

CHCSAC001

Support children to participate in school age care

Learner guide

Aspire Version 1.1

Copyright Warning

**This product is copyrighted to One World for Children
(ACN 076 297 400).**

One World for Children owns copyright in this product. Aspire Training & Consulting owns the licence to publish this material. Except as permitted by the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth) or unless you have obtained the specific written permission of One World for Children, you must not:

- reproduce or photocopy this product in whole or in part
- publish this product in whole or in part
- cause this product in whole or in part to be transmitted
- store this product in whole or in part in a retrieval system including a computer
- record this product in whole or in part either electronically or mechanically
- resell this product in whole or in part.

One World for Children and Aspire Training & Consulting:

- invest significant time and resources in creating original products
- protect their copyright material
- will enforce their rights in copyright material
- reserve their legal rights to claim loss and damage or an account of profits made resulting from infringements of their copyright.

Aspire is committed to developing quality resources that meet the needs of our customers. However, occasionally Aspire finds, or is notified of, errors. Please refer to our website at www.aspirelr.com.au to see if there are any updates that may be relevant to you.

Every effort has been made to ensure the information in this book is accurate; however, the author and publisher accept no responsibility for any loss, damage or injury arising from such information.

Except where an information source is acknowledged, the names and details of individuals and organisations used in examples are fictitious and have been devised for learning purposes only. Any similarity to actual people or organisations is unintentional.

All websites referred to in this unit were accessed and deemed appropriate at time of publication.

One World for Children apologises unreservedly for any copyright infringement that may have occurred and invites copyright owners to contact them so any violation may be rectified.

CHCSAC001 Support children to participate in school age care



© 2017 One World for Children Pty Ltd
407–411 Thompson Road
NORTH GEELONG VIC 3125 AUSTRALIA
Phone: (03) 5272 2714
www.owfc.com.au



Cover and design
© 2017 Aspire Training & Consulting
Level 8, 409 St Kilda Road
MELBOURNE VIC 3004 AUSTRALIA
Phone: (03) 9820 1300

First published April 2017

All internal photographs except where marked © One World for Children Pty Ltd
Cover design: Rewind Creative
Printer: Doculink Australia Pty Ltd, 1d/28 Rogers Street, Port Melbourne VIC 3207

e-ISBN 978-1-76059-709-2 (PDF version)
ISBN 978-1-76059-707-8

Contents

Before you begin	v
Overview: The National Quality Framework	1
Chapter 1: Identifying the support needs of children	3
1A Evaluating the specific support needs of children and matching them to existing experiences	5
1B Using appropriate communication techniques to engage children and identify specific needs	14
1C Consulting with your supervisor or other staff about particular needs of children	18
1D Clarifying support and guidance needs of children	26
1E Supporting sibling relationships	29
Chapter summary	31
Assessment activity 1: Identifying the support needs of children	32
Chapter 2: Implementing support and guidance strategies	35
2A Ensuring inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds and children with additional needs	37
2B Minimising the effects of aggressive or abusive behaviour of children	41
2C Enabling children to express their need for support	50
2D Accessing support from your supervisor to optimise children's participation	54
Chapter summary	56
Assessment activity 2: Implementing support and guidance strategies	57
Chapter 3: Determining the effectiveness of individual support	61
3A Designing and implementing processes for the review of an individual child's support needs	63
3B Consulting others to ensure support reflects organisational and industry requirements	68
Chapter summary	73
Assessment activity 3: Determining the effectiveness of individual support	74

Chapter 4: Monitoring and adjusting support strategies to include review outcomes	77
4A Reviewing information and support provided to children to assess continuing relevance and effectiveness	79
4B Attending meetings to identify and evaluate school age care services	83
4C Identifying problems and introducing adjustments	85
Chapter summary	91
Assessment activity 4: Monitoring and adjusting support strategies to include review outcomes	92
 Appendices	 95

Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCSAC001 Support children to participate in school age care* from Version 1.2 of the Community Services Training Package. It is designed to **complement**, not replace, the learning and assessment strategies your trainer or training organisation has put in place.

Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. Information regarding how this learner guide relates to this unit of competency is included as Appendix 1 in this guide.

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 assessment activities you need to complete.

Feature of the learner guide	Explanation
Learning content	Read each chapter 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 and case studies	Examples of completed documents that may be used in a workplace are included in this learner guide. You can use these examples as models to help you complete practice/assessment tasks. Case studies highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice tasks	Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Video clips	Where QR codes appear, learners 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 .
Chapter summary	Key learning points are provided at the end of each chapter.
Assessment activities	There is an assessment activity at the end of each chapter. Your trainer will tell you which activities to complete. These activities give you an opportunity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• check your progress• apply the skills you have learnt• gather evidence to present in an evidence portfolio (see information later in this section)• demonstrate your competency.



continued ...

... continued

Feature of the learner guide	Explanation
Foundation skills	Information regarding foundation skills is provided in Appendix 2. As you complete each chapter (and the relevant assessment activity, if you are required to do so), record evidence of how you have applied foundation skills in the table at the end of this learner guide. Remember to keep copies of documents that demonstrate your application of foundation skills.

Assessment

Your trainer/assessor is responsible for ensuring the learning and assessment material you complete is suitable, and also for making any reasonable adjustments. They may provide you with additional or alternative assessment activities to those presented in this learner guide.

Your trainer may also ask you to compile an evidence portfolio as part of your training program. Under guidance from your trainer, gather relevant evidence (for example, an ongoing learning journal, workplace forms and documents) to demonstrate your competence. Your portfolio will also include evidence relating to how you have developed foundation skills. Information regarding foundation skills is included as Appendix 2 in this learner guide.

Overview

The National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework (NQF) puts in place compulsory, nationwide standards to maintain quality across a range of education and care services for children, including long day care, family day care, preschools and school age care. It incorporates licensing, regulations and quality assurance into a single system operating Australia-wide. Its aim is to enable services to use a unified system to work toward goals of best practice and quality. The NQF is implemented by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). You can find out more about the NQF by visiting ACECQA's website at: www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework. The resources available from this website are also available in any registered early childhood education and care, and school age care service in Australia.

The National Quality Standard

A key aspect of the NQF is the National Quality Standard (NQS), which aims to ensure high-quality, consistent care across Australia. This standard seeks to improve services by setting the standards for children's development and safety, and providing families with information so they can make informed choices about services.

The NQS includes *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia* (MTOPI), which provides guidance to school age care educators in implementing quality, responsive programs with a focus on individual strengths, interests and needs.

The NQS consists of seven quality areas, each containing standards and elements, against which children's education and care services are assessed and rated.

The seven quality areas covered by the NQS are:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical environment

4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Leadership and service management

My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia

This learner guide supports MTOP and is linked directly to the beliefs and values it represents. At the commencement of each chapter, there is a table identifying which of the MTOP principles, practices and outcomes are most closely represented within it.

MTOP is based on the view that children’s lives involve aspects of belonging, being and becoming:

- Belonging is based on human existence, the questions about who we are and where we belong, identities, relationships and the central core of worth that allows children to learn and enjoy healthy development.
- Being is the art of childhood, all the exploring and building that not only supports the years to come, but also the things happening now.
- Becoming is a result of learning about the values and beliefs upheld by society, intrinsic motivation and attributes. It considers what is required to become an effective member of society.

MTOP comprises three elements – Principles, Practice and Outcomes:

- Principles reflect contemporary theories and research that influence how we implement programs for children. These principles guide our practice.
- Practice is a reflection of your principles. The things you believe about children, their families and how people learn and develop are all exhibited through the practices you implement in your daily program.
- Outcomes have been designed to capture the learning and development that you observe when working with children aged 5 to 12 years. Each child progresses at their own pace to achieve each outcome during their learning and development. The five outcomes are:
 - Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity.
 - Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
 - Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
 - Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners.
 - Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators.

Chapter 1

Identifying the support needs of children

To maximise participation of children in school age care services, you should assess their support needs in a holistic way. This means considering each child's:

- physical development
- emotional development
- social development
- academic ability
- learning potential
- cultural and family background.

Your assessment of children's support needs can be enhanced by using skills of observation, questioning and listening during your interactions with children, both in groups and individual discussions. Effectively assessing children's support needs helps you to plan activities and provide ongoing support to children. It enables you to facilitate enjoyment and learning in both their leisure and play.

In this chapter you will learn about:

- 1A Evaluating the specific support needs of children and matching them to existing experiences
- 1B Using appropriate communication techniques to engage children and identify specific needs
- 1C Consulting with your supervisor or other staff about particular needs of children
- 1D Clarifying support and guidance needs of children
- 1E Supporting sibling relationships

The following table maps this chapter to the National Quality Standard and *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia*.

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: Leadership and service management
My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care	
Principles	
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
✓	High expectations and equity
✓	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
✓	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

1A

Evaluating the specific support needs of children and matching them to existing experiences

All children are different. Each child has their own unique set of needs and, in a school age care setting, these are known as support needs. As a school age care educator, it will be one of your goals to strive to meet these support needs by recognising and applying different strategies and experiences.

Needs assessment is the process used to identify the individual needs of children. Needs assessment involves:

- understanding the common developmental needs of children of various ages
- identifying the specific needs of individual children
- recognising the link between a child's behaviour and the hidden needs that this behaviour may be communicating.

Common support needs of children

A child's needs are wide ranging and can include physical, social, emotional, cultural and intellectual needs. They can vary from day to day and month to month. General information about the needs of children at different ages and abilities can help you understand the needs of individuals and groups of children that you support. Information on developmental stages is discussed in section 1C.

To meet the common support needs of children, your organisation's policies and procedures should:

- encourage the participation of all children in programs and activities
- provide a nurturing, supportive environment that encourages open communication
- provide comfortable, hygienic, safe and secure physical environments that cater specifically for 5–12-year-olds
- include effective procedures for dealing with accidents and emergencies
- actively foster positive self-esteem through interactions and activities.

Policies and procedures that consider the broad support needs of children are important, but children also need to be recognised as individuals with their own specific set of needs.

Specific support needs of children

Written information about an individual child's needs should be included in their file notes and enrolment paperwork. Familiarise yourself with the documentation that is completed when a child is new to your service and review it regularly during the child's enrolment.

You can find out a great deal about individual needs of children by watching them perform tasks and interact with others, especially to determine the child's level of interest in certain activities. Observation allows you to see problems that a child faces in communicating and socialising with other children and adults, and will alert you to any limitations.

Talking to children and their parents can also provide you with a great deal of information that contributes to your ongoing assessment of individual needs.

Communicating with children about specific support needs

Effective communication with children is the foundation for encouraging a high level of participation in school age care programs. Address any barriers to communication to ensure the child's needs are identified accurately. Your own style and method of communication can then be adjusted accordingly.

Children can be hesitant to communicate with you if they are shy, uncertain or fearful of how you might react to their interaction. This can prevent them from:

- seeking help with an activity
- acting independently; for example, going to the toilet while you are leading a group discussion
- discussing ongoing difficulties, such as bullying from other children.

There are many other situations where communication difficulties may arise; for example:

- Children with speech or linguistic problems will struggle with communication and may require more of your time to attend to their needs; speech impediments, slow development of speech or poor comprehension of the subtleties of language can contribute to this.
- A child with a learning delay may have difficulty following instructions or understanding the exact meaning of what you are saying.
- A child who does not have English as their first language may have difficulty communicating with staff and other children.

Providing specialised physical aids or equipment

Children with additional support needs can participate more in programs when specialised aids and equipment are supplied and used correctly. Aids and equipment are a positive way for the child to overcome barriers and maintain their independence. When a child can perform an activity independently, they are encouraged to feel more like their peers and have a greater scope for play and learning.

