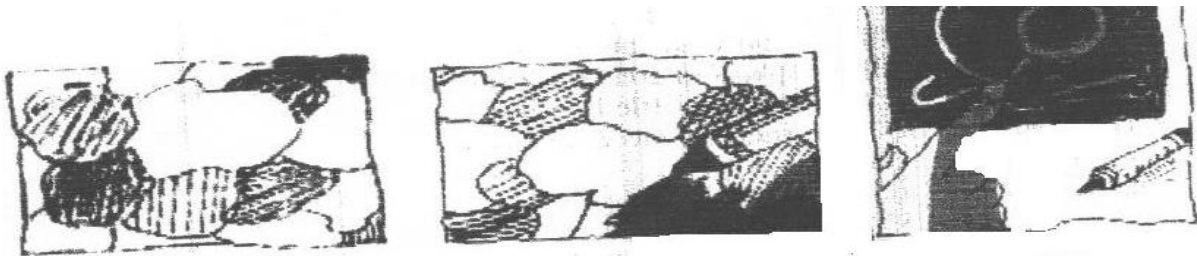
When they have finished, they take the black crayon and, pressing down hard, coat the whole sheet of paper with black, covering all the other colours. Now they use fingernails or tooth picks to scratch a picture on the paper. The black crayon will be removed where they scratch, leaving the other colours to show underneath.

Modelling activities

Children can make models and sculptures with different materials such as natural clay, play dough, plasticise or paper mâché. They can use different modelling tools, such as rolling pins made from lengths cut off a broomstick; cookie cutters made from lids, paper towel rolls or kitchen utensils, and shells, stones, beads or cutlery to make marks on the modelling material.

Printing activities

Children can do sponge printing or potato printing. They can also do hand and footprint printing. They can use natural objects for printing such as leaves, sticks, stones and shells. They can use everyday objects or junk for printing such as keys, bottle tops, corks and ice-cream sticks.

Collage activities

Children can create shape collages where they choose from different sizes and colours of circles, squares, triangles, rectangles and so on. They can also do colour collages where they choose from different items of the same colour, wood collages where they choose from different sizes and shapes of wood twigs, wood off-cuts, shavings or season collages where they choose items that represents spring, summer, and autumn or winter. Other collage activities are wool collages where children make designs by pasting piece of wool of different colours on paper; fabric collages where children choose from a variety of different colours, shapes and textures of fabric; string collages where children choose from different lengths, textures and thicknesses of string; or nature collages

where children can collect natural items such as leaves, twigs or sand on a nature walk and use these natural items to make a collage.

Construction activities

Children can build polystyrene constructions, nature constructions (using items found in nature), box constructions (using large or small boxes) or cylindrical constructions (using toilet rolls or other tubes).

When you were looking at how to adapt resources, you were encouraged to collect old boxes and other recycled junk materials. This collection will come in useful now for creative construction activities. Every playroom should have a box or container to house beautiful junk, for example egg cartons, cotton reels, bottle caps, matchboxes, film containers, bits of fabric, toilet roll tubes, string, shoe boxes, toothpaste caps – in fact almost anything made of paper, cardboard, plastic or fabric. Just do not use glass!

Children can construct all sorts of things: animals, trains and other vehicles, cities, mobiles, monsters, and so on. You can link the construction activities with your theme. For example, if your theme is "The sense of sight", the children could make binoculars with two toilet roll tubes stuck together. Use your imagination to inspire children and extend them. Necklaces and bracelets can be made using drinking straws that have been cut into pieces and threaded onto wool or string. Papier-mâché beads can be made as well. Remember to ensure that you make a hole in them before they dry. This makes a lovely gift for Mother's Day.

You can do an open-ended junk construction activity that challenges children to use their creativity and their imagination. Lay out a variety of cardboard boxes and other junk materials, polystyrene trays, egg boxes, toilet rolls, strings, beads, ribbons, old wrapping paper and so on. You could also include broken appliances, so that children can use cogs and springs and other real machine parts. Provide glue and strong sticky tape (clear packaging tape works well). Then allow children the freedom to create whatever they want to, using the junk materials you have provided. Allow learners to be as creative and innovative as possible when designing "junk constructions". These can be painted, collaged, (having small pieces of coloured paper stuck on to decorate the finished product) or papier-mâché (soak bits of torn newspaper in water and paste; then mould the paper onto the shape and smooth it down). Children respond in a highly creative way to this challenge, and you may be amazed at what they create – ice cream-making machines, video camera periscopes, dolls" cradles!

It is often unnatural to separate creative and imagination development. However, creative activities tend to involve creating a physical end product, while imaginative activities tend to involve a process of playing with no physical end product. We now look at some activities that encourage imaginative development.

8. Activities for imaginative development

Children love to use their imaginations and act roles they see in the world around them. You can facilitate children's imaginative play by providing them with props that will help them act out fantasy or role playing scenarios. Try to make your props open-ended: a Batman costume bought from the shop will only allow a child to be Batman. But a long red piece of fabric can be a superhero cloak, a magician's cape, a red carpet for a princess to walk down, a queen's dress and so on. Open-ended props allow children to exercise their imaginations and to create the props they need for a particular imaginative activity.

Young children love to mimic what they see in the everyday world. Here are some ideas for props to support everyday imaginative play:

- plastic plates, bowls and cutlery
- child-size stoves
- small table and chairs

- pictures of food from magazines (laminate these to make them more durable)

- empty food boxes

- "pretend" doctor equipment – mask, stethoscope, thermometer

- plastic tool set

- envelopes, cardboard rectangles and a post-box made from a cardboard box

- play money

- old electronic equipment – computer keyboards, old radios, old typewriters and tape recorders

- musical instruments

- puppets

- old clothes – ties, old shirts, flower girl dresses, aprons, hats

- pieces of fabric and scarves

- old mirrors, hairbrushes, combs, scissors

Always rotate and recycle props, so that there is always something new for children to explore. Keep the children's favourite props available at all times.

You can also make furniture for imaginative play. Get a large cardboard appliance box, the kind used for stoves or washing machines. Cut out a door and windows. Paint the box so that it looks attractive, but try not to make it look too much like a house. In this way, children can use it for a variety of different fantasy games. It can be a house, a spaceship, an animal's burrow, a pirate's cave, a shop, a hospital, and so on.

Here are some specific activities that encourage imaginative development:

Let's play pretend

During circle time, give each child an object: a piece of paper, a stick, a plastic spoon. Show the children a few ways in which you can use the object. For example, you can use the stick as a comb or a toothbrush. Then start a chant. Let's play pretend with our little sticks. Give each child a chance to think of a way to pretend with the sticks.

Allow children to make the rules for their role playing games. This gives them the freedom to express themselves, and helps them to take responsibility for managing their own play.

Let's play shop

Collect a variety of empty boxes of foods that the children use at home, for example Rice Krispies, Jungle Oats, biscuits boxes, margarine containers, pasta boxes. Stuff the boxes with newspaper and tape them tight. Children can use these boxes to play "shop". They can also use play money and the large painted appliance box in this imaginative activity.

> ***Class Activity 3: 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.

2.2 Design the activities

There are many aspects relating to designing activities! In this unit we will focus on designing activities that meet developmental needs. Consult the booklet "Creative Ideas" and the appendices at the end of this Learner Guide for ideas.

As an ECD practitioner, you need to know how to design activities to meet the developmental needs of the babies, toddlers or young children in your playgroup. You should be able to define the purpose of activities in terms of their contribution towards achieving identified developmental outcomes. You should also be able to design activities that are appropriate to the individual developmental needs of all the children in your playgroup. The activities that you design should make provision for progression through the developmental stages. The activities you design should also be integrated so the children are developing in more than one area of skill at a time. In this unit you will learn how to design activities that meet children's developmental needs.

2.2.1 Ensure that the design makes provision for child input

When you design activities for the babies, toddlers or young children in your care, you need to make sure that the activities provide opportunities for the child's input when that is appropriate. So, what is "child input"? Child input refers to any activity where the children contribute to the content, resources or process in a meaningful way. Child input requires that the children are actively involved in the content, resources or process of the activity. So, why should children give input to activities? There is an old Chinese proverb that says: "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand." This means that children learn best when they are actively involved in an activity rather than being passive recipients or on-lookers.

There are many ways to provide opportunities for child input in activities. You will look at three different ways:

- children telling their own stories
- children making their own resources
- children giving input in routine-based activities.

Let's look at each of these in more detail.

a) Children telling their own stories

Children can contribute to the content of an activity by telling their own stories. This is a very important way to cultivate children's love for books, reading and stories. There are multiple ways in which you can do this. In this section, you'll focus on three ways, namely:

i.   encouraging children to make up stories through fantasy and imaginative play

ii.   inviting children to re-tell familiar stories or make up their own stories

iii. listening to children when they tell stories, and writing their own stories down

i. Encourage children to make up stories through fantasy and imaginative play

Children love engaging in fantasy and imaginative play. Making up their own stories and plots is a natural extension of fantasy play activities. You can encourage children to make up stories by asking them prompting questions such as: "Zandile, you are dressed up as a beautiful princess. And here is Tommy. He is dressed up as a monkey. What will happen when the princess meets the monkey?"

You could also give groups of children an opportunity to dress up and act out a short story for the rest of the class. Make sure to keep it short. Children love an audience, and their play can go on for hours if you don't set clear limits.

ii. Invite children to re-tell familiar stories or make up their own stories

Children love to become familiar with certain books and stories, and will often return to the same story over and over again. You can encourage the children to re-tell familiar stories. You can also encourage them to make up their own stories. If you want to, use a familiar story as a starting point. For example, you can say, "I like the story about the sailor-dog. I wonder if you can tell me a story about another animal. What about the astronaut-pig?"

Another suggestion from storyteller Wendy Walsh is to give each child a simple picture book. You give the children five minutes to "read" the book. Then, you take the books away and give each child a chance to "tell" the story. You need to use books that are very short and simple. When the children become more used to this technique, you can begin to encourage them to change their tone of voice or use sound effects. In this way, you can help children to start practising the art of storytelling at a very early age.

iii. Listen to children when they tell stories, and write their stories down

You need to listen attentively to children when they tell you their stories. You can encourage the child by offering meaningful praise. For example, you might say, "I like the gruff voice you used when you were the policeman".

You can also invite children to tell you stories for you to write down for them. You can write these stories in their own books. Then you can read the story back to the child who told it. You can do this on a one-to-one basis, or you can read the story to the group. The proud smile on the child "writer's" face will prove to you just what a confidence-boosting and affirming activity this storytelling is.

b) Children making their own resources

Children can contribute to the resources needed for an activity by making their own resources. Making resources is a very practical way to provide for child input in an activity. Let's read a case study to see how this can work.

> **CASE STUDY: HELPING CHILDREN MAKE MUSICAL SHAKERS**
>
> At the end of each year, "The Green Apple Playschool" in Gauteng holds an end-of-year concert. The ECD practitioner, Eve Nyingma, wants to make the concert special for the children in her class. She wants to involve the children in the concert right from the start. She wants them to feel their hard work helps to make the concert a success.
>
> Eve decides that children will perform a special song, We are the World, which conveys the message that children all over the world are important. She wants the children to play musical instruments while they sing this song. So a few weeks before the concert, she helps them to make their own musical shakers. The children do this activity step-by-step over a week. Here's how they make their own shakers:

Day 1

The children bring plastic 500ml cool drink bottles to playschool. Eve had given them reminders to collect bottles well in advance. She also collected "spare" bottles for children who do not remember to bring their own.

Day 2

The children paint their bottles with bright colours and patterns, and leave them to dry overnight.

Day 3

The children paint their bottles with varnish, so that the paint on their shakers will last longer. The varnished bottles are left to dry overnight.

Day 4

The children collect small containers of sand and small pebbles from the garden. Eve provides small containers filled with dried seeds, pips and stones. Children choose what they want to put into their shakers. Eve explains that they should not fill their shakers too full. They need to leave some space in the shaker so that they can hear the sound of the sand or rice moving about. The children then remove the lids from the bottles, "fill" their shakers and replace the lids.

Day 5

Eve helps the children to rehearse the song, we are the World, using their shakers to provide the rhythm. She teaches the children when to use the shakers and when to keep their shakers silent. They rehearse their song every day until the concert.

When the day of the concert arrived, the children in Eve's class were very excited. Although they were shy to perform in front of adults and strangers, they were proud of their colourful shakers. They had rehearsed their song so often that it was easy for them to perform. Their song was a great success. Eve explains why she thinks was so: "The children didn't just song a song. They took time and care to make their own musical shakers for the song. In this way, each child felt she had put small piece of herself into bringing the song to life."

This case study demonstrates several unimportant reasons why children should be encouraged to make their own resources. One reason is to give children a sense of pride and ownership. If a child feels proud about working with a resource they have made, they feel as if they "belong"; they feel part of the activity, their class, and their playschool. In the case study above, would the children have felt the same sense of belonging if they had been given "ready-made" shakers to use at their concert? No, "ready-made" shakers may be strong and attractive, but they could never give the children the same feeling of ownership that they gained from making their own shakers.

What are some of the other reasons why children should make their own resources? The mind map shows you some of the reasons.
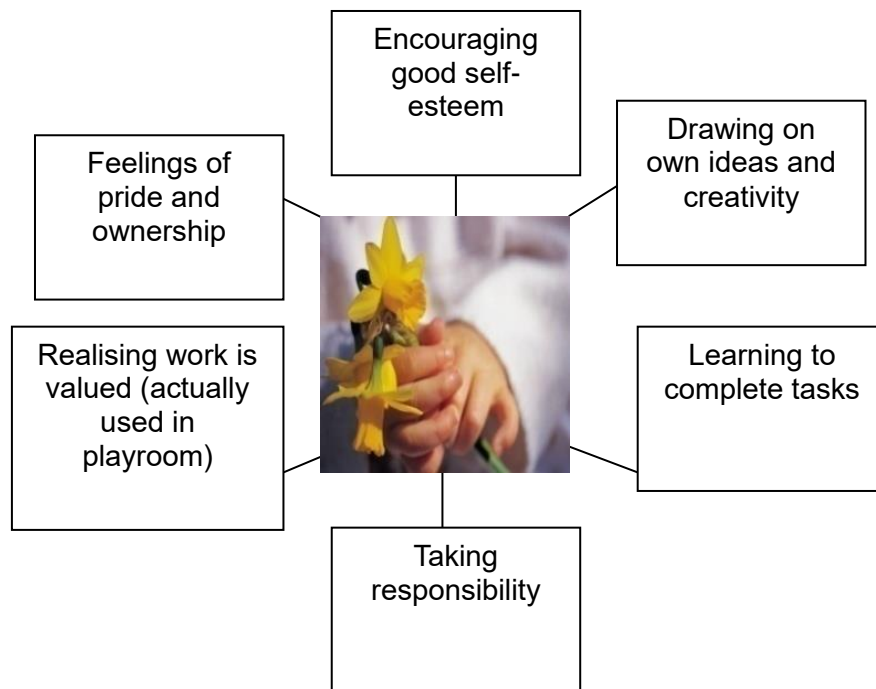
When you help children to make resources, you can take them step-by-step through the process. This is what Eve Nyingma did in the case study. However, even when you take children through the task step-by-step, try to give them some room to think for themselves and use their own creativity. Eve did this when the children painted the bottles in whatever colours and patterns they wanted and when the children chose what to put in their shakers. Another activity where children can help to make their own learning resource is by using play dough.

Children use play dough on a daily basis and play dough is easy to make. So, if possible, allow the children to help with the preparation of the play dough. They will make many new discoveries while they take part in this practical activity.

2.2.2 Define the purposes of the activities

Before you design the activities to use with your playgroup, you need to define the purpose of different learning activities that you can do with babies, toddlers and young children. When you define the purpose of a learning activity, you are answering the questions "Why?" and "What?" "Why do I want to use a specific learning activity?" "What is the aim of the learning activity?" Through your needs analysis, you have identified a number of developmental needs. The purpose of your activities is primarily to meet those developmental needs.

As you know, learning activities can meet many developmental needs. They can help babies, toddlers and young children to grow and develop in the major developmental areas:

- physical development
- cognitive development
- language development
- social and emotional development
- creative and imaginative development

Let's look in more detail at the purpose of activities that encourage cognitive development so that we can get an idea of how to break down the needs in a developmental area. This will help you to define the purpose of a particular activity in each of the developmental areas.

The purpose of cognitive development activities

Of course, you can say that all activities that develop cognitive skills have the development of cognitive skills as their purpose and you would be right. But that's a very broad statement. When you define the purpose of an activity you need to be more specific. It would be more specific to say that the purpose of a particular learning activity is to develop the cognitive skills of:

1. guessing

2. comparing and contrasting

3. identifying

4. classifying

5. sequencing and ordering

6. predicting cause and effect relationships

7. trying things out

8. reaching conclusions

9. reasoning

We discuss each of these purposes in more detail:

1. Guessing

An important cognitive skill that children need to develop is the ability to guess possible results. When young children make a guess, they use their prior knowledge and experiences. They use this knowledge and experience to help them make an educated guess. For example, look at this simple guessing experiment. Hold up a large heavy ball and a small light ball. Give the child an opportunity to hold the balls and feel their weights. Then ask him, I am going to hold the balls up high and drop them at the same time. Which ball will land first? In this instance, the child will make a guess. However, he has the opportunity to draw on (use) his knowledge about the relative weights of the ball before making his guess. He also has the opportunity to draw on any other experiences he has had with dropping heavy and light objects. When you encourage children to guess, you encourage them to draw on their knowledge and experience. You encourage them to exercise their reasoning skills. That is why guessing is a key cognitive skill that you should encourage.

2. Comparing and contrasting

Comparing and contrasting are important cognitive skills. There are many ways to practise these skills. You could offer lotto and bingo games, for example. You can get children to compare sounds, textures, smells, tastes and actions throughout by asking "find the one that is different" or "which ones are the same?"

3. Identifying

Identifying is the ability to name a given object correctly. This is a fairly simple skill. However, without the ability to identify single objects, a child will be unable to compare, contrast, sequence (put in order) and classify groups of objects. This skill can be practised during games and

activities. You could ask a child to name colours, numbers, animals or shapes from pictures, ask him to draw a shape or letter or have the child choose the given object or quantity from a group.

4. Classifying

Classifying is the ability to put objects into groups based on certain characteristics. Four- and five-year-old children can sort objects and actions into many different categories. There are lots of ways to work on classifying during the day. You can ask a child to find all the objects that belong together (such as food, toys, leaves or any other objects). Always ask the child why they think certain classes belong together so that they can think for themselves. Remember that behaviour can be classified, too: indoor or outdoor activities work or play. When you teach grouping and classification, use things that have common characteristics, but that are not identical.

5. Sequencing and ordering

Sequencing and ordering tasks require the child to place things or events in a logical order, either in space or time. Some examples of ordering and sequencing tasks are counting, grouping objects by size, and describing sequences of events. Helping children to make daily plans is one good way to practise this skill. Using manipulative activities that require the child to place objects (such as blocks or rings) in sequence is another. You will probably notice that children have an easy time with extremes, such as largest or smallest, but a more difficult time figuring out the middle objects in the series. This is normal, and explains why children need to practise this process often. Give encouragement, but let children learn from their own mistakes.

6. Predicting cause and effect relationships

Introducing cause and effect activities does not have to be complicated. One of the clearest ways of introducing these ideas is to guide children's behaviour. For example, teach children that if they make a mess (cause) they will have to clean it up (effect), and if they are disruptive (cause) they will be removed from the activity (effect). Much science is based on experimentation and exploring cause and effect relationships. You should first ask children "what would happen if...?" Then let children experiment to determine what the correct answer might be.

7. Trying things out

Children develop cognitive skills through learning activities and experiences that encourage them to think. The best way to get children to think is to encourage them to become actively involved in whatever they are doing. Rather than guiding and assisting children too much, let them try things out.

For example, allow a child the freedom to play with blocks in an open-ended way. This will encourage the child to think about questions like: what happens if I place a big block on the tall tower? Oh look, the tower falls over! What happens if I put the big block at the bottom of the tower? Children learn far more if they can actively try things out and then try to understand what happened and why it happened.

8. Reaching conclusions

If children have good reasoning skills, they will be able to reach conclusions. This ability is a vital element of problem-solving. When children guess, compare, contrast, identify, predict and try out, they gather important information about the world and how it works. They can then apply this knowledge to help them reach conclusions.

9.   Reasoning

Many learning activities provide opportunities for children to use reasoning skills. Help children to explore a topic by comparing, ordering and classifying information or actions. Ask open-ended questions to encourage them to think. Say, "What happens when we mix yellow and blue paint together?" Or "what happened when you baked the cookie? It turned brown? Why do you think that happened?"

Always encourage children to think about cause and effect relationships by being good questioners. They should not be like robots or computers that just provide facts. Help children to discover the answers to questions for themselves.

Now that you know how to define the purpose of activities in terms of their contribution towards achieving specific developmental outcomes, you can look at how to design activities that meet individual developmental needs.

2.2.3 Ensure that activities are free from cultural, race and gender bias

The activities you design must be bias-free. This means that the activities must not reinforce biased ideas about different people in the world around us. Remember that when we are biased, we have a fixed opinion that is not based on fact. A bias is a belief, often based on incorrect information that can lead to the unjust, unkind, or unfair treatment of others. Some of the most common forms of bias and discrimination are racism, sexism and stereotyping. We look at each of these in turn.

- **Racism** dismisses whole groups of people as inferior because of skin colour, race, religion, or national origin, claiming that such characteristics determine a person's abilities and behaviour (Cronbach, 1977).

