



**CHCECE035**

**Support the holistic  
learning and development  
of children**

**LEARNER  
GUIDE**



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## **Version Control & Document History**

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## This Learner Guide

### **CHCECE035 - Support the holistic learning and development of children (Release 1)**

This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge to recognise and support the interrelationship between the physical, social, emotional, cognitive and communication development of children.

This unit applies to educators who support children's learning according to established curriculum under the guidance of others in regulated children's education and care services in Australia.

The skills in this unit must be applied in accordance with Commonwealth and State/Territory legislation, Australian standards and industry codes of practice.

No occupational licensing, certification or specific legislative requirements apply to this unit at the time of publication.

**A complete copy of the above unit of competency can be downloaded from the TGA website:**

<https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/CHCECE035>

## About this Unit of Study Introduction

As a worker, a trainee, or a future worker, you want to enjoy your work and become known as a valuable team member. This unit of competency will help you acquire the knowledge and skills to work effectively as an individual and in groups. It will give you the basis to contribute to the goals of the organisation which employs you.

It is essential that you begin your training by becoming familiar with the industry standards to which organisations must conform.

## This Learner Guide Covers

Support the holistic learning and development of children

- I. Support physical development
- II. Support social development
- III. Support emotional development
- IV. Support cognitive development
- V. Support communication development
- VI. Support holistic learning and development

## Learning Program

As you progress through this unit of study, you will develop skills in locating and understanding an organisation's policies and procedures. You will build up a sound knowledge of the industry standards within which organisations must operate. You will become more aware of the effect that your own skills in dealing with people have on your success or otherwise in the workplace. Knowledge of your skills and capabilities will help you make informed choices about your further study and career options.

## **Additional Learning Support**

To obtain additional support, you may:

- Search for other resources. You may find books, journals, videos and other materials which provide additional information about topics in this unit.
- Search for other resources in your local library. Most libraries keep information about government departments and other organisations, services and programs. The librarian should be able to help you locate such resources.
- Contact information services such as Infolink, Equal Opportunity Commission, Commissioner of Workplace Agreements, Union organisations, and public relations and information services provided by various government departments. Many of these services are listed in the telephone directory.
- Contact your facilitator.

## **Facilitation**

Your training organisation will provide you with a facilitator. Your facilitator will play an active role in supporting your learning. Your facilitator will help you at any time during working hours to assist with:

- How and when to make contact,
- what you need to do to complete this unit of study, and
- what support will be provided.

Here are some of the things your facilitator may do to make your study easier:

- Give you a clear visual timetable of events for the semester or term in which you are enrolled, including any deadlines for assessments.
- Provide you with online webinar times and availability.
- Use ‘action sheets’ to remind you about tasks you need to complete, and updates on websites.
- Make themselves available by telephone for support discussion and provide you with industry updates by email where applicable.
- Keep in touch with you during your studies.

## **Flexible Learning**

Studying to become a competent worker is an interesting and exciting thing to do. You will learn about current issues in this area. You will establish relationships with other students, fellow workers, and clients. You will learn about your own ideas, attitudes, and values. You will also have fun. (Most of the time!)

At other times, studying can seem overwhelming and impossibly demanding, particularly when you have an assignment to do and you aren't sure how to tackle it, your family and friends want you to spend time with them, or a movie you want to see is on television.

Sometimes being a student can be hard.

Here are some ideas to help you through the hard times. To study effectively, you need space, resources, and time.

### **Space**

Try to set up a place at home or at work where:

1. You can keep your study materials,
2. you can be reasonably quiet and free from interruptions, and
3. you can be reasonably comfortable, with good lighting, seating, and a flat surface for writing.

If it is impossible for you to set up a study space, perhaps you could use your local library. You will not be able to store your study materials there, but you will have quiet, a desk and chair, and easy access to the other facilities.

## **Study Resources**

The most basic resources you will need are:

1. A chair
2. A desk or table
3. A computer with Internet access
4. A reading lamp or good light
5. A folder or file to keep your notes and study materials together
6. Materials to record information (pen and paper or notebooks, or a computer and printer)
7. Reference materials, including a dictionary

Do not forget that other people can be valuable study resources. Your fellow workers, work supervisor, other students, your facilitator, your local librarian, and workers in this area can also help you.

## **Time**

It is important to plan your study time. Work out a time that suits you and plan around it. Most people find that studying, in short, concentrated blocks of time (an hour or two) at regular intervals (daily, every second day, once a week) is more effective than trying to cram a lot of learning into a whole day. You need time to ‘digest’ the information in one section before you move on to the next, and everyone needs regular breaks from study to avoid overload. Be realistic in allocating time for study. Look at what is required for the unit and look at your other commitments.

Make up a study timetable and stick to it. Build in ‘deadlines’ and set yourself goals for completing study tasks. Allow time for reading and completing activities. Remember that it is the quality of the time you spend studying rather than the quantity that is important.

## Study Strategies

Different people have different learning ‘styles’. Some people learn best by listening or repeating things out loud. Some learn best by ‘doing’, some by reading and making notes. Assess your own learning style and try to identify any barriers to learning which might affect you. Are you easily distracted? Are you afraid you will fail? Are you taking study too seriously? Not seriously enough? Do you have supportive friends and family? Here are some ideas for effective study strategies:

1. **Make notes.** This often helps you to remember new or unfamiliar information. Do not worry about spelling or neatness, as long as you can read your own notes. Keep your notes with the rest of your study materials and add to them as you go. Use pictures and diagrams if this helps.
2. **Underline keywords** when you are reading the materials in this Learner Guide. (Do not underline things in other people’s books.) This also helps you to remember important points.
3. **Talk to other people** (fellow workers, fellow students, friends, family, or your facilitator) about what you are learning. As well as help you to clarify and understand new ideas, talking also gives you a chance to find out extra information and to get fresh ideas and different points of view.



## Using this Learner Guide

A Learner Guide is just that, a guide to help you learn. A Learner Guide is not a textbook. Your Learner Guide will:

1. Describe the skills you need to demonstrate to achieve competency for this unit.
2. Provide information and knowledge to help you develop your skills.
3. Provide you with structured learning activities to help you absorb knowledge and information and practice your skills.
4. Direct you to other sources of additional knowledge and information about topics for this unit.

## How to Get the Most Out of Your Learner Guide

Some sections are quite long and cover complex ideas and information. If you come across anything you do not understand:

1. Talk to your facilitator.
2. Research the area using the books and materials listed under Resources.
3. Discuss the issue with other people (your workplace supervisor, fellow workers, fellow students).
4. Try to relate the information presented in this Learner Guide to your own experience and to what you already know.
5. Ask yourself questions as you go. For example, ‘Have I seen this happening anywhere?’ ‘Could this apply to me?’ ‘What if...’ This will help you to ‘make sense’ of new material, and to build on your existing knowledge.
6. Talk to people about your study. Talking is a great way to reinforce what you are learning.
7. Make notes.
8. Work through the activities. Even if you are tempted to skip some activities, do them anyway. They are there for a reason, and even if you already have the knowledge or skills relating to a particular activity, doing them will help to reinforce what you already know. If you do not understand an activity, think carefully about the way the questions or instructions are phrased. Read the section again to see if you can make sense of it. If you are still confused, contact your facilitator or discuss the activity with other students, fellow workers or with your workplace supervisor.

## **Additional Research, Reading, and Note-Taking**

If you are using the additional references and resources suggested in the Learner Guide to take your knowledge a step further, there are a few simple things to keep in mind to make this kind of research easier.

Always make a note of the author's name, the title of the book or article, the edition, when it was published, where it was published, and the name of the publisher. This includes online articles. If you are taking notes about specific ideas or information, you will need to put the page number as well. This is called the reference information. You will need this for some assessment tasks, and it will help you to find the book again if you need to.

Keep your notes short and to the point. Relate your notes to the material in your Learner Guide. Put things into your own words. This will give you a better understanding of the material.

Start off with a question you want answered when you are exploring additional resource materials. This will structure your reading and save you time.

## Introduction

Ninety per cent of brain development happens within the first five years of human life. A child's interaction with the environment and the people around them strongly influence how the brain grows and develops. Typically, the first to develop are the visual and hearing pathways, followed by early language skills and higher cognitive functions. A child has as many as 1000 trillion brain connections by the time they are three years old, and these connections become more complex as they grow. Influencing brain development to enforce positive learning behaviours is easier to achieve than attempting to rewrite it later. Early childhood is a critical period with many valuable opportunities to help children develop skills to stay with them as they grow.

*Sourced from [Benefits of Early Childhood Education](#), used under CC BY 4.0.  
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As children grow, they develop in different domains: physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and communication. The domains work together, and each domain's development affects the other. Holistic development emphasises the interaction between the different domains and their effect on the development of the child. It focuses not only on how a child excels in a single domain but also on the connectedness of these domains to the mind, body, and spirit. It poses that children, especially those in their early years, must be supported and nurtured to develop appropriately.

As an early childhood educator, you play an important role in ensuring the holistic development of each child and providing equal opportunities that are inclusive to all types of learners. It can be executed by preparing stimulating and engaging activities in your educational program that can accommodate the needs of all learners despite the differences in culture, tradition, skills, and abilities. You can do this by promoting the child's physical and psychological safety and wellbeing, providing safe and age-appropriate experiences through the physical environment design, and building an authentic and respectful relationship with children. Further discussion on establishing an inclusive environment is in Subchapter 2.7.

As you prepare yourself in supporting children's development across domains, remember that the progress of each milestone may vary, and no child is alike. This means that children have unique personalities and have different ways of approaching learning. Be patient with each child's development and pace and do your best to assist their progress.

## Learning Dispositions

Children are comfortable being in their natural selves, even in a new environment and around new people, such as in school, where they feel safe. They develop confidence and problem-solving skills when they are given opportunities to make age-appropriate decisions. They can express their imagination and creativity when given access to a wide range of materials and allowed to execute their plans. Children are more likely to participate and engage in their environment when they know that they are free to explore and make discoveries. They tend to show persistence and develop a sense of independence in a supportive environment. These are some of the things that are waiting for you as an early childhood educator. Remember that your program, the school environment, and your teaching practices all contribute to developing children's dispositions for learning.

The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia describes *dispositions* as enduring habits of mind and actions and tendencies to respond in distinctive ways to situations. The New South Wales Government website describes that *learning dispositions* are sometimes called 'habits of mind' and refer to children's ways of engaging with the learning process. These definitions indicate that children's dispositions are observable behaviours seen as they engage with different learning processes involved in your curriculum. Instead of the outcomes, learning dispositions are focused on the processes and how children approach learning.

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Some examples of learning dispositions are confidence, curiosity, creativity, discovery, and persistence. Curiosity and discovery are fundamental learning dispositions because they serve as a start to other learning processes. When children are curious and want to discover new information, they create ways to achieve a goal or prove their ideas. When they are engaged and interested, it will lead to exploration

and skills development across domains. These can be encouraged through various processes such as exploration, collaboration, and problem-solving incorporated in the curriculum and learning programs. The execution of programs and the teaching practices that support the holistic development of children need to be standardised to ensure the quality of early childhood education.

## **Early Years Learning Framework**

The Australian and State/Territory Governments, in collaboration with the early childhood sector and academics, developed *Belonging, Being & Becoming* – The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) for Australia as means of standardising the principles, practices, and outcomes used in early childhood education and care.

Learning frameworks, such as the EYLF, provide educators with underpinning principles to guide practices, and in the case of the EYLF, broad, long-term objectives for children.

The EYLF does not set out to tell educators what to teach; instead, it provides direction about intent, pedagogy, and outcomes for children’s learning—it gives the foundation for a specific, local curriculum. It does this by:

- outlining the kinds of environments in which children’s learning is facilitated
- highlighting the desirable knowledge, skills, and attitudes held by early childhood educators
- addressing ways that children’s learning opportunities may be enhanced.

This enables educators to plan content relevant to their local context and be responsive to children’s interests and ideas while still working to the broad outcomes of the EYLF.

### **Belonging, Being and Becoming**

The EYLF describes childhood as a time of belonging, being, and becoming. These three words are at the heart of the EYLF. You will hear these words constantly as you work to apply the framework.

- **Belonging**

Belonging is about giving a child a sense of belonging. It involves building trust and making them feel secure, comfortable, and a valuable member of a group. The more secure a child feels, the more confident they are likely to be and more willing to explore new ideas and concepts.

- **Being**

Being recognises the importance for children to know and accept who they are, help them build relationships with others, and accept who others are. It is also about appreciating and celebrating everyday experiences and achievements.

- **Becoming**

Becoming refers to the changes children experience as they grow and learn and how these experiences shape their relationships and develop their skills and sense of self.

The EYLF highlights the significance of play-based learning during the early years and their relationship to communication, language, and social and emotional development. The EYLF encourages using a holistic approach in teaching children from birth to five years instead of the traditional academic milestones. A holistic approach in early childhood education and care connects children's development with their environment and builds strong relationships through active learning and social activities.



### Further Reading

You may refer to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) to know more about holistic development and teaching approach (page 16), and the discussion of Outcome 4: Children are Confident and Involved Learners (page 36) to know more about the development of learning dispositions of children.

[Early Years Learning Framework](#)

### National Quality Framework

In pursuit of better educational and developmental outcomes for children, all Australian governments created a standard for regulation, assessment, and quality improvement for early childhood education and care across long day care, family day care, preschool/kindergarten, and outside school hours care services.

The National Quality Framework (NQF) was established on 1st January 2012, and applies to most early years learning centres (EYLC) in Australia. In Western Australia, the National Quality Framework also extends to home-based care. The NQF aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency in childhood care and education services through:

National Law and National Regulations

National Quality Standard

Assessment and Quality Rating Process

National Learning Framework

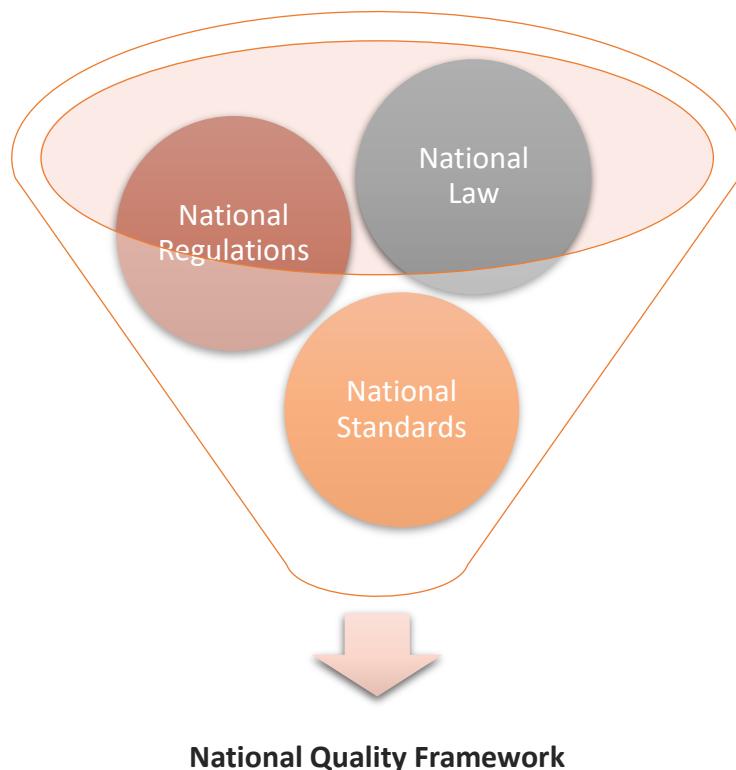
The following sections will discuss how each component of the NQF relates to each other and how your understanding of these requirements affects your role as an educator in supporting children's holistic development.

### National Legislative Framework

The National Legislative Framework is established through an applied law system which consists of:

- the Education and Care Services National Law (known as the 'National Law')
- the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

Together, they create a national approach to the regulation and quality assessment of education and care services.



The NQF operates under an applied law system consisting of the National Law and National Regulations. Essentially, the same is applied across Australia with some provisions to satisfy the different needs of each state/territory.

The law passed by Victoria, the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, essentially applied across Australia. The other jurisdictions adopted this law through Application Acts and passed corresponding legislation with some provisions to satisfy the needs of each state/territory.

The legislation followed in each state/territory are as follows:

State/Territory	Legislation	Application Act
Victoria		
New South Wales	Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010	<a href="#">Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010</a>
Australian Capital Territory		<a href="#">Education and Care Services National Law (Act) Act 2011</a>
Northern Territory		<a href="#">Education and Care Services (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011</a>
South Australia		<a href="#">Education and Early Childhood Services (Regulation and Standards) Act 2011</a>
Tasmania	Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010	<a href="#">Education and Care Services National Law (Application) Act 2011</a>
Queensland		<a href="#">Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Act 2011</a>
Western Australia	Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012	

Access and review the applicable law in your state/territory by clicking the link provided in the table above.

## National Law and Regulations

The National Law sets national standards for children's education and care. It provides the objectives, provisions, and guiding principles of the National Quality Framework. It also establishes a regulatory authority in each state/territory responsible for the approval, monitoring, and quality assessment of services and a national body, the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), which guides the implementation of the NQF. Requirements such as educator qualifications, educator-to-child ratios, and other key staffing arrangements were phased between 2012 and 2020.

The National Regulations provides a range of operational requirements for service providers across Australia. It ensures that quality service for early childhood education and care is provided across all territories and states. The regulations cover the following areas:

- Provider and service approval application
- Rating scale set-up
- Rating and assessment of services against the National Quality Standard
- Operation of education and care services requirements
- Staffing arrangements and qualifications
- Transaction fees
- Jurisdiction-specific provisions

Section 3 of the Guide to National Quality Framework enumerates the National Quality Standard and Assessment and Rating requirements. It summarises the underpinning regulations and sections applicable to each quality area of the National Quality Standard.

The complete document with the underpinning regulations can be found in the Education and Care National Regulations. The underpinning sections can be reviewed in the Education and Care Services National Regulations Act 2010. As an educator, you must be familiar with the different standards and regulations associated with these Quality Areas to satisfy the requirements of this unit. You may access the regulations for Quality Areas 1, 2, 3, and 5 in the table below.

Underpinning Regulations of Each Quality Area
Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
Quality Area 3: Physical environment
Quality Area 5: Relationships with children



## Further Reading

For more information on the Guide to the National Quality Framework and the underpinning sections and regulations, you can check the references below.

[Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)

[Education and Care National Regulations](#)

[Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010](#)

### National Quality Standard

The National Quality Standard (NQS) sets benchmarks for the quality of education and care services. The NQS establishes seven quality areas where education and care services are assessed and given a rating to determine compliance. These quality areas are important outcomes for children, especially in their early years. The seven Quality Areas of the National Quality Standard are as follows:

Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practise

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

Quality Area 3: Physical Environment

Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements

Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families & communities

Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership

The National Quality Standard aims to promote children's safety, health, and wellbeing, focus on achieving outcomes for children, and emphasise family involvement in the holistic development of children through high-quality educational programs for early childhood and care.

For this unit, you will focus on Quality Areas 1, 2, 3, and 5 of the National Quality Standard. It provides service standards, policies, and procedures for children's health and safety, educational program and practice, physical environment and relationships with children. These quality areas will help you understand why they are important to your role as an educator. It is also crucial to pay attention to the underpinning sections and regulations from the National Law and Regulations that apply to each quality area.

## **Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practise**

This Quality Area emphasises the importance of stimulating and engaging educational programs and practices to encourage children to participate in the learning process. It ensures that early childhood education and care programs and services exist to nurture life skills and help children relate them to their experiences, opportunities, and relationships inside and outside the school. Quality Area 1 outlines three standards for an educational program and practice. These standards and their elements are presented in the table below.

<b>Standard 1.1</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>The educational program enhances each child's learning and development.</b>
Element 1.1.1	Approved learning framework	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Element 1.1.2	Child-centred	Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities, and interests are the foundation of the program.
Element 1.1.3	Program learning opportunities	All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.
<b>Standard 1.2</b>	<b>Practice</b>	<b>Educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development.</b>
Element 1.2.1	Intentional teaching	Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.
Element 1.2.2	Responsive teaching and scaffolding	Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.
Element 1.2.3	Child-directed learning	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.

<b>Standard 1.3</b>	<b>Assessment and planning</b>	<b>Educators and coordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.</b>
Element 1.3.1	Assessment and planning cycle	Each child's learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection.
Element 1.3.2	Critical reflection	Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, drives program planning and implementation.
Element 1.3.3	Information for families	Families are informed about the program and their child's progress.

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## **Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety**

The objective of this Quality Area is to make sure that children have access to quality education and care that makes their health and safety a priority, including minimising risks and protecting children from harm, injury, and infection. A child's physical and psychological wellbeing should be given high importance by early childhood education and care service providers. It should support the child's growing competence, independence, and confidence. The standards outlined by Quality Area 2 and their elements are presented in the table below.

<b>Standard 2.1</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.</b>
Element 2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
Element 2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
Element 2.1.3	Healthy lifestyle	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
<b>Standard 2.2</b>	<b>Safety</b>	<b>Each child is protected</b>
Element 2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
Element 2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised, and implemented.
Element 2.2.3	Child protection	Management, educators, and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect

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### **Quality Area 3: Physical environment**

The objective of this Quality Area is to ensure that the physical environment is safe, suitable and promotes the learning and development of children through a wide array of rich and diverse experiences. Early childhood education and care service providers must make sure that the environment promotes inclusive relationships and is designed, equipped, and organised to maximise children's level of engagement and positive experience. This Quality Area outlines two standards for the physical environment of children. The standards and their elements are presented in the table below.

<b>Standard 3.1</b>	<b>Design</b>	<b>The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.</b>
Element 3.1.1	Fit for purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures, and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
<b>Standard 3.2</b>	<b>Use</b>	<b>The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning</b>
Element 3.2.1	Inclusive environment	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environment.
Element 3.2.2	Resources support play-based learning	Resources, materials, and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.
Element 3.2.3	Environmentally responsible	The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

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## **Quality Area 5: Relationships with children**

The objective of this Quality Area is to make certain that early childhood education and care service providers build responsive and respectful relationships with children. It promotes a sense of security and belongingness to children and makes them feel free to explore their environment as they engage in play and learning. This Quality Area outlines two standards for relationships with children. The standards and their elements are presented in the table below.

<b>Standard 5.1</b>	<b>Relationships between educators and children</b>	<b>Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.</b>
Element 5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident, and included.
Element 5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
<b>Standard 5.2</b>	<b>Relationships between children</b>	<b>Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships</b>
Element 5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from, and help each other.
Element 5.2.2	Self-regulation	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

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## **Assessment and Quality Rating Process**

The National Law and Regulations establish the minimum operating requirements for early childhood education and care centres. The state and territory regulatory authority rate their services and how well they meet the practices of the approved learning frameworks to ensure that the standards of providing early childhood education and care are met. The early childhood education and care services are assessed based on the seven quality areas of the National Quality Standard.

## **Approved Learning Frameworks**

The early childhood and care services should be based on an approved learning framework mandated by the National Law and Regulations. These frameworks focus on the individual development of each child through a holistic teaching and learning approach.

The approved learning frameworks are key components of the National Quality Standard (NQS). The approved learning frameworks under the NQF include:

- **National:** Early Years Learning Framework outlined in ‘Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia’
- **National:** Framework for School Age Care, outlined in ‘My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia’
- **Victoria:** the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

These learning frameworks identify the values, practices, and results necessary to promote and improve young children’s learning from birth to age five and their transition to school. These frameworks were developed to help educators provide young children with opportunities to maximise their potential and establish a foundation for future success in learning. They draw on conclusive international evidence that early childhood is a vital period in children’s learning and development and was developed through the combined efforts of the early childhood sector and academics and the Australian and State and Territory statutory authorities.

## **Further Reading**



More information on the assessment and quality rating process is available through the following references. You can also review the approved learning frameworks in the link below.

[Assessment and Quality Rating Process](#)

[Early Years Learning Framework](#)

[Framework for School Age Care](#)

[Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework](#)

## Authoritative and Credible Sources of Information on Early Childhood Education



As an educator, you need to guarantee that the information you gather and incorporate into your planning is based on credible sources. The programs and practices you execute must support the holistic development of children, and the data you use should be from sources that can be trusted. Authoritative sources of information are institutions or bodies in the industry that produce material containing information about early childhood education and care. Examples of these are distinguished professionals and professional organisations. Credible sources of information are sources of information such as books, journals and websites that contain information whose claims are well-researched and based on fact. Examples of authoritative and credible sources of information about childhood development include the following:

- **Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)**

The ACECQA supports all states and territories in Australia to provide a centralised source of information, guidance, and services aligned with the national standards and policies on early childhood education and care to ensure the quality of service.

- **Raising Children Network (Australia) Limited**

The Raising Children Network is a free, reliable, and trusted online parenting resource that provides updated information from experts to help families grow. It is designed to assist parents and families in providing practical tools, strategies, and techniques in nurturing and raising children across all ages.

- **Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)**

The AEDC is a periodic nationwide evaluation aimed at assessing children's development as they start school. It identifies areas of strength and areas that require improvement or further attention in order to support both children and families. This involves evaluating the children's five key domains: physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills, and communication skills and general knowledge.

- **Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)**

The AIFS is a national research and information agency focused on the wellbeing of children and families in Australia. They want to make a positive difference in the lives of Australian families by improving awareness of the factors that impact them.

- **Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY)**

The ARACY is a national collaboration of experts that disseminate knowledge to ensure that policies and programs designed to help children overcome obstacles and reach their potential are evidence-based.

- **Journal of Early Childhood Research**

The Journal of Early Childhood Research is a compilation of discussions and international forums that provides a strong reference to early childhood policymakers, educators, and researchers. It also bridges cross-disciplinary areas and intersecting early childhood education and care fields by providing a platform for discussion among professionals.

- **Australasian Journal of Early Childhood (AJEC)**

Similar to the Journal of Early Childhood Research, the AJEC is also a peer-reviewed journal containing all aspects of child development research from birth to eight years. It welcomes the critical exchange of ideas from early childhood professionals across the globe. The AJEC includes theoretical discussions, methodological orientations, and original primary research and literature reviews from different fields in the early years. The journal aims to gather evidence to develop and improve young children's lives, education, and wellbeing.

## **Organisational Policies and Procedures**

As an educator, your complete understanding of and compliance with your early year learning centre's (EYLC) organisational policies, standards, and procedures will greatly affect your perspective as you develop programs and execute teaching and learning practices to promote the holistic development of children.



Organisational policies are general statements that establish formal requirements that guide decision making in an organisation. Organisational standards are formal requirements that provide objective, quantifiable expectations and organisational procedures are step-by-step instructions to ensure that organisational standards and organisational policies are met. Below are some examples of the policies, standards, and procedures that your EYLC will likely have.

- **Educational program and practice**

- The curriculum must focus on the current interests, strengths, abilities, and exploration of each child.
- Educators must be intentional in capturing teaching opportunities and respond to children's questions, queries, and feedback

- **Health and safety**

- Educators must respect each family's food preferences and restrictions.
- Educators must provide adequate supervision to ensure that children are safe at all times while supporting children's exploration.

- **Physical environment**

- Educators must ensure that the participation of each child is considered when setting up the indoor and outdoor spaces.
- The materials must be age-appropriate, relevant, purposeful, and accessible to each child.

- **Relationships with children**

- Educators must build meaningful interaction and a trusting relationship with each child.
- Educators must provide support to help children calm themselves, control their emotions and communicate what they feel, especially during conflict.



### **Sparkling Stars Early Years Learning Centre**

Sparkling Stars is the simulated early years learning centre environment referenced in our learning resources.

Their policies and procedures are published on their site. You can access them through the link below.

#### [Policies and Procedures](#)

*(username: newusername password: new password)*



### **Further Reading**

For further information on the standards for policies and procedures, the seven Quality Areas of the National Quality Standard will be helpful.

#### [National Quality Standard](#)

## I. Support Physical Development

*'Physical activity and attention to fine and gross motor skills provide children with the foundations for their growing independence and satisfaction in being able to do things for themselves.'*

*Sourced from [The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#), used under CC BY 4.0. © Commonwealth of Australia.*



Every small and big movement that the body can do starts developing in the early years. When an infant's little body performs small movements (e.g. sucking, waving arms, moving legs up and down, grasping and reaching objects), the child prepares itself for the bigger actions they will take as they grow. Some of the bigger actions are sitting, poking, holding a spoon for eating, crawling, and walking. The repetition of the little movements trains the body to perform activities that require more control, strength, and coordination.

