Unit 1: Patterns of Child Development

Level: 1 and 2

Unit type: Core

Guided learning hours: 30

Assessment type: External

Unit introduction

Every child is special and unique, but each of us learns to do things according to the same pattern. What’s your earliest memory? Can you remember how old you were when you learnt to swim? Were there some things you found easy to achieve and some that took a bit longer to learn, for example, riding a bicycle or writing your name? Understanding child development may help you to answer these questions and it will also explain why, as individuals, we develop skills and knowledge at different rates.

This unit aims to develop your knowledge and understanding of child development. You will learn about five different areas of development – physical, cognitive, communication and language, emotional and social – and how these areas are linked.

In each of these five areas there are expected patterns of development based on the norms for different ages. These developmental norms are sometimes referred to as milestones. They are useful for several reasons. Early years professionals and health professionals monitor children’s progress in achieving these milestones. While it is usual for children to have different rates of progress, it is important for professionals to know when children are showing unusual progress or patterns in their development. This sometimes means that a child needs additional support.

Knowing the expected patterns of development and associated milestones for each area of development also helps adults to anticipate the next stage of a child’s development in each area. You will investigate how adults in early years settings can support children’s development.

As part of your course, you will learn about the expected patterns of development, and if you choose to work with children this will help you plan activities and understand why children are doing certain things.

Learning aims

In this unit you will:

a. understand growth and development in children

b. understand the characteristics of children’s development from birth up to   
eight years

c. understand how adults in early years settings can support children’s development.

Learning aims and unit content

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| What needs to be learnt |
| Learning aim A: Understand growth and development in children |
| Topic A.1 Growth and development  Growth   Key aspects of children’s growth are changes to physical size, the skeleton, muscles and the brain.   Children’s height, weight and head circumference are measured to monitor growth, ensuring it is consistent with expected patterns, and to highlight potential issues at an early stage.   Children’s growth is plotted on centile charts.   Growth is determined by heredity, hormones, nutrition, sleep, illness and emotional influences.  Development  Child development is defined as the increasing acquisition of skills and knowledge gained by a child.   Development should be viewed holistically as children acquire skills at varying rates in different areas of development.   Developmental norms are sometimes called milestones. They have been determined by looking at the data of thousands of children and considering the average or ‘typical’ milestones. Using these norms or milestones helps to understand the patterns of development.  Development can be broken down into the following five areas:   **Gross motor and fine motor physical development** is to do with movement – gross or large movement of limbs, developing locomotion, balance and coordination, and fine manipulative movement of fingers developing hand–eye coordination.   **Cognitive development** is the way children develop thought processes, perception, memory, imagination and problem-solving, and are able to increase their knowledge and understanding of their environment.   Communication **and language development** is the way children communicate and develop speech, including reading and writing.   **Emotional and behavioural development** is how children develop feelings and express their emotions through behaviour and includes the development of self-concept and self-esteem.   **Social development** includes how children develop friendships with peers and cooperate with others and become aware of role models. |

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| What needs to be learnt |
| Topic A.2 The links between areas of development and how each area may complement each other  Development should be viewed holistically as there are many ways in which areas of development relate to each other. Learners will be expected to explore this concept and the significance of these relationships.   Language development helps children to understand new concepts and also to play with other children. Children with a language delay may become frustrated and this might affect their behaviour and also their ability to play with others.   Physical development helps children move to explore their surroundings, learn from new experiences and develop confidence in their abilities.   Cognitive and language development combine to help children express their thoughts and to develop reading and writing and problem-solving skills.   Emotional development helps children to develop secure attachments, enabling positive social relationships and friendships to evolve.   Social development helps children to develop language through playing with others and interacting with adults. |