- **Sexism** is the discrimination against someone on the basis of their sex (or gender). Societies assign different roles to people based on their gender. The nature of the diverse roles that male and female children play in our society becomes clear even at a very early age. For example, toys for boys typically include action figures, such as toy soldiers, while toys for girls are typically those that require nurturing, such as dolls.

- **Stereotypes** simplify the way we view the behaviour of a certain race, or gender, or culture or people who are physically challenged. Stereotypes give the impression that all people who share some identifiable characteristic will behave in a certain similar manner. The truth, however, is that not all Italians like pasta and not all black people can sing and dance well. It is only the common generalisations that would have us believe this.

The activities you design for your playgroup should not only be free of bias such as racism, sexism and stereotyping, they should celebrate diversity. When you design activities that are free of bias you are helping children to celebrate their diversity in various ways:

- A bias-free activity can portray differences positively. An understanding of differences and accepting those differences, helps to encourage respect.

- A bias-free activity can stress similarities. When people discover their common humanity, co-operation becomes possible.

- A bias-free activity can examine attitudes and values, drawing attention to bias and at the same time trying to reduce it.

- A bias-free activity can develop the skills and capabilities that the children need to realise their potential in our complex society.

Usually, children who are exposed to bias-free activities that celebrate diversity will respond to individual differences positively. Understanding, respect and positive interactions form the cornerstone of bias-free activities that celebrate diversity.

As our society changes, so the make-up of our playgroups changes too. More and more playschools have a diverse child population in which a variety of races, religions, and language groups are represented. In addition, more and more playrooms include children with special needs (needs due to learning difficulties or physical limitations). It is important that you as the practitioner are aware of any bias in children and deal with it effectively. If you work closely with the babies, toddlers or young children in your care, you will be able to detect and deal with inappropriate behaviour more easily. If you do find some biases, you need to spend time with the children by openly discussing these feelings and beliefs. Ask yourself questions like: Is the bias a result of misunderstandings or misconceptions? Can you counsel the biased child effectively? You must constantly be aware of the need to be an appropriate role model. Nothing less than the fair, consistent, caring treatment of all children is acceptable.

Providing a variety of bias-free activities is a good way to challenge bias and discriminating behaviour. One good place to deal with bias is in the morning greeting ring. The morning ring provides time for children to get to know one another. For example, you can provide opportunities for the children to discuss their backgrounds, families and where they live. This allows you to explore diversity within the context of each child's own family life. By doing so, you do not portray all members of a particular race, gender or culture as living in the same way. You should start these conversations. You can assist and support those children who may feel uncomfortable sharing these details in a large group.

2.2.4 Ensure that activities are stimulating, challenging, interesting and linked to real-life experience

The next criteria you need to consider when designing activities are to make sure the activities are stimulating and challenging. So, what does it mean that an activity is stimulating and challenging? A stimulating activity is one that engages the children in actively learning through what they are doing. When you stimulate someone, you encourage and motivate them to do something. A stimulating activity should excite children so they want to participate and learn. A stimulating activity will enhance the child's development. For example, babies, like all children, learn through their senses. In other words, they learn by touching, hearing, seeing, smelling and tasting. When you design activities for babies that stimulate their senses, they tend to learn more quickly.

A challenging activity is one that "stretches" the children to progress to the next stage of development or to the next level of difficulty or complexity. The criteria of designing activities that are stimulating and challenging are used together because they complement each other. A challenging and stimulating activity makes demands on children that force them to be actively involved in using their skills and abilities in a way that stimulates their growth and development.

You need to make sure that the activities you provide are neither too difficult nor too easy for your children. The activities should be challenging, but not so difficult that you will lose the children's attention. One challenge of teaching is to provide activities that are relevant to every developmental level in your class, and to then make them progressively more challenging as the year progresses. You should always ask yourself whether each child is getting the opportunity to work at his or her own level. Do they seem bored or confused? If so, make changes that will provide them with the learning opportunities they need.

You shouldn't set such long and involved activities that children become restless or stressed. If you leave them laughing over an activity, it is more likely that they will be enthusiastic the next time. On the other hand, if you notice a lot of wiggling and restlessness, the children are probably bored and it is time to move on to the next activity.

There are many ways to design stimulating and challenging activities. We will look at three different ways:

- moving from the known to the unknown
- arousing children's natural curiosity
- encouraging interaction

Let's look at each of these in more detail.

1. Moving from the known to the unknown

One way to make sure activities are stimulating and challenging is to design activities that build on the known and that introduce the unknown. Activities that include both familiar aspects and new aspects will ensure that children build on previous experiences and face a challenge. This encourages children to build new understandings that are based on active reconstruction of existing knowledge. The activities you design need to provide experiences and scaffolding (basis) for the children to build on and extend what they already know.

For example, you can teach your playgroup to play "I spy". When the children are sitting in a big circle, you can first teach them how to say the "I spy" rhyme: "I spy with my little eye someone (or something)…" then explain that they need to take turns to describe someone or something in the playroom and the other children have to guess what or who it is. For instance, "I spy with my little eye someone wearing a blue T shirt/with short, brown hair/playing with a block", or "I spy with my little eye something made of wood around/green/that you can play with". The ability to describe the things in the world around them with words is an important step for children's language development. This activity can be used at the beginning of the year to get the children used to their new playroom. It can be used at other times to practise colours. When you start introducing the alphabet you can add a new dimension by telling the children with which letter of the alphabet the item they have described, begins. For instance, the child says, "I spy with my little eye something made of wood". The other children eventually guess that it is a table. Then you can say, "able starts with the letter T". You could also have said, "I spy with my little eye something beginning with T."

2. Arousing children's natural curiosity

Another way to make activities stimulating and challenging is to arouse (stir up) children's natural curiosity. You need to design activities that encourage children to ask and answer questions. You can design activities and experiments that encourage children to think about cause and effect. For example, ask the children questions such as, "What do fish do when we turn out the lights?" "What happens to the sugar when we put it in the tea?"and "Could birds fly without wings?" These questions teach children to observe and think for themselves.

You can also teach children words, songs and rhymes in different languages. All children enjoy learning words from other languages, so by including different languages in your playschool, you will stimulate children's curiosity and help them to accept and acknowledge languages that are different from their own.

Children are naturally curious about the body functions of all living things, including themselves. Activities that explain the workings of animal and human life will help children to better understand many things, from why they should wash their hands to how their bodies move.

For example, you can do the following activity to teach children about the five senses. Most children use their sight primarily, followed by their hearing, but they can learn to investigate the world around them using all five of their senses. You need a plastic container filled with sugar for this activity. Here are five steps to follow:

- **Step 1:** Ask the children to sit in a circle and close their eyes tightly. They must not see what you've got. Shake the sugar and ask the children what they hear. Hide the sugar and ask them, what do you think I am shaking? The children must guess.

- **Step 2:** Tell the children to close their eyes again and hold out one hand. Tell them you will put something in their hand. Pour some of the sugar into each child's hand. Tell them to rub it between their fingers. Ask how it feels. Explain that their skin is what they touch with. Ask if they can guess what the object is.

- **Step 3:** Still with their eyes closed, tell them to smell what you've put in their hand. Be careful with this one, you don't want them to inhale the sugar. Depending on their sense of smell, they may or may not be able to smell anything. Ask them what they smell with and see if they can guess what it is.

- **Step 4:** Still with their eyes closed, tell them to taste it. Ask them what it is. They will probably know that it's sugar. Ask them what part of their body they taste with.

- **Step 5:** Tell them to open their eyes and see what the object is. Explain that sight is the last of the five senses and ask what part of their body they see with.

Now you can go over the five senses with the children showing them how they used each one to identify the sugar. You can expand on this activity by using other things for the children to guess such as cereal, fruit slices, vegetables cut into small pieces or anything else you can think of.

3. Activities that encourage interaction

You know that stimulating and challenging activities are activities that actively engage children in learning. So it makes sense to do activities that encourage children to interact with you, with each other, and with the learning resources. There are a variety of techniques you can use to encourage interaction. Let's look at some of the techniques that encourage interaction when you use stories, songs or rhymes:

1. joining in with words and actions
2. predicting what will happen next
3. expressing feelings
4. listening to each other
5. extension activities

a. Joining in with words and actions

Plan the story, song or rhyme you are going to use in advance. Think about what you can do to encourage children to become involved. Are there simple actions they can perform? For example, the song "The wheels on the bus" involves a range of simple actions. The rhyme "Eensy-weensy spider" has simple accompanying hand movements.

Try to select stories that encourage children to join in by calling out or reciting predictable, expected words. For example, the story "The ginger bread man" has a refrain "Run, run as fast as you can. You can't catch me; I'm the ginger bread man". Children will quickly learn this refrain, and they will enjoy repeating it in the relevant parts of the story.

The reason we encourage children to join in with words and actions is because this helps them to maintain their interest and become involved. Young children have short attention spans and become bored easily. Help them to associate stories, songs and rhymes with being active and having fun. This will help to build a positive attitude towards stories, songs and rhymes throughout their lives.

b. Predicting what will happen

During story time, read a story in an interactive way that encourages children to talk and ask questions as well as listen. For example, you might encourage the children to think ahead to what might happen in a story by pausing and saying; what do you think the puppy is going to do next?

c. Expressing feelings

Use stories to help build children's emotional literacy. Encourage the children to express their feelings and think about others" feelings when they hear stories. Give them opportunities to feel empathy (compassion and understanding) for the characters in the stories. For example, you can ask, "What do you think Sipho felt when he lost his dog? Has this ever happened to you? How did you feel?"

d. Asking and answering questions

Encourage active listening by pausing at intervals to ask the children questions. Children enjoy thinking up and offering answers. They also enjoy getting the answer right. If they know that you will probably ask questions, they are more likely to listen to the story attentively and carefully. Keep your questions short and simple. For example: "Why was the little bunny crying?"

e. Listening to each other

Provide opportunities for children to listen to each other. When you ask questions about the story, make sure that the other children listen considerately and kindly to the child who is speaking. This can be hard, since children are impatient and eager to have their own voices heard. However, by using gentle discipline, you can help create a culture of listening. Say, "Ssshhh. Let's hear what Sihle has to say."

You can also make opportunities for children to listen to each other in pairs. Ask questions about the story and let the children take turns to tell their partners the answer.

f. Extension activities

By providing opportunities for children to interact with stories, songs and rhymes through extension activities, you can increase the enjoyment that children obtain from this input. For example, children can draw pictures about the story they heard. Or they can act out the story using dress-up clothes and story props.

Now that you have looked at ways to design activities that are stimulating and challenging, you need to look at other criteria for designing activities. The next criterion you will consider are designing activities that are interesting, linked to real-life and provide opportunities for meaningful reinforcement.

Activities should have opportunities for meaningful reinforcement

If learning is pleasurable, children will want to learn. This means that learning activities must be relevant and interesting to the children in your group.

As you know, children are inherently curious about the world. You can make the most of this by discovering the things that each baby, toddler or young child in your group is interested in. What excites them? What do they want to learn more about? What are their lives like? Keep a list of things that the children in your group express interest in. This list can be a valuable tool when you sit down to design activities that will hold the attention of the children in your playgroup.

You will get a wealth of activity ideas from your observations of your group. One child may talk about his dog and how much he loves his pet. That child may enjoy an activity about dogs or pets.

Another child may enjoy building large towers with blocks whenever he gets the chance. Children will be more motivated to participate in activities if they find them interesting.

The activities that you design should not only be interesting; they should also be linked to the real-life experiences of the babies, toddlers and young children in your group. Children need to make sense of the world in which they live and linking activities to their real lives helps them to do so. When activities are linked to real life they also provide opportunities for meaningful reinforcement. This is because the children can see the relevance of what they are learning at the day care centre in their everyday lives and can transfer the skills from one environment to another. This allows whatever has been learned to be practised and reinforced in a meaningful way:

1. exploring the "made" world

2. exploring the natural world

3. going on field trips

Let's look at each of these in more detail.

Exploring the "made" world

Our society is technologically highly developed. Every day, children are exposed to this sophisticated "made" world. At home, many children have access to radios, toasters, televisions, stoves, and fridges. When they move outside of home, even the simple activity of catching a taxi, bus or train to school exposes children to the technological developments in our society.

You can design activities to help children to learn more about the "made" world. You can help them to begin to think and understand how the "made" world around them works. You can encourage them to think about the benefits we get from our technologically advanced environment: How did children get to school before cars, buses, taxis and trains were invented? What would happen if you lived far away from school? How do cars, buses and trains make it easier for children to get to school today? You can also encourage them to think about the negative consequences of technology on the environment and their lives. You can talk about issues like pollution and deforestation. You can talk about the changing quality of children's lives. For example, before television was invented, children spent more time reading and playing imaginatively.

The best way for children to explore the "made" world around them is through discovery, when they observe and experiment with the "made" world. In this way, they discover many things about made objects and the "made" world for themselves. Your role in this process is to guide children, and to ask them the kinds of questions that will help them to think more deeply. In this way you help children to develop their thinking, reasoning and problem-solving skills.

One activity to encourage children to explore the "made" world is by creating a discovery corner. A discovery corner should be an ever-changing display of several interesting made objects. You need to make sure your discovery corner promotes active, open-ended discovery experiences. Children should feel comfortable to get involved and really explore the objects they find there.

The kinds of made objects you could place in your discovery corner include:

1. old electrical appliances

2. old non-electrical appliances, objects and tools

3. tools that encourage observation and discovery

1. Old electrical appliances

Your discovery corner could have electrical appliances that no longer work, such as old clocks, telephones, toasters, typewriters, computer keyboards, computer components, radios, tape decks, drills, and so on. Electrical appliances do wear out and break down, so it should be quite easy to get donations of these items from parents and your community. Children should be encouraged to

explore these items freely, push buttons, take them apart, and put them together. Remember, children are often banned from using these kinds of expensive (and sometimes dangerous) electrical objects in the home. In the discovery corner, they have an opportunity to touch, feel, explore and experiment with objects they may have seen, but not touched before.

2. Old non-electrical appliances, objects and tools

Children love to explore and experiment with mechanical tools that work. You can provide them with:

- kitchen tools (egg beaters, can openers – blunt!), garlic presses, potato mashers, pastry cutters, icing bags and nozzles)
- garden tools (trowels, hose pipe attachments, small spades)
- woodwork tools (small hammers, blunt screwdrivers)
- car, bicycle or engine parts (bicycle bells, pumps, levers, pulleys, cogs)

3. Tools that encourage observation and discovery

You should provide appropriate tools that children can use to explore and experiment. Useful tools include a magnifying glass and a balance for weighing.

Take care that you don't overwhelm children in the discovery corner by providing too many things. Rather provide a few interesting objects every day and make sure you rotate the objects daily. You can keep a few favourites available, and then include new objects to stimulate the children's curiosity. *You should not plan an activity around the discovery corner.* The purpose of the discovery corner is for children to engage in open-ended exploration. Your task is to provide a range of interesting objects, and then allow children the opportunity to explore and discover for themselves.

However, you may plan a discussion activity around any of the made objects in the discovery corner.

Exploring the natural world:

Many children live in urban areas and very seldom enjoy the benefits of nature: the sea, the mountains or forests. Children who do live in rural areas often do not take time to explore the natural environment. By focusing on the natural world, children have the opportunity to appreciate the beauty of nature. In addition, they can learn about shade, shelter, fruit and timber.

You can include natural objects in your discovery corner. This is because the discovery process of observing, investigating and experimenting can be used to learn about both made and natural objects. It can also be helpful for children to compare and notice differences and similarities between made and natural objects. However, you may prefer to have a separate nature corner just for natural objects. You can have natural objects from trees and plants such as twigs, dried leaves, seeds, pods, pips.

These are just some ideas for designing interesting activities that are linked to real life with opportunities for meaningful reinforcement. You may use your imagination and creativity as well as your knowledge of the babies, toddlers and young children in your group to design many relevant and appropriate activities for the children to enjoy.

2.2.5 Ensure that activities are appropriate to the individual developmental needs and interests

When you conducted the needs analysis of your playgroup you identified the developmental needs of the individual children and the whole group. You can now use your analysis to identify the kinds of interventions a particular child or group of children needs in the playroom.

When you plan your daily activities, you can use the results of your needs analysis. For example, if Thembi needs help with her English language skills, build in activities that help to extend and encourage vocabulary. For example, you could sing the song "Head, shoulder, knees and toes" during music ring. You may want to use a multilingual storybook during story time to affirm Thembi's home language, while teaching her English skills.

There are a number of guidelines you can follow to help you design activities that meet the individual development needs and interests of the children in your playgroup. You could:

- use theories of child development

- use group and individual activities

- use open-ended activities

- create a developmentally appropriate playroom

We now discuss each one of these in more detail.

- *Use theories of child development*

When you design activities that meet children's developmental needs you will use the theories of child development. For clarity and organisation, child development is divided into stages. It is important to remember, however, that the age ranges at approximate and flexible in any scheme of developmental stages. Variation in achieving certain milestones, whether they are physical, cognitive or social, is normal. All developmental stages are a guide, but remember that each child is unique, and will develop at his or her own pace.

When learning activity meets the developmental needs of a particular child it is an activity that the child can do with a strong chance of success. Why? Because the learning activity is designed to fit with what the child is able to do at his or her stage or level of development. In other words, you need to design activities to match the developmental stages of the children in your playgroup.

- *Use group and individual activities*

Although group work is an important technique in a child-centred ECD playroom, there is also a place for individualised activities. Individualised activities are specially chosen for a particular child. Instead, they either work alone or interact only with you, the ECD practitioner.

- *Use open-ended activities*

Activities that are appropriate to the individual developmental needs and interests of the children in a playgroup are often open-ended activities. The activities relate closely to the children's interests, so that they feel eager to become involved and participate. You provide opportunities for children to take responsibility for their own learning by making choices about the kinds of learning activities that they enjoy, and where and how to do them.

- *Create a developmentally appropriate playroom*

Creating a developmentally appropriate playroom means designing one that suits the development needs of the children using it. The developmentally appropriate playroom is well organised, clearly structured and well equipped. Within this context of structure and order, the playroom is designed

to be flexible to meet children's different needs; your role, as the ECD practitioner, is to act as a guide and facilitator within this organised, flexible learning environment. The following quotation (Crosser, 1996) aptly describes the ethos that informs the developmentally appropriate playroom:

The developmentally appropriate playroom environment is one where children most often:

▪ Lead	▪ rather than follow the teacher
▪ Create	▪ rather than duplicate
▪ Move	▪ rather than wait
▪ Make the lines	▪ rather that colour in the lines
▪ Speak	▪ rather than listen passively
▪ Initiate	▪ rather than imitate
▪ Raise questions	▪ rather than answer the teacher's questions
▪ Solve their own problems	▪ rather than the teacher's problem
▪ Make art	▪ rather than do crafts
▪ Emphasise the process	▪ rather than product
▪ Use authentic skills	▪ rather than drill and practise
▪ Make books	▪ rather than fill in workbooks
▪ Decide	▪ rather than submit
▪ Choose wisely	▪ rather than being told
▪ Make a plan	▪ rather than follow the teacher's plan
▪ Try again	▪ rather than fail

When you design activities that are appropriate to the developmental needs of children, you need to provide activities that children can undertake confidently, as well as activities that challenge them to progress and develop further. In the next section we discuss activities that provide scope for progression (step-by-step development) in more detail.

2.2.6 Ensure that the activities provide scope for progression, integration and assessment

You know that child development happens in stages. While it is important for children to master the skills at their present stage of development, they should also be challenged to progress to the next stage of development. You have to design activities that help children to progress through the stages. Let's look at activities that will help children to progress in the different developmental areas.

a) progression in physical development

b) progression in cognitive development

c) progression in language development

d) progression in social and emotional development

e) progression in creative and imaginative development

a) *Progression in physical development*

In general, babies, toddlers and young children have better control of their large muscles and large motor skills (such as running and jumping) than of their small muscles and fine motor skills (such as writing, throwing, and eye-hand co-ordination).

Progression in gross motor development

Gross motor development progresses in a fairly predictable sequence. The activities that encourage gross motor development should provide opportunities for children to practise familiar skills and try out new ones. For example, a six-month-old baby lying on his stomach can probably push himself up and bear enough weight on his hands to lift his chest and the top part of his stomach off the ground. In this position he can reach out for an object with one hand while supporting his body with the other hand. A good activity to practise this skill is to place a toy or other desirable object just in front of the baby.

A seven-month-old baby progresses from the position lying on his stomach, to being able to pivot (turn) around his own body axis (the mid-point of his body). He can turn around in a circle while moving himself with his arms. You can encourage this progression by placing a toy on the side of the baby near his feet. The baby will need to develop the turning pivot movement in order to reach the toy.

Progression in fine motor development

Fine motor development progresses in a fairly predictable way.

For example, when an 18-month-old toddler starts to use a brush to paint he will grip the paint brush with all his fingers, with the thumb in opposition to the other fingers, a three-year-old child starts to use a pincer grip to hold brush between his thumb, index and middle fingers. This has implications for the activities that you do with the children. For example, a painting activity with toddlers would need bigger brushes and thicker paint than a painting activity with young children because their fine motor skills are at different stages of development.
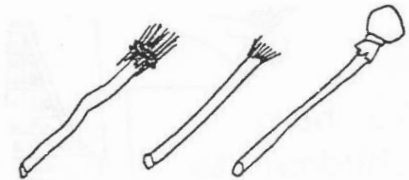
In general, it is a good idea to keep those activities that encourage fine motor development as short as possible. Children may get tired easily during activities that require the use of small muscles and their eyes may not be used to long periods of close work. You should observe the children to make sure they are not frustrated with an activity. If this is the case, the level of skill needed may be above that child's abilities and you should then present alternative activities.