The same goes for the physical development of the children under your care. Some small signs of progress are sometimes overlooked because everyone around the child, including some family members, are excited to see the big ones. Your role as an educator is to ensure that each child is provided with opportunities to practise and master the little movements to prepare them for the big ones.

Physical development involves fundamental movements of the body, which are divided into two: fine motor and gross motor. Fine motor skills refer to the hands, wrists, fingers, feet and toes, or what you can call the small muscle groups, and their ability to manipulate objects. On the other hand, gross motor skills focus on large muscle groups such as arms and legs and the coordination of other large body parts. The adult support required for each child varies on their physical development; they change as they grow and develop their skills. For example, an infant with very little control over their body needs more support from adults than a three-year-old who is starting to walk on a balance beam.

This chapter aims to provide you with information to observe children, identify the level of their physical skills based on the developmental milestones, and provide appropriate support as needed.

By supporting physical development with movement skills, concepts, and strategies, you help children be competent, confident, and creative as they engage in various physical activities. Physical development is closely linked to cognitive development, making gross and fine motor skills, coordination, and bodily control vital for children's overall wellbeing and learning. Supporting children's physical skills will also help them develop the knowledge, understanding, and techniques to strengthen their self-awareness and build and maintain satisfying relationships. It will also help them learn about resilience, make age-appropriate choices, and promote their health and participation in physical activity. The observable milestones in physical development in early childhood include the following:

Age group	Milestones in Physical Development
Birth to 4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ moves whole body</li><li>▪ squirms, arms wave, legs move up and down</li><li>▪ eating and sleeping patterns</li><li>▪ startle reflex when place unwrapped on a flat surface/when hears a loud noise</li><li>▪ head turns to the side when cheek is touched</li><li>▪ sucking motions with mouth (seeking nipple)</li><li>▪ responds to gentle touching, cuddling, rocking</li><li>▪ shuts eye tight in bright sunlight</li><li>▪ able to lift head and chest when laying on stomach</li><li>▪ begins to roll from side to side</li><li>▪ starts reaching to swipe at dangling objects</li><li>▪ able to grasp object put into hands</li></ul>

Age group	Milestones in Physical Development
4 to 8 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ plays with feet and toes</li> <li>▪ makes an effort to sit alone but needs hand support</li> <li>▪ raises head and chest when laying on stomach</li> <li>▪ makes crawling movements when laying on stomach</li> <li>▪ rolls from back to stomach</li> <li>▪ reaches for and grasp objects, using one hand to grasp</li> <li>▪ eyes smoothly follow object or person</li> <li>▪ crawling movements using both hands and feet</li> <li>▪ able to take weight on feet when standing</li> <li>▪ watch activities across the room—eyes move in unison</li> <li>▪ turns head to the sound of voices</li> </ul>
8 to 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ pulls self into standing position when hands held</li> <li>▪ raises self to a sitting position</li> <li>▪ sits without support</li> <li>▪ stands by pulling themselves up using furniture</li> <li>▪ stepping movements around furniture</li> <li>▪ successfully reach out and grasp toy</li> <li>▪ transfers objects from hand to hand</li> <li>▪ picks up and pokes small objects with thumb and finger</li> <li>▪ picks up and throws small objects</li> <li>▪ holds biscuit or bottle</li> <li>▪ crawls</li> <li>▪ mature crawling (quick and fluent)</li> <li>▪ may stand alone momentarily</li> <li>▪ may attempt to crawl upstairs</li> <li>▪ grasps spoon in the palm, but poor aim of food to mouth</li> <li>▪ uses hands to feed self</li> <li>▪ alerts peripheral vision</li> </ul>

Age group	Milestones in Physical Development
1 to 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ walks, climbs, and runs</li> <li>▪ takes two to three steps without support, legs wide and hands up for balance</li> <li>▪ crawls up steps</li> <li>▪ dances in place to music</li> <li>▪ climbs onto chair</li> <li>▪ kicks and throws a ball</li> <li>▪ feeds themselves</li> <li>▪ begins to run (hurried walk)</li> <li>▪ scribbles with pencil or crayon held in fist</li> <li>▪ turns pages of book, two or three pages at a time</li> <li>▪ rolls large ball, using both hands and arms</li> <li>▪ finger feeds efficiently</li> <li>▪ begins to walk along in a ‘tottering way’, with frequent falls</li> <li>▪ squats to pick up an object</li> <li>▪ reverts to crawling if in a hurry</li> <li>▪ can drink from a cup</li> <li>▪ tries to use spoon/fork</li> </ul>
2 to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ walks, runs, climbs, kicks and jumps easily</li> <li>▪ uses steps one at a time</li> <li>▪ squats to play and rises without using hands</li> <li>▪ catches ball rolled to him/her</li> <li>▪ walks into a ball to kick it</li> <li>▪ jumps from low step or over low objects</li> <li>▪ attempts to balance on one foot</li> <li>▪ avoids obstacles</li> <li>▪ able to open doors</li> </ul> <p>(continued on the next page)</p>

Age group	Milestones in Physical Development
2 to 3 years	<p>(continued from the previous page)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ stops readily</li> <li>▪ moves about moving to music</li> <li>▪ turns pages one at a time</li> <li>▪ holds crayon with fingers</li> <li>▪ uses a pencil to draw or scribble in circles and lines</li> <li>▪ gets dressed with help</li> <li>▪ self-feeds using utensils and a cup</li> </ul>
3 to 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ dresses and undresses with little help</li> <li>▪ hops, jumps, and runs with ease</li> <li>▪ climbs steps with alternating feet</li> <li>▪ gallops and skips by leading with one foot</li> <li>▪ transfers weight forward to throw a ball</li> <li>▪ attempts to catch a ball with hands</li> <li>▪ climbs playground equipment with increasing agility</li> <li>▪ holds crayon/pencil between thumb and first two fingers</li> <li>▪ exhibits hand preference</li> <li>▪ imitates a variety of shapes in drawing (e.g. circles, squares etc.)</li> <li>▪ independently cuts paper with scissors</li> <li>▪ toilet themselves</li> <li>▪ feeds self with minimum spills</li> <li>▪ dresses/undresses with minimal assistance</li> <li>▪ walks and runs more smoothly</li> <li>▪ enjoys learning simple rhythm and movement routines</li> <li>▪ develops the ability to toilet train at night</li> </ul>

Sourced from [Developmental Milestones and the EYLF and NQS](#),  
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## **1.1 Identify and Use Opportunities to Support the Emerging Physical Skills of Individual Children**

The development of physical skills is one of the most profound learning experiences that human beings ever have. Children's acquisition of these skills is a joy to watch because the development of physical skills is often the first to be noticed. Providing support in this vital area significantly affects their overall wellbeing and ability to learn.

Children's physical skills develop at a different pace and can be affected by the child's readiness and exposure. Infants explore their world and need experiences to help develop their senses, basic movement, and body control skills. Toddlers are curious, interested, and alert to a variety of possibilities. They are consolidating many of the skills acquired during infancy. Their newfound confidence in exploring their world leads to greater skill development.

Once a child has entered the preschool years, their physical skills develop rapidly. Preschoolers spend much of their time refining and mastering their physical skills. They will find that some skills, such as hopping (which were previously difficult), are suddenly very easy when they are four-and-a-half or five.

To effectively identify and provide the appropriate support that the child needs at each age level, you must have a deep understanding of the developmental milestones. Your understanding of the developmental milestones will allow you to observe *emerging skills* easily. These are the new skills and actions that the child does once the child is ready to approach the next developmental milestone. Simply put, these are the physical skills that the child is showing signs of developing fully.

By having a full understanding of the developmental milestones, you can easily observe, document, and assess each child and their skills as they approach play and learning. In addition, it will help you plan the next steps in creating your program, making adjustments to your practices, and integrating goals with your curriculum. This process applies not just to the physical development milestones but to the other domains as well.



### **Further Reading**

For a brief overview of children's physical development, you may access the resources from Kidspot and Raisingchildren linked below. These readings may be helpful for educators in early childhood education and parents of young children.

[Physical development in babies and children](#)

[Physical activity for young children](#)

## Observing Emerging Physical Skills

As an educator, you play a key role in providing opportunities for children to practise their current skills. Encouraging them to engage in more challenging activities that require more coordination and body movement will help you observe the emerging physical skills. For example, a child who has been using writing tools held in a fist



and making whole-arm movements to make marks is now starting to hold the tools with fingers, although not in the correct tripod grip, and scribble by moving the wrist. This situation shows that the child is now ready for more fine motor activities to practise finger and wrist movements such as transferring, pouring, stirring, and mixing.

Besides your knowledge of the developmental milestones, your observation of the child's skills and approach to learning also matters. One of the things that come in handy when planning for activities to supplement child development is to have an organised way of keeping a record of your assessment and observations of each child's progress. Your documentation will be helpful as you strategically plan your activities to achieve your goals for each child.

Another factor to consider when observing emerging physical skills is the child's profile and background. You must consider any limitations, disabilities, or restrictions when giving your observations. Remember to be objective at all times and avoid judgement. It is always best to record only the child's observable behaviours, disposition, and temperament concerning the activity or skill being observed.

## Learning Opportunities

After analysing your observation of the child's gross and fine motor skills, assessing skills development based on the child's age and milestones, and gathering information about the child, it should be easier for you to look for teaching opportunities in spontaneous situations and planned activities. Some examples of these situations can be displayed in the following scenarios. Try to spot which physical skill is addressed in each case.

### *Example 1:*

*During free play time in class, you noticed a group of children using cups and containers to 'transfer' juice and fruit shake and distributed them to everyone. This group of kids sustained their play for more than 30 minutes, just pretending to pour, transfer, and drink their fruit shake and juice. This observation is a good basis for planning activities that can support and further develop their fine motor manipulative skills and wrist and finger movements.*

*You can do an outdoor play with the class and allot one area with a water tub, cups, pitcher, and small containers to allow this group of children to explore transferring and pouring with actual water. The other children are also free to join the water play or use other activities such as spray bottles, water balloons, and sponges. These materials can also encourage the other children to engage in gross and fine motor activities.*

### *Example 2:*

*You noticed a child wanting to put their things on the bag shelf as they arrive. You observed where they would like to put their things, and you saw that the only empty shelf is at the top, which seems to be too high for them to reach. The child realised this sooner and decided just to leave their bag on the floor. Instead of picking up their bag and putting it on the shelf for them, a better option would be to ask the child to try again, but this time, you will be holding their hands and arms to 'help' them put their stuff in the shelf.*

*Giving support to children does not mean you have to do the task for them. Their involvement in performing difficult tasks and your presence as support will practise their physical skills, which, in this case, is an attempt to balance if the child tiptoes while reaching for the higher shelf in the cubby or using the upper extremities of her body to pack away their bag. Aside from the physical skills, situations like this will also encourage persistence and motivation.*

**Example 3:**

*While eating with your class of 3-year-olds, you noticed that one child brought pasta for a snack. The child has a hard time using the fork, has a poor aim in their mouth, and was about to cry out of frustration.*

*One of the important things you must consider before intervening for help is to ask the child whether they want to do it on their own or wants your help. You can say, ‘Can I help you twirl/scoop the pasta?’ or ‘Do you need me to cut the pasta?’ and stay on their side while waiting for their response. When the child finally asks for help, you can provide support by cutting the pasta or preparing a scoop on their fork and then leave the rest to the child. Through this, you can build more successes by having only one target skill focused on aiming food in their mouth. Asking the child to do the scooping or twirling may only add frustration, given that they were about to cry before help was offered.*



## **1.2 Use Daily Routines as Opportunities to Support Children to Acquire and Practise Skills**

Like students who need class schedules in universities and adults to keep track of their plan for the day, children in early childhood also need daily class routines to follow in the learning centres. Most of the time, parents and children keep an organised flow of their day through daily routines, even at home. Aside from just keeping things in order, routines are helping children in a deeper sense.

Routines help children get a sense of control and security. Knowing what will happen next allows them to prepare mentally, physically, and emotionally because they know what to expect. It establishes support among relationships and provides strong building blocks of learning. Daily routines give order and stability and help children maintain a strong sense of wellbeing and purpose from consistent activity patterns. The importance of physical activity, how to promote it, and the development of meaningful routines are ideal opportunities for children to acquire and practise physical skills. Self-feeding, independent dressing, hygiene practices, toileting, helping set the table, setting up, and cleaning up are examples of purposeful and meaningful activities.

Daily routines also help children who struggle with transitions because there is no need to worry about what is coming. For example, a child who struggles to say goodbye to their parents can adjust better because they know that they will have to read books once they arrive at school. The consistency of daily routines helps children across all domains, including the physical development of children.

Repetition in daily routines is a relevant factor in acquiring, building, and practising skills. A child who practises balancing skills or uses writing tools by incorporating them into their daily routine four to five times a week will most likely improve on it sooner than by doing it only every weekend.

For example, when children arrive in the centre, they can trace their names using markers and laminated name tags. In the beginning, their names are written in print, so they will only have to follow the lines. In the second term, the print on the laminated name tags can be changed into broken lines to encourage more independence from children. The broken lines can be replaced with starting and ending dots as cues for children when writing their names in the last term of the school year.

Note that the focus of this routine is to familiarise children with manipulating writing tools and not the accuracy of writing each letter. You can provide support by observing how children hold the writing tools—full hand grip, in the fist, uses fingers, between thumb and first two fingers, exhibits hands preference, and other observations based on the developmental milestones. Letter and sound recognition and identification skills can be reinforced and incorporated into other activities such as storytime and singing.



Another example is by engaging children to practise balancing skills using wood blocks as balance beams. These materials can be prepared for the outdoor experience or active play activities. You can also prepare obstacles that children can explore on specific days of the week. These activities can be repeated until children can walk on the balance beams without falling on the ground, stepping their foot on the ground, using alternating feet while balancing, or learning to counterbalance.

Activities like this will target their body control and coordination and gross motor manipulative skills. Incorporating them into the daily routines will give a better outcome in acquiring skills, being familiar with their body movements, and executing actions with confidence and mastery.

## Further Reading



The following readings from TheSpoke: Early Childhood Australia's Blog and Early Childhood Australia Learning Hub may be helpful for educators and parents of young children to understand the importance of daily routines.

[Routines: Opportunities for Learning and Connecting](#)

[Routines and Transitions: Embracing Opportunities for Learning](#)

## 1.3 Select and Arrange Equipment That Will Develop Fundamental Movement Skills, Fine and Gross Motor Skills



Now that you know the importance of consistency in daily routines and incorporating activities to acquire and practise physical skills, this subchapter will discuss choosing and arranging valuable equipment you can use to help children develop fundamental movement skills.

Children develop physical skills by engaging in a wide range of activities, as all experiences serve to help them build upon their current skills and extend themselves further.

*Gross motor skills* refer to the skills involved in large muscle movements such as walking, running, dancing, crawling, balancing, catching, and jumping. *Fine motor skills* refer to the skills involved in small muscle movements, fine finger movements, and hand-eye coordination, such as drawing and writing.

Fundamental movement skills are locomotor, non-locomotor, and object-control skills. Locomotor skills are movements that require travelling from one place to another (e.g. jogging, running, hopping, galloping), while non-locomotor can be performed in the same location (e.g. bending, swaying, wiggling). Object-control skills involve the manipulation of an object, such as throwing, catching, dribbling, and kicking.

### Selecting and Arranging Equipment

The equipment you will use in your classroom will contribute to the physical development of each child and your classroom's physical environment's overall design, safety, and use. Quality Area 3 – Physical Environment of the National Quality Standard provides the perfect example and a benchmark for preparing the classroom environment.

When choosing centre equipment, whether for indoor or outdoor activities, consider:

- the safety and security of children while using the equipment
- the space required so that children can still move around while using the equipment and still have enough space for those who prefer to play with something else
- the way children will interact with the equipment, including any medical conditions or restrictions that may prevent them from engaging with the equipment
- any medical procedure or policy that you need to be trained in
- the accessibility of equipment to all children, the capacity for multiple uses, and accommodation for all types of learners
- the appropriateness of the equipment to children's age, interest, and prior skills and experience
- the target skills that may be developed as children engage with the equipment.

Equipment must be developmentally appropriate, inclusive, and support exploring a play-based and child-led learning environment. Educators must arrange equipment considering the class routine and anticipating how children will engage with them. Consider the following examples:

- Place the balance beam equipment near an open space in the classroom to give enough space for children to participate.
- Have the tables near the sink so children can wash hands easily after a painting activity or snack time.
- Make the writing materials accessible from the tables and chairs so children can be prompted to sit down while writing or drawing. You may also have a shelf with puzzles, playdough, and other learning tools nearby.

## Further Reading



Chapter 10 of Early Childhood Education talks about play and the learning environment. The Early Childhood Facilities describes design standards and guidelines that reflect the commitment to a holistic approach. You may read more about the materials and equipment for early childhood classrooms and how to prepare the physical space for play through the links below.

[Early Childhood Education: Play and the Learning Environment](#)

[Early Childhood Facilities \(birth to age 8\) – Design Standards and Guidelines](#)

## Developing Physical Skills

After selecting the equipment and considering how it will affect your classroom's physical environment, you can now prepare and observe how this will help children develop their skills. The Reggio Emilia approach refers to the environment as the third teacher, which emphasises children's relationship to their environment, including the materials and equipment you intentionally and strategically put in your classroom. As children engage with their environment, they are expected to develop their skills across all domains. This section will elaborate on developing their physical skills through the use of equipment. Everyday play activities allow young children to develop the following key physical skills:



Educators need to plan and provide a wide range of movement experiences and play opportunities to ensure optimal development in all areas. The Australian Physical Activity Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines recommends the following for children aged 2 to 4 who are not in school:

- at least 180 minutes a day of physical activity, including energetic play
- no more than 60 minutes a day engaged in a screen-based activity.

*Sourced from [Physical Activity](#), under CC-BY 3.0. AU  
©Australian Institute of Health and Welfare*

Children require a variety of different play activities and various environments each day. In addition, play activities should stimulate their senses, as this will assist in developing other skills, such as communication skills, independence, coordination, and spatial awareness.

With the limited time children spend in the centre, your goal is to maximise the opportunities to develop these skills. Here are some examples of the equipment and physical setup you can apply in class and the developmental milestones associated with gross and fine motor development that it can address.

- **Infants**

Some of the developmental milestones for this age group focus on developing head and neck control, reaching, grasping, rolling, and pulling themselves around. The play environment must have safe areas for these types of movement explorations and must be supervised closely. Some equipment you can prepare are:

- firm, soft surfaces for lying, stretching, rolling and moving
- furnishings that are soft to support sitting and reaching
- sturdy furniture at an appropriate height to help babies practise pulling up and walking
- safe, sturdy toys that babies can push or pull as they learn to walk.



#### ▪ Toddlers

This age group focuses on developing more controlled movements such as walking steadily, jumping, running, bending, stretching, and climbing. The play environment must provide opportunities that will encourage them to engage in more challenging activities. Some equipment you can prepare are:

- firm, soft surfaces safe for practising running, walking and jumping
- sturdy furniture at an appropriate height to help toddlers practise sitting, climbing (e.g. wooden steps and climber), and reaching with less assistance.

#### ▪ Preschoolers

The continuation of physical skills development, such as running, jumping, climbing, balancing, hopping, galloping etc. Some equipment you can prepare are:

- firm surfaces with a bigger space that is safe for practising running, balancing, hopping, galloping, climbing, etc.
- sturdy furniture or improvised materials that appropriate for practising balancing (e.g. balance beam)
- higher or increased number of steps on the climber to practise advanced climbing skills and practice independence.



### Further Reading

You may read more about key recommendations for physical activity in early childhood in the resource linked below:

[Physical activity and exercise guidelines for all Australians: For infants, toddlers and preschoolers \(birth to 5 years\)](#)

[Get Up & Grow: The Importance of Active Play](#)

[National Physical Activity Recommendations for Children 0-5 Years](#)

## 1.4 Encourage Challenge, Choice and Spontaneity in Physically Active Play



Children's large and fine muscle development, eye-hand-foot coordination, and balancing and locomotor skills all need a range of opportunities for practice. They also need to test the limits of their abilities constantly to identify areas of development. Regardless of the children's abilities, your program and practices should

aim to extend their skills, provide support, and enrich and expand their physical development in positive and creative ways.

In the introduction of this chapter, you have learnt that the physical development of children is closely linked to their cognitive development. This idea allows children to acquire self-awareness and problem-solving skills. It also helps them develop strategies and techniques to perform new and unfamiliar tasks. Their growing knowledge of manipulating their bodies and responding to their environment will also develop their maturity and confidence as they approach new challenges. Thus, educators play a big role in encouraging children and making them believe in their capabilities.

As an educator, your observation of the physical development of children will be the key to assessing their readiness to approach the next milestone. To promote continuous growth, you must provide opportunities to challenge, offer choices, and engage children naturally or in natural situations. Facing new tasks and dealing with more difficult situations can be frustrating at first. Children experience these challenges when they encounter situations requiring more advanced skills which have no experience in. It can be overwhelming for them.

One of the ways to offer support is by giving them choices. Remember that the child is already facing an unfamiliar task and does not have the required skill to accomplish it yet. With that in mind, you must be careful with the choices you will offer. Try to build more successes with the child by breaking down difficult tasks into smaller ones and then asking them which smaller task they want to try first. By doing this, you lessen the child's chances of being frustrated with the unfamiliar situation and build a foundation for confidence and motivation in approaching new tasks.

You can refer to Example 1 in the Learning Opportunities in Subchapter 1.1.

*During water play outdoors, you assigned one area for children to explore transferring and pouring activities based on the interest of a group of children in your class. The activity aims to further develop and strengthen their finger and wrist movements. You also noticed that the other children are not interested in using transferring tools. One thing to do is prepare other materials that the others can explore, like using a sponge to dip in water and throw against the wall. It will be interesting for children if the water or liquid you will use will leave marks on the wall. You can also stick dots on the wall to act as their 'targets' for throwing.*

*This activity practises children's ability to manipulate objects using their arms and upper body. During the throwing activity, you noticed a child who repeatedly fails to hit the target they are aiming for. The child is starting to get frustrated, which makes it harder for them to hit the target. You can support the child in this situation by making them realise their choices to achieve their goal. You can offer an easier target to the child, which adjusts their goal but keeps the approach they use, or keeps their goal but make adjustments to their approach, like moving closer to the target or trying to throw with more force.*

When children realise that they can make choices and deal with unfamiliar situations, they will develop problem-solving skills and keep a positive learning disposition. The ability to approach challenges and make appropriate choices are skills you want to build with the child and should not be separated from their physical development. The skills will help them figure out what works best for them with the skills that they currently have. As they learn and adapt these strategies and techniques, they will eventually do this independently and spontaneously in everyday situations.

Repetitive, adult-directed rote exercises may not encourage children's development and their learning as much as natural and spontaneous play do. Their physical skills can be displayed best when they are interested in the activities.

You can encourage a challenge by showing children a positive attitude towards their mistakes as they try new things. In the previous example, you can model to children that you can focus on the solutions instead of the failed attempts to hit the target. You may continue to cheer them and stay motivated by saying, 'How about we aim higher and throw with more force?' Do this with enthusiasm to boost children's self-esteem and help them build a positive outlook in approaching challenges.

Although planned activities help target and develop skills among children, there will be unplanned events that will occur in a day, for sure. By showing children how quickly you can adapt to these situations and how you keep a positive attitude in responding to them, you can encourage spontaneity and help them see unplanned situations as learning opportunities. For example, in the throwing activity, a child noticed that there were no more sponges available. You may encourage the child to play with other materials while waiting, or you can also tell them to look for different objects to use for throwing, such as plastic balls or crumpled paper. It can also mean children may use the materials differently, like throwing them in the sky instead of towards a specific target. Spontaneity is mostly connected to unplanned responses based on the present situation. Encourage children to go out of their comfort zones and think out of the box by helping them build their self-esteem to try new things and be creative. Show them a positive outlook towards undetermined situations and encourage them to do the same.

By allowing them to engage in active play and meaningful activities, both indoors and outdoors, they will be motivated to discover their growing abilities and take pleasure in doing physical activities.



## Further Reading

To learn more about how building self-esteem relates to children's response towards challenges, take some time to read the reference below.

[Building Self-Esteem by Encouraging Children to Take on Challenges](#)

## **1.5 Support Children to Take Increasing Responsibility for Their Own Health and Wellbeing Through Positive Communication and Information Sharing**

This subchapter will discuss three topics that relate to supporting children to develop an awareness that they must be responsible for their own health and wellbeing. It should gradually increase as they acquire new experiences and grow. These are children's health and wellbeing, positive communication, and information sharing.

As an educator, your knowledge about children's health and wellbeing is your foundation in supporting children to take increasing responsibility through positive communication and information sharing. This can be observed when children:

- can acknowledge and express their body needs (e.g. hunger, thirst, rest, comfort)
- engage in physical activities that involve fine and gross motor activities to achieve more complex patterns and movements (e.g. dance, drama, and creative movements)
- demonstrate spatial awareness and consider their environment and the people around them as they move and navigate safely
- demonstrate awareness of healthy habits and good nutrition
- develop independence in attending to their personal and others' needs, including hygiene, care, and safety
- use their senses and positive learning dispositions to explore their environment.

*Based on [The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#), used under CC BY 4.0. © Commonwealth of Australia.*

### **1.5.1 Children's Health and Wellbeing**

Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers need nutritious food to grow and develop normally. Therefore, a huge chunk of their health and wellbeing should focus on maintaining a growth rate consistent with the norms and stages of physiological maturity for their age and sex.

Regular visits to health professionals are critical to ensure that children's nutritional needs are met. Educators and parents must respond to children's nutritional and developmental needs based on the recommendation of health professionals, as their growth rate is a fundamental indicator of their health and wellbeing. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare defines health as the state that indicates a presence or absence of disease based on risk factors examined medically. Moreover, the World Health Organization describes health in a broader sense. It refers not only to an individual's physical state but also to mental and social wellbeing.

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) describes wellbeing as something that reflects how individuals realise their sense of self and how this relates to their relationships in the community and contribution to their continuous development. The EYLF's concept of wellbeing revolves around both the physical and psychological aspects of belonging, being, and becoming.

As an educator, your influence in the lives of the children under your care will affect how they see themselves and how they relate themselves to their environment. You help them build a strong sense of wellbeing and gain confidence as they approach new learning experiences and reach their full potential. These experiences are not only about food selection but also about developing their confidence in taking care of themselves and their needs through daily activities, such as washing hands, changing clothes, packing away their food after snack time, wearing their shoes and more.

### **1.5.2 Positive Communication**

Positive communication involves using an encouraging tone of voice, giving gentle reminders, and choosing appreciative or corrective words that will not demotivate or embarrass the child. It can be applied when you correct children's actions, suggest better ways of accomplishing tasks, negotiate with matters that concern food and hygiene, discuss safety issues, or engage them in routines and experiences that promote their health and wellbeing. Through positive communication, you can make the child feel that you understand their preferences, and at the same time, you are also thinking about their health and welfare.

Another way to use positive communication to encourage children in taking increasing responsibility for their own health and wellbeing is by praising them when they successfully accomplish a task. For example, when they can finally wash their hands after mealtime with less assistance or pack away their bags on their own after eating. Noticing their efforts by saying simple praise like, 'I can see that you are rinsing your hands and getting rid of all the soap on your own now' or 'Thank you for packing away your bag and cleaning the table.' Appreciating children's efforts will most likely reinforce their behaviour and communicate that their actions are helpful.

These approaches that use positive communication may also be applied in encouraging children to establish and build positive relationships with their friends, engage in safe exploration and play with their peers, and be aware of possible danger or health hazards.



### 1.5.3 Information Sharing

Both educators and parents have a significant influence on children and what they learn about food. Sharing information while modelling can surely be an effective way to share information with children about their health and wellbeing. Starting conversations during mealtime, reading stories, engaging in group discussions, and asking open-ended questions are some of the ways to share information that will help children take responsibility for their health and wellbeing.

Below are some of the topics that you can talk about when sharing information with children.

