

Learning Unit 2

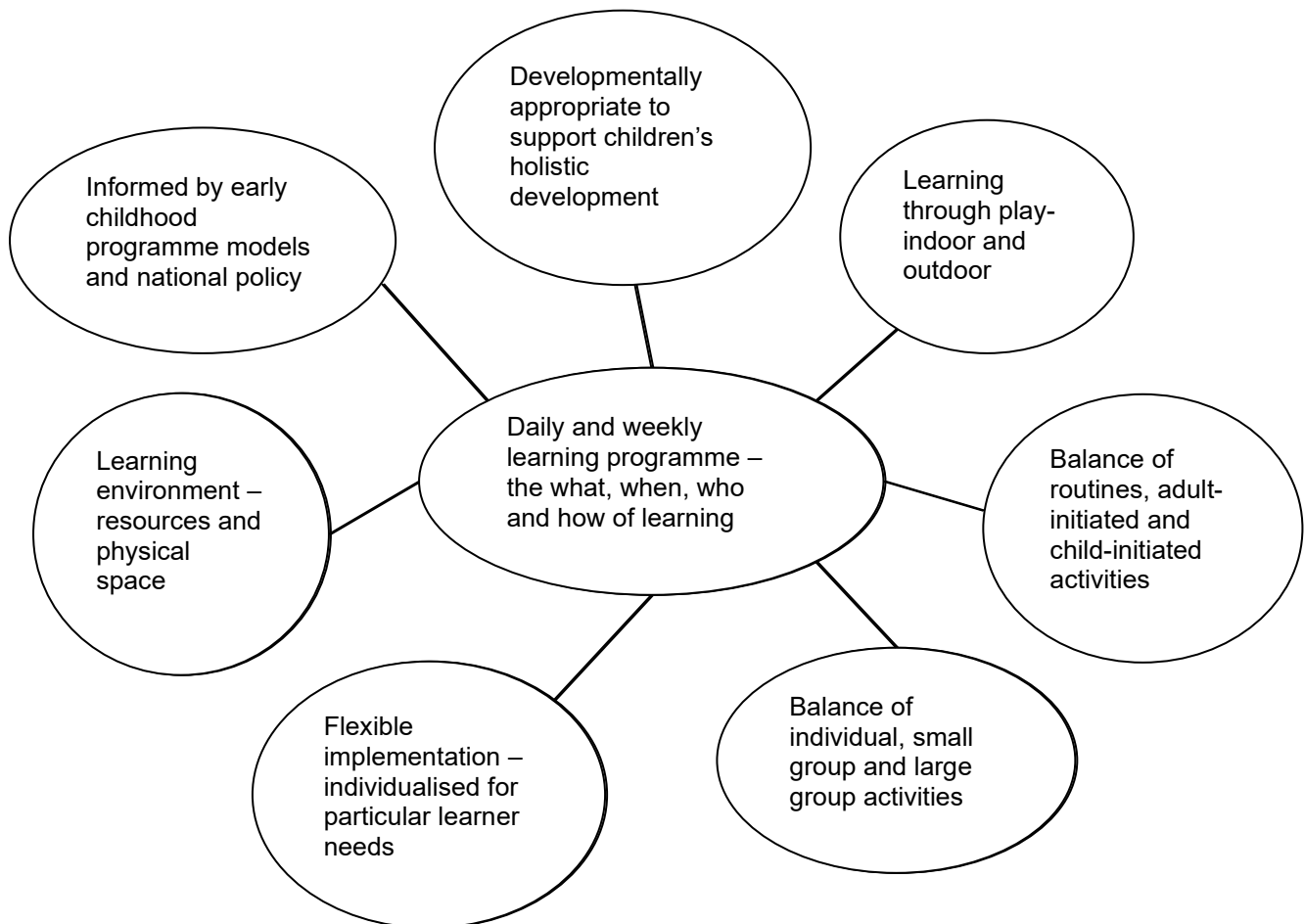
Design activities for ECD programmes

After completing this learning unit, you will be able to design activities for ECD programmes. You will be able to:

- 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 learning 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)

Version 1 (Mar 2013)

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)

Version 1 (Mar 2013)

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

Version 1 (Mar 2013)

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.

1. 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.

2. 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:

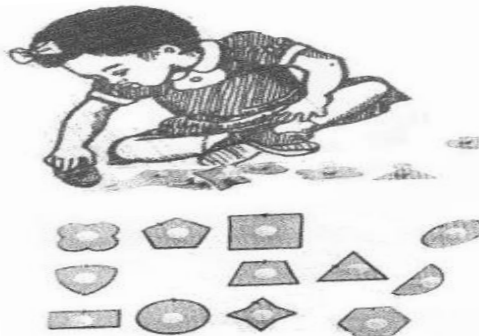
1. matching games
2. memory games
3. sorting games
4. what's missing?
5. patterns – what comes next?
6. quick change
7. construction games

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.