Physical aids and equipment may include:

- mobility aids; for example, wheelchairs and leg braces for children with physical disabilities
- living aids; for example, large switches adapted to everyday appliances (including computers) for children with reduced fine motor skills common to muscular dystrophy and other neurological conditions

- communication aids; for example, electronic speech output devices, word boards and picture boards for children with speech or language difficulties
- sensory aids; for example, hearing aids, glasses or large print books for children with hearing or vision loss.



School age care programs and activities should encourage participation of all children.

Providing children with information about school age care programs

Giving relevant and timely information about an activity or expectation can help children participate in programs with more confidence and enjoyment. Children who are told in advance what to expect from an activity are often more likely to participate with enthusiasm.

Children need information about the program communicated to them in a way that they can understand, with frequent reminders where necessary. This may include:

- prompting the child during an activity, such as reinforcing a rule
- placing signs and posters in areas that will jog the child's memory.

If children neglect to follow limits and guidelines or seem confused about what is expected of them during the program, more information and direction may be needed.

Supporting the development of children's life skills or social skills

A well-run school age care service does not expect military precision and consistently perfect behaviour. However, children do need to develop the ability to follow guidelines and maintain social responsibilities. These responsibilities include:

- learning to share
- cooperating with others
- showing kindness and concern for others

- listening carefully to staff for safety and wellbeing
- following basic limits.

Children need to develop life skills that can help them to be independent. Some of the life skills that are important, especially for the youngest groups of children in school age care, include toileting, general hygiene and using eating utensils adeptly.

Encouraging children to participate in school age care activities

Encouragement is important for fostering positive self-esteem in children. Whenever possible, it should be regularly provided to all children to promote confidence and a sense of accomplishment. It is also a motivator for participation in activities. Children can often be encouraged to try a task or take part in an activity that they might otherwise have avoided.

When encouragement is used properly, it does not place high expectations on the child's ability to succeed. Instead, it inspires the child to take part, to enjoy participating with other children and to challenge themselves without needing to compete with others. A child may be indicating the need for additional encouragement when they show certain behaviours such as disinterest in activities and openly voicing their frustration or lack of confidence.

Praise is very effective in encouraging a child, especially when they have achieved a goal or challenge.

Recognising cultural backgrounds

Children from different cultural backgrounds can benefit from having aspects of their own culture incorporated into activities and programs. This can help to:

- bridge a connection between the child's home life and school life
- elevate a sense of identity and self-esteem when other children around them are also taking part and enjoying traditions that belong to their individual culture.

Recognising children's cultural backgrounds helps to embrace the idea of inclusivity and acceptance of all children. It helps children to understand and celebrate differences.

Assisting children with homework

Completing homework may be seen as a key aspect of your school age care programs. This is particularly the case for older children, whose academic demands are increasing as they move through school.

Some schools, parents or educators may view a structured approach to homework, which can help the child develop lifelong study and learning habits. Other schools, parents or educators may believe the child should be encouraged to use their time out of school for more varied pursuits.

Your stance on homework should mostly reflect the child's and family's needs. Children who are expected to complete homework by their school, but who are at your service until late, need to be provided homework time. Other children who are only in your care for short periods may need less or no focus on this.

The following case study shows how homework can be different for each child and family.

Case study

Joseph and Yannick are both in grade 4. They regularly have homework tasks to complete after school. Joseph attends the service two times per week and leaves at 4.30 pm each day. His parents want him to focus on leisure and friendship during his time at the service, as there is plenty of time for him to complete the work after he has been picked up.

Yannick attends the service daily and leaves at closing time, 6.00 pm. His parents want the service to support him to complete his homework as they are rushed when they arrive home and they want to spend time with Yannick doing other activities, like talking about his day and playing games. Yannick completes his homework with an educator after 5.00 pm as this is a quieter time in the service and the children have enjoyed some wind-down time and fun with the others in the service.

Some children in school age care services will need assistance with homework, such as:

- encouragement to complete their homework tasks without distraction
- prompting – sounding out the first letters of a word during reading practice or providing concrete materials like unit blocks or play money
- practical help with researching on the internet.

Actions and behaviours that may indicate that a child needs help focusing on homework tasks include:

- attention-seeking behaviours
- creating frequent diversions and distractions among other children
- appearing bored
- complaining about the need to do homework.

Demonstrate your acknowledgment of each child's needs by adapting the homework expectation and including a balanced program where your main priority is learning through leisure. Ensure all children have the opportunity to wind down and relax following their demanding day at school.

Providing children with food and drink

School age care services are likely to have schedules relating to meal and snack times. Food preparation should be based on the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Australian Dietary Guidelines* (2013). These guidelines include providing children with plenty of:

- vegetables and fruit
- cereals, including breads, rice, pasta and noodles, preferably wholegrain

- lean meat, fish, and poultry, or alternatives for children who have a vegetarian diet
- milks, yoghurts and cheese, or alternatives for children with allergies or intolerance to dairy foods
- water rather than sugary drinks.

Children’s diets should include only limited quantities of:

- foods high in saturated fats
- foods high in salt
- foods containing added sugars.

Your service will have routines for eating; however, these should be flexible to meet individual children’s needs and events of the day. There should be water available for children to drink at all times. Additional food may be required when:

- a child arrives at the service in the morning without eating a suitable breakfast at home
- a child has a condition that requires additional attention to eating patterns, such as diabetes.

Children with allergies need to have special attention paid to their diets and to the wider school age care environment. When a child has a food allergy, even the smallest traces of that food may cause serious illness. In rare cases, contact with the food can even cause a child to stop breathing. This reaction is called anaphylaxis. Common allergens (foods that can trigger severe reactions) include milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, fish, shellfish, wheat and soy. If a child who has allergies attends your service, it is important to inform parents and staff not to bring these foods into the centre, even in small traces.

Matching specific support needs of children to existing experiences

Encouraging a child to take part in existing programs and everyday experiences is the most successful method of appropriately meeting the needs of a child. The following table provides examples of methods used to match an existing experience with the specific support needs of children attending your service.

Specific support needs	Matching school age care experience
To have needs heard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple questionnaires and feedback surveys • Group discussions about children’s needs and preferences • Opportunities to talk to staff individually, such as during quiet times • Asking questions and engaging in conversation with children frequently

continued ...

... continued

Specific support needs	Matching school age care experience
To learn communication skills that enable the child to overcome shyness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group games that encourage the child to talk in an unthreatening environment, such as simple card games and singing games
To overcome being teased or bullied by peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour support strategies in place for children who bully or create conflict • Bullying education programs for all children • Linking the child with more inclusive groups of children, such as setting up play opportunities and suggesting suitable playmates • Circle time or discussion groups that encourage sharing of problems
Physical aids to assist a child with a disability to participate in activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of play equipment that suits the child's abilities • Adapted eating utensils • Computers with voice recognition software
To feel accepted by peers who are from a different cultural background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs that 'borrow' aspects of a child's culture, such as traditional toys and games from the Aboriginal culture • Learning activities that familiarise children with diverse cultures, such as films and books relating to the child's background being shown to all children
To improve hygiene practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters on walls to remind children to wash their hands • Prompting and reminding children to follow expected standards of hygiene
To gain extra homework assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer games related to the relevant area • Homework groups so that children can collaborate on projects • Opportunities to undertake research using books and the internet
To be provided with information about the limits and guidelines of the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation sessions • Posters • Handbooks • Regular instruction and reminders • Group discussions about limits and guidelines

Additional support needs

Children's needs sometimes require special planning and support that goes beyond the everyday experiences of your service. These specialised needs include those relating to physical disabilities and learning impairments, or may also apply to children who experience risks, such as trauma, neglect or violence at home.

Your service may seek assistance from health and education professionals, government departments and services that provide specialised support, aids and equipment.

The following case study illustrates how an educator assesses the specific needs of a child, and matches these needs to existing experiences.

Case study

Jonas has recently become uncharacteristically withdrawn. Carla, an educator, has noticed that some of the other children snigger at him when he comes near. He reads inside on his own while the others play outside. Carla suspects that the other children are excluding Jonas from their games. She knows that some of the children can be unkind to Jonas because he speaks with a lisp. She talks to her supervisor about some strategies for addressing unkind behaviours. She learns that the service has an activities folder with a list of games that can help children like Jonas to feel more included.

Practice task 1

Read the scenarios, then complete the task that follows.

Scenario 1

Benoit arrives at 6.30 am. He attends school during the day, then comes to your service until 6.30 pm when his grandmother picks him up. Around 5.30 pm, he usually gets sleepy and likes to sit quietly on a cushion, watching others or viewing a movie. His grandmother says they don't eat their evening meal until around 8.00 pm.

Scenario 2

Polly is 5 years old and has been sitting alone. She is very quiet around other children and rarely talks to the educators, looking at the ground when she is spoken to.

Scenario 3

Seron comes from Sri Lanka, and has limited English language skills. He doesn't join in games with the other children, preferring to sit and watch them play. When you encourage him to play, he tells you he doesn't understand the rules of the games.

Evaluate the support needs of the child in each scenario. For each possible need that you have identified, provide an example of how your service might support that need. Use a table similar to the following to record your responses.

continued ...

... continued

Scenario	Identified needs	How you could support this need
Scenario 1		
Scenario 2		
Scenario 3		

1B

Using appropriate communication techniques to engage children and identify specific needs

Assessing the needs of children participating in a school age care program is an ongoing process. Developing your communication skills can help you to gather information that contributes to a better understanding of the individual children in your care.

Communication is not just about talking and asking questions. It involves:

- listening carefully to what the child is saying
- observing unspoken communication, such as body language
- following your instincts when you suspect that something in the child's manner or behaviour is not quite right.

Developing a rapport with children

Developing a rapport with children can take time and patience. Children often need to develop trust and be engaged in a mutually respectful conversation before they can talk openly about their needs. Techniques that can help you to build rapport include leading discussions, questioning and active listening.

Leading discussions

Adults can sometimes lead discussions with children alone or in groups to help children assign words to their needs. For example, you might sit with a child who is alone in the playground and ask them what it is that they would most enjoy doing at that moment.

Leading discussions can force issues such as bullying into the open. Children can be asked in groups to talk about the issue of bullying and be encouraged to express how this type of behaviour makes them feel. Discussions may also lead to how they might go about talking to an adult when it occurs.

Leading questions

Questioning children is a useful technique for obtaining information about their needs. You may take opportunities to ask leading questions. This is most successful when the child is relaxed and engaged in an activity with you, such as during a craft activity. Be careful that your questions do not raise anxieties or concerns in the child that they might otherwise not have considered, such as leading questions about whether the child has friends or how they feel about a disability.

Children who are reluctant or unable to talk to you openly may react positively to sensitive questioning. When asking questions, be guided by the child's conversation and try to reflect the child's own thoughts and direction from the conversation. Open questions that do not lead the child in a specific direction are useful here. For example, 'What are your favourite subjects?' or 'Who do you most enjoy playing with?'

Once a child has indicated a concern, you might ask further questions that encourage a more specific response such as, 'What particular homework problem can I help you with?' or 'How do you feel when other children leave you out of the game?'

Using open and closed questioning

Using a combination of different question styles can guide children's discussions effectively. Closed questions are those that only require a yes or no response. They can be useful when you require brief information or for establishing a fact. For example, you might ask closed questions like, 'Do you like that game?' or 'Do you need any help?'

Open questions attempt to extract more than a one-word response. They are useful when encouraging a child to expand on their needs or feelings. For example, you might ask questions like, 'What would you like to do now?' or 'What did you think of that game?'

Alternating between open and closed questions can help to establish a deeper rapport with the child and feels less threatening than using only open or only closed questions.