- Food (e.g. taste, texture, colour, how it is planted, how to take care of it, how it is harvested, where it grows, and more)
- Equipment (e.g. materials used to build it, safe use, its capacity, how to take care of it, how to assemble or disassemble)
- Materials (e.g. art materials and tools, sensory play materials, cooking activity ingredients, science experiment materials and tools)
- Environment (e.g. weather, appropriate clothing, what to bring based on the weather, preparing for natural calamities)
- Hygiene (e.g. washing hands, taking a bath, brushing teeth, changing clothes or nappy)

You can use books to discuss a topic or ask children about experiences and let them talk about their interests. Use these opportunities to share information about the common things they see, the objects they use, or their personal experiences. It will help them make informed decisions that relate to their personal and others' health and wellbeing.



### Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Educators can find teaching opportunities from planned and unplanned events from daily class routines to support children's fine and gross motor development.
2. Select equipment appropriate to children's age and developmental level and arrange them strategically based on your planned activities and class routine.
3. Positive communication and information sharing are helpful approaches in appreciating children's effort and encouraging them to take increasing responsibility for their health and wellbeing.



## Further Reading

To learn more about supporting children's developing personal health and wellbeing, spend time reading through the resources linked below.

[Personal hygiene for children](#)

[Young children and communication](#)

[Australian Dietary Guidelines Resources](#)

[Healthy Eating for Infants, Children and Teenagers](#)



## Learning Activity for Chapter 1

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the classroom learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

## II. Support Social Development

*[Educators] recognise connections between children, families and communities and the importance of reciprocal relationships and partnerships for learning. They see learning as a social activity and value collaborative learning and community participation.'*

*Sourced from [The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#), used under CC BY 4.0. © Commonwealth of Australia.*



Studies show that during the first five years of life, children's brains develop faster, create more connections, and simulate development through experiences and relationships than any other time in their lives. You may access references to this in the Further Reading section.

The social development of a child is linked to the development of other domains, like how they depend on one another. The social interaction in their early years will establish their relationship and connection to the world. Teaching young children how to relate to the people around them is a crucial skill to develop and something that they will bring with them as they grow.

Social development involves learning skills such as interacting with others, forming relationships, and communicating. It is also affected by how children are encouraged to see themselves as part of a wider community. Like any developing skill, social skills are learnt and taught through a variety of accumulated experiences. Learning social skills requires support, exposure, practice, and repetition. Children need the support of parents and educators to help them acquire these vital skills and establish pathways for meaningful learning. You have learnt in the previous chapter that health and wellbeing are not just the physical state but also the mental and social aspects of each individual, including children. It highlights the significance of the attention given to addressing the social development of children in their early years to keep healthy and sound wellbeing. One of the best ways to do this is through play.

### **Learning Through Play**

Play-based teaching shows a perfect scenario of ‘meeting children where they are at’ and effectively connecting and communicating with them in ways they easily understand. Children will more likely engage in interesting and stimulating activities based on their interests, abilities, and experiences and delivered through spontaneous and natural play.

Quality Area 1 of the NQS talks about play-based learning and how this approach provides curiosity, discovery, and creativity opportunities, among other learning dispositions. It mentions that children learn best through a play-based program, where they are viewed as competent learners capable of and responsible for their learning. Play-based learning also provides children with a social context of organising and processing new information through exploration. It allows them to connect their previous experiences with current discoveries.

As children build their confidence and develop a positive disposition towards learning, they also begin to accommodate and establish positive relationships with other adults and children their age. Your role as an educator is to provide provocations based on the children’s interests, abilities, and experiences. Provocations are materials and activities thoughtfully chosen to provoke or encourage children’s thoughts and ideas through exploration and investigation, creating an environment that will prompt children to interact and explore together.

The National Quality Standard also provides a guide on establishing relationships with children. The objective of Quality Area 5 is to promote responsive and respectful relationships with children that will give them a sense of security and belonging. Another objective is for educators like you to facilitate and support children as they build relationships among themselves. Children's confidence to explore the environment and engage in play and learning is reinforced when they have relationships of this kind.

The EYLF and the NQS developed a guide on the observable milestones in social development in early childhood, which will help educators identify the social needs of children and create programs to address these needs.

Age group	Milestones in Social Development
Birth to 4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ smiles and laughs</li> <li>▪ makes eye contact when held with a face about 20 cm from the face of an adult looking at them</li> <li>▪ may sleep most of the time</li> <li>▪ alert and preoccupied with faces</li> <li>▪ moves head to the sound of voices</li> </ul>
4 to 8 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ reacts with arousal, attention or approach to the presence of another baby or young child</li> <li>▪ responds to own name</li> <li>▪ smiles often and shows excitement when sees preparations being made for meals or bath</li> <li>▪ recognises familiar people and stretches arms to be picked up</li> </ul>
8 to 12 months	shows definite anxiety or wariness at the appearance of strangers
1 to 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ begins to cooperate when playing</li> <li>▪ may play alongside other toddlers, doing what they do but without seeming to interact (parallel play)</li> <li>▪ curious and energetic, but depends on adult presence for reassurance</li> </ul>
2 to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ plays with other children</li> <li>▪ simple make believe play</li> <li>▪ may prefer same-sex playmates and toys</li> <li>▪ unlikely to share toys without protest</li> </ul>

Age group	Milestones in Social Development
3 to 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ enjoys playing with other children</li> <li>▪ may have a particular friend</li> <li>▪ shares, smiles and cooperates with peers</li> <li>▪ jointly manipulates objects with one or two peers</li> <li>▪ develops independence and social skills they will use for learning and getting on with others at preschool and school</li> </ul>

*Sourced from [Developmental Milestones and the EYLF and NQS](#),  
used under CC BY 3.0 AU. © Commonwealth of Australia*

Understanding the social developmental milestones of the children under your care will help you identify what kind of support you need to provide when the need arises. A toddler who is new in class and acts stiff around new adults might need a different approach than a toddler who cries upon arrival and has a hard time saying goodbye to the guardian. As an educator, you must learn the appropriate responses to support the various needs of children.



## Further Reading

The links below will direct you to a short video from the Raising Children Network, which gives a useful overview of children's social development and the studies that relate to children's brain development during the early years.

[Social development: children 1-5 years](#)

[InBrief: The Science of Early Childhood Development](#)

[Why Early Childhood Matters: Brain Development](#)

[Early Brain Development and Health](#)

## **2.1 Encourage Children to Engage in Play and Social Experiences With Other Children**

Social skills are developed through interaction and practice. With this in mind, as an educator, you need to provide as many opportunities as possible for children to practise their developing social skills.

To begin with, having a clear picture of each child's stage of development helps you plan social interactions that allow them to:

- practise the skills that represent their developmental stage
- come into contact with other children at other developmental stages to model themselves after
- build upon their current experiences and extend their skills.

You can prepare age-appropriate materials and strategically place them in areas where two or more children may be interested and engage with them. While you do not force interactions, especially when you see that children are not yet ready or are still adjusting to each other's presence, you can help children build a positive relationship that begins with you. When you establish that trust, and when children feel safe when you are around, they are more likely to engage in social experiences with other children eventually. In addition, children will feel more at ease and encouraged to engage in their environment when they know you are around.



Social experiences create a doorway to a lot of learning opportunities in the life of a child. These social experiences refer to situations where two or more children interact by being in the same area, using the same materials, handing out toys, and, later on, learning to share, take turns, or work collaboratively. Observing as children interact will make you realise their needs and help develop them further. Remember that your role as a teacher is to support their natural capability to learn and not tell them what they need to learn, which means that you should focus on the process of their learning and less on its output. As you observe, you will notice that children have different forms of play, indicating their readiness for social development.

Children's forms of play change according to their developmental stage, and observing how a child plays provides important information regarding the kinds of social skills they are currently developing. Children learn a great deal from each other, so providing a wide range of interactions allows children to solve problems and facilitate interactive learning.

One of the founding theorists on social development in early childhood is Mildred Parten. Her stages of play theory underpin much of current practice.

### Parten's Stages of Play

The importance of providing children with opportunities to engage in a range of play situations, both group and individual, is commonly recognised. Parten specified six stages of play that children progress through during their childhood, outlined in the table below.

Stages of Play	Stage of Development	Description and Observation
Unoccupied play	0–2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The foundation for the other stages of play</li><li>▪ Seemingly scattered play</li><li>▪ Explore and interact with materials without organisation or structure</li><li>▪ Stage to discover manipulating materials, practise self-control and build a perception about the world</li></ul> <p><b>Example:</b> A baby is sitting on a sensory mat with musical instruments. Instead of playing with the instruments to produce sounds, like shaking the maracas or hitting the drums, the baby only grabs it, pounds it on the mat, throws it, or pokes it with hands.</p>

Stages of Play	Stage of Development	Description and Observation
Solitary play	0–2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation for interactive stages of play</li> <li>▪ Prefer to play alone and entertain themselves without social interaction</li> <li>▪ Stage to explore freely and master the new skills they discover</li> </ul> <p><b>Example:</b> A child is alone while watching the cars pass by the glass window, holding toy cars and imitating their movements. The child might move to a different place near the window when other children try to stay in the same area and continue playing alone.</p>
Onlooker play	0–2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Beginning of active play</li> <li>▪ Prefer to watch other children play but do not join, just like how adults ‘people watch’</li> <li>▪ Learn social rules of play by watching others</li> <li>▪ Stage to explore different ways of manipulating materials and apply their learning</li> </ul> <p><b>Example:</b> A child is sitting on the opposite side of the painting table watching other children playing but refuses to paint.</p>
Parallel play	2 years onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transition to interactive play</li> <li>▪ Comfortable in the presence of other children while playing side-by-side but does not interact</li> <li>▪ Stage to acknowledge the company of other children and that they are sharing the same space for play</li> </ul> <p><b>Example:</b> A child may copy what another child next to them is doing but does not join in the play with the other child.</p>

Stages of Play	Stage of Development	Description and Observation
Associative play	3 years onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Beginning of interactive play</li> <li>▪ Become engaged in play and communicate with other children, borrow and take turns, but no formalisation of what their goal is</li> <li>▪ Stage to interact with other children or adults in the same environment and start showing fondness to another child</li> </ul> <p><b>Example:</b> Children are all working in a shop at the home corner, but one child is shopping, another is at the register, and a third child is cooking with the materials; all three children are in the same environment, might exchange materials, and communicate but have different goals.</p>
Cooperative play	4–5 years onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emerging to collaborative play</li> <li>▪ Establish rules and goals for play, work together for a common goal, and negotiate to resolve conflict</li> <li>▪ Stage where communication skills are more evident, and interaction with other children comes with a purpose, like assigning a role during dramatic play</li> </ul> <p><b>Example:</b> A camping experience where the children are doing their own jobs within the play, such as planning and listing down what they need, working together to set up a tent, cooking and gathering sticks for the campfire while communicating with each other and ensuring that the tasks are performed</p>

Considering the stages of play that children go through, your role is to meet their needs at their current level and provide continuous support for social development. The activities you will make must encourage and prepare the children to learn from older children, demonstrate their skills and interests, teach others, cooperate, communicate and listen to each other, and express their individuality and creativity.



Use the child's areas of interest to help structure further skills development opportunities while encouraging them to participate in a wide range of activities. Keep your communication positive and encouraging and model useful social skills. This will provide the children in your care with a strong basis for building their emerging social development. To encourage children to engage in play and social experiences with other children, consider:

- establishing a positive relationship with each child and joining in their play as you introduce and gradually set up interactions between them
- starting with subtle and non-verbal prompts to avoid making children feel pressured to engage with other children, especially with the ones they just met
- observing children's interests and creating opportunities where they can be more familiar with each other's presence or setting up natural instances that will encourage them to interact.

## Further Reading



You can refer to the links below to know more about the stages of play and how every stage prepares children for more complex social skills.

[Types and Stages of Play Important for your Child's Development](#)

[The Power of Play – Part 1: Stages of Play](#)

## **2.2 Provide Developmentally Appropriate Support and Information That Helps Children Understand and Accept Responsibility for Their Own Actions**

The acquisition of social skills is essential for children to communicate effectively with their peers and other people, form relationships, and support their sense of belonging and self-esteem.

When you establish social experiences, it is imperative to provide and promote several environments that allow for different stages of play, which means different responses and actions from children. For example, you know that toddlers are usually self-centred, which is normal in this phase. They are only beginning to learn how to share and take turns as they interact with each other (supporting Parten's notion of parallel play, children are playing alongside each other). You must remember that although preschool children are beginning to engage in many associative and cooperative situations, they still require opportunities to engage in solitary play. Learning how children respond to social experiences based on their age and development will help you understand what is expected of them. This will also be your guide in communicating with children and providing developmentally appropriate support to help them understand and accept responsibility for their own actions.

Throughout the learning process of social interaction, your role as an educator is to be a safe place and person of security as they explore the world. Most of the time, it is enough that children know you are just around to support them. There is no need for continuous verbal or non-verbal prompts to force children to engage in social situations. As you gain their trust, children will feel more at ease to be themselves and will allow the skills to unfold naturally.

As the adult in class, children will be watching and imitating your responses to different situations. They will also feel your emotions, whether positive or negative, which in return might affect the way they explore the world. You can be mindful of the responses that you allow children to see by being aware of how it affects their perspective and understanding why they respond the way they do according to the social developmental milestones and stages of play. With this in mind, you can provide developmentally appropriate support and help children be more aware of their actions, be responsible for them, and realise how it affects themselves and the people around them.

## Erik Erikson: The Psychosocial Theory

Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory discusses the crucial role the environment plays in children's social development. His theory concerns children's emotional and social (psychosocial) development and how the environment plays a leading factor in this development. Erikson believed that children develop at a consistent rate, depending on the level of interaction



with adults. For example, a child with constant support and guidance will progress through each stage of development and develop into a confident child.

Erikson's psychosocial development theory has eight stages that cover birth until late adulthood. This subchapter will only discuss the first three stages applicable to early childhood learners and commonly observed as you interact with children.

### Stage 1: Child develops trust or mistrust (0–2 years)

An infant will learn whether their environment is comfortable and trustworthy in the initial moments of life. An infant in a comfortable and trustworthy environment will develop a positive outlook in life and healthy self-esteem. In contrast, a child who feels mistrust and lacks security will develop a level of uncertainty and wariness, especially when meeting new people. The provision of a safe, secure environment is vital for this foundational stage.

### The Importance of Attachment in Social Development

Attachment is the deep and enduring emotional bond between a child and their carer. Infants must receive consistent one-on-one interaction with specific caregivers; this should be strongly established with one or two caregivers. Services that have a high turnover of staff do not assist the infant in developing secondary attachments. During the first year of life, Erikson believed that children either developed **trust or mistrust** in themselves and those who care for them. Children who build trust in their caregivers establish a special bond with them. The bond is often referred to as *attachment*.

As an educator, your role in this stage of psychosocial development is to provide that bond when the infant is under your care. The amount of attention that the child needs must be provided to establish trust and confidence in the child. This stage is a critical foundation as the child grows and learns to accept more responsibility toward their actions. When children trust their environment and the people around them, they are more likely to develop a good sense of self and a healthy disposition to understand how their actions affect themselves and others.

For example, a child communicates and gets an adult's attention mostly through crying. A child who trusts the adults in their environment would know that someone will come to the rescue when they cry and communicates their need for affection, comfort, or food. If adults establish a trusting relationship with the child and get to know the child as an individual, including their needs and requests, they will likely understand the cause of crying. In the same way, the child is most likely to communicate their needs effectively as they grow and can understand and respond to others' expressions of needs and wants. For the child, communication is established to be an act of expression and response.

This foundation of understanding and communication between an adult and a child is crucial in shaping a child's view of the world and their overall personality. When children are raised in an unreliable environment with adults who cannot attend to their basic needs, the mistrust can cause children to be anxious, confused, and fearful. They are more likely to have difficulty in forming healthy relationships and accepting support from others. The mistrust can eventually lead to isolation and loneliness.

### **Stage 2: Child develops autonomy or shame and doubt (1–3 years)**

As infants progress into toddlers, they become independent learners, developing the cognitive, motor, and language skills required to express their preferences, communicate their needs and wants, and insist on doing tasks on their own. At this stage, children will assert their capabilities of gaining control over themselves and the world around them and their need for independence to make age-appropriate decisions. Children are no longer entirely dependent on others for their care and safety, which is not really a bad thing.

As an educator, your role is to support children in building their confidence as they approach new tasks and attempt to accomplish them independently. This stage is crucial to how children will perceive the world and their control over it. You must help children realise their strengths and identify the things they still need to work on so they can improve them. If educators support children in their attempts to be independent, they will feel capable and optimistic about their abilities.



Here are some tasks and activities that you can work on with the child to develop their autonomy and confidence in decision making:

- Potty training helps children gain control over their bodies which helps them get a sense of control and independence.
- Giving children the freedom to make choices on food, clothes, and toys they will use may seem like small decisions for adults, but these are age-appropriate decisions that children will make. These decisions will help them understand the results and consequences of their choices and learn from them.
- Allowing children to play with toys however they want is also an act of supporting them in being independent and fostering their curiosity and exploration. Often, adults dictate how children should engage with toys and learning materials without realising it. Doing this limits children's imagination through play and exploration and takes away their confidence in executing their plans and ideas that are needed in the next stage.

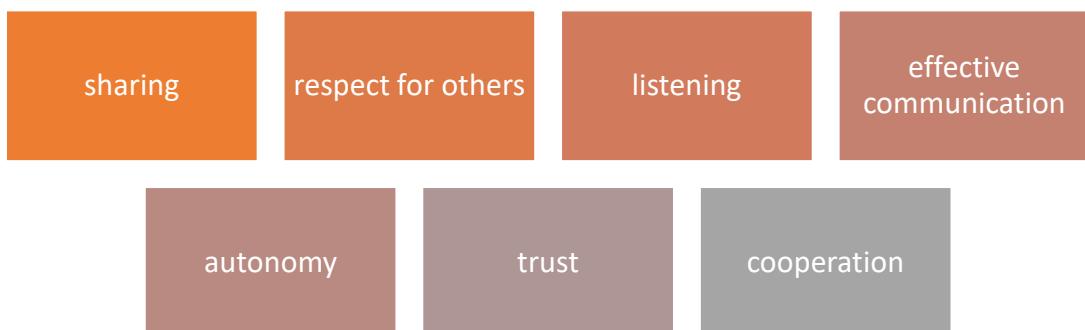
With this underpinning knowledge in mind, the importance of the environment on children's social development is evident. The role of parents and educators in making children feel that they are capable affects the development of autonomy and confidence. As an educator, helping children reflect on and understand their actions in appropriate settings while under your care is crucial in this stage. You must make sure that the environment you establish is free from judgement and supports children's self-esteem and independence.

### **Stage 3: Child develops initiative or guilt (3–6 years)**

Educators need to support children in their preschool years and provide them with activities that use relevant skills and encouragement to develop the initiative to implement their ideas. As children discover their skills and engage with their environment, they develop the courage to discover and explore new things. Provided with adequate support, children form positive feelings around creativity and experimentation. They learn that their ideas are valued and develop confidence in executing their plans and ideas.

When children overcome the first two stages, they become aware that they can trust their environment and get a sense of doing things independently. After that, children will learn how their choices affect themselves and others and either get a sense of initiative or guilt. As they make decisions in their everyday lives, they will start to realise that whatever they decide to do impacts others and is powerful in their own sense. In the same way, the influence of the environment and the people around them can be more evident at this stage. Parents and educators must identify and enforce safe boundaries while encouraging children to make good choices. One of the ways to do this is through modelling and *reinforcement*.

Some of the concepts that children can learn by exploring this development stage are indicated below. Notice that these concepts do not only affect children themselves but their relationships with others as well.



Play is a key to children's social interaction and, therefore, has a big role at this stage. Now that children can trust the world and are confident with what they can do, their next step is to experiment and enforce their ideas and imagination in social situations through play. If successful in this stage, children will get a sense of purpose and initiative. They will feel that their ideas are valid and will be encouraged when others follow or consider them.

Parents who over-direct children may cause a struggle in developing their initiative and confidence in implementing their ideas. Instead of sharing them with others, children may feel embarrassed about their ideas. They will hesitate to express themselves, feel guilty about mistakes, and think that their ideas can only be a source of failure. On the other hand, parents and educators who support children will help them understand that their failures are not who they are. Mistakes happen, and they are just signs of the need for practice and learning.

Providing support involves giving directions or guiding children on how they should respond in certain situations. Although observing their initial response without any influence is important, it is also helpful that children know that they can reach out to you at any time. In addition, as an adult in class, your presence is a boost of confidence itself to children as they explore social experiences. On the other hand, providing information on children's actions may involve talking about the vocabulary and language used to describe different actions and the possible consequences of their actions or how they will affect other people's feelings. Discussion on emotions and how their choices affect other people is a good start to promote awareness of how they are connected. Then follows owning their actions, being truthful about them, and accepting responsibility for them.

Adults' responses to children's mistakes are crucial on whether they will be truthful about it or not. Hence, you must not make children feel bad or embarrassed about themselves when they own up to their mistakes. Instead, you should see them as learning opportunities for children and support how they will realise their mistakes and make them right.



## Further Reading

For further information on reinforcement and Erikson's psychosocial stages of development applicable to early childhood and the other stages, you may access these resources from Goodtherapy.org and Verywellmind.com linked below:

[Erikson's Eight Stages of Development](#)

[Trust vs. Mistrust: Psychosocial Stage 1](#)

[Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt in Psychosocial Stage 2](#)

[Understanding Initiative vs. Guilt](#)

[Positive and Negative Reinforcement in Operant Conditioning](#)

## **2.3 Provide Opportunities for One-to-One and Large and Small Group Interactions**



Research studies emphasise the importance of play-based learning on children's social and academic achievement. Through play, children can develop working with peers and self-regulation, to name a few, as they interact with each other. As an educator, you can plan these learning opportunities in different teaching settings.

### **One-to-One Interaction**

One-to-one interaction will allow you to discover children's unique personalities and preferences. It creates a special bond between you and the child. Spending time with a child and asking what they did over the weekend can be one way to do one-to-one interaction with an adult. As you engage the child in conversations, you can observe and assess their language development and communication skills. This social interaction creates a deeper relationship, especially when children feel attended to and given enough attention.

When planning one-to-one activities between children, remember the stages of play and how it applies to each individual. Despite your goals, you must remain respectful of children's boundaries and readiness in engaging in one-to-one interactions. Instead of assigning children to do the task right away, you can ask for volunteers so others can observe in the meantime. You can also demonstrate the activity by partnering with one child who is willing to participate and show other children that the activity is exciting and fun!

### **Small Group Interaction**

Another way to encourage children to engage in social interactions is through small group teaching. This setting provides more connection with the adult and allows more intentional teaching and sustained conversations. A small group teaching setting involves an adult and three to four children in one area. For example, three to four children will have to do an art activity together on one large sheet of paper. They can use crayons, markers, and other writing tools to draw and make marks on the paper. To allow children to explore and interact freely, you can instruct them to 'draw or write anything they want,' and observe how children respond. Teaching settings like this can be an opportunity to allow children to resolve social issues such as sharing materials and spaces, taking turns, and working together to achieve a common goal.

This setting can also allow children to get to know each other, work towards a goal with fewer distractions, and encourage more participation without competing for the educator's time. On the other hand, educators can have more opportunities to assess each child and observe their responses. You can also use this setting to encourage conversations and build on what the children are saying. It can be a great way to model social rules, such as listening, waiting for the other person to finish talking, or answering and asking questions related to the common topic.

In this setting, you can group children based on your goals or their level of skills. This way of grouping children is not to rank their progress and development but to plan appropriate activities to match their current skills and experiences.

### **Large Group Interaction**

Group activities provide a common experience among children. No matter the level of their current skills or milestone, group activities will give them a shared learning experience that can be a baseline for further exploration and discovery.

Some activities that can be done in a large-group setting are singing songs and rhymes, active outdoor play, and reading stories. The educator can focus on print concepts, letter sounds, and phonological awareness during the activity, which can also be done through songs and rhymes or storytime. Group discussions out of storybooks allow children to practise self-expression, develop listening skills, and develop self-reflection and high-order problem-solving skills. Sharing ideas fosters self-esteem and their ability to express themselves and promotes participation. There are adventure and action songs that can be played during outdoor play to encourage active participation. These activities can also develop children's spatial awareness and their ability to communicate to others through their body movements and non-verbal cues. Large-group interaction can practise how children relate themselves to a bigger group.

Remember that group activities do not mean there should be more time for the educator to talk and lecture about the rules. Large-group interactions between children and adults should be driven by children's interests and current skills and motivated by their shared experiences. It must remain a play-based approach and should address the goals for each child through a holistic approach.

Another setting that can be encouraged in early learning centres is the *mixed-age groups*. Children of all ages can gather in one place and do an activity together. For example, the centre conducts *Music Monday* every week and assigns one class to lead the activity. Every Monday, each class will perform a song using recycled materials or by playing musical instruments. The other classes are also given their own set of materials appropriate to the children's age group to participate in the activity. Everyone will be encouraged to participate in ways that they like. It may be through dancing, singing, or playing musical instruments.



## Further Reading

You can refer to the readings below to know more about teaching settings and the advantages of the different classroom interactions:

### [Small Group Experiences](#)

[Learning in a Larger Group: Teaching Strategies to Support Engagement](#)

[When Fewer Is More: Small Groups in Early Childhood Classrooms](#)

[Play-based early childhood classrooms and the effect on pre-kindergarten social and academic achievement](#)

## 2.4 Model Care, Empathy and Respect for Children, Educators and Families

Empathy is the ability to ‘put oneself in another’s shoes.’ It entails an understanding of another person’s thoughts and feelings without necessarily directly experiencing them. For example, a child suddenly sought comfort and became sad upon seeing a friend who cried as they say goodbye to their parents. Even if the situation is not experienced firsthand, the child became sorry for a friend and, in a way, felt what they were feeling at the moment.

Respect is accepting somebody for who they are regardless of differences, physical or otherwise, and to care is to consider somebody else’s welfare, feelings, or emotions other than your own. For example, a child with extensive needs is still learning how to eat using a spoon with close supervision while the rest of the class can already attend to their needs. Respect can be shown by acknowledging that each child is different as some have special needs that have to be attended to. To care for them is to consider that their needs also matter, even if they need more help and are not the same as everyone else in your class.

A child’s sense of morality develops over time. All children experience difficulties related to social skills and can identify with difficulties in relating to others. Part of their social development involves self-reflection and investigating relevant ethical issues. Children develop unselfishness and the capacity to think about and consider others as they grow. Asking them to think about these issues helps them gain these valuable social skills.



The EYLF states in Learning Outcome 1.4 that children must learn to interact with others with care, empathy and respect. This is demonstrated by children when they:

- display that they are interested in others and belonging to a group
- engage in play and contribute to shared play experiences
- express various feelings, ideas and opinions constructively
- empathise with and express concern for others
- display that they are aware of and that they respect others' perspectives
- consider the consequences of their actions on others and reflect on their actions.

Educators promote this learning by:

- initiating one-to-one interactions with children, particularly babies and toddlers, during daily routines
- promoting small group interactions and play experiences through the organisation of learning environments
- modelling care, empathy and respect for children, staff and families
- modelling explicit communication techniques to assist children in initiating interactions and participating in play and social activities in ways that foster positive interactions with other children
- acknowledging children's complex relationships and sensitively intervene in ways that promote consideration of alternative perspectives and social inclusion.

*Sourced from [The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#), used under CC BY 4.0. © Commonwealth of Australia.*

This subchapter will focus on how you can promote this learning: *modelling care, empathy, and respect for children, educators, and families.*

One of the ways of learning that is also an effective way to teach children is through modelling. It occurs when an educator like you demonstrates the skills that you want children to acquire with the expectation that they will learn by observing them. For example, you like watching basketball on TV but have no experience playing the sport. Yet, when someone brings you to a basketball court and hands you a ball, you will probably attempt to shoot the ball to the ring. That is because you gained knowledge by watching basketball on TV, and you copied what you saw from professional players.

These ways of learning also apply to children. The children under your care are more likely to imitate you as the adult figure in class and their parents at home.

Albert Bandura's social learning theory shows how children can adapt and imitate what they see. Although focused on aggression, his theory can also mean that if educators show compassion, care, empathy and respect, children can also adapt and imitate those behaviours. It also gives a hint as to why educators like you should model these values. When children observe what you do and see that you respond in consideration to other's needs, feelings, and welfare, they are more likely to do the same with their peers and the people around them. Take a look at the following examples of modelling care, empathy, and respect.