| What needs to be learnt |
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| Learning aim B: Understand the characteristics of children’s development from birth up to eight years |
| Topic B.1 Characteristics of children’s development  Learners must be aware that children can develop at varying rates in different areas of development. They must know the usual sequence and the characteristics of each child development milestone from birth up to eight years.   Knowledge of the usual sequence in physical (gross and fine motor skills), cognitive, communication and language, emotional and social development.  Birth up to twelve months  Gross motor development:  Newborns are born with reflexes – sucking, rooting, startling, grasping – which help them survive. Movements are uncontrolled and uncoordinated:   at three months able to lift up head and chest when on their stomachs and bring hands together over body   at six months can roll over from back to front   at nine months can sit unsupported and is usually mobile by crawling or rolling, may pull up to stand alone and walk by holding on to furniture   at twelve months pulls up to stand, stands alone, walks holding on to furniture.  Fine motor development:   no coordinated movement but newborns will grasp things put into their hands as a  reflex action   at three months can watch their hands and hold a rattle for a moment   at six months can reach for a toy and move a toy from one hand to the other   at nine months can use a pincer grasp (index finger and thumb) to grasp objects,  can deliberately release objects by dropping them   at twelve months can use pincer grasp to pick up small objects, points using  index finger.  Cognitive development:   at one month ‘freezes’ if hears a sound played softly   at three months can recognise familiar routines, alert and follows movement with eyes if objects are close   at six months can explore objects by putting in mouth, recognises voices   at eight or nine months can look for dropped objects and objects that they see  being hidden   at twelve months enjoys throwing toys to the ground and watching their descent, learns by trying things out and repeating if successful. This approach to learning is called ‘trial and error’.  Communication and language development:   at one month can turn head to adult voice, at six weeks begins to coo   at three months smiles when hears a familiar voice   at six months makes short babbling sounds, such as ‘da’ and ‘ba’   at nine months understands ‘no’, vocalises in long strings of babbling   at twelve months knows own name and understands simple instructions. |

| What needs to be learnt |
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| Emotional and social development:   at one month can focus on human faces with interest   at six weeks can smile   at three months enjoys being held and forms indiscriminate attachments   at six months can recognise and respond to emotions in others   from seven to eight months can form specific attachments and show wariness of strangers   from eight months develops specific attachments and imitates actions of others,  such as clapping   from eight months experiences separation anxiety from primary carer(s).  Twelve months up to three years  Gross motor development:   at fifteen months can crawl upstairs and may walk hesitantly   at eighteen months can walk unaided, can walk upstairs with help and can squat to pick up toys   at two years can run, climb onto furniture and use sit-and-ride toys   at two and a half years can kick a large ball and can jump with two feet together from a low step   at three years able to run forwards and backwards, steer and pedal a tricycle, walk upstairs with alternate feet and throw a large ball.  Fine motor development:   at fifteen months pincer grasp is precise, uses palmar grasp to hold crayons   at eighteen months can build a tower of three bricks, can feed self with a spoon and scribble using a crayon in palmar grasp   at two years can draw dots and circles, can put on shoes and fasten with Velcro® but not buckles and laces   at two and a half years starts to show a hand preference, can pull down items of clothing and starting to develop tripod grasp   at three years can use tripod grasp, draw a circle, hand preference is established for most tasks.  Cognitive development:   at fifteen months explores objects by sight and sound   at eighteen months very curious to explore environment, remembers where  things belong   at two years recognises self in mirror, can remember past experiences   at two and a half years recognises self in photographs, with help can complete  simple puzzles   at three years understands the difference between past and present, can complete simple puzzles. |

| What needs to be learnt |
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| Communication **and language development:**   at fifteen months communicates by pointing and vocalising, has up to six words   at eighteen months has around 15 words, able to communicate wishes, understands simple requests   at two years has up to 50 words, able to join words, enjoys looking at books   at two and a half years has around 200 words, starting to use simple sentences,  asks questions, uses personal pronouns, plurals and negatives   at three years speech is clear to anyone unfamiliar with child, enjoys books and  turns pages.  Emotional **and social development:**   at eighteen months emotionally dependent on parents and key persons, plays alone but enjoys being near adults and siblings, insistent on immediate attention to needs and can copy adult actions   at two years unable to wait for needs to be met, may be distracted from tantrums, plays in parallel with other children but unable to share toys   at two and a half years plays alongside other children and engages in onlooker play, very dependent on adults and jealous of other children gaining attention, responds well to adult attention and praise and has tantrums when frustrated   at three years finds it easier to wait, starting to take turns and share, enjoys being with other children and will comfort another child.  Three **years up to five years**  Gross **motor development:**   from three to four years can hop on one foot, walk along a line, aim and throw a ball and kick it with force, ride a tricycle using pedals   from four to five years can run avoiding obstacles, skip with a rope, throw a large ball to partner and catch it.  Fine **motor development:**   from three to four years can button and unbutton clothes, use scissors to cut out simple shapes, draw a person with head, trunk and legs, eat with a knife and fork, thread beads to make a necklace   from four to five years can form letters, write own name and colour in pictures.  Cognitive **development:**   from three to four years can recognise and name primary colours, understands what is meant by ‘more’, can tell whether an object is heavy or light, arranges objects into categories, makes a connection between people and events   from four to five years can count accurately up to 10, can add two sets of objects together, can match equal sets, understands the need for rules, names the time of day associated with activities.  Communication **and language development:**   from three to four years, speech can be easily understood, although some words may be incorrect, uses questions and by four years language is fluent, with some speech immaturities   from four to five years can count accurately up to 10, uses complex sentences with words such as ‘because’, can talk about what has happened and what might happen, uses language to argue and answer back. |