Active listening

Active listening involves showing the child through your words and actions that you care about what they have to say, and encouraging them to say more.

The following techniques contribute to active listening and are useful in drawing out a child's feelings and concerns:

- Taking a position close to the child speaking
- Focusing attention on the child speaking
- Suspending opinions and emotions
- Checking understanding and clarifying information

Taking a position close to the child speaking

Children often talk openly when the perceived difference in power and size are minimised. To make a child feel more comfortable, sit at the same level as the child; for example, in a similar sized chair next to them at a table or on the floor. Reducing the distance between yourself and the child to a close but comfortable level can encourage the child to speak about problems that are more difficult for them to discuss.

Focusing attention on the child speaking

Ignoring distractions can be a challenge. At a school age care service, there are often children and staff playing and working around you, with numerous and frequent demands placed on your time. It is sometimes difficult to concentrate, but paying close attention to a child who is speaking can encourage better communication.

When a child is speaking to you, maintain eye contact if culturally appropriate, and avoid showing the child signs that you might be disinterested or too busy to talk to them. Try not to glance at your watch or interrupt to talk to other staff.

In situations where other children or adults are demanding your attention, it can be useful to say something like, 'It's a busy time of day right now, but I'm really interested in talking to you about this. Could we sit down together later on when it is quieter and talk about it then?' Always ensure that you keep your promise to the child and find a place to talk that is as free from distractions as possible.

Listen intently to the child and use body language that demonstrates your interest in the topic, such as leaning forward and nodding appropriately.

If you believe the child is telling you something vital that they have built up to or are having trouble sharing, you may need to arrange to be free by telling others, 'I need to listen to Cybil now, I will play with you after I have finished'. Take the child to a quiet area if needed. This may be important if the child is disclosing abuse, bullying or other private or important information that is not easy to share.

Suspending opinions and emotions

A valuable skill to learn when using active listening techniques is to suspend opinions and emotions. Showing strong reactions to something a child has told you can quickly shut down their eagerness to continue talking. For example, a child may feel they have upset you if you show signs of sadness during a discussion about their family member who has died. A child may retreat back into themselves if you show signs of anger when they begin to tell you about another child bullying them for fear that you might cause an uncomfortable situation for them.

Checking understanding and clarifying information

Showing that you understand what the child has been communicating can be encouraging. Check that you understand fully by restating the problem or concern using the child's own words. For example, 'You are saying that you are upset because the other children often leave you out. Is that right?' Ask further questions where required to ensure that you have understood what the child is saying and to clarify any areas that cause confusion.

Summarising what has been said towards the end of the conversation confirms to the child that you fully understand their problem and helps them align their problem to any possible solutions you raise.

The following case study illustrates how communication techniques can be used to engage children and identify specific needs.

Case study

Raeesah is 7 years old and attends a school holiday program over the summer break. Carol works with the children on various activities. During the morning she notices that Raeesah has been quiet and withdrawn. Carol comes over to the table where Raeesah is drawing and sits down next to her so that they are at the same level. Carol asks questions about what Raeesah is doing and makes Raeesah smile when she drops some glitter on the table. Carol uses a soft tone to ask Raeesah if she is enjoying the program. Raeesah replies that her mother is unwell and that she would rather be at home to help take care of her.

Carol reflects Raeesah's communication by asking, 'Are you finding it hard to concentrate on the activities because you are worried about your mother?' Raeesah nods and Carol tells her that it is okay to be upset and to spend some quiet time on her own if she would prefer. She suggests that they could make a bouquet of flowers for Raeesah to take home to give to her mother later in the day.

Raeesah seems to appreciate the chance to talk and she stays by Carol's side throughout the morning, engaging in conversation that takes her mind off her wish to be at home.

Practice task 2

For each of the three scenarios outlined in Practice task 1, identify two appropriate questions and one active listening technique you could use to engage the child in conversation in an effort to develop a rapport and identify their needs.

PC 1.3

1C

Consulting with your supervisor or other staff about particular needs of children

Talking to your supervisor can help you to clarify particular needs of children. Reporting the findings of assessments you have made about individual children through observation or discussion helps educators deliver more effective and consistent care.

Your supervisor may also be able to provide you with further insight into the individual child's family or schooling situation so that your understanding of their needs can be confirmed or expanded.

Developmental needs

A child's developmental stage refers to the milestones or level of ability that a child has reached. Although age can often be an indicator of developmental stage, this is not always the case. Supervisors can assist you to understand differences in children's levels of development. For example, development can also be affected by the child's level of intelligence, their experience in a range of areas and the presence of learning disorders or intellectual disabilities.

Developmental needs are needs that are common to children at each stage. These needs are considered to be broad requirements for children to reach their maximum potential and growth.

The following table provides some general information regarding milestones in children's development. This information will help you with your observations of children in school age care and form the basis of your discussions with your supervisor about developmental needs.

Approximate age	Skill or ability
4–5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can dress and undress themselves with help • Can go to the toilet on their own • Can jump over small objects • Likes to paint and draw • Can thread beads onto a string • Can identify letters and may be able to write some of them • Can hop • Can count to 20 • Understands routine • May not always like to take turns

continued ...

... continued

Approximate age	Skill or ability
5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can skip • Can dress and undress themselves • Understands and can copy simple shapes • Can walk backwards and on a balance beam, do somersaults • Participates in group play • Uses scissors to cut on a line • Starts to like particular people as best friends • Starts to colour in between the lines • May know the alphabet • Asks lots of questions • Generally follows instructions • Likes puzzles • Starts to read • Likes things to go their way • Understands when someone says they have been bad or good
6 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows left from right and number of fingers • Seeks praise and encouragement • Has trouble accepting criticism • Enjoys responsibilities and privileges
7–9 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can learn to roller skate, ride bikes and jump ropes • Enjoys games and can play team sports, including simple competitive games • Forms close friendships and may like to have a small friendship group; friendships can be on-again/off-again • Enjoys helping • Is able to solve arguments with peers • May spend a lot of time ‘dobbing’ or ‘telling tales’ • Likes to participate in making rules • Likes to learn new things • Can be argumentative
9–12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs peer recognition and approval • Wants to fit in and will risk adult disapproval to get peer group acceptance • Can be cruel or insensitive • Will stand up for their friends • Starts to seek independence and wants adults to accept their ability to make their own decisions • May become confused about their sexual identity and desires and their relationship with boys or girls

Cognitive needs

Children learn in different ways and school age care services should include a range of different approaches to address cognitive needs. Collaborating with your supervisor can help you to develop approaches that use:

- opportunities for children to learn through a range of hands-on experiences
- visual information available from books, computers or posters
- learning through instruction
- unstructured time allowing children to follow their own interests
- time set aside for structured learning
- learning through making mistakes
- a nurturing learning environment where children feel safe from criticism from their peers and from adults.

The age or developmental stage of the child can determine how you adjust your communication style to meet their individual cognitive needs. For example, younger children often miss the subtleties of language such as sarcasm, humour or complex words and phrases, and therefore need to be spoken to in simple and clear language. Older children can develop a mistrust of certain styles of communication, such as being told what to do without collaboration, and need communication that is not patronising or demeaning to them.

Social needs

When children move through their primary school years, their social skills tend to develop significantly. The importance of peer acceptance and being part of a group increases with the child's age. Needs that relate to a child's social development include:

- opportunities to participate in a range of games and activities that promote and teach cooperation
- instruction and reminders about social rules
- safe environments to play and explore
- encouragement to feel a part of their community and to care about issues that matter to the community
- having adults around them who form caring and positive attachments
- rules that encourage fairness in children's behaviour.

Your supervisor can help you to recognise anti-social or uncooperative behaviours in children that are unexpected in their age group, such as aggression towards other children.

Psychological and emotional needs

Psychological and emotional needs relate to how children feel about themselves, other people and the social environment they participate in. Fitting in and being accepted as part of a peer group is important for children's social and emotional development.

It is desirable for a school age care program to provide children with opportunities to feel proud of what they have achieved in front of their peers. This can also help them if they are to continue to be motivated to learn.

Early primary-school-aged children tend to thrive on structure and routine. While children are still learning to be independent of adults, they also need to feel that there are clear limits to behaviour to help them to develop a sense of responsibility. When children in this age group incur an injury or are involved in an incident, they may still require some form of comfort, but will usually recover from being upset quite quickly.

Older children might have more complex or ongoing problems or anxieties that require more time and discussion to solve. They might be less inclined to talk to you about their concerns than younger children. Particularly in the later primary year levels, children need to feel that they are being listened to and taken seriously when they talk about their feelings and emotions. They are often quick to pick up on responses from adults that are patronising or flippant, and their self-confidence can be affected when they feel they are regularly ignored or sidelined.

Older children are also susceptible to emotional changes and mood swings due to the effects of puberty. They might need more time alone at this age and often become more dependent on their peers than on adults to provide them with emotional support.

Children who experience grief, loss or trauma need to be treated with sensitivity and patience. This can include allowing the child time to be alone and being available and willing to support them if they wish to talk. Seek additional support from your supervisor to assist a child who appears to have ongoing emotional needs.

Physical needs

Exercise and movement are important for children's health and for developing both gross and fine motor skills. Your school age care programs should provide opportunities for physical development including:

- experiences that develop gross motor skills
- experiences that develop fine motor skills
- unstructured play in a safe environment
- structured exercise.

Children's needs for assistance with physical tasks can be related to the child's age, presence of additional support needs or the child's experience with the task.

School age care programs should take into account the child's abilities to perform certain tasks safely and effectively, and provide appropriate support and assistance where required. Your supervisor should provide direction on meeting the needs of children who require additional assistance, supervision or support.

Cultural needs

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is clear about the rights of all children from any culture or background to learn about and practise their own cultural traditions, languages and religions. Supporting this right for children from minority groups sometimes requires additional effort and consideration.

When you know very little about a child's religion or cultural practices, you can often find out information about their beliefs and traditions from your supervisor, the child's parents, the internet and from the child themselves. Take care not to assume that a family from a particular geographic location shares a certain set of beliefs or traditions. Every family is different and might have a unique set of cultural expectations for their child.

Meeting cultural needs through your delivery of care and programs can include:

- incorporating aspects of the child's culture into programs
- providing opportunities for children to learn about different cultures in structured activities
- encouraging respect and acceptance of differences and diversity
- zero-tolerance of negative comments, discrimination or scrutiny based on culture or religion.

School age care activities should be designed to not exclude any child or group of children because of their beliefs or religious restrictions; for example, it would be inappropriate to hold a sausage sizzle that excludes children who cannot eat meat. Where activities might be seen to be exclusive, include opportunities that do not highlight difference. For example, vegetarian food options could be offered to all children, not just those who cannot eat meat.

Your supervisor should be able to discuss the cultural needs of children in a school age care program and clarify any issues that you come across regarding specific cultural requirements of children.

Needs relating to abilities

Children who are engaged at the right level will be focused and participate willingly and happily. Your role here is to encourage and support children so that they are motivated to participate in activities. Your enthusiasm and interest will continue to motivate them.

Sometimes play equipment, games, activities and interactions with the children do not engage them as expected. Some children may indicate that they are bored or frustrated or simply do not like what you had planned for them. Negative reactions to planned programs can be the cause of distress in children and difficulty for the educator. These reactions can be caused by the activities being too challenging, not stimulating enough or not interesting to the child.

Too challenging

Children can indicate that they find an activity too challenging for their current level of development by turning away from the game, getting frustrated, angry, aggressive or upset. Children may find an activity or interaction with others too difficult to master because they have not yet developed the required motor, language or cognitive skills to play effectively and enjoy the game. Children who cannot keep up with others, are confused by an activity or constantly fail to gain any level of achievement may feel a sense of failure.