### For Children

Some students take time adjusting and get upset when they know their parents have to leave. Saying goodbye to parents is something you want to prepare for because you expect a tantrum once the parents leave. Some children will spend time crying to express their frustration, but there are times that parents cannot stay longer to wait for their children to adjust and be 'okay' about them leaving. Your role as a teacher starts once the child is brought under your care.

There are many strategies and techniques to address this situation, and it is not a 'one size fits all' kind of solution. Check the scenario below as an example.

*A boy in your class threw a tantrum after seeing his mum leave the centre for work. You see that the child shows behaviours that will harm him. The first thing that you need to do is to address the situation to ensure his safety. You can hold the child to comfort him; ask him or prompt him to sit down if he does not want to be held. By doing this, you show that you care for their safety and ready to respond to it right away.*

*The second is to acknowledge what the child is feeling. Try to understand where the feeling is coming from. You can acknowledge his feelings by saying, 'I can see that you are really upset that mum needs to leave right away.' Or ask something like, 'Are you upset that mum needs to leave and that she could not stay longer?' Children feel seen when they know that their feelings are validated and most likely will be ready to listen to you when they feel that you listen to them, too. Through this, you model empathy and respect for their feelings.*

*Lastly, allow the child to take his time and gather himself as he recovers from being separated from his parent. Wait for him to be ready to join class activities and continuously provide support as he soothes himself. Another thing that you can do is to help the child express his feelings in more appropriate ways without disregarding his emotions. You can help the child write a letter, or if he cannot write yet, you can ask him what he wants to say and write the words down for him. It does not have to be grammatically correct, nor it should be a perfect sentence. Helping the child express his emotions appropriately while showing respect to what he is feeling is your goal.*

There are times that other children in class will ask what is going on or why the other child is crying. One way to handle the situation is to try to explain in words that they can understand. You can say something like, 'He is not yet ready to say goodbye to his Mum, but his Mum needs to leave. That is why he is so upset.' You can also ask them how they can help their classmate by saying, 'How do you think you can help him feel better?' You will be surprised with how children will respond, but remember that consent is also vital in modelling respect.



Teach children how to ask permission, especially if they want to offer something that involves physical touch like a hug, tap on the back, or kiss. If the crying child refuses, you must explain to the child offering a hug that their friend is not ready for it. You can show them that there are other ways to care for someone, such as staying beside them until they feel better, and it includes showing respect for things they are not yet ready to do.

## For Educators

How you treat other educators and your relationship with your co-educator, especially inside the classroom, will communicate respect, care, and empathy to children. One of the things you may consider to show these values to children genuinely is to have a harmonious working relationship with your partner or co-educator.

Here are some strategies you may consider:

- Prepare and plan together
  - Communicate with your partner about your observations of each child and their interest as you plan your activities.
- Assign roles and set expectations
  - Delegate tasks and ensure that your roles are clear when one of you is facilitating.  
You may consider the following co-teaching models:
    - *Teach & Assist*
      - One educator leads the class while the other one acts as support that discreetly assists children who may need help or observes and takes notes of children's responses.

- *Small Group Teaching*

Divide students into groups and each educator takes a group to facilitate the same activity, in consideration of children who require close supervision.

- *Team Teaching*

Both educators work hand-in-hand to facilitate one activity to a big group.

- Enjoy and allow your co-teaching relationship to grow in time.

When you work harmoniously with your partner, children will naturally see how you show respect to each other, just like how children will feel if you genuinely show empathy, care, and respect to them. You can model this to educators through your teaching strategies. For example, this can be observed when you acknowledge and respect the facilitating educator by modelling listening, paying attention, and participating in the activity. You can also show children empathy and care for educators by communicating what they are feeling and showing them that you care for your partner's wellbeing and will participate in helping and finding solutions. For example, you may say, 'Miss Anna's throat is a bit painful today. She forgot to drink plenty of water after eating sweets. We need to be extra quiet when she speaks so we can hear what she has to say.'

### For Families



Most families will clearly communicate their preferences, fears, and expectations, especially when their child is at the centre and not with them. One of the specific instances that this can be observed is the families' food preferences and restrictions. May it be because of medical reasons, religion, or beliefs,

your role as an educator is to communicate it to children and show them that you respect their families' choices by enforcing them strictly.

Take a look at the example below.

*A group of children in your class spends time pretending to cook during free playtime. You figured eventually that these are from their observations and experiences they had at home. To explore this further, you thought of making pancakes in class. Children took turns, and with close adult supervision, cooked their very own pancakes. You asked the children to bring their favourite toppings to add to their pancakes.*

*While eating together, you saw that a boy brought chocolates, which not everyone can eat. One girl who is not allowed to eat chocolates asked if she could taste some. Although you encourage children to share, you must remember that food restrictions and preferences of families must be strictly implemented because this affects their physical health and wellbeing. It is also your way of modelling children that their families have different choices, which is okay, and you will respect them. You may explain that some of them are allowed, and some are not, but they can still enjoy their snacks and pancakes with the toppings they brought.*

*The girl who asks for chocolates might be upset when you tell her, 'I am sorry, but you are not allowed to eat chocolates.' You can try offering something else that you are sure she is allowed to eat and remind her that her mum or dad does not let her eat chocolates, but she can have pancakes instead.*

If children understand the concepts of allergies or other medical conditions related to food restrictions, you may also take the time to share the information with them as necessary. Remember to keep the communication positive and avoid imposing fear and threat when talking about food.

Showing respect, care, and empathy to children, educators, and families does not have to be limited to the things they are allowed or not allowed to do. Instead, it can be modelled and shown to children by acknowledging and valuing differences in culture, practices, preferences, and tradition.



## Further Reading

For further information on Albert Bandura's social learning theory, you can check the link below.

[What the Bobo Doll Experiment Reveals About Kids and Aggression](#)

[How Social Learning Theory Works](#)

## **2.5 Support Children When They are Having Difficulty Understanding or Communicating With Each Other**

Once children understand the dynamics of communication and how powerful their words are, they will probably use them to express their thoughts and feelings, exchange ideas and questions, or assert their wants and needs. However, children still have limited vocabulary, and there are times that the words they say do not exactly translate what they mean. These limitations may often result in frustrations or miscommunication.

You have learnt in the previous subchapter that one of the ways to teach children is through modelling. You can teach communication effectively by acknowledging children's feelings, showing respect to their emotions, and applying the social rules of language. As an educator, you must show and model that you listen to them, take turns when talking, or wait for the other person to finish talking before taking your turn to express your thoughts. When children see that you respect and show a deep understanding of their verbal and non-verbal language, interaction styles, and ways of communicating, they are more likely to be more observant to other children their age and do the same.

As children practise communicating, frustrations and miscommunications cannot be avoided. There are times when they cannot express their thoughts and ideas properly because of the limited vocabulary and experiences.



Here are some examples of situations and what you can do as an educator to support children in communicating their thoughts, feelings, and ideas.

*When you observe a child getting frustrated in finding the right words to express themselves, try giving suggestions or guessing what they want to say based on the context of their stories. You can provide some of the words that might be a good fit to help them express their thoughts but avoid talking on behalf of the child. You can still encourage them to express themselves by assisting h in finding the right words to say.*

*You noticed that a child is not in a good mood that day and is not ready to join the group activity when invited by one of their classmates. They resorted to shouting and screaming, 'No!' repeatedly. You can help the child communicate that they are not ready to join yet by providing the words they can use to express their feelings. This time, the child is already frustrated and letting them think of the rest of the words may not be helpful. Instead, you can ask the child to say, 'I am not yet ready to join. Maybe later,' or just say 'Not yet,' whichever fits their verbal expression ability, instead of shouting and screaming. You are now teaching the child to express their feelings more appropriately, even when they are not in a good mood.*

*On the other hand, you can explain to the other child who initiated the invitation for play that they are not yet ready to join. You can say, 'Thank you for inviting them, but I do not think they are ready to join right now. Maybe we can wait until they feel okay.' This way, you reassured the other child that it is not their fault. They can still play together at a later time when both of them are ready.*

*Some non-verbal expressions that you can observe on children are sharing and handing out toys, taking turns in using materials, comforting a crying child by tapping on the back or giving tissue to wipe tears, getting an ice pack for someone who got hurt, singing and dancing, and more.*

Outcome 5 of The Early Years Learning Framework talks about how children are effective communicators. It is crucial to developing their sense of *being*, their feeling of *belonging*, and how they will achieve *becoming*. The EYLF also states that children's way of communicating is not limited to verbal communication. It only shows that although children may have a limited vocabulary in expressing themselves verbally, they have other ways to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and ideas. As an educator, you must be observant of situations where children use non-verbal communication. You must show them your awareness, understanding, and readiness to support them in communicating themselves. Children may express themselves and connect with others through music, drama, movements and dance, tools and media, gestures, and other non-verbal cues.

## **2.6 Model Language That Children Can Use to Express Ideas, Negotiate Roles and Collaborate to Achieve Goals**

As children learn about the world and gain more experience interacting with children of different ages, adults, and people they encounter, conversations start to be more complex. Their expressions, ideas, and thoughts are not anymore limited to their needs and wants. Outcome 2 of the EYLF describes how children are connected with and contribute to their world. In this phase, children are now aware of how their actions affect others and their participation and ideas matter.

In the previous subchapter, you have learnt how you can provide support when children have difficulty expressing themselves. You have also previously learnt how modelling is an effective teaching tool for children. This subchapter will focus on how you can model language in helping children connect to a bigger world that requires more complex language and social skills.

Children are more likely to express their ideas confidently when they have built trust in their environment, as discussed in Subchapter 2.2 – Erikson’s psychosocial development theory. Children will be more confident when they understand that they can share their ideas with the world without judgement. Their misconceptions can be proven or tested out, and they can eventually come up with better ideas to correct them.

As children develop an understanding of their social worlds, they start to make connections with others. This can be seen as they learn to share, negotiate ideas, resolve conflict, and take turns. Through play, children develop more advanced language skills as they learn about each other’s differences. They see opportunities to share ideas that may differ from one another, execute them, and negotiate to decide which work best for their play. After the exploration of these ideas comes working together to achieve a common goal. Children learn to collaborate, agree on the direction of their play, make choices together, and resolve conflict.



There are times that conflict will be caused by the limitations of their vocabulary or their manner of expressing themselves. As an educator, you can support and help children connect better by modelling how to communicate their ideas, negotiate and collaborate. Remember that children are watching you every day and will adapt how you respond to unplanned situations. You must be mindful of this and make every moment a teaching opportunity. Review the examples below on how you can model language for these situations.

In expressing ideas, be mindful of modelling social rules and remember that teaching through modelling happens in unplanned and spontaneous situations. Social rules of language include maintaining eye contact during a conversation, looking toward the speaker, using pauses and verbal prompts, such as ‘please’ and ‘thank you,’ taking turns in conversations and regulating the volume of voice as necessary (e.g. softer voice during quiet time and loud voice in the outdoor play area). You can review the following examples and use them in your daily conversations with children.

- ‘Can I say something?’ Then wait for the child to finish talking before you talk.
- ‘I want to show you this new book. Do you want to check it out?’
- ‘I have an idea!’
- ‘I think (share your idea about a book, for example). What do you think?’

You can model language for negotiating roles and ideas as you do it with children. When you negotiate with them, you allow children to observe your language and adapt how they can convince another person to consider their idea and proposition, which often happens during play. For example, you want to start implementing ‘classroom jobs’ to encourage children to take responsibility in classroom roles. One child consistently chooses to be the ‘class gardener’ whose role is to water the plants in class. Some children want to try the job, but one child always chooses it first. Although there is technically nothing wrong with it because the child probably arrives first and always gets to choose a classroom job first, you may negotiate with the child to give others a chance. You may say, ‘Is it okay if your friends get to water the plants today so they can try what you do?’ or something like ‘How about you try being the bookkeeper [another interesting task] today?’ or say, ‘Let us go find new books in the library?’ You may also use the words ‘please’ and ‘thank you.’

As you model this skill through your conversations with them, you can teach children to apply them in negotiating roles with their peers. Below are some of the words and phrases that you can use.

- ‘How about we do (this) instead of (this)?’ Try to explain the consequences of both options and why the other one will be better for the child.
- ‘How about you can be (role) and then later, you can switch and exchange so you can both try what it feels like to be (role)?’ Explain to children that they can have their own time and a chance to experience the same preferred role.
- ‘Do you want to try something else today? Your friends want to try that too because it looks fun! Can we give them a chance today?’ Try to explain that taking turns does not mean they will not be able to do it again. Introduce sharing and taking turns by making it a fun experience for children.
- ‘How about setting a time for each turn? Do you want to count or set the alarm?’ Another way to practise taking turns is by showing children that they can have their turn again very soon. For example, you may use tools with visual representations, like a clock and say, ‘if this turns to 10, that means time is up, and you need to exchange.’ You may also ask children to count up to 20 or 30, depending on their skills, and figure out taking turns on their own once they reach the last count. Another thing would be explaining how alarm clocks work. Show them that you set the time to two minutes, for example, and when they hear the alarm rings, it means it is time to exchange.

Children can also observe how you model language for collaboration when you facilitate activities in class or interact with them. As an educator, you must establish a genuine relationship with children in positive and fun interactions made through play. One way to effectively model language for collaboration is to set up activities intentionally with these targets in mind and interact with them through these activities.

Here are some examples of the language you can use to model and encourage collaboration.

- ‘Let us do it together!’
- ‘I think I need some help here. Can you help me (specify a task based on children’s skills and abilities)?’

- ‘I want to make the tallest building block ever! How do you think can we do that?’
- While reading a storybook about an adventure, you can ask everyone what they want to bring on a trip. Getting children’s insights and listening to each one of them is also a way of showing that you value and consider their ideas which play an important part in teaching collaboration.

You can support this learning by planning activities and experiences to promote cooperation, communication, and problem-solving. As opposed to competitive play, cooperative play encourages children to work together towards a common goal. In addition, cooperative play significantly affects self-esteem and promotes teamwork which can be achieved through communication. You can do this by:

modelling effective communication in your own behaviour and social interactions

maintaining appropriate rules but allowing choices where possible

verbalising the benefits of the collaboration

offering solutions but allowing children to solve their own problems through communication (where appropriate)

verbalising your reasoning in solving a problem so it can be understood by children

allowing sufficient time for children to communicate and create solutions

The activities and experiences you execute through play can promote the development of learning skills. Activities that encourage children to work together to achieve an outcome (such as drama and role play) and do not define children as ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ allow them to explore the positive feelings of working together. These activities also give them vital experience in managing frustration, communication, and problem-solving.



### Further Reading

You can visit the link below to learn more about conflict and how to help children resolve them.

[How children can learn to resolve conflict](#)

## **2.7 Use Communication and Modelling That Encourages Children to Respect and Value Each Other's Individual Differences**

In your role as an educator, you must ensure that your practices promote a culturally safe and unbiased environment by demonstrating actions that recognise and respect the cultural identities and differences of each individual. You must model practices that encourage and meet the needs, expectations, and rights of other people. Remember that children watch you and imitate your energy and responses in almost everything they see or hear from you, including your attitude towards cultural and individual differences.



You can work inclusively by:

- reflecting on your own culture, attitudes, and beliefs about others
- communicating in a manner that is clear, value-free, open, and respectful
- developing trust
- recognising stereotypical barriers and avoiding them
- engaging in two-way dialogues where knowledge is shared
- understanding the influence of culture shock and how to adapt to it.

Here are some considerations that may serve as your guide in communicating with children to encourage them to respect and value each other's differences. You may also refer to the examples of how you can model them to children.

Consideration	Explanation
Active listening	<p>Active listening is a positive way of engaging and listening to the speaker. It may involve clarifications or asking questions to verify whether you were able to understand the message correctly.</p> <p>For example, a child was trying to explain to you why she was late for school on that day. You may ask, 'Do you mean you forgot your favourite doll at home and you went back for it? Is that why you got late today?'</p> <p>Active listening encourages children to respect and value each other's differences by learning to communicate and deal with their different speaking styles. Some of them may share with a few words, and some may take a longer time to finish a story, but both aim to connect to the other person. By showing children that you listen actively to each of them, you encourage them to value and pay attention to each other as they communicate.</p>
Non-verbal communication	<p>Communication is not always verbal. Some children, especially those still adjusting to the new classroom environment, new classmates, or teachers, may not always communicate with words and resort to gestures. You may also encounter children who communicate through sign language. It is an opportunity for you, as an educator, to learn about it and model inclusion.</p> <p><i>(continued on the next page)</i></p>

Considerations	Explanation
Non-verbal communication	<p>(continued from the previous page)</p> <p>Using non-verbal communication such as gestures and sign language will encourage children to adapt to different communication styles, which may not always include verbal expression. It will establish respect and value for each other's differences as they break the barriers to communicate with each other. When children see that you make an effort to reach out to everyone and make everyone feel valued, they are more likely to imitate what you are doing.</p> <p>Other than sign language, other non-verbal gestures you can show are hugging, high-five, fist bumps, a tap on the shoulder, and handing out toys or food. Remember to show children how to seek consent when it comes to gestures that involve physical touch to model respect to children's personal space.</p>
Common words and terminologies	<p>Phrases or expressions based on culture rather than the sums of each word or meaning are <i>idioms</i>. For example, using the term, 'I have got the <i>munchies</i>' instead of saying 'I feel hungry' may cause some confusion for migrants unless you intend to share some idioms and jargon in your culture and ask them to do the same.</p> <p>Remember to keep the classroom environment inclusive to all types of learners, considering the limitations and scope of their vocabulary. You can share and learn from each other but make sure that each child follows what you are talking about and understands the conversation, so no one is left out. Avoid using words that are difficult to understand or only selected children can relate to.</p> <p>When children see that you are sensitive with the words you use in consideration of each other's cultural differences, they are more likely to follow what you are doing. For example, you may always clarify, 'Does everyone know what this word means?' You may ask for input from children and keep the conversation positive and educational.</p>



## Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Children in their early years develop their social ability through interaction with their carer and other children.
2. As an early childhood educator, you must be aware of the social developmental progress of the children in your care so that you can give the appropriate support that they need to develop further.
3. Children in their early years must be encouraged to respect individual differences.



## Learning Activity for Chapter 2

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the classroom learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

### III. Support Emotional Development

*'By acknowledging each child's cultural and social identity, and responding sensitively to their emotional states, educators build children's confidence, sense of wellbeing and willingness to engage in learning.'*

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Children's abilities to recognise, understand and manage their emotions are influenced by how the adults who care for them acknowledge and respond to their feelings. As an early childhood educator, you can foster emotional development by teaching children appropriate ways to express their emotions. These ways include teaching them to observe the reactions of others to understand their feelings, regulate their own emotions, develop an awareness of what influences their behaviour, develop empathy for others, and establish positive relationships with friends, family, and the community.

Emotional development is the ability to:

- express feelings and control emotions
- form relationships and develop feelings towards other people

- become an independent person
- develop self-esteem, positive self-concept, self-reliance, and independence.

Emotional development can be observed many times throughout the day in class (e.g. playtime, interacting with peers, responding to stories, etc.). However, arrival and departure times are also significant times to observe children's responses when they separate from their parents or peers. It will help you understand children's emotional adjustment, how they feel, their relationships with others, and their strategies to deal with their emotions.

Observable milestones in emotional development in early childhood include the following:

Age Group	Milestones in Emotional Development
Birth to 4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ bonding</li> <li>▪ cries (peaks about six to eight weeks) and levels off about 12–14 weeks</li> <li>▪ cries when hungry or uncomfortable and usually stops when held</li> <li>▪ shows excitement as a parent prepares to feed</li> </ul>
4 to 8 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ becoming more settled in eating and sleeping patterns</li> <li>▪ laughs, especially in social interactions</li> <li>▪ may soothe self when tired or upset by sucking thumb or dummy</li> <li>▪ begins to show wariness of strangers</li> <li>▪ may fret when parents leave the room</li> <li>▪ happy to see faces they know</li> </ul>
8 to 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ actively seeks to be next to a parent or principal caregiver</li> <li>▪ shows signs of anxiety or stress if a parent goes away</li> <li>▪ offers a toy to adult but does not release it</li> <li>▪ shows signs of empathy to the distress of another (but often soothes self)</li> <li>▪ actively explores and plays when parent present, returning now and then for assurance and interaction</li> </ul>

Age Group	Milestones in Emotional Development
1 to 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ may show anxiety when separating from significant people in their lives</li> <li>▪ seeks comfort when upset or afraid</li> <li>▪ takes a cue from a parent or principal carer regarding attitude to a stranger</li> <li>▪ may ‘lose control’ of self when tired or frustrated</li> <li>▪ assists another in distress by patting, making sympathetic noises or offering material objects</li> </ul>
2 to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ shows strong attachment to a parent (or main family carer)</li> <li>▪ shows distress and protest when they leave and wants that person to do things for them</li> <li>▪ begins to show guilt or remorse for misdeeds</li> <li>▪ may be less likely to willingly share toys with peers</li> <li>▪ demands adult attention</li> </ul>
3 to 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ understands when someone is hurt and comforts them</li> <li>▪ attains gender stability (sure she/he is a girl/boy)</li> <li>▪ may show a stronger preference for same-sex playmates</li> <li>▪ may enforce gender-role norms with peers</li> <li>▪ may show bouts of aggression with peers</li> <li>▪ likes to give and receive affection from parents</li> <li>▪ may praise themselves and be boastful</li> </ul>

Sourced from [Developmental Milestones and the EYLF and NQS](#),  
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As with all types of child development, your observations, monitoring, and assessments of how the children in your care develop emotionally are vital tools for improving their learning outcomes.

Emotional development is challenging for children (and for families and educators), as learning to self-regulate and manage emotional responses is a process. Realising that their emotional responses affect other people is part of children's developing awareness and ability to regulate their behaviour. The support, assistance, and modelling you provide in this area are crucial resources for children's emotional health and wellbeing. When children experience trauma or stress, their brains may suffer long-term negative consequences. On the other hand, brain growth is stimulated by activities such as talking, reading, and playing. Parents, caregivers, and early childhood care providers should make sure that they have the skills and resources needed to provide safe, stable, nurturing, and stimulating care.

Each education and care service is likely to have a set of policies and procedures for assessing and monitoring child emotional development. Besides these formal processes, your informal observations are significant resources to alert you to particular challenges children may have and support changes in the curriculum to educate children in emotional understanding.

When assessing and monitoring children's emotional development, it is important to understand areas of emotional development, such as:

attachment	This is the emotional bond between the child and their carer.
moral reasoning	This refers to the process by which a child decides what is right or wrong according to logic (i.e. patterns they have observed in the past).
temperament	This is the biologically determined basis of a child's personality and may include energy level and emotional responsiveness.
resilience	This is the child's ability to cope with sudden times of intense difficulty or trouble.
emotional expression	This refers to manner by which a child expresses their emotion, either through non-verbal or verbal means.



## Further Reading

The resource below provides a more detailed exploration of children's emotional development.

[Teaching your child resilience](#)

### **3.1 Provide Children With Strategies to Make Informed Choices About Their Behaviours Appropriate to Their Level of Understanding**

The previous chapter has repeatedly emphasised how modelling can be a very effective teaching tool that helps children adapt and imitate positive and negative behaviours. As an educator, it is your role to ensure that the values that children imitate from you will promote positive learning and development. As children develop dispositions and skills in social situations discussed in the previous chapter, they will also realise how these situations affect them and their feelings. Their realisations can eventually lead them to analyse the cause of their feelings, their responses, their decisions and the reason behind it, and the outcome of their choices.

As an adult, your ability to make informed choices is based on your previous knowledge and experience. It is more likely that you will be confident in the decision you will make if you somehow anticipate its outcome. The same goes for the children under your care. For children to be confident in making informed choices, they must have age-appropriate experiences as a basis. The concept of a *trial-and-error* and *cause-and-effect* can be simplified so children can understand what they mean. Remember that your goal is not for children to remember the technical terms but to understand the possible results of their choices done in different ways (*trial-and-error*) and think about their choices and the output of those choices (*cause-and-effect*).



Outcome 3 of the Early Years Learning Framework emphasises children's strong sense of wellbeing, including becoming strong in their social and emotional wellbeing.

According to the EYLF, educators can promote this learning by:

- showing genuine affection, understanding and respect for all children
- ensuring that all children experience pride in their attempts and achievements
- building upon and extend children's ideas
- maintaining high expectations of each child's capabilities
- valuing children's decision-making
- talking with children about their emotions and responses to events to support their understanding of emotional regulation and self-control.

*Sourced from [The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#), used under CC BY 4.0. © Commonwealth of Australia.*

Before allowing children to make choices independently, you must ensure that you have established a nurturing relationship between them. Children must be confident and trust that their environment withholds judgement and allows mistakes, like what you have learnt in Subchapter 2.6.

In providing children opportunities to practise their decision-making skills, you must consider their abilities, recent experiences, and level of understanding. Assigning tasks that are way beyond their capabilities may only cause frustrations. Instead of building successes and developing confidence in making decisions, the child may only see it as an opportunity for failure. Remember to give your full support, especially when they encounter new and more advanced tasks.

Here are some of the strategies you can provide to children to help them make informed choices appropriate to their level of understanding.

Break down a big task into smaller familiar tasks to achieve a goal

Communicate what they like and what they do not like

Reflect on a misdeed

- **Break down a big task into smaller familiar tasks to achieve a goal**

Preparing for snack time may involve smaller steps that you may help children remember by establishing a routine:

1. wash your hands
2. get your bag and placemat
3. bring out your food
4. enjoy eating.

When children are conditioned and practised breaking down tasks into smaller, familiar steps, they are more likely to control their behaviours and find solutions in overwhelming situations. It may also be established when they get hurt by their friend or face something they do not like. You may tell them to say ‘No!’ or ‘Stop!’ look for an adult, and describe what happened, instead of hurting them back.

- **Communicate what they like and what they do not like**

At first, it is expected that young toddlers will resort to crying to express frustration or disagreement. As they grow up and gain more social experience, you can teach them to effectively communicate their likes and dislikes, like the example in the first item, and how they should respond to someone who expresses them.

Provide children with words to use to express disagreement politely, e.g. ‘no, thank you,’ ‘I am not ready,’ ‘maybe later,’ ‘I am still using the toy,’ ‘no,’ ‘stop’ ‘you are hurting me,’ ‘I do not like it.’

Provide responses and options when children encounter this response from other children, such as:

- stopping what they are doing and asking someone else who agrees with the kind of play they like
- saying, ‘okay, I will try again later,’
- trying to offer other options, such as ‘can we exchange toys or take turns after 20 counts?’

- **Reflect on a misdeed**

Another thing that may be challenging for children to face is dealing with misdeeds that bring shame and embarrassment. Reassure children that they can always seek the presence of an adult even if they feel that they were wrong. Establishing that you are a safe place, as the adult in class, will help children feel that they will not be pushed away when they did something wrong. It will help them acknowledge their misdeed and see a chance of doing better next time.

Provide children with actions such as telling an adult what happened and what they think they did wrong. Help children understand what they did wrong and teach them the right words they can use to describe and confess what they think they did wrong and how it affected another child. Listen to what they say without judgement, ask questions to clarify, and do not shame the child. Process the situation and help them understand why it was a mistake. Come up with a solution together.

Train children to acquire a mindset that acknowledges mistakes, reflects on them and identifies solutions to solve the situation.

Help children connect their previous experiences to new knowledge, learn from them, and eventually make informed decisions appropriate to their behaviours and level of understanding.



## Further Reading

These resources provide a more detailed exploration of helping children develop their decision-making skills.

[5 Ways to Improve Young Children's Decision-Making](#)

[Giving Children Choices](#)

### **3.2 Assist and Encourage Children to Experience Pride and Confidence in Their Achievements**

One of the most important ways to foster healthy self-esteem is to allow children to experience pride and confidence in the little or big things they accomplish. Any opportunity to feel competent and recognise the pleasure of achieving a goal adds to a child's self-esteem and emotional wellbeing.

Pride is the awareness of one's capability and being especially proud of a particular quality or skill. Confidence is the state of assurance and certainty of one's skills and abilities and that the chosen path or action is the most effective in the given circumstance.

By creating opportunities for children to experience success, develop their strengths, and incorporate them into the daily routine, you can help build on their sense of pride and confidence. You can do this by offering challenging activities based on the child's developmental stage achieved with effort and practice. Please take note of the developmental milestones appropriate to their age as you plan your activities. Observe, assess, and monitor each child's development individually based on how they responded.