As you know, jigsaw puzzles are a good activity for developing fine motor skills. Older babies and toddlers can be given puzzle pieces with knobs on to make it easier to handle. Young children should progress from simple four-or-five-piece puzzles to more complex pictures, that eventually includes a detailed foreground and background.

b) Progression in cognitive development

Many of the skills that are necessary for cognitive development are like building blocks – children have to build a foundation of simple skills before they can progress to more complex skills. For example, the relatively simple skill of identifying (naming) is an important building block. Without the ability to identify single objects, a child will be unable to compare, contrast, sequence and classify groups of objects.

Many of the cognitive skills that are developed in the playroom are essential for the cognitive skills that are required at school. For example, the skill of comparing and contrasting is a requirement for reading, because the children will then be able to start reading. This skill of looking for similarities and differences in objects prepares children for seeing similarities and differences in words and letters. Sorting games are useful activities to encourage this cognitive development in the playroom. However, you should always make sure that the size of the objects that are used for sorting games is age-appropriate. Small objects can be dangerous for babies and toddlers, who may put them in their mouths and choke. Use larger objects for babies and toddlers, and use the smaller objects with young children.

Memory skills are another important building block for more complex skills. Visual memory is the ability to remember what the eyes have seen. This skill is essential so that, once children go to school, they can remember what they have read. They also need to recall what a word or number looks like when they are busy with literacy or numeracy. Memory cards are an enjoyable way of training the memory and enhancing concentration, which are both essential skills to complete school activities.

There may also be progression in the complexity of the same cognitive skill. For example, as young children mature and become more sophisticated, you can make comparisons more complex by increasing the number of things they need to compare.

c) Progression in language development

As babies grow and develop into toddlers and young children, the development of their language skills also progresses. You know that children's hearing and speaking skills become increasingly more sophisticated as they grow and develop.

The table below summarises the broad stages of language development from six (6) months to five (5) years.

Language development	
6-month to 11-month-old baby	• Chatters (babbles sounds such as da-da", "ga-ga", pa-pa, "ma-pa" to get attention. • Understands the word "no", shakes his/her head to indicate "no". • Uses gestures for words e.g. waving to say goodbye. • Responds to his name and simple verbal requests and commands e.g. "Give me your toy" and "Put down your toy". • Shows interest when pictures and objects are named for him. • Enjoys imitating sounds such as coughing and kissing sounds.
12-month-old toddler	• Says her first words (normally familiar words that she hears a lot). • Makes one word sentences e.g. "Ball" to mean "I want the ball". • Can point to her main body parts (head, hands, feet and eyes) if you ask her to e.g. "Where are your eyes?" • Associates qualities of an object with the object itself e.g. when she sees a bird she will say "up" and point to the bird. • Responds temporarily to "no" and "stop".
15-month-old toddler	• Understands at least 10 words. • Can say at least 4 to 6 words. • Can give an object if asked for it. • Can point to familiar objects if you ask him e.g. "Where is the spoon?" • Indicate what he wants with gestures (normally pointing at what he wants) and tone of voice.
18-month-old toddler	• Understands and carries out two simple instruction given at the same time e.g. "Fetch your shoes and put them on the chair." • Understands at least 15 words. • Starts to make two-word sentences e.g. "Mummy up" to indicate that she wants her mummy to pick her up. • Starts to use adjectives like "good" and "bad".

Language development	
2-year-old toddler	• Understands and carries out three simple instructions given at the same time e.g. "Go to your room, fetch your shoes and bring them here." • Uses at least 50 recognisable words. • Understands 250–1 200 words. • Uses three word sentences e.g. "I am hungry," and combines nouns and verbs e.g. "Daddy go." • Can memorise simple rhymes and learn a simple song. • Uses a lot of gestures to express herself e.g. will put her finger to her lips if she wants you to be quiet.
2 ½ year-old child	• Uses 4-word sentences. • Starts to use correct word order and grammar e.g. "The girl is eating." • Can name her gender and give her first name. • Asks simple questions. • Uses pronouns e.g. "she", possessive pronouns e.g. "mine", adjectives e.g. "big", joining words e.g. "and", plurals and the past tense.
3-year-old child	• Has a vocabulary of about 900 words. • Asks a lot of questions. • Understands longer, more complex sentences. • Can make negative statements e.g. "The boy does not eat." • Can have a conversation and describe an incident. • Can give his first and last name.
4-year-old child	• Enjoys talking about things and making up stories. • Uses language to express thinking and opinions. • Enjoys using words that rhyme. • Uses and understands humour in rhymes and situations. • Can recite the alphabet.

Language development	
5-year-old child	• Can write the alphabet. • Uses language to think reason and solve problems. • Makes up more sophisticated and involved stories. • Communicates in discussions and shares opinions with others. • Initiates and develops conversations with others (peers and adults).

Although children mostly learn the rules of language without much instruction or training, children need activities that encourage their language development:

- They need language interaction with adults and their peers.

- Babies need activities where you talk to them and show and name the objects in their world and in books. They need you to make sounds that they can imitate.

- Toddlers need you to give them up to three simple instructions that they can carry out.

- They need you to teach them simple rhymes and songs.

- They need you to respond to their attempts to communicate through gestures. Young children need opportunities to ask lots of questions.

- They need activities where they can make up stories and express their opinions.

d) Progression in social and emotional development

You already know that children tend to become increasingly social and independent as they grow and develop.

The table below summarises these stages of social and emotional development:

Birth to 11 months	*Trust vs mistrust (Erikson's stage of personality development)*
	Begins social play and interaction with parents and/or caregivers (including the ECD practitioner if the child is in a crèche or playschool).
	Enjoys imitating sounds.
	Plays social games such as pat-a-cake.
	May be afraid of strangers.
	Can remember some rituals (bye-bye, "kiss").
1 to 2 years	*Trust vs mistrust (Erikson's stage of personality development)*
	Wants to be helpful to parents or caregivers.
	Shows an interest in other adults and may want to imitate them.
	May enjoy social situations, but will probably engage in parallel play (next to, but not with, another child).
	Social rituals are more developed (please, thank you, hello, goodbye).
2 to 3 years	*Autonomy vs shame (Erikson's stage of personality development)*
	Finds it hard to share with others.
	Can be competitive with others.
	May want things to go "his" or "her" way.
	Eager for adult approval.
	Starts to interact more with peers.
3 to 4 years	*Initiative vs guilt (Erikson's stage of personality development)*
	May start to form strong friendships.
	Can be generous and share.
	Shows empathy if a child or adult is hurt or sad.
4 to 5 years	*Initiative vs. guilt (Erikson's stage of personality development)*
	Is increasingly independent.

	Plays more easily with others.	
	May form and play within a peer group.	
	Enjoys more sophisticated group games with "rules".	
	Co-operates when playing with others.	
5 to 6 years	*Initiative vs guilt (Erikson's stage of personality development)*	
	Wants to be linked and to "belong" to the group.	
	Tries to observe group norms (dress, language, play choices).	
	Co-operates and compromises when playing with others.	
	Can solve some problems in the group independently.	

As this table shows, young children become more social as they grow and develop. However, it is not always easy for children to change from being self-focused, and interacting mostly with parents or caregivers, to becoming group-focused and interacting with peers. It is critically important that children learn to socialise and learn easily with their peers. This is the most important purpose of the activities you provide for the social and emotional development of the babies, toddlers or young children in your care.

e) *Progression in creative and imaginative development*

You know that children's physical, cognitive and language skills progress through a series of development stages. Their creative and imaginative skills also progress as they develop. To understand this progress, you can look at the series of stages that children's artwork moves through. These stages (the main developmental stage in children's drawing) are shown in the table below.

Age	Stage	Characteristics
2 to 4 years	Scribbling stage	Makes first marks on paper. May want to represent objects and people from own world – mum, dad, house. Can become easily frustrated with drawing. Begins by drawing horizontally, then diagonally, then vertically. Draws circles, then squares, triangles and other shapes. May tell a "story" about a drawing: "I went to the zoo with daddy". Can point to and name some elements within their drawings.
4 to 7 years	Emergent schematic stage	Fits images to the size of the page. Makes recognisable attempts to represent people or objects. Draws on fantasy and imagination. Use colour creatively. Is not limited by reality of outside world – the sky may be purple, or the sun may shine at night-time. Bases the sizes of people and objects on their importance to the child, rather than their actual size. Still becomes easily frustrated.

Age	Stage	Characteristics
7 to 9 years	Schematic stage	May use more symbols in drawings – heart for love, skull and crossbones for danger. Makes greater attempts to "capture" real world accurately. May try to "copy" a drawing or make a sketch of an object. Has well-developed fine motor skills and eye-hand co-ordination. Drawings include finer and more specialised details – if grandpa has a beard and uses a walking stick, the child will include these details.

The stages of creative growth outlined in the table above are only guidelines. As you know, each child is unique and develops at his or her own pace. So don't make the mistake of trying to fit a child into a fixed developmental box. You probably realise from your own experience that there is a lot of overlap among the developmental stages identified here. For example, many four-year-olds – and even some three-year-olds – show strong early characteristics of a particular schema. This reminds you that it is important to be flexible. Don't panic if a three-year-old is still scribbling on paper. Provide regular creative art experiences, and the child's art abilities will develop when he or she is ready. Be patient, offer praise and encouragement when appropriate, and trust that, with opportunities to be creative and use their imagination, children's creativity and imagination will grow and develop.

Art educator Eric Goldberg says that children's creative milestones are universal. He believes that children's art from all over the world reflects the same patterns of learning and development. This is true for all children everywhere: in the hills of KwaZulu-Natal, in the high-rise flats in Hillbrow, the mansions of Constantia and the informal settlements in Khayelitsha. Take a few minutes to read and think about his ideas now. (Eric Goldberg is Associate Professor of Fine Arts at Quinebaug Valley Community Technical College in the United States.)

The artwork of young children gives us a glimpse into a universal language used by all people. The images created by the very young are common to children of all cultures, all races, all nationalities and all ethnic groups. This is a language that has not yet acquired the ability to express differences, only to express its humanity. Children in the hills of Virginia draw the same images as children of the hills of Nepal. These symbols are a reminder to us that we are one people with diverse cultures.

In the network of the very young child you will see the human form first depicted as a circle. This circle has internal marks that are the eyes, mouth, and nose of the person. The next evolution of this image is the addition of external marks that are the arms and legs of the person. As the young artist matures these marks become refined and perfected. Eventually the person acquires a body and later, even such details as a neck, ears, clothing, buttons, zippers etc. The social maturity of the child can be identified by the degree of development when drawing a person.

The child's use of colour and pattern share a similar evolution. Simple one-colour images make way for distinctly contrasting primary and secondary colours. Patterns that begin as bold, seemingly random scribbles eventually evolve into more carefully planned rhythms.

SOURCE?

All children are creative and imaginative. Expressing the world through images, colours, patterns and rhythms is as natural to human beings as is the ability to walk or talk. Creative expression is important to the development of young humans. Through creative expression the child learns to express the world and how to alter the world. All you need to do is provide the tools and the activities to allow that creativity and imagination to flourish.

We end this section on activities that provide scope for progression by looking in detail at the progression in one particular type of activity, namely block play.

Progression in block play

Blocks have been part of the toy box for many, many years. They come in a variety of colours and sizes, and may have letters, numbers or pictures painted on them. At first, children were given blocks to keep them occupied, but gradually educators began to see the value of blocks as part of the education of the young child.

Toddlers start using blocks in a non-constructive way. They carry them around and pile them up in spaces or corners of a room with no visible order or form. Between the ages of two and three they start to use the blocks to construct rows, walls or towers. At this stage it is essential that all the blocks are cut accurately and are exactly in proportion to each other, to be of good educational value and not frustrate the user.
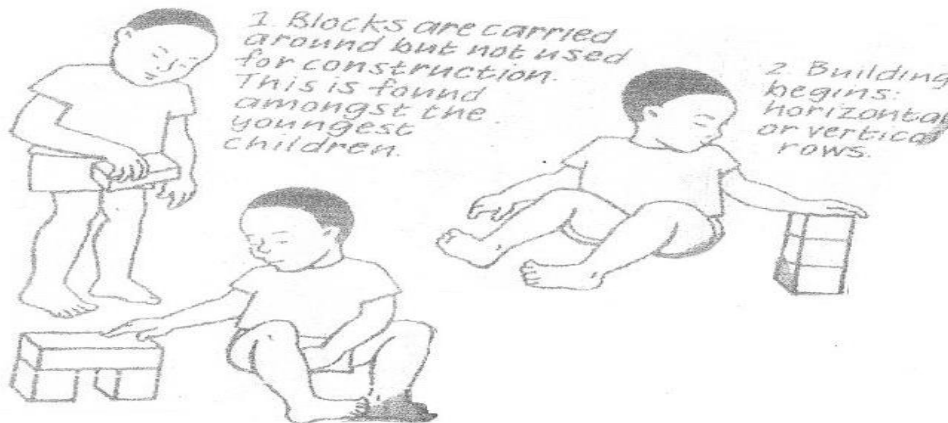
A child's skills at block play develop through set stages, as shown. Each stage will give you an idea of the child's concept of space.

Let's look at some of the building processes that a child progresses through in block play:

- repetition
- bridging
- enclosures
- patterns
- representing

Repetition

A toddler will pile blocks one on top of another to form a tower. When the tower crashes down the child will rebuild it, but each time with more care and greater accuracy. Some toddlers are cautious and careful builders from the start, while others will pile the blocks up haphazardly, with more disastrous effects. As the child gains experience and confidence in building, the towers may take on different shapes, with smaller bricks placed nearer the top. They will also experiment with balancing big blocks on little blocks.
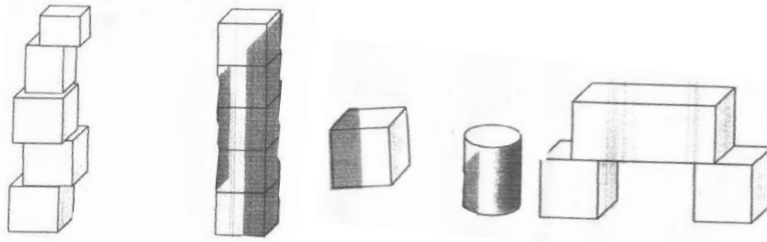
Bridging

In this stage of development, the young child will experiment with leaving gaps between blocks and bridging them with bigger or longer blocks. Children learn to estimate (guess) the distance between the two upright blocks and choose the right length for the bridge.

The child will eventually find out that, when he places two uprights on either side of a bottom block, he will need a block that is longer than the bottom block to make a bridge. A bridge structure can also form a type of enclosure, and children will experiment with placing and balancing smaller blocks inside it.

Enclosures
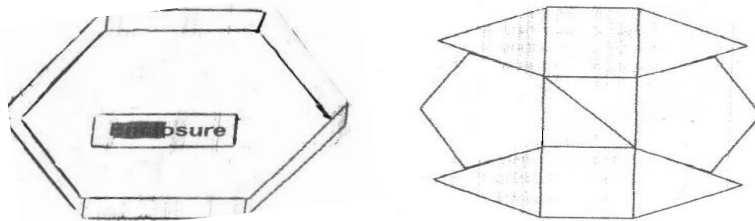
Enclosures begin to appear in the early stages of block construction. Once the problem of closing the "gap" has been solved, children will begin to construct several enclosures next to one another. As the child gets more skilled in building enclosures, she will experiment with building differently shaped enclosures, not necessarily joined, and will then join them with a block, a bridge or a small tower. Enclosures can become more and more complex, and small villages or buildings begin to appear. Other objects, like farm animals or people, can be placed within the enclosures. These enclosures do not have to be square, and the imaginative child will build triangular and many-sided ones as well. As children become more experienced, they will show a steady increase in skills, imaginative design and the number of blocks they use for a construction.

Patterns

Another form of "playing" is arranging blocks in a variety of patterns or sequences that can take on many forms, for example:

- putting three blocks side by side, with smaller ones on top and yet smaller ones on top of them to form a pattern
- constructing enclosures of different shapes and joining them with a common side
- sequencing big-small or long-short, or by alternating rectangular blocks with triangular ones
- a combination of balancing constructions

Patterns can be viewed from the side as well as from a bird's eye view from above.

Representing

Representations are probably the most dramatic constructions of all, and the child's imagination can run wild. Buildings and towns will flourish and all the construction skills and block shapes are used. The child will probably tell you who inhabit this wonderland and where it can be found. This need not be a solo effort: a group of children can construct a railway or bus station, a town hall with towers and roofs and bridges of varying height and length. At this stage other materials can be brought into use, such as modelling clay, plastic people, cars and animals and paper rivers.

When you look at the end result you will see that all the stages have been used and developed. Repetition is obvious, but the tower is taller and straighter and more robust. Balancing is seen in bridgework and buildings, steps and stairways. Enclosures have been constructed in the parking garage and car lots. The use of space within the various constructions has been explored.

Next, we look at how you can design activities that integrate the achievement of developmental outcomes.

2.2.7 Describe the activities in detail to enable practitioners and others to implement them

When you create activities, you should be able to describe the activities in sufficient detail so that practitioners and others can implement them. You can do this by including activity details such as:

- purpose

- link to developmental outcomes

- who they are for

- how they work

- opportunities to extend them

- ways of integrating with other activities, what resources are needed

- where they should happen

- possible timing, etc.

By now you have designed many activities that meet various criteria. You have designed activities that:

- contribute toward achieving identified developmental outcomes

- are appropriate to the individual developmental needs and interests of all the children

- provide scope for progression, integration towards the achievement of identified outcomes and assessment opportunities where possible

- make provision for child input where appropriate

- are free from cultural, race and gender bias

- are stimulating, challenging, interesting and linked to real-life experience, with opportunities for meaningful reinforcement

It takes a great deal of time and effort to design really good activities that meet all these criteria. It would be a waste if all that time and effort was used just once. That is why you need to describe your activities in sufficient detail, so that other ECD practitioners can also use your activities. You may even want to use your own activities again with another group; a detailed description of the activity will help you to remember what you did.

What do we mean when we say you should describe your activities in sufficient detail? Sufficient detail includes describing:

- the purpose of the activity with links to developmental outcomes

- the timing of the activity

- who the activity is for

- what resources are needed and what preparation is required

- where the activity should happen and how to manage that environment

- how the activity works from the introduction, through the body to the conclusion

- ways of integrating the activity with other activities and linking it to the weekly theme

- opportunities to extend the activity

- self-reflection, feedback and how to improve the activity

A good way to do this is by developing an Activity Plan for each of your activities. Read over the sample Activity Plan below. This sample gives guidelines about how to describe your activities in sufficient detail.

The Activity Plan consists of two sections, namely a section on learning outcomes and a detailed description of how to facilitate the activity.

a) Learning outcomes

The learning outcomes refer to the skills that the children should develop when they do the activities. In other words, you must be clear about exactly which skills each activity will help the children to develop. You also need to write down these learning outcomes next to one or more activities in your unit plan. For example, in the Activity Plan below, the learning outcome for asking children to plan their collage in advance is to develop their planning and organisational skills.

The activities that you plan will fit into a learning programme. This learning programme needs to be planned within the context of the national curriculum. In terms of the national curriculum your learning programme, and all the activities that you plan, should address the learning outcomes for your children. These learning outcomes should be clearly stated in your Activity Plans.

b) A detailed description of how you will facilitate the activity

Each activity is divided into three steps, namely:

1. The introduction: How to introduce the activity

2. The body of the Unit: Precisely how to facilitate the activity – What do you need to tell the children? What do the children need to do?

3. The conclusion: How to complete the activity – For example, if the children have been running around during a movement activity, do they need to sit quietly to calm down a bit?

Sub-activities

Sometimes, you will divide the children into more than one group. One group will be involved in the main activity while the other groups will continue with separate activities, called sub-activities. For each sub-activity you also need to describe:

- the introduction – all activities need to be introduced

- the body – you need to write a detailed description of how to facilitate the activity

- the conclusion – you need to describe how to finish off the activity; in some cases, you may have a common conclusion for all activities; for example: all children will need to wash their hands if they are doing painting activities

- the learner outcomes

Don't forget that if the type of main activity is, for example a creative art activity, the sub-activities will also be related to creative art tasks.

Read the Activity Plan on the next page. Note the main activity and sub-activities in particular, because later you will have to use an Activity Plan like this one to describe the activities you have designed.

ACTIVITY PLAN

Name of activity

Give your activity a name, for example "nature collage".

Purpose of activity

What is the broad purpose of the activity? This will be linked to the developmental outcomes. For example, to develop creative or fine motor or gross motor or imaginative skills.

Time needed

How much time will children need to complete the activity?

Age of children

Write down the age range for which the activity is suitable, for example, four to five year-olds.

Theme

What is the theme for the week in your playschool? Your activity should relate to the theme, for example, "gifts from the forest".

Developmental appropriateness

Explain how you will make sure the activity is developmentally appropriate for the children.

For example:

- Provide very small objects like seeds to develop fine motor skills.
- Explain the instructions, and then leave children to work independently.
- Encourage children to write names on artworks.

Resources needed

List the materials or equipment you need for the activity. For example:

- A4 paper
- glue, and spatulas for spreading glue
- natural objects (seed pods, twigs, leaves, and so on)
- aprons for the children

Learning environment management

Identify where the activity should take place, for example, in the playroom or on the playground.

Identify what you need to do to "manage" the activity in the learning environment. For example: This activity is for four children to do at one table so each group of four needs a small art table and four chairs.

Preparation

Write down what you need to do in advance. For example:

- Lay out one sheet of paper per learner on a table.
- Place glue and spatulas in the centre of the table.
- Place a box of natural objects in the centre of the table.

Ideas for extension activities

If a child finishes early, what extension activities can they do? For example: Use natural materials to "write" their names.