Not stimulating enough

When activities are not stimulating enough to keep a child interested and engaged, they may react by being bored, easily distracted, fidgety and by distracting other children. Activities may be too simple or too easy, and the child may consider them too 'babyish'. This is especially the case if the child mastered this activity or interaction when they were much younger and they now see younger children involved in the activity.

Not interesting to the child

As with interactions and activities that are not stimulating, trying to engage a child in an activity that does not interest them is unlikely to achieve the objectives of the program. It is also unlikely to assist their development or maintain their focus and attention, and may encourage poor behavioural responses.

Meeting needs

Depending on the developmental needs and interests that you have identified, you can consult your supervisor to design activities and use them in the program. The following table lists some activities that develop different aspects of a child's skills and abilities.

Developmental area	Example activities
Cognitive development	Memory games, puzzles, any problem-solving activity
Creative development	Art, dance, music
Language development	Singing nursery rhymes and songs, conversing, asking questions, using sign language
Physical development – gross motor skills	Riding a bike, playing ball, skipping, hopping, dancing
Physical development – fine motor skills	Art and craft, gluing, colouring, lacing, playdough, puzzles
Social and emotional development	Reading books about feelings, asking children to describe how they feel or how others might be feeling, activities that require children to share or be part of a group

Behavioural needs

Children who demonstrate behaviours of concern sometimes have underlying needs that are not always obvious. These behaviours can be the result of a range of problems or emotions that the child is experiencing and should be referred to your supervisor to determine how the child's needs could best be met. For example:

- a child who shows bullying behaviours may have been the victim of bullying themselves
- a child who is angry or in frequent power struggles with staff or other children may have emotional or developmental problems
- children with attention-seeking behaviours may have problems related to self-esteem.

Your supervisor can sometimes help you to recognise the factors behind certain behaviours. They may suggest documenting or charting the behaviour to help you determine environmental factors that trigger each episode, such as excessive noise, food intolerance or overstimulation. Underlying causes for serious behavioural problems can sometimes be best determined by a trained professional such as a doctor, psychologist or behavioural expert.

The following case study illustrates how an educator consults with their supervisor about a child's particular needs.

Case study

8-year-old Jonathan has been displaying unusual and uncharacteristic behaviours. He frequently appears irritable, occasionally even lashing out at other children when they come too close during activities. He ignores staff requests to help tidy the room when an activity has finished, preferring to sit down and watch.

continued ...

... continued

Terri, an educator, has attempted to talk to Jonathan about his mood and behaviour but this has only increased his agitation, and she cannot see any other reason for the change. Jonathan's parents are also concerned, and tell Terri that this behaviour has been occurring at home. They add that he has also been drinking excessive amounts of fluids throughout the day and evening. Terri talks to her supervisor, Marnie, about her concerns. Marnie confirms that there should be no developmental reason for an 8-year-old to have such a dramatic change in temperament. She suggests that Jonathan's parents take him to see his doctor.

A few days later, Jonathan's mother tells Terri that Jonathan has been diagnosed with juvenile diabetes, a serious medical condition with symptoms that include tiredness and irritability. She thanks Terri for taking her son's behaviour change seriously enough to refer the problem to her supervisor

Practice task 3

Download a summary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child at: www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf. Read through the articles numbered 1 to 42 that are summarised on the document.

Identify any articles of the convention that you think apply to particular areas of need, using the following headings:

- Developmental needs
- Cultural needs
- Needs relating to abilities
- Needs relating to behaviours

1D

Clarifying support and guidance needs of children

Part of the process of identifying the support needs of children in school age care is to ensure individual children's support and guidance needs are clarified before working with the child.

Obtaining information about a child's support and guidance needs is often done by consulting with your supervisor, parents or carers, and the child.

Make yourself familiar with the following types of information about a child so that you can understand their support and guidance needs:

- The child's age and the skills and developmental milestones they have reached
- Any delays in learning, speech or comprehension
- Giftedness or unusual abilities or talents
- The child's usual temperament, personality and behaviours
- Recent changes in the child's life that might have caused emotional upheaval or stress, such as a death in the family, a new baby or a change of schools
- The child's cultural background and the language and cultural traditions that are regularly practised at home
- Any disabilities or delays in physical ability
- The child's preferences and interests
- The child's abilities regarding their toileting and hygiene needs
- Dietary preferences and restrictions
- Medical conditions and related considerations

Consulting with a supervisor

A general discussion with your supervisor should help to clarify support and guidance needs of children before you work with them. A simple question to your supervisor such as, 'What can you tell me about Dorian?' might suffice. If you need to know more details, your supervisor can direct you to the child's individual file notes.

File notes provide information about:

- medical and social history
- any recent problems with the child's ability to participate in activities
- changes that have taken place in the child's home life.

Records can provide you with a summary of problems and solutions that have been observed by your supervisor or other staff members. They can be used to guide you in attending to needs of children consistently and in line with the care of other educators.

Talking to parents or carers

Children might be dropped off and collected from a service by their parents or by other trusted people such as grandparents, other relatives or guardians. A child's individual needs can be discussed in an informal setting while the person is dropping off or picking up the child, or in more formal meetings such as during annual care review meetings.

Remember to ask questions sensitively and without judgment. A parent is more likely to respond in a positive way if you ask something like, 'Has your son said anything to indicate to you that he might be upset about coming to the program?' rather than, 'Why do you think your son has been behaving so badly lately?'

Parents are more likely to talk openly when you have made efforts to establish a rapport and made yourself available to talk when they are present at the service. Engaging parents in conversation about the child's progress can be as simple as showing them some of the activities or crafts that the child has done. From there, you might ask questions that encourage the family member to talk about the child's behaviour, personality and abilities.

Use a variety of open and closed questions to encourage discussion. A closed question requires simply a 'yes' or 'no' response, such as 'Does your child need extra help to interact with other children?' An open question encourages the parent to talk further; for example, 'What do you think we could do to encourage your child to feel more at home here?'

Talking to a child about support and guidance needs

Asking questions or seeking information from a child prior to working with them can help you to understand their problems or challenges. This knowledge will inevitably help them to participate more fully in school age care programs.

Children can have numerous needs that are not immediately evident to you because the child is new to the service or you do not know them well. It is possible that you have only a basic understanding of a child's developmental needs based on the child's age and obvious abilities. In many cases, the child is the best source of information.

Refer to section 1B for appropriate communication techniques to engage children and to identify specific needs.

The following case study illustrates how an individual child's support and guidance needs are clarified by the educator prior to working with them.

Case study

Carissa works in a school age care environment and her supervisor has informed her that a new child called Luke will be commencing the program that morning. Carissa is told that Luke is 8 years old and has Down syndrome, a condition that causes mild intellectual disability. She has never cared for a child with this disability before, so she asks the supervisor to tell her more. Carissa learns that Luke attends a mainstream school and that he has support from a classroom aid. The supervisor tells Carissa that he might have additional needs that include close adherence to routines and assistance with his physical development.

Carissa reads Luke's enrolment form, which provides some details about Luke's specific needs. Some of the detail on the enrolment form includes the fact that he can become breathless and weak when exposed to too much physical exertion such as running.

When Luke arrives with his mother, Carissa smiles and warmly introduces herself to both of them. She asks Luke's mother whether Luke has any routines that are particularly comforting to him in new environments. Using a variety of open and closed questions, Carissa clarifies that Luke enjoys having books read to him when he is nervous. He needs some physical support with eating, drawing and cutting out. When climbing on the play equipment he also needs physical support because his fine motor skills are not well developed.

Practice task 4

Consider the previous case study, in which Carissa clarifies information from three different sources.

1. What unique benefits can be gained from each of the sources identified: the supervisor, the file notes and Luke's mother?
2. Do you think Luke's needs might have been met differently if Carissa had only used one source of information about his background and support requirements? Why or why not?

1E

Supporting sibling relationships

Relationships between siblings are often complex. In some cases, sibling relationships can be fraught with negative emotions such as jealousy and conflict.

Services that provide school age care and education aim to provide environments that encourage children to feel part of a relaxed and friendly group of familiar faces. Provided through school holiday or vacation care programs, family day care and some long day care services, these programs aim to foster this type of family-friendly atmosphere. Enabling children to be with members of their own family can be very comforting to a child who is away from their parents.

While in many cases children will take the lead in spending time and sharing activities with their brothers or sisters, there are a range of skills that you can develop to help you support sibling relationships.

Recognising the need to encourage sibling interaction

It is common for older siblings to take a nurturing role with their younger brother or sister. They may wish to comfort the child when they are upset and assist them with physical tasks and activities. When children are new to a school age care service, the presence of a familiar face can be comforting. Siblings can be supportive of each other in times of stress and in unfamiliar environments.

It is important not to force an older child to take care of their younger sibling, especially if this is not a role they naturally take. Some children can resent the time and effort spent caring for a younger sister or brother, and this task can interfere with the older child's ability to make their own friends and enjoy the program. For children between the ages of 9 and 12, when peer attitudes are becoming extremely important, the constant presence of a younger sibling can be embarrassing and even isolating.

Supporting children to link with siblings

It is possible to foster a healthy and nurturing relationship between siblings in a school age care service by focusing some activities on the importance of family. For example, you might set tasks to create artwork that represents the child's family unit or projects that are created by siblings for their parents or grandparents. These activities can help to promote and celebrate the unique relationship that siblings have; they are also valuable for other children as they allow them to share their family information and to feel they belong.

Do not discourage children from attempting to nurture or care for each other unless you can see that there is resentment or longing by one of the children to be somewhere else. Where the nurturing relationship appears natural, you can encourage the children to help and support each other by regularly interacting

with them and using positive language to affirm their relationship. Remember, siblings are not responsible for the safety and wellbeing of their family members, no matter how protective they appear to be. You should remain aware of the activities of the siblings at all times, and not allow the older child to take over your supervisory role.

Managing conflict between siblings

Sibling interactions should not be treated in isolation or differently to interactions between other children, as their behaviours need to conform to the limits and guidelines of the service, just as they would be applied to any other children. Unkind words or actions should not be permitted. Conflict should be managed positively and according to service behaviour support procedures.

It can be useful to determine what might be behind these behaviours, since sibling rivalry can be caused by a variety of factors. Jealousy of the sibling's achievements can sometimes be countered by ensuring that praise is provided in equal measures. Children should not be asked to compete against each other when one child has an advantage such as age or unusual talent. Try to foster individual talents that suit each child's own abilities and praise them for their own achievements rather than making comparisons with siblings. Avoid statements like, 'If only you behaved as well as your brother' or 'Your older sister is very good at sports. You must be very proud'.

Putting pressure on children to leave their own friendship groups or activities to take a parenting role can be unfair to the older child. You can support children to foster their own friendships. In some cases, asking the older child to help their sibling to make friends first can be a good option when the younger child is shy or reluctant to leave their older sister or brother. Stay with the pair until the shyer child has become involved in an activity with children from their own age group.

The following case study illustrates how an educator recognises and supports sibling relationships.

Case study

Emma and Kate are sisters aged 6 and 9 respectively. They have recently commenced at a new school and will be attending the school age care service attached to the school every afternoon. Emma is shy and nervous about her new surroundings and the sea of unfamiliar faces. She clings tightly to Kate. Kate is very protective of her younger sister. Sally, the educator, can see that Emma's clinging behaviour is preventing Kate from making friends from her own class. Sally talks to Kate alone when she has a chance and praises Kate for her kindness towards her sister. She reassures Kate that she will begin to introduce Emma to other children from her class and that once Emma begins to feel more comfortable in the service she will naturally begin to develop her own friendships.

Practice task 5

Design a short activity that could be used in your service to celebrate family relationships and encourage siblings to recognise the importance of their connection.