Children develop confidence through mastering new skills and by exploring their interests. They must be allowed to engage independently with tasks without having someone 'jump in' and fix everything for them.

By allowing children to solve problems by exploring various options, you will help them identify what they feel and encourage their developing independence. There is a fine line between offering help and interfering in learning, and promoting independence and withholding help. As an educator, you must be quick in determining these matters on an individual, moment-by-moment basis.



Offering suggestions appropriate to the child's level without physically performing a task for the child is a valuable way to encourage children to engage independently. Additionally, offering children choices also supports the development of independence, as it helps children self-identify their needs and wants while demonstrating that their intentions are valid and respected. Independence also supports the development of self-regulatory skills, so encouraging children to try new things, solve problems, and explore have wide-ranging benefits for their overall learning outcomes.

As children engage in the activities that you prepared to address your goals, remember to focus on the process and the observable behaviours they display. Your attention should not just focus on the output and whether they achieve the goal or not but also on building their determination to approach challenging tasks. As you encourage children to participate and believe in their capabilities, you teach them to appreciate the progress they achieve through practice and repetition, no matter how small. There are times that even if progress is not yet evident, the act of participation itself is an achievement already. Showing your appreciation for their effort and determination will encourage them to keep practising until the goal is achieved.

Recognising success with positive encouragement is important. Offering verbal encouragement and recognising a child's strengths and capabilities support their self-esteem and help children identify their achievements. Gestures of encouragement, such as hugs, a high five, or the 'thumbs up', can also reinforce this recognition while also creating a positive bond. Your relationship with children is a key factor in building their self-esteem.

When children develop positive self-esteem, they feel more confident to try new things, which opens to more opportunities for learning. According to My Time, Our Place Framework for School Age Care in Australia, self-esteem is a critical influence in children creating positive images about their abilities, interests, and personality. Children are more likely to achieve a sense of themselves and their part in a bigger group, like the community, once they learn to build a feeling of success within themselves through the positive support you give to them.

By offering children activities that stimulate their curiosity and creativity, you can provide them with early experiences of mastery and the love of learning that will benefit their learning outcomes in all areas. By grounding these activities within an overall supportive environment, children learn that their achievements are valued and appreciated.



## Further Reading

To further build children's self-esteem through success, you may access the resource from the Child Care Information Exchange linked below.

[Self-Esteem and Confidence Grow from Early Success](#)

### **3.3 Provide Acknowledgement and Support If a Child Experiences Frustration and Encourage Children to See Mistakes as an Opportunity to Learn**

As mentioned in the previous subchapter, providing opportunities that challenge children allows them to experience success. However, you need to ensure that the experiences you select are:

developmentally appropriate

challenging the children appropriately

allowing children to make appropriate choices

encouraging independence

delivered within a supportive environment

aimed at enhancing the children's strengths

encouraging children to explore a variety of roles

designed to explore issues of self-image and identity in ways that are appropriate to the children's level of development

Considering the items above and preparing the activities based on the children's individuality in your class, you will most likely be ready for the outcomes and anticipate the level of participation. This prediction in your mind may include the children who easily get frustrated, those who may experience failures in the first attempts due to learning a new skill, and those who require special attention due to extensive needs.

However, there are times that no matter how much you prepare, there are little and big surprises that arise along the way, including frustrated and distressed children. Many factors may affect children's behaviour and temperament other than the activity you prepared. Some of these are:

- having a bad dream which caused an unusual feeling of distress in the morning
- going to school after a long vacation with family, which may cause temporary separation issues
- having trouble saying goodbye to some relatives who visited at the centre
- having to build a tall tower out of blocks but keeps on falling due to a poor foundation.

These are all examples of learning opportunities. As an educator, understanding and acknowledging these feelings, no matter the cause, is the first step to handle these situations and avoid escalations as much as possible. Remember not to take this personally so you can address them based on the needs of the children. Acknowledging children's feelings will help them cope with their current situation rather than dismissing them or pretending nothing happened. You may consider the examples below.

- When the child is upset, you may say, 'Are you upset that you forgot your doll at home? You must be very excited to show it to us. Let us write a reminder so you will not forget about it tomorrow' or 'Are you crying because someone else got your favourite toy first? You must like it that much that you are looking forward to playing with it all day in school.' Comfort the child or redirect to another activity, such as reading books, playing with puzzles, or engaging the child in conversations about another topic.
- When children do not agree with a common goal and prefer different ways of doing a task, they might get frustrated. You may say, 'I can see that you want to try different ways of doing it, and you are getting frustrated because you cannot convince each other to do the same. How about try it on your own first and then do it together later?'
- When a child cannot achieve a goal despite being persistent, frustration may get in the way. You may say, 'It can really be frustrating because you are trying so hard to make it work! Let us see what is going on here. Why do you think it is not working?' Try to figure out with the child what went wrong and lead the child to realise what needs to change to make it work.



Allowing children to process their emotions will help them find ways to improve their situations and feelings. It will also teach them to look at mistakes and failures as opportunities to do better next time and use what they have learned from their mistakes.

When children are frustrated, you can provide support by observing and noticing what they did differently to make the situation better or solve their problem. You can also brainstorm with them and ask questions that may lead them towards figuring out the answer on their own. Giving children options is also a way of supporting them to go on and continue what they are doing until they succeed. There are also days when comforting a sad child and just physically staying beside them is all the support you can give, which is okay.

By providing support to children as they deal with frustrations and challenges, you communicate indirectly that their mistakes are not the outcome of what they are doing. These are just learning opportunities that can help them figure out what else needs to be improved. You can encourage children by noticing their progress, praising what they have accomplished so far or what they did right this time compared to the last time. These types of responses will highlight children's efforts to achieve their goals instead of seeing mistakes as discouragement.

### **3.4 Assist Children to Identify Physiological Responses to Situations and Express and Regulate Feelings Appropriately Through Modelling and Guidance**

Physiological response is referred to as a non-voluntary automatic reaction. This reaction can sometimes trigger a physical response to an event or situation.

When you pay attention to children's feelings, you will notice how they express them, including their physical reactions to situations and how they try to make themselves feel better afterwards. Situations like these are opportunities for you to support children's emotional development. Children experience feelings just like adults. They become frustrated, excited, nervous, sad, happy, jealous, frightened, worried, angry, embarrassed, etc.

Children usually do not have the vocabulary to talk about how they feel and are sometimes unaware as well. Instead, their feelings manifest through their behaviours, facial expressions, and even in the way they play.

A child may physiologically respond to situations in the following ways:

#### **Crying**

- Crying is an important communication device for early infants. They will usually cry to indicate that they need something as they have no other means of communicating with their carer.

#### **Tension**

- Tension is described as a feeling of discomfort or uneasiness. It usually accompanies stress and is experienced by children when encountering an unknown threat.

#### **Increased heart rate**

- Like adults, a child's body may respond to particular situations by releasing adrenaline hormones which cause their heart rate to speed up.

#### **Shortness of breath**

- Adrenaline hormones may also cause a child's breathing to speed up which causes shortness of breath.

Several factors influence children's emotional development and psychological responses to situations, including:

- the mother's environment during pregnancy like maternal nutrition, stress, and substance use
- the temperament, genetics, and any health issues or disabilities the child may have
- the physical and cultural environment in which they grow and the presence of risk factors that impact optimal care, such as poverty or violence
- the nature of the care they get from their caregivers and its quality.

By getting to know and understanding children's differences, family background and culture, health information, and personality and disposition, you can prepare for and observe the possible physiological responses of children.

Help children understand how what they are feeling and when they usually feel it. You can do this by labelling the physiological responses or giving names that children can understand and easily associate with situations or emotions they are feeling. For example, you may label 'sweaty hands' for nervous feeling, 'short breaths' after a physically active play or 'fast heartbeat', which you can demonstrate by placing your hand over your chest and allowing children to do the same, or 'crying' which is commonly associated when they are hurt, scared, or upset.

Once children learn to name what they are feeling, you have already provided the vocabulary they need to express them. The next thing you want to do is help children express these emotions when they feel them and eventually regulate them. Regulating emotions means children know how to control or soothe themselves when they feel them. When children can identify what they are feeling and express them appropriately, they can eventually develop healthy coping techniques and make themselves feel better. These can be as simple as taking deep breaths, sitting down to relax, getting tissue to wipe their tears, or redirecting themselves to do relaxing activities, such as reading or drawing.

Through modelling, you may help children connect these words to their experiences and associate them with the correct feelings. For example, you may say, 'We need to take a rest. My heart is beating so fast because of our animal dance!' or say, 'I got sweaty hands because I feel nervous that you may fall when you climb up the window. It is not safe. Please do not do that.' You may also use books to model these responses and open discussion on how to regulate these feelings. Through stories, you can have a platform that children can relate to using the characters in the book. You can use it to identify the responses of the characters by describing the situation and the character's feelings. Ask children for input and invite them to analyse the cause of the feelings and physiological responses. You may also ask, 'What about you? What do you feel in your body when your mum says goodbye? Or when you see that your toy got broken?'

You may lead the discussion to come up with ways to regulate these feelings appropriately. Some options are to seek comfort from trusted adults, sit down for a while to calm down, spend time doing relaxing activities involving breathing exercises, or redirect themselves by looking for other interesting things to do.

### Further Reading



To continue your learning on supporting children's developing independence, read the article from AbilityPath.org on helping infants learn self-regulation and social and emotional development on page 43 of Connections, a resource for early childhood educators to support children's mental health and wellbeing.

[Help Infants Learn Self Regulation Through Relationships](#)

[Connections: A resource for early childhood educators about children's wellbeing](#)

#### 3.4.1 Expressing and Regulating Feelings Appropriately

Expression of feelings allows children to recognise that the current situation and emotions are caused by something within themselves or their environment. Internal causes can relate more to physiological causes, like hunger, lack of sleep, and thirst. At the same time, external causes can be connected to events that happen in their environment.

Children's feelings can sometimes seem overwhelming to them, although they become more capable of regulating their emotions as they develop. You can support this development by encouraging children to identify and express their feelings through relevant experiences.

It is important to emphasise to children that their feelings are valid and acceptable. What may not be acceptable is the expression of these feelings. The ability to self-regulate emotions is dependent on age and a whole host of other factors. Still, there can be clear guidelines to provide children with alternative options for emotional expression.

To express emotions of frustration, anger, or sadness, many children can have tantrums. While very young children have little control over their emotional reactions, you can offer children different ways to express their feelings. Some of these ways can be done through:

- Physical activities (e.g. dancing, running around, or engaging in physical games)
- Messy or sensory activities (e.g. playing with clay, dirt, or sand)
- Arts (e.g. writing, painting, or drawing)
- Drama (e.g. acting through toys or puppets, engaging in pretend play)
- Music (e.g. playing musical instruments, listening to songs, or singing)

Discussing feelings and emotions as part of the curriculum is also imperative to validate children's experiences and provide them with the vocabulary to understand their experiences. Additionally, discussing emotions and recognising that other people share similar feelings create



compassion and empathy, fostering strong emotional bonds. However, some children may not want to discuss their feelings, and this choice should be respected.

Self-regulation is not only about children being able to control themselves. It is developed when a child learns to understand, process, and return to their balanced state. When children realise that their feelings are caused by something, it will help them process their emotions, deal with mistakes, and learn self-regulation. Below is a suggested process with examples of responses that you can do to help children express their feelings appropriately and think of solutions to better themselves.

#### Explore Feelings

- Ask the child about what they are feeling and help them label the emotions.
- E.g. upset, angry, hungry, thirsty, frustrated, missing someone, etc.

#### Express Emotions

- Help the child come up with appropriate ways to express their feelings.
- E.g. writing a letter, taking a break, crying, asking for help, etc.

#### Understand the Situation

- Help the child process the emotions by trying to identify its cause.
- E.g. involve the child in analysing why the tower keeps on collapsing every time it reaches a certain height (because of the poor foundation)

#### Improve the Situation

- Support the child in thinking of ways to improve the situation.
- E.g. strategise to build a stronger foundation for the tower with the help of friends

Children's emotional reactions provide opportunities for teaching and helping them understand their feelings and learn effective ways to manage them. For example, if you see that a child is frustrated about waiting for what you want, you may acknowledge what they feel and suggest a productive activity while waiting, such as reading a story. You may tell them, 'I see that you are frustrated about waiting; perhaps we can read for now while we wait?'

Listening to what children say about their feelings and what they acknowledge about their emotions shows empathy. This also helps children learn how to identify their feelings and understand how they work. If children are supported in this way, they may be able to figure out how to manage their emotions. You might ask a child what is bothering them if they look worried by first acknowledging their feelings: ‘It seems like you are worried. Is something bothering you?’ For another example, if a child seems angry, you may acknowledge their emotion and ask them to talk about it. You may say something like: ‘It sounds like you are really angry. Let us talk about it.’

Children watch others, specifically carers, parents, and other family members, and learn about their emotions and how they express them. By showing kids how you understand and manage emotions, you help them learn from your example. If you lose your patience, apologise and show how you might make amends.

You can help children develop their emotional management skills by encouraging them to create other ways to respond to a situation. It may include asking them questions such as ‘How else could you look at this situation?’ or ‘What would help you feel brave?’

## Further Reading



Read the following article on how to respond to children’s emotional needs.

[Everyday learning about responding to the emotional needs of children](#)

### **3.5 Assist Children to Develop Empathy Through Identifying and Responding to Emotions in Other People**

In Subchapter 2.4, you have learnt what empathy means and how to teach its concept to children through modelling. The previous subchapters discussed how you could help children acknowledge and identify their feelings. This subchapter will focus on how you can assist children in empathising with others by recognising and responding to their emotions.

Children's encounters with their emotions happen daily with many unpredictable internal or external factors that may affect them. As an educator, one of the things you can do to support their emotional development, specifically in managing their emotions, is to capture the teachable moments in their daily lives. Some skills can be taught through planned activities, but there are also situations that you should capture spontaneously and turn into a learning opportunity for the child. Being intentional when teaching children can happen in planned and spontaneous events. It also applies to their encounter with each other's feelings.

According to the Early Years Learning Framework Practice Based Resources – Developmental Milestones, children usually start showing signs of empathy at the age of 8 to 12 months. This stage will begin when they demonstrate awareness and reaction to the emotions of others but not fully knowing how to respond to them. When children's feelings are guided and processed with the help of adults, like the parents or educators, they will learn to acknowledge, identify, and express their own emotions. When this skill is practised, children are more likely to apply it to themselves and others as well. This stage is where responding to the needs of others starts.

As children see that the people around them also go through the same experiences they had, they will understand other people's emotions through empathy. That is why children seeing adults respond to the emotional needs of others is a key to this learning. When they witness how the people they look up to demonstrate empathy, it will reinforce their knowledge and real-life experience. Keep in mind that these concepts are also in line with the developmental milestone for each age group. Be careful about expecting a 2-year-old to willingly share toys with everyone in the class, as you know that this skill is not likely at this age yet.

Here are some examples to support children in developing empathy:

- Reading about books that talk about feelings that children can relate to and encouraging discussion about the topic
- Caring for animals and plants to help them understand their role and influence by responding to the needs of another living thing

- Playing with baby dolls, both for young boys and girls, to simulate taking care of another person and showing awareness of their need to dress, feed, soothe, and care for babies
- Encouraging children to engage in imaginative play to perform their understanding of a role and how it relates to others

Below are the emerging emotional development skills you may observe in children based on EYLF's Developmental Milestones and some examples of how you can support them as an educator.

- **Shows reaction to the distress of another child**

An 11-month-old girl looks at another child in class who was crying after saying goodbye to their parents when they arrived in the centre. The girl felt distressed and went to an adult for comfort. Although it was the other child who has the reason to be sad, the girl did not know how to respond and resorted to calming herself instead by going to a trusted adult.

As an educator, you can support the girl by accommodating her need for comfort when seeing another child is in distress. At this age, the child cannot identify emotions yet or have the vocabulary to describe what the other child is feeling. You may narrate the situation and say, 'Your friend is sad because it is time to say bye-bye to mum and dad' to help the child identify the emotions of others. At the same time, make sure that the needs of the child in distress are also attended to.

- **Assists another child in distress**

A 2-year-old boy comes close to comfort a crying child who slipped and fell on the floor while running. The boy might linger around, give a pat on the back, or offer toys thinking that it will make the other child feel better.

While attending to the crying child, you can observe the responses of children who come close out of curiosity and those who will linger for a long time because they knew something is wrong. These children will attempt to help the crying child feel better by offering materials that may not be needed at the moment. Allow interaction between children and observe their efforts in making the other child feel better.

As you observe children, you may also ask questions such as, ‘Why do you think they are crying?’ or ‘Why are you giving them toys?’ to probe if the boy can identify the emotion or understand its cause. If not, describe the incident using words that are easily understood by children their age.

- **Begins to show guilt or remorse for misdeeds**

A 3-year-old boy sits on the floor, looking sad, and refuses to engage in activities for a while after finding out that a girl was working on the puzzle pieces he disassembled. The girl got so upset because of this, and the boy felt bad that he made the girl sad.

In some situations, children also cry out of guilt or with a hint of fear when they understand they were the reason why another child is crying. Avoid making a child feel bad about what happened. Talk to both children to process and explain the situation. Try to help them identify and label each other’s feelings and come up with a resolution. For example, remind them to keep the toy with them if they are not finished playing with it. If they leave the toy, someone else will think no one is using it. On the other hand, you can also tell them to ask around if they see toys arranged just to make sure they are not getting or breaking apart someone else’s work.

- **Understands when someone is hurt and comforts them**

A 4-year-old girl talks to a friend in class who is not yet ready to go back to school after a long vacation with their family. The girl may notice why the other child was sad and may help her friend feel better by talking about the trip, drawing something about it, or sharing her own experience about going on a trip.

Encourage children to support each other through conversations and activities they will enjoy together. You can also provide books related to adventure or trips to provide an opportunity to explore the topic while they are in the centre. Through this, children can connect their positive experiences to a classroom exploration.



## Further Reading

Read the following resources from Melbourne Child Psychology and Goodstart.org on why teaching empathy to children is important.

[Why We Need Empathy, and How We Teach it to Children](#)

[Why teaching children empathy is more important than ever](#)

### **3.6 Support and Encourage Children to Persevere With Challenges to Assist in Building Resilience**

Perseverance is a learning disposition that develops when a child continues to engage in a task with determination despite its difficulty to achieve success. Resilience has something to do with a child's ability to take increasing responsibility in self-help and health routines with confidence and independence. It is closely related to a child's wellbeing and develops when a child experiences coping with stress and challenges. These challenges refer to the tasks that children may struggle to accomplish, especially when developing a new skill or something they have not mastered yet.

One way to support children is to maintain a positive attitude to their attempts and express confidence in their abilities to meet challenges. Children are more likely to persevere when they are told that they are capable of achieving a goal. As an early childhood educator, you must model this optimism. You must also help them recognise that success does not always happen right away. Encourage patience and give them time to reflect on their failed attempts to see what they can learn.

Other ways you can support and encourage children to persevere are by:

normalising mistakes

using mistakes as teachable moments to explore consequences

teaching children to take responsibility for their mistakes

working with and supporting children to find solutions or new approaches

responding calmly to remove stress and conflict from the situation

Overcoming challenges and building resilience is accompanied by persistence and perseverance. You can help children understand these concepts by modelling that you also see mistakes and failed attempts as learning opportunities. Your response toward errors and failed attempts will matter. As an educator, you must show children that their experiences in dealing with challenges are not their final output, and they can always be better through practice.

Allow children to repeat and keep on trying without shame and judgement. To avoid escalating frustration on repeating attempts without new knowledge for improvement, you can help children by taking a break with them and analysing what is going on in the situation. Try to communicate and assist them in figuring out what went wrong, what is not right, and why they think the current technique is not working. Lead them to a better solution by asking the right questions and allowing them to find the answers. Be open to new ideas from children and consider their opinions even when they do not make sense to you.

You can also provide suggestions on how they can improve next time. Give them enough time to reflect on these suggestions and figure out how to incorporate them as they approach the challenges. There are times that children will take a break by engaging with other materials. Allow them to take time and respect their pace. As they develop perseverance in dealing with challenges, they will eventually learn how to adjust their routines and techniques while applying what they have learned. They can create new ways to perform their task and achieve their goal, which is what resilience is all about. This shows that when children persevere with challenges, the skills they develop will help them develop resilience.

Children's emotional development is influenced by their ability to cope with challenging situations. Building resilience will help them analyse situations and set their minds towards the goal and achieve it instead of focusing on their struggles along the way.



## Further Reading

Watch the Child Family Community Australia's (CFCA) webinar on building resilience and wellbeing in the early years and coping strategies for parents. You can also check an article on perseverance from [Firstfiveyears.org](http://Firstfiveyears.org):

[CFCA Webinar: Building resilience and wellbeing in the early years.  
Coping strategies for parents](#)

[Perseverance: Teaching the value of effort](#)

### **3.7 Share Children's Successes With Families in Informal and Formal Ways**

In a collaborative approach to learning, families are integral to children's learning outcomes and are vital members of the early education and care service community. Quality Area 6 of the National Quality Standard emphasises the partnerships with families and communities that highlight communication, consultation and collaboration.



Sharing children's progress and successes with families helps them understand how they perform in a different setting other than the home. The centre provides opportunities that may be challenging to have in a home setting: social interaction with children their age, an environment that may not be their comfort zone, rules and limits to their access to materials, following routines and instructions from an adult, and more. Although they may be similar to some at home, these examples still provide a different context and new learning for children. Your role as an educator in communicating with parents and families is critical in establishing positive relationships, encouraging family involvement, and achieving learning goals.

Additionally, various cultural variations in parenting beliefs and behaviours are reflected in the generalisations of 'individualistic' and 'collectivist' societies. These provide a rich tapestry to draw upon for families to contribute to the learning in services.

Facilitating family involvement means:

- fostering good communication
- taking an active interest in families' cultural heritage and languages
- asking families for feedback and input into the curriculum and activities
- asking families to contribute to activities, including specialised knowledge and/or resources that they can provide about their heritage and language (i.e. stories, songs, instruments, etc.)
- modelling respect and the appreciation of diversity to everyone in your community
- acknowledging that differences exist and emphasising working together to achieve agreed outcomes.

There are different methods available in communicating children's milestones to families. Below are some of them:

## **Informal**

Informal methods refer to a more casual way of communicating with families. This is usually appropriate in sharing general information, such as class schedules, announcements, and upcoming activities. Other informal methods may be used to communicate private matters, report incidents or emergencies involving a specific child, or give some updates on specific goals for a child.

- **Information boards**

These are family information boards accessible in a central location. These may contain a schedule, upcoming activities, a summary of the class topic, and a highlight of the activities children did in the past few days. You may post pictures with a short description of how each child engaged with the materials or what they verbalised while doing the activity.

- **Daily conversations**

There are days where you may approach families to give quick updates about how the child is doing, what happened in class within the day or address families' concerns and questions. You can use this method to share with them the progress you finally see emerging on a goal you have been working on for quite some time. This way, families can also praise the child for doing a great job and notice their progress. It will likely reinforce the behaviour and motivate the child to do it again next time.

- **Newsletters**

These can be a physical or digital newsletter done weekly or every other week to summarise the activities you did in class. This method may focus on sharing large and small group activities that the children did together.

- **Phone calls**

This method can often be used to report urgent matters, incidents or injuries, emergencies, or seek information involving their consent or confirmation of their preferences needed at the moment. You can also use this method for the same purpose as the daily conversations, especially if families are not available to stay long for a personal conversation while at the centre.

- **Emails and messaging applications**

This method can be used to keep in touch with families and share learning progress when there are limited chances of seeing them or talking to them in person. You can also use this to send documents, pictures, and videos you want to share and update them with. When choosing messaging applications, it is preferred to discuss with the centre to ensure consistency, professionalism, and organisation.

## **Formal**

Formal methods are usually anticipated and predetermined. They are part of the schedule of each academic year and expected by both parents and educators.

- **Parent-teacher conferences**

Individual conferences are often scheduled after a defined academic period. This method is a formal way of presenting each child's progress to their families by discussing each domain and providing supporting documents and references. It is also usually at this period that the goals from the previous academic period are reviewed, and new goals for the coming period are set in collaboration with parents.

- **School meetings**

This method may address group concerns of children in class or the topics they explore in large and small groups. You can use this method to share with families and open a group discussion on children's development and responses to their peers, environment, and activities in class.

Sharing children's success helps build a relationship with families and confidence in children. You can do this by creating a portfolio that records the child's learning journey for other people to see. A portfolio may include:

- observations and stories of children's learning
- photos, drawings, or recordings
- samples or artefacts of projects, investigations, and representations
- individual and collaborative works
- contributions from families.

*Sourced from [Documenting and reflecting for children's learning](#), used under CC BY 3.0 AU. © The State of Queensland 2016*

Close family and community engagement adds to the richness of your service's environment and benefits all the children in your care. Consider how you can work with families to promote the values of inclusion and respect for diversity.



## Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. The way adults consider and react to a child's feelings impacts their ability to recognise, understand, and control their emotions.
2. Children will be more inspired to explore new things and persevere through challenges when provided with a safe environment that encourages them to see mistakes as a natural part of learning.
3. It is best to work with the children's families when developing strategies to support their emotional development.



## Further Reading

For more information on communicating with parents and families, check the following links from Virtual Lab School and RaisingChildren.Net:

[Promoting Family Engagement](#)

[Communication: Families and Other Partnerships](#)

[Effective Communication with Parents: For Professionals](#)



## Learning Activity for Chapter 3

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the classroom learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

## IV. Support Cognitive Development

*'Children's learning is ongoing, and each child will progress towards the outcomes in different and equally meaningful ways.*

*Learning is not always predictable and linear.*

*Educators plan with each child and the outcomes in mind.'*

*Sourced from [The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#), used under CC BY 4.0. © Commonwealth of Australia.*



Cognitive development is the development of a child's information processing, perceptual skills, language learning, and other cognitive abilities like memory and imagination. These skills develop as children interact with their environment and the people around them.

Developing these skills involves trial and error, exploration, investigation, and discovery. Educators have an essential role in developing children's cognitive skills and need to understand cognitive development to facilitate children's learning.

In this chapter, you will learn how to do the following:

- I. Select materials, resources, technologies and experiences that support exploration and problem-solving
- II. Provide opportunities that encourage exploration of children's concepts and ideas
- III. Extend children's thinking by engaging them in sustained shared conversations

## Jean Piaget: Cognitive Theory

The work of Jean Piaget illustrates the importance of children's play in concept development. Piaget made several contributions to cognitive development that help identify how children think differently from adults. Piaget focused on thinking, reasoning, memory, and logic, implying that children acquire each skill and increase their abilities as they develop.

In addition to establishing four sequential stages of cognitive development, Piaget indicated that cognitive and intellectual development was the primary result of children's independent interaction and exploration of their environment.

This understanding emphasises the importance of the educator's role in preparing a learning environment that promotes the child as an active learner and implements teaching strategies to support children's exploration, discovery, and interaction.

Piaget's stages of cognitive development relevant to this unit include the following:

Stages of Cognitive Development	Description
Sensorimotor stage (0–2 years)	Here, children develop an understanding of the present and the world around them. Children have direct involvement with the environment, using their sensory skills to establish how things work. Children learn object permanence, cause and effect, limitation, memory and thought during this stage, and goal-orientated movements replace their reflex movements.
Preoperational stage (2–7 years)	As children master the skills within the sensorimotor stage, they move into the preoperational stage. The child's thoughts include symbolic representations of the present time and the world around them. As an educator, you will see children thinking more independently and holding mental representations and ideas of what they would like to achieve and do.

The particular cognitive skills that become evident in the preoperational stage include increasing language and imagination, manipulating symbols mentally, and applying logic in one-step directions. Additionally, the foundation is laid for development in complex, abstract concepts.

Piaget developed characteristics that demonstrate the kind of symbolic representations that children develop in the preoperational stage, including:

- **Symbolic thought**

The ability to understand that one thing can symbolise another (e.g. a child using a paddle-pop stick for a knife).

- **Concept acquisition**

- *Seriation*

The ability to sequence objects according to their characteristics or properties (e.g. a child ordering objects from small to large).

