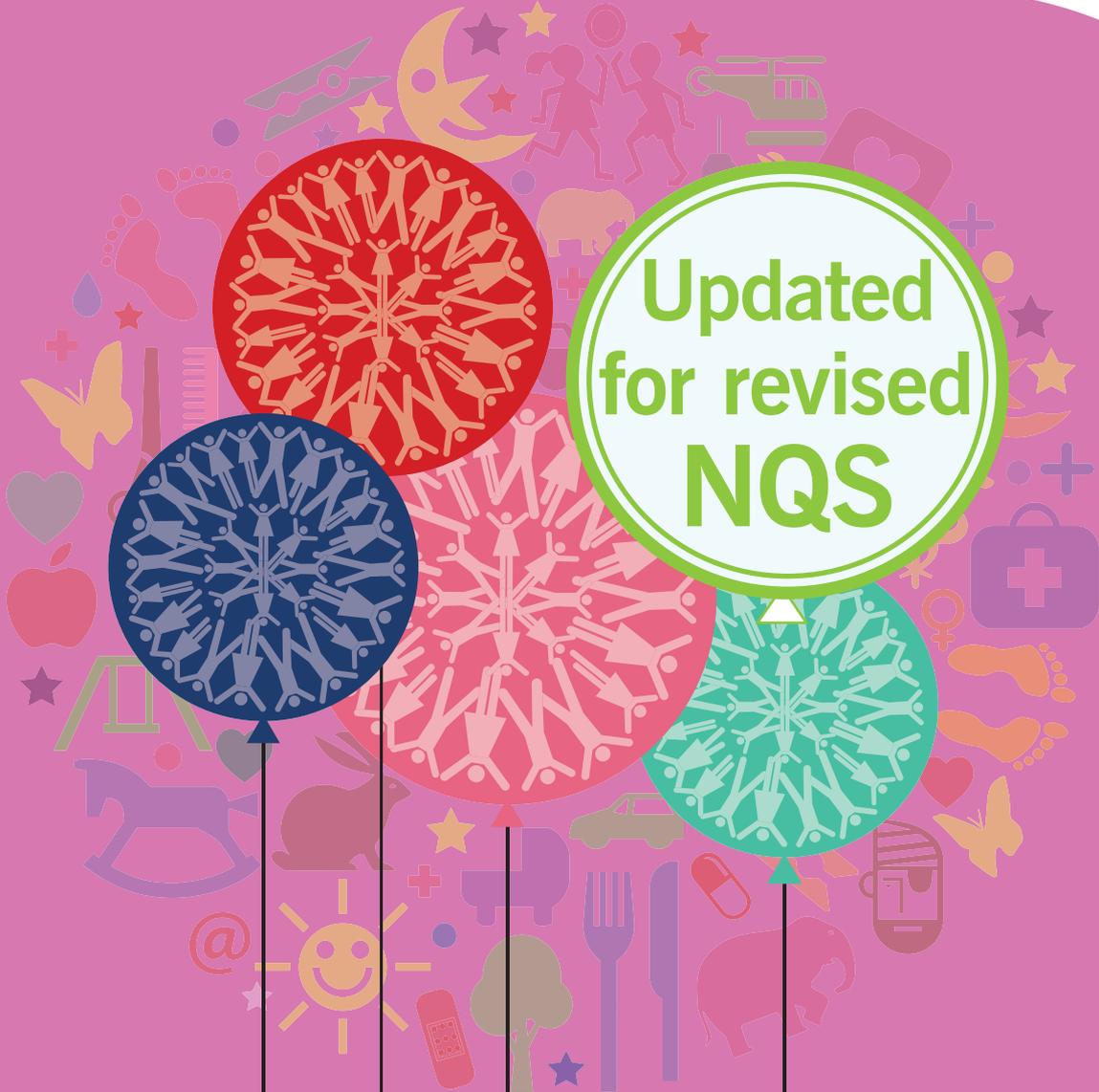


CHCECE010

Support the holistic development of children in early childhood



Updated
for revised
NQS

Learner guide



aspire
learning resources

CHCECE010

Support the holistic development of children in early childhood

Release 2

Learner guide

Aspire Version 2.1



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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCECE010 Support the holistic development of children in early childhood*, Release 2. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete.

Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into practice. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Video clips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Where QR codes appear, you can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: www.aspirelr.com.au/help. 
Summaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning checkpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There are learning checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.



Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

1A Principles of physical development

1B Physical development outcomes

1C Physical development practice

Supporting physical development

There are many critical periods in children's learning and development in which they will be affected either positively or negatively by their experiences and the relationships they build with others. As children grow, they reach common developmental milestones at individual rates and at different ages.

Educators play an important role in promoting physical skills by offering children time, space, resources and a safe environment in which to practise their skills. A supportive learning environment builds confidence and offers challenges, exploration and discovery.

Watch this video about children's physical activity and skills.



The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard		
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice	
	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 and communities	
✓	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership	
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place	
Principles		
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓	Partnerships	
	High expectations and equity	
	Respect for diversity	
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
Practice		
✓	Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
✓	Learning through play	Learning through play
✓	Intentional teaching	Intentionality
✓	Learning environments	Environments
	Cultural competence	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
Outcomes		
✓	Children have a strong sense of identity	
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
✓	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
✓	Children are confident and involved learners	
	Children are effective communicators	

1A Principles of physical development

A theory is a set of ideas put forward as an explanation. Researchers collect information (data) and try to explain and predict development and behaviour. Theories can be developed, modified or even discarded as they are tested against observations.

Theory shows you where ideas come from and provides proof that quality care practices have a sound basis in research, practice and discussion. Your organisational regulations, standards, policies and procedures are based on the results of theory and research.



Maturation

In the past, child and adolescent development was considered simply a maturation process; children were seen as ‘miniature adults’ who only needed to get taller, stronger and bigger. We now understand that there are many environmental influences on the path to adulthood.

As children mature, they become ready to implement new skills. Maturation is believed to be driven by an individual’s biologically determined developmental pathway. The experiences provided to children give them the chance to use and test the skills they are developing at different maturity stages.

Learning

Learning can be defined as a permanent change of behaviour that occurs as a result of experience. Maturation is a biological process, while learning is largely dependent on an individual’s environment; however, most learning theories state that some part of development is attributed to maturation.

Learning is a problem-solving process. One learning experience can be used to determine possible solutions to the next problem or learning experience. This means that the process of learning is just as important as the result of learning.

By observing the stage a child is at, and planning suitable enriching experiences for that child, you will be providing an opportunity for the child to consolidate their skills. This approach is a safe way for you to identify when a child is ready to move on and be provided with opportunities to extend their learning and skills.

Certain periods of a child’s development seem to be the best time for them to learn. These are known as ‘critical periods’ or ‘windows of opportunity’ and are times when enriching experiences provide the child with maximum benefits.

Teachable moments also occur spontaneously, when you notice learning can take place and you take advantage of this. The following examples describe two of these critical periods.

Walking	<p>Walking is a developmental milestone that occurs around 12 months of age. However, it may start earlier or later. For instance, some children may walk at 10 months, others at 18 months. A child approaching this milestone has a critical period just before they begin to walk when they tend to stand up and move themselves around by holding onto furniture.</p> <p>To acknowledge this milestone, enrich this learning and recognise this critical period, you could provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ clear areas for the child to move around without tripping ▶ support by holding hands or arms, or by sitting or standing behind the child to catch them if they fall ▶ furniture or equipment that is the right height for the child to hold onto safely ▶ encouragement through clapping, smiling and positive comments.
Writing	<p>Beginning to write is a developmental milestone that occurs around five years of age. Again, it could happen earlier or later; some children may learn to write at four years, others at six years. A child approaching this milestone has a critical period just before they begin to write when they gain more control over the pen or pencil and start to create figures that look like letters.</p> <p>To acknowledge this milestone, enrich this learning and recognise this critical period, you could provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ chunky pencils that are easy for small hands to grip ▶ plain or lined paper ▶ play experiences that develop the fine motor control of the hand, such as pegging out washing, squeezing playdough or cutting paper shapes ▶ a model of letters or the child's name to copy ▶ encouragement through smiling and positive comments.

Environmental effects on learning

Critical periods are valuable times for learning; however, there are environmental aspects that can negatively affect early childhood development, including:

- ▶ poor diet
- ▶ lack of play
- ▶ lack of stimulation
- ▶ lack of materials and resources
- ▶ inconsistent or non-existent emotional support or comfort
- ▶ trauma
- ▶ other life experiences that interrupt appropriate childhood activities.

Illness could also delay development; for example, if a child has a major operation at 12 months of age this might mean they won't learn to walk for some time.

These environmental effects can cause serious problems for children, both in their childhood and in later life, including:

- ▶ intellectual delay
- ▶ depression
- ▶ learning difficulties
- ▶ anxiety

- ▶ suicidal thoughts
- ▶ aggression
- ▶ impulsiveness
- ▶ criminality
- ▶ hyperactivity
- ▶ substance abuse
- ▶ poor health.

By creating a responsive, safe and healthy care environment, you will be helping children to learn and develop to the best of their potential.

Biological influences are linked to heredity, genetics and maturation. Environmental influences are linked to nurturing and what children are taught through interaction with the environment.

Example

Biological versus environmental influences

Gina, an educator, identifies some of her personal characteristics and tries to work out whether they originate as a result of biological or environmental influences. This is what she thinks:

- ▶ Biological: blonde hair, big feet, quick learner.
- ▶ Environmental: afraid of spiders (her dad once scared her with one), plays guitar (she had lessons at school), interested in gardening (her mum loves to spend time with her in the garden).

Gina is also patient and mathematical, but doesn't know how to categorise these characteristics. She knows that biological and environmental influences work together, and that some characteristics may arise from both. She thinks the following may be true:

- ▶ Patient: she may have been born with a patient personality, but she was also born into a large family where they need to help each other and share things. Her patience was probably influenced by biological and environmental factors.
- ▶ Mathematical: she was probably born with a brain that works well with numbers, but she also had positive mathematics experiences in kindergarten and grade two, when her teacher encouraged the class to see numbers as fun and organised lots of interesting mathematical activities. Her abilities were probably influenced by biological and environmental factors.

Developmental milestones

Every child passes through key stages of development, as described in the following table.

Developmental stage	Approximate age
Infant (from birth to walking)	0–12 months
Toddler (from walking to preschool age)	1–3 years
Preschooler	3–5 years

As each child develops at their own rate, there is a period of transition between each of the stages.

Milestones are the markers that identify that a particular stage of development has been reached. Many planning processes use milestones in some way, as they are significant skills or events in a child's life that help educators, parents and health professionals to monitor and support their development and learning.

The milestones of child development are divided into major areas called aspects or areas of development. When considered collectively, they are called 'holistic learning and development'. They include:

- ▶ physical development
- ▶ social development
- ▶ emotional development
- ▶ cognitive (intellectual) development
- ▶ communication development.

These aspects are the foundation of a quality education and care curriculum. The quality areas in the National Quality Standard (NQS) and *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework of Australia* (EYLF) are based on your ability to understand development, to develop relationships and to provide an environment appropriate to this understanding.

You can find information on the NQS and the EYLF at:
<http://aspirelr.link/explaining-nqf>

Growth and development

Children's growth has been monitored for many years in western countries and was the focus of one of the first studies of children. Growth is monitored from birth and is measured using percentile charts, which classify a child's growth pattern into 'lower than average', 'average' and 'upper average'.

Here are some facts relating to physical growth:

- ▶ At birth an infant's head is one quarter of their body length.
- ▶ As adults our heads are one eighth of our body length.
- ▶ During the first five years of life, body proportions change rapidly as the body grows quickly to catch up to the head.
- ▶ In the first year there is significant weight gain, and infants double their weight in the first six months.
- ▶ Teeth erupt at around six months of age.
- ▶ By age four, a child has doubled their length (height).
- ▶ Preschoolers lose some of their body fat prior to this age.
- ▶ Children with slower bone growth usually walk later and may also reach puberty later.

Influences on growth and development

Children's growth is influenced by genetics, culture and environment. Australian society comprises a diverse range of racial and cultural groups, so children's health and nutritional backgrounds could be quite different.

Changes in a child's diet affect not only their growth and nutritional status, but also their food education; for example, starting on solid foods. The types of food that a child eats affect the physical development of their mouth and jaw, therefore linking with the child's ability to form words and speak. Ensure you provide the right foods at the right time to facilitate these developments.

Children’s growth and development is also influenced by the safety of their environment. For example, children who are at risk of harm or who are placed in hazardous environments often lack confidence in their abilities and, as a result, may not develop skills that are expected for their age. Their growth may be held back by stress on their bodies and poor nutrition. Your ability to control hazards and risks in the environment assists children to grow and develop to reach their full potential.

Practice task 1

1. Reflect on your reading so far. Which **two** points about child development theory did you find most interesting? Why?

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2. Think about your personal characteristics. List **three** characteristics that have been influenced by biological factors and **three** characteristics that have been influenced by environmental factors.

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3. Choose one of the causes of poor early childhood development. Write down any elements from the NQS that provide a guide in relation to this cause. You can find the NQS at: <http://aspirelr.link/explaining-nqf>

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1B Physical development outcomes

The EYLF guides your work with children. Outcomes have been designed to capture the learning and development that you will observe when working with children from birth to five years. Each child will progress at their own pace, and outcomes will have different importance to each child during their learning and development.

Allowing a child to independently practise their physical skills at a time when they are ready helps to develop their self-confidence and a range of physical skills.



The EYLF helps you understand the importance of physical development, and how you can work toward supporting children’s learning and development.

EYLF	Areas of focus
Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Using daily routines ▶ Physical environment ▶ Resources ▶ People ▶ Safety

Daily routines

When children are involved in daily routines and encouraged to develop their independence, they learn about their bodies and how to care for their own health. Modelling is the main way that children learn.

The following table gives examples of routine activities that are ideal opportunities for children to:

- ▶ acquire physical skills and independence
- ▶ take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

Mealtimes	Hygiene and self-care	Care for others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Opening and closing lunch boxes and removing food wrappers ▶ Eating finger food ▶ Feeding themselves using cutlery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Turning taps on and off ▶ Using child-sized brooms and cloths to clean the environment ▶ Dressing and undressing ▶ Cleaning up messes ▶ Washing and drying hands ▶ Using and flushing the toilet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Serving lunch and pouring drinks ▶ Setting a lunch or snack table

During daily routines, you can talk to children about the following.

Developmental stage	Discussion ideas	Examples
Infant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Talk about activities, experiences and movements. ▶ Celebrate achievements, such as learning to crawl or walk. ▶ Incorporate song into movement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 'Look at your strong legs.' ▶ 'Yes! You are walking!' ▶ 'Row, row, row your boat.'
Toddler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Talk about the activities they are doing. ▶ Describe their movements. ▶ Add words that describe the skills they are developing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 'Good job sweeping the floor.' ▶ 'That is a big jump!' ▶ 'Now you are running fast.'
Preschooler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Involve the community through activities and visits. ▶ Talk about their body structures – muscles, bones, eyes – and how these work. ▶ Discuss individual abilities and achievements. ▶ Invite a dietician to talk about how food makes children strong. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 'Milk and cheese provide our bones with calcium to make them strong.' ▶ 'Hayley jumps very high and Stacey can run fast. They both have strong legs.'

Physical environment

In an environment where equipment, games and toys are accessible, children will feel a sense of accomplishment when they are able to do a task by themselves. Children develop their self-esteem when they feel confident in their own abilities, and believe that you have confidence in them.

The care environment should be arranged so that children have a clear indication of where and how they can complete their tasks. Materials should be well-displayed and the equipment and materials a child needs to complete tasks should be safe, age-appropriate and in good condition.

Look at the service setting from a child's point of view; every aspect sends a message to children about how they should participate. Ensure these messages are encouraging.

Preparing the physical environment for play involves five main aspects:

- ▶ time
- ▶ space
- ▶ resources (materials and equipment).
- ▶ people
- ▶ safety

Time

Children live in a busy world – they may arrive at your service having been suddenly woken up, rushed through breakfast and hurriedly dressed. When they leave they may be rushed off for dinner, a bath and bed. The time children are with you must be unhurried; children should be able to experiment and develop skills at their own pace.

When children have time to complete routine tasks, this gives them an opportunity to experiment with materials and skills.

Children need time to:

- ▶ learn new skills and practise developing them
- ▶ become skilled at personal care tasks
- ▶ feel confident that their attempts are valued and encouraged.

Space

You may use spaces that are designed specifically for children to gain and practise skills, or you may occupy a space that is shared by adults and has adult-sized equipment and facilities. Either way, the arrangement of this space is under your control and should be adapted to suit children’s needs.

When planning how to use space for the development of physical skills, remember that children need:

- ▶ hands-on experiences
- ▶ opportunities to be solitary
- ▶ challenges
- ▶ safety and security.

The following table provides more detail about these aspects.

What	Why
Hands-on experiences	▶ To explore, touch, smell, move and create – not only in play but also when undertaking routine activities.
Opportunities to be solitary	▶ To concentrate and not be distracted ▶ To take a break when tired and over-stimulated
Challenges	▶ To offer opportunities to improve skills ▶ To invite children to complete tasks at their own level with adult support when required
Safety and security	▶ To have the chance to explore and learn while feeling and being safe

Resources

Resources include furniture, equipment and materials for activities and experiences. The resources you choose to make available to children have a huge bearing on the quality and types of skills children use during daily routines.

It is important that:

- ▶ resources match the child's abilities
- ▶ enough resources are provided for the number of children in a group
- ▶ good-quality resources are provided
- ▶ hygiene and safety needs are taken into account.

People

As well as being part of a broader community, your service is a community in itself. The service location and specific cultural priorities affect the way you present your routines, how you communicate these to others and what priority you place on various physical routine tasks. For example, your parent group may feel that educational programs are important, or play and leisure may be emphasised. Religion and country of origin can also have an influence as majority groups often request services that cater to their specific needs.

The qualifications and experience of the adults working with children and the educator–child ratios affect how routines are presented. Consider how these people are positioned to ensure children's safety and wellbeing while they complete tasks.

Safety

Your knowledge of child development and the individual abilities of children allow you to observe the environment and identify how to make it safe. You need to consider the developmental abilities of children, such as their:

- ▶ understanding of safety and danger
- ▶ spontaneous behaviour
- ▶ ability to follow limits and guidelines
- ▶ curiosity
- ▶ interest in adult-modelled behaviour
- ▶ level of independence
- ▶ mobility and balance
- ▶ understanding of consequences.

Finding a balance between safety and healthy risk-taking behaviour is a challenging part of your job.

Practice task 2

Read the case study, then answer the question that follows.

Case study

It is lunchtime. An educator is at the lockers with two children. They are taking their own coats off and, as their shoes are wet, they are taking these off too. The educator is chatting to them while this occurs. Another educator has taken three children to the bathroom to wash their hands at the trough with three taps.

A third educator is already at the table with three children and she is placing the sandwiches and tongs on the table for their meal.

The tables seat four children each, and there are two tables prepared for the eight children. Each place is set with a placemat and a plate.

1. How have the educators in this case study considered the following aspects?

a. Time

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b. Space

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c. Resources

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d. People

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e. Safety

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2. How have the educators considered children’s need to acquire and practice emerging skills and take increasing responsibility?

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1C Physical development practice

Motor skills are the sequences of movements when muscles of the body are coordinated to perform a particular action. There are two types of motor skills:

- ▶ Gross motor skills: actions that use the large muscles of the body.
- ▶ Fine motor skills: actions that use the small muscles of the body.

When you observe the movements that a child makes as they are involved in activity, you can identify whether they are using their gross or fine motor skills.



Gross motor skills

Gross motor skills are fundamental movement patterns involving large muscle groups in the legs, arms, trunk and head. These skills include:

- ▶ sitting up
- ▶ walking
- ▶ running
- ▶ hopping
- ▶ catching a ball.

These are the foundation movements that are used in more specialised, challenging and complex actions needed for play, active games, sports, dance, gymnastics and physical recreation activities.

Fundamental movement skills can be divided into three categories:

- ▶ Body management skills – involving balance
- ▶ Loco-motor skills – involving moving the body in a direction
- ▶ Object control skills – involving holding and using objects

Here are examples of each.