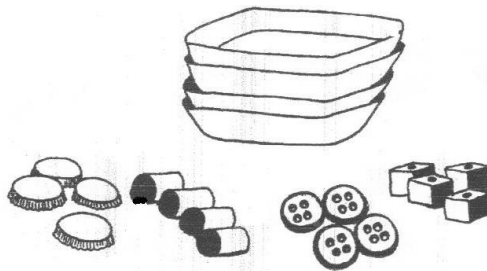
b) Memory games:

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 of 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.

3. 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.

4. 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

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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.

5. 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.

6. 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, Version 1 (Mar 2013)

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.

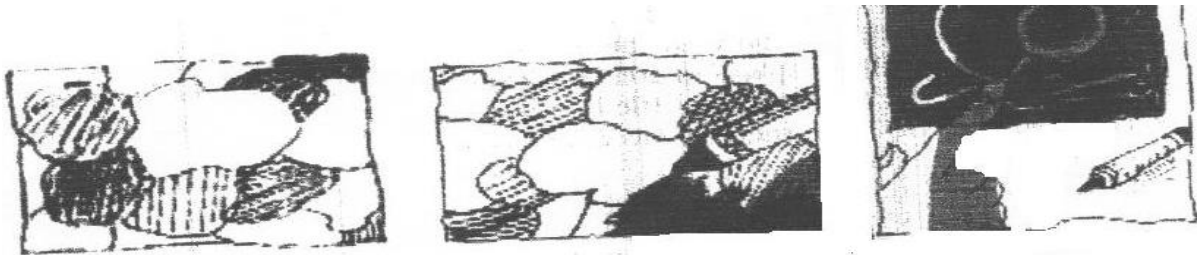
- *Magic pictures*

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, plasticine 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.

7. 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 (laminated 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.

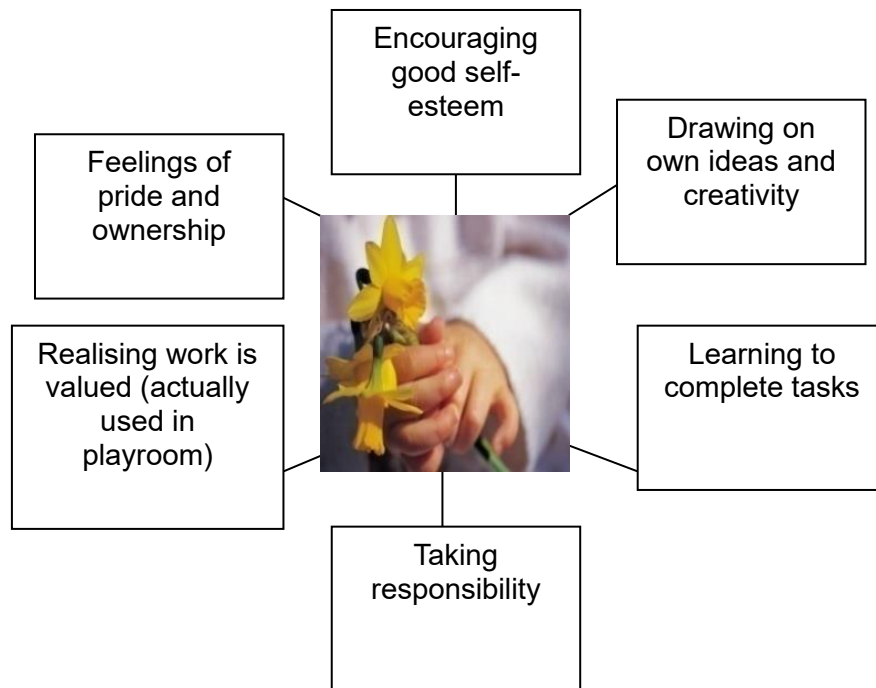
Day 5

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 Siphso 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:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lead ▪ Create ▪ Move ▪ Make the lines ▪ Speak ▪ Initiate ▪ Raise questions ▪ Solve their own problems ▪ Make art ▪ Emphasise the process ▪ Use authentic skills ▪ Make books ▪ Decide ▪ Choose wisely ▪ Make a plan ▪ Try again 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ rather than follow the teacher ▪ rather than duplicate ▪ rather than wait ▪ rather than colour in the lines ▪ rather than listen passively ▪ rather than imitate ▪ rather than answer the teacher's questions ▪ rather than the teacher's problem ▪ rather than do crafts ▪ rather than product ▪ rather than drill and practise ▪ rather than fill in workbooks ▪ rather than submit ▪ rather than being told ▪ rather than follow the teacher's plan ▪ rather than fail
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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.