- *Classification*

The process of grouping objects following specific attributes (e.g. a child grouping all the sheep together from a container of farm animals).

- *Conservation*

The ability to understand that the size, weight, and height of an object will remain the same despite changes in appearance (e.g. a child recognising 100ml of liquid in two different bottles, despite the bottles being different shapes).

- **Reasoning**

The ability to reason that one particular will be the same as another particular (e.g. a baby will cry because all babies cry). Reasoning also includes:

- *Animism*

The ability to give life to inanimate objects (e.g. a child implying that a car was hurt in a car accident).

- *Artificialism*

The belief that natural phenomena are caused by human beings (e.g. a child establishing that thunder is created by someone banging a drum).

- **Information processing**

- *Irreversibility*

The ability to begin at the end of an operation and work towards the start (e.g. a 3-year-old child will not understand why they have upset someone, as they are unable to reverse the problem to establish that they caused the problem).

- *Perceptual dominance*

The tendency to focus attention on and judge based on an object's appearance (e.g. when a pencil is placed in water, it looks bent due to refraction; a child will indicate that it is bent due to its appearance).

- *Memory short/long term*

Children have limited recall of list-like information and, as a result, will tend to be forgetful.

- *Concentration*

The ability to focus on one aspect at the exclusion of other attributes (e.g. a child focusing on the size of a block when building a tower and disregarding the length of the blocks).

- **Egocentrism**

The inability to understand another perspective (e.g. a child not understanding why someone is crying although they are upset about the same thing).

- **Deferred imitation**

The ability to observe something occur and implement it later (e.g. a pre-schooler implementing real-life situations in the home area).

Another theory that will help you understand children's patterns in behaviour and exploration is the *schema*. Schemas are patterns that urge children to repeat their way of investigation through play. These are the brain's way of adding knowledge and processes based on what children currently know. Through schemas, children make connections with their learning and understand more processes as they continue to explore. Understanding schemas will help you provide the correct activities to support their learning and growth.

Understanding these concepts on children's cognitive development will help you identify the reason for their actions and explorations. Children's cognitive development involves their reaction and response processes, developing learning dispositions, remembering and connecting experiences, problem-solving, creativity, and imagination.

Observable milestones in cognitive development in early childhood include the following:

Age group	Milestones in Cognitive Development
Birth to 4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ smiles and laughs</li><li>▪ looks toward direction of sound</li><li>▪ eyes track slow-moving target for brief period</li><li>▪ looks at edges, patterns with light/dark contrast and faces</li><li>▪ imitates adult tongue movements when being held/talked to</li><li>▪ learns through sensory experiences</li><li>▪ repeats actions but unaware of ability to cause actions</li></ul>
4 to 8 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ swipes at dangling objects</li><li>▪ shakes and stares at toy placed in hand</li><li>▪ becomes bored if left alone for long periods of time</li><li>▪ repeats accidentally caused actions that are interesting</li><li>▪ will search for partly hidden object</li><li>▪ able to coordinate looking, hearing and touching</li><li>▪ enjoys toys, banging objects, scrunching paper</li><li>▪ explores objects by looking at and mouthing them</li><li>▪ develops preferences for food</li><li>▪ explores objects with mouth</li></ul>

Age group	Milestones in Cognitive Development
8 to 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ moves obstacle to get at desired toy</li> <li>▪ bangs two objects held in hands together</li> <li>▪ responds to own name</li> <li>▪ makes gestures to communicate and to symbolise objects</li> <li>▪ seems to understand some things parent or familiar adults say to them</li> <li>▪ drops toys to be retrieved, handed back, then dropped again/looks in direction of dropped toy</li> <li>▪ smiles at image in mirror</li> <li>▪ likes playing with water</li> <li>▪ shows interest in picture books</li> <li>▪ understands gestures/responds to 'bye bye'</li> <li>▪ listens with pleasure to sound-making toys and music</li> <li>▪ notices difference and shows surprise</li> </ul>
1 to 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ repeats actions that lead to interesting/predictable results</li> <li>▪ points to objects when named</li> <li>▪ knows some body parts</li> <li>▪ points to body parts in a game</li> <li>▪ recognises self in photo or mirror</li> <li>▪ mimics household activities (e.g. bathing baby, sweeping floor)</li> <li>▪ may signal when they have finished their toileting</li> <li>▪ spends a lot of time exploring and manipulating objects, putting in mouth, shaking and banging them</li> <li>▪ stacks and knocks over items</li> <li>▪ selects games and puts them away</li> <li>▪ calls self by name, uses 'I', 'mine', 'I do it myself'</li> <li>▪ will search for hidden toys</li> </ul>

Age group	Milestones in Cognitive Development
2 to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ builds tower of five to seven objects</li> <li>▪ lines up objects in ‘train’ fashion</li> <li>▪ recognises and identifies common objects and pictures by pointing</li> <li>▪ enjoys playing with sand, water, dough; explores what these materials can do more than making things with them</li> <li>▪ uses symbolic play (e.g. uses a block as a car)</li> <li>▪ shows knowledge of gender-role stereotypes</li> <li>▪ identifies picture as a boy or girl</li> <li>▪ engages in make believe and pretend play</li> <li>▪ begins to count with numbers</li> <li>▪ recognises similarities and differences</li> <li>▪ imitates rhythms and animal movements</li> <li>▪ becoming aware of space through physical activity</li> <li>▪ can follow two or more directions</li> </ul>
3 to 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ understands opposites (e.g. slow/fast) and positional words (front, end)</li> <li>▪ uses objects and materials to build or construct things (e.g. clay, blocks, sand, puzzle)</li> <li>▪ builds tower of eight to ten blocks</li> <li>▪ answers simple questions</li> <li>▪ counts five to ten things</li> <li>▪ has a longer attention span</li> <li>▪ talks to self during play (to guide what they do)</li> <li>▪ follows simple instructions</li> <li>▪ follows simple rules and enjoys helping</li> <li>▪ may write some numbers and letters</li> </ul> <p>(continued on the next page)</p>

Age group	Milestones in Cognitive Development
3 to 5 years	<p>(continued from the next page)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ engages in dramatic play, taking on pretend character roles</li> <li>▪ recalls events correctly</li> <li>▪ counts by rote, having memorised numbers</li> <li>▪ touches objects to count – starting to understand relationship between numbers and objects</li> <li>▪ can recount a story</li> <li>▪ copies letters and may write some unprompted</li> <li>▪ can match and name some colours</li> </ul>

Sourced from [Developmental Milestones and the EYLF and NQS](#),  
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### Further Reading

Learn more about schema and how they serve as building blocks for the brain in early childhood by accessing the link below.

[Schemas in Early Childhood](#)

## 4.1 Select Materials, Resources, Technologies and Experiences That Support Exploration and Problem-Solving

Children are naturally curious, and they are inclined to exploring their environment. The importance of the environment, program, and activities you prepare was mentioned in the first chapter. They all contribute to providing learning experiences that will help children develop their skills. To do this, you must make certain that the classroom environment is strategically arranged to support the needs of children and that the materials reinforce their interests. Too many toys and materials with the same purpose might add clutter and not help supplement learning. If you have the right number of materials but do not support children's interests, children might get bored. If you fail to plan and intentionally choose the materials in your classroom, they might only become an 'ingredient' to chaos. It may cause children to lose the motivation to engage in learning processes.

To ensure that your materials, resources, technologies, and experiences will supplement and reinforce children's learning, you must check if they are:

- safe for independent exploration (i.e. the size of the object is based on the ability of the child to control and manipulate things to avoid causing a choking hazard)
- in good quality and made of safe, non-toxic materials
- age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate
- open-ended and encourage critical thinking and problem-solving
- challenging enough based on the current abilities and skills
- promoting persistence and resilience
- interesting to children.

From a very young age, children like to sort and arrange objects in order. They begin to notice the concepts that define the similarities or differences of objects based on their characteristics and properties, such as 'hard' and 'soft' or 'big' and 'small'. These early interests are the beginning of the logical and observational thinking developed later by participating in science, mathematics, and technology experiences.

Plan and provide experiences that encourage children to observe and evaluate their environment. Ask them to solve problems and discover answers to 'why' and 'how' questions to promote higher-order thinking and reasoning abilities. There is an enormous range of available online resources to help you plan activities that encourage children to learn about science, develop their mathematical skills, and interact with technology. Remember, children learn best in a fun, engaging environment that allows them to build upon their current learning and experience.

Some early childhood centres and organisations in Australia promote the use of loose parts in play-based learning. Loose parts are materials that are not designed to be manipulated in a specific way. They can be used in tinkering, building, creating, and many other processes. Loose parts are open-ended and have no rules and instructions for use. It will encourage and challenge children to form new ideas and discover and express them by manipulating materials to explore their processes and properties.

Some examples of these materials are clean squeeze bottles or spray containers, buttons, bottle caps, empty tissue rolls, boxes, rope, chalk, and more. Some are also available in nature which can be explored during outdoor play, such as stones, twigs, logs, branches, sand, water, dirt, grass, leaves, pinecones, seashells, feathers, and more.

Open-ended materials that can be bought are building blocks, magnetic tiles, playdough, animal and people toys, writing materials like chalk, and more. These materials promote creativity and imagination, leading to more discovery of various properties of objects and processes. These types of materials will encourage representation and symbolism. Children can use materials as something else, allowing limitless ways of using and playing with them. For example, pebbles can be used as toppings for a pizza, strings can be used as noodles, and empty tissue rolls can act as binoculars or telescopes during pretend play.



When children have the freedom to manipulate materials, they are more likely to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills as they encounter struggles and challenges in their exploration. You can observe this during unprompted and uninterrupted play among children.

Resources include the strategies and techniques that educators use in response to children's exploration and learning experiences. These can be children's access to a safe and supportive environment where they can conduct problem-solving activities and uninterrupted investigation and exploration. This also includes adult's support like giving encouragement and motivation.

Selected technologies can also be provided to supplement this learning approach. For example, you can include familiar tools and technologies that may be a provocation for learning and that children can connect to their present experiences. Some of these are telephones or old mobile phones, calculators, timers, clocks, accessible flashcards with number and letter prints, newspapers, picture books, and more.

While specific educational experiences can be programmed and planned, unplanned incidents also provide teachable moments to:

- ask children to use their senses to observe and explore their environment
- ask children to make comparisons and investigate
- encourage children to communicate observations and ask questions
- encourage children to work out ‘why’ and ‘how’ in various situations.

Consider how you can use everyday experiences to teach, inform, and encourage children to learn about relevant concepts. Working with other children, using tools and various materials, offering sufficient time and space, and encouraging questioning all support developing children’s ability to understand complex concepts.

Experience with fun, hands-on activities that stimulate their curiosity provides the basis for developing abstract thinking. Additionally, by modelling curiosity and engagement with the physical environment, you teach children the importance of asking questions and the joy of learning and discovering the world around them.



## Further Reading

View the following two short videos by Eastern Connecticut State University’s Centre for Early Childhood Education to explore other ways on supporting children’s cognitive development through technology and maths.

[Introducing Technology to Young Children](#)

[Using Math to Support Learning](#)

## 4.2 Provide Opportunities That Encourage Exploration of Children's Concepts and Ideas

Concepts are fundamental building blocks that you may observe as children play and engage with their environment. However, children may not realise that they are exploring these formal, abstract, and mental representations like science and mathematics as they play. Concepts may be aspects of the child's strengths and interests that the child still seemingly has little to no understanding of. On the other hand, ideas are more personal perspectives and may change based on a child's reflection of learning and experiences. They are the ways of doing things or potential courses of action.



Providing a wide range of everyday materials in organised, accessible storage allows the children in your care to engage with their environment creatively. As discussed in the previous subchapter, children explore, discover, and interpret their experiences and environment using these tools.

The materials you provide do not need to be expensive—a mix of recycled, natural, and household items that encourage 'loose' play is just as engaging and stimulating as more expensive, purpose-built materials.

*Based on Play (emergent literacy), used under CC BY 4.0. © State of Victoria (Department of Education and Training)*

As an educator, treating children as little scientists who love to experiment on and explore their ideas will help you visualise the kind of opportunities you can provide to help them execute their ideas and test them. You do this by preparing activities covering the two types of play: structured and unstructured, free play.

Structured play is an organised way of teaching children and allowing them to explore what their bodies and minds can do through a guided program. This may include:

- Storytelling
- Art classes focused on techniques and output
- Dance, music, or drama classes
- Sports and swimming lessons

Unstructured, free play may be the more appropriate type for an early childhood educator like you. This type of play is child-led and play-based. You will be the one to make adjustments and change classroom materials or plan activities as the children's interests progress. Some of these activities might be:

- Creative solitary or interactive play
- Art classes focused on processes and manipulation of materials
- Sensory play, water play
- Nature/outdoor exploration
- Pretend-play or imaginative play

Supporting children's learning can also be a combination of both. You do not need to be restricted with one type of play as long as children are always encouraged to test their ideas and discover learning concepts. Below is an example of the opportunities you can provide to assist children in exploring concepts and trying their ideas.

*You noticed that one of the children in your class mentioned an experience about eating pizza with family over the weekend. Some children got interested and shared their personal experiences. After that, they started pretending to make pizza and add their favourite toppings. You hear some of them say they like cheese, pepperoni, olives, and pizza sauce.*

*This is a good opportunity to talk to them about it and ask each child what they want on their pizza. You may hear some of them mention other ingredients like fruits or chocolate. Remember to listen to their ideas and avoid judgement. Write the exact words they say on a board or a piece of paper and then post it in a common area accessible to everyone.*

*In the following days, you can prepare materials or loose parts that children can possibly imagine as toppings to their pizza. Allow children to remember their experiences and connect them through unprompted imaginative play. You can place cut-outs of red circles, strips of yellow paper, green paper, plates, and other materials that can act as provocations to observe more of their current knowledge about the topic.*

*You can also put some storybooks about pizza to encourage further discussion during storytime. Make sure that the books are age appropriate. As you observe children's responses through play or communication, analyse and plan what else you can do to provide opportunities for further discovery and to confirm their ideas and present knowledge.*

To confirm their knowledge, you can invite and consult experts or bring children to a professional's work area. You can plan, collaborate with families, and arrange an educational trip to a pizza parlour. This will provide a common experience to children and will answer their misconceptions or further their knowledge about the topic. After that, you can repeat the observation and see where their new knowledge will lead them.



Allow children to follow their interests and try their ideas while discovering new concepts; reward exploration and discovery and encourage them to use critical thinking as they approach situations. Let children make choices based on the connection of their previous knowledge to new ones, considering clear, logical, and consistent safety rules. By doing this, you help children be more confident and responsible for their own learning. You allow them to have the opportunities to correct misconceptions, change their present knowledge, and turn them into new facts that can again be tested for new learnings.

### Further Reading



Read the following articles that show some examples of opportunities for exploration through play and how it affects their cognitive development.

[Gardening for Children](#)

[Thinking and play: toddlers](#)

### **4.3 Extend Children's Thinking by Engaging Them in Sustained Shared Conversations**

Having conversations with children helps in establishing trust and connection. It is a fundamental tool in building relationships. When children trust you, they are more likely to engage and be confident in sharing their thoughts and ideas with you. Spending time communicating with children and listening to anything they want to say creates a special bond that encourages children to disclose personal experiences.

You must talk to children based on their language ability, vocabulary, and communication skills. When you speak to them without these considerations, they may find you intimidating. They may hesitate to talk with you if they feel that the words you use, your manner and your approach to communicating is something that they are not familiar with. Remember that it is an essential part of knowing the children under your care, including the context of their culture, family background, and personal experiences.

When children can connect with you, short exchanges can, later on, develop into sustained conversations. One of the keys to help children extend thinking skills through conversations is by asking the right questions. These are the types of questions that will make children stay on topic or remember a related subject they can connect to. A sustained shared conversation is an excellent tool for building on the language skills of children. It helps practise and extend their ability to formulate their ideas and thoughts before expressing them.

As an early childhood educator, you can involve children in group discussions to discuss activities that require collaboration. Gather ideas and encourage extended thinking by facilitating the planning, encouraging communication during execution and, later on, discussing their experience in the activity. Encourage children to ask questions and give them time to process their thoughts and express the answers they found through exploration and investigation. Other ways to engage children in sustained shared conversations include:

offering activities that develop memory and recall

encouraging children to accept challenges and to take appropriate risks

encouraging them to reflect on their activities and to describe what they have achieved

allowing activities to continue over several days, if appropriate

offering suggestions and alternative approaches to extend their thinking

keeping your language encouraging and positive



For younger children, there are times that you can give choices to help them express their thoughts but be careful not to be too suggestive and influence their thinking so you can still observe natural responses. By discussing interesting topics, children will be encouraged to recall previous experiences that they can connect to the present situation. Through open-ended questions, you can provide children opportunities to formulate an answer by reflecting on and analysing the situation. Children are more likely to engage in genuine conversations when they feel that you pay attention to their answers and ask new questions based on them. You can also try challenging them by asking ‘what if’ questions to encourage imagination and formulate responses by applying their present knowledge.

You must provide the children with a creative and inspiring environment. Children’s joy and excitement at discovering things for themselves, including their developing ability to speak out what is in their mind, will provide a firm foundation for their later education and give them a lifelong curiosity and love of learning.



## Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. A child's cognitive development is characterised by how they think, explore, and figure things out. It is the development of knowledge and skills that helps them understand how the world around them works.
2. How a child's cognitive abilities develop can be explained through Jean Piaget's stages of cognitive development.
3. You can support the development (and further development) of a child's cognitive abilities by providing an environment that is creative and inspiring.



## Further Reading

You can access the links below to read more about sustained, shared conversations with children.

[Stimulating a Child's Development Through Conversation](#)

[National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program – Sustained, Shared Thinking](#)



## Learning Activity for Chapter 4

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the classroom learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

## V. Support Communication Development

*'Children's use of their home languages underpins their sense of identity and their conceptual development. Children feel a sense of belonging when their language, interaction styles and ways of communicating are valued.'*

Sourced from [The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#), used under CC BY 4.0. © Commonwealth of Australia.



The previous chapters have discussed how language development and communication skills are incorporated in the development of other domains. The relationship and connectedness of these domains will be more evident as you acquire a deeper understanding of how they work together towards holistic development in children.

Language acquisition is one of the most complex tasks that humans ever undertake, and children's ability to develop linguistically is a fascinating process to observe. A firm foundation for language development begins to form as soon as children are born. Systems created in their minds, and later, speech, reading, and writing are accommodated into these systems. The form and nature of these systems depend on the amount and complexity of speech the child hears and the language opportunities and experiences they have been given.

A child has many opportunities to listen to language spoken by a caregiver through songs, stories, fingerplays, and rhymes in an average day in early childhood education and care service. Participation in large or small group activities, both planned and spontaneous, are further opportunities for children to be immersed in language development.

The language they are engaged in must be appropriate for their age and relevant to (or extend) their current skills and knowledge.

Encouraging language skills is significant for children's cognitive, social, emotional, and psychological wellbeing. While you should be aware of the typical developmental milestones, remember that language skills develop at different rates in different children. All possible efforts should be made to encourage all children to develop to their fullest potential.

Observable milestones in communication development in early childhood include the following:

Age Group	Milestones in Communication Development
Birth to 4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ expresses needs</li><li>▪ cries</li><li>▪ makes small throaty noises when content</li><li>▪ soothed by the sound of voice or by low rhythmic sounds</li><li>▪ imitates adult tongue movements when being held and talked to</li><li>▪ may start to copy sounds</li><li>▪ coos and gurgles</li></ul>
4 to 8 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ enjoys games such as peek-a-boo or pat-a-cake</li><li>▪ babbles and repeats sounds</li><li>▪ makes talking sounds in response to others talking</li><li>▪ copies sounds</li><li>▪ smiles and babbles at own image in mirror</li><li>▪ responds to own name</li></ul>

Age Group	Milestones in Communication Development
8 to 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ responds to own name being called, family names and familiar objects</li> <li>▪ babbles tunefully</li> <li>▪ says words like ‘dada’ or ‘mama’</li> <li>▪ waves goodbye</li> <li>▪ imitates hand clapping</li> <li>▪ imitates actions and sounds</li> <li>▪ enjoys finger-rhymes</li> <li>▪ shouts to attract attention</li> <li>▪ vocalises loudly using most vowels and consonants – sounding like a conversation</li> </ul>
1 to 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ comprehends and follows simple questions/commands</li> <li>▪ says first name</li> <li>▪ says many words (mostly naming words)</li> <li>▪ begins to use one- to two-word sentences</li> <li>▪ reciprocal imitation of another toddler; will imitate each other’s actions</li> <li>▪ enjoys rhymes and songs</li> </ul>
2 to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ uses two or three words together</li> <li>▪ ‘explosion’ of vocabulary and use of correct grammatical forms of language</li> <li>▪ refers to self by name and often says ‘mine’</li> <li>▪ asks lots of questions</li> <li>▪ uses pronouns and prepositions, simple sentences and phrases</li> <li>▪ labels own gender</li> <li>▪ copies words and actions</li> <li>▪ makes music, sing and dance</li> <li>▪ likes listening to stories and books</li> </ul>

Age Group	Milestones in Communication Development
3 to 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ speaks in sentences and uses many different words</li> <li>▪ answers simple questions</li> <li>▪ asks many questions</li> <li>▪ tells stories</li> <li>▪ talks constantly</li> <li>▪ enjoys talking and may like to experiment with new words</li> <li>▪ uses adult forms of speech</li> <li>▪ takes part in conversations</li> <li>▪ enjoys jokes, rhymes and stories</li> <li>▪ will assert self with words</li> </ul>

Sourced from [Developmental Milestones and the EYLF and NQS](#),  
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## 5.1 Value the Child's Linguistic Heritage and Encourage the Use and Acquisition of Home Languages

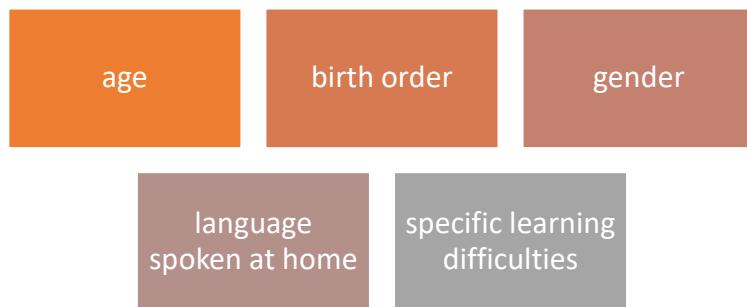


Linguistic heritage often refers to the language of a family's ancestry or culture. This can also be a language that children use at home, which is also referred to as the child's native language. It is emphasised in the previous chapters that the information you know about the children in your care, their cultural

background, and their health and family history are crucial aspects in understanding and addressing their needs. It also includes the language they use at home. Valuing children's home language is demonstrated by encouraging the use and acquisition of these languages and developing their ability to understand their native language further.

As an educator, you will likely be caring for and teaching children from different cultural backgrounds. Each child may use a foreign language when interacting with their families at home. Your role is to make children feel welcome to use words and terms they are comfortable with. Encouraging the use of these languages promotes diversity and models respect for their cultural heritage. In addition, acquisition and use of their home language will likely come easier for the child because of their exposure at home.

The development of language skills varies considerably and is affected by:



The following are some examples to show your encouragement of the use of home languages:

- Establish an environment that is free from judgement by modelling responses that welcome language differences.
- Celebrate diversity by allowing children to do practices they do at home and showing respect to them.
- Use the same words that children use to express their needs, such as *thirsty, hungry, water, food, bathroom*.
- Show interest in their language by welcoming discussions and encourage sharing of the different ways to call a *bread*, for example.

By acknowledging differences and promoting diversity, you encourage children with linguistic heritage to use their home language and facilitate culture and language learning.

### Further Reading



The following links discuss further the importance of supporting and valuing home language among children and their families.

[Supporting Home Languages](#)

[Many Languages, One Classroom: Supporting Children in Superdiverse Settings](#)

[The importance of home languages](#)

## **5.2 Select, Read and Tell Developmentally Appropriate Stories**

Books and storytime help in developing different domains during the early years. It can be a tool to teach children concepts that are difficult to understand because it tells about experiences that children can relate to. Books give children opportunities to process their emotions based on what the character of the story does. Selecting developmentally appropriate stories is as important as reading and telling them.

Reading activities play a big role in developing communication skills among children because it creates ways to show scenarios that children can relate to. Stories can also be used when teaching empathy, dealing with new experiences, and overcoming struggles such as separation from parents, potty training, and friendship. It will help children understand that their experiences are common and others go through them too. Asking questions during storytime encourages group discussion and sharing. A story of one child may spark a new idea or an old memory in another child, which creates an environment that shows their connectedness to one another. All these are key factors in the development of language and communication skills.

As an educator, you must use this activity to supplement your target goals. You must review and read the books before bringing them to your class and making them accessible to children. When choosing a book, you must:

- ensure that it is age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate
- consider the book's length and text
- consider the vocabulary used, and whether it matches children's language
- review how the characters are presented
- assess the emotional maturity of the children in your class and how the story will appeal to them
- ensure that it is based on children's skills, abilities, and previous experiences or preparation for a topic you are planning to explore with them.

You must also consider the material of the book. For example, board picture books with few words might be more applicable to toddlers and babies. They usually interpret texts on books based on pictures since they have not developed reading skills yet. For preschoolers, you can gradually introduce activity books or books with illustrations that can capture their attention. As they progress, you can begin reading materials with more pages, longer texts, and advanced concepts like friendship and sharing. Remember that facilitating advanced concepts and sensitive topics in children's words is vital in teaching values and manners.



Your approach when telling stories can also influence children's interest in storytime and reading. To bring the book to life, you can adjust the pitch and rhythm of your voice as the character changes, make sure that words are pronounced with clarity, use actions and gestures to emphasise ideas, and your facial expressions to support the emotions and events in the story. Some of the questions you can ask may focus on identifying facts about the story, analysing and interpreting events, formulating solutions to resolve problems, and predicting the story's ending.

## Further Reading



To know more about choosing books for children, you can access the links below.

[Choosing A Child's Book](#)

[Reading with Children: Interacting with Others](#)

### 5.3 Use Props to Stimulate Children's Enjoyment of Language and Literature

In a typical day, educators can create numerous opportunities to allow children to listen and respond to language, such as:



For you to capture children's attention, you must take advantage of making their imagination active through fun representation, visual cues, and animation. It can be done by using props to supplement verbal instructions.

Props are materials that serve as visual cues and tangible representations to help bring language and literature to life. When children see what they are hearing, they tend to remember them more. For example, the animation and portrayal of characters in a storybook will most likely capture your readers' attention compared to reading from the book alone. Props are also helpful when introducing new concepts or when supporting dramatic play. Learning will be more effective when children visualise your instructions and match your words with actions and objects.

The use of props when singing songs, poetry, and rhymes will help children connect the words they say to the actions they see as the props are being manipulated. It will reinforce the understanding of language and vocabulary through songs.

Some examples of props you can use are finger puppets, hats, masks, or other character representations. You can also use the available loose parts in your classroom to stand for something else. For example, instead of finger puppets, you can use linking cubes as butterflies while singing *Five Little Butterflies*. Using loose parts will encourage creativity and imagination in children.

#### Further Reading



Additional references that you can visit to know more about using props and how they help stimulate children's enjoyment are provided below.

[How Props Can Enhance the Reading Experience](#)

[Props for Setting the Stage](#)

## 5.4 Ask and Answer Questions During the Reading and Discussion of Books or Other Text

Children's understanding of words from books and other texts, like environmental print, labels, directions, signs, and more, are dependent on their ability to relate them to the real world. Their understanding and awareness of various ideas and concepts from text experiences and their lives is part of background knowledge.

For children to have successful meaning-making experiences, using background knowledge is imperative. Encourage children to think about what they know on topics and the text during and after reading experiences.