Body management skills	Loco-motor skills	Object control skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Bending ▶ Swinging ▶ Climbing ▶ Lifting ▶ Reaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Skipping ▶ Jumping ▶ Running ▶ Hopping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Throwing ▶ Catching ▶ Batting ▶ Kicking ▶ Shovelling

To allow children to practise and develop their emerging gross motor skills, they need access to equipment, games and toys that encourage this. This means supplying equipment such as:

- ▶ climbing frames
- ▶ ladders

- ▶ steps or stairs
- ▶ indoor space to crawl, walk while holding onto furniture and walk independently
- ▶ outdoor space to run, skip and hop
- ▶ skipping ropes
- ▶ balls
- ▶ push-along trolleys
- ▶ dolls and prams
- ▶ tricycles and bicycles
- ▶ monkey bars
- ▶ shovels and spades
- ▶ trampolines.



Fine motor skills

Fine motor skills involve movements of smaller body parts, such as the wrists, hands, fingers, feet and toes. Fine motor skills also require hand–eye coordination; that is, when you see something and coordinate your hand to move to what you see. There are many activities that use hand–eye coordination, including:

- ▶ writing
- ▶ typing
- ▶ stringing beads
- ▶ tracing around hands
- ▶ dressing or undressing dolls
- ▶ pasting.

To allow children to practise and develop their emerging fine motor skills, they must have access to equipment, games and toys that encourage this. This means supplying equipment such as:

- ▶ finger puppets
- ▶ pasting and painting brushes
- ▶ scissors
- ▶ playdough
- ▶ building blocks
- ▶ cutlery
- ▶ computer keyboards
- ▶ small sorting items such as buttons, coins, bottle tops and pebbles.
- ▶ pencils, pens and markers
- ▶ staplers
- ▶ nails and hammers
- ▶ toy cars
- ▶ books
- ▶ puzzles
- ▶ wool for knitting, sewing, stitching and making pom-poms

Materials must be age-appropriate; for example, small items that could pose a choking hazard are not suitable for younger children.

Providing physical activities

When considering the choices children have for play and leisure, view the environment from their perspective and consider all areas of equal value. Children undertake activities both indoors and outdoors, so both these areas should be considered when supporting their physical development.

Indoor physical activity

Indoor play mainly provides opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills. As children's bodies grow larger, their skills also increase and they become capable of doing things that aren't suitable for busy indoor areas.

The way children are grouped may affect how you set up these areas. For example, your organisation may group children by age range such as up to two years, and three to five years, or by family groupings where the ages are mixed from infants to five-year-olds. If you work in an out-of-school-hours program, you may care for children aged five to 12 years.

When examining these groupings, your knowledge of children's physical development at various ages may be challenged as you identify appropriate environments and experiences.

Infants and toddlers

Infants and toddlers usually use indoor areas for:

- ▶ discovery – exploring interesting items safely with their senses
- ▶ climbing
- ▶ wheeling or pulling toys
- ▶ manipulative play
- ▶ block play.

When you arrange your indoor space carefully, infants and toddlers are offered better opportunities to practise both fine and gross motor skills. Most activity areas for infants are arranged on the floor rather than on tables for easy access.

Preschoolers

Preschoolers benefit from indoor activities such as:

- ▶ dramatic play
- ▶ blocks
- ▶ books, language and listening centre activities
- ▶ puzzles, threading and construction sets
- ▶ clay modelling, painting and drawing
- ▶ sand and water play
- ▶ woodwork
- ▶ cooking.

Outdoor physical activity

The outdoor space requires the same level of consideration as the indoor space; there should be opportunities for both fine and gross motor skill development. Almost every activity that can be done in the outdoor environment can provide many valuable opportunities for learning, if it is thoughtfully set up. Many organisations provide children with the opportunity to move indoors and outdoors as they please. Your staff ratios and service design will determine whether this is an option for you.

Outdoor play spaces need to be clearly defined so children can immediately see how the space can be used. They should have easy access so that children can move between spaces and activities without interfering with others at play. Stepping stones and other natural features can provide children with creative options for their physical play.

Outdoor spaces should have the potential to rearrange equipment, change the location of activities, add or remove items, and provide either simple or complex play arrangements. Consider providing the following items:

- ▶ wooden planks
- ▶ car tyres
- ▶ small ladders
- ▶ A-frames
- ▶ outdoor blocks
- ▶ cable reels
- ▶ off-cut logs.

If you provide the appropriate props for children, they can create the type of physical play experience they want to participate in for themselves. There is more information about using props in Topic 5.

All age groups need to be given many opportunities to engage in physically active play. Children need to be able to involve themselves in physical movements such as running, jumping, digging, pushing, skipping and climbing. Children need to be challenged; they need to be able to actively manipulate their play space by redesigning and reinventing with movable equipment and props. Through this interaction with the outdoor space, children practise skills of balancing, bouncing, lifting and pushing.

In addition to these areas for active hands-on play, children also need areas where they can experiment and explore. Almost all experiences planned for indoors can also be offered in an outdoor space.

Encouraging challenge, choice and spontaneity

Children will be occupied and learn through play easily when:

- ▶ there is a choice of experiences
- ▶ they can move to different experiences spontaneously
- ▶ the experiences provide challenges.

Children should be able to choose between quiet and active play, and open and private spaces. They will be fulfilled by having three or more choices that are based on their interests and meet their skill levels. Children will move to the different experiences and use them spontaneously in ways they enjoy. They will also be challenged if the materials and equipment are open-ended; this allows the children to learn different skills depending on their interests and how they approach the set-up.

Challenging experiences are ones that:

- ▶ suit the child's ability
- ▶ can be adapted to develop with the child
- ▶ are based on things the children are interested in
- ▶ allow children to make choices, solve problems and make decisions
- ▶ can be changed by the child to meet their interests at the time.

When you offer challenging experiences, you need to consider:

- ▶ safety
- ▶ appropriate risk-taking behaviour
- ▶ supervision and support requirements
- ▶ assistance to overcome or reduce any frustration
- ▶ flexibility to change the equipment or experience to suit the child.

Physical milestones

The following table illustrates the physical milestones for each age group, which have been linked to practical application (interactions and experiences) in the service setting.

Physical development milestone	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
0–3 months		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Brings hand to mouth ▶ Takes swipes at dangling objects ▶ Opens and shuts hands ▶ Raises head momentarily while lying on stomach ▶ Reflexively grasps finger or object placed in their hand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Display delight, encouragement and enthusiasm for children’s attempts. ▶ Imitate the infant’s vocalisations and facial expressions, e.g. coo, smile and yawn back. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide rattles and mobiles.
3–6 months		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can reach for things voluntarily ▶ Holds head upright in a sitting position ▶ Holds head upright for longer periods while lying on stomach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Play peek-a-boo. ▶ Recite songs and rhymes, e.g. ‘This little piggy went to market’. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide tummy time on mat. ▶ Display low mirrors at a child’s eye level. ▶ Provide a basket of different textures to feel.
6–12 months		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Rolls over ▶ Sits easily without support ▶ Crawls or shuffles ▶ Able to support own weight when held in standing position ▶ Pokes objects with index finger ▶ Lets go of objects voluntarily ▶ Brings toes to mouth ▶ Transfers toy from hand to hand ▶ Holds own bottle ▶ Pulls self to standing position by holding onto furniture ▶ Walks with assistance ▶ May be able to walk independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ As infant points to things, name them, e.g. ‘eyes’, ‘bottle’, names of other children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide large soft blocks and stacking cups. ▶ Provide an open safe space for the child to roll and crawl around. ▶ Display low mirrors at a child’s eye level. ▶ Provide low furniture for the child to pull themselves up.

Physical development milestone	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
1–2 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Holds large crayon with a palmar grasp (in a fist) and marks paper ▶ Places objects in another person’s hand and lets go ▶ Attempts to feed self with spoon ▶ Uses thumb and forefinger to explore objects ▶ Walks unassisted ▶ May begin to run 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Repeat sounds and words back to the child. ▶ Read simple books with the child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide thick crayons and large pieces of paper. ▶ Provide push and pull-along toys, and abacus beads.
2–3 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Turns pages of a book one at a time ▶ Runs with ease ▶ Pedals a tricycle ▶ Builds a tower of up to 10 blocks high ▶ Screws and unscrews objects such as lids and knobs ▶ Jumps using both feet ▶ Kicks a large ball ▶ Walks on tiptoes ▶ Feeds self with fork and spoon ▶ Holds a crayon or pencil between the thumb and fingers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Read books with the child. ▶ Participate in action songs and dancing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide books. ▶ Allow children to play chasey. ▶ Provide balls and tricycles. ▶ Provide forks and spoons for the child to use at mealtimes.
3–5 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Walks up stairs one foot at a time ▶ Throws a ball overhand ▶ Balances on one foot momentarily ▶ Uses scissors with some control ▶ Draws a person with some recognisable body parts ▶ Begins to hold a crayon/pencil in tripod grasp (between the thumb and two fingers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Join in games and conversations. ▶ Encourage children’s efforts, e.g. ‘Well done’, ‘Good try’, ‘Keep going’. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide hoops. ▶ Set up an obstacle course. ▶ Provide pencils, paper, scissors and craft items. ▶ Provide equipment for ball games: basketball ring, soccer net, cricket bat and ball, etc.

Practice task 3

1. Go to the ACECQA website (<http://aspirelr.link/national-quality-standard>) and read Standard 3.1 of the NQS, in particular the information about indoor and outdoor environments. Identify one point that you feel you do well and one point that could be improved.

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2. Observe a play space. What can you see that tells you children are encouraged to do each of the following? Explain each of your choices.

- a. Select materials and equipment themselves

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- b. Arrange equipment to suit their physical play (using gross and fine motor skills)

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- c. Take up challenges

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- d. Have choice in physically active play

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- e. Behave spontaneously in physically active play

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3. Explain how would you do each of the following:

- a. Provide an experience to support children's physical development that encourages use of gross and fine motor skills

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- b. Interact with children participating in the experience to support their physical development

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Summary

- ▶ Routines are excellent times for children to learn and practise new and emerging skills.
- ▶ Carefully setting up the environment encourages the development of gross and fine motor skills.
- ▶ Children benefit from having choice in physical activity.
- ▶ The way materials are arranged helps children make choices and create spontaneous ideas for physical play.
- ▶ Children can be supported to take responsibility for their own physical health and wellbeing by providing them with information and allowing them to practise skills without rushing them.

Learning checkpoint 1

Supporting physical development

Part A

1. Choose one physically active experience that might occur spontaneously (not an organised activity).

a. Describe the experience.

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b. What is the age range of children likely to be involved in the experience?

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c. Explain why the experience would be spontaneous. Give at least **two** reasons.

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2. List **two** gross motor skills and **two** fine motor skills that children may acquire or practise during the day.

For each physical skill:

- ▶ explain how you would select and arrange equipment to assist the child to develop their physical skills
- ▶ list one interaction you would provide to support each of the skills listed.

You may use the table provided.

	Skill	How you would select/arrange equipment	Interaction to support learning
Gross motor skill 1			
Gross motor skill 2			
Fine motor skill 1			
Fine motor skill 2			

Part B

1. Locate and write down one outcome from the EYLF that refers to children taking increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing. You can find the EYLF at: <http://aspirelr.link/approved-learning-frameworks>

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2. Provide **two** examples of how you would support children to learn hygiene practices in the outcome you identified.

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3. Give **two** examples of how children can take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing during daily routines.

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4. Answer the following questions in relation to a child who is learning to talk.
- a. Give an example of how this learning could be supported in the environment.

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- b. List **three** aspects of poor early childhood development that could contribute to the child having delayed speech development and explain why.

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Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

2A Principles of social development

2B Social development outcomes

2C Social development practice

Supporting social development

Children learn to take their place in a social world through play. As they engage in play, they develop independence and a sense of achievement, which contributes to their growing self-esteem. Children's play moves through recognisable stages that reflect their growing sociability, but they also approach play according to their own life experiences and culture.

As an educator you have an important role in supervising and supporting play.

By providing children with the time, space and resources to play, you will stimulate and challenge them individually, and help them learn to interact with and understand others.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard		
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice	
	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 and communities	
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership	
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place	
Principles		
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓	Partnerships	
✓	High expectations and equity	
✓	Respect for diversity	
	Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
Practice		
✓	Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
✓	Learning through play	Learning through play
✓	Intentional teaching	Intentionality
	Learning environments	Environments
✓	Cultural competence	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
	Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
Outcomes		
✓	Children have a strong sense of identity	
✓	Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
✓	Children are confident and involved learners	
✓	Children are effective communicators	

2A Principles of social development

Children develop many social skills through their play experiences – they learn to cooperate with others, choose activities, make decisions, and experience failure and success.

Pretend play helps children explore the world of feelings and relationships. By playing out situations they have seen, children learn about and come to terms with their world, particularly if they are confused by their experiences or do not understand them.

As you observe children at play you will get a sense of how play affects a child's self-esteem, independence and sense of achievement.

You will also see how play enables children to better understand themselves through expressing their fears, joys and frustrations. Play enables them to understand their communities and to learn about how others express themselves in different ways.

In play, you can see children learning and practising social skills. A typical play experience could involve:

- ▶ taking turns
- ▶ sharing
- ▶ negotiating
- ▶ cooperating
- ▶ helping others
- ▶ thinking
- ▶ setting and following rules and guidelines.

Watch this video about how play can improve children's social skills.

Like physical development, social development has stages. A two-year-old doesn't yet have the social skills to play effectively with others, whereas a four-year-old happily plays in a group. People who study children's play have noted these differences and classified them into different play types.

Social play types

Theorist Mildred Parten defined types of play to reflect social dimensions. She identified the following types of play.

Solitary play

Solitary play is when children are playing alone and do not have any social contact with others. Solitary play is mostly seen in children under two years, but older children may also be seen engaging in solitary play as they enjoy time alone to pursue their individual interests.

An environment set up for solitary play should have experiences that are for one child only, such as a pop-up toy, a sensory mat or a puzzle. Space should be provided that is suitable for one child, such as a small table with one chair, a cushion with an activity or an easel to work at.



<p>Parallel play</p>	<p>Between two and three years of age, children begin to enjoy being near others and participating in the same experience. Although they are still self-centred and are usually unable to share or talk with others very much, they may imitate a child nearby by playing in the same manner. An example of parallel play is when two three-year-olds are at the dough table, both squeezing and poking the dough, but not interacting with each other.</p> <p>Older children may choose to play side-by-side in parallel play, even though they have the skills to play together.</p> <p>To set up for parallel play, you should provide experiences that allow small groups of children to work on the same or similar play experiences independently, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ puzzles ▶ collages (cutting and pasting) ▶ car mats ▶ blocks ▶ painting ▶ drawing ▶ a book corner ▶ hammering ▶ a sandpit.
<p>Associative play</p>	<p>Associative play usually starts when children are at early preschool age and are beginning to associate with each other.</p> <p>As a child's language skills improve, they become more aware of other children and better able to communicate. A child may play with others, speak briefly to them, laugh with them and react to them. Although these children are playing together, you will find their interactions are brief and the play episode may not last very long. For example, children may borrow and lend toys, and laugh together without actually cooperating or playing with common ideas in mind.</p> <p>Early superhero play is often observed at an associative play level as groups of children 'fly' around and deal with emergencies. However, the play isn't organised and the children don't talk together about plots or characters.</p> <p>To encourage associative play, you can provide experiences that require children to share materials with others; for example, car mats, block corners and dress-up areas, or props for imaginative play such as toy cars, hats, clothes, bikes and dolls.</p>
<p>Cooperative play</p>	<p>By late preschool age, children become less focused on themselves and their interest in other children increases. Because their language is becoming more complex, their interactions with other children usually last longer as they begin to share ideas and solve problems together. They enjoy taking the roles of leader or follower, and they give roles to each other in their play; for example, 'You be the dad, I'll be the mum. Joey can be the baby.' Plots will be discussed and played out; for example, 'Now you go to the table and I will come in and serve dinner.'</p> <p>Because children are working together and the play is lasting longer, this is called cooperative play. You can encourage cooperative play by providing for role-play, and imaginative or dramatic activities. You may include dress-ups, cubbies, home furniture and other props that children can use. Car mats, block corners and dress-up areas all provide children with the opportunity for cooperative play.</p>

<p>Play with rules</p>	<p>Older preschool and early primary school children become interested in more structured games; that is, games with clearly defined rules. Children choose to play these games during their leisure time with any number of friends.</p> <p>Games with rules include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ board games and tabletop games ▶ games played in lines or circles ▶ games with balls, bats or marbles ▶ skipping games ▶ hopscotch ▶ cricket ▶ football. <p>You can help support play with rules by ensuring materials and equipment are in good order and readily available to children. Most play with rules requires space and an understanding of the rules of play.</p> <p>Avoid competitive games where possible, as they reduce children’s opportunities to practise skills. In competitive games, the children with the greatest skill get lots of practice while the children with less developed skills are eliminated early. This reduces practice time and provides little chance for developing skills, and it can be damaging to self-esteem. The children who ‘go out’ early in the game might become bored, upset or angry. Non-competitive games ensure all children participate most of the time so that a group of children can develop their skills.</p>
<p>Unoccupied play</p>	<p>Children of all ages can become involved in unoccupied play, when the child is not playing, but is occupied by watching anything that happens to be of momentary interest. The child may play with their body or clothes, get on and off chairs, stand around, follow an educator or sit in one spot glancing around the room. Unoccupied play may not seem important, but you must respect a child’s decision not to participate, and see the value in a child’s observation of an environment and the people in it.</p>
<p>Onlooker play</p>	<p>A child who spends time watching other children at play is using onlooker play. Children of all ages can become involved in onlooker play. The child may talk to the children they are observing by asking questions or giving suggestions, but the child does not enter into the play.</p> <p>This type of play differs from unoccupied play in that the onlooker is observing a particular group of children. The child stands or sits within speaking distance of the group so that they can see and hear everything that takes place. As with unoccupied play, onlooker play may not seem important, but again you must respect a child’s decision not to participate and see the value in a child’s observation of others.</p>

Pro-social behaviour

Pro-social behaviour is the successful and appropriate manner in which we interact. It also relates to voluntary behaviour that benefits another person by:

- ▶ helping, comforting or rescuing
- ▶ showing sympathy and kindness
- ▶ giving and sharing
- ▶ showing positive verbal and physical contact
- ▶ showing concern
- ▶ understanding another person's perspective
- ▶ cooperating.

This behaviour is based on altruism – the motivation to benefit another person without expecting personal reward or acknowledgment of your actions.

When you help children develop pro-social behaviour, you help them to succeed in friendships and gain group acceptance. The following table illustrates examples of ways you can support this social skill development.

Skill	Example of supporting skill development
Formulating social goals	'Keenan, how will you ask Miniya if you can play?'
Noticing social cues	'Look Keenan, what is Miniya telling us by moving her head?'
Interpreting social cues	'Keenan, Miniya is nodding her head up and down, she must mean yes!'
Generating possible problem-solving strategies	'Miniya, explain how you would like Keenan to help you. What ideas do you have?'
Evaluating probable effectiveness of strategies	'Yes, Miniya, Keenan could watch or he could build a road. What do you think will help you most?'
Taking peer perspectives	'Miniya, how do you think Keenan would feel if he can only watch? Do you think he will feel helpful?'
Understanding social rules	'Miniya, Keenan has made a road just like you planned. Thanks for helping, Keenan!'
Remembering experiences and linking these to expectations for future reference	'Keenan, do you remember how you asked Miniya if you could help her yesterday? You could do that again today.'

Temperament and personality

Temperament refers to the behavioural characteristics that shape reactions and responses, and is believed to be a trait that individuals are born with. The temperament of a young child affects the way you interact, and may alter your expectations of them. For some people temperament influences how well they bond with a young child.

There are three types of temperament that relate to young children, as shown in the following table.

Temperament	Characteristics
Easy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Cheerful ▶ Adaptable ▶ Fit well into routines ▶ Positive in mood
Slow to warm up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Adjust slowly to new experiences ▶ Tend to be negative in mood ▶ Inactive ▶ Mildly responsive to the world around them
Difficult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Slow to adapt to new experiences ▶ Strong reactions to change ▶ Irregular routines ▶ Negative in mood ▶ Often withdrawn

The term 'temperament' is often used when discussing infants and toddlers as the natural forces of their character predominate. As children develop socially and emotionally, various positive and negative experiences affect them, and they begin to develop a personality that is not based solely on their inborn traits.

You can adapt your interactions and responses to suit a young child's temperament and, later, their personality. You may even be able to assist a young child with a difficult or slow to warm up temperament to become more settled and ready for change.

Sense of belonging

Ideally you should match the environment and your interactions with the temperament or personality of a child, and aim to create a feeling of belonging for each child. When doing this, consider the following.