Self-evaluation, feedback and how to improve the activity

After each activity:

- Get feedback from the children – sometimes they will spontaneously talk about the activity. However, if they do not offer feedback, then ask them questions about the activity.
- Reflect on the activity – what worked well? What didn't work? How can you improve the activity? For example, did you plan your time well, or did you have to rush the children? If you rushed them, you know that the activity needs more time.
- Write down your ideas. For example: Jimmy said: "My picture makes me feel like I'm playing in the forest." I need to buy better quality glue, because some of the objects did not stick well.

ACTIVITY PLAN – MAIN ACTIVITY	
Learning outcomes	**Description of activities**
List the skills that the children will practise during the activity.	Note down exactly what you need to do to help the children do the activity.
Introduction	
Link the activity to the theme of the week, in this case, "gifts from the forest".	Remind the children about the forest walk and about the objects that they collected.
	Tell the children that they will make a nature collage.
	Show the children an example of a collage.
	Remind the children to wear aprons.
Body	
Express creativity by creating an artwork.	Suggest that the children begin by planning their collage. They can lay out natural objects in a design like before gluing them.
Develop planning and organisational skills by planning the artwork.	
Develop fine motor skills by picking up small objects (seed pods, twigs and so on).	Show the children how to manage the glue and spatulas. They will need very little glue for small, light objects, and more glue for big, heavy objects.
Recognise that easily found natural objects can be used for creative art activities.	Tell the children that when they are happy with their designs, they can glue their objects onto the paper.
Children listen to and follow instructions.	
Conclusion	
Develop literacy skills.	When the children have finished the main activity (the collages) tell them where to lay their pictures flat to dry overnight.
Learn to collaborate and develop social skills.	
Develop life skills of cleaning the environment and hygiene.	Tell the children to explain to other groups what they have made.
	Ask the children to help you tidy up and to wash their hands.
	Ask the children to evaluate the activity.

ACTIVITY PLAN – SUB-ACTIVITY 1	
Learning outcomes	**Description of activities**
List the skills that the children will practise during the activity.	Note down exactly what you need to do to help the children do the activity.
Introduction	
Children listen to and follow instructions.	Cutting and pasting. Show the children how to cut out lines on prepared folded pieces of paper in order to make a pattern, and then paste cut-outs onto a coloured piece of paper.
Body	
Express creativity by creating an artwork. Develop fine motor skills. Make the children aware of patterns and shapes.	Children cut shapes from folded paper. Children paste cut-outs onto sheets of paper.
Conclusion	
Develop literacy skills. Learn to collaborate and develop social skills. Develop life skills of cleaning the environment and hygiene.	When the children have finished, tell them where to lay their pieces of paper flat. Tell the children to explain to other groups what they have made. Ask the children to help you tidy up and to wash their hands.

ACTIVITY PLAN – SUB-ACTIVITY 2	
Learning outcomes	**Description of activities**
Introduction	
Children listen to and follow instructions.	Mealie printing: Show the children examples of pages that have been printed with mealie husks dipped into paint.
Body	
Express creativity by creating an artwork. Develop fine motor skills. Make the children aware of patterns and shapes.	Tell the children to dip mealies in different coloured paints and stamp the mealies onto a page.
Conclusion	
Develop literacy skills. Learn to collaborate and develop social skills. Develop life skills of cleaning the environment and hygiene.	When the children have finished, tell them where to lay their pieces of paper flat. Tell the children to explain to other groups what they have made. Ask the children to help you tidy up and to wash their hands.

ACTIVITY PLAN – SUB-ACTIVITY 3	
Learning outcomes	**Description of activities**
Introduction	
Children listen to and follow instructions.	Marble painting: Show the children how to dip marbles into different coloured paint and roll the marbles onto boxes to make a design.
Body	
Express creativity by creating an artwork. Develop fine motor skills. Make the children aware of patterns and shapes.	In groups of four, the children dip marbles into paint and roll marbles onto boxes to make a design.
Conclusion	
Develop literacy skills. Learn to collaborate and develop social skills. Develop life skills of cleaning the environment and hygiene.	When the children have finished, tell them where to lay their pieces of paper flat. Tell the children to explain to other groups what they have made. Ask the children to help you tidy up and to wash their hands.

When you draw up an Activity Plan like this one to describe an activity, it gives you a detailed record of the activity you designed. Next time you do the activity or when another ECD practitioner uses your activity, it is clear what needs to be prepared for the activity, which skills are being encouraged and exactly how to manage the activity. You also know what you need to do next time to make sure your activity works more effectively. It may seem like a lot of work to record activities in this way. However, you only need to write an Activity Plan once, although you may use the same activity many times in your career as an ECD practitioner. Make a file in which to keep your Activity Plans. In this way, when you need a learning activity, you can look through the Activity Plans in your file and choose one. Your file will keep growing, and will become a very valuable tool, helping and supporting your day-to-day work in the playroom.

> ***Class Activity 4: Design activities for ECD programmes***
> Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

Learning Unit 3
Prepare an ECD programme

After completing this Learning Unit, you will be able to prepare an ECD programme, by successfully completing the following:

- Ensure that the programme sufficiently addresses the developmental stages and particular needs of the children as revealed by the analysis.

- Ensure that the programme provides flexible options for implementation.

- Ensure that the programme specifies the sequence, timing and main resource requirements of the planned activities, including opportunities for assessment.

- Ensure that the programme provides a balance of developmentally appropriate activities to support the development of all the children.

- Ensure that the programme provides a balance between indoor and outdoor activities and individual, small and large group activities to support the development of the children. Ensure that the balance between such activities, particularly between individual and group activities is appropriate to the developmental stages of the children.

- Ensure that the programme can be implemented in the given context and within available resources.

- Ensure that the programme complies with relevant national policies and guidelines.

- Develop learning programmes to enhance participation of learners with special needs.

Prepare an ECD programme

Careful consideration and planning are necessary when you prepare a learning programme for your ECD centre. You should think about the learning activities and experience that you should provide for children daily, weekly and in the longer term. You should also think about the children's interests and developmental needs. The mind map below provides an overview of the key elements in the ECD learning programme.

Informed by early childhood programme models and national policy

Developmentally appropriate to support children's holistic development

Learning through play - indoor and outdoor

Learning environment – resources and physical space

Daily and weekly learning programme – the what, when, who and how of learning

Balance of routines, adult-initiated and child-initiated activities

Flexible implementation – individualised for particular learner needs

Balance of individual, small group and large group activities

In this module, we will examine these different elements to equip you to prepare your own ECD learning programme, with the assistance of your mentor. You may find it helpful to think of each element as a different coloured filter. When the ECD practitioner designs the ECD learning programme, she focuses on each element, placing one coloured filter on top of the other. In this way, she builds up the learning programme until all the colours are represented and the learning programme comes to life – in full technicolor.

Designing a learning programme

There are many issues that you should take into account when you design an ECD programme. Below are some pointers:

- Young children learn best through active, engaged, meaningful learning.

- Young children learn best in an early childhood programme that is developmentally appropriate.

- Young children learn best in an early childhood environment that is appropriate for their age and stage of development.

- Young children benefit from a consistent routine or daily schedule in the early childhood classroom.

- Young children learn best when the school develops a sense of community for all participants.

- Young children function best in early childhood programmes that value and reinforce continuity.

- Young children benefit from early childhood programs that provide a careful transition from preschool to kindergarten and from kindergarten to the primary grades.

- Young children learn best when they are with teachers who consider them and respond to them as individuals.

Using these principles as a foundation, we can say that planning and organising for an effective early childhood programme should emphasise five factors: quality staff, suitable environment, appropriate grouping, consistent schedules, and parent involvement.

Routines change according to the age of the children. This means that adults who plan a daily routine should think about the needs of the children they are working with.

For extra information on the principles of designing a programme and ideas, see the handouts called NELDS and "Creative Ideas".

Adapting learning activities is not as difficult as it may seem. There are some guiding principles you should apply, but the most important elements are to:

- be willing to adapt activities so that children with special needs can be fully part of the class

- be open to learning, experimentation and ideas from other sources

- develop a sound knowledge of the child's strengths and weaknesses

Differentiating activities into level of more and less difficulty

All children learn different concepts and skills at different rates. Thus, all activities should involve levels of differentiation so that stronger learners are encouraged to push themselves, and weaker learners are still able to achieve what they need to.

Let's look at a practical example of an art activity:

You have set up an activity, where the learners are going to glue various items onto a piece of cardboard. The sorting tray has buttons, string that is already cut into various lengths, polystyrene bubbles and pieces of fabric. There are also balls of wool, scissors and felt tip pens on the table as well as glue pots.

Children with fine motor skills that are not well developed can simply take items from the tray and paste them onto the cardboard. Those who have stronger fine motor skills will probably choose to cut wool from the balls and may also use the felt tip pens to draw on the cardboard. Thus the activity is differentiated as it makes provision for differing levels of skills.

The diagram below explains the concept by using a cognitive example. Using transport theme as an example, there are basic things every child must know about transport. These would fall into the

dark central area labelled 1. The larger pale blue area labelled 2 represents things the children should know. The largest and lightest area, labelled 3, represents things the children should know.
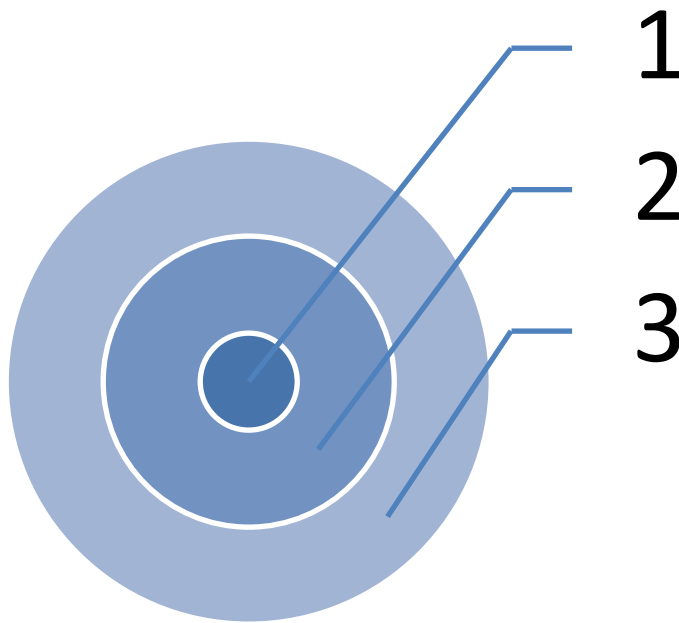
The following diagram represents differentiation in levels of knowledge on the theme of transport:

1	Must know	Different modes of transport, for example on sea, land, air
2	Should know	The difference between a car and a truck
3	Could know	Space travel - different types of spacecraft

You could start the discussion in the morning ring with the "must know" concepts and then expand these into the "should know" and "could know" areas, but only if the learners were coping and contributing to the discussion. For gifted learners in particular, you would encourage further exploration in the "could know" arena. Remember that gifted children are also classified as learners with special needs.

3.1 Ensure that the programme sufficiently addresses the developmental stages and particular needs of the children as revealed by the analysis

When you analyse the context for your ECD learning programme, your analysis should clearly identify the developmental ages, stages and needs of all the children within the playgroup. This understanding will help you later when you prepare your ECD learning programme. As you know, it is important that the ECD programmes that you prepare for young children are appropriate to their ages and stages of development. This is known as developmentally appropriate practice (DAP).

3.1.1 ECD learning programmes can enhance participation of learners with special needs

ECD learning programmes can enhance (improve) the participation of learners with special needs such as physical, health, cognitive, emotional or economic needs.

For many years, the policy in our education system was to identify learners with special needs and to provide them with specialised education. This system worked well for some learners, but also isolated many others. The services that were provided in specialised education were not equally apportioned according to race, geography or even the type of disability. This means that many children with special needs did not have access to these services. Even worse, terms such as "spastic" or "mental" were often used to refer to them.

The following approaches to education of children with special needs were applied at various times in the past in South Africa:

- special education
- mainstreaming
- integration

Special education

Special education schools were specifically designed to deal with a particular disability. These facilities were staffed with people who have trained to deal with particular disabilities and maximise the learning of the children who were placed there. In this model, children who were identified as having a special need were only permitted entry into a "special school"; they were not allowed to remain in a mainstream school. The approach was very much based on the idea that if a learner was unable to learn in a mainstream environment then it must be because there is something "wrong" with that particular learner. Thus it seemed to make sense to remove them from the mainstream and place them at an institution where their needs could be met more effectively.

Unfortunately, the special education approach had many flaws. Special education schools often kept learners separated from the rest of society. Excluding these children from mainstream society meant that they were robbed of a chance to interact with other people. This often also meant that they did not receive an opportunity to improve their social skills.

Separating learners with special needs also had an effect on mainstream learners: it encouraged them to view individuals with special needs as "inferior" or "defective".

Mainstreaming

The mainstreaming approach gave all children the opportunity to attend mainstream schools for as long as they could keep up with their classmates.

The purpose of mainstreaming was to give learners with special needs a chance to push themselves to the point where they could survive in "mainstream" education. This solved the problem of isolating learners with special needs, because now they were rather given the opportunity to improve, until they could perform at the same level as their "normal" classmates.

The problem with mainstreaming was that it ignored the fact that some children had genuine educational challenges that required support. Mainstreaming expected them to be able to overcome their barriers without any extra help. For example, under the mainstreaming approach, learners who had cerebral palsy would have to try to write at the same speed as their classmates, a task that was simply impossible for them.

Integration

Another attempt to solve the problem of special needs education was called "integration". It was similar to mainstreaming because learners with special needs were placed in mainstream schools. However, unlike in the mainstreaming approach, integration also provided these learners with specialised attention that was aimed at helping them to cope with their learning challenges.

Unfortunately the integration approach was also problematic. Whenever learners were taken out of their classes to receive their learner support they missed out on things that their classmates had learned. This had the effect that when the learners with the special needs came back they were even further behind their classmates than when they left.

A second problem with this approach was that many children were stigmatised. They were often subjected to abuse or teasing from their peers.

Inclusive education

Inclusive education is based on the belief that all learners have a right to be educated as much as possible in the environment that is the best for them. This approach differs from other approaches in several ways:

- It emphasises modifying the teaching methods to suit the learner, instead of trying to change the learner so that he or she "fits in".

- There is awareness that all learners have their own strengths and weaknesses, things that help them to succeed and things that prevent them from succeeding.

- An inclusive approach always tries first to help learners to succeed in the mainstream, but if it turns out that mainstream education cannot help them to achieve their full potential, then it makes specialised learning support available to them.

- Lastly, inclusive education calls attention to the fact that almost anything can be a barrier to learning, if it is not managed correctly.

3.1.2 Special needs requiring attention during the development of ECD learning programmes

It is vitally important for you as an ECD practitioner to be aware of the range of special needs that you may come across in your class. While you should be able to identify them, it is not always easy to identify more suitable special needs, such as Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD), which is on the autism spectrum.

As an ECD practitioner you are also not able to diagnose disabilities in children. Only medical practitioners are able to do this. Nevertheless, your observations and reports can influence a diagnosis, and therefore they need to be factual and comprehensive.

When a special need is identified, it often results in a child being labelled as being different or being called a "slow", "poor" or "naughty". This is a discriminatory practice that expects less of the child; the label becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy (the child acts as he or she is expected in terms of the labels).

Special needs children vs children with special needs

a. "We label boxes, not children"

We may also fall into the trap of referring to "special needs children" when we should say "children with special needs".

b. Stop and consider the difference

If we say "special needs children" we place the emphasis on their special needs when in fact we need to view them as children firstly and only then consider their special needs.

While it may seem like a very small difference, it can be extremely important when we identify and assist children. We have to remember that they are *children* who have developmental needs, before we look at how to adapt to their particular and special needs.

Please beware of using expressions such as "children who are ADD" or "children who are HIV"! They may *have* a disorder or a viral infection, they *are* not that disorder!

Early identification of special needs and barriers to learning

As the ECD practitioner, you are an important link in the early identification of special needs. While some parents may notice that their child is not meeting developmental milestones and seek help, others may not notice, or may choose to ignore the issue.

Many parents compensate (make up) for the child instead of letting them struggle.

The earlier a problem is identified, the sooner the child can receive appropriate support and continue to learn without falling behind developmentally. It is much easier to adapt activities in this formal teaching environment and children are not as aware of the individual attention. It is also important to prevent bad compensatory habits (trying to make up for the problem) from forming such as visually impaired children constantly shaking their heads or poking their eyes.

Special needs may be very obvious: for example, a child starts in your class and you can see that she is wearing splints on her legs. However, another child may start in your class and it takes you a few weeks to notice that he is not coping as well as others with certain activities. How can you be certain that the child has a special need or barrier to learning?

Here are some reasons why it is not always easy to identify special needs in the ECD phase:

- You need to observe carefully and have a sound knowledge of developmental phase.

- ECD is informal, so children are not expected to perform at the same level; no formal tests are conducted.

- Children avoid activities they find difficult, so you don't always get to observe the problem area.

- Young children are not always consistent on a day-to-day basis.

- Some children are late or slow developers.

The Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) is a good guideline to follow in order to establish if further intervention is necessary.

1. Create a learner profile by reading any forms and background information that the parents have provided. Look at the child's likes and dislikes in the learning programme.

2. Identify any special needs or barriers to learning by assessing the child against developmental norms. It is important that you do not just compare that child to the rest of the class, as this may not be a true reflection of age-related ability in a particular area. Think of where and when the child experiences difficulties, and consider whether it could be your teaching style or the environment that may need to be adjusted. Sometimes teachers have unrealistic expectations of children, for example, that a three-year-old should be able to concentrate for a long story that takes 25 minutes to tell.

3. Think of ways that you can adapt activities to include the child. (This is covered in depth in Lesson 4.)

4. Monitor the child's progress and evaluate whether your assistance as the teacher is sufficient, or if the child needs to be referred through the SIAS system.

Class Activity 5: Ensure that the programme sufficiently addresses the developmental stages and particular needs of the children

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

3.2 Ensure that the programme provides flexible options for implementation

Children are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities. However, these activities must be flexible and be adapted to suit the child's individual needs. The fact that there is a choice suits the attention span of young children: although continuous activity is encouraged, they will not be in any zone long enough to become bored or frustrated. The outdoor play portion allows them to run, jump and let off steam after focused activities.

Within the ECD playroom, each child is viewed as a unique individual with special abilities, interests and learning styles. For this reason, the ECD learning programme needs to be flexible, so that each child can participate in the programme in a way that suits him or her as an individual. This type of programme flexibility is also geared to accommodate learners with special needs.

Here are some signposts of a flexible and individualised learning programme:

- The ECD practitioner takes time to observe children as they play and notes their abilities, strengths and challenges, so that she knows how to adapt the programme to meet their individual needs.

- During certain activity periods, children are able to make their own choices about which activities they want to engage in and how to use the resources and materials. This enables children to choose activities that stimulate them and that they enjoy.

- The activity zones are stocked with resource material that cater to the children's different developmental levels. For example: the puzzle corner will offer a range of puzzles from elementary to challenging. In this way, children can make choices that match their developmental ability.

- The ECD practitioner takes time to interact with all learners, including those children who are shy, quiet or who make a few demands on her attention.

- The learning environment (the physical layout, learning resources and activities) are adapted for children with disabilities or barriers to learning. In this way, children with disabilities are included and are able to participate fully.

- During free play, the ECD practitioner interacts with individual children or small groups and offers guidance, support and encouragement. Learning activities are also adapted to suit individual children.

3.3 Ensure that the programme specifies the sequence, timing and main resource requirements of the planned activities

Let's examine the daily or weekly ECD programme in more depth, so that we can understand why it is structured or sequenced in this way. A well-designed learning programme provides a balance of the following types of activities:

- o indoor and outdoor activities
- o individual and small group activities – initiated by either the child or adult
- o large group activities – adult-initiated
- o routine activities
- o effective transitions between activities

In addition, all activities are developmentally appropriate for the children in the playgroup.

The daily ECD learning programme creates a safe, predictable and carefully designed structure of activities and routines. The ECD practitioner uses the daily programme structure to help her when she prepares her longer weekly learning programme. Usually, the ECD learning is theme-based. Typical themes include: the seasons, the sea, the weather, pets, you and your family, animals, and one world – different people. Once a theme is selected, usually for a week or two-week period, the ECD practitioner identifies and creates learning resources and activities linked to this theme. She fits these into the relevant time slots in the daily programme.

Using themes helps to keep the ECD learning programme fresh and exciting for young children. The ECD practitioner tries to choose themes that are developmentally appropriate and match the children's interests. For example, if it is the Soccer World Cup, and many children are interested in soccer, she may use the theme sport, so that children can express their enthusiasm and interest. A theme usually runs for a week or a two-week period, and many of the activities and routines in the daily programme are linked to the theme.

Including opportunities for assessment in the programme

Assessment can provide very useful information to parents and educators about how children develop and grow. Using the developmentally appropriate assessment system can provide information to highlight what children know and are able to do.

Assessments of child development are for different reasons, each requiring unique indicators. The various types of assessments include:

- assessments for an overview of current child status

- assessments to support learning (e.g. by parent or teacher to see what type of activities the child is ready for; mostly informal)

- assessments to identify special needs (e.g. growth monitoring to identify malnourished children)

- assessments for programme evaluation (to determine whether the programme is effective in reaching its goals, or to compare alternative programme models and approaches)

- assessments to monitor trends (e.g. assess the status of children within or across regions and over time)

- assessments for high-stake accountability (to hold individual students, teachers or project managers accountable)

The following tools are the norm:

Screening

Developmental screening is the process of looking at several areas of development on a superficial level to determine whether a child is developing as expected.