Before, during, and after reading something, children should be encouraged to think about what they know about the text they will read. To do so, you may use the phrases below (or similar expressions):

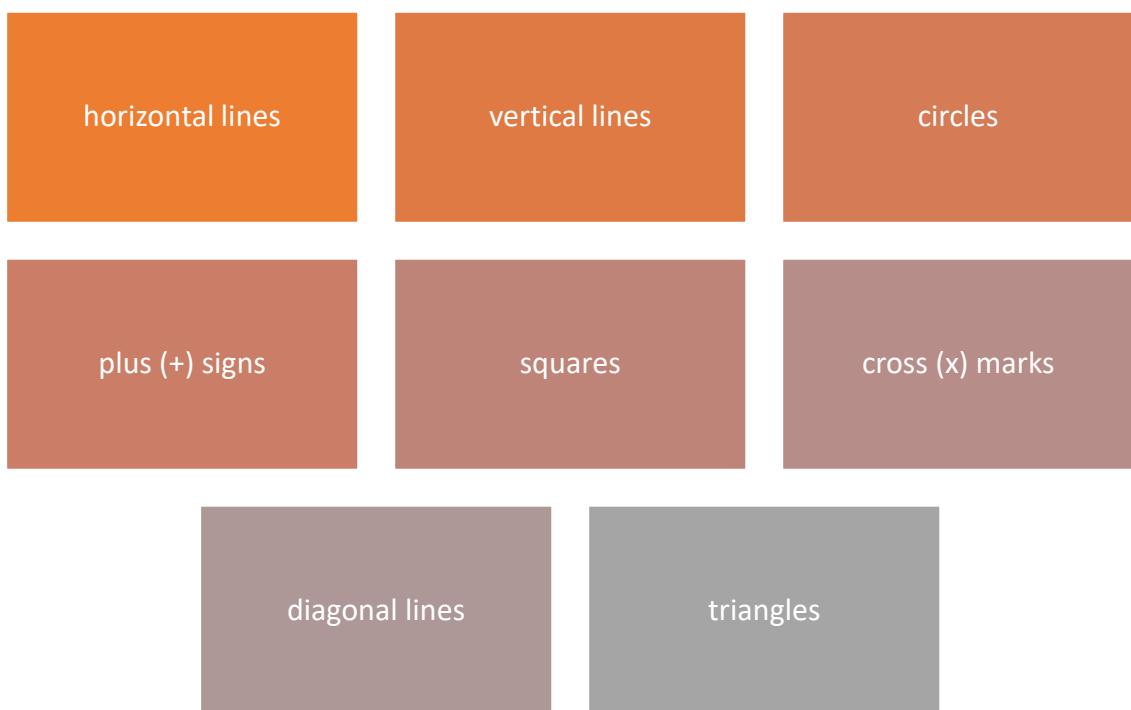
- ‘Have you heard of these before?’
- ‘Does anyone know what this word means?’ (Make sure that the word will appear in the material)
- ‘This book is like that book we read yesterday!’
- ‘Have you heard of that before?’
- ‘Have you ever done that before?’
- ‘Was that something we did before?’
- ‘This book was different from/same as the [book name], wasn’t it?’
- ‘What was learned from this book today?’

Aside from texts found in books, children may also connect their experiences outside the centre. Other texts that children may be exposed to refer to labels and environmental prints, such as the words ‘Supermarket,’ ‘Fire Station,’ ‘Police Station,’ ‘Ambulance,’ or the printed brand names on their milk, snacks, and more. Children may learn about these words from their daily experiences and connect them in book texts.

## 5.5 Provide Meaningful Opportunities for Children to Develop Pre-Writing Skills

Pre-writing skills are skills that children need to acquire before they can write. Interest in using writing tools typically begins around the age of one to two years old. They start by learning how to make marks on paper using dots, lines, zigzags, mazes, and curve lines. Learning to write these marks is necessary to help them write letters and other symbols later on. At this stage, you want to focus on children's familiarity with manipulating writing tools rather than their writing output. Spontaneously work on the physical development milestones that focus on the fine motor manipulative skills as discussed in Subchapter 1.3. Remember that pre-writing skills also rely on the child's readiness to use the tools for writing.

As children strengthen their grip through various physical activities, they are now ready to practise holding a pencil correctly, which is a fundamental skill in developing pre-writing skills (or emergent writing skills). Children usually begin developing their pre-writing skills by drawing the following marks:



These marks may be practised through activity books or unprompted drawing activities you can do together to keep writing activity fun instead of making it a task. Provide meaningful experiences by practising these skills in ways that they can remember even after school hours is over. You may consider the following examples:

- Draw and write to express their feelings, thoughts and ideas freely.
- Use coloured markers for glass windows, chalk and chalkboard, whiteboard marker and laminated films, or paper with different textures and colours.
- Create a card for their mum or dad or grandparents or anyone they want to write to. Help children translate their words into writing.
- Pick a classroom label to write or trace.
- Ask children to take turns writing the numbers in the calendar or the days of the week.

Remember to do it in an organised way, so children will understand that you are practising a skill rather than just making marks on random objects and print.

Children share enjoyment and fulfilment when they see their output and the purpose of developing the skill. These activities also provide opportunities to develop emerging literacy skills. Besides developing pre-writing skills as a tool for expression, children can also experiment with letters as they apply their present knowledge of letters and sounds. As an educator, your role in observing and planning activities to address and support these domains all contribute to the holistic development of children.



## Further Reading

You can visit the link below to read more about Victoria State Government's Literacy Teaching Toolkit.

[Writing with Children](#)

## **5.6 Model and Encourage Two-Way Communication Through Questions and Careful Listening**

The previous subchapters, including Subchapter 2.4, emphasised the effectiveness of modelling in teaching children.

When you communicate with children in ways that show care, respect, and interest, you demonstrate how you actively support their growing sense of identity and directly affect their wellbeing. By engaging in two-way communication that revisits topics of interest to a child, you demonstrate that their feelings and ideas are worthwhile while stimulating their memory and other higher-order thinking skills. Two-way communication happens when two speaking parties take turns talking, listen to what the other speaker is saying, and respond with respect to understand each other.

Make it a focus of your day to engage and communicate with each child in a meaningful way. It will help teach and model social rules in communication, extend their thinking skills, and promote a close, supportive bond.

You can participate in and model meaningful, two-way communication when you:

- listen when the child is speaking, then prompt the child to wait and listen when it is your turn to speak
- involve the exchange of ideas, ask relevant questions to challenge children, and extend their thinking in new ways
- demonstrate respect and care by showing understanding and comprehension of what the child is saying
- recognise and respond to non-verbal forms of communication like moving away, stiffness, frowning, smiling, hugging, and more
- help the child to comprehend what you are saying by using words at their level and show understanding of what the child is trying to communicate
- support the developing skills of the child by practising saying difficult words or introducing new relevant words to expand their vocabulary
- respect cultural differences in communication, language, and way of speaking.



Often, the sign of a meaningful two-way conversation is the child's feeling after the discussion: is the child happy, enthused, challenged, and supported? Equally, how do you feel about the conversation? Do you feel like you know the child a little better than before? Good communication creates strong bonds and underpins the psychological wellbeing of the children in your care.

Children benefit from conversations because it allows them to express themselves, get what they need, resolve problems, ask for support, and learn from adults and one another. When children learn two-way communication, they can use several opportunities to converse—with one another, with adults, in one-on-one situations, and in groups.

In everyday experiences, educators need to make sure that children are exposed to different learning styles and are provided with a diverse, flexible, and engaging set of activities to apply what they have learned in two-way communication. Consider the following:

- **Using everyday activities as opportunities for conversational talk**

Conversational talk that is incorporated into daily activities develops a child's ability to express themselves spontaneously. For example, you may ask children to talk about what they know from their own experiences related to the book being read aloud. Children can apply social rules of language by listening to each other and waiting for their turn to speak.

- **Designing spaces and activities that encourage children to talk together and share ideas**

As an early childhood educator, you can offer children activities that require them to collaborate and converse to facilitate literacy development. These activities offer great opportunities to practise two-way communication by allowing each other to speak, listening to understand each other's ideas, and put them together to achieve a goal.

- **Asking open-ended questions that encourage children to express their ideas with more depth**

Asking why something happened instead of yes-or-no questions encourages children to verbalise their ideas more and develop their language skills. As you have learnt in Subchapter 4.3, sustaining shared conversations can also enhance their communication skills and expand their vocabulary while applying social rules of language.

## **5.7 Draw Children's Attention to Symbols and Patterns in Their Environment and Talk About Patterns and Relationships, Including the Relationship Between Letters and Sounds**

By interacting with other children, adults, and their surroundings, children gain literacy skills. You can enhance this development by providing a literacy-rich environment.

A literacy-rich environment is one in which children interact with many forms of print, including books, signs, word displays, murals, bulletin boards and charts, and many more. An environment rich in print media allows children to see that reading and writing skills have real and everyday purposes. Children observe adults using printed materials and realise that print carries meaning. In doing so, they explore print and become motivated to try to read and write themselves.

Learning words will help children connect print to their experiences and identify a word's meaning, how it is read, and how it is used. Frequently reading aloud, reading a wide range of materials, and encouraging children to connect letters and words with meanings through actions all facilitate this learning process. Providing material in the children's home languages and encouraging all children to engage with other languages further enriches their environment and extends their learning.



Being aware of environmental print, such as in billboard signs or stores, and understanding that it is part of how people communicate shows its purpose and meaning. It also involves understanding basic print concepts, including where to begin reading a page and the direction it needs to be read. A curriculum that encourages emergent literacy development may include visits to the grocery store, daily book reading times, and writing activities where children can experiment with purposeful written communication, such as labels, signs, and charts.

To provide a wide range of resources that children can experiment with, you could provide the following:

- printed books
- charts and graph paper
- picture books
- books made by the children
- magazines
- visual storytelling items such as puppets or felt figures on a fuzzy board
- posters
- signs
- pads and pencils

Some symbol systems you may start introducing in early childhood education and activities you may do to teach them are the following:

Symbol System	Sample Activity
Letters	Children can be provided with magnetic letters stuck to a metal baking sheet. It gives a tactile component that is both effective and fun for children. Encourage children to form familiar and meaningful words, like their name.
Numbers	During a baking activity, children can refer to a list of ingredients to match the number required for each item. For example, show the symbol of the number two from the list and add two eggs as indicated.

Symbol System	Sample Activity
Time	Children can be provided with a board to check their daily routine and identify the activities they accomplished. For example, a board can have pictures that symbolise brushing teeth, putting away toys, and bathing. Beside each item is a clock face that tells the children what time each part of the routine associated with.
Money	During a role-playing activity, children can pretend to buy items using play money. While engaging in play, they can be taught what each denomination looks like, how much each denomination is worth, and how much each denomination they need to buy specific items. They can also pretend to buy things they like, which are available during the play.
Musical notation	Children can be encouraged to listen to (and even sing) simple nursery rhymes to explore tempo (fast and slow), pitch (high and low), and other musical notations. Once children show awareness of the different components of music, educators can introduce the symbols used to indicate the differences.

Gaining early experience and confidence in language and literacy is one of the most direct ways to benefit children's later learning outcomes. As an early childhood educator, you have the opportunity to influence a child's life in this regard profoundly and to share with them the joys of reading, writing, and language.



## Further Reading

For further reading on literacy in early childhood education, you may access the links below.

[Early Language and Literacy Article](#)

[Literacy Teaching Toolkit for Early Childhood](#)

### 5.7.1 Developing Emergent Literacy Skills Through Patterns and Relationships



Drawing attention to the relationship between sounds and letters is an excellent way of introducing concepts that develop a child's emergent literacy skills, especially in reading. You can begin this by exploring a child's phonological awareness. Phonological awareness refers to the understanding of how sounds are put together to form words. This skill includes the ability to recognise syllables, rhymes, sounds at the start/end of words, and sounds in the middle of words. Development of this skill is strongly associated with later success in reading and spelling. You can introduce these concepts through the following:

- songs
- shared book reading
- rhymes and games
- collaborative writing experiences (e.g. drawing with annotation)

Learning sounds that make up words in conjunction with the words themselves will help children understand how words are sounded out and form an association between words and how they are pronounced. In addition, learning language and the basic rules of grammar through conversations will help children express themselves better and promote an awareness of the correct use of language.

Phonological awareness and children's increasing exposure to letters, sounds, and prints pave the way to the development of their pre-reading skills. Pre-reading skills are the strategies that children acquire to have the ability to distinguish different letter sounds from one another. It may include recognising print, knowing what books are and how to manipulate them, and understanding that words and letters are used to convey meaning. It also involves the relationship of letters and their sounds through patterns and repetition. These solidify children's understanding of how words are written and pronounced. You can develop phonological awareness in early childhood by practising the following:

- **Syllable awareness**

This can involve activities such as counting, tapping, blending, or segmenting syllables.

- **Rhyme awareness**

This involves the ability to determine whether or not words rhyme. You may continue to develop this skill by asking children to think of examples that rhyme with a certain word. Children often use mimicking or copying what they hear to translate the sounds of words.

- **Alliteration**

This can involve sorting words by their initial and final sounds. Remember that in a phonological awareness experience, children must hear the words instead of seeing the letter patterns, so make sure that words are sorted by their sounds instead of letters.

- **Onset-rime**

This involves breaking down words into their consonants before the vowels (onset) and everything left in the word (rime). For example, the rime 'ig' can have the following onsets to make these words:

- F (onset), ig (rime), fig (word)
- W (onset) ig (rime), wig (word)
- B (onset) ig (rime), big (word)
- Tw (onset) ig (rime), twig (word)

*Based on [Phonological awareness \(emergent literacy\)](#), used under CC BY 4.0.  
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## 5.8 Provide Opportunities for Group Discussions and Exchange of Views Between Children



Another way to support literacy development in early childhood is through group discussions. Providing a balance between child-initiated and educator-supported learning can benefit children from each learning mode and maximise their learning opportunities. Allotting time for group activities that everyone needs to attend to is a strategy you can use to teach collaboration, facilitate group discussions, address social adjustments, and build relationships on top of the individual skills that this can address.

One of the things you can incorporate into your daily routine is *Group Time/ Circle Time*. At this time of the day, you can gather in a comfortable area in class to do activities together within an allotted period, considering children's attention span and age. Choose appropriate activities that children can enjoy and participate in.

Group time can involve activities such as:

- Music and movement
- Sensory activities
- Reading books
- Calendar time
- Today's weather
- Word/Letter for the day
- Show and tell
- Group games and discussions
- Exploration of an object or activity

When selecting activities for group time, some factors you can consider are their age and development, adjustment, familiarity with classroom materials, current skills and abilities, and level of communication. You can encourage children to share their own views by asking follow-up questions based on their responses or asking what they think about another child's point of view. Remember to make the activities inclusive and respectful of each child's differences.

## **5.9 Model Language and Encourage Children to Express Themselves Through Language in Different Contexts and for Different Purposes**

Language modelling is an excellent way of building upon children's communication attempts and demonstrating how children can use more language.

You can model language during interactions with children to stimulate language development. You can talk about the following:

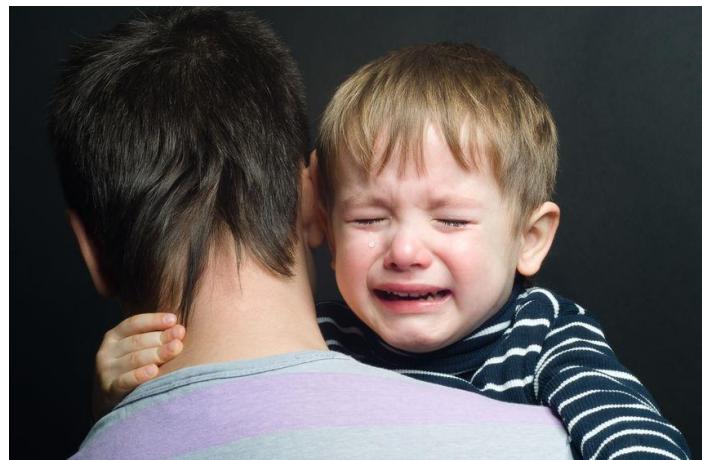
- What you are doing (self-talk) to model language used to describe the actions you are making or express what you are thinking. For example:
  - While joining children play, you can say, 'I want to use yellow cubes today. Yellow is the colour of Mister Sun [pause to look for other yellow objects] and Olivia's dress!' to describe the characteristics of the objects they see inside and outside the centre
  - You can say, 'I want to squeeze the playdough and then pinch its sides, then roll it!' while doing the actions
  - During snack time, you can use common prepositions to describe position and location or words to describe taste or smell, 'I want to sit between Jack and Olivia. That makes me sitting across you, Noah! What do you have for snacks today? [pause] Oh, wow! You have mangoes. Are they sweet? [pause] What about you, Ava? Do you like your oval chocolate cookies?'
- What the child is doing (parallel talk) to verbalise your observation of the child's actions, narrate what the child is doing, model appropriate gestures, or practise target vocabulary. For example:
  - 'I can see that you are holding the red car, red ball, red cup and red block. Hmm. I wonder what you are going to do with those. [pause] Oh, you now have a box for your red stuff and a second box with a yellow ball in it!'
  - You want to reinforce the identification of the colours blue and green. You may incorporate this through play and say, 'We have a pink and a blue dress for our baby doll. Hmm. I think blue will look good on the baby. Can you please get the blue dress? [pause and ask the child to help you change the baby doll's clothes] Now, we have to pick from the green and orange shoes. Let us try them on! Can you bring green shoes? [pause] Then the orange shoes, please? [pause] Which one do you like for our baby doll? [pause and wait for the child to pick]

You can model how you use language to give relevant descriptions of what you see in people, objects, places, and events. Children can appreciate your comments when you share them as they happen. This way, children can connect the language you use to describe and visualise the actual object you describe. On the other hand, you can encourage children to express themselves by asking open-ended questions that will allow them to observe their environment and gather a response.

When using self-talk and parallel talk, it is important to respond to the needs of children and use appropriate words that apply to the current situation. This way, you will help children understand the different contexts and uses of verbal expressions and language.

*Based on [Language stimulation](#), used under CC BY 4.0. © State of Victoria  
(Department of Education and Training)*

It is also crucial for children to learn to express themselves in different contexts and purposes. The context of language may include instances when the child feels a certain emotion, while its purpose may be about expressing a request or asking permission. For example, you may still encourage an upset child to ask for a preferred toy appropriately even when they are about to have a meltdown. Remind the child to calm down and model how they can ask properly using words like, 'May I have (object), please?'



Modelling language allows children to realise that there are appropriate ways to express themselves under different circumstances and emotions and for different purposes, whether it is to inquire, request permission, describe a statement, communicate their observation, and more. You may also encourage children to express their thoughts and ideas through open-ended questions, conversations about a book, drawing and writing, and music and movement.

## Checkpoint! Let's Review



1. A child's language skills development is affected by age, birth order, gender, the language that is spoken at home, and specific learning disabilities.
2. There is a positive relationship between a child's performance in school and their emergent literacy skills during their early years.
3. You can stimulate children's enjoyment of language and literature by providing a creative and imaginative environment.



### Learning Activity for Chapter 5

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the classroom learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

## VI. Support Holistic Learning and Development

*'Children's learning is dynamic, complex and holistic. There are several aspects of learning and all are interrelated and intricately interwoven, including spiritual, personal, creative, emotional, cognitive and linguistic.'*

*Sourced from [The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#), used under CC BY 4.0. © Commonwealth of Australia.*



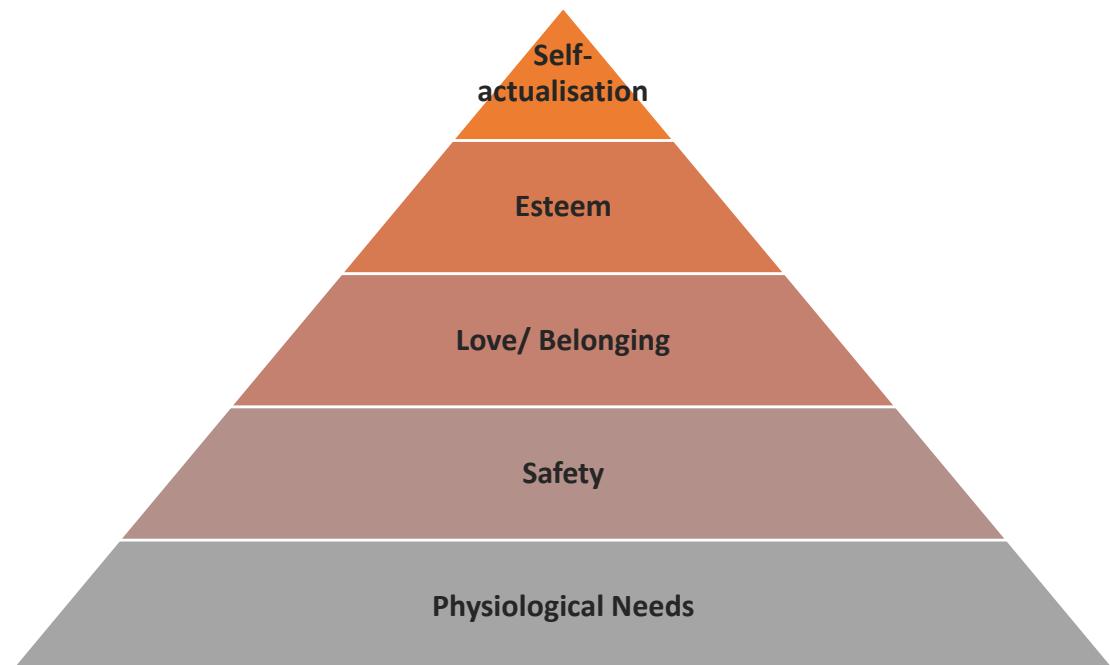
Throughout this unit, you have examined ways of fostering physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and communication development. In this chapter, you will combine all these elements and explore different ways of creating and fostering an environment for holistic learning and development.

When considering children's holistic development, educators need to have an in-depth knowledge of the theories behind children's development and learning. Note that each theory or theorist explains development from a different perspective. Therefore, educators must work with their team to decide what theories and perspectives influence their philosophy, policies, and practices. It is also crucial to clarify how these affect intentional teaching for holistically encouraging children's development.

Some of the theories and theorists explored throughout this unit include Mildred Parten's stages of development, Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory, Albert Bandura's social learning theory, Jean Piaget's cognitive theory, and the schema theory. In this chapter, you will learn a few more. Note that each theory or theorist explains development from a different perspective.

### Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

This theory is widely accepted in many disciplines as a clear, visual schema for expressing development. Maslow's theory is based on holistic notions of the whole child, as it explores the idea that the fulfilment of basic needs leads to 'self-actualisation'—where children have the opportunity to develop to their highest potential. Below is an overview of Maslow's hierarchy of needs:



Children are the focal point of the curriculum in contemporary early childhood education as educators work to cater to their individual needs. Maslow expresses that children need a safe and secure environment to engage and learn and be supported to develop relationships with other children and educators. These needs are explored in Learning Outcome 1 in the EYLF, as the curriculum encourages children to become independent learners and move towards self-actualisation.

According to Maslow's understanding, these basic needs must be met before higher-level needs of self-esteem and self-actualisation can be achieved. Thus, providing a safe, secure environment enables children to feel a sense of belonging, which fosters their self-esteem and ultimate self-actualisation. To support and initiate inquiry processes, you must first ensure that children's basic needs are fulfilled and they feel welcomed and valued members of the community. With this support in place, children's natural curiosity and desire to learn can flourish, which you can, of course, further support and promote by facilitating each child's learning.

Maslow's theory does not only apply to children's needs while at the centre. It covers other factors outside the classroom that can, for sure, impact early development. Before venturing on to the rest of the unit, you must be aware of certain factors that may affect the holistic development of children.

### **Lack of Materials and Resources and Poor Diet**

One of the factors that prevent the fulfilment of physiological needs is poverty. Poverty may cause inaccessibility of age and developmentally appropriate materials needed to support a child's development. The lack of materials will also limit the reinforcement and provision of new learning opportunities in a child. Some aspects include lack of presence of books in a child's home, poor food variety, limited access to academic support such as tutorial sessions, or the inability to enrol a child in ballet or swimming classes even though the child's potential is evident. The impacts of these aspects may involve chronic malnutrition and the child having no references for further learning.

Lack of resources may negatively impact the development of a child's self-regulation, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. Poverty also brings about several other adverse effects in the family's resources that may impede normal development in early childhood, such as stress and poor health conditions. The aspects of lack of resources may involve insufficient social support and income to support the child. These may negatively impact children when they develop difficulty interacting with others. Another negative impact is the inaccessibility of quality education and healthcare, leading to slower progress in learning and health.

Inability to purchase healthy food items will cause poor diet, hunger, malnutrition, or low enthusiasm in children. When children do not get the nutrients they need, they will not have the energy to engage in play, discovery, and learning. To some children, it is not poverty that causes poor diet, but inappropriate food choices usually influenced by families. Because of this, overeating and undereating are both aspects of poor diet. Children who overeat have a high chance of developing Type-2 diabetes, and those that have no access to healthy food may develop nutritional deficiencies.



## Further Reading

For more information on the impact of the lack of material and resources on development in early childhood and the health of Australia's children, you may access the link below.

[The Impact of Poverty on Early Childhood Development](#)

[The Health of Australia's Children](#)

[Poor diet in children](#)

## Family Violence, Child Abuse, and Trauma

Every year, thousands of children in Australia suffer physically and psychologically due to violence they experience or witness at home. Family violence may be physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, or economic that directly or indirectly affect the child. Regardless of its aspect, this is a threat to the safety and welfare of children. It may result in neglect, trauma and instil fear and anxiety. The effects of family violence extend to children, even as infants. For example, a mother who lives in fear of her husband may unintentionally neglect their child, which may manifest itself in the form of learning disorders or developmental delays in the future. Because of family violence resulting in neglect, children's medical needs may not be attended to, and treasured items, including the child's belongings, may constantly be damaged. This will result in poor health and physical development or children's inability to form trusting relationships.

Child abuse is an act of violence that directly affects and negatively impacts a child's development. It is a traumatic event that the child will cope with until adulthood. Family abuse refers to the violence done by a family member towards another that may be physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, economic, or legal abuse. Even if violence was not directed towards the child, seeing a family member suffer from violence and witnessing incidents like this will surely affect the child's wellbeing in the long run. Some of the aspects of child abuse are the physical and emotional injuries inflicted on the child. Children may have trouble maintaining relationships and carry negative emotions such as fear and isolation in the long run.



As an educator in early childhood, you must be aware of tell-tale signs of family violence and child abuse, such as physical, sexual abuse, and other experiences that interrupt appropriate childhood activities.

Some effects of these experiences among children include the following:

- Poor health, sleeping habits, and excessive screaming in infants
- High levels of distress and aggressive behaviour in toddlers
- Distrust of adults or difficulty forming relationships with others

*Based on [Domestic violence as a form of child abuse: Identification and prevention](#),  
used under CC BY 4.0. Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)  
on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia*

Trauma is the result of disturbing events that may happen to children. It may be a child's response to distressing or negatively overwhelming situations that the child may not handle or cope with. These are situations that cause emotional pain and distress to children. Some of the possible causes of trauma are family abuse, dysfunction in the family that are not addressed or rehabilitated (e.g. mental illness, substance abuse), accidents, natural disasters, death of a loved one, or separation from parent or caregiver. Incidents like this affect children negatively and may result in sleep problems and lower immune functions.

Keep in mind that the cognitive development of children who have experienced trauma may deviate from the norm. Research has shown a link between exposure to trauma and the development of a child's cognitive abilities, language, and self-identity. Children exposed to trauma are also likely to have been exposed to other factors that may affect their cognitive development. Among these factors are neglect and alcohol exposure while they were in the womb. The impact of these factors must be considered when providing support for these children—more on these in the further reading section.

All these factors contribute to a child's safety and wellbeing. When safety is not guaranteed, there will always be a hindrance in achieving holistic development in children. Their full potential will be difficult to maximise, and achieving goals will be a challenge. As an educator, your role in understanding the needs of children under your care now makes more sense. Observe and know each child and, with your best effort, help and support children experiencing them.

## Further Reading



For more information on children's different responses to trauma, how your response to the traumatic event is important to the child, and the effect of trauma on the children's brain development, visit the links below.

[Trauma and children – tips for parents](#)

[The effect of trauma on the brain development of children](#)

### **Inconsistent or Non-Existential Emotional Support or Comfort**

Children need emotional support to boost their esteem and motivate them to move forward to the next developmental milestone they are ready to approach. It can be expressed verbally through praise or physically through hugs or pats on the back. On the other hand, emotional comfort can be related to the response they will receive as they encounter mistakes or challenges in new learning experiences. Again, it can be expressed verbally through consoling words or physically through comforting hugs.