Consideration	What to take into account
Sensitivity	How sensitive is each child to particular situations and experiences? Noise, room temperature, pain, smells, colours and textures all affect us differently, so consider these when plans change.
Activity level	Each child may require a different amount of activity – some children can manage to be active all day without rest, others of the same age require a regular sleep or rest period. Children require quiet and active choices throughout the day, so you will have to be flexible in your daily routine to ensure their needs are catered for.
Adaptability	<p>Constantly changing rooms, staff and routines are disruptive to children and may cause anxiety. When a child is new to your service, establish a routine so there are as few changes as possible from day to day.</p> <p>Prepare the child in advance for what is going to happen next. Even very minor changes, such as moving from play to snack or lunch, can cause new children to become upset if they are unfamiliar with the routine and unaware of what will occur.</p>

Consideration	What to take into account
Approach	For new children, use a transition action to reduce the impact of a new relationship. This is a strategy that involves using a special toy or ritual to break down the barriers between you and a child. Respect a child's need to take things slowly when dealing with new people, places or practices. Rushing things may only cause the child to develop mistrust and create further difficulty in dealing with new situations. Children who are slow to warm up may need their parent to stay longer than other children, so encourage this to happen.
Attention span	Be realistic in the time you expect a child to concentrate on one activity. In a group of children, all with varying skill levels, temperaments and personalities, there will be some children who can stick to an activity for a long period of time and others who can maintain only a brief concentration span. Ensure your routines and experiences allow for these differences; in particular, group times should be flexible and suited to the individuals in the group.

Practice task 4

Read each of the following scenarios about children in the dramatic play home corner. What stage of social play do you think each child is demonstrating?

1. Helen has told the other children what role they are to take and is explaining to another child that they need to do the shopping. They collect handbags and talk about catching a taxi to the shops.
.....
2. Jo is at the kitchen sink washing dishes. Another child is at the table mixing in a bowl.
.....
3. Tania is sweeping the floor and another child is putting cups into a drawer. Tania says, 'I am sweeping the floor'. The other child says, 'The cups can go in here'.
.....
4. Lisa is sitting in the book corner on a cushion. She is looking around the room and twisting her shoelaces.
.....
5. Maryanne is standing next to a group of children who are playing Ludo. Now and again she reminds the next player that it is their turn.
.....

2B Social development outcomes

You can influence the play and social development of children through:

- ▶ formally organised activities
- ▶ times and places for unplanned interaction
- ▶ meetings
- ▶ travel
- ▶ walks
- ▶ setting up the environment or venue.



The EYLF helps you understand the importance of social development and how you can work toward supporting children’s learning and development.

EYLF	Areas of focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children feel safe, secure and supported ▶ Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Developing trusting relationships ▶ Engaging in one-to-one interactions ▶ Showing empathy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children respond to diversity with respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Respecting individual differences ▶ Using play ▶ Respecting cultural differences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities, and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Supporting children’s communication skills ▶ Supporting children with communication difficulties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Respecting choice to watch and observe ▶ Taking responsibility for actions

Developing trusting relationships

Developing trust between an educator and child is a vital part of a child’s healthy emotional development. For example, infants are helpless; they use cues to express their needs, and rely on educators to understand and respond to these cues appropriately. If the infant’s needs are not met or their cues are not acknowledged, they will not trust those around them. Believing that they lack the ability to make things happen will reduce their self-esteem.

If a child has learnt that they can trust the world and has a strong sense of autonomy, they will also have ideas, energy and enthusiasm to explore the world. A child without trust may be wary and hostile, and will try to protect themselves from an unpredictable world.

Respect can be shown by using an approach that assists you to gain the child's trust. Whether you need to wipe a nose, change a nappy, move play to another area or ask a question, always approach the child, move to their level (for example, crouch down) and tell them what you are going to do and what you want them to do.

The interactions you make to ensure the child's relationship with you is secure and trusting are essential if you are to provide support during play. To develop a secure and trusting relationship that will benefit children during play, you must:

- ▶ get to know the individual child
- ▶ provide an environment that responds to the interests, strengths, needs and culture of the child and their family
- ▶ frequently interact with the child
- ▶ promptly respond to the child's needs
- ▶ model appropriate behaviours
- ▶ use positive communication
- ▶ provide encouragement
- ▶ offer choices
- ▶ redirect inappropriate behaviour
- ▶ apply limits and guidelines.

Example

Demonstrating respectful interactions

Kristen welcomes each child into the room by moving to their level and saying hello. She always makes a comment that is special to each child. For example, she:

- ▶ asks Carol about how her new toy car is going
- ▶ tells Susan that today she can engage in painting and making collages
- ▶ welcomes Tammy with a big hug and tells her that she has really strong arms
- ▶ thanks Ashan for reminding her to water the pot plants as they were really thirsty.

One-on-one interactions

Often one-on-one interactions occur spontaneously. These may be times when you can work together on an activity, such as reading a story or completing a puzzle.

Routine times also provide opportunities for one-on-one interaction. This might occur during:

- ▶ welcome and farewell time
- ▶ toileting or nappy change
- ▶ mealtimes
- ▶ rest, sleep and relaxation.

During these routines you can:

- ▶ greet and farewell every child in an individual way
- ▶ respond to their cues or requests
- ▶ return the interactions they initiate with you
- ▶ talk about the child's day, weekend, plans for the next day, etc.
- ▶ use the child's name
- ▶ talk about what you are doing.

When you take time to complete routines and make the most of the one-to-one interactions you are having with each child, you will provide a relaxed physical time and lots of contact appropriate to the child's preferences. For example, you can do this by:

- ▶ cuddling them
- ▶ sitting them on your knee
- ▶ rubbing their back
- ▶ holding hands
- ▶ singing
- ▶ reciting poems.

Element 5.1.1 of the NQS expects that 'Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included'. This includes the way you engage, participate in play and develop secure relationships with children.

Empathy

Until they are around six years old, children do not fully understand how others are affected by their actions. This is called empathy. When you have empathy, it means you understand what someone else is feeling or how you would feel if the same thing happened to you. When you feel empathy for someone, you are caring for them and respecting their feelings.

Empathy develops gradually from infancy – you might notice that if one infant begins to cry, others will also start to cry. Toddlers begin to comfort others when they notice they are upset and, by preschool age, there will be an understanding of feelings and emotions related to things the child has experienced themselves.

Modelling is an excellent display of behaviour; it forms the backbone to learning how you care for others by:

- ▶ supporting them when they are upset, grumpy or frightened
- ▶ talking about how people feel
- ▶ redirecting negative comments.

Watch this video about learning empathy.



Example

Modelling empathy and care

Constance, the educator, is in the sandpit with Jervis (five years) and Lysa (three years). They have been playing in parallel for some time, building near each other, when Jervis suddenly pushes Lysa over, grabs the shovel she was using and yells, 'Lysa, you are a baby!'

Constance immediately goes to Lysa and helps her to her feet, asking if she is okay. Constance then moves to Jervis and says that she was concerned to see him be so rough with another person.

Constance asks Jervis to return the shovel to Lysa. She asks him how he would feel if someone took his shovel away. Jervis says he would feel sad.

Constance says that she would feel this way too. She offers Jervis another shovel and asks him to say sorry to Lysa.

Respecting individual differences

Diversity relates to a variety of characteristics that may be viewed as differences. These differences may relate to:

- ▶ gender
- ▶ race and language background
- ▶ culture
- ▶ age
- ▶ ability
- ▶ interests and preferences
- ▶ social activity and lifestyle
- ▶ communication style
- ▶ personality or temperament
- ▶ length of time and regularity of attendance in the service.

From as early as two years old, children begin to notice physical differences in people, particularly relating to gender, skin colour and obvious physical disabilities. This is part of the child's self-discovery as they ask, 'Who am I?'

Children begin to determine who they are from their experiences with others. They find out whether they are male or female, become aware of the colour of their skin, eyes and hair, and find out about their bodies and their physical capabilities.

As children start forming relationships with others, they develop attitudes about differences. Early ideas about particular groups of people can influence children's feelings about who they are, as well as how they feel about others.

Cultural differences

Children need to see diversity in their daily lives to be able to value and accept it. You can encourage the play of children with cultural differences, including different racial backgrounds, by doing the following:

- ▶ Allow children to use play that depicts their culture through role-playing, modelling or their home language.
- ▶ Be aware of children's culture and incorporate relevant resources; for example, Chinese cookware for home corner, saris for dress-ups, dolls with varied skin colours, or Aboriginal musical instruments for music time.
- ▶ Make cultural diversity part of the day-to-day environment rather than just bringing out cultural resources on special days or occasions.
- ▶ Realistically depict life outside the care setting so that everyone feels accepted.
- ▶ Respect all cultures.
- ▶ Educate yourself about the children's lives outside the service.
- ▶ Do not allow yourself to stereotype any child or family.
- ▶ Celebrate special occasions that are important to each of the children at the service.



Gender differences

You should encourage children to accept and respect gender differences.

Steps to encourage children to accept gender differences:

- ▶ Avoid labelling children's activities as 'for boys' or 'for girls'.
- ▶ Be aware that boys and girls play differently.
- ▶ Encourage everyone to participate in all areas of play; for example, encourage boys to dress up, girls to engage in more messy play and initiate more spontaneous interactions with all children in the group.
- ▶ Be sensitive to the attitudes of families – some cultures have strict ideas on suitable behaviour for boys and girls, and you may need to make compromises.

Children with additional needs

Steps to encourage children with additional needs to play and be social:

- ▶ Include them in all types of play for all areas of development.
- ▶ Participate in the play to model ways to include the child and encourage interactions.
- ▶ Provide specific equipment or set-up to ensure success.
- ▶ Follow individual programs that have been developed for the child by a specialist service.
- ▶ Ensure that the child's individual programs are incorporated into the overall play setting to provide an inclusive experience for the child.
- ▶ Encourage other children to participate in the activities specified by specialist services as well.

When you encourage all children equally, you are modelling communication and interactions that the children will learn from, which assists them to use appropriate communication.

Example

Encouraging participation

Belinda, an educator, is in the home corner with a group of five-year-old children. She is part of their play as they make breakfast using toy foods and do the dishes. Belinda says, 'I need to drive my grader (earth mover) today so I can build the new road'. She points to the poster of the graders and says, 'That's my grader, the big one at the top'. She then asks each child where they will be working today as she dries the dishes. The children respond as they help Belinda dry the dishes. Belinda says, 'Thank you, everyone!' They all say goodbye and head off to 'work'.

Using play

Play can help children to accept and value all people, particularly those who may appear different from themselves. In the following table, there are some examples of how you can support this learning.

Diversity	Create a play environment that reflects many kinds of people and ways of living; for example, by adding one or two new or cultural items to a dramatic play area, including music or pictures of people from various cultures, or inviting visitors to participate as volunteers or guests.
Equity and inclusiveness	Arrange a play setting that promotes participation of boys and girls, disabled and able-bodied children and children of various cultural backgrounds.
Parent involvement	Involve parents in children's play by providing education and information that extends parent understanding of play and children's acceptance of others, and/or discussing issues privately with particular parents.
Challenge negative behaviours	Challenge any behaviour that alerts you to negative attitudes that may be developing in children; for example, by talking about feelings if children are singling out others.

Supporting communication skills

Children's social play is influenced by their interaction and communication skills. This includes communication skills to express themselves and to listen to others. For communication to be effective, both processes need to occur.

When supporting a child's communication, encourage the child to verbally express themselves as much as possible. Children use nonverbal cues for communication until they are developmentally ready to speak. Until this time, you can model the use of words in a correct and clear way.

Children will wish to solve problems, such as how to complete a task, or negotiate to work out who will go first or what role to take, and you can support them by providing appropriate words to use; for example, you might help them to ask for a toy, or to join in a play situation. Be mindful that not all children have the ability to use words skilfully; you are there to model positive examples of words that can be used in a variety of situations.

Some examples of the things you can do to help children develop their communication skills are illustrated in the following table.

Skill	Example
Communicating ideas	'Kip, tell Eugenie about your plan for building.'
Negotiating	'Kip, Eugenie wants to build with you. You should tell her how she can work with you.'
Collaborating	'Kip, Eugenie has some ideas for the building. Maybe she could tell you and you can both work together.'
Understanding each other	'Eugenie, Kip would like to explain his idea. If you stop and listen, you will know what he means.'

Supporting communication difficulties

Most children choose solitary or quiet play at times; they enjoy working alone and achieving their goals. However, some children have difficulty working with others or becoming involved in small or large groups. These children may be shy or inexperienced, or they may have a particular communication difficulty.

Children with communication difficulties may misinterpret social cues and lack knowledge of how to behave in social situations. They may:

- ▶ laugh at inappropriate times
- ▶ ignore others' attempts to interact with them
- ▶ become physically aggressive
- ▶ watch others in play
- ▶ become withdrawn and find hiding places while others play.

A child who has difficulty interacting with others will need time to familiarise themselves with the situation they plan to enter. They may also need to prepare themselves to become part of the experience.

A child who has difficulty forming relationships with play partners will benefit from your help to improve their social skills. By using your own interactions and the planned experiences you provide, you can support the child to learn to:

- ▶ compromise
- ▶ share
- ▶ make decisions
- ▶ solve problems
- ▶ understand how their emotions affect others
- ▶ win and lose
- ▶ use social and pro-social behaviours
- ▶ accept similarities and differences.

Here are some examples of games and activities that help children to manage social relationships and develop their relationship skills.

Type of game	Examples
Name games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 'Hello' and 'name' songs, chants and rhymes. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 'Who stole the cookie?' – 'How do you do?' ▶ Photos of children's faces made into puzzles ▶ Photo albums of children in the group
Facial expression and emotion games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Emotion flash cards for matching ▶ Copy the emotion ▶ Pretend to ... (be happy, sad, etc.)
Laughter games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Make the statue laugh ▶ Who can laugh the funniest

Type of game	Examples
Cooperation games and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Large-scale construction ▶ Murals ▶ Ball games ▶ Garden project
Negotiation games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Cooking a pizza in pairs – deciding on the toppings liked by both ▶ Small groups setting the table for lunch – working out who will do what task ▶ Planning an activity together

Respecting a child's choice to watch and observe

There are a number of reasons why a child may choose to observe others, including:

- ▶ learning new information from direction or modelling
- ▶ considering new ideas
- ▶ participating in onlooker play or unoccupied play
- ▶ taking time out to refuel, rest or change their play.

It is unrealistic to expect a child to participate constantly, especially if they are in long day care. Children occasionally need time to withdraw from social contact, just as adults do. However, you might find that the child needs your support because they:

- ▶ feel unable to enter a situation
- ▶ lack the skills to participate
- ▶ believe they are not welcome in the situation.

Your observations of the child and some gentle questioning will help you find out if they need support. You might ask:

- ▶ 'Would you like to play too?'
- ▶ 'Can I help you to ...?'
- ▶ 'Can [the child] play too?'
- ▶ 'What would you like to do?'

The challenge for you as an educator is to identify whether the child is watching and observing for a positive reason or because of a lack of skill or ability.

Example

Respecting the child's choice

Ashton is sitting at the puzzle table watching other children at the science bench as they talk about what the caterpillars are eating.

Glenise is standing a short distance away from the science bench, also watching the other children.

The educator observes Ashton, but knows that he has the skills to enter a discussion if he chooses, so instead of asking him if he would like a closer look at the caterpillars, she decides to leave him to listen and watch the other children.

The educator is not sure if Glenise wants to join the discussion. She approaches Glenise and asks her, 'Would you like to come to see the caterpillars with me?' Glenise agrees and, as they approach the bench, the educator says to the children, 'Glenise would like to look at the caterpillars too. Let's make a space for her.'

Taking responsibility for actions

Another way to support children to strengthen their social and emotional wellbeing is by expecting them to take responsibility for their actions – particularly in regard to how they interact with others and the environment. This is especially important when working with toddlers and preschoolers as they are attempting to assert themselves, and often test situations and people. You can help a toddler or preschooler to understand the effects of their actions by:

- ▶ discussing what is occurring
- ▶ encouraging children to help rectify a situation
- ▶ being consistent.

Strategy	How you can do it
Discussion	<p>Discuss what is occurring in a simple way; for example, say to the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ‘You threw the ball and it went under the bench. You can’t play with it now.’ ▶ ‘If you throw your biscuit it will go on the floor and then you will have no biscuit to eat.’
Rectifying	<p>Encourage the child to help rectify a situation they have caused; this might include hugging a child they have hurt (with the other child’s permission) or cleaning up a spill.</p>
Consistency	<p>Be consistent and follow through with limits and guidelines. This is important as the child will quickly learn that testing you is not necessary and that you will continue to have the same expectations and support for them.</p>

The outcome of any discussion should be that the child understands what has happened and what the result is – these are the consequences. To support children to understand consequences, you can explain to them what happened, what the consequences are, why this occurred and how they can avoid this in the future.

Practice task 5

1. Obtain a copy of a plan of activities. Identify the following things on the plan:
 - a. When one-on-one interactions could be used

 - b. Where respect for difference could be included

2. Explain how you would assist a child to use communication with others to:
 - a. Communicate their ideas

b. Negotiate

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c. Collaborate

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d. Understand each other

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3. If you were caring for a six-month-old, would you expect them to take responsibility for their actions? Explain why or why not.

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4. What could you do and say to show empathy to a child who was upset after sleeping to help them develop a trusting relationship with you?

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2C Social development practice

As with physical development, social development is also influenced by:

- ▶ time
- ▶ space
- ▶ resources
- ▶ people
- ▶ safety.



Time

The social play and leisure time you plan for children must be unhurried and uninterrupted. When children are rushed through play they don't have an opportunity to be fully involved in the experience and may become frustrated. Children also need time to interact in unplanned activities.

Children need time to:

- ▶ make choices
- ▶ become involved
- ▶ change direction
- ▶ become involved again
- ▶ practise and master skills
- ▶ form relationships
- ▶ express themselves.

Space

You can work with children to determine how the space available should be used. When planning, remember that children need the following.

What to plan for	How to provide it
Opportunities	The type of play should be appropriate for their age. Opportunities for each social play stage should be offered to older children. When children are in a group all day, every day, they may become tired and over-stimulated, so they also need some quiet time.
Choices	The space available should help children choose to do something that interests them; therefore, there must be sufficient play spaces available for children to have a choice of two or three activities or experiences.
Challenges	The space should offer a variety of possibilities and should encourage children to think creatively, solve problems and make decisions. The space should be flexible to allow children to play in self-created play, or to mix two or more play experiences. For example, children may move the animals in the sand trough to the block area and extend their own play.
Safety and security	The space should be safe and secure without making the children feel over-protected – finding a balance between safety and healthy risk-taking is a challenging part of your job.

Resources

The resources you make available to children will affect the quality and type of play they engage in and, in turn, will affect their social development. The resources should match the children's interests, needs and abilities. There should be enough resources provided for the number of children in the group. Finally, the resources should be good quality so the children can use them safely and get as much enjoyment out of using them as possible.

People

Consider how educators are positioned to ensure children's safety and wellbeing while they develop their social skills. These educators need space and time to be able to interact with children playing, to enhance social play, model appropriate behaviour and to extend play where possible.

Cultural priorities such as education, play, language, rituals and religious beliefs all affect the way you present your play, how you communicate with others and what priority you place on various play and leisure decisions. These same cultural priorities also affect the type of play that children engage in.

An important skill you must develop is the ability to judge when and how to enter a play situation. Here are some useful strategies:

- ▶ If you feel it is necessary to show a child how to use a particular piece of equipment or tool, join in the play and model how this is done rather than stopping the play and directing the child.
- ▶ When you are invited into play, do so in a subtle manner. After some time passes, you can provide suggestions to enhance and extend the play instead of taking over and directing.
- ▶ With older children, you may want to teach a craft or a game that there has been interest in. Once the skills are established, you can leave the play to the children.
- ▶ When you provide support and extensions to play, children remain engaged for longer periods and can find a broader range of options for their play as well. You might add new props, suggest a larger or smaller space, or add a new idea about the topic of play.
- ▶ Support negotiation, problem-solving and conflict resolution as needed without interrupting the play.

The roles that you take when entering a play situation are shown in the following table.

Role	What you're doing
Observer	Watching the play
Provider	Supplying materials and resources
Mediator	Resolving conflicts and suggesting options
Player	Joining in the play

Safety

Your knowledge of child development and the individual abilities of children allows you to create a safe play environment. In terms of social development, this means there should be enough equipment to allow children to participate, particularly if they are young and unable to share. Safety must also be considered in relation to the types of dramatic play that materials will be used for. You must be sure that materials are sturdy and in good repair, and placed to allow their full use.

Social milestones

The following table illustrates the social development milestones for each age group, which have been linked to practical application (interactions and experiences) in the service setting.