Ongoing assessment

There is a difference between screening and ongoing assessment. Screening lets the practitioner have a quick look at development whereas ongoing assessment looks at development constantly and continually over time. Ongoing assessment is a method that collects information about a child's strengths and weaknesses, their levels of functioning and specific characteristics of their learning or learning style.

Diagnostic assessment

This is a process that looks at areas of definite concern and could also include a broad range of development areas. These are typically uniform (identical) for a large number of children; a score is given that reflects a child's performance in comparison to other children of the same age, gender and ethnic origin. The results could identify an area that needs extra attention or a child being diagnosed correctly.

Class Activity 6: Ensure that the programme provides flexible options for implementation

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

3.4 Ensure that the programme provides a balance of developmentally appropriate activities to support the development of all the children

To ensure that the programme provides a balance of developmentally appropriate activities to support the development of all the children, your programme may include an appropriate mix of:

- routine activities

- adult-initiated activities

- child-initiated activities

To best support children's holistic development, the ECD Daily Programme incorporates both inside and outside activities. Usually outside activities are physical and encourage gross motor function. When children climb ropes, peddle tricycles, play on swings, hop, skip, run and jump and so on, they exercise their physical muscles, build fitness, and develop feelings of well-being that accompany physical activity. In a society where children are more sedentary (inactive) through watching television, playing computer games and travelling by car or taxi.

Usually, the ECD practitioner will provide opportunities for outdoor sand and water play (supervised) where learners can measure, pour, build, float and generally exercise their fine motor, creative/imaginative and cognitive skills.

Of course, not all ECD centres have an outdoor play area. In these cases, the ECD practitioner must find opportunities to take children to a nearby park, and offer opportunities for physical movement inside the playroom.

Indoor activities: In the ECD daily programme, there are many opportunities for indoor activities. Usually children participate in rings and use activity zones e.g. creative art area, literacy/reading area, fantasy play area. While movement rings provide opportunities for physical movement gross motor development, generally indoor activities focus on the other developmental domains.

Individual and small group activities – child- or adult-initiated

In the daily or weekly programme, we encourage a particular range of children's social emotional and language development through offering individual and small group activities initiated either by the child or the ECD practitioner.

Children need to acquire some independence and the ability to play on their own at times. Also, some children with an introverted (shy) nature actually need lots of time on their own to feel peaceful and happy. Children also need to build relationships with peers and learn to cooperate together during play or an activity. This is where small group activity is important. The free choice activities that form an important part of the ECD Programme allow children to participate on their own or in small groups in a flexible way. For example, a creative art zone will usually group children in fours around a table; however, the reading/puzzle corner allows children to play independently.

In addition, some of the activity zones should provide an activity that has been prepared by the ECD practitioner, e.g. finger painting with autumn colours, or a range of picture books on the theme "the circus". Children can participate in the activity in their own unique way – allowing them to take the initiative in their own learning.

Large group activities – adult-initiated

The most important adult-initiated activities in the daily programme are rings. Ring times encourage learners to participate together as a class, developing another range of social, emotional and language skills. The most important rings are these:

        a) morning rings and special rings

        b) physical activity rings

        c) story rings

a) Morning rings and special rings

Morning rings provide an opportunity to gather together as a group and set the "tone" for the day. Usually the morning ring contains:

- a welcoming or greeting song
- sharing of news – for example an unusual event like getting a new puppy
- a discussion about the weekly theme (perhaps including show and tell)
- an opportunity to talk about any emotionally difficult event that a child is anxious about (for example bullying, a parent in hospital, an upcoming operation)
- an important event in the community or world (for example the Olympic Games or a village fair)

Special rings are used to mark special events and occasions, such as birthdays, the school's birthday, or holiday celebrations. The morning ring is often used as the timeslot for the special ring.

When you have a birthday ring, the birthday girl or boy is the centre of attention. You could place a crown on the birthday child's head and refer to him or her as prince or princess for the day. You could let the birthday child choose the creative activity for the day.

If appropriate, parents or caregivers could be asked to supply some refreshments (cake or biscuits) for snack time. You may even invite them to join the birthday ring if you wish. This helps to make the day special for the child, and a celebration to remember. You could present the child with a birthday book containing one picture that was drawn by each member of the group. All this boosts the child's self-esteem.

b) Physical activity rings

Physical activity rings are designed to get children moving. These rings usually involve games, music and poetry or rhymes.

Let's look in turn at:

- movement activities
- musical activities
- poetry and rhyme activities

Movement activities

Movement activities involve both physical activity and memory. The children are given instructions. They need to look, listen and do the actions. (You or a child can demonstrate.) The older the children are the more complex and lengthy the movement routines will be.

These activities should include both small muscle development (moving fingers and toes) and large muscle development (moving arms, legs, head and body). Large muscle activities include movements that exercise balance – on a low beam, or standing on one leg, or balancing a bean bag on the head, or a combination of these.

Make sure that the children take off big jackets and jerseys. Set an example by doing the same. There should be an introduction to the ring, for example an action rhyme or game, which serves as a warm-up for the ring. Plan one main activity and three sub-activities to avoid children having to wait in long rows for their turn. Always allow for a relaxation period after the physical activity.

Remember to praise children for their efforts in order to encourage and support them.

You could also use any of the following for smaller groups:

- Skittles: children roll a tennis ball and knock over as many skittles as they can.

- Hula hoops: children use any part of their body to hula.

- Bean bags: children throw bean bags into boxes, which are placed one behind each other; children try to throw bean bags into the furthest box.

Musical activities

Music is a source of great enjoyment for children and also serves a very important purpose. Children learn musical concepts, such as soft and loud sounds, high and low notes, and fast and slow tunes.

Musical activities provide an excellent opportunity for children with poor co-ordination to gain confidence with physical activity through dancing, imitating and moving to specified musical cues. You could ask them to jump up and down for high notes, crawl on the ground for low notes, hop or skip to specific beats, and so on.

Make sure you choose musical instruments and songs that reflect the languages and cultures of all the children in your playgroup, and if possible of all the people in South Africa.

Poetry and rhyme activities

Young children greatly enjoy the repetition and rhyming of poetry and the different kinds of rhymes.

Finger rhymes and action rhymes are good for fine motor development. The children find them challenging and fun.

Always make sure that you choose a variety of poems and rhymes that reflect all the languages and cultures of children in the group. See the box below for examples.

c) Story rings

Story rings are usually scheduled at the end of the day. The children sit in a semicircle with the practitioner sitting up front. Encourage the children to sit with their legs folded and have their hands free. Ensure that they leave learning resources, blocks, dolls, and other equipment behind.

Children who have hearing problems or tunnel vision should sit opposite you (or opposite the person who is telling the story).

Set a good pace for the story, projecting your voice well and use varied intonation (your tone of voice must vary, and go up and down). Show pictures and illustrations, and only use the book where necessary. You could also use story tapes or CDs.

There is a special magic about the art of storytelling – telling children the story in your own way, rather than always reading from the book. Try to learn the techniques of the good storyteller. Your local library should have books to help you. Or find out if there is a good storyteller in your community who could occasionally tell a story during story ring.

Story props or visual aids always help to make the story more exciting and stimulate the child's imagination. These could be in the form of puppets, pictures, and flannel boards, moveable characters or doll and role play. Make sure your story props are culture-fair and anti-bias.

Young children love to hear their names in stories. It is good to base stories on the members of your group and on the community in which they live.

Sometimes children can tell the story, or part of the story, themselves. Here again a tape recorder can be useful so that the children can listen to the story again. Sound effects create a lovely atmosphere during story rings, and help to hold the children's attention. Older children could devise their own sound effects for the story.

The story should be age-appropriate and suitable for the audience.

How to select suitable stories for young children

You need to have a collection of stories available that you can read to young children.

- stories that deal with objects, places and people that the children know and are familiar with
- stories that include unfamiliar people, places and events, so that you broaden the children's knowledge
- fantasy stories about fairies, giants, monsters and so on, which are essential for developing the children's imagination (take care not to use very frightening stories, as some children become easily disturbed)
- rhyming stories, such as Dr Seuss
- stories where the same sentences or phrases are repeated in the story, as young children enjoy repetition
- humorous stories
- Stories should be culture fair and anti-bias. Avoid stereotypes, for example where only daddy goes out to work and only mommy cooks; where all families consist of two parents and two children and all old people are sick or frail. Include a variety of cultures and pictures.

Routine activities

The routines in the ECD daily programme include: clean up time, bathroom time, eating times (snack and lunch), and nap time. The learning opportunities here are around developing independence and self-reliance and learning about health, safety and good manners.

Effective transitions between activities

When you implement your ECD centre programme, you will find that it's sometimes challenging to get the children to move on from one activity to the next. Some of them might not like the next activity you have in mind (for example clean-up time) and some of them might just be enjoying the current activity a lot (perhaps painting or playing outside).

Here are some practical tips for constructive transition times:

- Sing with the children while moving from one activity to another or move in different ways, for example tiptoes, sway, fly like birds to the next activity. This will help children to become excited about the next activity.

- Choose a method to signal the start of a new activity – and allow children to become familiar with it. For example, play a simple tune on a recorder (flute) that learners recognise. After a while of repeated use, a few notes will alert children and they will gather for the new activity. A gentle musical signal is preferable to a bell or harsh sounding instrument.

- Divide the children into groups. For example, say all the children with short hair go to the bathroom first and all the children with long hair go second. The next day children with lace-ups can go first and children with sandals can go second, and so on.

- Let the children sing a song about tidying up to change it from a task to something enjoyable and sing "well done" to those who participate. If this is a regular daily routine, it provides an opportunity to use other languages that only some of the children may know. You can take a simple tune and make up your own words in a variety of languages. In this way, what might be an unstructured, potentially unsettling and disruptive time becomes more of a learning experience.

- Tell the children what they will be doing next before you ask them to pack up and move on to the new activity and direct specific tasks especially to those who become unfocused during transitions. They like to know what's going to happen next as it gives them a better sense of security and control.

 Class Activity 7: Ensure that the programme provides a balance of developmentally appropriate activities to support the development of all the children

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

3.5 Ensure that the programme provides a balance

The balance that you need to ensure that your programme provides should be:

- between indoor and outdoor activities
- between individual, small and large group activities

These activities need to support the development of children and be appropriate to the development stages of the children.

3.5.1 A balance between indoor and outdoor activities

Indoor activities: In the ECD daily programme, there are many opportunities for indoor activities. Usually children participate in rings and use activity zones e.g. creative art area, literacy/reading area, fantasy play area. While movement rings provide opportunities for physical movement gross motor development, generally indoor activities focus on the other developmental domains.

Outdoor activities: To best support children's holistic development, the ECD daily programme includes both inside and outside activities. Usually outside activities are physical and encourage gross motor function. So, when children climb ropes, peddle tricycles, play on swings, hop, skip, run and jump and so on, they exercise their physical muscles, build fitness, and develop feelings of well-being that accompany physical activity. In a society where children are more sedentary through watching television, playing computer games and travelling by car or taxi.

Usually, the ECD practitioner will provide opportunities for outdoor sand and water play (supervised) where learners can measure, pour, build, float and generally exercise their fine motor, creative/imaginative and cognitive skills.

Of course, not all ECD centres have an outdoor play area. In these cases, the ECD practitioner must find opportunities to take children to a nearby park, and offer the chance for physical movement inside the playroom.

3.5.2 A balance between small and large group activities

Although group work is an important technique in a child-centred ECD playroom, there is also a place for individualised activities. Individualised activities are specially chosen for a particular child. These types of activities are often non-social in nature. The children do not interact with others in this type of activity. Instead, they either work alone or interact only with you, the ECD practitioner. These individual times can be used to work on weaker areas or to provide emotional support when children need it.

Learning activities can also be more or less group-orientated and children should have opportunities to work on their own with a puzzle, draw a picture, build with blocks or look at books. Children are forced into group situations and shared space during music, movement, story and morning rings.

As humans, we are social beings but sometimes we all feel the need for solitude (being alone). An ECD environment needs to have sufficient space for children to be able to work alone without being forced to share with others.

Babies and toddlers are self-centred by nature and only engage in more social play after three years of age. The younger the child, the more individual activities are needed.

Group size is also a consideration. Children need to experience being part of the playgroup group and also groups of only four or five children as the level of interaction required of them differs.

> **Class Activity 8: Ensure that the programme provides a balance**
> Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.

3.6 Ensure that the programme can be implemented in the given context and within available resources

When you plan your ECD learning programmes, you need to ensure that the learning activities and experiences you provide for young children are appropriate to their age and stages of development. This is known as developmentally appropriate practice (DAP).

Every ECD context is different. For example, one ECD centre may be very small, providing care for the babies of six working mothers in a middle-class suburb; another one may offer morning only care, but may be large with playgroups in all the age categories. Can you see why the ECD learning programmes for the two centres would need to be different?

Analysing your context consists of these five steps:

Step 1: Identify the factors that impact on the ECD programme.

Step 2: Identify the developmental ages and stages of the learner group.

Step 3: Identify the needs of particular learners, for example a child with specific learning disorders (SLD or dyslexia).

Step 4: Identify relevant ECD-related frameworks.

Step 5: Reflect on your analysis.

3.7 Ensure that the programme complies with relevant national policies and guidelines

Whichever model you choose to use in your learning programme, you will need to make sure that you follow the requirements of the national school curriculum. You are probably aware that the education system in South Africa is periodically revised and adapted to meet the needs of a changing environment. You will therefore have to contact the National Education Department (or a provincial branch) for up-to-date documentation about the specific details of the ECD curriculum.

However, we can provide you with an outline of the current educational curriculum and introduce you to the structure and terminology that will help you to understand the documentation.

a. The structure of the NQF

NQF is one of the abbreviations you will hear often in connection with the new education system. It stands for National Qualifications Framework. As an ECD practitioner, you need to know where early childhood development is located within the national education system as a whole. The table below shows you clearly how the NQF is structured. You will need to refer to this table constantly as you read the next few pages. The table also shows clearly where early childhood development (ECD) fits in. Please note that ECD is not part of the formal NQF, but young children can enter the formal system from ECD playschools.

Structure of the NQF				
School grades	**NQF level**	**Band**	**Types of qualifications and certificates**	
HET Certificate				
	10	Higher Education and Training Band	Doctorates	
	9		Further research degrees	
	8			
	7		Degrees	
	6		Diplomas	
	5		Certificates	
FET Certificate				
12	4	Further Education and	Schools/NGO"s/Workplace	
11	3	Training Band	Technical/Community/Private Colleges	
10	2			
GET Certificate				
9	1	General Education and Training Band	Senior Phase	ABET 4
8				ABET 3
7				
6			Intermediate Phase	
5				ABET 2
4				
3				
2			Foundation Phase	
1				ABET 1
R				

Now let's look at some of the terminology you should become familiar with in order to find your way around the NQF. We will first look at the three bands of education, then at the NQF levels.

b. Bands

There are three main clusters or bands of education and training, namely:

a) the General Education and Training Band (GET)

b) the Further Education and Training Band (FET)

c) the Higher Education and Training Band (HET)

GET: General Education and Training

The GET feeds into the GET band, we will focus on this part of the NQF chart. The GET band covers education from Grade R up to Grade 9. Grades 1-9 are the nine years of compulsory education, grouped into three phases: the Foundation Phase, the Intermediate Phase and the Senior Phase. Grade R (shown as R, for reception year) falls into Foundation Phase and is optional, but is encouraged. A learner can be admitted to Grade R at age four (4) turning five (5) by the 30 June in the same year of admission. The ECD phase caters for babies, toddlers and young children prior to entering Grade R. The ECD phase is not compulsory.

FET: Further Education and Training

The FET band comprises Grades 10, 11 and 12. An FET certificate, which is equivalent to a matric certificate, is given at the end of this band, and signifies the end of formal schooling. Grade 12 is thus the final exit point for schooling.

HET: Higher Education and Training

This band enables learners to obtain diplomas and certificates offered mainly by colleges, and degrees offered by universities and technical colleges (formerly known as technikons).

c. NQF Levels

The NQF has ten levels of qualification. The whole GET band (Grades 1- 9 or ABET 1- 4) makes up the first level of the NQF. The learner can receive a qualification at each level by achieving the credits required to complete that level. The NQF makes it possible for learners to move up the levels and across the different areas of the NQF structure.

The NQF was designed to allow learners to build on what they know as they move from one level to another. It allows for more flexibility than the previous education system, especially for people who were unable to receive full schooling as children. We consider the differences in more detail in the next section (see table 3).

d. Teaching methodology

Within the national curriculum, the teaching methodologies have shifted from the old content-based approach to an approach that is outcomes-based. The table below explains the difference between these two approaches.

Old	New
Passive learners	Active learners
Exam – driven	Learners are assessed on an ongoing basis.
Rote learning	Critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and action.
Syllabus is content-based and is broken down into subjects.	An integration of knowledge, learning is relevant and connected to real-life situations.
Textbook- or worksheet-bound and teacher-centred.	Learner-centred teacher is facilitator and constantly uses group work and teamwork to consolidate the new approach.

Old	New
Syllabus seen as rigid and non-negotiable.	Learning programmes are seen as guides that allow teachers to be innovative and creative in designing programmes.
Teachers are responsible for learning; motivation is dependent on the personality of the teacher.	Learners take responsibility for their own learning; learners are motivated by constant feedback and affirmation of their worth.
Emphasis on what the teacher hopes to achieve.	Emphasis on outcomes – what the learner becomes and understands.
Content placed into rigid time-frames.	Flexible time-frames allow learners to work at their own pace.
Curriculum development process is not open to public comment.	Comment and input from wider community is encouraged.

These learner-centred methodologies are well-suited to the ECD environment, which is highly child-centred and encourages children to learn through play.

e. Learning outcomes

As you know from your own studies, outcomes-based education means that you learn in three main ways:

- You acquire knowledge: what you need to know and understand.

- You acquire knowledge skills: what you need to be able to do.

- You acquire attitudes and values: what you feel and understand and your approach to the world around you.

These three aspects are incorporated into learning outcomes that explain precisely what learners need to master at each level of their education. For the foundation phase, these learning outcomes are written up in the revised National Curriculum Statement which you can obtain from the Education Department.

f. Foundation phase learning programmes

During the foundation phase – including Grade R – learners have three main learning programmes:

- Life skills

- Mathematics

- Language

Within the ECD phase, the learning programmes are designed to encourage learning and development in the early years, and to equip learners to enter into Grade R at age four to five.

If you have any questions about the leaning programmes for Grade R and the foundation phase, or about implementing the national curriculum guidelines, contact your local Grade 1 teacher. He or she will be able to assist you.

Class Activity 9: Ensure that the programme can be implemented in the given context and within available resources

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

3.8 Develop learning programmes to enhance participation of learners with special needs

The term "learning programme" includes all the topics or themes and all the activities that are planned on a weekly and daily basis. We will focus on the various activities in this section, as a child with special needs may be unable to participate fully in certain activities only. Consider, for example, a child in a wheelchair: while he may not be able to skip in a music ring, he is able to participate fully in a story ring.

Each child, whether he or she has a special need or not, has areas of strength and areas of weakness. Think of yourself: you have some skills that are well developed and others that are not. When you plan activities, you need to be aware of all the special needs in your class so that a particular child does not feel excluded from several activities on the same day. Proper planning is the most critical factor in the success of an activity and in the participation of all children.

Special needs, symptoms and requirements

In ECD programmes, we are very aware of looking at children holistically. We don"t focus only on their cognitive skills but recognise that other aspects, such as their social skills, are also vitally important.
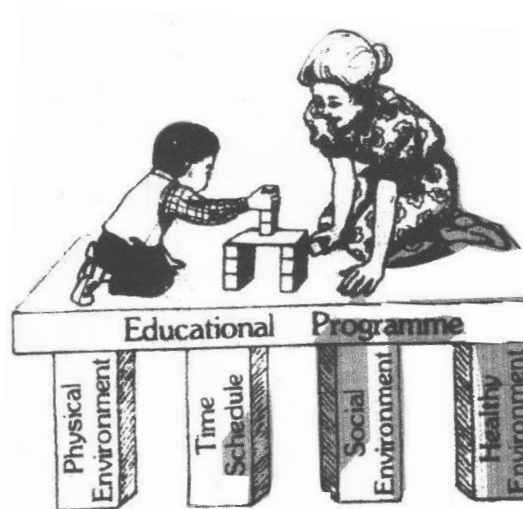
The figure above shows children develop in many areas at once. We must consider these holistically (as a whole).

Let's look at a list of special needs or barriers to learning that you may come across in these different areas. Please don't just skim through this list, but to try to picture a child in each situation.

a.   Physical special needs

Physical special needs are usually easiest to identify and include the following:

- Cerebral palsy, the loss of a limb, spina bifida or severe burns may restrict movement. Children may need assistive devices such as wheelchairs, splints or crutches.

- Visual impairment can range from being blind to a child needing glasses for reading.

- Chronic or long-term illnesses such as cancer, Aids, epilepsy, diabetes, asthma or TB may prevent a child from being active, but may also cause them to be away from the ECD centre for lengths of time. They may also need medication while they are at your ECD centre.

b. Environmental special needs

The following are some of the circumstances that might lead to environmental special needs:

- Children may come from impoverished homes where they lack the physical resources needed for normal development. These resources include adequate shelter, food, clothes and educational resources like books and toys.

- Poor nutrition often occurs in poor communities. However, keep in mind that many wealthier children live off "junk food" and also don't get the nutrients they need from their food.

- Children may have to travel long distances and leave home very early to reach the ECD centre on time. If they had to get up at 4:00, they may already be tired by the time they get to you at 8:00.

c. Cognitive special needs

Cognitive special needs include the following:

- Foetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). Children born with FAS may be cognitively challenged or may learn at a slower pace than other children.

- Cognitive challenges such as Down syndrome (also called Down's syndrome).