Chapter summary

1. Needs assessment is the process used to identify the individual needs of the children.
2. A child's needs are wide-ranging and can include physical, social, emotional, cultural and intellectual needs. They can vary from day to day and month to month.
3. Developing your communication skills can help you gather information that contributes to a better understanding of the individual children in your care.
4. Talking to your supervisor can help you to clarify particular needs of children.
5. A child's developmental stage refers to the milestones or level of ability that a child has reached.
6. Obtaining information about a child's support and guidance needs is often done by consulting with your supervisor, parents or carers, and the child.
7. Enabling children to be with siblings can be very comforting to a child who is away from their parents.

Assessment activity 1

Identifying the support needs of children

Your trainer or assessor may require you to complete this assessment activity and will provide you with instructions as to how to present your responses. They may provide alternative or additional assessment activities depending on the circumstances of your training program.

The following table maps the assessment activity for this chapter against the element and performance criteria of Element 1 in *CHCSAC001 Support children to participate in school age care*.

Part	Element	Performance criteria
A	1	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5
B	1	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in identifying the support needs of children.

Requirements

To complete this assessment activity, you need:

- access to a children's services environment
- access to the National Quality Framework and National Quality Standard
- access to *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia*
- to answer the questions and submit responses as directed by your trainer/ assessor/training organisation.

Part A

1. What signs might indicate that a child is struggling with a task and that they feel embarrassed to tell you they need help?
2. Briefly explain how you could use communication skills such as questioning and active listening to help this child talk to you about their problem.
3. Give three examples of situations where children may have particular food and drink needs.

4. How might the emotional needs of a 5-year-old child differ from those of a 12-year-old?
5. How might you clarify information about the needs of a child who has a severe allergy to certain foods?
6. How can you help to discourage jealousy between siblings?

Part B

Choose two areas of child development from the following list:

- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Social
- Physical

Observe two children in your workplace, one aged around 5 years, and another aged around 12 years. Write a report on the differences you have observed between the two children in each of these areas of need.

Include the following in your report:

1. The specific needs that the children from each age group might have in each area
2. Techniques for assessing and identifying the child's needs in these areas
3. An example of a related need that might require clarification from a supervisor or family member

Present your report to your trainer or to other learners.

Record your foundation skills

When you have completed the assessment activity, make sure you record evidence of how you have developed and applied foundation skills. You may use the table at the end of this learner guide for this purpose. Keep copies of material you have prepared as further evidence of your skills. Refer to the information on foundation skills in Appendix 2 of this learner guide for further guidance.

Chapter 2

Implementing support and guidance strategies

Providing physical assistance with tasks and activities is sometimes seen as the core responsibility of your role in delivering school age care programs. However, it is just as important to develop and foster your skills in supporting and guiding children's social and emotional wellbeing. Children from different cultures or those with disabilities sometimes require additional support to have these needs met effectively.

Children need to have their emotions affirmed to enable them to participate fully in programs, and to help them develop a positive sense of self that will take them through life. Teaching effective communication skills to children can help you to support children who are reluctant to speak up about their needs. It can also help you to teach a child who uses aggressive and abusive behaviours to release their frustration or anger in more effective ways.

When you are faced with difficult situations, your supervisor is the best person to provide additional support or guidance. They may have access to services and strategies that will add to your own abilities.

In this chapter you will learn about:

- 2A Ensuring inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds and children with additional needs
- 2B Minimising the effects of aggressive or abusive behaviour of children
- 2C Enabling children to express their need for support
- 2D Accessing support from your supervisor to optimise children's participation

The following table maps this chapter to the National Quality Standard and *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia*.

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: Leadership and service management
My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care	
Principles	
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
✓	High expectations and equity
✓	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
✓	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

2A

Ensuring inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds and children with additional needs

As a school age care educator, you are expected to respect people equally regardless of their gender, age, socio-economic status, race, language, beliefs, additional needs and family structure or lifestyle. Certain behaviours, languages or practices that label, stereotype or demean others will not be tolerated.

All school age care services must adhere to a policy of diversity and equity. The purpose of a diversity and equity policy is to:

- ensure that all people are treated equally and with a level of mutual respect
- reduce bias and prejudice
- develop a range of practices and guidelines that actively counteract bias or prejudice
- promote inclusive practices
- encourage all people to communicate respectfully and fairly
- avoid comparisons between children, families and staff, and their backgrounds, abilities or additional needs.

Children from diverse backgrounds

Differences in children's personalities and family backgrounds should be respected and celebrated by all people attending school age care. The diversity of children's backgrounds covers:

- cultural background
- religion
- social and economic status
- family beliefs and lifestyles.

Respecting differences and similarities

A school age care service should recognise and value the differences and similarities that exist in its clients. It can do this by providing a range of guidelines and strategies to meet the individual needs of children and families from diverse backgrounds. Equitable and inclusive practices are a continuous process and should occur every day. It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with all relevant guidelines and strategies.

Acknowledging and respecting differences and similarities can be reflected in the types of leisure and learning experiences provided. The emphasis should always be on child-focused, relevant and meaningful experiences.

Effective leisure and learning experiences:

- encourage children to broaden their understanding of different groups of people in their local community and society
- reflect the diversity of children's families and lifestyles and encourage children to explore, experiment and question
- emphasise the diversity and equity reflected in children's individual and group experiences.

Cultural diversity

Cultural diversity refers to differences in race, language, religion, family lifestyle and structure. It is important for all educators to develop an understanding that extends beyond preconceived or traditional stereotypes.

If a child does not have their culture recognised and respected, the child is likely to feel devalued. If the way things are done at home is never mentioned or is visibly perceived by others as strange or foreign, the child begins to learn to hide these types of distinctive traits to attempt to fit in with their peers.

Consulting with families and your community is a good start when implementing culturally diverse activities and approaches into your program. Consider cultures that exist both in your local community and within the families of children who attend your service. Talk to all families and children about their cultures and beliefs, so that you do not have to make guesses or respond to stereotypes that could be incorrect or even offensive.

Including children with additional support needs

Children can be remarkably accepting of a child's differences when they are supported to understand that this is simply another child with a range of unique abilities and interests, who also happens to have a disability.

Children with additional support needs who might attend mainstream schools and care settings include those who have:

- intellectual disabilities, such as children with Down syndrome
- physical disabilities, such as cerebral palsy or spinal injuries
- learning disorders, such as dyslexia
- developmental disorders, such as autism
- behavioural disorders, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- sensory disabilities, including hearing and vision impairments.

Take care to make games and activities inclusive for children with disabilities. To help a child who uses a wheelchair feel included in the group, you might adjust a group activity that involves sitting on the floor by arranging a circle of chairs instead. A child should never be expected to sit out of an activity because of their disability. If the game does not allow everyone to take part equally, choose another activity.

Celebrate the achievements of all children, no matter how small, and encourage other children to do the same. Strengths-based approaches are important, because they focus on what the child can do, rather than treating the disability as a problem. For example, children with high-functioning autism spectrum disorders such as Asperger's syndrome can be reliant on predictable routines and clear directions. However, they can also have high intellectual abilities and often enjoy being challenged in maths and language games.

Talking to children about differences

Children are naturally curious about differences. It is important that you do not avoid answering questions or show that you are uncomfortable discussing a child who is from a different culture or who has a disability. Be honest in your responses, highlighting that the disability is just one aspect of the child using a strengths-based approach.

For example, you might answer a question about a child with a hearing impairment in the following way: 'Ned has some trouble hearing. The hearing aid helps him to hear better, but he is very good at understanding what you are saying by watching your lips move. You can help him by facing him while you are talking. You don't need to shout'. Where possible, and when the child with the disability appears comfortable, you might encourage them to lead the discussion, rather than talking for them.

Never allow negative comments or insults to go unchecked. When a child makes a hurtful or stereotypical comment, challenge them by giving more accurate information, and invite them to consider how their comment makes the other child feel. You might first need to work on your own feelings of bias or stereotypical attitudes.

Inclusion can be modelled most significantly in your words and actions. If you do need to point out differences at all, use terms that recognise the person first, rather than focusing on a disability. Refer to an unknown person in a discussion as a person or child with a disability, rather than a disabled child. A child with autism is preferable to an autistic child. Refer to a child who *uses* a wheelchair, rather than using negative terms like 'confined to a wheelchair', or 'wheelchair-bound'.

The following case study illustrates how to include children from diverse backgrounds.

Case study

Tran is 7 years old and has recently arrived in Australia from Vietnam. He speaks very little English and spends a lot of time sitting alone. The other children in the program have given up trying to talk to him, because they rarely receive a response.

Julia, an educator, knows that Tran will gradually learn English, but she involves the other children in making a picture board to help Tran to communicate. She encourages Tran and the other children to make colourful drawings of different games, emotions and needs. Tran writes down a corresponding word in Vietnamese next to each picture. Tran can now communicate some basic ideas with others, but Julia is surprised that the other children are also using the board to learn some Vietnamese words.

Their attempts to pronounce and remember the words for 'food', 'happy' and 'football' engages the children, and their interactions help to break down Tran's shyness. He smiles and laughs with them over the picture board, and very soon they are exchanging both English and Vietnamese words with him.

Practice task 6

Choose a culture that you know little about, and research a common game, festival or tradition that is celebrated in that culture.

1. What are the unique features of the game or tradition?
2. How could you include aspects of this tradition in your programs?
3. What benefits can inclusion of this tradition in your programs have for a child who comes from that culture?
4. How could it benefit other children in the program?

2B

Minimising the effects of aggressive or abusive behaviour of children

When a child displays aggressive or insulting behaviour during school age care, the ability of other children to participate fully in programs can be greatly affected. When behaviours escalate to regular, purposeful attempts to make an individual child feel inferior, excluded or unhappy, then it can be termed 'bullying'. Your organisation will have detailed policies relating to how you might approach consistent bullying behaviour from children in your services.

Incidents of aggressive or abusive behaviour can occur in isolation, or over an extended period. They can have a negative effect on the self-image of other children, as well as posing a risk of injury to children and adults. Aggressive behaviour can have many causes, but is often a poorly adjusted response to stress, frustration or anger. For some children, aggression is learnt from observing parents and other adults. It can also be caused by individual personality factors, developmental delays or behavioural disorders, lack of effective communication skills or being unable to deal with stressful situations.

Aggressive behaviour can include:

- destruction of property such as toys and furniture
- hitting or kicking other children or staff
- using words or body language designed to exclude or offend others.

Abusive behaviour can include:

- using obscenities
- yelling
- making negative personal remarks about other children.

Preventing the occurrence of aggressive behaviour

Educating children about bullying is very important. It is possible to help children understand the consequences of negative behaviours by discussing the harmful, long-term effects that bullying can have on other children.

Children should have a clear understanding of your expectations in terms of behaviour. Rules should be laid out clearly and frequently. You might use posters, signs and learning materials such as videos and books that relay the message that all children have the right to be treated respectfully.

Minimising escalation of aggression

Situations that might lead to abusive or aggressive behaviour in children are more likely to be managed effectively in the early stages before they are allowed to escalate. It is important to pay close attention to signs of anger, aggression or bullying-type behaviours that might be occurring. Redirecting a child who is becoming increasingly frustrated to another activity can help defuse the child's escalating emotions before they turn into aggression.

Children are not always likely to tell you when another child has hurt them. Instead, you should remain alert for arguments and resentments between children, or for signs that a particular child is being excluded or bullied. These signs include withdrawal, low confidence, unkind comments directed at the child from other children, and reluctance to attend the service.

Encouraging positive alternatives

Children who use aggressive words or actions in isolated incidents should be made aware that their behaviour is not acceptable. Provide them with a positive alternative that could replace the inappropriate response. This strategy can help children with poor communication or assertiveness skills to recognise other, more respectful ways to channel their anger or frustration.