Social development milestones	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
0–6 months		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Begins to smile at people at six weeks ▶ Enjoys social play with caregivers ▶ Fascination and interest in mirror images of themselves ▶ Squeals with delight ▶ Uses various cues for gaining attention for needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Smile back at infant ▶ Recite ‘Round and round the garden’ with actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Knee bouncing games with infant ▶ Low mirror at child’s height
6–12 months		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Imitates people during play ▶ May begin to test caregiver and parent responses to behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Talk about what the child is doing, e.g. ‘You’re on the phone. Say, “Hi Mum”.’ ▶ Acknowledge how children are feeling, e.g. ‘You’re feeling sad because we have to come inside for lunch.’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Toy phone ▶ Tea set ▶ Dolls, blankets, cradle
1–2 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Demonstrates self-awareness ▶ Becomes increasingly independent of caregivers ▶ Defiant behaviour is more apparent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Talk about members of the family, pets and special events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Photos of self and family members ▶ Story time ▶ Sand play

Social development milestones	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
2–3 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Imitates the world around them through social play ▶ Becomes increasingly independent and exerts control with the use of the word 'no' ▶ Does not have the ability to share toys and equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Model positively, offer choices where possible ▶ Involve children in daily routines, such as helping to set up the lunch table 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Home corner – supermarket set-up with groceries, cash register, shopping bags and handbags ▶ Provide multiple toys to avoid difficulty of sharing ▶ Cubby house ▶ Playdough
3–5 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can cooperate with other children more regularly ▶ Negotiates simple solutions to problems and conflicts with peers ▶ Pretend play increases as children act out what they see ▶ More likely to listen and respond to rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Involve children in decision-making and choices ▶ Sometimes join in play, taking on a role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Puppet theatre ▶ Simple board games and card games ▶ Dress-ups ▶ Doll house with people

Practice task 6

1. Choose one of the age groups in the above table of social development milestones and answer the following questions:

a. What age group did you choose?

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b. Identify one social experience that you could set up.

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c. Explain how you would participate in play during this experience.

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2. Refer to a program of activities. Identify how many physical play choices are available to a child during a play period.

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Summary

- ▶ Children need support to take responsibility for their own actions.
- ▶ There is a range of times when you can spend one-on-one time with children.
- ▶ When you model care, empathy and respect for others, the children will learn from your example.
- ▶ The language used to express ideas, negotiate roles and collaborate to achieve goals can be modelled.
- ▶ Trusting relationships can be developed with children; this can extend to educators, other adults and other children.
- ▶ Children enjoy your participation in their play and learn from your modelling.
- ▶ Individual differences can be exciting when approached with respect.
- ▶ Children may wish to simply observe at times.

Learning checkpoint 2

Supporting social development

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Casper, a new preschooler, is extremely shy and hasn't yet adjusted to the new environment. His mother tells you that he has been this way since she separated from her husband.

After his mother drops him off in the morning, he often cries for an hour. He doesn't like being around the other children and sits in the corner by himself. He seems uninterested in the experiences around him.

One morning, Casper arrives with a big smile on his face. He has a container of green playdough and shows it to you. At playtime, he sits down beside other children using natural coloured playdough. Casper plays with his green playdough. This is a big step for Casper, who usually doesn't sit with the other children. After a short while you notice he is watching the other children working with their playdough. They are using feathers and pebbles with the dough.

Casper is using all of the pink feathers with his playdough. Mike, another child, approaches him and takes all the feathers, saying, 'Pink feathers are for girls.'

1. Write a paragraph about how you would spend one-on-one time with Casper and extend his social experience through play. Include how you would model care, empathy and respect.

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2. What could you say to Casper if you were trying to do the following:
 - a. Encourage him to participate and communicate with the other children at the table

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- b. Explain to the other children why Casper does not wish to participate if he was unable to tell them himself

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3. Answer the following questions by giving one example for each.

a. What indicators might tell you that Casper was ready to join an activity or experience?

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b. Explain what you would do to ensure Casper developed a trusting relationship with you.

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c. How would you support Casper if he wanted to use some feathers and pebbles? Explain why you would suggest this.

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4. What you would say and do so that Mike shows respect to Casper, and accepts responsibility for his own actions?

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Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

3A Principles of emotional development

3B Emotional development outcomes

3C Emotional development practice

Supporting emotional development

As they grow, children form a primary attachment to a significant person, but they are capable of forming attachments to many different people. Children often make sense of unknown feelings and experiences by linking them to familiar objects and people. Strong attachments are built through your prompt and consistent attention to each child's needs, and by recognising and supporting them through their negative feelings.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	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 and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
✓	Respect for diversity
	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
✓	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
	Learning environments
✓	Cultural competence
✓	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
✓	Children have a strong sense of identity
✓	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
✓	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

3A Principles of emotional development

Understanding the basic principles of emotional development will help you to support children to express and manage their feelings appropriately, and provide a basis for understanding how to support and encourage their efforts.

Watch this video about healthy emotional development.



Humanistic theory

Psychology theorist Abraham Maslow (1908–1970) identified the basic needs of children and adults that must be met before we progress to satisfying other needs. You may recognise Maslow's theory, presented as a pyramid:



The hierarchy of needs demonstrates that emotional needs link with most needs of humans. You can see that the basic needs are food, rest and sleep, and basic body functions (toileting, swallowing, etc.).

Once basic physical needs are met, emotional needs are tied in with all other levels, forming a type of foundation for success. Safety, security, limits and consistency allow people to feel like their emotional needs are being met and acknowledged. Love and belonging support feelings of being needed. Self-esteem and the need for respect, attention and appreciation are directly linked to how people experience and react to feelings and change, and how they feel others will experience and react. Maslow's theory shows that an emotionally cared for and confident child can attempt to be all they can be.

Maslow's theory can help you to recognise priorities in caring for children by demonstrating that your expectations must match the child's immediate needs. For example, if a child feels insecure and unsafe (second-level needs), they won't feel loved and cared for (third-level needs). They also may not participate fully in the experiences you plan and may not develop secure relationships with others. In addition, the child's developmental progress may be affected as they are focused on being safe and secure, rather than being involved and challenged.

Throughout this learner guide, you will notice many points that relate to the priorities you give to children's needs (particularly in caring for social, emotional and psychological development) as a foundation for ensuring other developmental areas are catered for appropriately.

Attachment theory

John Bowlby (1907–1990) developed the attachment theory and Mary Ainsworth (1913–1999) continued studies based on his findings.

Bowlby believed that children are able to form attachments to a number of people. There is usually a primary caregiver with whom the attachment is strongest, and any number of other attachments may follow. The primary caregiver is the person who provides for the child's physical and emotional needs consistently and responsively. This person is most likely to be a parent or guardian.

Other attachments are important to the child's social and emotional development, and it is expected that you will aim to develop an attachment relationship with the children. Children who are securely attached will experience less distress than other children.

Children show attachment relationships by showing the following behaviours.

Behaviour	Characteristics
Social referencing	<p>The child may watch emotional responses and respond in a similar way to a caregiver they are attached to.</p> <p>For example, if a spider is crawling on the wall, the child may copy the response of the caregiver. If the caregiver screams, the child screams; if the caregiver says, 'Hey, look how many legs it has!' the child will show interest.</p>
Anchoring	<p>The child may move off to explore, but will not move too far from the caregiver they are attached to.</p> <p>The child will ensure this caregiver is close by – just in case – and will be confused and concerned if the caregiver moves away unexpectedly.</p>
Refuelling	<p>The child may periodically return to the caregiver they are attached to with a toy or activity, or just to make sure they are still there.</p> <p>The child will also return to the caregiver when frightened, hurt or upset.</p>

These attachment behaviours allow you to observe how well you have developed relationships with the children you care for. Understanding attachment behaviours also guides you to understand what is required of you when a child is attached to you. If you are available to a child and respond to their emotional needs, you will develop a healthy, trusting bond.

Separation anxiety

At some stage, all children will experience anxiety at being separated from their parent or primary caregiver. The onset of anxiety may be out of character for a child and may indicate that there are other issues you should consider, or it may be due to the child's developmental stage.

Common signs of distress a child may display include:

- ▶ withdrawal
- ▶ aggression
- ▶ crying
- ▶ behaviour that is out of character (any action or emotion that is not usual for this child).



Stranger anxiety

Infants may become fearful of strangers between the ages of six and nine months. At approximately eight months, infants become fearful of being separated from a person they are attached to. Even if this person is present in the room, they may still suffer stranger anxiety and will want to stay close to the person they are attached to.

These reactions show that the child is able to tell the difference between people and seek out those closest to them. They also show that the child has the physical ability to cling to their favoured person when exposed to an unfamiliar situation.

Generally, stranger anxiety and separation anxiety peak at around 12 months and reduce by 18 months. At two years, children begin to feel more comfortable with other carers, provided the environment is secure and familiar, and that unfamiliar carers work towards positive relationships.

Fear

Fear is an emotion that is recognised as a reflex at birth and develops in a child as their brain function increases, and their imagination and thought processes become more complex and abstract. Children often experience fear because they do not understand a situation or are not prepared for a change.

Address children's fears so they can feel safe and secure in the care environment. When your routine is stable and predictable you can eliminate certain fears, such as:

- ▶ what will happen next
- ▶ what is expected of them
- ▶ who will be caring for them
- ▶ when particular things will occur.

The following table summarises common fears that children experience. Children may become more fearful when they are managing other issues in their lives.

Age group	Common fears
Infants	Infants show an instinctive fear of sensory surprises, like loud noises and unexpected approaches. Later, once their brains are better able to connect objects and actions with sounds, they show fear of being separated from familiar people.
Toddlers	Toddlers may show fear of night-time, darkness and of potentially scary activities. This occurs due to their developing imagination.
Preschoolers	Preschoolers show fear of imaginary things and often have nightmares. Their imaginations are animated and explore outside their familiar environment into things they can make up. They often become afraid of things they don't understand, sometimes after having overheard an adult conversation they misunderstood.

Practice task 7

1. Watch the behaviour of infants and/or toddlers. Do you notice children demonstrating attachment behaviours? Explain what you see.

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2. Consider Maslow's humanistic theory. If a child was demonstrating fear due to separation anxiety, would they be able to settle in and feel a sense of belonging and safety in the environment? Explain why or why not.

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3B Emotional development outcomes

Emotions are the feelings that we experience as part of our mental state. Emotions may be positive or negative, and may include the following.

Positive emotions	Negative emotions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Enthusiasm ▶ Happiness ▶ Empathy ▶ Excitement ▶ Curiosity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Hatred ▶ Grief ▶ Anger ▶ Shame ▶ Sadness ▶ Fear

Positive emotions are pleasant to experience, and negative emotions are often upsetting. However, both are important in children’s emotional development. Children need to learn to express and manage their negative emotions appropriately as they grow up.

Every person experiences emotions to different degrees. People may even experience different emotions relating to the same event. Children use emotions as cues to communicate messages. Your response to these emotions is crucial – the way you respond can have a long-lasting effect and may influence a child’s self-esteem throughout their life.

The EYLF helps you understand the importance of emotional development and how you can work toward supporting children’s learning and development.

EYLF	Areas of focus
Children feel safe, secure and supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Expressing and managing feelings ▶ Negative feelings ▶ Separation anxiety and stranger anxiety ▶ Fear
Children develop their emerging autonomy, interdependence, resilience and sense of agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Encouraging children’s efforts ▶ Providing choices about behaviours ▶ Making simple choices ▶ Dealing with anger ▶ Supporting decision-making about behaviours
Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Recognising and sharing successes ▶ Sharing successes with families
Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Supporting children through frustration and mistakes ▶ Monitoring frustration ▶ Using mistakes as opportunities to learn

By responding to all feelings, you start to build relationships with children and show them that you care.

Developmental stage	Basic emotional needs
Infants	Infants need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ be responded to ▶ have their nonverbal communication understood and be attended to.
Toddlers	Toddlers need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ express themselves through activities and experiences ▶ express themselves verbally ▶ name their feelings.
Preschoolers	Preschoolers need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ express themselves through physical activities, such as clapping and stamping ▶ express their feelings verbally ▶ express their feelings through paintings, drawings and other creative experiences.

Expressing and managing feelings

There are a number of strategies you can use to encourage children to express and manage their feelings appropriately, and to support their efforts.

Negative feelings experienced by children are commonly caused by:

- ▶ accidents
- ▶ other children
- ▶ losing a toy or having a toy taken from them
- ▶ embarrassment
- ▶ the environment being too noisy, crowded, large, busy, quiet or uninteresting
- ▶ not being heard.

When feelings are being expressed as clear responses to one of these causes, they can be responded to in simple ways. When children express feelings and ideas, both positive and negative, you can respond using the following strategies.

Strategy	Responding to a child expressing negative feelings	Responding to a child expressing positive feelings
Listen to what the child has to say. Use body language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use active listening. ▶ Face the child. ▶ Get down to their level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use active listening. ▶ Face the child. ▶ Get down to their level.
Avoid leading the child with specific questions; respond with simple comments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ‘Oh, I understand.’ ▶ ‘Mmmm.’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ‘That’s interesting.’ ▶ ‘What an interesting idea.’ ▶ ‘So how does it feel?’

Strategy	Responding to a child expressing negative feelings	Responding to a child expressing positive feelings
Recognise specific feelings where possible to enable the child to do the same.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 'You seem angry.' ▶ 'Are you sad about it?' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 'You are very excited about this idea.' ▶ 'How confident you are.' ▶ 'You seem very happy.'
Ask the child what to do next.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Find out what the child wants to do. ▶ Brainstorm a solution together if the child is old enough. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Find out what the child wants to do. ▶ Brainstorm a solution together if the child is old enough.
Use physical language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sit close to the child. ▶ Touch the child gently on the arm or rub their back. ▶ Be sure not to invade the child's space. ▶ Use appropriate actions for an educator to child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sit close to the child. ▶ Demonstrate enjoyment or pleasure if appropriate by clapping, smiling, jumping up and down, or laughing. ▶ Mirror the child's feelings if appropriate.
Provide materials or opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The child may need a comforter (toy, blanket, dummy, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The child may need time, space, materials or people so their idea can be expressed. ▶ The child may need to tell others or express themselves to specific people.
Redirect to the next activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ If the child is extremely upset, redirection is not useful or appropriate as their feelings would be stifled. Allow some quiet time until they are ready to move on. ▶ Suggest an activity that the child usually enjoys. ▶ Monitor the redirection and participate with the child if possible until they are settled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ If the child is extremely excited or enthusiastic, redirection should relate to furthering their ideas and feelings. ▶ Provide for their success. ▶ Monitor the child's participation to ensure they are continuing to feel positive and enthusiastic. ▶ Monitor their levels of frustration, confidence and challenge.

Separation anxiety and stranger anxiety

When a child displays signs of separation anxiety, the strategies you should use to settle them are very similar to those for reacting to a child with an emotional upset.

Stranger anxiety is normal and should be expected, and there are plenty of ways to support children at this delicate stage of development.

The following table summarises some useful strategies.

Emotion	Strategies
<p>Separation anxiety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Physically comfort the child with a hug or by rubbing their back, arm or shoulder. ▶ Listen to the child. ▶ Talk to the child. ▶ Provide comforters to relax the child. ▶ Redirect or distract the child with another activity. ▶ Use a 'transition action'.
<p>Stranger anxiety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Be consistent and reassuring in your practice. ▶ Encourage families to participate in the orientation process so that the child is comfortable with the surroundings and the educators, and builds up their familiarity through short, frequent visits. ▶ Ask families about their care practices. What makes the child comfortable at home? Does the child have any comforting toys or favourite songs? ▶ Make the environment more homelike by providing familiar toys and other things from home. ▶ Learn about what interests the child and incorporate this into your care and activities routine. ▶ Offer physical comfort to a child who is distressed; if the child becomes more upset, give them some space and use gentle comments of reassurance instead. ▶ Use appropriate language and tone of voice when speaking with the child; act as calmly as possible.

Fear

As fear affects children differently, your strategies for managing fear will vary. Some strategies to manage the predictable fears children experience are outlined in the following table.

Strategy	How to implement
<p>Anticipate fears and act to prevent them</p>	<p>If you know that a child is afraid of something or someone, you may be able to prepare the child for experiencing fear or, if possible, avoid it completely.</p>
<p>Remove objects causing fear</p>	<p>If the child is afraid of a particular toy or noise, removing it will be relatively simple. If the child is afraid of something that cannot be removed, such as an educator, people with glasses, men or the playroom, you will have to try another strategy.</p>
<p>Prepare children for unpleasant times and events</p>	<p>Children's lives may involve unpleasant experiences; for example, having a blood test, going to hospital or moving rooms. You can use the suggested experiences identified previously to encourage emotional expression, and to provide ways for children to find out more about what the experience involves. Be honest and give the child accurate information, as telling children that an experience will be different to what it actually will be may only make them more afraid once they undergo the experience.</p>

Strategy	How to implement
Appropriate routines	Ensure routines are appropriate for the age and stage of the child, and provide a stable and predictable environment. When routines aren't flexible or if materials and messages in the environment don't match a child's needs, the child may become fearful or distressed, and the common causes of negative feelings may become a regular part of the day.

The following strategies may be useful if a child expresses uncontrollable emotions of fear.

Strategy	How to do it
Remove child or cause	Remove the child or the feared object if possible.
Get the child's attention	Ask the child to look at you and, if necessary, hold the child's face gently and turn them towards you.
Offer the child a security item/ comforter	If the child has an item they use for comfort, this is the time to use it. If the child doesn't have a favourite item, provide something they can use as one.
Comfort the child	Talk calmly and quietly, and use body language to let the child know you care about what they are feeling.
Acknowledge the fear	Acknowledge the fear by saying, 'I know you are afraid'. Ensure the child knows they are safe with you and stay nearby until they have calmed down. Don't talk too much; continuing to speak about the fear or continuously reassuring the child may increase their anxiety. Respond simply, as discussion is not appropriate during a fear response.
Redirect if possible	Encourage the child to move to another area or experience, to give them something else to occupy their thoughts. This step may not suit all children and the timing may be difficult to judge.

When working with older children, it is generally easier to empower and enable them to manage the fear themselves by talking to them about their fears in the lead-up to an unpleasant event. This is due to their level of understanding and ability to rationalise a situation. Younger children may try to manage their own fear by:

- ▶ humming – this distracts their minds from the fear
- ▶ taking deep breaths – this allows their bodies to slow down and relax
- ▶ squeezing a hand or item – this gives a focus of tension and allows some anxiety to be transferred to this action.

Ensure you are familiar with these fear management methods so you can provide the child with the comfort and support they need. Most importantly, you need to ensure the environment and your relationship with the child is one that allows the expression of feelings, as suppressed feelings can lead to greater issues.

Encouraging efforts

Acknowledgment and encouragement shows children that you value them and their efforts – it gives them the motivation to do things for intrinsic reasons (to please themselves or because the task is worth doing). Acknowledgment and encouragement focuses on the child's efforts or the process of doing something. It is aimed at helping the children feel good about themselves, which helps to develop their self-esteem. For example, after a child has helped pack away toys, you may encourage them by saying, 'Matilda, you worked really hard to put all the toys away'. There is a range of ways you can demonstrate acknowledgment and encouragement during or after an event, such as the examples provided in the following table.

Provide feedback	Make a positive comment about the effort that is being made, the structure or colour, the materials used or what parts you are particularly interested in or attracted to.
Ask questions	Demonstrate your interest and appreciation by asking a relevant question, such as 'How did you do that?'; 'What materials did you use?'; 'What do you think of your work?'
Thank children	Acknowledge effort and thank children for their contribution by commenting and modelling basic manners.

Your knowledge of each individual child should enable you to recognise things that the child sees as important; you can also find out more about how the child expresses themselves.

To ensure you respond to successes, you must be prepared to consider things from the child's perspective. The most effective way to do this is by providing a child-focused program.

Example

Encouraging efforts

Daniel is drawing with crayons at a table. Christine, the educator, approaches and sits at the same table. Christine has noticed that Daniel has been working at the table for some time. As she sits down she says, 'What have you been working so hard on, Daniel?'

Daniel is proud – he has drawn a horse. Christine can see that it is one of Daniel's most detailed drawings so far. She asks him if he is pleased and then comments that she really likes the way the horse's tail is flying out. Christine asks if Daniel would like to display the work on the art wall or if he plans to take it home tonight.

When Christine shows interest and comments positively on his drawing, Daniel's feelings of success are acknowledged and his self-esteem increases. This causes his self-image and ideal self to become closer together.

Providing behaviour choices

There are two aspects to choice that you will need to address in relation to caring for children. One links to the child's decision-making about a situation, and the other links to the options available in the environment. These aspects relate to one another: the children need to have appropriate activities and experiences provided for them so that there is a range of options to make choices from.