- Giftedness. Some children are particularly gifted and have the ability to learn more and at a faster pace than other children.

- ADD (attention deficit disorder) with or without hyperactivity. Children with ADD or ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) have a very short attention span and are easily distracted.

- The autism spectrum, including PDD (pervasive developmental disorder). Children with disorders in this range have difficulty in focusing on tasks and prefer to be "in their own world", so it is difficult to engage them in activities.

- Special learning disorder (SLD), which used to be known as dyslexia in the past. Children with SLD have perceptual disorders and thus their brain has difficulty interpreting the signals it receives. They may have perfect eyesight, but will, for example confuse a "b" and "d".

d. Language special needs

Language special needs include the following:

- Many children are forced by circumstance or by their parents to learn in their second or third language. This is very common in South Africa and can put children at a huge disadvantage. Imagine understanding only three out of ten words when someone speaks to you! While children do catch up and learn language quite quickly, they may miss out on basic concepts, which can slow down their progress.

- Speech impediments such as stuttering or lisping may occur. Children may be teased and feel embarrassed to speak and thus do not practise their speech skills. This often has an impact on their socialisation at school.

- Aural (hearing) impairment, which could range from a child being deaf to needing a hearing aid. These children learn speech at a slower pace.

e.   Social and emotional special needs

Cognitive special needs may arise due to the following circumstances:

- Children may be victims of abuse or neglect.

- Children may be isolated because of their religion or culture. For example, a Muslim child in a Christian school or ECD centre may be teased when she wears a scarf or refuses to eat food that is not halaal.

- Some children have behaviour problems. This may be a result of poor parenting or a neurological dysfunction such as autism, discussed above.

This is a fairly comprehensive list of barriers to learning or special needs that you may come across. However, there are others that fit into these categories that are not covered. Remember that the most important thing is how you adapt to each learner's particular needs.

Another important point to remember is that special needs are unique to each particular child and may differ in severity. Two children who both have ADD may differ in their abilities. While one child may be able to focus and concentrate on a task for ten minutes and complete it with their ECD facilitator's encouragement, the other may only be able to focus for two minutes before getting up from the table – even when the facilitator is assisting her.

These differing abilities are placed on a continuum (range or spectrum), which is illustrated below. Sometimes a rating scale is linked to this, for instance 1 to 10.

Mild	**Moderate**	**Severe**
(1-3)	**(3-6)**	**(6-10)**

Signs and symptoms of more commonly occurring special needs

Please keep in mind that not all children with the special needs that we mentioned will display all of the characteristics. These are merely a guideline to assist you in identifying children who may have a special need. You will have to do further assessment in order to determine the special needs and before referring the child to further support.

Attention deficit disorder (ADD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

If hyperactivity is not present, the children are often seen as daydreamers or labelled "lazy". They tend to be quiet, passive and clumsy and are often overlooked in a class.

If hyperactivity is present, you may observe that the child:
- fidgets, squirms, appears restless and has difficulty remaining seated
- is easily distracted and has difficulty in sustaining attention
- has difficulty in waiting his turn and blurts out answers
- has difficulty following instructions and shifts from one uncompleted task to another
- has difficulty playing quietly and talks
- frequently engages in dangerous actions

Children with ADHD are sometimes called "impossible", because they:

- are difficult to discipline
- are intelligent, but do not respond to reasoning
- never truly explore in a quest for knowledge
- don't generally like to be hugged and cuddles
- are easily frustrated
- are strong-willed and have temper tantrums

Cognitively challenged children

Children with cognitive challenges will tend to:

- have a developmental backlog and not reach milestones within the broad timeline of six months
- be slow in understanding and responding to instructions
- be unable to follow stories if there are no illustrations
- have difficulty in learning new songs and rhymes
- be easily confused by new or different objects and situations
- have difficulty in imitating more complex movements
- have difficulty in repeating long words or sentences
- prefer the company of younger children
- possibly be grasping more abstract concepts

Hearing impairment

You should suspect hearing impairment if you notice that a child:

- often interprets instructions incorrectly
- turns his/her head to listen
- watches the teacher's lips and cannot follow what the teacher is saying if she covers her mouth or turns away (the child might move around during story to be able to lip-read)
- finds it difficult to locate the source of sound
- speaks too loudly or too softly
- finds participation difficult in large groups
- doesn't pay attention
- cannot follow instructions if there is moderate amount of noise in the group;
- finds it difficult to relate stories
- appears to be disruptive or not to listen

Pervasive developmental disorder (Autism scale)

Autism and related disorders are not always easy to recognise. Here are some pointers:

- Up to age of two years, the mother sometimes has a feeling that all is not well with the child. She may notice delayed speech, poor motor development and self-stimulation behaviours.
- In early childhood, poor social contact becomes obvious. The child's play is often repetitive and meaningless and she may develop peculiar preferences or dislikes for food.
- At school-going age, language development is obviously delayed or disturbed.
- They display abnormal reactions to normal stimuli such as background music in a restaurant.

- Motor control and imitation of movements is poor.
- These children may develop particular skills in areas that interest them.
- Behavioural problems like temper tantrums may continue.

Other signs of impairment or disability

The following are often referred to as soft signs" because they are not very obvious and can be easily overlooked.

Motor development

Take note of:
- effects on both gross and fine motor abilities
- delays in development of skills
- poor quality of movements and skills that are not well developed
- clumsiness and poor motor planning skills
- difficulties with balance, and poor spatial orientation
- hand dominance that is established late (after five years of age), so children often swap hands when drawing
- self-help skills that are poorly developed, for example a child cannot do up buttons when dressing (at an age when peers can do this)

Language development

Pointers to look out for include:
- delays in reaching speech milestones
- poor articulation and quality of speech

Social

Notice when a child is unable to "read" social situations and has a poor concept of personal space.

Cognitive

Cognitive signs include:
- poor memory, struggle to engage in age-related problem solving and to see cause and effect
- difficulty in making decisions
- a poor level of symbolic play
- a lack of creativity - the child will rather copy others than come up with their own ideas
- a tendency to be very passive in their learning
- difficulty in abstract thinking
- difficulty following more than one instruction at a time

Hypotonic (low tone)

Children with low tone may show the following behaviours:

- Try to act "cute" for their age and opt out of activities where possible.
- "Flop out" and lie down as much as possible; for example, they will not sit and watch TV but will drape themselves over the chair.
- Avoid doing any motor tasks and rely on listening and verbal skills.
- Use spontaneous movement and rush around when they are required to move.
- "Fix" in various positions (w-sitting is very typical); **W-sitting** is a floor sitting position in which children appear to be kneeling, but they are actually sitting with their bottom on the floor between their legs. Their legs form the shape of a "W".
- Cope with skills they are taught or have to copy, but have difficulty when they have to do motor planning of their own.
- Use gestures if their speech is delayed.
- Rely on others to do tasks for them.
- Display silliness and clowning, or switch off and ignore stimuli.

Down syndrome

Down syndrome has both physical and cognitive characteristic signs:

- They have low muscle tone.
- The stomach is prominent, and they have a small head, which is flat at the back.
- Face appears small and flat with a small mouth and a tongue that often protrudes (sticks out).
- Epicanthic folds (skin of the upper eyelid that covers the inner corner of the eye) over almond-shaped eyes that slant upward.
- Small low-set ears.
- Neck is short and broad, hair is sparse, fine and straight.
- Hands are small and square with short, stubby fingers and atypical fingerprints.
- Skin is often dry and mottled.
- The child is short and stocky in stature – this is more noticeable from four years of age – with a tendency to be overweight.
- Language development is delayed and the child is slow to learn new concepts.

Visual impairment

Be alert to visual impairment when you notice that a child:

- rubs her eyes frequently, especially when doing close visual work
- shuts or covers one eye, tilts head or has unusual facial expressions like squinting, frowning or blinking with close visual work
- complains of eye discomfort
- shows sensitivity to light
- holds a book incorrectly – upside down, too close or too far away
- fail to see detail in picture
- has excessively watery eyes or red, inflamed eyes that don't get better
- has eyes that look dull or cloudy, with pupils that are unusual in size or colour

- appears clumsy
- seems afraid to move around in unfamiliar surroundings, and avoid balls games
- show developmental delays in all areas

3.8.1 Evaluate a range of learning programmes and point out special needs, strengths and weaknesses

When evaluation takes place within an ECD setting you have to pay special attention to the quality of the programme. There are various organic factors that contribute towards this. There are five dimensions of quality within and across settings and systems. These are:

1. *The ECD programme must be in alignment with the values and principles of a community or society.*

   Programmes may differ radically for example, in urban versus rural areas (Dahlberg et al, 2007). The different communities may solve in different ways the tensions between "adult-centred" and "child-centred" views, between valuing children fundamentally or instrumentally for the work they can or will be able to do. It must also include the ability to cater for special needs.

2. *ECD resource levels and their distribution within a setting or system*

   This measurement will include material resources, human resources, the educational level of an early childhood caregiver, the skills level of a health worker as well as the food for the children and print materials.

3. *Physical and spatial characteristics associated with meeting basic needs and minimising environmental dangers*

   South Africa is a developing country. Being exposed to accidents and unforeseen threats is a key feature that affects quality, and the nature of the threats also depends on whether it is a rural or urban setting. Norms may differ but safety standards need to be clear. This includes boundaries to prevent large animals (such as cattle) from entering a setting where children are present, convenience issues for children or parents with disabilities, and the ability to address risks that arise from poor conditions, conflict or natural disasters.

4. *Leadership and management*

   The priority that ECD enjoys and the response to concerns such as the turnover of ECD providers or teachers are leadership and management issues. This includes human resource factors such as local staffing shortages and learning for ECD practitioners.

5. *Interactions and communications*

   In places where ECD is not a cultural norm, the language and mode of communication are often the first experiences that communities have of a programme. This is especially important for reaching minorities, such as the poor or ethnic groups who experience discrimination, and even children or parents with disabilities. Effective communication and involvement is critical to ensure ECD service quality.

3.8.2 How to modify learning programmes to enable learners with particular special needs to participate

Learning programmes can be modified to enable learners with particular special needs to participate. You can modify any or all of the following:

- design of learning programmes, resource materials, trails and routes

- choice of activities, examples and language

- timing and duration of programme, etc.

You can also modify:

- actions

- arrangements

- learning programmes

- materials

We can use didactic principles (or teaching principles) as a basis from which we can adapt activities in order to maximise the learning for all learners, but especially those who have barriers to learning.

The following table shows the didactic principles and how they apply to the design of activities:

Principles	Explanation	Example
Work from the known to the unknown	Always give the learners the opportunity to feel confident of their abilities and knowledge. Start activities with concepts that they know, before introducing new ideas.	We start the year with ideas that are familiar to the children, for example "my body", later in the year we may handle concepts of transport or what happens under the sea.
Work from simple to complex	Start with easier activities and work towards more complex ones. Work with one idea before introducing more.	When cutting, children start with cutting straight lines before they can cut around shapes.
Work from concrete to abstract	Work from 3D (actual objects that they can handle) to 2D (pictures and drawings).	Writing is a classic example: first we touch and smell an apple; we then write the word and can remember the smell and feel of an apple.
Totally (a holistic approach)	Take into account the whole child and all his/her modalities.	When we read stories, children develop cognitively, they learn language, and they become emotionally involved; socially they take turns to answer questions. We may end with a finger play, which is a fine motor exercise.
Play = learning	Young children need to play in order to learn. They do not learn by sitting at desks and working in books only.	Instead of giving children worksheets, they can play educational games which will address the same concepts.
Active participation	Children need to practise skills in order to obtain know-how.	A child in a wheelchair may not be able to march or hop in a music ring but could participate by playing an instrument or clapping out a beat.
Motivation	Children learn best when they feel supported and encouraged. They will attempt more difficult tasks.	We praise children for their effort. Even if they have not achieved an objective, we say "well tried".

Principles	Explanation	Example
Individualisation	Not all children will achieve the same developmental goals at the same time. Not all children learn in the same way. Children learn best when they are interested in the activity or topic.	Some children need more help than others. One child who has a hearing impairment may need to be able to look at you directly in order to lip-read while another may hear well enough with the use of a hearing aid. Even if children have the same type of disability, they may have different special needs.
Repetition	Children learn best when ideas are repeated. They feel secure and enjoy repetition.	A favourite counting song is sung regularly so that all children become familiar with the words.
Multi-sensory	We try to use as many senses as possible while doing an activity. In this way the child who has a visual impairment is still able to touch, listen, smell and taste something and learn about it.	When talking about different fruit, we ask children to look at the colour, touch and feel it, smell it, even taste it so that they remember it better.

Examples of activity adaptations

The following are some ideas of how activities could be adapted to suit children with special needs. They are not rules but *guidelines* only. Use them to spark your own ideas and creativity to adapt activities to the needs of the children in your care.

a. Environment

- Children who are easily distracted may need to work in a quieter corner of the class.

- Buildings may need to be adapted and ramps built so that children in wheelchairs can access the garden.

- Children with a hearing impairment find it difficult to follow instructions if the classroom is very noisy. You may need to get the class to be quiet before telling the class what to do next.

b. Time and duration

- Children with ADD have shorter attention spans and find it difficult to concentrate for long periods. You may need to allow them to get up from a table-based activity to walk around the class, before returning to complete their activity.

- Visually impaired children are often sensitive to bright light so outdoor play should happen earlier in the day to avoid the sharp midday sun.

- Children with diabetes need to eat small meals at regular intervals. You may need to adjust your snack times to accommodate a child who needs to eat.

c. Resources

- Children with a physical disability that affects their hands may have trouble using a string when threading beads. These children would cope better if they used a kebab stick to thread the beads onto.

- A child in a wheelchair may be able to ride a tricycle if straps are added to the pedals to keep their feet in place.

d. Assessment

You must make sure that assessment activities do not disadvantage a child but are adapted to test the same concept as the original activity. A child who is learning in a second language may not be able to name shapes but could be asked to point to a triangle, square and so on. In this way their concept of shapes is still being tested but their language abilities are not handicapping them.

e. Group vs individual

- Children learn best in a one-on-one situation where they get all the attention and activities can be individualised. This may not always be possible, but if a child is cognitively challenged and learns more slowly than the group, he will benefit from having extra time to consolidate a concept.

- Small-group teaching is a valuable method, except when children become aware that they are being categorised. This may happen, for example, when a group who learns concepts quickly is called the "hares" and the slower group the "tortoises". Children are more sensitive than we may realize. Mixed-ability groups work quite well, as stronger learners can help those who are struggling.

f. Buddy system

- Children who are shy or withdrawn will benefit by having a "special" friend who plays with them and partners them in activities.

- Children can help their physically disabled classmates by fetching toys for them or pushing their wheelchair in a music ring.

- A child who is hearing impaired may not hear the bell ringing after outdoor play, so a friend could fetch them wherever they are in the garden.

This system is of benefit to both parties, as the child who is helping also feels important and his or her self-esteem is raised.

3.8.3 Appropriate attitudes and behaviour in relation to learners with a range of special needs

As an ECD practitioner, you are often the first adult outside of the immediate family with whom a child spends extended periods of time. This places a huge responsibility on you, not only in terms of early identification as discussed, but in the way you deal with this child. Your attitudes towards a child with special needs can be the critical success factor in the time she spends in your class. If you are positive towards the child with special needs and show her unconditional acceptance, she will most likely thrive and progress.

Let's look some key aspects or characteristics of your role as an ECD practitioner in relation to children with special needs. Ideally, you need to be:

- a role model
- loving
- creative
- flexible

- enthusiastic
- patient
- confident
- humble
- motivational
- setting realistic goals
- encouraging independence
- prioritising safety
- managing behaviour

Role model

The other children in your class will be guided by your attitude towards the learning with special needs. If you are impatient with the child, they will be too.

Loving

All children have the right to be loved. It is not always easy to hug a child who is dirty or who smells because he has not had a bath in many days, or who is destructive and hurts other children. However, it is important to see they will respond positively in time.

Creative

You will have to look at the challenges that a particular child with special needs experience, and you will have to come up with solutions. While you may be able to consult with others or follow guidelines, you will often need to "think out the box" to find suitable solutions that are practical and affordable. A good example is a child who needs a footrest – this can be made by taping together old telephone directories.

Flexible

Be prepared to adapt activities and tasks, and even your programme, in order to accommodate the special needs in your class.

Enthusiastic

Show children with special needs that you are keen and happy to assist them.

Patient

A child may not always have good urinary control and may wet herself several times in a day. If you become impatient with the child, she may become more anxious and may wet herself even more often.

Confident

Be confident that you are indeed able to assist the children in your class. Your confidence will inspire them to be confident of their abilities and to take small risks in developing their skills. Believe in children and they will believe in themselves. This self-belief can be the start of great achievements.

Humble

There are times when you need to be humble (modest) and admit that you have made a mistake or do not know enough. Never be afraid or too proud to ask for assistance; there are many people and organisations who may be able to help you.

Motivational

Motivate the children in your care to extend themselves (do more than what they think they can) and to develop themselves to their full potential. Don't look only at challenges; look at possible solutions and encourage children to be all that they can be. Remember that a child with special needs is still a child who has aspirations and goals.

Setting realistic goals

While encouraging children, be careful not to set goals that are too high and that children will not be able to reach, as this can be harmful to their self-esteem.

Prioritising safety

You need to be aware of safety issues, especially with aids such as wheelchairs, crutches or walkers. A wheelchair could be overturned if another child is pushing a friend too fast, and injuries may occur. You need to strike the balance between fun and participation and safety.

Managing behaviour

Just because a child has a special need that does not mean that you should not discipline him or her. While you may have to adapt methods - especially for children with emotional problems - they cannot be allowed to get away with socially unacceptable behaviour, because they will, like any other child, become part of society. This is an area that many caregivers find very difficult as they feel sorry for the child.

Class Activity 10: Develop learning programmes to enhance participation of learners with special needs

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

Learning Unit 4
Reflect on the ECD programme

After completing this Learning Unit, you will be able to reflect on the ECD programme, by successfully completing the following:

- Reflect on the ECD programme.
- Evaluate the design of activities.

Reflect on the ECD programme

Reflecting on your ECD programmes is an excellent way to secure that you will always strive towards improvement. Bear in mind that reflections may take place before, during and after implementation of your programme.
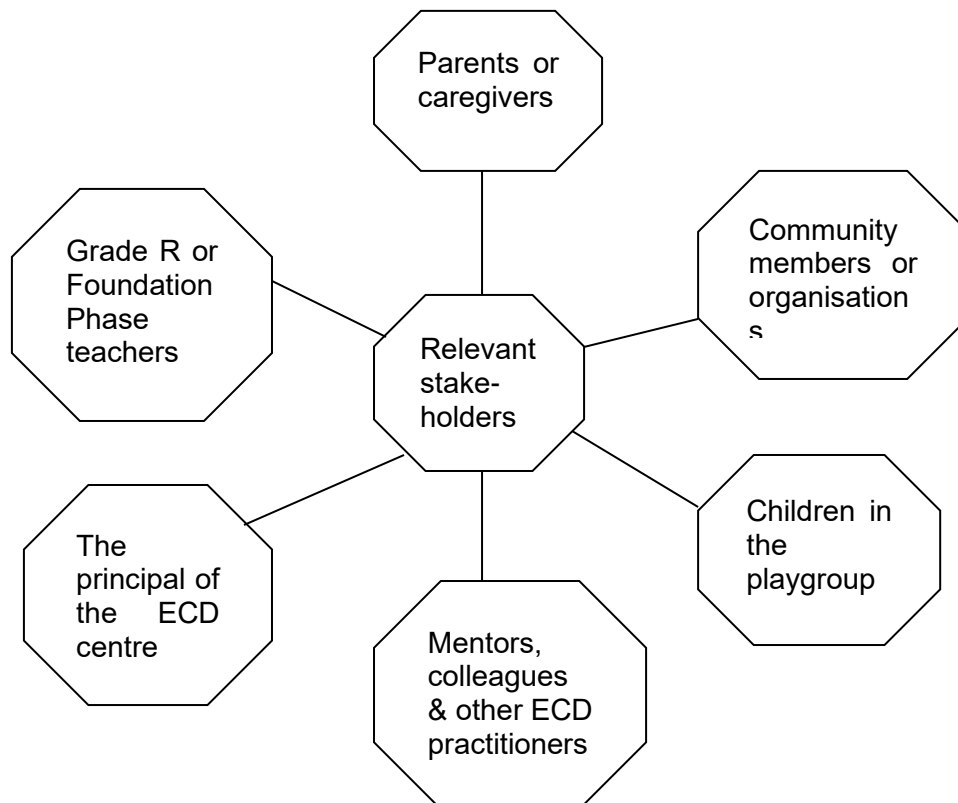
Allowing for space, incentive, time, and means for ECD practitioners to reflect on their programmes and practice are all essential for an effective ECD centre. Without feedback and reflection time, ECD practitioners sometimes work mechanically (like they are on auto pilot) and without objectives.

Reflection allows you to build on the strengths of your programme, and to resolve weaknesses and problem areas. This means that the programme is always evolving, strengthening and improving. When you see the positive impact of your programme reflections, you should feel proud and resolve to carry on with renewed energy. Furthermore, the process of self-reflection can also become a vehicle for collaboration.

Make self-reflection a priority, and create space for it. Your own success and that of the ECD depend on your reflection.

4.1 Obtain feedback from relevant sources on the value and success of the programme

When we want to reflect on the value and success of our ECD programme, we have to start by obtaining feedback from relevant stakeholders (the sources of feedback). Let's begin by examining a mind map of who these stakeholders or feedback sources could be.