Positive alternatives that could be suggested to the child include using respectful language. For example, suggest to them that they should ask calmly for what they want, rather than making demands. Some children might need to be taught effective communication skills. For example, help them practise asking politely for an object during a role-play with you.

You can ask children to talk to you when they feel that they have been treated unfairly, as an alternative to reacting negatively to other children's behaviour. When this has been provided as an alternative, it is important that you make an effort to respond when the child does approach you with a complaint or problem. The child's anger can be diminished when you take their feelings seriously and listen to their view. Intervene in a fair way that encourages compromise rather than inflaming further competition between the children.

Other alternatives that can be used to defuse anger can include allowing the child to walk away from an activity, run or 'shoot hoops' in a safe area, or create artwork to express their feelings.

Responding to aggressive and abusive behaviour

Despite your best efforts, preventative controls to avoid the initiation or escalation of aggressive behaviour are not always effective. At times when a child's behaviour becomes aggressive, the safety and wellbeing of all children should be your priority.

Using quick response actions

Safe intervention strategies will depend on the severity of the behaviour and require you to think and act quickly. Every time a child shows these behaviours towards other children, you should be consistent with interventions.

For low-level aggression, positive strategies in line with your organisation's procedures might include asking the child to apologise, and providing them with a warning of the consequences of using the behaviour again, such as ceasing to play in the area or being required to play near an educator. The child in question must

be told exactly how they have broken the rules. For example, ‘Hitting another child is not allowed. When someone has said something to upset you, you must come and tell me’.

In situations where the behaviour could pose a risk to the child using the aggressive behaviours, or to other children or adults, you should respond by separating the children in immediate danger. This may include standing between the aggressive child and other children if it is safe for you to do so, and asking other children to leave the area.

Restrictive practices such as confinement in a safe room should only be used in emergency situations where there is a real threat to the safety of others. Call for help where possible. Another educator may be able to help you to defuse the aggression, or call the child’s parents to collect them. Never use physical punishment in response to the child’s behaviour.

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Under the Education and Care Services National Law, the Education and Care Services National Regulations, Part 4.5 Relationships with Children, states:

Regulation 155	Interactions with children	<p>An approved provider must take reasonable steps to ensure that the education and care service provides education and care to children in a way that—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourages the children to express themselves and their opinions; and • allows the children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem; and • maintains at all times the dignity and rights of each child; and • gives each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour; and • has regard to the family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for by the service.
----------------	----------------------------	---

Serious breaches

According to Authorised Version No. 005, *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*, Part 6 Operating and Education and Care Service, states:

Section 166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline	<p>1) The approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that no child being educated and cared for by the service is subjected to—</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) any form of corporal punishment; or b) any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances. <p>Penalty: \$10 000, in the case of an individual. \$50 000, in any other case.</p>
-------------	---	---

Examples of this type of behaviour may include:

- hitting or slapping
- force feeding
- yelling at or belittling
- humiliating a child
- physically dragging a child
- depriving a child of food or drink (for example, saying to a child ‘If you don’t eat your vegetables, you can’t have dessert’)
- time out where a child is placed in an alternative place and in isolation.

Unacceptable practices

What is generally considered as unacceptable practice within a service includes:

- negative labelling
- criticising
- discouraging
- blaming or shaming
- making fun of or laughing at
- using sarcastic or cruel humour
- using negative language, such as ‘no’, ‘stop that!’, ‘don’t...’ and ‘you never...’
- using restraint, unless in an emergency situation.

National Quality Standard

The National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5 Relationships with children, states:

Standard 5.2	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults.
Element 5.2.2	Each child is supported to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
Element 5.2.3	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times.

My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care

All Principles and Practices of the MTOP relate to your role in supporting behaviour positively. They pull together everything you know and understand about children and support your use of positive interactions in shaping behaviour.

The Outcomes each relate back to supportive behaviour strategies. There are many strategies that may be commonly used, but some of these are considered controversial. Here are some examples of controversial strategies.

Tangible rewards

Tangible rewards, such as stickers, lollies and toys, are given to reward a specific behaviour or action. The reward is usually given immediately or shortly after the child complies with the adult's request.

We are all intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. Some things we do because we enjoy them, we feel good about doing them and we want to be part of the outcome. This is intrinsic. However, some things we do only because someone or something else motivates us. This is extrinsic. A tangible reward is an extrinsic motivation. Studies have shown that people whose main motivation is extrinsic usually exert a minimum effort for the reward.

Tangible rewards have immediate results. They appeal to the child as the reward is 'now'. However, these immediate results do not always have a positive effect on the child's self-esteem. This is because they are completing tasks for reward not for enjoyment – whether that enjoyment comes from helping others, succeeding, doing a good job, being part of a team, trying, participating or learning. It also means that children may come to expect a reward for completing day-to-day tasks.

The following case study illustrates how a child responds to a reward.

Case study

Ryne, 7 years old, is asked to pack up the construction kit. His educator tells him that if he does this quickly, he will get a sticker. Ryne packs up the area quickly and rushes to the educator asking for a sticker.

The next day, another educator is working with Ryne. She asks him to help pack up the play space. Ryne says, 'Will I get a sticker?' The educator explains to Ryne that all children are packing up to help each other rather than to get a sticker. Ryne sits on the mat watching everyone else pack up.

Incentive charts

Incentive charts are sometimes used to encourage a child to achieve something or to demonstrate behaviour consistently. Unfortunately, if the child is not in control of their abilities, then the incentive chart is just another way to demonstrate how they fail. Consider the following case study.

Case study

Cooper (6 years) squeals loudly, runs in circles and flaps his arms when he is excited. His educator has developed an incentive chart. Every time Cooper is excited and does not squeal, he receives a sticker on the chart. Cooper has noticed that he has only one sticker, so he starts to avoid situations that he is interested in to control his excitement.

The incentive chart is not working because Cooper is unable to control his emotional reaction when he is excited. Cooper needs to learn how to recognise his feelings and control his reaction first. His educator should keep in mind the importance of excitement and its value on learning and self-esteem. The incentive chart may be more appropriate when Cooper is able to control his emotions better.

Incentive charts are useful when children are tracking activities they are in control of (for example, practising a musical instrument, feeding a fish or helping with chores). Incentive charts are also useful if the child is able to measure the success of a newly learned behaviour or action.

Incentive charts can be harmful when they are used for children who are unable to control their behaviour, or for children that are not ready to show the behaviour you desire. Incentive charts are reward-based, which means the child may feel they are being punished if the reward is not achieved.

Time out

Time out within children's services is generally not an acceptable practice. National Quality Standard 5.2.3 clarifies that children must not be isolated for any reason other than illness, accident or a pre-arranged appointment with parental consent.

Young children are not capable of taking time out to think about their behaviour or reflect on what they have done without educator support. They also need to recognise that solitude is enjoyable.

Older children sometimes misbehave in order to be placed in time out, to get out of completing a task such as cleaning up. Sometimes children continue to disrupt the group or try to irritate an educator when in time out.

If you accept that time out is mostly used as a punishment, it is considered inappropriate in children's services.

Time out used in this manner often sees the children being provoked into secondary behaviours, such as destroying the area they are placed in. Some children are sensitive to the isolation and the time out punishment, and they perceive this clearly as humiliation and an attack on them as a person – lowering their self-esteem and making them more timid in play.

Children sometimes deal with their anger or frustration by taking 'time out' themselves. The space they go to should be safe and private. Sometimes this technique is called 'time away', 'quiet time' or 'safe time' so that it is clearly different to the concept of 'time out'. Consider the following case study.

Case study

Jacob gets angry very quickly. His educators have been helping him recognise when he is angry and how to calm down. The educators have noticed that Jacob needs time on his own in a private space when he is angry. They find that he gets angrier if they talk too much about the situation before he has calmed down. They set up a cushion in a quiet part of the room.

When Jacob starts to get angry, he clenches his fists tightly and goes red in the face. An educator comes to him when he shows these signs and says, 'Jacob you look angry. Come over to the cushion and take some time to yourself'. This suggestion is not enforced, but is offered to Jacob so he can deal with his emotions. If Jacob follows this strategy, he usually calms down within a few minutes. His educator stays close by and when he starts to calm down, she talks to him about how he is and what has happened. She also tells him how well he managed the situation and then helps him move to a new activity.

Jacob's educators ensure no other children bother him when he is on this cushion. They can tell when he has calmed down as his face returns to normal colour and his fists release.

Time with

Another adapted technique is 'time with'. Some educators have recognised that when children are displaying behaviour that is of concern, it often means that they need to be near an educator. This should not be in the form of close supervision or punishment, but in a way that they can provide individual support, caring and genuine interest, as illustrated in the following case study.

Case study

Martin, 8 years, watches others build towers with blocks. When they are built to waist level, he enters the play area and pushes down these buildings.

His educator chooses to use a 'time with' method as she thinks Martin needs assistance to engage in an activity and also to gain her positive attention.

The educator goes over to Martin and moves to his level. She asks if she can help him build a tower and Martin agrees. The educator makes sure that she interacts frequently during their play and remains with Martin for as long as possible. She encourages Martin to push down his own towers. When she does need to move away from the area, she asks Martin if he wants to stay, or come to the next activity with her.

When time out is recommended by a specialist or your supervisor, you may need to clarify which type of time out strategy they are referring to. You may also need to discuss National Quality Standard 5.2.3 and how the strategy will fit with these expectations.

Behaviour plans

Children who show regular and serious behavioural problems, or children with developmental delays whose behaviour is consistently concerning, may require specialist intervention. This can include drawing up behaviour plans, combined with supplementary support including counselling. When developing behaviour plans, educators may benefit from input and advice from a behavioural expert, such as a psychologist who specialises in child behaviour. The child's parents and program staff, and the child themselves, are also often asked to collaborate on developing the plan.

Behaviour plans provide an individualised set of responses that must be followed consistently by all staff in the event of behaviours of concern. Plans usually outline the child's history of aggression towards others, and identify triggers that commonly lead to the behaviour, such as food allergies, losing at games or not being given their way in a group decision. The plans provide specific strategies that should be used to prevent escalation of aggressive behaviour, and appropriate and safe responses to behaviour that puts other children at risk. They should also include ongoing positive behaviour support strategies, such as praising the child when they communicate in a respectful way.

The following example demonstrates how a behaviour support policy can help to minimise the effects of behaviours of concern.

Example

A school age care service has a bullying policy that requires certain actions to be taken if a child has shown bullying behaviours towards another child. The policy includes the following instructions:

- Talk to the perpetrator, explaining the consequences of their behaviour on the other child. Inform the child that the behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Provide a warning to the child that clearly explains the consequences of further behaviour.
- Arrange a time to speak to the parents of both children, on separate and private occasions about the strategies that have been put in place to resolve the problem.
- Develop and record strategies in consultation with the parents of the child who has shown bullying behaviours.
- Use agreed disciplinary actions if the behaviour continues.

Practice task 7

Using your own organisation's policies and procedures manual or one found on the internet, locate a policy on guiding a child's behaviour.

1. Briefly explain what the policy says about the limits you would apply if a child was demonstrating aggressive or abusive behaviours.
2. Summarise your organisation's policy about consulting supervisors and family in this type of situation.
3. How does the policy demonstrate the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations and the National Quality Framework?
4. Which Principles from MTOP are identified within the policy and how?

2C

Enabling children to express their need for support

Immediate support needs are those that are urgent or important to the child during activities and programs. They can range from needing assistance with an activity to informing you of an injury. Children who are encouraged to use confident and clear communication are more likely to have their immediate support needs met in a timely and effective way.