Making simple choices

Making simple choices is an important first step in learning about decision-making, and children need to be given many opportunities to practise this skill. When a child becomes involved in a choice they have a feeling of ownership and are more likely to follow through.

Children of all ages are able to make choices such as what they want to play with, what they want to eat and what they want to wear. They are also able to make choices about their behaviour and how they express their emotions. The skills you need are:

- ▶ knowing the appropriate choices to give a child
- ▶ being able to respect the decision that the child has made
- ▶ following through with their choice.

You must always offer choices that are realistic and can be followed through. Remember that young children (especially toddlers) are unable to make big decisions or choose between many options.

Listen to the words you use – ensure you use questions when there are choices, and statements when there are no choices.

These considerations are demonstrated in the following examples:

- ▶ When Kyall takes the children outside he asks, ‘Do you want to put your hats on?’ The children reply, ‘No!’
- ▶ When Finn takes the children outside he says, ‘Everyone needs their hats on now, please.’ The children go to get their hats.

Dealing with anger

Many issues concerning children’s feelings are a result of them not understanding their emotions, not knowing that feelings are normal, or dealing with feelings in inappropriate ways. Anger is an example of this.

Children’s outbursts can be frightening and even dangerous. This may demonstrate that the child is not in control of their feelings or not capable of expressing themselves safely.

Your ability to deal with children’s emotional outbursts relies on your ability to remain calm. Your actions should be consistent and you should be open to comforting upset children at the appropriate time, even though they may seem difficult to get close to.

Children deal with emotions differently. Some children need quiet time away from others; others need to try to solve the problem or just talk to someone who is prepared to listen. Other children may need to express their emotions physically.

You can cater for each of these calming methods in your environment, but you must also consider the safety of the other children. It is appropriate for children to become emotional, but it is inappropriate for them to hurt others, damage the environment or attempt to leave your care. The limits and strategies you provide for the child at this stage will help them throughout their life.

As you gain more experience caring for children, it will become apparent that every child has different emotional needs. Emotional outbursts of anger are common for some children, just as emotional outbursts of fear, frustration, sadness and joy are common to others.

Supporting decision-making about behaviours

Some ways you might support decision-making about behaviours include:

- ▶ recognising problems
- ▶ clarifying goals
- ▶ planning strategies
- ▶ finding solutions
- ▶ asking open-ended questions
- ▶ supporting children to share their ideas with others
- ▶ answering questions
- ▶ talking about routines and choices
- ▶ encouraging children to consult each other
- ▶ supporting parents to provide learning environments at home.

You can help children to develop their decision-making skills by teaching them how to:

- ▶ break decisions into manageable tasks
- ▶ identify which issues to tackle in which order
- ▶ apply a strategy to use when they are faced with decisions
- ▶ see other people's points of view.

A child who has a strong sense of 'being able' will more confidently make a choice and will have more knowledge of their choices to enable them to make an informed decision.

Element 5.2.2 of the NQS states: 'Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts'. Element 1.2.3 states: 'Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions, and influence events and their world'. When you help children to share their feelings with others in an appropriate manner, and to make informed choices, you are demonstrating these elements in practice.

Example

Encouraging children to resolve problems

Katrina, four years old, has crossed arms and a scowl on her face, and is stomping her feet and growling as she stands close to May, also four. Iris, the educator, comes over to the pair and moves to their level. She asks what is wrong and Katrina says, 'Grrrrr!'

Iris explains to Katrina that she might be scaring May, but Katrina continues to scowl. Iris asks Katrina, 'Why are you upset?' Katrina says, 'Because of her!'

Iris asks May, 'Do you know what Katrina is upset about?' May shakes her head.

Iris explains to Katrina that she might need to talk to May and tell her what the problem is. She asks Katrina, 'Do you know what to say to May?' Katrina says she does.

Katrina tells May that the scarf she is wearing is from the home corner and she wants to play with it herself when she has finished doing a puzzle.

Iris explains to Katrina that May only knew this because Katrina told her, and she thanks Katrina for letting May know. Iris tells Katrina that when she uses a growling voice, May will be scared and won't know what she wants.

Iris supports Katrina to ask May about using the scarf: 'May, can I play with the scarf when you're finished?'

May replies, 'Yes, I'm nearly finished!'

Iris compliments the children for working out the problem by talking to each other.

Recognising and sharing successes

Self-esteem encompasses the various impressions we have of ourselves. The closer our self-concept is to our ideal self, the greater our self-esteem. Self-esteem refers to our personal judgment and feelings about who we are. In particular, it refers to how we feel about ourselves based on these judgments.

An emotional success is one in which a child is pleased with something they have achieved. This might be a simple task or experience they have participated in or completed, or it may be related to a relationship they have with another child or adult. Children feel an increased self-esteem from an achievement, but most will gain further positive feelings if they are acknowledged by another person.

To positively influence a child's self-esteem, you must:

- ▶ give individual attention to each child
- ▶ encourage children to attempt skills and activities
- ▶ give positive feedback
- ▶ provide opportunities for children to be independent
- ▶ support children to be considerate of others
- ▶ help children to be clear communicators
- ▶ acknowledge children when they help you or others
- ▶ provide children with positive messages about themselves
- ▶ encourage realistic ideals by providing materials, experiences and models that show diversity
- ▶ discourage put-downs by never using them yourself and telling others who use them that this is not appropriate behaviour
- ▶ avoid comparisons and competition
- ▶ accept mistakes as learning opportunities
- ▶ be genuine in your interactions with children
- ▶ allow children to make decisions, problem-solve and negotiate
- ▶ provide activities, equipment and expectations appropriate for a child's age and developmental stage
- ▶ identify and celebrate children's emotional successes.

Recognise and respond to achievements

It can be difficult to identify successes when some children are obvious and express their feelings openly, and others are quiet achievers. Careful observation and your knowledge of each child will enable you to recognise what they see as important and how they express themselves. Importantly, you must take the time to identify when children:

- ▶ achieve something and experience success
- ▶ are being challenged positively.

Your observations and interactions will help you identify and monitor the child's level of confidence as they are challenged positively or experience an achievement. The following table provides ideas that will help you identify what is happening when children are experiencing achievements and challenges, and suggests ways you can positively support and respond to them.

Child's experiences	What the child might say	Cues the child might give	What you can do
Achievements and successes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 'Look what I've done.' ▶ 'We did it.' ▶ 'I did it myself!' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Smiling ▶ Finishing and sharing their work ▶ Wanting to do the activity again ▶ Telling others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Comment on the process or skill ▶ Ask how the activity was done ▶ Offer tasks for a similar skill level or area of interest
Positive challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 'This is hard, but I can do it.' ▶ 'I know I can do it if I try hard.' ▶ 'Look what I can do.' ▶ 'I need some help, but not very much.' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Smiling ▶ Humming or singing ▶ Concentrating hard ▶ Succeeding ▶ Working on the task for some time with progress ▶ Asking for a little bit of help or feedback, but not wanting you to take over or complete the activity for them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Stay nearby to ensure you provide timely support ▶ Offer ideas and help only when needed or asked for ▶ Comment on the process or skill ▶ Do not interrupt their concentration ▶ Allow time and space for success

Sharing successes with families

Parents are often excited to hear about the interests, learning and successes of their child, and to see how independent they are becoming. Home-to-care information sharing is a great way to develop a positive relationship with parents and to include them in the world of their child, as is communication about things that are happening with the whole group. Some other suitable methods for information-sharing are providing:

- ▶ records that are personal to the family, such as a diary or portfolio
- ▶ records of routines and independence, such as a log or communication sheet
- ▶ opportunities for parents to contribute information, such as a communication book or learning story.

Supporting children through frustration and mistakes

As well as supporting and acknowledging successes, it's also important to take the time to identify and monitor when children:

- ▶ are frustrated or overly challenged
- ▶ make mistakes.

Children often become frustrated if the challenges provided are inappropriate or too difficult. They may also become frustrated if your expectations are too high or too low. The following table illustrates what you might hear and observe when a child is frustrated or overly challenged, and provides some ideas of how you can positively respond and support their efforts. Most of these strategies support the child to learn to persevere when faced with a challenge.

What the child might say	Cues the child might give	What you can do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 'I can't do this.' ▶ 'This is too hard.' ▶ 'I don't want to do this.' ▶ 'This is stupid.' ▶ 'I'm stupid.' ▶ 'You need to do it for me.' ▶ 'I'm no good at it.' ▶ 'Why can't I do it?' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Frowning ▶ Growling or making aggressive sounds ▶ Stopping work ▶ Working on the task, but not progressing ▶ Asking you to do the task for them ▶ Telling you they can't do it ▶ Being aggressive, throwing materials, sweeping the activity off the table or interrupting others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Stay with the child and offer help or assistance ▶ Simplify the activity if possible ▶ Provide strategies or techniques ▶ Give hints ▶ Change the activity to something more suitable ▶ Ensure that the next activity meets the child's level of ability ▶ Provide successful experiences to rebuild confidence

Using mistakes to learn

Mistakes are a common occurrence for adults and children. If mistakes are characterised as weaknesses and failures, or are viewed as irritating or intolerable, children will develop a fear of trying because they might make an error.

Mistakes should be seen as a natural part of learning. Relationship and behaviour mistakes are particularly common because social development relies on the child's ability to understand the needs of others, determine correct and incorrect responses, and control their emotions and feelings – all very challenging concepts.

If mistakes are seen as developmentally appropriate methods for learning, children will be able to take responsibility for their actions when they make a mistake. This will provide them the opportunity to move onto fixing the problem or learning how to better manage the situation in case it arises again.

Not all socially inappropriate actions can be labelled as mistakes. Sometimes children will repeat behaviours or actions that are inappropriate. This could be by habit, because they are testing the boundaries, or because they are upset about something else. If you teach children that their actions affect others and that they can change their behaviours, they will be able to take responsibility for their actions and their feelings.

You can help them achieve this by:

- ▶ discussing the situation openly
- ▶ refraining from blame or punishment
- ▶ discussing the effects on others
- ▶ providing alternatives
- ▶ modelling and/or demonstrating appropriate behaviour
- ▶ acknowledging efforts
- ▶ guiding or assisting the child during an event.

Practice task 8

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Mason is a student educator working with a group of children aged six months to five years. It is a hectic morning and many children are upset and irritable. During the morning several situations arise that Mason has to resolve.

When two children are fighting over a tricycle, Mason resolves the issue by putting the tricycles away and replacing them with a new activity.

When a child is frustrated while struggling to complete a puzzle, Mason tells the child that he might be better at building with blocks.

When a child tries to clean up a paint spill with a soaking wet face washer, he slips over on the floor and bumps his knee. Mason tells the child never to use face washers on the floor again.

When a child is afraid of a fly that's buzzing around the snack table, Mason tells the child not to be silly.

1. What could Mason have said to the children fighting over the tricycle to help them to express their feelings and make informed choices to solve the conflict?

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2. When the child was frustrated while struggling to complete a puzzle, what could Mason have done to reduce the child's frustration, yet encourage him to persevere with completing the puzzle?

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3. When the child made a mistake in washing the floor, what could Mason have said to encourage the child to see the mistake as an opportunity to learn?

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4. What would you do and say to the child who is afraid of the fly?

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3C Emotional development practice

As you care for children you provide valuable attention, feedback and guided challenges, which influence their emerging sense of self. The following table illustrates the emotional milestones for each age group, which have been linked to practical application (interactions and experiences) in the service setting.

Emotional development milestones	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
0–6 months		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Cries in response to another infant's cry ▶ Capable of demonstrating various emotions, e.g. interest, sadness, happiness, joy, anger and disgust ▶ Uses various cues for gaining attention to needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sing lullabies while gently rocking or swaying the infant ▶ Pick up on the infant's cues and verbally say what they are expressing, e.g. 'You are hungry and want your bottle now.' ▶ Use infant's name during experiences, e.g. 'Jack's smiling, you like the rattle that makes noise.' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Help infant to clap hands to a song, e.g. 'If you're happy and you know it' or 'Everybody clapping, clapping... just like me'
6–12 months		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Becomes increasingly shy with strangers ▶ Begins to demonstrate fear ▶ Separation anxiety increases ▶ May begin to test caregiver and parent responses to behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Establish a routine of separation ▶ Make frequent physical contact according to infant's preferences, such as cuddling, sitting them on your knee or rubbing their back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Allow infant time to get to know new people by using 'transition actions' – using an object to gain infant's interest such as a special toy
1–2 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Demonstrates self-awareness ▶ Toward the latter part of this stage, separation anxiety may begin to fade ▶ Defiant behaviour is more apparent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Play games where the child points to self, people and familiar objects, 'Where's Sophie?', 'Where is the horsie?' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Hide a familiar toy in an obvious place and encourage the child to find it; clap and cheer when found

Emotional development milestones	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
2–3 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Separates from parents/caregivers ▶ May be attached to a comfort toy ▶ Experiences new feelings such as guilt, shame and pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Acknowledge the child’s efforts with comments like ‘Good listening’, or ‘Thank you for helping pack the toys away.’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Find out what the child’s interests are and set up activities to match them, such as painting or playing dinosaurs
3–5 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understands when someone is hurt and comforts them ▶ Attains gender stability (she is a girl/ he is a boy) ▶ May praise themselves and be boastful ▶ Begins to learn how to regulate emotions by using language to express how they feel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Encourage the child to state how they are feeling by asking, ‘How do you feel when ...’ ▶ Involve the child in decision-making ▶ Role-model the words to say, e.g. ‘Tom, may I please have a turn?’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dramatic play and role-play experiences

Practice task 9

1. If a child was having difficulty dressing themselves, explain how you would do the following.

a. What would you say to encourage them to persevere?

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b. What would you say when the child achieved this goal so they could feel pride and confidence?

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c. What would you tell the child’s parent about this achievement?

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Summary

- ▶ Children can be provided with a range of strategies to make choices about their behaviour.
- ▶ Pride and confidence are feelings children should experience as a result of their achievements.
- ▶ Mistakes are opportunities to learn, so acknowledge and support children during this time.
- ▶ Support children when they experience frustration.
- ▶ Allow children to express their feelings.
- ▶ Provide children with strategies to manage their feelings.
- ▶ Assist and encourage children's efforts.
- ▶ You can encourage children to persevere by motivating them through challenges.
- ▶ Families often enjoy sharing their child's successes.

Learning checkpoint 3

Supporting emotional development

1. Provide an example of what you could say to a child in the following situations:

a. A child needs help to choose an appropriate behaviour.

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b. A child needs their feelings of frustration acknowledged.

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c. A child needs to make a mistake as a way to learn.

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d. A child needs to express their feelings appropriately.

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e. A child needs their efforts to be supported.

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2. Explain how you would display children’s artwork in a positive way that includes sharing with parents. How would the display ensure children experience pride and confidence in their achievements?

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3. If a child has difficulty persevering with an experience, explain how you could assist them.

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Topic 4

In this topic you will learn about:

4A Principles of cognitive development

4B Cognitive development outcomes

Supporting cognitive development

Children's cognitive or intellectual development is influenced by their biological make-up and the environment they grow up in. Infants learn through their senses and, as they grow, they develop their imagination, memory and logic.

Children learn to predict, experiment and test how their actions affect their world. They move through common stages of cognitive development in predictable ways, but at individual rates and different ages.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard		
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice	
	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 and communities	
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership	
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place	
Principles		
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
	Partnerships	
	High expectations and equity	
	Respect for diversity	
	Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
Practice		
✓	Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
✓	Learning through play	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching	Intentionality
✓	Learning environments	Environments
	Cultural competence	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
	Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
Outcomes		
	Children have a strong sense of identity	
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
✓	Children are confident and involved learners	
	Children are effective communicators	

4A Principles of cognitive development

Cognitive development is the process of learning how to think. Cognitive abilities include how we think about things, problem-solve, remember, imagine, learn and judge. These abilities continue to emerge and develop throughout childhood, and are important for future educational success.

Watch this video about children’s cognitive development.



Brain development

Brain development has a great effect on how a child learns. Heredity (nature) defines the framework of a brain, but the environment (nurture) influences its development.

Research shows that the quality of experiences and relationships during the first few years of life has a profound and lasting impact on brain development. Rich environments, experiences and interactions result in faster and more meaningful learning. Environmental influences include:

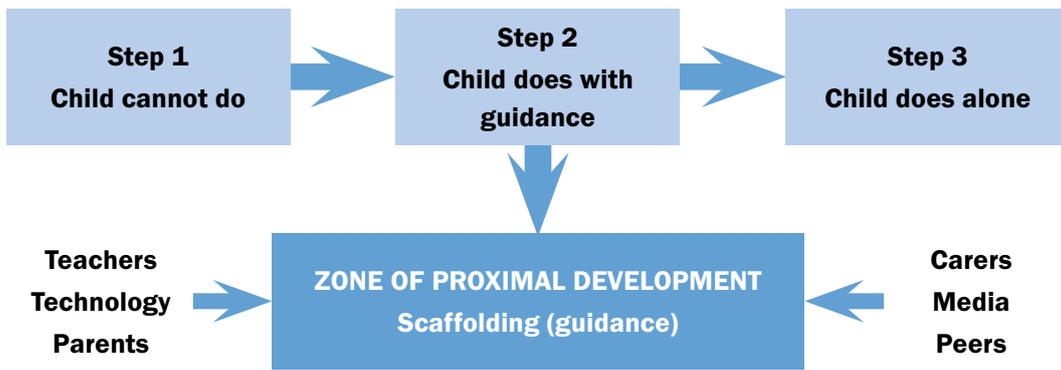
- ▶ adequate rest and nutrition
- ▶ clean drinking water
- ▶ a safe environment
- ▶ appropriate materials and equipment
- ▶ adequate space for developing motor skills
- ▶ good oxygen supply
- ▶ appropriate levels of stimulation – over-stimulation can distract children.

It has been found that if a child is lovingly cared for and provided with stimulating, meaningful interactions and activity at critical learning periods, the child’s brain will develop to a greater extent. This also means that the brain wiring will form stronger and more permanent connections than a child who does not benefit from these interactions.

The environment, which should include stimulating and age-appropriate experiences, therefore plays an important part in cognitive development. Consider how the care and education you provide children can assist their brain function to develop, and will ultimately affect their ongoing learning ability.

Cognitive theory

Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) provides a clear picture of how critical learning periods, windows of opportunity or teachable moments are enriched by the environment and community that children are part of. Vygotsky shows that if a child is assisted to develop a skill when they are ready (when the skill is emerging), they are able to learn that skill and use it independently soon after. Vygotsky calls this window of opportunity ‘the zone of proximal development’ and it can be put into a diagram, as follows.



When a child demonstrates an emerging skill, they seek guidance, or you may identify the emerging skill yourself and offer guidance. Vygotsky calls this guidance ‘scaffolding’ and does not limit it to just what you as an educator provide. He states that there are many different ways for a child to receive scaffolding.

According to Vygotsky, if scaffolding is provided and the child is ready, soon afterwards they can develop and master the skill themselves. You should be able to see how readiness and scaffolding in relation to the zone of proximal development fit with most of the strategies provided in this learner guide.

Toilet training is an excellent example for demonstrating Vygotsky’s theory, as illustrated by the following description of the steps in toilet training and the role scaffolding plays.

- 1 **Child cannot do**
A child is unable to learn to use the toilet independently until their spinal cord develops to a point where they can feel the sensations required for toileting and they gain a range of self-help and self-awareness abilities.

Children show emerging skills (signs they are ready) for toilet learning by:

- ▶ being interested in the toilet and their nappy
- ▶ being dry for periods of time
- ▶ being able to hold on for a short time – long enough to tell you they need to use the toilet and then remove their clothes
- ▶ showing that they know when they are wetting or dirtying their nappy.

- 2 **Child does with guidance (Zone of proximal development)**
When a child shows these signs, they have entered the zone of proximal development in relation to learning toileting skills. Your role is to recognise this and to provide guidance (or scaffolding) to the child. Note that the child is also influenced by other factors.

Scaffolding can be provided in the following ways:

- ▶ Educators provide scaffolding by encouraging the child to go to the toilet; providing child-sized toilets or toilet seats; assisting the child to remove and replace their clothing; and making positive comments even when the child makes a mistake.
- ▶ Parents provide scaffolding by encouraging the child to go to the toilet; being positive about toilet learning; being patient and providing opportunities; and being consistent.
- ▶ Scaffolding is provided by things such as training nappies, child-sized seats and toilets, and clothing that is easy to take on and off.
- ▶ The media provides scaffolding through advertising and media images (in magazines and on television) that show children using the toilet and training nappies, and the message that children are ‘big kids’ when they can toilet themselves.
- ▶ Peers provide scaffolding as they learn to use the toilet themselves; show pleasure in achieving toilet learning; and talk about toileting and whether they are wet or dry.