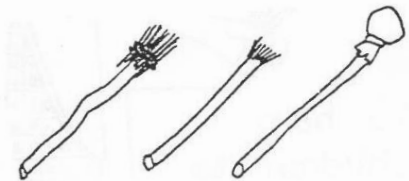


A seven-month-old baby progresses from the position lying on his stomach, to being able to pivot (turn) around his own body axis (the mid-point of his body). He can turn around in a circle while moving himself with his arms. You can encourage this progression by placing a toy on the side of the baby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

Progression in fine motor development

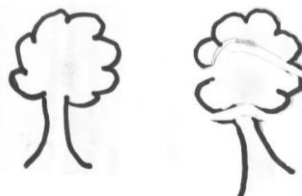
Fine motor development progresses in a fairly predictable way.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chatters (babbling 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands and carries out two simple instructions 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<i>Trust vs mistrust (Erikson's stage of personality development)</i> 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	<i>Trust vs mistrust (Erikson's stage of personality development)</i> 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	<i>Autonomy vs shame (Erikson's stage of personality development)</i> 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	<i>Initiative vs guilt (Erikson's stage of personality development)</i> 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	<i>Initiative vs. guilt (Erikson's stage of personality development)</i>

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

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

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

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?

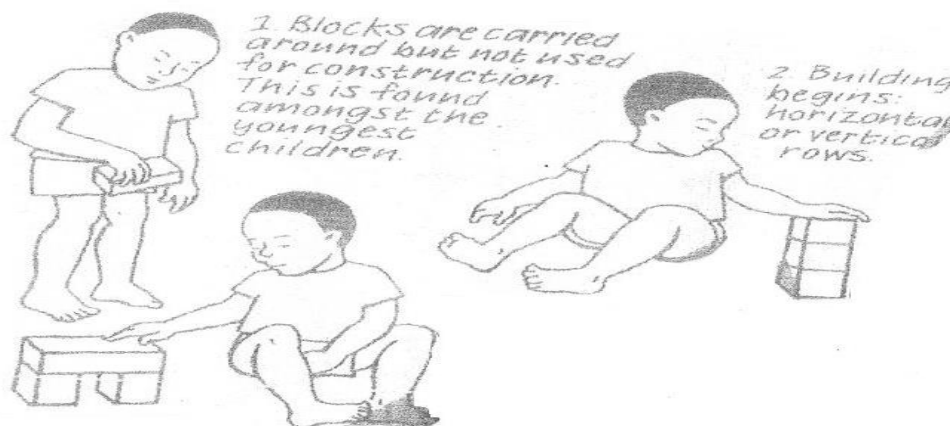
All children are creative and imaginative. Expressing the world through images, colours, patterns and rhythms is as natural to human beings as is the ability to walk or talk. Creative expression is important to the development of young humans. Through creative expression the child learns to express the 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.



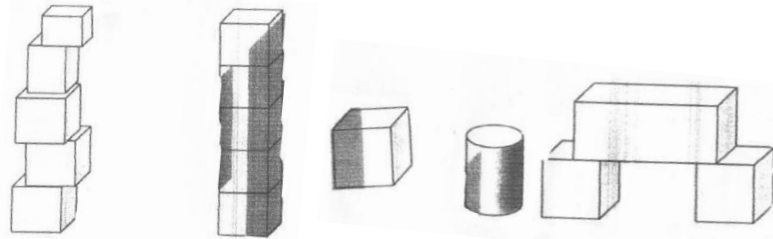
A child's skills at block play develop through set stages, as shown. Each stage will give you an idea of the child's concept of space.

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.

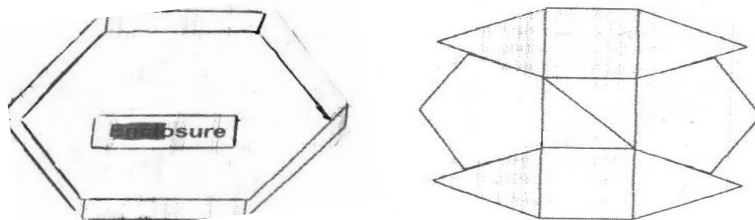


Bridging

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 List the skills that the children will practise during the activity.	Description of activities 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. Develop planning and organisational skills by planning the artwork. Develop fine motor skills by picking up small objects (seed pods, twigs and so on). Recognise that easily found natural objects can be used for creative art activities. Children listen to and follow instructions.	Suggest that the children begin by planning their collage. They can lay out natural objects in a design like before gluing them. 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. Tell the children that when they are happy with their designs, they can glue their objects onto the 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 the main activity (the collages) tell them where to lay their pictures flat to dry overnight. 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.