You can help children to express their needs using many of the communication strategies covered in Chapter 1. Children who might otherwise feel uncertain or shy about talking to you can respond quite positively to active listening and questioning.



School age care services should support communication of children's needs.

Enabling children to communicate needs

There can be many reasons why a child might feel uncomfortable or unable to express their needs; for example:

- You might look busy and distracted by other tasks.
- The child might be shy or have poor English skills.
- They might feel that talking to you is pointless if you frequently respond to their requests with irritation or indifference.
- Other children might monopolise your time, making it difficult for the child to interrupt.
- The problem might be sensitive or embarrassing for the child.
- The child might think that you are not able to help them with their problem.
- The child might feel that they will get into trouble if they bring your attention to a conflict or certain other problems.

Identifying the needs of individual children can be difficult at these times, and you might rely on children to approach you when they have a problem.

Being available for children to express their needs

You can help children to feel confident to approach you by regularly providing them with opportunities to talk, ask questions and make suggestions. Standing quietly in a prominent place during an activity tells a child that you are available to talk. When you regularly show interest in children's attempts to communicate by using warm facial expressions and active listening, you present yourself as an approachable adult who is likely to take their concern seriously. Over time, these strategies help to build a trusting relationship between children and educator.

Many children need prompting before they tell you about certain needs such as hunger, feeling unwell or being unable to complete a homework task. Prompting invites a child to raise an obvious concern or need with you; it can help them to speak up with confidence. A child might be prompted to tell you that they need help with a task when you sit next to them and ask what they are working on. A child who is standing alone or not participating in activities could be prompted to tell you that they feel unwell by you asking them gently why they are not joining in.

Encouraging children to express needs in different ways

Younger children might not be fully aware that they have a particular need or they may be unable to put that need into words. For example, a child might feel isolated in the playground due to communication or social skills that are less developed than those of other children. The child might be aware that they are somehow different, but not have the ability to put their need for a friend into words. The child might also feel a sense of sadness or homesickness, but can be unaware that this feeling stems from a need for close companionship or attention. When you cannot be sure about what a child is feeling, it is important to gently draw these emotions out in a way that is comfortable and age-appropriate for the child.

Using art to communicate

You can help a lower-primary-school-aged child to communicate their feelings by drawing or painting. For example, a child who feels overwhelmed or frightened by older children in the playground might depict a group of older children towering over them. A child in a similar situation might draw themselves with superpowers or larger than others, showing their wish to be stronger or have more control over the situation.

Due to the different interpretations of artwork, it is useful and effective to introduce discussion around the work. When you talk to the child with interest about what they have completed, they often begin to open up about a range of issues and concerns. Ask questions such as, 'Who is that?', 'Why do they look sad?' and/or 'Tell me what is happening'.

Writing feedback

Children in upper primary years are becoming more independent and developing their own ideas about how school age care can best meet their needs. If you are providing activities, resources and programs that are not challenging or interesting to the majority of children, in most cases they will make it clear – often through their behaviour. However, children can also be very good at trying to please the adults around them, and might feel that complaining or showing signs of boredom could be rude. You can seek the input of children about aspects of your service by asking them to write down their needs and preferences. This can be achieved by using suggestion boxes, distributing simple questionnaires and surveys, or even setting creative writing exercises about their school age care experiences and ideas for improvements.

Children can be consulted about a range of program or service elements, including:

- the quality, variety and taste of food provided by the service
- policies relating to discipline, such as interventions they consider appropriate
- the quality, level of interest and variety of activities
- programming factors, such as the timing of sessions and the order and length of activities
- the behaviour of other children, if it impacts negatively on their enjoyment of program and activities
- the quality of interactions of individual staff members.

Holding group discussions

Children can sometimes feel less intimidated when they are consulted in groups about their needs. Encourage discussion by putting a suggestion to children and listening to responses. For example, you might begin, ‘How does it feel when children play too roughly in the playground?’ These discussions should be general in nature, and children should be told not to mention individual names during group discussions.

The following case study illustrates an educator using age-appropriate approaches and communication to enable children to express their needs.

Case study

Patty runs a school age care service with seven children. She has been noticing that some of the 5- and 6-year-old children are becoming increasingly irritable during the afternoon. Patty asks some of the children individually about whether they enjoy the program activities. They all give her a positive response, but Patty still feels that there is something causing them to squabble frequently amongst themselves. She asks the children to create drawings of how they feel when they are taking part in various activities. Some of the finished drawings show the children lying down rather than playing. When she asks one of the children about these images, he tells her, 'Sometimes I wish I could just go to sleep at the program. There are so many fun things to do, but playing all the games makes me very tired'.

Patty has always believed that her program should include active games and activities. But from the children's reactions, she sees the possibility that the children can be over-stimulated and tired by her busy programs, and need to have some unstructured, quiet time. Patty arranges for the children to have choices between active and restful experiences. The change is very effective, and the children begin to show fewer signs of tiredness.

Practice task 8

1. Design a five question survey that might be distributed to children aged between 10 and 12 years, asking them to express how they feel about the program.
2. How did you ensure that the questions were appropriate for this age group?
3. What types of questions did you use to allow children to provide detailed responses?

2D

Accessing support from your supervisor to optimise children's participation

Regardless of whether you work alone in a school age care service, within the grounds of a school, or in a busy school holiday or vacation care program with numerous other staff, you will have access to help and guidance from a manager or supervisor, either on site or external to the service grounds. Many school age care services report to local councils or community organisations to ensure that they adhere to legislative and industry requirements, and managers from these central organisations can provide advice and assistance when you work alone.

Seeking guidance and direction

There might be times when you are unsure about your legal responsibilities in relation to providing support, or whether your care practices meet the best interests of children in complex situations. It is your responsibility to ask for assistance when you are unsure about how to proceed with an approach or task related to individual children. Your supervisor might give you this support in numerous ways, including:

- additional instruction and advice about proceeding with a child's care and education
- directing you to reading materials such as industry codes of practice or organisational policies
- providing you with physical assistance or opportunities to practise an unfamiliar task under supervision
- making recommendations to the family that the child be referred to external services or professionals such as behavioural psychologists or doctors.

When asking for assistance, always provide the supervisor with adequate information about the situation to enable them to make an informed decision about how they can best help you. When important information is not passed on, the supervisor might unwittingly provide incorrect or inappropriate advice.

The following case study illustrates the importance of passing on adequate information when seeking help.

Case study

Mary-Jane phones her off site supervisor about Vincent, a child who is showing aggressive behaviours towards other children. Mary-Jane has trialled the strategies outlined in the service's policies and procedures, but the behaviour is increasingly frequent and severe. The supervisor agrees that the aggressive behaviour is unacceptable, and recommends that Vincent be provided with a series of consequences for his behaviour that might include insisting he participate in an individual activity if he is unable to cooperate with others at the time.

continued ...

... continued

Mary-Jane neglected to tell her supervisor of two key issues related to this behaviour:

- The aggressive behaviour is very out of character for this usually placid and cooperative child.
- Vincent and his family have recently suffered the death of his younger sister through a sudden illness.

If the supervisor had been aware of these facts, her advice might have been very different. She might have been likely to recommend that the child sees the school counsellor, and that Mary-Jane gives him close emotional support.

Requesting additional resources

Sometimes the needs of children cannot be met with your current level of staffing or funding for programs. Supervisors can occasionally discuss and approve the release of increased funding to allow for a wider range of activities to meet the individual needs of children. This may include funding for:

- playground equipment that is age-appropriate and that meets the physical needs of children better than current play options
- books and audio-visual materials that better reflect the cultural diversity of your school age care community
- increased staff numbers at busy times of the day, when you feel that children are not being adequately supervised
- specialist support so that a child with a disability can take part more effectively in physical activities or learning programs.

Seeking feedback about your performance

If you are only ever given positive feedback about your strengths and abilities, you are unlikely to recognise or work on areas where your practice may need improvement. Constructive feedback does not have to be overly critical or negative. Instead, it should be an opportunity for the supervisor to show interest in your potential and to make suggestions for how you can meet higher standards.

Feedback about your work performance can be gathered through spontaneous discussion while you work. It can also take place in more formal settings, such as through annual or six-monthly performance review meetings with your supervisor.

Many supervisors might be reluctant to give honest feedback. They might not wish to make you feel incapable, and they might fear appearing unkind or confrontational. For this reason, it is helpful to be proactive in seeking feedback that is honest and open and to be specific about what you want to know.

It is important to accept feedback graciously, and to try not to take it personally. Instead, use criticism as an opportunity to learn about what you can change.

Practice task 9

Think of an area of your organisation or program that you feel could benefit from receiving additional support.

1. What types of support might help?
2. Would you be confident in asking your supervisor for help with this area? Why or why not?

Chapter summary

1. As a school age care educator, you should respect people equally regardless of their gender, age, socio-economic status, race, language, beliefs, additional needs and family structure or lifestyle.
2. When a child displays aggressive or unkind behaviour during the program, the ability of other children to participate fully in programs can be greatly affected.
3. Always follow your organisation's guidelines and policies when responding to aggressive behaviours.
4. Children who are encouraged to use confident and clear communication are more likely to have their immediate support needs met in a timely and effective way.
5. Many children need prompting before they will tell you about certain needs, such as hunger, feeling unwell or being unable to complete a task.
6. When you cannot be sure about what a child is feeling, it is important to gently draw these emotions out in a way that is comfortable and age-appropriate for the child.
7. It is your responsibility to ask for assistance when you are unsure about how to proceed with an approach or task related to the care of children.

Assessment activity 2 Implementing support and guidance strategies

Your trainer or assessor may require you to complete this assessment activity and will provide you with instructions as to how to present your responses. They may provide alternative or additional assessment activities depending on the circumstances of your training program.

The following table maps the assessment activity for this chapter against the element and performance criteria of Element 2 in *CHCSAC001 Support children to participate in school age care*.

Part	Element	Performance criteria
A	2	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4
B	2	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in implementing support and guidance strategies.

Requirements

To complete this assessment activity, you need:

- access to a children's services environment
- access to the National Quality Framework and National Quality Standard
- access to *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia*
- to answer the questions and submit responses as directed by your trainer/ assessor/training organisation.

Part A

1. Imagine that a child from an Aboriginal background attends your school age care service. Explain why it might be more culturally inclusive to consistently show the children images of Indigenous Australians participating in everyday activities, rather than celebrating a corroboree.
2. A child asks you why another child uses a wheelchair. How might you respond to this child and the child with the disability?

3. Why is it important that all educators follow a behaviour plan for a child who regularly demonstrates aggressive behaviours?
4. How might a child who is showing signs of rising anger during a group activity be encouraged to use an alternative way to vent their anger, rather than yelling at other children? Explain:
 - a) your expectations and actions if this occurred
 - b) how Element 5.2.2 of the National Quality Standard supports these actions – see the *Guide to the National Quality Standard*
 - c) how the Education and Care Services National Regulations support these actions
 - d) how the Practice from *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia*, ‘Intentionality’, supports these actions and the importance of supporting children to learn to manage their feelings.
5. List three reasons why a child might feel uncomfortable approaching you with a concern about feeling unwell. Explain how your own behaviour could encourage this child to tell you their problem.
6. Explain how you might gather feedback about your performance to identify areas that might need improvement.

Part B

Read the scenario, then answer the questions that follow.

Scenario

Ahisma is 6 years old and comes from India. She speaks English well, but she is very shy. Her parents have asked that she eat only halal foods, which are foods that are specially prepared according to the Muslim culture. Ahisma’s parents bring these foods to the program every morning.

Harry, who is 9 years old, also attends the program. He has a history of behavioural problems, and has been teasing Ahisma about the Muslim headscarf that covers her hair and neck.