Child does alone

All these areas of scaffolding work together to influence a child’s abilities. Through these influences the child develops from emerging skills to a point where they have achieved the skill of independent toileting.

Practice task 10

Identify a time when you have scaffolded children’s learning as part of your normal interaction with them. If you have not scaffolded learning, ask your supervisor or a colleague to explain when and how they have done this.

1. Explain what you did and how this action of scaffolding linked with the child’s learning.

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2. Do you think that your actions contributed to the child’s brain development by creating an environmental influence, or do you think the child’s biological influences are solely responsible for this learning? Why?

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4B Cognitive development outcomes

Cognitive development refers to how we think about things, problem-solve, remember, imagine, learn and judge. We know from the rapid growth and change during childhood that children think a lot. As with all areas of development, cognitive development varies between individuals. These differences occur due to influences such as:



- ▶ heredity
- ▶ maturation
- ▶ basic care, including whether the child has a healthy diet and is protected from trauma
- ▶ the level of stimulation received from the physical environment, including their opportunities to play and use a variety of materials and resources
- ▶ the attitudes and values of the child’s culture
- ▶ the degree of diversity and variety in the child’s life experiences
- ▶ the social and emotional support the child receives
- ▶ the adult interaction and support the child receives
- ▶ the level of verbal stimulation the child experiences.

Therefore, the environment and activities you provide influence the developmental progress of children.

The EYLF helps you understand the importance of cognitive development and how you can work toward supporting children’s learning and development.

EYLF	Areas of focus
Children develop a range of skills and processes, such as problem-solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Opportunities for exploring ▶ Strategies to stimulate cognitive development

Watch this video about children’s cognitive development.

Opportunities for exploring

Cognitive development occurs in stages that blend together as a child moves from one developmental level to the next. Your understanding of each learning stage will help you provide experiences that stimulate and challenge each child without frustrating them or confronting them with failure.



<p>Infants</p>	<p>From birth to around 18 months, infants make sense of the world by using their senses and physical actions on objects. Their imagination and memory are not strongly developed, so they react to what they see and experience. An infant does not have the skill to predict what is going to happen – they constantly experiment to learn through trial and error. Many of these experiments are repetitive, so the infant can determine whether the same thing happens each time.</p> <p>You will notice that infant play involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ repetition – by you and them ▶ imitation ▶ the use of the senses to explore materials. <p>You can support an infant at this stage by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ interacting with the child positively and frequently ▶ providing objects that are safe to suck, chew, throw and bang ▶ being a role model – demonstrating how to do things and how to use equipment ▶ providing simple objects and experiences so the child can explore basic properties and learn how things work ▶ allowing time for the child to explore during normal routine tasks; for example, children will want to touch their food and examine it ▶ using simple words to explain actions; for example, if a child is washing their hands you could say ‘wet hands’ ▶ allowing them to explore using repetition ▶ using simple songs, rhymes, stories and actions, and being prepared to repeat these over and again.
<p>Toddlers and preschoolers</p>	<p>Between toddler and early preschool age, children begin to use language and quickly develop their memory and imagination. They start to use new concepts and develop life skills. They become more and more interested in technology. Technology can be electronic, such as computers, tablets, voice recorders or cameras; or manual/mechanical, such as scissors, moving toys, hammers and other construction materials.</p> <p>Children at this stage are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ rapidly developing language skills ▶ participating in make-believe play ▶ interested in sorting, matching and naming items ▶ finding out about position – inside, under, over, on, in, next to ▶ learning opposites – over/under, fast/slow ▶ interested in colour ▶ interested in numbers and letters.

Concepts toddlers and preschoolers find difficult to understand

Children at this stage of cognitive development often have difficulty understanding things they haven't experienced themselves. They are yet to grasp concepts of counting, volume, mass, area, length and money. Their lack of logic skills means they may link things together incorrectly and form ideas using this incorrect information.

The following table illustrates areas that a toddler or preschooler may find difficult.

Concept	Difficulty
Counting	Toddlers and preschoolers usually won't be able to count objects accurately. They may say, '1, 2, 3, 4, 5', but be pointing at the objects in random order. The two actions are not coordinated as the child has learnt to count by memory, and doesn't yet understand what numbers are.
Mass	Toddlers and preschoolers usually won't understand how an object can change shape and still be the same quantity; for example, they may become upset if they receive a flat piece of dough and another child has a round ball, as the ball shape looks bigger.
Money	If you try to change five 10-cent pieces for one 50-cent piece, the child won't agree as they believe that five coins are worth more than one coin.

You must have an understanding of the child's limitations and work within these – when the child is upset about quantities, amounts or a situation they misunderstand, you must acknowledge their feelings rather than tell them they are wrong.

Example

Understanding quantities

Every time the three-year-old children have a drink there are arguments about who has the most drink and which of the differently sized cups is bigger.

Mel, the educator, always makes sure that the amount of drink is the same in each cup, but it makes no difference, even when she explains and shows the children.

Mel speaks to Nelson, another educator, and he points out that the three-year-olds are at a learning stage where they can't fully understand quantity.

To solve her problem, Mel replaces the cups with ones that are all the same size and the children are happy even if she doesn't measure the drink out equally.

Stimulating cognitive development

The following strategies can support a child's learning at the toddler and preschooler stage.

Idea	How to do it
Language	Use language clearly, frequently and appropriately, and introduce new words to describe things.
Problem-solving and negotiating	Provide opportunities and support for children involved in problem-solving activities and experiences, and in negotiation with others.
Dramatic/imaginary play props	Provide dramatic/imaginary play props and settings so that children can play symbolically.
Talking about real situations	Talk about objects and people in real situations, as history is too unfamiliar for this stage; for example, if a child meets someone from another racial background, that person would most likely have a lifestyle similar to their own. However, children may become confused by discussions about how other races lived in the past or how the race traditionally lived, particularly if these characteristics are not being practised by the person they know. It is better to focus on similarities and differences that can be seen.
Basics first	Ensure that children have explored materials before you present a complex activity; for example, children should be familiar with the basics of paint (how it feels and how it moves) before you provide a large range of colours and painting materials.
Sorting, matching, naming	Provide sorting, matching and naming activities, such as organising toys, putting materials where they belong, playing board games or sorting different coloured pebbles into jars.
Measuring, weighing, counting	Provide measuring, weighing, counting and other opportunities that help this age group discover the properties of materials.
Size, shape, measurement	Change objects or the environment to fit the children's sense of size, shape and measurement; for example, if a child thinks they are getting less playdough than another child, roll the flat dough into a ball.
Avoid rote learning	Rote learning refers to memorising information through repetition, but without understanding. Although children love repetition and imitation at this age, they should be free to combine this with experimentation as they learn. For instance, you could teach a child to count to ten perfectly by rote, but this won't help them attach meaning or understanding to the numbers any sooner. Imitation and experimentation will get them from one to ten eventually, and they will have learnt along the way. Avoid rote learning if possible.

Idea	How to do it
<p>Enjoyment and meaning</p>	<p>Ensure activities are enjoyable by providing experiences that suit children’s abilities and interests; ensure activities are meaningful by having them complete real tasks such as setting tables, serving food, caring for gardens or helping them read a story.</p>

Cognitive development milestones

The following table illustrates the cognitive milestones for each age group, which have been linked to practical application (interactions and experiences) in the service setting.

Cognitive development milestones	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
0–6 months		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can distinguish an object from a picture ▶ Imitates facial gestures ▶ Explores the world with their hands and mouth ▶ Understands that objects remain the same shape and size even if distant ▶ Recognises close family members ▶ Shows interest in what is going on close by 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ While holding the infant, make faces and babble and coo sounds back to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide pictures of people, animals or their family at eye level ▶ Provide toys with contrasting colours, such as black, white and red toys
6–12 months		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Correctly identifies objects when the name of the object is said ▶ Explores objects through various physical means, including shaking, dropping and throwing ▶ May attempt to use objects in an appropriate way; for example, talking into a toy telephone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Talk about everyday things, actions and sounds that are occurring; for example, ‘Can you hear the doorbell?’; ‘Listen to the music’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide simple picture books with thick pages ▶ Provide pop-up toys, rattles and stacking cups ▶ Blow bubbles

Cognitive development milestones	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
1–2 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Recognises own facial features ▶ Understands object permanence ▶ Begins to sort shapes and colours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ask children to recognise body parts, e.g. ‘Where’s your nose?’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide a shape sorting box or post box to place objects inside ▶ Hide familiar objects and encourage children to look for them
2–3 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Problem-solving skills increase ▶ Can complete four-piece puzzles ▶ Participates in make-believe play ▶ Sorts by shape and colour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ask children questions starting with who, what, where, when, why and how, e.g. ‘What could we do with these icy pole sticks?’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide sorting, matching and naming activities ▶ Provide water play with measuring cups ▶ Provide dramatic and imaginary play props such as empty boxes and smooth stones ▶ Provide puzzles with three to six pieces
3–5 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Capable of verbalising some numbers ▶ Grasps concepts such as same and different ▶ Names some colours ▶ Follows instructions of up to three commands ▶ Realises that people have differing views ▶ Develops a sense of time ▶ Able to recall stories ▶ Begins to draw a person with a head, body, arms, legs and facial features such as eyes, nose and mouth ▶ Can recognise letters, but may not be able to read 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sing number songs, such as ‘Ten little ducks’ ▶ Act out familiar stories like, ‘We’re going on a bear hunt’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide hand puppets ▶ Allow for open-ended painting, drawing and pasting activities ▶ Provide dramatic play areas ▶ Provide sorting games ▶ Provide peg boards ▶ Play simple card games such as Snap ▶ Provide building blocks ▶ Read stories

Practice task 11

1. Identify one experience that is useful for learning each of the following concepts:

a. Problem-solving

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b. Numbers

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c. Matching pairs

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d. Sorting objects or shapes

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2. Choose one of the experiences identified above and write down what you might say to the child at this activity to assist their learning.

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Summary

- ▶ Scaffolding refers to educators' decisions and actions that build on children's existing knowledge and skills to enhance their learning.
- ▶ Children's emerging skills can be scaffolded by your intentional application of interactions and experiences.
- ▶ Children's cognitive development will be extended by using a range of materials, technologies and resources that encourage problem-solving.
- ▶ Experiences provided to children can enable them to explore a range of cognitive concepts.

Learning checkpoint 4

Supporting cognitive development

1. Choose a skill that you would notice emerging in a child, then detail the following things:

a. What is the emerging skill?

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b. What might a child do that demonstrates they are learning this skill?

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c. How would you scaffold this skill? Include at least **three** ideas.

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d. How might the child's peers contribute to scaffolding this skill?

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2. Choose an experience that includes the concepts of numbers, matching and sorting, and is suited to a child of preschool age. Use a range of materials and resources to set up the experience. Provide a brief description of the experience, including:

- ▶ what you expect the child to do
- ▶ how exploration and problem-solving are supported
- ▶ how the experience contributes to brain development
- ▶ technology that could be used to extend this experience.

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Topic 5

In this topic you will learn about:

5A Language and communication development

5B Communication development practice

Supporting communication development

Communication development is characterised by predictable patterns, individual learning and rates of development. All infants undergo a general pattern of language development regardless of the language they will eventually speak. Early on, they rely on nonverbal cues and gradually, at their own pace, they start to express themselves verbally.

A language-rich environment is one where children are able to practise their skills through appropriate role-modelling, repetition and support for experimentation.

When children are learning a second language, they often mix languages and need to spend time consolidating their understanding of each language before they are able to switch readily between the two.

Watch this video about nonverbal communication.



v0041

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	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 and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
✓	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children
✓	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment for learning
	Holistic approaches
	Collaboration with children
	Learning through play
	Intentionality
	Environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity and transitions
	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
Outcomes	
	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children are confident and involved learners
✓	Children are effective communicators

5A Language and communication development

Communication is about passing information, ideas and feelings from one person to another through written, verbal or nonverbal signals. Communication is how people interact with each other and share messages. The EYLF helps you understand the importance of communication development, and how you can support children’s learning and development in this area.

EYLF	Areas of focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children interact verbally and nonverbally with others for a range of purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Language development ▶ Respecting linguistic heritage ▶ Supporting children who speak languages other than English ▶ Language for expression ▶ Developing communication skills ▶ Two-way communication ▶ Group discussion and exchange of views
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts ▶ Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reading stories ▶ Storytelling ▶ Puppets and other props ▶ Electronic technology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children begin to understand how symbols and patterns work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Letters ▶ Numbers ▶ Time ▶ Sorting

Language development

From birth, infants use language and communication skills, and are able to react to different sounds. They develop an understanding of language long before they start to speak. Each infant develops these skills at a different rate; however, there is a general pattern of early language development.

Once speech begins, children constantly build on their vocabulary and at around the age of five are able to have detailed conversations with children and adults. New forms of language constantly emerge as children expand their verbal skills and develop the ability to use written language.

As their understanding and use of language increases, children are able to express fun and serious ideas, use formal or correct language, and informal or slang (colloquial) terms. When children use made-up words and are creative in the way they speak, it demonstrates that they have a strong grasp of how language works.

The following table outlines some basic language terms to assist you to understand communication development.

Term	Examples
Expressive language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Explaining how you feel ▶ Telling someone about an object or interest ▶ Asking for something ▶ Making up a story
Nonverbal communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Gesturing ▶ Looking ▶ Using facial expressions ▶ Hugging ▶ Making sounds without words, such as crying or laughing
Receptive language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Listening to stories ▶ Understanding instructions ▶ Following directions

Respecting linguistic heritage

In early learning environments the identification of a child's home (native) language needs to be discussed with the family. Sensitivity is always needed to help parents feel that their child, culture and language is respected and valued.

If the child's home language is not English, educators need to gather information about the family's culture. Being aware of the child's cultural heritage will help you to support the child in developing English language skills, while still maintaining their home language.

Regular communication with the child's family is necessary to ensure the home language is being maintained.

Encourage children's parents and family members to maintain their home language away from the care environment. Some parents worry that their children will be disadvantaged if they are slow in acquiring English, and may discourage them from speaking their home language. However, you should actively support the child to maintain their home language, and ensure parents understand this won't have a detrimental effect on the child's ability to learn English.

You can include activities and equipment related to the child's home language and culture in the learning environment, such as traditional music, culturally appropriate clothing and props, and bilingual books.

Watch this video about supporting language development in children from different backgrounds.



Use the following strategies to support the child to maintain their home language:

- ▶ Learn how to pronounce the child's name correctly – get help from parents if necessary.
- ▶ Learn some key words from the child's home language to assist interactions.
- ▶ Use quality books and storytelling for one-on-one child reading. Parents or volunteers can also come in to assist and read stories in the child's home language. Stories should be simple to help the child acquire vocabulary.
- ▶ Model words and phrases in English. This gives the child experience in hearing vocabulary, phrases and simple sentences, and can help them understand the meaning of the same words in their home language.
- ▶ Always speak clearly and slowly.
- ▶ Introduce words, then give the child time to practise them.
- ▶ Explain activities as you do them – as you would with infants.
- ▶ Point to objects and pictures to give clues.
- ▶ Use songs and music. Include activities with rapping, chanting, words set to music and drama.
- ▶ Display text around the room in English and the child's home language.
- ▶ Partner the child with an English-speaking child in games.
- ▶ Encourage social support between all the children. Playing and interacting with English-speaking children encourages development. Acceptance within the peer group is crucial for successful language acquisition.
- ▶ Support and encourage the child generally to build their self-confidence.

Supporting children who speak a language other than English

Children who can't communicate with those around them may feel isolated, confused and frustrated, just as an adult would in the same situation.

Steps to support children who cannot communicate in English:

- ▶ Use words or phrases that the child is familiar with.
- ▶ Use body language and facial expressions to assist in communication.
- ▶ Consider their emotional and psychological state, and provide a secure and safe environment.
- ▶ Ensure that the child is provided with food, drink, warmth and any other physical needs.
- ▶ Ensure your environment gives clear messages that don't just rely on language; for example, don't have wide, open spaces indoors that seem to encourage running.
- ▶ Support the child to be involved in nonverbal social interaction – they might laugh, use body language and hand signals, or draw pictures – this is often a learning experience for all children.
- ▶ Show interest in the child's home language.

If languages other than English are not valued, or if a child has no opportunity to use their home language, they are likely to lose these language skills. By encouraging all children to use and learn new languages, and by demonstrating an interest in all languages, you assist children to be interested in, maintain and be proud of language skills as well as their cultural background.

Language for expression

Role-modelling communication to children encourages the child's communication skills and their self-esteem, as they hear the correct way to pronounce without being corrected.

There are many experiences that provide children with maximum exposure to communication. The value of these experiences relies on you being a positive role model and interacting frequently with children. To provide experiences and encourage children to speak, you should:

- ▶ respond to infant babbles and coos by babbling and cooing back
- ▶ speak about the things you are doing with the children as you do them
- ▶ put words to objects and emotions
- ▶ use a variety of sounds and voice pitches
- ▶ sing songs and rhymes
- ▶ read stories to them
- ▶ speak clearly and introduce new words
- ▶ use every opportunity for interaction
- ▶ give the child time to speak.



It is not advisable to prompt children to communicate verbally solely by asking them 'to use their words', as this can simply set them up to make mistakes. Children need guidance, options to choose from or even exact phrases to be modelled. Without your help, the child may use words that are not suitable, or may not know which words fit the situation. Always give the child some words to use to express themselves.

When a child pronounces a word incorrectly, repeat the word to the child the correct way, as in the following example.

Thomas is sitting at the drawing table holding a yellow pencil in his hand. He turns to Megan (the educator) and says, 'I did a lellow sun!' Megan looks at his drawing, smiles and replies, 'You drew a very bright yellow sun!'

It is not helpful to constantly correct children or tell them that they are saying something wrong. They will learn through interaction and experience.

Developing communication skills

You can support children's developing communication skills by:

- ▶ modelling and encouraging two-way communication through questions, careful listening and consultation on daily activities
- ▶ creating opportunities for group discussions and exchanging views
- ▶ reading and telling stories
- ▶ using puppets and other props to stimulate enjoyment of language and literature
- ▶ encouraging children to explore symbols and patterns and their meaning, such as letters, sounds, numbers and musical notation.

Watch this video about developing communication skills.



Two-way communication

Two-way communication can be encouraged through questions and careful listening. An effective way to facilitate two-way communication is by consulting with children, as this involves questioning and listening skills.

Asking and encouraging questions

Open-ended questions are a useful and important tool to incorporate into your everyday interactions with children. They can also be used to effectively consult with children. This requires you to think about how your questions are worded and presented so that children will have an opportunity to explain and extend beyond a 'yes' or 'no' response.

Questions that require a 'yes', 'no' or another one-word answer are called closed questions because the response is limited. Some examples of closed questions are:

- ▶ Is it hot outside?
- ▶ Did that hurt?
- ▶ Do you like trains?
- ▶ Are you angry?

Some examples of open-ended questions are:

- ▶ What is it like outside?
- ▶ What happened?
- ▶ What do you like to play with?
- ▶ How did you do that?

Listening

Listening is not simply about hearing something. It requires skill: to direct your attention, to gather meaning, to interpret emotional or other cues, and to decide on action. By modelling listening, you can show children how to interpret and gain an understanding of the world around them. Poor listening habits produce misunderstandings in language and relationships.

Listening is a necessary part of communication; in fact, if people don't listen, they can't communicate well at all. If an adult is not listened to, they will not want to continue trying to communicate; it is the same for children. Therefore, educators should model active listening to the child to demonstrate the need to listen to others.

The sounds of the human voice in speech and singing, sounds in daily life or in nature, or even the sounds of their own thoughts can teach a child how to listen. Strong social listening skills involve the ability to:

- ▶ engage with the speaker
- ▶ get pleasure from the social interaction
- ▶ learn about taking turns
- ▶ follow directions and instructions.

Some strategies to model careful listening are:

- ▶ Let the child finish what they are saying before you reply. This may be time-consuming, but it is a necessary skill to model. It is extremely frustrating for children to be interrupted or rushed; they will lose confidence in their abilities and be less likely to try to express themselves.
- ▶ Develop the skill of listening attentively while being aware of what is going on around you. Use body language such as nodding, eye contact and facial expressions to let the child know that they have your attention, while occasionally glancing around at what is happening in the room.
- ▶ Be open-minded so you don't immediately misinterpret what you are hearing. Listen to the whole story and try to see it from the child's point of view.
- ▶ Show the child you are interested in what they are saying by asking open questions to clarify or seek further information.