Parents or caregivers

Grade R or Foundation Phase teachers

Community members or organisations

Relevant stake-holders

The principal of the ECD centre

Children in the playgroup

Mentors, colleagues & other ECD practitioners

a. Mentors, colleagues and other ECD practitioners

Your mentor or your colleagues in the ECD can give you feedback and help you to evaluate how well you are preparing and implementing programmes. You may want to set up regular feedback sessions while you are still building up experience as an ECD practitioner. Later, you could help to

mentor or support other new practitioners. A peer feedback group also enables you to obtain relevant feedback from your peers.

b. ECD principal

The ECD centre director or principal will be a highly experienced practitioner, so she will be an excellent feedback source. She will also probably have a bird's eye view of your playgroup so may see trends and possibilities more easily.

c. Parents

There are many ways to obtain feedback from parents:

- informal conversation when dropping or collecting children

- telephone calls

- home visits

- parent meetings

- questionnaires

- a notebook in the child's bag that the ECD practitioner and parents use to correspond with each other

Usually, the ECD practitioner will use all of these methods to obtain meaningful feedback, both positive and negative. Remember: you are most likely to receive the best feedback during informal conversations with parents when they are feeling relaxed. Note down relevant suggestions and where appropriate discuss them further at a parent meeting or through a questionnaire.

d. Children

Children are good sources of feedback because they are usually honest and direct. They will tell you instantly if there are activities, routines or other parts of the programme that they do not like. They are also quick to show appreciation. Try to build regular reflection sessions with children. For example, after an activity or a story, ask them if they enjoyed it. Ask them what they learned. Write down their response on your activity template, so you can take their comments into account next time.

e. Grade R or Foundation Phase teachers

Your ECD centre will probably be a feeder centre for one or two local primary schools. Build up a relationship with the Grade R Foundation Phase teachers. They will be in a good position to give feedback on your programme, as they can assess the children's learning and development when they enter Grade R.

f. Community members or organisations

People outside the immediate ECD centre staff and the children's families also have an impact on the success of the ECD centre. You can informally ask these individuals for feedback. If what they have to say is really relevant, you may invite them to a parent meeting and ask them to address your colleagues and the children's parents.

The feedback book:

Have a feedback book on hand at the ECD centre. This can either be your personal feedback book or you can create a book for all the ECD practitioners to use. Write down feedback as you receive

it, otherwise you might forget before you have a chance to use a suggestion or share a compliment or complaint with your colleagues. You could also use a comments box or feedback book for those parents who want to remain anonymous. As trust grows, parents will feel more comfortable about speaking directly to you.

4.1.1 Obtain feedback on the application of the activities

When you conduct evaluations, you collect and examine evidence in order to make judgements about something's value. An evaluation is basically making value judgements about something by looking at the advantages and disadvantages of that thing. A value judgement is how effective or ineffective, good or bad, successful or unsuccessful something is. When you evaluate something, you want to assess whether it meets its intended goals. So, how does this relate to the evaluation of activities in an ECD playroom? You will have to make value judgements about your activities, their strengths and weaknesses and whether they meet their intended goals.

Why do you need to evaluate the activities you design? Because an evaluation allows you to assess your current teaching practice and improve your future teaching practice. Evaluation gives you the opportunity to:

- learn from your mistakes
- identify your areas of strengths and your areas of challenge
- make sure that you are being effective
- check how appropriate things are
- ensure that what you do matches the purpose
- improve
- identify ways in which you can change and grow

Evaluation forms an important part of your ongoing professional growth and development as an ECD practitioner.

Evaluations of activities in an ECD playroom have to meet a number of criteria. The evaluations you conduct must:

- reveal the activities" strengths and weaknesses in relation to their purpose
- be consistent and systematic
- draw on feedback, observations and/or reflections
- assess the contribution of the activities to the ECD"s aims

Let's look at each one of these in more detail.

a. Evaluations must reveal the strengths and weaknesses of activities in relation to their purpose

When you design your activities, they always have a purpose which is linked to the developmental outcomes. For example, the purpose might be to develop fine motor skills or to encourage children to share. The purpose is the intended goal of the activity. So, one of the things that you need to evaluate is whether an activity achieved its purpose. You can assess the strengths and weaknesses of an activity in relation to its purpose. The strengths will be successes, the advantages, the effective parts of an activity, what worked. The weaknesses will be the aspects that were not successful, the disadvantages, and the ineffective parts of an activity, what didn't work.

You can learn from both the strengths and weaknesses of an activity. The strengths of an activity teach you what is effective so that you can use those aspects again. The weaknesses provide you

with opportunities to change what didn't work so you can improve next time you do that activity or when you design another activity.

b. Evaluations must be consistent and systematic

A consistent evaluation is one that always looks at the same criteria. A systematic evaluation is one that is orderly and well planned. So, how can you make your evaluations consistent and systematic? A useful way is to develop a checklist of the criteria that you need to evaluate. Then you can be sure that you are always assessing the same criteria in an orderly way.

The Activity Plan that you used to describe your activities can form the basis for the checklist of the criteria that you need to evaluate. The table below gives you a checklist based on the Activity Plan:

Activity evaluation checklist for (name of activity) Assign a rating to each criterion from 1 to 5, where 1 = strongly agree and 5 = strongly disagree.		
	Rating	**Comments/evidence**
Does the activity achieve its purpose?		
Is the timing appropriate?		
Is the activity appropriate for the age of the children?		
Does the activity integrate with the theme?		
Is the activity developmentally appropriate?		
Are the resources appropriate for the activity?		
Is the learning environment well managed?		
Is the preparation appropriate?		
Is the introduction effective?		
Is the body of the activity effective?		
Is the conclusion effective?		
Are the instructions clear?		
Are the children actively engaged in the activity?		

The Comments/Evidence column is for comments explaining the rating or evidence to justify the rating. Evidence can be any proof that supports a rating such as a child's comment, an observation about a resource that broke or the products that the children produce in an activity. The Comments/Evidence column is there to avoid rather meaningless generalisations about activities "going well" or "being a disaster". An evaluation must be specific about how and why an activity is being judged as effective or ineffective.

c. Evaluations must draw on observation, reflection or feedback

When you conduct an evaluation, you can use three ways to gather information about the value and success of an activity: These three ways are:
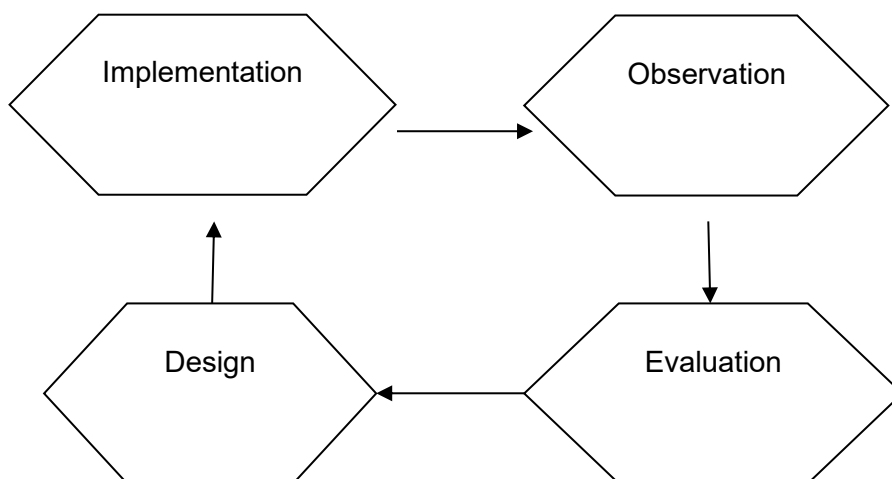
- observation
- reflection

- feedback

Let's look at each one of these in more detail.

Observation

You learned about doing observations when you were evaluating the learning resources you adapted. To recap, observations are about watching the children doing the activity. During an observation you are watching carefully to see whether the purpose of the activity is being achieved and to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the activity. Observation needs to be about what was said and done during the activity. The observation is a good time to complete the checklist. The checklist will help to record the observations and allows space to note down examples to illustrate comments.

Observation is part of an ongoing cycle: you observe the children during the activity, record your observations, evaluate the activity and then you use these evaluation comments to help you to improve your activity and design new activities. Then you implement (do) your improved activity or your new activity and the cycle starts again. In this way, your observation and evaluation inform your practice (that means that your practice is based on your observation and evaluation).

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         Implementation ──────────▶ Observation

              ▲                          │
              │                          ▼

              Design ◀────────────── Evaluation
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Reflection

Feedback

Feedback is information about a performance that leads to action to affirm or develop performance. The "performance" in this case is the activity. So, how is feedback different from reflection? Both are based on observation but reflection is usually self-reflection, it is what you think and feel about the activity. Feedback usually comes from other people such as your colleagues, the children in you playgroup and their parents. In a way, you could say that reflection is your own feedback on an activity and feedback is other people's reflections on an activity.

Feedback gives you the information you need to reinforce the effective things you are doing and to identify areas where you can improve. When you get feedback, it should motivate you to improve yourself as an ECD practitioner. Feedback is an essential part of your own learning. It helps you to maximise your potential, raise your awareness of your strengths and weaknesses, and identify actions you can take to improve your performance. Feedback helps you to plan productively for the next activity.

Feedback can be informal or formal. Informal feedback could be a comment from a child, a parent, or a colleague during or after the activity. For example, a child might say "I don't like this glue. It

doesn't stick". From that feedback you would know that you need to improve the quality of the glue next time. A parent might say "I don't know what you did but all of a sudden James can button his shirt. Thank you!" From that feedback you would know that the activities you've been doing to develop fine motor skills and putting on clothes are successful. A colleague might say "Your group was so excited at snack time. They couldn't stop talking about what fun they had in the music ring. You must share that activity with me."

Formal feedback would be a planned event. For example, you might ask a colleague to sit in on an activity and make observations and then give you feedback. Or you could work with parents to address a specific need of their child and have a feedback discussion about whether the activities are helping or not.

Often formal feedback from a colleague is given by using a feedback form. Your colleague will complete the form while she is observing your activity and then use it as the basis to give you feedback afterwards.

The table below gives an example of a feedback form.

Activity feedback form	
Name of activity:	
Name of colleague:	Date:
Strengths of the activity	
Weaknesses of the activity	
Summary of evaluation	

As you can see, this kind of observation is much more open-ended than the checklist you developed for observation. But your colleague can also use the checklist as a guide to the sorts of things for which to look. As with the checklist, your colleague needs to provide evidence and examples in the comments that she writes on the feedback form.

Your colleague will use this feedback form as the basis for the feedback session you will have. Usually colleagues evaluate one another so you will have opportunities to reinforce positive behaviours and strengths as much as looking at areas where improvement can be made. When you are doing a peer observation, you need to give as much attention to the evidence for effective performance as for ineffective performance. You need to give both affirmative and developmental feedback. Affirmative feedback tells your colleague what she did well. Its purpose is to encourage the person and to reinforce their behaviour. Developmental feedback tells your colleague what needs to be done better and how to do it. Its purpose is to help the person see how she could do better next time. The key to successful feedback is to give the person a manageable amount to go away with and put into practice.

When you evaluate an activity you will always use observation and self-reflection but you should also try to use feedback from others as well. This will give you a more balanced way to evaluate your activities. You may be too judgemental of your own activities or you may be unable to see any problems. Another person's observations and feedback will help you to see the activity from another perspective.

4.2 Reflect to identify strengths and weaknesses of the programme

As an ECD practitioner, you need to know how to evaluate the activities you design. You must know how to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of your activities. The purpose of finding out what works and what doesn't is so you can improve and extend the activities you have designed. When you evaluate your activities you need to do so in a consistent and systematic way. You need to get feedback from a variety of relevant sources such as your colleagues, the children in your playgroup and their parents. You also need to do self-reflection and record the findings of your evaluation.

4.2.1 Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the activities

A strengths and weaknesses table is a useful way to organise anecdotal feedback comments (that means, comments based on individual's stories and comments). Use this table to do revision of your programme. Pay particular attention to recurring feedback, for example when you hear similar suggestions from the parents or from several different stakeholders. You may like to call on your mentor or a group of peers when you do programme revisions, to make sure you retain the strengths of the programme so that children feel safe and secure.

The following table is an example of an ECD"s strengths and weaknesses:

Source of feedback	Strength	Weakness
Mentor	I like how you deal with transition times.	You sometimes allow the children to have too much say about what they would like to eat.
Colleagues	I really like the new playground equipment and the fact that the children enjoy it so much.	I feel we have too few staff members to care for and appropriately stimulate all the children.
Colleagues	The daily schedule/programme is well organised and flows smoothly.	I wish we could allow some more time for the children to eat. Snack and lunch times always feel too rushed for me.
Children	I love painting, and singing songs, and feeding the hamster.	Teacher Baile is always busy talking to the other teachers when I need her.
Parents	My child enjoys the different themes: Dinosaurs, under the sea, My House.	My child does not like story time. She says the stories are too long, and there are no pictures.
ECD Principal	Your programme is written in a really professional way. You have clearly taken all aspects into account.	I think you should pay more attention to what you display on your walls. The children and parents will take pride in what they see.
Other: the school's neighbours	I like the fact that you always invite us to your end-of-year celebrations.	I don't believe you have enough outdoor supervision as the children are very noisy at lunch and snack times.

How does the programme contribute meaningfully to the overall aims of the ECD service?

What are the overall aims of your ECD service? Usually these aims are stated in an ECD centre's vision and mission. For example, let's examine the aims of a typical ECD service. The ECD service below lists six main aims. It states that by participating in the ECD learning programme, children will:

- develop confidence and self-reliance in themselves as learners

- demonstrate curiosity and enjoy learning

- develop the ability to focus their attention and complete structured activities

- develop a level of communicative competence that is personally satisfying

- acquire social skills and abilities which enable them to relate to other children and to adults

- remain true to their individual natures, being free to develop to their own potentials

This is a very useful set of overall aims. For you as an ECD practitioner, a set of aims like this can help you reflect and adjust your learning programme effectively. For example, you could use a rubric to help you check if your learning programme is matching the identified aims.

The following table is an example of a rubric to check how programme matches its stated aims:

Children develop confidence and self-reliance in themselves as learners.	o Arrival – hanging up bags o Scaffold learning experience
Children demonstrate curiosity and enjoy learning.	o Science/discovery table o Nature
Children develop the ability to focus their attention and complete structured activities.	o Puzzles and completion games o Art and craft activities
Children develop a level of communicative competence that is personally satisfying.	o Share personal experiences in morning ring
Children acquire social skills and abilities that enable them to relate to other children and adults.	o Participate in small and large group activities o Interact with partner o Follow instructions
Children remain true to their individual natures, being free to develop to their own potential.	o Free expression in open-ended creative art activities

4.3 Reflect to identify the extent to which the programme contributes meaningfully to the overall aims of the ECD service

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. There are various steps in reflection that we will discuss.

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:

- 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 being 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 – see them as an opportunity.

Remember, "*Attitude determines altitude*".

4.3.1 Reflect on the extent to which the designed activities contribute meaningfully to the overall aims of the ECD service

As you know, when you reflect on something, you look at it carefully and think about it critically. Reflection is about examining and reviewing. When you are busy facilitating an activity you tend to make quick decisions to deal with any issues that arise. Reflection allows you the luxury of time to examine these decisions at your leisure and make further decisions about how you wish to respond should similar circumstances arise again. These decisions then become part of your activity when you do it again. Observation is done during an activity but reflection is done after an activity.

After doing an activity, it is important to stop and reflect on the activity. This is not so that you can indulge in self-congratulation or regrets, but rather so that you may have a basis for your own learning by reflecting on experience: this activity was unsatisfactory, what could I have done to improve it? Or: this activity was good, what was it exactly that made it good?

When you reflect you can ask yourself: "Did the activity go according to plan?" Although an activity that went according to plan will probably be effective, you also need to ask yourself whether the plan was a good one in the first place. A sensitive and flexible ECD practitioner will plan with different needs in mind and adapt to various changing circumstances such as the needs of the children.

You should try to reflect on an activity as soon after you have done the activity as possible. This is so your ideas and observations are still fresh in your mind. Your reflection notes don't need to be long but you do need to write your thoughts down. That is why there is a section for reflection at the end of each Activity Plan.

Like observation, reflection is part of an ongoing learning cycle. In this learning cycle, you plan an activity and then you do the activity. After doing the activity you reflect on the activity and use that reflection to again direct your next action. That action could be to improve your activity, try something different or use something similar for a different purpose. Then you are back into planning and the cycle continues.
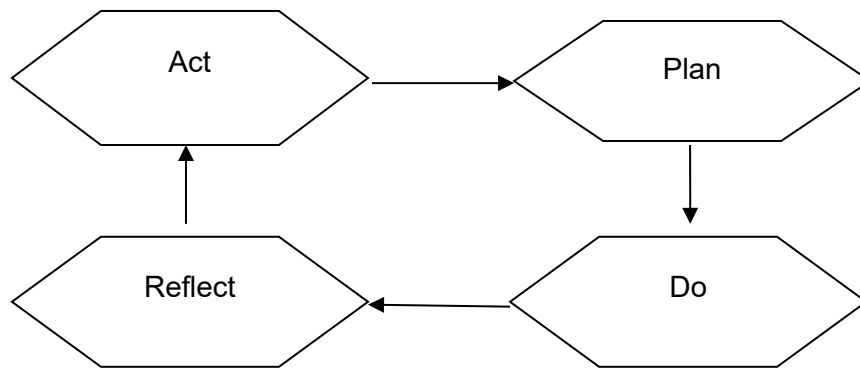
4.4 Identify and note ways to improve upon the programme for future plans and programmes

As an ECD practitioner, you need to make sure that you evaluate your programme activities regularly. The best way to do this is to structure evaluation sessions and stick to them! Most effective ECD practitioners use an evaluation schedule like this:

ECD Evaluation schedule

a.   Daily evaluation

Write up feedback comments on Activity Plans and daily programme during the day. At the end of the day, take ten minutes to reflect and make simple adjustments.

b.   Weekly evaluation

At the end of the week, take 15 minutes to reflect on the weekly programme. Notice any problem areas you experienced. Also, check the feedback book. Make any revisions to the following week's programme.

c.   End of term evaluation

Meet with other ECD practitioners. Review the programme together. Check that the learning programme for different playgroups link well together. Ask questions like the ones in the checklist that follows. Discuss and implement improvements strategies.

Making an effort to improve your ECD service

How can you ensure that you provide a consistently good quality ECD service? You always have to make efforts to improve the quality of the service you offer. You can do this by identifying the problems and weaknesses in your ECD service. You can also build on your strengths and what you already have in place in your ECD service. Remember to work co-operatively with co-workers, families and the community. These groups know your ECD service well. They will have many ideas for ways to improve. They may also notice problems and weaknesses that you have overlooked.

Suggested ways to improve the quality of your ECD service

1. Do you recognise the individual needs of the child?

2. Are you accountable to the community and caregivers?

3. Do you provide experiences that challenge children, and are achievable?

4. Are problem-solving and critical thinking an integral part of the programme?

5. Do you provide opportunities for the child to develop in a holistic way?

6. Do you avoid stereotyping and bias?

7. Do you encourage integrated learning?

8. Are there many opportunities for experiential learning?

9. Do you insist on regular assessment and evaluation?

10. Do you encourage free play and unguided activities?

11. Do you plan in advance?

12. Do you spend enough time playing with the children?

13. Do you meet regularly as staff to discuss the children's progress as well as the standard of care and education?

Now take a look at these opportunities:

1. Do you recognise the individual needs of the child?

All children are different and need to be treated as special. They acquire knowledge and skills at different developmental stages. As an ECD practitioner, you must take this into consideration when you plan your ECD programme. The mode of learning will not be the same for each child.

2. Are you accountable to the community and caregivers?

As a practitioner you need to be transparent and available to those who entrust their children to your care. The parent and caregiver community should be kept informed of and involved with what is happening in the playschool.

We can no longer be practitioners in isolation. We need to work with the community and share expertise with colleagues. It is up to you to be well-informed and knowledgeable of ongoing developments in early childhood development.

3. Do you provide experiences that challenge children and are achievable?

As an ECD practitioner you take learners from the known to the unknown. Small children have had varied experiences. Which provide you with a starting point? Try not to under- or over estimate what a young child is capable of learning. Provide a stimulating learning environment where children can be challenged to reach their full potential. If you know your learners well, it will be easier for you to provide an enriching programme.

4. Are problem-solving and critical thinking an integral part of the programme?

Problem solving is a process of thinking, identifying and finding solutions to everyday situations. This is a life skill that helps children to feel independent and builds their self-esteem. They learn that they have the resources to deal with situations that need answers. This realisation empowers the child to try out possibilities in a supportive environment. It implies that you should avoid stepping in before a child has had the chance to try something for him/herself. You should never interfere to the extent that you stunt (inhibit) their experiential learning.

5. Do you allow the child to develop in a holistic way?

The child should develop emotionally, intellectually, physically, socially, spiritually and creatively. Such 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 an assortment of resources that they explore in a variety of ways.

6. Do you avoid stereotyping and bias?

You can encourage children to respect and value all human beings by helping them to understand and celebrate our different cultures, traditions, social customs likes and dislikes. You, as the ECD practitioner, need to have an unbiased approach to gender, race, language, physical ability and children's special needs. You also need to be aware of other forms of bias that might influence your teaching.

Remember, the children will see you as their role model when they have to deal with their peers.

7. Do you encourage integrated learning?

Children learn best in an integrated environment rather than in isolation. The curriculum should combine all learning areas where possible and avoid fragmentation (breaking up the content into bits and pieces). For example, if "water" is the topic for the week, you could incorporate a story about water (e.g. the water cycle), measuring by using containers of different sizes and shapes, a song about water, uses of water in the home, experiments with water, stories about water the possibilities are endless. Literacy, numeracy and life skills as explained in the NCS documents can be focused on individual skills. However, they are all interrelated and occur throughout the day in the ECD environment.