| What needs to be learnt |
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| Emotional **and social development:**   from three to four years can cope with separation from primary carer with someone they know, is beginning to play cooperatively and show clear friendship preferences, and plays with others   from four to five years can work out what other people may be thinking, which helps them to negotiate with others, able to understand the need for rules, develops close friendships develop, behaviour mostly cooperative and separates more easily from parents.  Five **years up to eight years**  Gross **motor development:**   from five to eight years can hop, skip and jump confidently, can swerve and dodge when running, balance on a beam, ride a bicycle and use roller skates   coordination is more proficient, allowing for tasks that require coordinated movements including improved ball skills, swimming activities, hopscotch.  Fine **motor development:**   from five to eight years can tie and untie shoelaces, and accurately cut out shapes   from six years able to thread a large-eyed needle and sew large stitches, has good control over pencils and paintbrushes, allowing for more detailed drawings and clear handwriting.  Cognitive **development:**   from five to eight years can recognise numerals up to 100, do simple calculations,  show simple reasoning and be reasoned with   from seven years can ‘conserve’ quantities and numbers, complete a simple maze,  is starting to tell the time, understands the need for and uses rules.  Communication **and language development:**   from five to eight years uses language to reason and explain ideas, understands and enjoys jokes and riddles   uses more complex sentence structures and asks what, when, who, where, how,  why questions   from seven years has mastered the basics of reading and writing.  Emotional **and social development:**   from five to six years starts to compare self with others and becomes more aware of the feelings and needs of others   confidence in self may be shaken by ‘failure’   from five to seven years has strong friendships, often of the same gender, can understand that others have different viewpoints than them, can read facial expressions of others accurately and recognise what others might be feeling. |

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| What needs to be learnt |
| Learning aim C: Understand how adults in early years settings can support children’s development |
| Topic C.1: Understand how adults in early years settings can support children’s development  Learners will be expected to understand that children’s development can be positively influenced by adults in early years settings and that the lack of adult support may  lead to delays in development. Learners must be able to recognise why some forms of adult support are age/stage appropriate and be expected to suggest appropriate age/ stage support.  Gross motor and fine motor physical development:   meeting children’s physical needs by providing a well-ventilated and relaxing sleep area for children to sleep at regular intervals   meeting diet and nutritional needs in accordance with policy and parental wishes   providing opportunities to be outdoors   providing age-appropriate resources and activities that encourage gross and fine motor skills both indoors and outdoors   providing resources and activities that encourage children to touch, feel and explore objects with their senses   providing opportunities for children to meet their physical needs.  Cognitive development:   providing objects and games that encourage children to develop their memory and imaginative skills and helping them to think about others   providing age-and stage-appropriate activities and resources that encourage problem-solving skills   providing opportunities for children to visit different places and experience  new things   encouraging children to ask questions, helping children to link new experiences to past ones (memory and recall).  Communication **and language development:**   taking time to talk and smiling and maintaining eye contact to encourage  listening skills   encouraging speaking and listening skills by using nursery rhymes, picture books, telling stories, reciting rhymes, ‘show and tell’, and by asking questions such as  ‘what’ ‘where’ ‘who’ to encourage speaking   providing role play activities for pretend play   encouraging writing skills by copying their own name and familiar names and words   encouraging creative expression through stories, poetry, dance, drama and  making music. |

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| What needs to be learnt |
| Emotional **and social development:**   encouraging bonding through holding children close, maintaining eye contact, talking in appropriate tone   maintaining proximity as key person, responding to changing behaviour such as clinging, resistance, temper tantrums by helping children express their emotions positively without hurting others   supporting children through appropriate transitions such as moving home, new sibling, change of carer   encouraging confidence and self-esteem, encouraging children to express their feelings through activities and resources, and encouraging children to share and help other peers or other adults   maintaining appropriate proximity to children while allowing them to express themselves freely and safely   encouraging children to develop positive relationships and encouraging children to challenge negative comments and actions from others   helping children to understand their changing emotions and dealing with them positively through discussion or role play   introducing everyday routines to establish security   providing age appropriate play to encourage children to interact with other children, support others and learn to share and take turns   encouraging children to be thoughtful and cooperative with others by praising them and being a positive role model   encouraging children to develop a range of friendships. |

Teacher guidance

Resources

There are no special resources needed for this unit.

Assessment **guidance**

This unit is an externally assessed paper-based unit. The examination will be set and marked by Edexcel.

Examination **format**

Learners will complete a 60-minute examination worth 50 marks. The paper will consist of multiple-choice questions, short scenario-based questions and an extended writing question.

Learners will need to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and understanding.