Watch this video about effective communication.



Consulting with children

One of the most effective ways to encourage two-way communication is to consult with children. Consulting with them supports them to express their ideas and views. Some common things children can be consulted about include:

- ▶ food
- ▶ limits, guidelines and guidance policies
- ▶ activity choices
- ▶ behaviour expectations
- ▶ parent involvement
- ▶ staff involvement.

Consultation is a basic principle of good quality care, and there are many opportunities to incorporate it into your practice. It can take the form of verbal, written or nonverbal communication, as appropriate. You can consult with children and parents by holding a meeting, sending out a survey, having a group or individual discussion, or chatting informally. You could make requests or provide a suggestion box. Consultation can also be undertaken spontaneously when the opportunity arises; you might gather anecdotes or listen to conversations to spark an idea.

The level of consultation and method of communication you should use with children depends on their stage of development and their needs at the time.

Stage	Characteristics	Strategy
Infant/toddler	Consultation with an infant or toddler is simple and practical. Talk with infants and toddlers as you care for them. Show them your interest by consulting them about the things that concern them, such as the foods they like to eat, the toys they play with or the things they can see.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Tell infants what is going to happen to them, e.g. 'Let's change your nappy now.' ▶ Give toddlers a warning about what is going to happen, e.g. 'We are going inside soon.' ▶ Attend and respond to children's nonverbal communication, e.g. 'I can see you don't like that cold water.' ▶ Be a positive role model by verbally consulting with children and staff, e.g. 'Mary, should we put the new mobile here?'

Stage	Characteristics	Strategy
Preschooler	Get to know the child's communication style and consult them on simple matters that concern them. Consult children to help provide experiences that are relevant and interesting to them. Some preschoolers will easily be able to plan activities with you, while others will need lots of encouragement and support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Offer possible play choices and listen carefully to children's ideas. ▶ Use open questions to encourage children to consider all options, e.g. 'Could you make something with those boxes?' ▶ Only give a choice when it is appropriate; it is unfair to offer a choice you do not mean. ▶ Too many choices will confuse young children; give a small number of choices suited to the child's abilities to decide. ▶ Help children to understand the choices they have; never assume children know what you mean. ▶ Explain using verbal and nonverbal communication to help children understand, e.g. point to different items and say, 'Would you like to use this one or that one?' ▶ Encourage children to consult each other.

With younger children, you will not necessarily be waiting for an answer or decision; rather, you will be phrasing your actions as questions or suggestions. This helps the child become familiar with this type of interaction, and begin to think about what is happening in their environment.

Try the following ideas to facilitate consultation:

- ▶ Encourage children to listen to each other's ideas.
- ▶ Encourage children to think flexibly about their options.
- ▶ Show children how you think about problems by explaining or demonstrating what you might do or how you do things.
- ▶ Accept and acknowledge children's suggestions in a positive way.
- ▶ Explain things that limit children's options, such as safety considerations, practicality or resources.
- ▶ Allow children time to make suggestions; don't rush them or decide for them.
- ▶ Make sure all children participate, not just those who are loud, enthusiastic or quick to speak up.
- ▶ Offer new ideas and encourage children to consider different interests.
- ▶ Provide new and stimulating material or discussion.

Group activities

Group activities can be spontaneous or planned. They are an excellent way to focus on the children's interests, provide learning experiences and extend their development. Small groups allow children to develop self-esteem, and provide a more intimate interaction with educators and other children. Larger groups allow children to develop patience, turn-taking and cooperation.

Spontaneous group activities could take the form of songs, stories or puppet shows that you initiate during the day because you think they will be enjoyed and contribute to an activity or develop a new interest. They can also be used to regain control of an energetic room, calm a noisy period or extend a new interest of the group. As spontaneous group time is unplanned, your presentation needs to gain the children's attention and conclude when they are ready to move on.

Example

Spontaneous group activity

Julia, the educator, is sitting with four children at the playdough table. They are talking about Easter and what they would like to buy at the bakery, particularly hot cross buns. Julie thinks of some songs and rhymes related to bakeries, and asks the children if they would like to join in with her.

They pound on the dough as they sing 'Pat a cake, pat a cake'. They roll and press their dough as they sing 'Hot cross buns'.

Two of the children start to talk about how their buns look like rocks with snakes on top. Julia changes theme with the children and contributes to the new discussion.

Discussion groups

Discussion groups are an excellent way to encourage listening and social skills. Children will learn to listen to each other, and value and respect others' opinions.

The lifespan of a discussion group will vary depending on the age and stage of the children involved. A discussion among three-year-olds may only last a few minutes before the children move away or change to another topic or activity.

The success of a group discussion relies on:

- ▶ whether the discussion fits with the children's interests and developmental understanding
- ▶ how well you prepare
- ▶ how you influence the children to take an interest in the subject.

Example

Group discussion

Lindy, the educator, notices that the children are spending a lot of time in the garden looking at caterpillars and chasing butterflies.

Lindy recognises that this is an interest shared by many of the children, so she decides to extend their learning. She prepares some materials, including colourful resource books and posters showing the stages of the butterfly life cycle. She finds songs about butterflies and her copy of *The very hungry caterpillar*.

To enable the children to join in and exchange views, she starts a discussion group by asking the children open questions, such as:

- ▶ 'What do you think the butterflies and caterpillars like about our garden?'
- ▶ 'Where do you think butterflies come from?'

Lindy decides on two ways to capture the children's attention and promote discussion. Her first idea is to hold a small group discussion where all children interested could participate. She will show the pictures, talk about the life cycle of butterflies, sing and read *The very hungry caterpillar*.

Her second idea is to set up a science table outdoors near the flower garden, where she can place resources for the children to explore by themselves in small groups or on their own. She will be available to discuss the items and to answer questions.

Reading stories

Reading and storytelling help children develop listening and communication skills, so an education and care environment that supports language development must include these activities in their program.

Reading books to children is one of the most valuable tools in developing children's language. It needs to be done regularly with all children at the service, and parents should be encouraged to make it part of their child's routine at home. The children's section of any library will have a wide range of high-quality books – every child should easily be able to choose a book that appeals to them.

The organisation should mirror this choice, and offer a wide variety of books that will interest, delight, entertain and inform the children.

Story reading can be used in group situations or as a one-on-one activity. Reading stories with children offers opportunities for learning about the world as well as for developing language skills. Many children's books are informative and may answer questions children have. They can teach children about animal life cycles, colours, insects, planets, families, peers, diversity and many other worthwhile subjects.

Story reading is not only about dealing with issues, it is also an opportunity for the children to relax and have fun.

Use the following guide to choose age-appropriate stories. Make sure:

- ▶ the content is age-appropriate:
 - books for infants should have simple pictures and words
 - books for toddlers should have short stories
 - books for preschoolers should have more complex stories, and may be rhythmic, interactive or relate to life experiences
- ▶ the story is appealing and not too complicated or too long
- ▶ the illustrations are attractive and interesting.

Asking and answering questions

Part of reading a story is the interaction that occurs through questioning. It is common for educators to talk about the story after it has been read, but there are also questions that can be useful before and during reading. The way you use questioning when reading will help children's comprehension skills; that is, the understanding they have of the story.

Questions you could ask before reading include:

- ▶ What do you think the story is about?
- ▶ Do you think this a real story or imaginary?
- ▶ Why do you think we are reading this story?
- ▶ What do you already know about this story?

To work out what questions you might ask during the story, read the book before you read it to the children, and pick out points in the story that are of interest or could be extended. Try to maintain a good balance between the questions and the flow of the story. For example, if the story includes a build-up or language rhythm, try not to interrupt this.

Questions to ask during the story include:

- ▶ What do you think is happening?
- ▶ What is this picture telling us?
- ▶ What do you think this means?
- ▶ What do you think will happen next?

At the end of reading, review the story, and ask:

- ▶ Did you enjoy the story?
- ▶ What happened?
- ▶ Should we read it again?
- ▶ What other books are like this one?

Storytelling

Storytelling is something you probably do every day. Storytelling is the art of passing on old and often valued traditions through the spoken word. It allows the storyteller to share precious memories and traditions, encourages children's imaginations and helps create bonds between people of all ages.

When stories are well told, it encourages children to listen with such concentration that individual mental images will be formed, rather than the prescribed image a picture book presents. Storytelling, like reading, can occur at any time during the day and with children of any age.

Consider the following points when deciding what stories to tell children.

Story types	What children like to hear
Stories about themselves	Children from the youngest age love to hear stories about themselves, so they can recall events and even be part of the story.
Stories about their immediate environment	Infants and toddlers relate to stories about their immediate environment and things that they know.
Stories about imaginary adventures	Preschoolers enjoy stories that include them going on imaginary adventures, and that have an element of suspense.
Stories about familiar and new songs	Familiar and new songs take on a new meaning when they are expanded by storytelling; for example, children love to hear what the little ducks were doing when they refused to come back in 'Five little ducks'.

Resources for stories can come from story collections, picture books and movies. Older people recalling their childhood days can also be of great interest to preschool children.

Storytelling skills

The storyteller should be enthusiastic about the story and want to tell it. An effective storyteller will memorise and practise the story many times before telling it to the children. Starting with familiar stories like *The gingerbread man* is a good way to gain confidence in storytelling. The more you practise, the better you will be at engaging the audience.

Following are some hints for telling stories well.

Helpful hint	How to do it
Make eye contact	Ensure you maintain eye contact with the children. Learning to read upside down will allow you to hold the book facing out to them when reading to a group.
Monitor the interest level	Ensure you monitor the interest level of the children as you are speaking.
Use vocalisations	Use tone, pitch, volume and speed to dramatise the text.
Use props	Use props to maintain children’s interest and involve the audience.
Include chants	Have children repeat chants with you; for example, ‘Run, run, as fast as you can; you can’t catch me, I’m the gingerbread man’. Participation encourages children to make up their own stories to tell.

Puppets and other props

Puppets and felt characters are a wonderful way to enrich a child’s enjoyment and experience of a storytelling or language experience because they add a visual aspect to it. They are a great extension for group sessions, but are also a valuable individual experience or adult-free activity. Children can use puppets to extend and develop their own use of language by acting out and telling their own stories.



Older children can make their own puppets and felt characters, and put on their own puppet shows. They may wish to make up their own stories and create puppets to act the story out; they may also be able to use puppets to express feelings, anger, concerns or ideas.

To ensure that the puppets you choose are suited to the age/stage of the child, use this guide.

Age/stage	Puppet characteristics
Infants and toddlers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Safe when explored with the senses ▶ No small pieces that could be a choking hazard ▶ Can be easily manipulated by small fingers ▶ Relate to areas of interest, such as animals and faces ▶ Not too loud
Preschoolers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can be made by the children ▶ Can relate to stories, rhymes and finger plays ▶ Can be used in plays, stories and theatres

Using props

The use of props in the language development program creates interest and enjoyment for children of all ages. A prop can be as simple as putting a firefighter's hat on your head while telling a story or as complex as producing a puppet play.

Anything that adds another dimension to the language activity to engage the child is worth using. For example, you could use a scarf over your head to change your character, or hold a toy frying pan to show you are cooking pancakes.

The physical environment is full of props that can engage children's interest. Exploring different ground textures in the playground such as sand, dirt, grass and softfall may stimulate all types of language. Here are some examples:

- ▶ New cups in the toddler's room could lead to discussions about colours and shapes, and making up a rhyme to chant 'Red cups, blue cups, yellow cups, new cups', where all the children raise their cups high (make sure there is no liquid in the cups for this rhyme).
- ▶ A toy sheep can lead to children singing 'Baa, baa, black sheep'.
- ▶ A book about a chick hatching from an egg can stimulate extension of vocabulary, talking about change and time, and counting activities.
- ▶ A colourful mobile over a change table can encourage eye contact and language interaction between the infant and educator.

The list is endless and educators should be constantly aware of what can be used in the immediate environment to capture and sustain children's interest and enjoyment of language.

Electronic technology

Technology is evolving rapidly – music, photography, drawing and stories have found new expression on computers and other electronic devices. Technology enables such things as video chats, touch-screen storybooks and filming video with a smartphone. Introducing new technology to children can help to stimulate their curiosity and allow them to listen, see and explore.

Technology	How you can use it
Computers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Computers can provide open-ended experiences that encourage language and creativity. ▶ Computer programs can provide children with stories, music, pictures and other language experiences. ▶ Computers can help children learn words, hear other languages spoken by native speakers, create their own stories with pictures, make posters and poems, and design a range of ideas. ▶ Older children may wish to use the internet to look up pictures and stories of interest. Pictures or stories on the computer can be built into other experiences. ▶ Items can be printed out for group discussions, stories can be read from the screen or the computer can be used for children to find information, e.g. in a trivia hunt.

Technology	How you can use it
<p>CDs and headphones</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ CDs and headphones can be used to offer small and large group experiences as well as individual activities. Listening to music, poetry and stories can be soothing and relaxing, and allow children the time to be alone and away from the group while encouraging learning, language, listening, imagination and creativity. ▶ You can use a range of CDs with or without headphones to play music, multicultural languages and stories. These can be used for dancing, singing or listening in a group.
<p>Podcasts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Podcasts are an update on the traditional radio program format. A podcast may have originally been broadcast as a program on a radio station, or it may be created solely for download. You can access free, high-quality podcasts produced by broadcasters, educational publishers, teachers, school children, musicians and scientists. ▶ Content includes stories, poems, music, interviews, and magazine-style programming. You can review the content of the podcast first to make sure it is suitable. ▶ Note: Radio is not generally recommended for use with children as the content cannot be controlled. Any program could be interrupted by inappropriate news stories, language or ads. Popular music can be overtly sexual or sexist.
<p>Television programs and DVDs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Many excellent children’s programs are available to watch as television broadcasts or as recordings on DVD; however, the overuse or misuse of television is a concern. ▶ When working with children under school age, your curriculum is play-focused, which makes television less appropriate. Having children sit in front of a television could be seen as a lazy option instead of planning quality experiences for children. ▶ To use television well, you need to overcome its shortcomings: it is not interactive or participative; it is inflexible and cannot change its focus with the children’s needs; and it is a sedentary activity (requiring children to sit still). ▶ If you choose to use television programs and DVDs as a part of your program, ensure that you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – have parental permission (for the rating level or content type) – are following service policies and procedures – review the program carefully before showing it to children – sit with the children while they are watching – are prepared to answer any questions that arise from the content – participate in any actions or questions in the program to encourage children to participate – plan the program as part of your day, rather than just ‘put on the television’.

Symbols and patterns

Children learn about symbols and patterns as they watch adults using these in their daily activities, and see them being used in the environment. Children typically show interest in:

- ▶ letters
- ▶ numbers
- ▶ time
- ▶ money
- ▶ musical notation/symbols.

The learning experiences a young child has will assist them in their later success and confidence at school level. Play is a wonderful way to learn about symbols and patterns. There will also be intentional teaching times when you plan to introduce particular symbols and patterns. To ensure children remain engaged, encourage them through enthusiastic presentations and non-repetitive activities.

Letters

Here are some ways you can add written language to your curriculum.

What to do	Examples of how to do it
Introduce written information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Demonstrate how you use reading for everyday activities; for example, reading labels, instructions and signs. ▶ Comment on times that you read.
Provide written language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Show how books are read – that is, from left to right and top to bottom. ▶ Demonstrate how words and pictures go together. ▶ Use books with predictable text. ▶ Touch the words as you say them. ▶ Label objects and spaces in the room. ▶ Use big books.
Introduce the alphabet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Demonstrate the importance of letters and their purpose. ▶ Point out letters and words in the everyday environment. ▶ Encourage the child to write their names on their work.
Develop phonetic awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Demonstrate the sounds that letters make. ▶ Break up short sentences and demonstrate how the sentence is made from small words. ▶ Clap out the syllables of words.
Provide story details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Introduce the title of the book, the author and illustrator, and make sure the children know what these roles are.
Encourage the use of written language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Set up pretend play that involves writing shopping lists, creating signs, writing a letter or making a birthday card.

Numbers, time and money

Numbers, time and money can be explored using the following ideas.

Recognise numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Match numbers ▶ Sort numbers ▶ Create sensory art ▶ Incorporate jigsaws, posters and games that use number symbols ▶ Cook with simple recipes that use numbers for measuring ingredients
Understand one-on-one correspondence and count	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Count the number of items (blocks, trains, balls, doors, windows, etc.) ▶ Sing counting songs (three cheeky monkeys, five jellyfish, five little ducks) ▶ Hopscotch (younger children can jump instead of hop) ▶ Count chairs, plates, spoons or pieces of fruit at snack time ▶ Count how many cups or spoonfuls of an ingredient go into a recipe when cooking
Use time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use clocks for routines; for example, 'We have lunch when the big hand and the little hand are on 12.' ▶ Play time games (how long does it take to pack up, build a stack, etc.) ▶ Include books about time; for example, <i>Clean-up time</i>, <i>The very hungry caterpillar</i> ▶ Play games with egg timers and stopwatches ▶ Make event sequences – what do you do first, second and last? ▶ Incorporate calendars
Use money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Add play money to the home corner or create shop play ▶ Discuss how much money is needed to purchase items ▶ Create a simple budget for completing a project ▶ Count money ▶ Take money rubbings ▶ Sort coins by size, shape, colour and value

Musical notation

Musical notation includes the rhythm of music and the symbols that represent this. Some ways to involve children in using musical beats include:

- ▶ using movement games such as stomping feet to a beat
- ▶ creating beats on a musical instrument
- ▶ displaying notes and music symbols
- ▶ explaining note value through chants
- ▶ making musical instruments.

If you pair these rhythms with symbols showing how beats can be fast or slow, you will be teaching the children about musical notation. You can find many support materials online. Try 'Let's Play Music' at: <http://aspirelr.link/rhythm-activities>, which has ideas for music, songs and resources.

Practice task 12

1. If a three-year-old child wants a toy that another child has, what words could you model to them that would help them to use their language skills to express themselves?

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2. Find out how to say 'hello' in **four** languages that you do not speak and write them down. One of the languages you choose should be an Indigenous language. You can achieve this by asking someone who speaks this language or by doing a search online.

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3. Choose **three** stories you could read or tell. Select one most suited to infants, one most suited to toddlers, and one most suited for preschool children. For each story provide:

- ▶ the name of the book or story
- ▶ the author
- ▶ an explanation of why you selected the story as age-appropriate, considering the text, pictures, length of the story and story complexity.

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4. Choose one story you selected above and answer the following questions:
 - a. Identify one question you could use at the beginning of the story to create a group discussion

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- b. Identify one question that you could use at the end of the story to encourage children to exchange views.

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5. Find a story that you can tell. Prepare to tell this story and then deliver it to a group of children while your trainer/assessor is present. Ask for feedback. Note at least **two** ways you could improve your reading and storytelling next time.

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6. Look around a play space and describe where you can find the following things represented in children’s experiences. If any of these items are not represented, describe one way you could include this in a play and/or learning experience.

- a. Children’s names

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- b. Letters of the alphabet

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- c. Numbers

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- d. Time

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- e. Money

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- f. Musical notation

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7. Initiate a discussion or activity with a child about their name. This should be based on the letters and sounds that make up the child’s name. Document the discussion including the things you said and did, and the things the child said and did. If you are unable to discuss this with a child, write down or role-play what you could do.

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5B Communication development practice

The following table illustrates the communication development milestones for each age group, which have been linked to practical application (interactions and experiences) in the service setting.

Communication development milestones	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
0–6 months		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Coos back and forth with caregiver ▶ Responds to own name (4–5 months) ▶ Pays attention to human voices more than any other sound ▶ Gives and receives communication ▶ Imitates and responds to speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ When the infant coos, coo back. ▶ During interactions, use the infant's name. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sing nursery rhymes. ▶ Face the infant, talk and sing softly. ▶ Move a hand puppet in front of the infant, then hold it still and see if the infant makes sounds to encourage it to move again.
6–12 months		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Communicates by crying, cooing, babbling, imitating, facial expressions, body language and gestures ▶ Responds to simple verbal requests ▶ Understands that words relate to objects ▶ Begins to imitate spoken words ▶ First words may be spoken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Attend and respond to nonverbal communication, e.g. 'I can see you don't like the taste of pumpkin.' ▶ Encourage and acknowledge words spoken and repeat to the child, e.g. if the child says 'dink' for drink, respond 'yes, here is your drink'. ▶ Name familiar objects seen throughout the day such as 'car', 'doll', 'ball', etc. ▶ Point to and name objects in books e.g. 'tall tree', 'brown cat'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use a large box to play peek-a-boo. ▶ Sing 'My hands are clapping' while helping infants to clap their hands.