8. Are there many opportunities for experiential learning?

A hands-on approach is worthwhile and valuable. Children learn best when they do and see, rather than from just being told. Active learning is far more effective than passive rote learning and memorising. You can promote active learning by using different questioning techniques, experimentation and wide variety of different learning materials.

9. Do you insist on regular assessment and evaluation?

Plan your programme to include continuous assessment and evaluation. Ongoing observation and reviewing of the learners" skills and abilities is an integral part of the ECD practitioner's day. This helps with the learning process and assists the practitioner when planning her or his programme. The concept of continuous assessment and evaluation is one of the philosophical pillars on which outcomes-based education is based. Do keep in mind that testing can be very stressful for young children, and that the results are not always reliable, because children also have good and bad days.

10. Do you encourage free play and unguided activities?

Informal play and games are very important for the child's development because they promote curiosity, problem solving and co-operative learning skills. Not all activities should be guided. Children should be encouraged to experiment, discover and invent their own activities and rules.

11. Do you spend enough time playing with the children?

Play is the most important activity in the lives of children. Sometimes it seems more important than eating and sleeping. This can be easy and fun and also involve trying hard to do something right.

Play is the work, the occupation of childhood.

Why is play important?

- Play is important because it helps children grow strong and healthy.

- Play is important because children can learn about the meaning of things in the world.

- Play is important because it helps children learn about people.

- Play is important because it helps children learn and grow in a way that helps them feel good about themselves.

- Play is important because it is practice for being grown-up.

- Do you meet regularly as staff to discuss the children's progress as well as the standard of care and education?

You as an ECD practitioner do not work in isolation. Meeting with one another to discuss problems will always improve conditions for the children. This not only supplies support to one another but allows you to help less experienced staff members to deal with issues and to maintain quality.

4.4.1 Identify and record useful ways to improve upon and extend the activities for further use

If an activity does not work, it doesn't mean you are a "bad" teacher. You are only a "bad" teacher if you don't reflect on your activities and make the effort to revise the elements of the activity that did not work. The whole point of doing evaluations is for you to improve and extend your teaching practice. A good evaluation should highlight both the strengths and weaknesses of an activity. There are different ways to use evaluations to improve and extend activities. When you evaluate the strengths of an activity you are asking yourself questions such as "What worked?" "Why did it work?" The point is to learn what you are good at. Perhaps you can use this information to improve something else that didn't work. Or you can extend that which worked for one activity when you design another activity.

When you evaluate the weaknesses of an activity you are asking yourself questions such as "What problems arose?" "Why did they arise?" "How did I deal with them?" The purpose of this questioning is not to focus on the negative. The point is to learn from what has happened. You can turn problems and weaknesses into opportunities to improve and extend your teaching practice.

A good evaluation probes beneath the surface of issues and does not quickly assume that the source of an issue has been located. This involves a willingness to keep asking "why?" and to consider alternative explanations. For example, was your playgroup "unresponsive" to an activity because they were bored or because it was too difficult or was it the specific time of day and they were too tired? You need to keep digging until you find a reasonable explanation for an issue.

When you discussed doing observations and giving feedback, you were encouraged to be specific. This will help you when you want to make changes to your activities. You can look at an activity and ask yourself questions about each aspect such as:

- What could I have done in my design to avoid problems?

- If I do this activity again, which specific areas need to be improved?

- How can I improve those specific areas?

- What extension activities can I do to help the children with needs and issues that arose from the activity?

- What follow-up activities can I do to consolidate the skills the children developed in this activity?

A good evaluation will consider alternative approaches, which could be adopted in future activities. Your adoption of these approaches will be firmly based on the evidence from the evaluation of the activity. It will not just be a case of randomly trying something different. Teaching is a profession that requires constant introspection (looking at yourself and your teaching style) for serious growth and development to take place.

When you have decided how to improve and extend your activities, you need to record your decisions. The Activity Plan that you used to describe your activities has a section for evaluation where you can record your decisions. This section will be a summary of all the feedback, observations and reflections that make up your evaluation as well as the decisions you have made to improve and extend your activity based on that evaluation. You need to record these decisions to help you when you want to do the activity again or when you design another activity. You also need to record the decisions to help any other ECD practitioner who wants to use your Activity Plan. Keep your evaluations in the file with your Activity Plans. This file is an important resource to help you grow and develop as an ECD practitioner.

Class Activity 11: Reflect on the programme, the use and effectiveness of the resources and evaluate the design of activities

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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Appendix A:

Ongoing Developmental Checklist

1 TO 3 MONTHS

CHILD"S NAME: _____

DATE OF BIRTH:_____

	DATE OBSERVED
PHYSICAL	
Raises head when lying on stomach (3 months).	
Supports upper body with arms when lying on stomach (3 months).	
Opens and shuts hands (2-3 months).	
Pushes feet down when placed on firm surface (3 months).	
VISUAL	
Watches face intently (2-3 months).	
Follows moving objects (2 months).	
Recognises familiar objects and people at distance (3 months).	
Starts using hands and eyes in coordination (3 months).	
LANGUAGE	
Smiles at the sound of voice (2-3 months).	
Cooing noises; vocal play (begins at 3 months).	
Attends to sound (1-3 months).	
Startles at loud noise (1-3 months).	
EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL	
Begins to develop a social smile (1-3 months).	
Enjoys playing with people, may cry when playing stops (2-3 months).	
Becomes more communicative and expressive with face and body (2-3 months).	
Imitates some movements and facial expressions.	

DEVELOPMENTAL RISK FACTORS (1 TO 3 MONTHS)

- Doesn't seem to respond to loud noises.

- Doesn't follow moving objects with eyes by 2 to 3 months.

- Doesn't smile at the sound of your voice by 2 months.

- Doesn't grasp and hold objects by 3 months.

- Doesn't smile at people by 3 months.

- Cannot support head well at 3 months.

- Doesn't reach for and grasp toys by 3 to 4 months.

- Doesn't bring objects to mouth by 4 months.

- Doesn't push down with legs when feet are placed on a firm surface by 4 months.

- Has trouble moving one or both eyes in all directions.

- Crosses eyes most of the time (occasional crossing of the eyes is normal in these first months).

COMMENTS:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

PRACTITIONER: _____

4 TO 7 MONTHS

CHILD"S NAME: _____

DATE OF BIRTH:_____

	DATE OBSERVED
PHYSICAL	
Pushes up on extended arms (5 months).	
Pulls to sitting with no head lag (5 months).	
Sits with support of his hands (5-6 months).	
Sits unsupported for short periods (6-8 months).	
Supports whole weight on legs (6-7 months).	
Grasps feet (6 months).	
Transfers objects from hand to hand (6-7 months).	
Uses raking grasp (not pincer) (6 months).	
VISUAL	
Looks for toy beyond tracking range (5-6 months).	
Tracks moving objects with ease (4-7 months).	
Grasps objects dangling in front of him (5-6 months).	
Looks for fallen toys (5-7 months).	
LANGUAGE	
Distinguishes emotions by tone of voice (4-7 months).	
Responds to sound by making sounds (4-6 months).	
Uses voice to express joy and displeasure (4-6 months).	
Syllable repetition begins (5-7 months).	
COGNITIVE	
Finds partially hidden objects (6-7 months).	
Explores with hands and mouth (4-7 months).	
Tries to get objects that are out of reach (5-7 months).	
EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL	
Enjoys social play (4-7 months).	
Interested in mirror images (5-7 months).	
Responds to other people's expression of emotion (4-7 months).	

DEVELOPMENTAL RISK FACTORS (4 TO 7 MONTHS)

- Seems very stiff, tight muscles.

- Seems very floppy, like a rag doll.

- Shows no affection for the person who cares for them.

- Doesn't seem to enjoy being around people.

- One or both eyes consistently turn in or out.

- Persistent tearing, eye drainage, or sensitivity to light.

- Does not respond to sounds around them.

- Has difficulty getting objects to mouth.

- Does not turn head to locate sounds by 4 months.

- Doesn't roll over (stomach to back) by 6 months.

- Cannot sit with help by 6 months (not by themselves).

- Does not laugh or make squealing sounds by 5 months.

- Does not actively reach for objects by 6 months.

- Does not follow objects with both eyes.

- Does not bear some weight on legs by 5 months.

COMMENTS:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

PRACTITIONER: _____

8 TO 12 MONTHS

CHILD"S NAME: _____

DATE OF BIRTH:_____

	DATE OBSERVED
PHYSICAL	
Gets to sitting position without assistance (8-10 months).	
Crawls forward on belly.	
Creeps on hands and knees.	
Gets from sitting to crawling or stomach position (10-12 months).	
Pulls self up to standing position.	
Walks holding on to furniture.	
May walk two or three steps without support.	
FINE MOTOR	
Uses pincer grasp (grasp using thumb and index finger) (7-10 months).	
Puts objects into container (10-12 months).	
Takes objects out of container (10-12 months).	
Pokes with index finger.	
Tries to imitate scribbling.	
COGNITIVE	
Explores objects in many different ways (shaking, banging, throwing, dropping) (8-10 months).	
Finds hidden objects easily (10-12 months).	
Looks at correct picture when image is named.	
Imitates gestures (9-12 months).	
LANGUAGE	
Responds to simple verbal requests.	
Responds to "no".	
Makes simple gestures such as shaking head for no.	
Babbles with inflection (8-10 months).	
Babbles "dada" and "mama" (8-10 months).	
Says "dada" and "mama" for specific person (11-12 months).	
Uses exclamations such as "oh-oh".	
EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL	
Shy or anxious with strangers (8-12 months).	
Cries when mother or father leaves (8-12 months).	
Enjoys imitating people in his play (10-12 months).	
Prefers mother or regular caregiver over others (8-12 months).	
Repeats sounds or gestures for attention (10-12 months).	
Finger-feeds himself (8-12 months).	

Extends arm or leg to help when being dressed.	

DEVELOPMENTAL RISK FACTORS (8 TO 12 MONTHS)

- Does not crawl.

- Drags one side of body while crawling (for over one month).

- Cannot stand when supported.

- Does not search for objects that are hidden (10-12 months).

- Says no single words ("mama" or "dada").

- Does not learn to use gestures such as waving or shaking head.

- Does not sit steadily by 10 months.

- Does not show interest in "peek-a-boo" or "patty cake" by 8 months.

- Does not babble by 8 months ("dada," "baba," "mama").

COMMENTS:

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PRACTITIONER: _____

12 TO 24 MONTHS

CHILD"S NAME: _____

DATE OF BIRTH:_____

	DATE OBSERVED
PHYSICAL	
Walks alone (12-16 months).	
Pulls toys behind him while walking (13-16 months).	
Carries large toy or several toys while walking (12-15 months).	
Begins to run stiffly (16-18 months).	
Walks into ball (18-24 months).	
Climbs onto and down from furniture unsupported (16-24 months).	
Walks up and down stairs holding on to support (18-24 months).	
FINE MOTOR	
Scribbles spontaneously (14-16 months).	
Turns over container to pour out contents (12-18 months).	
Builds tower of four blocks or more (20-24 months).	
LANGUAGE	
Points to object or picture when it's named (18-24 months).	
Recognises names of familiar people, objects, and body parts (18-24 months).	
Says several single words (15-18 months).	
Uses two-word sentences (18-24 months).	
Follows simple, one-step instructions (14-18 months).	
Repeats words overheard in conversations (16-18 months).	
COGNITIVE	
Finds objects even when hidden under 2 or 3 covers.	
Begins to sort shapes and colours (20-24 months).	
Begins make-believe play (20-24 months).	
EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL	
Imitates behaviour of others, especially adults and older children (18-24 months).	
Increasingly enthusiastic about company or other children (20-24 months).	
Begins to show defiant behaviour (18-24 months).	
Episodes of separation anxiety increase toward mid-year then fade.	

DEVELOPMENTAL RISK FACTORS (12 TO 24 MONTHS)

- Cannot walk by 18 months.

- Fails to develop a mature heel-toe walking pattern after several months of walking, or walks exclusively on toes.

- Does not speak at least 15 words by 18 months.

- Does not use two-word sentences by age 2.

- By 15 months does not seem to know the function of common household objects (brush, telephone, bell, fork, spoon).

- Does not imitate actions or words by 24 months.

- Does not follow simple one-step instructions by 24 months.

COMMENTS:

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PRACTITIONER: _____

24 TO 36 MONTHS

CHILD"S NAME: _____

DATE OF BIRTH:_____

	DATE OBSERVED
PHYSICAL	
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).	
FINE MOTOR	
Makes vertical, horizontal, circular strokes with pencil/crayon (30-36 months).	
Turns book pages one at a time (24-30 months).	
Builds a tower of more than 6 blocks (24-30 months).	
Holds a 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 (26-32 months).	
Understands most sentences (24-40 months).	
Understands physical relations (on, in, under) (30-36 months).	
Can say name, age, and sex (30-36 months).	
Uses pronouns (I, you, me, we, they) (24-30 months).	
Strangers can understand most of words (30-36 months).	
COGNITIVE	
Makes mechanical toys work (30-36 months).	
Matches object in hand/room to picture in a book (24-30 months).	
Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, people (24-36 months).	
Sorts objects by colours (30-36 months).	
Completes puzzles with 3 or 4 pieces (24-36 months).	
Understands concept of "two" (26-32 months).	
EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL	
Separates easily from parents (by 36 months).	
Expresses a wide range of emotions (24-36 months).	
Objects to major changes in routine (24-36 months).	

DEVELOPMENTAL RISK FACTORS (24 TO 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 copy a circle by 3 years old
- 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:

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PRACTITIONER: _____

3 TO 4 YEARS

CHILD"S NAME: _____

DATE OF BIRTH:_____

	DATE OBSERVED
PHYSICAL	
Hops and stands on one foot up to 5 seconds.	
Goes upstairs and downstairs without support.	
Kicks ball forward.	
Throws ball overhand.	
Catches bounced ball most of the time.	
Moves forward and backward.	
Uses riding toys.	
FINE MOTOR	
Copies square shapes.	
Draws a person with 2-4 body parts.	
Uses scissors.	
Draws circles and squares.	
Begins to copy some capital letters.	
Can feed self with spoon.	
LANGUAGE	
Understands the concepts of "same" and "different".	
Has mastered some basic rules of grammar.	
Speaks in sentences of 5-6 words.	
Asks questions.	
Speaks clearly enough for strangers to understand.	
COGNITIVE	
Correctly names some colours.	
Understands the concept of counting.	
Begins to have a clearer sense of time.	
Follows three-part commands.	
Recalls parts of a story.	
Understands the concept of same/different.	
Engages in fantasy play.	
Understands causality ("I can make things happen").	
EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL	
Interested in new experiences.	
Cooperates/plays with other children.	
Plays "mom "or "dad".	
More inventive in fantasy play.	
More independent - dresses and undresses.	
Often cannot distinguish between fantasy and reality.	

DEVELOPMENTAL RISK FACTORS (3 TO 4 YEARS)

- Cannot jump in place.
- Cannot ride a tricycle.
- Cannot grasp a crayon between thumb and fingers.
- Has difficulty scribbling.
- Cannot copy a circle.
- Cannot stack 4 blocks.
- Still clings or cries when parents leave him.
- Shows no interest in interactive games.
- Ignores other children.
- Doesn't respond to people outside the family.
- Doesn't engage in fantasy play.
- Resists dressing, sleeping, using the toilet.
- Lashes out without any self-control when angry or upset.
- Doesn't use sentences of more than three words.
- Doesn't use "me" or "you" appropriately.

COMMENTS:

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PRACTITIONER: _____

4 TO 5 YEARS

CHILD"S NAME: _____

DATE OF BIRTH:_____

	DATE OBSERVED
PHYSICAL	
Stands on one foot for 10 seconds or longer.	
Hops, somersaults.	
Swings, climbs.	
May be able to skip.	
FINE MOTOR	
Copies triangle, circle, square etc.	
Draws person with body.	
Prints some letters.	
Dresses and undresses without assistance.	
Uses fork, spoon.	
Usually can go to toilet by self.	
LANGUAGE	
Recalls parts of a story.	
Speaks sentences of more than 5 words.	
Uses future tense.	
Tells longer stories.	
Says name and address.	
COGNITIVE	
Can count 10 or more objects.	
Correctly names at least 4 colours.	
Better understands the concept of time.	
Knows about things used every day in home (money, food, etc.).	
EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL	
Wants to please and be with friends.	
More likely to agree to rules.	
Likes to sing, dance, and act.	
Shows more independence.	

DEVELOPMENTAL RISK FACTORS (4 TO 5 YEARS)

- Exhibits extremely aggressive, fearful or timid behaviour.
- Is unable to separate from parents.
- Is easily distracted and unable to concentrate on any single activity for more than 5 minutes.
- Shows little interest in playing with other children.
- Seldom uses fantasy or imitation in play.
- Seems unhappy or sad much of the time.
- Avoids or seems aloof with other children and adults.
- Shows little emotion.
- Has trouble eating, sleeping or using the toilet.
- Can't differentiate between fantasy and reality.
- Seems unusually passive.
- Can't understand two-part instructions and prepositions ("put the cup on the table"; "get the ball under the couch").
- Can't give his first and last name.
- Doesn't use plurals or past tense.
- Cannot build a tower of 6 to 8 blocks.
- Seems uncomfortable holding a crayon.
- Has trouble taking off clothing.
- Can't brush teeth or wash and dry hands.

COMMENTS:

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PRACTITIONER: _____

Appendix B:

Maths refresher

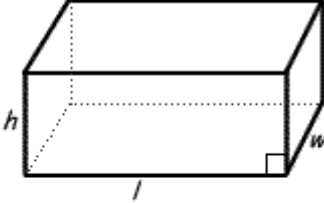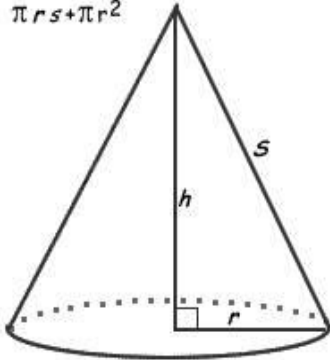## Represent analyse and calculate shape and motion in 2- and 3-dimensional space in different contexts

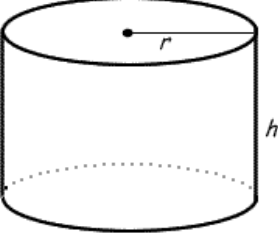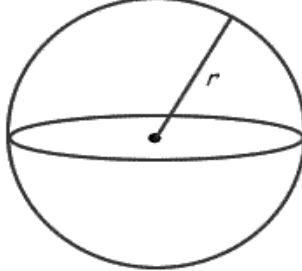Measuring instruments:

Width of a page	Ruler
Temperature	Thermometer
To calculate a percentage	Pocket calculator
2 x 4	Mental arithmetic
Adding 45 numbers	Pocket calculator
Time	Watch/clock
The floor area of a room	Tape
Mass	Scale
Distance between two towns	Car odometer
Sugar in a sugar pot	Measuring jug/teaspoon
Load on a 10 ton truck	Weigh bridge

Units of measurement:

Cooldrink in a tin	ml
Distance to the stars	Light years
Mass of a packet of sugar	g or kg
Speed of a bullet	m/s
Temperature	degrees
Water in a drum	Litres
Breadth of a room	m
Size of a farm	Hectares
Capacity of a truck	Tons
Distance between two towns	Km

Shapes:

	Rectangular Prism <u>Surface Area</u> $A = 2(wh + lw + lh)$ *(diagram of rectangular prism with dimensions h, w, l)* <u>Volume</u> $V = lwh$ If all three lengths are equal it can be called a **cube**.
	Cone <u>Surface Area</u> We will need to calculate the surface area of the cone and the base. Area of the cone is πrs Area of the base is πr^2 Therefore the Formula is: $SA = \pi rs + \pi r^2$ *(diagram of cone with dimensions h, s, r)* <u>Volume</u> $V = \frac{1}{3}\pi r^2 h$

Cylinder

__Surface Area__   We will need to calculate the surface area of the top, base and sides.

Area of the top is πr^2
Area of the bottom is πr^2
Area of the side is $2\pi rh$

Therefore the Formula is: $A = 2\pi r^2 + 2\pi rh$

$$V = \pi r^2 h$$

__Volume__ $V = \pi r^2 h$

Sphere

__Surface Area__

$$A = 4\pi r^2$$

__Volume__

$$V = \frac{4}{3}\pi r^3$$

Source: http://math.about.com/od/formulas/ss/surfaceareavol_2.htm

Appendix C:

Example Lesson Plan

Here is an example of a daily lesson planner:

DAILY LESSON PLANNER

NAME OF ACTIVITY: TIME:
AGE OF CHILDREN IN CLASS:
PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY:
DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITY IN DETAIL – ROUTINE OR PLAY-BASED
WHAT RESOURCES ARE NEEDED:
WHAT INPUT WILL THE CHILD HAVE:
WHAT DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOME WILL THE LESSON ADDRESS?
NOTE: ACTIVITY MUST BE FREE FROM CULTURAL, RACE AND GENDER BIAS.
POSSIBLE LESSON EXTENSION TO EMBED LEARNING:
HOW DOES THIS INTEGRATE WITH OTHER ACTIVITIES?

| Date: | **WEEKLY PLANNING** |
| | THEME: _____ |

Daily Plan

Monday: _____

Tuesday: _____

Wednesday: _____

Thursday: _____

Friday: _____

MONDAY
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TUESDAY
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WEDNESDAY
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THURSDAY
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FRIDAY
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Goal

What skill do I want the children to have by the end of the week? _____
_____

What knowledge do I want them to have by the end of the week? _____
_____