Inconsistent emotional support occurs when adults fail to be present in children's milestones and give changing or uncertain support on selected circumstances. This may cause the child to associate the level of motivation or reinforcement they receive with their performance on a specific task or the output of a certain situation. The inconsistency may negatively impact the child and cause confusion due to differing responses to a child's single emotion and not validating a child's feelings. Because of this, the child may have difficulty trusting other people and regulating their own emotions.

On the other hand, non-existent emotional comfort may leave the child in guilt and self-blame when making certain mistakes. Emotional comfort provides reassurance that mistakes are only learning opportunities and can be corrected through practice and application of learning. Without this, children may develop unhealthy coping techniques if they are not guided on dealing with failures. These may cause the child to be afraid to make mistakes and feel bad about themselves when they commit them. Non-existent emotional support means affection is not shown towards the child, and their emotional needs are not met. Because of this, the child may develop an inappropriate display of emotions and difficulty regulating their emotions.

All these may negatively impact the development of children's confidence and independence. In addition, these experiences will affect their emotional and social developmental milestones and the other domains eventually.

The previously discussed factors can negatively impact children's physiological needs and safety. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, if these needs are not met, children will not achieve the stage of love and belongingness. Just like how you may not fully appreciate hugs and words of encouragement when you are thinking about how to get your next meal, or you do not want to go home because of an abusive partner.

### **Lack of Play and Limited Stimulation of Brain Development**

When children struggle with the first three levels, they are less likely to develop confidence and self-esteem. Lack of play is a very unfortunate event that may happen to a child. It is the deprivation of childhood experiences and opportunities to build the foundation skills they need later in life.

When children are restricted and develop problems with play, positive learning dispositions are put at risk. These are big factors that negatively impact all domains and the progress of each developmental milestone. Children may develop poor self-control and difficulty adapting to change.

Limited stimulation of brain development may be linked to children's engagement in play and fun activities. When children are interested, their minds are at work. Curiosity and exploration will spark, and discovery will take place. If children do not have access to that, regression may occur, which means the skills will go back to a less developed state. There will not be enough opportunities to practise these skills, and growth may be slower or stop. All these factors impact the holistic development of children.



## **Other Life Experiences Which Interrupt Appropriate Childhood Activities, and Their Potential Long-Term Harmful Impacts**

In the table below are other life experiences that may interrupt appropriate childhood activities and the potential long-term harmful effects to child development:

<b>Experience</b>	<b>Long-Term Harmful Impact</b>
Lack of attachment to adults	Difficulty in trusting others
Disability	Difficulty adjusting to the environment
Living as a refugee	Difficulty in developing a sense of belongingness

These experiences contribute to children's present condition, disposition, and response towards their environment, making it more crucial for you as an educator to model compassion and understanding. As mentioned in the previous chapters, knowing each child in your care is a key factor in addressing their needs appropriately. There are many ways you can create the sense of connectedness and belongingness discussed in previous chapters, including:

- keeping your communication and language positive and encouraging
- making the entire family feel welcome and taking an interest in their culture and experiences
- offering children support and kindness while encouraging them to explore their developing skills and interests
- showing pride in children's achievements and displaying their projects and artworks
- offering a wide variety of activities that allow for each child to shine
- promoting inclusion and diversity and modelling respect for all members of the community.

Children's overall wellbeing and development are the goal of all educators. You must ensure that you make every child feel welcome, supported, and a valued member of the community.

## **6.1 Recognise and Promote Opportunities for Development in Multiple Areas**

The previous chapters show overlapping concepts on children's physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and communication development. This is because all domains work together to achieve holistic development among children. It is worth remembering that children develop in unique ways, and a 'one size fits all' approach may not be the best to use. As an educator, you must continue to advocate for children's learning and give the best care for them by recognising their needs, providing opportunities to address them as they build their confidence towards independence.

Play-based learning has risen in popularity to support the holistic development of children in the early years. Playing helps children naturally develop essential social, physical, emotional, and cognitive skills without restricting them to a rigid classroom setting that they may not be mature enough to handle yet. Children pick up on skills much easier during play because it comes more naturally to them than structured activities.



## **Interrelationship of Developmental Domains**

Children do not progress through one developmental domain at a time. Instead, the developmental domains affect each other so that one supports development in the other. For example, a child whose physical health and wellbeing develop appropriately according to age may easily learn how to identify and regulate their emotions without being distracted by their physical needs. A child who has a good grasp of their native language's grammar and use is more likely to ask cohesive questions that are easier to understand and answer, which leads to more knowledge acquisition for the child.

Understanding the interrelationships between and among developmental domains helps educators form practices and programs that fit a child's current capabilities. For example, a child with good language and cognition skills but with poor social competence might better be prompted individually rather than expecting the child to follow the group. This can be practised through group activities. However, coaching discreetly and separately will help the child develop social competence without disrupting others' learning.

Planning and preparation are helpful processes that will allow you to provide opportunities for development in multiple areas. Without planning, your goals for the development of each child may not be met.

## **Curriculum Planning**

The curriculum planning cycle is largely dependent on children's learning and development. Educators must determine what the child wants to learn, how they learn, and their current stage of development. Educators tailor activities based on the information they have gathered on the child's learning and development. After implementing the activities, educators determine whether their activities were effective, meaningful, and relevant to the child's learning and development.

Early childhood education and care staff use the curriculum planning cycle to prepare a quality program that best suits both the child and the centre's needs. The curriculum planning cycle is an ongoing process that has five main steps, as discussed in the succeeding pages.

## **Step 1: Observing/Collecting Information**

This is the process of gathering various information and data about the children, their families and educators, and the communities in which they live. Here are some processes under this step.

- Identify their individual and group strengths, interests, and goals in conjunction with the Framework's Learning Outcomes.
- Observe children to determine their developmental progress and establish whether any goals and objectives (Learning Outcomes) have been achieved. The best observations will occur during children's regular daily activities. Their use of language, social interactions with others, and work samples will demonstrate learning.

## **Step 2: Analysing Learning**

This process involves reviewing your observations. It includes asking questions, going back to what has been observed, and analysing the content of the observation considering child development theory and knowledge.

Here are some examples of questions you may ask:

- What learning is taking place here?
- How is this meant for us as educators, the child and their family?
- What are their strengths and interests?
- What do I see?
- What do others see?
- What do children recognise about themselves?
- What do families recognise?
- How does this meet the learning outcomes?

### **Step 3: Planning**

A centre will plan and design learning experiences considering what other learning activities or extensions of learning are possible. These are what a plan will include:

- planning in collaboration with children and families
- planning for learning against the EYLF Learning Outcomes
- planning to support the pedagogy, including individual and group plans, routines, experiences, interactions inside and outside, etc.

### **Step 4: Implementing**

Acting is to respond by implementing the plan for the children (i.e. putting the plan into action). As an educator, you need to present the experience in an attractive and welcoming way to encourage children's participation. It is important to remember to actively participate in the experience to guide and support children's learning.

### **Step 5: Reflecting/Evaluating**

Reflect on the learning that occurred, what you have noticed, understood, planned for, and how you and the children have interacted and participated. Review and analyse what methods worked best or what modifications are needed as necessary.

Reflection involves personal review by the educators involved and discussion with colleagues, the children, and their families. Each person will have unique thoughts and observations to draw upon and offer meaningful and important reflection.

You will also need to reflect on how the experience links to the EYLF practices, principles, and learning outcomes.



### **Further Reading**

For further information on the curriculum planning cycle as laid out in the EYLF, you may read pages 10–13 of the Educator's Guide to the EYLF linked below.

[Educators' Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#)

## **Observation and Documentation**

One thing that will supplement your plans and preparations is to ensure that you keep your observations documented. It will help track each child's progress, give you a basis for curriculum planning, and support your discussions during formal meetings with families. Consider some helpful guidelines of what you can do when observing, documenting, analysing, and planning how to support children's needs.



You can collect information and document and analyse evidence to assess learning through the following:

- Observe and document children's learning in different ways.
- Gather evidence to plan, teach, and review the methods used.
- Apply the framework and learning outcomes where appropriate.
- Ensure children are engaged in their own learning and progress.
- Ensure all information is shared with all stakeholders who support the child's learning and development.
- Evaluate the curriculum and practices at intervals.

Observations can also happen spontaneously. Before you observe a child, you should have a goal or questions in mind that you seek the answer to. Consider:

- the context, such as what is specific to a family, community, and children's culture
- the child's interests, abilities, and strengths
- your environment, such as your workplace and the resources and materials available
- the child's routines, such as sleep time or mealtime
- the child's relationships, such as who is important in the child's life
- the expectations of the family
- the name of each family member who is appropriate to discuss the child with
- the child's exposure through educational trips.

While observing a child, you should pay particular attention to what the child is doing, how they are interacting with other children, and what they are saying. It will help if you position yourself in a place close enough to hear the child's conversations but far enough that you are not intrusive and disruptive. You should write down your observations for review later.

Consider the following when taking notes:

<b>Identify Basic Information</b>	Include child's age, date of the observation, target skill to observe, setting, other children involved, and your name
<b>Mention relevant information</b>	Include only details of direct quotes and information about what is actually happening. For example, 'prefers using a paintbrush with a bigger handle during an art activity, refused when offered a paintbrush with a smaller grip, moves paintbrush in a circular motion or jabs on the paper.'
<b>Describe children's play behaviours</b>	Outline play behaviours, including the child's interests and skills. For example, Cassie sat down next to Jake in the sandbox area. 'Hi Jake, can I play with you?' Cassie and Jake built a sandcastle together. 'Let us put flags on top of the castle,' Cassie said. Cassie continued working with the sand. 'I want to make soldiers,' she said.

<b>Use Descriptive Language</b>	<p>Outline what the child is doing and specify the observable actions. Record the exact event that occurred, including children's comments. For example, Olivia pretends to eat fruits and says, 'owange [orange is] tasty!'</p>
<b>Record facts and evidence-based remarks</b>	<p>Record the facts on your observation that can be characterised using neutral words. Avoid using judgemental language that does not describe children's actions and tends to reflect your own interpretation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ e.g. the words 'pretty', 'ugly', 'perfect', and 'bad' do not describe children's actions and reflect a subjective perspective</li> <li>▪ e.g. 'uses the left foot when taking the first step on the balance beam and then tries to stay on the shaft by spreading arms and moving them until confidence to walk is gained.' This is a statement that reflects accurate and evidence-based observation.</li> </ul>
<b>Keep an objective point of view</b>	<p>Do not let your personal experiences and judgements interfere when recording observation. Avoid minimising children's feelings based on your own or disregarding their experiences based on personal thoughts and points of view.</p> <p>Instead of saying, 'Cassie is a whiner today just because her doll is broken, and I think she is scared that the doll will be thrown away.'</p> <p>Say, 'Cassie cried today when she saw that the foot of her doll got separated from the rest of its body. She did not want to let go of her doll and kept on shouting, 'No!' She only calmed down when the educator said, 'Let us try to fix it. How can we fix it?' She kept holding onto the doll and eventually agreed to use tape to put the parts together temporarily.'</p>

## 6.2 Intentionally Scaffold Children's Learning to Foster Development

A child can solve a problem, carry out a task, or achieve a goal just beyond their abilities through scaffolding. In construction, scaffolding refers to the temporary framing or structure workers use as support while working on a building but are ultimately taken away to reveal the completed structure. In childcare, scaffolding children's learning refers to the temporary support you provide when helping children learn new skills or building on skills they already have. The level of assistance you give to them is intended to fade eventually and can be more or less depending on their needs.



### Vygotsky: Zone of Proximal Development

Lev Vygotsky was an early pioneer in child development theory who saw children as dynamic learners who could achieve skills that they could not yet naturally achieve when guided by an interested and engaged adult. Vygotsky stated that learning occurs in the space between what the child could achieve independently and where an adult guide and/or collaboration of peers is needed. He referred to this as the zone of proximal development (ZPD).

With this understanding, educators facilitate children's learning by keeping them in the ZPD through the teaching strategy of scaffolding to support and guide children. Additionally, Vygotsky's underpinning theory informs educators of the type and level of support a child requires. For example, training a toddler to express the need for a toilet break verbally will need more attention than a pre-schooler who is already toilet trained but wants to be accompanied by an adult.

Scaffolding children's learning means:

- individually identifying where children need support in performing a task or acquiring a skill,
- assisting while the child is learning and gaining experience, and
- withdrawing assistance as the child's skills grows to increase independence.

Vygotsky's theory emphasises the importance of social interaction as the precursor to development. In this regard, your role as an educator who interacts socially with children to a high level is considered crucial for developing fully. Your ability to scaffold effectively is dependent on your social interactions with children—your ability to observe and assess their actions and needs, your ability to communicate effectively, and your ability to engage creatively with the children in your care.

Traditionally, educators tended to take over children's play rather than supporting children through their play. However, the EYLF strongly supports children's ability to learn independently through play. As an educator, your role is to scaffold and guide their learning by anticipating their needs and providing the right amount of support to ensure that children consistently progress through their developmentally appropriate milestones.

For example, by engaging in an ongoing social relationship with the children in your care, you will develop an understanding of their interests, their intentions, and their objectives. Based on this information, you can decide whether to participate and how to participate in their play on a moment-by-moment basis. Considering Vygotsky's ZPD will allow you to scaffold their learning while maintaining the child's level of autonomy and increasing their self-esteem and self-confidence.

The following scenario illustrates the value of scaffolding to support children:

*The educator noticed that children are learning each other's names. They devised a teaching tool and activity that would support their efforts to remember names and practise pre-reading skills simultaneously. The Brown Bear song is a favourite in the classroom, so the teacher used their existing familiarity with the song, combined with the new book, to scaffold their attempts to remember names. At first, the teacher replaced some words with children's names while singing the song and used the same line until all names were mentioned. Eventually, the line from the song will act as a cue for children to replace the word with their name. The teacher can then allow children to fill in the blanks to complete the wordings with each other's names.*

*To 'scaffold' means to provide external support to a child's mastery attempts, so they can be supported in mastering a task that they are currently unable to accomplish on their own. With this small amount of scaffolding, the children will very soon remember each other's names independently, without support.*

Early childhood is a crucial period in terms of cognitive development. Humans form the integral brain structures that underpin their learning ability in the first few years of life. An environment free from major stress, which is appropriately stimulating (i.e. suited to the child's skill levels) and encourages creativity and exploration, will best support children's rapidly developing cognitive skills.

Each education and care service is likely to have a formal set of policies and procedures for assessing and monitoring children's skills development. However, you can also consider everyday interactions as chances to informally observe children and identify their needs. The amount of time you spend with children allows you to have relevant insight into how they are developing and the opportunity to ask for help or further intervention if you perceive a problem or delay.

For instance, if you consider that a child in your care is not exhibiting the appropriate signs of development for their age, discuss this with other staff and professionals to seek their perceptions and advice. Remember that early intervention is important when there are areas of concern to make sure that children can make the most of their learning opportunities in these crucial early years. The following case study explores the area, as mentioned above:

*Danielle (3 years old) is working on strengthening her fine motor skills. She cannot successfully open containers or zip her bag; squeezing playdough is a challenge, and the objects she holds falls off when they get a little heavy. Danielle sometimes gets frustrated and throws objects that fall. The educator noticed that the other children her age were now successful in doing these tasks. It clearly shows that Danielle needs some attention to work on this skill.*

*The educator can spend more time doing playdough activities with Danielle to practise squeezing. Clothespins for clipping and tongs for transferring objects are also some tools that the educator provided. Danielle's disposition towards the new activities is also observed to avoid frequent failed attempts that may lead to frustration. The educator can take turns with Danielle, demonstrate techniques on clipping a clothespin or start with a few objects to transfer using tongs and, later on, increase the number as Danielle develops mastery of the skill. The educator can also do hand-over-hand prompts by holding Danielle's hand and doing tasks 'together' like opening containers and zipping her bag.*

*Gradually, the educator can decrease the prompts or their presence while Danielle does these exercises. They can pretend to do something else and go back when Danielle finished clipping five clothespins, for example, but still observing from afar. Once the skill is acquired and Danielle has confidence in her new skill, this can now be practised across various situations. The educator can ask Danielle to bring three books from the shelf or invite her to collect yellow objects in a container and observe if she can do the task successfully and independently.*

Scaffolding recognises the child's ability to learn and solve problems given the right support, rather than seeing learning as something that children must be forced to do. This is a highly creative, moment-to-moment educational strategy that relies on your flexibility, adaptability, and knowledge of the developmental levels of each child in your care.

To scaffold children's learning, you can:

- offer suggestions to improve skills development
- use open-ended questions to encourage problem-solving
- offer alternative options or ways of thinking
- offer alternative resources or materials to extend their experiences
- provide feedback and encourage children to reflect on their experiences
- anticipate children's needs
- use spontaneous, 'teachable moments' that are directly related to children's experience.

Not only does scaffolding benefit the child, but it also calls for educators to be creatively engaged, offering a wonderful opportunity to extend their own skills and understanding. With this approach, each day provides variety and something new to learn for both children and educators.

*Based on [Scaffolding](#), used under CC BY 4.0. © State of Queensland (QCAA) 2019.*



### **6.3 Select and Use Resources and Materials That Offer Integrated Opportunities for Challenge, Curiosity and Discovery**



Stimulating children's natural curiosity facilitates their desire to explore and to ask questions. Challenges prompt children's minds to create solutions and develop new strategies and techniques to achieve a goal. New learning through these will eventually lead to discoveries.

Providing a fun, engaging environment full of resources

and materials that allow them to explore and innovate promotes their holistic development. Opportunities for challenge, intrigue, and discovery refer to instances where children are encouraged to look at situations in a different light and direct their own development.

The resources you provide should be:

- of a wide variety to allow children choices and room for exploration (including a variety of shapes, sizes, colours, textures, etc.)
- safe and non-toxic
- clearly labelled
- readily available so that children can follow their interests
- largely open-ended, meaning that they allow children to use their imaginations and to explore and create
- recycled or repurposed where possible to promote sustainability.

Consider how you can present and store materials and resources in ways that make them available, engaging and stimulating children's curiosity and sense of fun. Give children time and space to explore and encourage them to try new things and follow their interests.

#### **6.4 Arrange the Environment to Encourage Interactions Between Children as well as Accommodating the Child's Need for Privacy, Solitude or Quiet**



Holistic learning is dependent upon children feeling safe and cultivating a sense of belonging and connectedness. This kind of environment allows children to explore and make mistakes, knowing that they are cared for, safe and valued. Quality Area 3 of the National Quality Standard provides guidelines on ensuring a safe and appropriate learning environment in early childhood learning centres.

The classroom design must be planned to intentionally create an environment that encourages interaction, collaboration, and cooperation. Examples of intentional classroom designing include:

- placing a storage rack with crayons, pencils and paper near the table so that children can share the accessible materials while doing writing and drawing activities
- putting a mat and on the building blocks corner divided with shelves as a precaution for falling towers as children work together
- having fruits and vegetables, plates, and utensils available in the kitchen area to encourage children to engage in imaginative play.

The purpose of the materials and their accessibility must foster independence and strategically aim children to communicate their needs, feelings, and preferences.

The classroom design must also give space for children to warm up, adjust, take a break, or enjoy doing activities on their own. You can place chairs near the door or their bag shelves to allow children to take their time to adjust when they arrive at school.

### **Need for Privacy**

During toileting, dressing, and undressing, every child's right to privacy must be respected. This applies to children of all ages and stages of development, including babies, young children and school-age children. Educators need to be vigilant in protecting children's privacy during nappy changing times in toilet areas and at any time a child dresses and undresses, such as for sleep and rest times or changing clothes. There must be a separate room in the centre, such as changing room or bathroom, that is not visible to the visitors in the centre. It ensures that children will not be embarrassed in case of incidents related to potty training. At the same time, the centre must provide close supervision from trusted adults for the safety of each child.

You can also use an area inside the classroom that may be partially covered with shelves, for example, to emphasise the division and its intention for respect to privacy. Through this, children can associate the purpose of this area. They can eventually communicate their needs to educators by going there or bringing their things, such as clothes or nappies, to express their requests. As children seek independence in dressing and toileting, educators need to give them the space and privacy they need whilst still supervising sensitively and respectfully.



### **Further Reading**

For further information on children's right to privacy, you may read the National Childcare Accreditation Council resource linked below.

[A matter of respect: Recognising young children's right to privacy](#)

## Need for Solitude

There will be days when children are not in the right disposition to interact with others and prefer to do activities alone. This does not mean there is something wrong with the child, but make sure that you observe any unusual behaviour worth taking note of. Remember to be respectful of children's decisions when engaging to play. Some learning outcomes and discovery can also be achieved when they work on their own.



To address the need for solitude, you must provide activities and materials that an individual can manipulate or accomplish. Some of these include manipulatives and table toys, like jigsaw puzzles, drawing and writing materials, toy cars, small construction, and drawing materials.

## Need for Quiet

Following an everyday routine and interacting with many people at the centre can sometimes be too much for a young child to bear. Providing quiet times and areas for children to find relaxation is essential for balancing a child's day and allowing time for adjustment, reflection, and restoration. To support this need for quiet, you can design your classroom with an area to accommodate children who want to rest, take a nap, or stay still in a comfortable place without being forced to participate in group or physical activities.

This can be in the same spot or close to your cosy reading nook, separated from the other areas for play. Make the space comfortable by putting blankets, pillows, and a soft mat to create a warm and relaxing vibe. Through the classroom environment, you can communicate to children that you have prepared appropriate spaces in the classroom to accommodate their needs.

## Further Reading



For further information on children's need for spaces for privacy and quiet, you can visit the links below.

[The Classroom Environment: Create a Quiet Space](#)

[The Indoor Environment: Designing and Organizing](#)

## **6.5 Respond to Spontaneous Teachable Moments as They Occur and Use Them to Enhance Children’s Learning**

Spontaneous teachable moments happen beyond what you write on your planned activities and curriculum. These are situations that are affected by children’s responses, disposition, temperament, and other external factors. As an educator, your role is not only about the strategies and techniques you planned for each activity. When you are involved in children’s learning, you can easily find opportunities and turn them into teachable moments by facilitating instead of interrupting children’s play. You can find situations where you can further engage children in play and stimulate their thinking.

Using teachable moments to support and extend children’s learning is considered part of an ‘intentional teaching’ approach. Intentional teaching includes a balance of self-guided and adult-guided experiences that support children’s learning goals, including the spontaneous teachable moments that educators use to build on (scaffold) children’s learning. To capture these moments to teach children in unanticipated situations in their daily routine, you must be responsive to the environment and flow of activity, be informed of each child’s developmental level and commit to individual learning. You can review the examples of Learning Opportunities in Subchapter 1.1 and apply your new knowledge.

### **Intentional Teaching**

The qualities of intentional teaching are that it is deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful. This teaching method relies on an educator’s knowledge of current educational theories and research regarding children’s play, leisure, and learning. Educators who practise intentional teaching recognise that learning occurs in social contexts and that for learning to occur, social interaction and conversations are vitally important. Therefore, worthwhile and challenging experiences and interactions are used to promote learning among children and foster high-level skills actively.

Strategies that may be used in intentional teaching include the following:

modelling and demonstrating

open questioning

speculating

explaining

engaging in shared thinking and problem solving

Intentional teaching can also involve a planned provocation presented during a moment in the room's routine group time or during another regular occurrence during the day, such as at mealtimes. From the children's reactions, an educator can then act flexibly and spontaneously, using the children's response to take the experience in a direction that will have the most impact and value.

Educational programs and practices must be stimulating and engaging to satisfy Quality Area 1 of the NQS. It should enhance children's learning and development, nurture the development of life skills, and complement experiences, opportunities, and social relationships.

Here is a summary of intentional teaching practices that you may also apply in the discussion of the previous chapters:

Intentional Teaching Practice	Definition
Challenging	Providing opportunities for children to expand their skills and using provocation and reflection to determine when to present obstacles and opportunities to extend their thinking.
Collaborating	Allowing children to take the lead in exploring and contributing to the course of the experience rather than controlling it.
Encouraging	Giving remarks that inspire and encourage children to persevere, especially when they are making an effort.
Identifying	Bringing new ideas and subjects to children's attention which may lead to new fields of discovery and investigation.
Listening	Paying attention to what children are saying to encourage them to lead conversations. By actively responding to children's contributions, educators create opportunities for authentic and sustained conversational exchanges.

Intentional Teaching Practice	Definition
Modelling	Demonstrating a skill or the proper execution of a task. Modelling should always be supplemented by opportunities for children to try their hand at understanding the skill.
Negotiating	Providing opportunities for children to try their hand at problem-solving and coping with difficult issues. Educators use 'scaffolding' to help children see different sides to an argument or question, and they enable them to come up with rational ideas that address their own and others' points of view.
Providing choices	Allowing children to make their own decisions. This entails appreciating children's abilities to make safe decisions and experience the consequences of their choices. When providing children with choices, educators must consider children's developmental stage and ensure that they are not at risk or in danger.
Questioning	Engaging children in critical thinking and problem-solving in a responsive manner. Questions should be honest and polite rather than being used to elicit answers that educators already know.
Revisiting and revising	Taking the time to reflect on and draw on previous learning by revisiting experiences, engaging in critical thinking, and making modifications as necessary.
Scaffolding	Making use of knowledge of a child's ability. Educators may break down activities and concepts and provide a supportive environment for children to move on to the next stage or a higher level of thinking.

Based on *Intentional teaching practices*, under CC BY 4.0. © State of Queensland (QCAA) 2019.

You may consider the teaching strategies and apply them to each area of development, as follows:

- **Physical development**

Encourage children to participate in activities that use their fundamental motor movements and their gross and fine motor skills. Some of these may include dancing, running, moulding, drawing, and more.

- **Social development**

Prepare activities that encourage collaboration among children, promote interaction or doing activities in a shared area.

- **Emotional development**

Listen to children and validate their emotions to help them understand what they are feeling and learn to regulate their emotions.

- **Language and cognitive development**

Use open-ended questions while engaging children in conversations or observing their work to help them practise critical thinking skills and problem solving.

- **Communication development**

Model the proper use of social rules of language and encourage children to ask questions and express their thoughts and ideas.



### Further Reading

The video from ACECQA linked below showcases an educator utilising a teachable moment while outdoors to enhance a young child's learning.

[Connecting with practice: Opportunities for learning in natural spaces](#)

## **6.6 Support Collaboration With Colleagues Through Sharing and Seeking of Information**



Early childhood education is a collaborative endeavour, and working with others with the same interests and values is one of the joys of working in this sector. Your colleagues may have different opinions, experiences, interests and areas of expertise to offer. Therefore, regular communication is important in gauging the observations and assessments of the children in your care.

To communicate well with your colleagues, be professional, honest, and respectful at all times. Be sure to use your active listening skills and promote the wellbeing of the children in your care as the focus of your communications.

Aside from participating in any scheduled, regular meetings with fellow staff, make sure that you regularly communicate and keep up to date with your colleagues regarding how best to care for the children at the service.

Your fellow staff are a wonderful resource of experience and expertise that you can draw upon to extend your own experience. Similarly, you have a great deal to offer your colleagues. It is, therefore, essential to take the time to maintain a healthy, positive relationship with them, as this will ensure the smooth running of the service and benefit the children in your care.

In studying this unit, you will have understood how promoting the children's development and wellbeing is a collaborative, team effort. You must promote this sense of team effort with your colleagues, families, any experts involved, and the children themselves to ensure that each child receives the support they need in the challenges of growing and developing in the early years.

In particular, assessing and evaluating child development and wellbeing needs to be a regular, coordinated process in which all staff participate and are kept up to date with any changes. Each education and care service is likely to have set policies and procedures in place that you must familiarise yourself with and follow.

It is important to comply with all the service's policies and procedures and participate in the improvement process. Additionally, seek the input of all other stakeholders in this process and share your thoughts and concerns in a timely and appropriate manner.

Remember, you are all working together to ensure the optimal development of the children in your care. In doing so, you offer children a rich, meaningful, and profoundly important educational start and support their overall wellbeing.

### Checkpoint! Let's Review



1. Developmental domains affect each other so that development in one domain affects the others in some way.
2. As an early childhood educator, you can help further a child's development by scaffolding their learning and supporting their progress from one developmental phase to the next.
3. Collaboration with colleagues ensures that you can provide the children in your care with the appropriate support they need.

### Learning Activity for Chapter 6

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the classroom learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

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