Communication development milestones	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
1–2 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Uses combinations of words in meaningful ways ▶ Knows names of people and familiar objects ▶ Has a vocabulary of up to 200 words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Put words to objects and emotions, e.g. ‘Looks like you’re feeling happy, sad, excited, frustrated, etc.’ ▶ Introduce new words. ▶ Give the child time to speak and listen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Model the sounds of vehicles or animals as you play with toys. ▶ Look through a photo album of children’s family members.
2–3 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Displays interest in word rhymes ▶ Understands prepositions such as ‘under’, ‘on’ and ‘inside’ ▶ Has a vocabulary of up to 1,000 words ▶ Understands many things said by adults ▶ Most words spoken are recognisable by caregivers and strangers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Give two-part instructions, e.g. ‘Put your drawing in your bag, then come sit on the mat.’ ▶ Sing action songs, such as ‘Three cheeky monkeys’. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Encourage social situations and small group play with others, e.g. dramatic play of a kitchen set-up such as pretend food. ▶ Use water play to talk about mathematical concepts of weight, height, temperature, length and numbers.
3–5 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Has clear speech with only a few grammatical errors ▶ Has more complex speech patterns and vocabulary ▶ Asks questions ▶ Tells stories and recounts past events ▶ Understands more advanced concepts such as ‘same’ and ‘different’ ▶ May be capable of reciting their name and address ▶ Shows interest in symbols, letters, words and sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ When reading stories, involve children by asking ‘What do you think might happen next?’ ▶ Listen to children’s questions and stories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide building blocks such as LEGO for children to work in small groups. ▶ Encourage interaction with peers. ▶ Provide activities such as show and tell, and puppet shows.

Practice task 13

Describe **three** ways you could add written language to a dramatic play area.

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Summary

- ▶ Communication development is characterised by predictable patterns, individual learning and rates of development.
- ▶ Linguistic (language) heritage should be valued and maintenance of home languages should be encouraged.
- ▶ Children rely on verbal cues until their expressive language develops.
- ▶ Language is a learnt skill that requires practice and repetition in a supportive and encouraging environment.
- ▶ It is important to provide a language-rich environment.
- ▶ Strong social listening skills will help children learn.
- ▶ Storybooks, puppets and felt stories are wonderful ways to enrich a child's enjoyment and experience of language and literature.
- ▶ Group discussions are an excellent way to discuss topics of interest and to encourage children to exchange views.
- ▶ Educators model language and encourage expression through language in all interactions they have throughout the day.

Learning checkpoint 5

Supporting communication development

Part A

Prepare to implement a group experience with preschoolers using a storybook and a puppet or prop. If you do not have access to a group of children, implement the experience in a role-play or simulated scenario.

1. Choose a book and list the title, author and illustrator.

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2. Provide a brief explanation of why this book was chosen. Your explanation should include details of the following:

- ▶ Age-appropriateness of the text, pictures and overall content
- ▶ The appeal, length and complexity of the story
- ▶ Attractiveness of the illustrations

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3. Describe the props that will be used and how they will be used.

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4. Provide a summary of how you will present and implement the whole experience by answering the following questions.

a. What is a question you could ask before the story?

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b. What is a question you could ask during the story?

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c. What is a question you could ask at the end of the story?

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d. What is one way to use the story to interest children in symbols and numbers?

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e. What is one way to interest children in letters and words in the book?

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f. What is one way to interest children in musical notation that is related to the story?

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g. What is one way you could include the use of electronic technology either before, during or after the story?

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h. What topic may arise as a group discussion or exchange of views during or after the story?

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5. Implement the experience while your supervisor or trainer/assessor is observing. Ask your supervisor or trainer/assessor to provide feedback of how you implemented the storybook experience. Create a table similar to the following to record the feedback.

Checklist	Feedback	Date and name of supervision
<input type="checkbox"/> The story and materials were appropriate.		
<input type="checkbox"/> The children were engaged in the story.		
<input type="checkbox"/> You altered your plans to meet the needs and interests of the children.		
<input type="checkbox"/> You modelled appropriate language and communication strategies, including listening.		
<input type="checkbox"/> You answered questions clearly.		
<input type="checkbox"/> You drew attention to the relationship between letters and sounds.		

Part B

1. Choose a language other than English that you could share with children, and describe three ways you could share this language, or words from this language.

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2. Explain one way that you could encourage the use of home languages.

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Topic 6

In this topic you will learn about:

6A Principles of holistic learning and development

6B Holistic learning and development outcomes

Holistic learning and development

Your knowledge of child development and individual growth patterns is critical to planning and implementing developmentally appropriate learning experiences. You can also use developmental theories to give structure to your own experience of children's stages and areas of development.

An educator's personal and professional qualities, combined with realistic expectations, significantly influence their ability to support the development of children in their care.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	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 and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
✓	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children
✓	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning
	Holistic approaches
	Collaboration with children
	Learning through play
	Intentionality
	Environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity and transitions
	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
Outcomes	
✓	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
✓	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
✓	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

6A Principles of holistic learning and development

Children have the right to feel safe, to learn and play, and to have their basic needs provided for. To ensure this occurs, responsibilities have been set out for governments, communities, families and educators in the form of declarations for rights and ethical educator practice. The following apply to your work in supporting the development of children:

- ▶ the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child
- ▶ the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics.



Educators should use these guidelines – and other theories related to child development – to help them develop practices that achieve high-quality child development and wellbeing outcomes.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child makes a commitment to protecting children by outlining the rights of children, and the responsibilities that governments and parents have to provide for these rights.

The Convention is made up of 54 articles, which outline the minimum standards governments must meet to provide adequate services and support for children and their families in the areas of health, welfare and education. It signifies the international community's recognition that children, as human beings, are entitled to the full enjoyment of human dignity.

Some developments in Australia that support the Convention include:

- ▶ the National Quality Framework (NQF)
- ▶ the ECA Code of Ethics.

For more information about the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including access to the 54 articles that make up the Convention, visit: <http://aspirelr.link/rights-of-the-child-articles>

For more information about the NQF, visit: <http://aspirelr.link/explaining-nqf>

The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics

A code of ethics is a written set of guidelines that educators can use to:

- ▶ understand what adult behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable
- ▶ maintain standards of practice
- ▶ protect children who are powerless and vulnerable
- ▶ help the educator make the right decisions when faced with ethical dilemmas.

The ECA Code of Ethics describes a number of commitments made to:

- ▶ children
- ▶ families
- ▶ colleagues
- ▶ communities
- ▶ the professional.

The Code of Ethics has the following core principles:

- ▶ Each child has unique interests and strengths, and the capacity to contribute to their communities.
- ▶ Children are citizens from birth with civil, cultural, linguistic, social and economic rights.
- ▶ Effective learning and teaching is characterised by professional decisions that draw on specialised knowledge and multiple perspectives.
- ▶ Partnerships with families and communities support shared responsibility for children’s learning, development and wellbeing.
- ▶ Democratic, fair and inclusive practices promote equity and a strong sense of belonging.
- ▶ Respectful, responsive and reciprocal relationships are central to children’s education and care.
- ▶ Play and leisure are essential for children’s learning, development and wellbeing.
- ▶ Research, inquiry and practice-based evidence inform quality education and care

Source: The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics extract is reprinted with permission.
www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au

Access the ECA Code of Ethics at: <http://aspirelr.link/eca-code-of-ethics>

Holistic learning theory

Philip Johnson-Laird suggests that in order for a child to learn, certain elements of their personality should be activated. These elements include:

- ▶ the intellect (cognitive processes)
- ▶ the body impulse (their desire to learn)
- ▶ intuition (their ability to acquire knowledge)
- ▶ imagination (the ability to form new images and sensations).

By now you will have noticed that learning and development is not compartmentalised. Each new skill requires advances in several areas that combine to yield the outcome. For example, the following table illustrates skills a child needs when learning to print their name.

Skill	How the skill is manifested
Physical skills	The child is able to hold the pencil and control its movements (fine motor skills).
Social skills	The child has a desire to learn to write in order to be connected to their community, where writing is important for communication.

Skill	How the skill is manifested
Emotional skills	The child has the patience to keep trying, leading to feelings of success and a growing self-esteem when they succeed.
Cognitive development	The child can understand the letter symbols and what a word is.
Communication development	The child realises that the symbols of letters make a word and that others can understand these words also.

Partnerships

Parents will contribute to the learning community if they are encouraged to share their values and beliefs with you in a range of ways. They will choose to get involved if they feel confident that their wishes for their child are being respected and considered throughout the day as you care for and educate the child.

Ways to communicate with families:

- ▶ Schedule parent–educator–child meetings to establish goals and share service changes.
- ▶ Listen to parents tell you about their children’s strengths and how they learn.
- ▶ Ensure you have access to telephones or email to communicate with parents during the child’s day.
- ▶ Ensure parents know the telephone numbers or email addresses of the service, and the times you are available to take phone calls or emails from them.
- ▶ Give parents positive messages about their children.
- ▶ Make an effort to communicate with the parent who does not normally attend the service; for example, if the father always drops off and picks up the child, consider how you can make contact with the mother.
- ▶ Provide parents with structured ways to comment on the service’s communications; for example, email, telephone or take-home surveys.
- ▶ Speak to parents directly (not just leaving messages on voice mail or sending emails).
- ▶ Provide copies of service information in a variety of ways; for example, in printed handbooks and online.

The open communication you establish by managing communication effectively will ensure that families not only share their needs and issues, but will choose to do so in a positive way as part of their partnership with you. They will also feel confident in sharing milestones and events, and will be comfortable participating in your program.

Ongoing learning

Your understanding of children will evolve over time as you gain experience, learn new things, and come across different environments and attitudes.

Personal and professional development is important and continues throughout life. It helps you to remain enthusiastic when the work you do is challenging.

To remain motivated you often need to develop new skills or improve old ones. Quality educators devote time and energy to learning more about their profession and following through on their professional interests so they don’t become ‘stale’ in their practice.

Professional development includes learning with your colleagues at work, and the activities you are involved in outside your daily work environment. You could learn and exchange information about child development and wellbeing by:

- ▶ attending training sessions
- ▶ participating in a performance review
- ▶ reading further on topics that you would like to learn about
- ▶ gaining a qualification
- ▶ making contact with a specialist service or resource worker
- ▶ joining a professional organisation.

Practice task 14

1. Think about the rights and learning of children.

Select one article from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and one point from the ECA Code of Ethics that represent something important to you about children's learning and rights.

Explain why you chose these and what they mean to you.

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2. Think about the information you share with colleagues and other students.

a. What have you learnt about child development and wellbeing from other professionals, including other students and your trainer/assessor?

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b. What have you learnt about child development and wellbeing from children's parents?

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6B Holistic learning and development outcomes

Children feel like they belong when their environment includes aspects of their home life and reflects their interests. They feel connected when they are involved in the decisions and changes that take place around them, and when the people they interact with are respectful and take time to communicate with them.



The EYLF helps you understand the importance of holistic development and shows you how you can work toward supporting children’s learning and development.

EYLF	Areas of focus
Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting a sense of belonging and connectedness
Children develop dispositions for learning, such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering new ideas
Children develop a range of skills and processes, such as problem-solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge, intrigue and surprise Inquiry processes Consulting with children Shared conversations

Watch this video about supporting the development of all children.

Promoting a sense of belonging and connectedness

Promoting children’s sense of belonging and connectedness is important for their social and emotional wellbeing.



To help children feel that they belong, the service should provide:

- familiar staff
- warm and trusting relationships
- places for children to put their belongings
- photo displays of children and family members, including pets
- experiences that reflect children’s interests
- room changes that are made in consultation with the children.

To help children feel they are connected, the service should provide:

- ▶ support for developing friendships
- ▶ a connection to the natural world
- ▶ resources that reflect the child's family life
- ▶ discussion of the child's interests and home life
- ▶ opportunities to use home languages.

Offering new ideas

Children are excited by new ideas, whether they are initiated through their own interests, or through the interests you feel are valuable. New ideas give you the chance to provide children with opportunities for learning; a natural outcome of this is the scaffolding that occurs as the child develops knowledge that complements current understanding (refer to Topic 4 for more information).

The environment should accommodate all aspects of a child's development and should maintain their curiosity. One of the ways to do that is to include aspects of all children's family lives, exploring them and linking them to an understanding of each other, and of the link between community, home and education. This also extends the experience of each child as they share their knowledge and skills.

Children are more likely to be engaged in activities that reflect their interests and strengths. They are also more likely to maintain a sense of agency when they participate in planning activities and are inspired to be curious. Curiosity is about experimenting, exploring, and asking 'why?' Curiosity is an excellent tool for initiating a new activity or experience; it is also good for encouraging participation. Curiosity will lead children through learning with the aid of scaffolding, as they use trial and error to work things out, experiment and develop new ideas. This learning, particularly trial and error, is sometimes seen as children making mistakes. However, trial and error is important as it allows children to see what does and doesn't work, as well as how different approaches can affect an outcome.

Engagement is not just about getting children to complete an activity. It is about getting them to explore, experiment and be engrossed in what they are doing. Engagement is the process rather than the product. You will know when you have engaged a child's interest because they will concentrate on the activity, ask questions and stay involved for some time.

Example**Engaging children in an activity**

Hester, the educator, sets up a new activity. He provides marbles, paper and paint. He also places trays on the table.

Hester thinks about how to engage children. He plans to pique the children's curiosity and creativity through his interactions. Instead of telling the children, 'This is marble painting and this is how it is done', Hester says things like:

- ▶ 'Can you work out how to use these things?'
- ▶ 'What do you think you could do with these?'

Challenge, intrigue and surprise

Children need to be challenged, but it's difficult to get the balance right. If the activity or experience is too easy, the child may become bored; if it is too hard they may become frustrated.

When evaluating the appropriateness of an experience, look at how the children could be extended slightly beyond the experience. Never wait for the children to become bored or lose concentration before increasing the challenge. Look at the ease of their participation and consider whether extension is required.

Any ideas you have for modification and even suggestions from the children should be acted on, as they are great ways to extend the children's development, further enrich the experience and increase their interest levels.

When all activities and experiences are given equal thought and consideration in presentation and reasoning, children will be interested and intrigued by the choices they have.

The following table presents some ideas for each age group.

Age group	Ideas to challenge, intrigue and surprise
Infant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Feeling box ▶ Blanket made of various fabrics such as felt, fur, hessian, silk, wool and leather ▶ Ice with a large object inside, such as a toy dinosaur ▶ Big clam shell or box of shredded paper to explore
Toddler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sand tray with natural resources such as pebbles, gumnuts and pinecones ▶ Farm animals ▶ Different-sized boxes with various surprises inside
Preschooler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Colour mixing ▶ Containers for shaking with different objects inside – guess what's inside ▶ 'Volcanoes' made with bicarbonate of soda and vinegar

Inquiry processes

The ideas children have might launch an inquiry process in which you provide intentional teaching and set up learning environments that build on their interests. To use inquiry as a means for learning, try the steps outlined in the following table.

1

Identify something the children are interested in, or provide a new item or experience.

Rex has brought in a new basketball to show the group. The children are intrigued by the ball.

2

Find out what the children already know.

You ask the children questions:

- ▶ Do you know what the ball is for?
- ▶ What game do you play with it?
- ▶ What is it made of?
- ▶ What makes the ball hard?

3

This leads you to find out what the children want to know.

You find out that the children would like to know:

- ▶ the rules of basketball
- ▶ how the basketball is made
- ▶ what makes it hard.

4

Discuss the item or interest, and introduce correct terminology or language.

- ▶ You introduce a simple basketball game so that the children can play and learn the rules.
- ▶ You talk about man-made and natural materials, and the differences between them.
- ▶ You show the children how to pump up a ball and they see how, without air inside, the ball is soft.
- ▶ You introduce new words: 'hoop', 'backboard', 'foul', 'dribbling'.

5

Expand the topic or item into other areas of the curriculum.

You introduce other types of balls to play indoors and outdoors. These include:

- ▶ small softballs and a bucket so that the children can throw the ball into the bucket from a distance
- ▶ a soccer ball
- ▶ an AFL ball.

6

Watch for decreasing interest; this tells you the children are finished with this inquiry.

After a week and a half fewer children are playing. You decide to start a new topic of inquiry.

Some skills children might develop through an inquiry process are:

- ▶ exploring
- ▶ identifying
- ▶ classifying (sorting)
- ▶ comparing and contrasting
- ▶ hypothesising (putting forward an idea and testing it).

They will also have the opportunity to make mistakes as part of learning. As they try to understand how something works, the child will hypothesise and use the inquiry process to find out what the correct answer is.

Shared conversations

The two-way process of communication begins shortly after birth. Early on, it is babble that is shared to and fro, as the form of conversation begins to take shape. Later, information is passed through words and concepts shared.

Stage	Characteristics of communication
Toddler	Toddlers start to introduce their own ideas into conversation, using one- or two-word sentences. They understand much of your meaning even if they are limited in their ability to express themselves in words.
2 to 3 years (in between toddler and preschool stage)	Sentences are much clearer and the child will appreciate the rules of conversation and talk about their interests and things they know.
Preschoolers	Preschoolers have a large vocabulary, many interests and lots of knowledge about how to share their thoughts. They enjoy what, why, how, when and where questions and also like to be asked these, which encourages them to find out the answer through exploration and even simple research.

A conversation is not just about talking. A conversation is an exchange of ideas between communication partners. If you want to be effective at conversing you should use a variety of skills including:

- ▶ listening
- ▶ supporting
- ▶ encouraging
- ▶ commenting
- ▶ asking open questions
- ▶ using different styles of speech.

Modelling these skills and encouraging children to develop them will support their ability to converse and to contribute to more complex conversation such as consultation.

Consulting with children

When you consult with children, you provide opportunities for them to express their ideas and views about matters that are important to them. If you involve them in a decision-making process, they can share information about their preferences and needs. Some common things children can help make decisions about include food, activity choices and behaviour expectations. Consultation is discussed in more detail in Topic 5.

Practice task 15

1. Look around a play space and note down where you can find the following things:
 - a. A challenging experience
.....
 - b. Something intriguing or surprising
.....
 - c. Inclusion of each child’s family
.....
 - d. Something that could start a conversation
.....

e. A topic of interest that could lead to an inquiry process

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2. Think of a new idea – something that is not seen in the environment currently. What is the idea and why do you think the children would benefit from being introduced to this?

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Summary

- ▶ Children’s play can lead to the development of interests that can be used to initiate an inquiry process.
- ▶ Open-ended experiences can challenge and intrigue children, and can be used in multiple ways.
- ▶ Culture and the family context are central to children’s sense of belonging and success in lifelong learning.
- ▶ Strategies such as modelling, demonstrating, open questioning, speculating, explaining, engaging in shared thinking and problem-solving will extend children’s thinking and learning.
- ▶ Use scaffolding techniques to build children’s strengths, skills and knowledge.
- ▶ Encourage children to see mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow.
- ▶ Create aesthetically pleasing and natural learning environments.
- ▶ Collaborate with colleagues and families to create learning experiences that are meaningful and authentic.

Learning checkpoint 6

Creating an environment for holistic learning and development

Part A

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Joanna has decided to create an experience for the children. A humpback whale has been sighted near the coastline, so Joanna decides to develop an experience based on this event. She plans her experience so that she can introduce new information about whales and the ocean. One of the aims of the experience is to encourage the children to think about the ocean environment and ask questions. Joanna has located posters and a book about whales. Some of the children are interested, but she has difficulty keeping their interest.

Benjamin is interested in the whales. He gets up and runs to the toy corner, finds a toy seal and brings it back proudly and says excitedly, 'See! This is a baby whale!' Some of the other children laugh and make fun of him. Benjamin throws the toy seal in the corner and sits down away from the other children, looking embarrassed. Joanna continues the discussion about whales and tries to engage Benjamin.

1. Think about how this experience is being used to initiate and extend the children's inquiry process.

a. What are **two** topics of conversation that may stimulate the children's thinking and interest, and create intrigue or surprise?

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b. Identify another **two** resources or materials that could be added to support the extension of this experience.

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2. Discuss the case study with a colleague. Particularly focus on how child development and wellbeing are influenced by the way you would manage Benjamin's mistake so he can see this as an opportunity to learn. Following your discussion, create a role-play or write down what you would say to support Benjamin and scaffold his learning.

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Part B

1. Describe **two** things that would demonstrate that children belong and are connected with their environment.

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2. Identify **two** ways a family could contribute to the learning community.

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3. Which parts of the following guidelines relate most to a child's feelings of belonging and connectedness?

- a. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

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- b. The ECA Code of Ethics

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- c. The National Quality Standard

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- d. EYLF principle

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