Ahisma has become more withdrawn during the activities in recent weeks. Another child tells you that Harry has continued to taunt her when you are out of earshot, but you cannot be sure about this. When you ask Ahisma whether anything is worrying her, she tells you quietly that everything is fine.

1. Explain two strategies to help Ahisma feel proud of her cultural background, and to make her feel included in the group despite her differences.
2. How might you respond when you hear Harry calling Ahisma’s headscarf ‘weird’ when he is talking quietly to his friends?
3. How might you encourage Ahisma to talk to you openly about the reasons for her recent withdrawn behaviour?

4. Identify one reason for seeking support from your supervisor in this situation. Explain why you would gain the support and what outcome you would hope to achieve by doing so.

Record your foundation skills

When you have completed the assessment activity, make sure you record evidence of how you have developed and applied foundation skills. You may use the table at the end of this learner guide for this purpose. Keep copies of material you have prepared as further evidence of your skills. Refer to the information on foundation skills in Appendix 2 of this learner guide for further guidance.

Chapter 3

Determining the effectiveness of individual support

Reviewing individual support is the process of looking objectively at your approach to each child, and determining the quality of care that you provide. Review processes for measuring the effectiveness of your interactions with individual children should take place both formally and informally.

Formal processes are official procedures that are planned and guided by your school age care service's policies, such as meeting processes. Informal processes are undertaken in a more casual and spontaneous way, such as the process of talking to a child during an activity about their enjoyment of the program. Both have an important place in ensuring that the quality of your service is maintained and improved for the benefit of all children.

In this chapter you will learn about:

- 3A Designing and implementing processes for the review of an individual child's support needs
- 3B Consulting others to ensure support reflects organisational and industry requirements

The following table maps this chapter to the National Quality Standard and *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia*.

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: Leadership and service management
My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care	
Principles	
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
✓	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
✓	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

3A

Designing and implementing processes for the review of an individual child's support needs

PC 3.1

The information that you obtain from a review of a child's individual support needs is more likely to be accurate if you use more than one source or review process. A bigger picture can be seen when you seek feedback from children, families, schoolteachers and other school age care educators.

You can be clear about whether you are meeting individual children's needs by matching your needs assessment with evidence of the child's enjoyment and participation in programs.



Reviewing a child's support needs requires consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including the individual child.

Reviewing the needs assessment

Section 1A discussed the process of undertaking a needs assessment. The needs assessment includes information that you collected about the child when they first accessed the program and at regular intervals during their ongoing attendance. You can revisit your assessment of the child's needs for the purposes of review by collecting the following documents:

- The child's admission or orientation details, including their cultural and religious background, age and family situation
- Written records of observations that were made about the child's needs, such as individual file notes
- Written records of needs that have been voiced by the child and family members, such as special requests or preferences recorded on enrolment forms
- Publications that provide information about the developmental needs of children in certain age groups
- The results of surveys and questionnaires that have been distributed to children and families to identify needs
- Incident forms or other records that show individual needs relating to safety

Compare the results against the child's participation by:

- observing children taking part in programs to assess their level of participation
- comparing the activities needed for the child's development and other needs to the actual program schedule and activities, in consultation with supervisors
- collecting ongoing feedback from children about their enjoyment of the program
- holding discussions with parents about their level of satisfaction with the program
- reviewing children's records of attendance and participation.

Observing children to assess their level of participation

Watching children learn and play is just as important during the review process as it is when assessing the child's needs. Children of different ages and abilities might prefer different levels of participation. For example, younger children might be content to sit and watch other children take part in a sports game, and still enjoy doing so. For older children, participation in a board game may involve a higher level of communication and interaction with other children, such as laughing and talking about the game in an animated way.

Also observe how the child reacts to interventions from educators.

Questions that can be asked to review the child's participation while undertaking observation include the following:

- Does the child participate actively with other children?
- Do educators support the child's emotional needs when they are upset or withdrawn?
- Does the child have friends who treat them fairly and with respect?
- Do educators provide praise and attention to the child in equal measures with other children?
- Does the child show signs of enjoyment during the program, such as smiling, laughing and talking to others?
- Is there any evidence of unmet needs, such as withdrawal or challenging behaviours?

Comparing the activities needed to actual program schedule and activities

When considering the activities undertaken by your service, identify whether these activities meet the needs of the children who attend the program. This type of review can help you to decide which experiences could be provided again, developed further or stopped completely.

Your supervisor can assist by directing you to aspects of the program that can be flexible. Consulting with your supervisor can also help you to recognise how programs meet developmental needs according to each child's age and stage of development.

Questions that you can ask yourself when determining the effectiveness of activity programming include the following:

- Is there a variety of activities that meet the child's developmental needs?
- Are activities age-appropriate and challenging?
- Is the child's culture recognised and supported by program activities?
- Can children choose to be alone or in groups if they wish?

Collecting ongoing feedback from children

You can discover how a child feels about their level of participation in programs by listening to their ideas and opinions. For example, you can gather feedback during group or individual discussions by asking children what they like about the program and what they think could be improved. Children can provide feedback in the form of simple questionnaires or surveys that ask specific or general questions about the activities and experiences offered by your service.

Children can also identify their feelings about programs through creative expression, such as painting and drawing. Older children may be interested in creating stories or diaries. These techniques can highlight the program experience as seen through the child's eyes, in either a positive or negative light.

Questions to ask when reviewing children's feedback include the following:

- Are the child's opinions and ideas listened to?
- Do the program experiences meet the child's individual needs and preferences?
- How could programs be adjusted to meet the child's preference?

Holding discussions with parents or carers

Family members can and should be consulted about the participation of their child in your program. Consultation can take place informally during a discussion with the parent at drop-off or pick-up times. More formal processes for consultation with families include regular care review meetings and distribution of questionnaires.

Questions that you can ask the child's parents include the following:

- Does the child complain about aspects of the service?
- Are the parents satisfied with the current program and activities?
- Are there any needs that they feel are not being met adequately?
- Do educators keep parents regularly updated about their child's progress and participation?

Reviewing children's records of attendance and participation

Attendance records are kept in line with legislation and show evidence of the frequency of the child's attendance at your program, as well as late arrival or early pick-up routines. Intermittent or poor attendance does not always indicate that the child does not enjoy the program. However, if you suspect that a child is having difficulty separating from parents or participating in activities, poor attendance can indicate problems or concerns. Parents might give in to a child's request not to attend the program, and make other arrangements for the child's care.

Records of participation are collected for individual activities or excursions. They can also indicate gaps in a child's level of interest, particularly when the child is consistently choosing to engage in solo activities, like reading, rather than group activities. While all children need some 'down time' taking part in quiet activities, there can be concerns that the child's social development is restricted by spending continuous time alone. This could be an indication of dissatisfaction with the program.

Reviewing the safety of a school age care program

Safety issues relating to children's participation in activities need to be reviewed regularly. The following table shows examples of how safety could be considered in a variety of contexts.

Area of review	Questions to ask
Outdoor play areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are play areas adequately supervised according to required educator ratios and ages and numbers of children? • Is outdoor play equipment checked regularly for signs of damage or wear? • Are boundaries and fences locked and secure?
Indoor play areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are floor surfaces non-slip? • Are resources and equipment age-appropriate? • Are spills attended to quickly?
Excursions and travel situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are children supervised by adequate numbers of educators? • Do transport options, such as mini-buses, comply with organisational requirements including seat-belt regulations? • Are children provided with instructions about staying with the group? • Are head counts performed according to procedure?
Meal preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are precautions taken to ensure that children with allergies do not come into contact with relevant foods, such as bans on products containing peanuts? • Do the children receive meals at the appropriate temperatures? • Are children prevented from entering kitchen areas?

continued ...

... continued

Area of review	Questions to ask
Basic fire safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are children and adults who use the centre aware of basic fire practices, such as the location of fire alarms and fire-fighting equipment? • Are fire drills carried out regularly? • Are smoke alarms in working order and tested regularly?

The following example illustrates the importance of consulting with parents in reviewing individual support needs.

Example

A school age care service has developed a series of strategies to encourage families to provide feedback in a format most likely to reach as many parents as possible. With a high percentage of parents working in office or information technology environments, the program suggests families email questions or comments when they are unable to speak directly to educators at drop-off and pick-up times. Monthly updates about each child's progress are sent in secure password-protected web pages accessible to each parent. While face-to-face interaction is encouraged and preferred, and other forms of information-sharing are available to parents who do not use the internet, the system has encouraged parents with long working hours to feel more involved in the service and in their own child's care.

Practice task 10

Paul and Lorraine are the parents of Pia, a 7-year-old child. They often hear a great deal from Pia about her experiences at the service. When Pia has had an exciting or enjoyable experience, she wants to share it with her parents, the people who are most interested in how she spends her day.

Pia also feels more comfortable talking about negative experiences with her family than sharing these problems with service educators. When Pia is facing problems with friendships or the behaviour of other children, Lorraine notices a change in Pia's behaviour at home. She becomes anxious and upset before she leaves for the service.

1. How can you encourage Lorraine to share this type of information with educators?
2. If Pia was allergic to peanuts, what safety and risk management strategies would your service implement? Provide relevant policy documents and highlight the main points.

3B

Consulting others to ensure support reflects organisational and industry requirements

Wherever possible, you should consult the stakeholders of the service about relevant issues that affect them. In the case of day-to-day and organisational matters, your supervisor is the best person to consult. When any issue directly affects a child, consulting both the supervisor and the family of the child may be appropriate.

When reviewing the effectiveness of your service, compliance with regulations and industry guidelines is a priority. The services provided by your programs should reflect industry best practice.

Meeting industry standards also ensures that your services meet the high expectations of quality care that are expected by the Australian community.

There are several ways in which you can ensure that you are meeting these regulations:

- Observation of children, families and educators during the course of the program
- Reviewing documentation, especially your organisation's policies and programs, and other evidence such as individual file notes that shows that your service is meeting requirements
- Regularly consulting with supervisors about your workplace responsibilities and determining how well you are meeting expectations
- Regularly consulting with family members to determine whether you are meeting their expectations, through distributing questionnaires, arranging meetings and informal discussion

Ensuring support reflects organisational procedures

Every organisation has its own unique set of policies and procedures that must be followed by every educator. Policies and procedures should closely reflect the legal and industry requirements your service is bound to follow.

It is important that you consult your supervisor regarding the organisational requirements that should be demonstrated when you undertake a review of children's support. Your supervisor should be able to help you with the review process, particularly in terms of the effectiveness of the support being offered to children in your service.

Ethical behaviour and codes of conduct

Ethics are the fundamental principles that guide human behaviour towards what we believe is right, just and fair. Working ethically means that you are providing a service that takes the needs and considerations of children into account without discrimination or self-interest. Unethical behaviour can take many forms. For example, it would be unethical to accept a cash payment from a family who asks you to give their child special treatment in return.

A code of conduct is a set of guidelines that demonstrate the standard of behaviour that is expected of you during the course of your work. Your organisation is likely to promote a code of conduct as a stand-alone document that is distributed to all educators, or incorporate it into policies and procedures. In consultation with your supervisor, the review of your own work performance can include reflection on the standards that you adhere to during the course of your work.



Privacy and confidentiality

Respecting the confidentiality of children, families and other educators is an important concern, especially when you have access to personal details. When considering matters of privacy and confidentiality regarding any aspect of your service, you should consult with your supervisor.

Privacy is to be respected at all times. Privacy considerations should include:

- not discussing personal information about a child, such as a medical condition, in front of other children or families
- protecting written information using processes that keep it safe from unauthorised access, such as password-protecting computer files or locking filing cabinets
- taking care that electronic communication is delivered only to the intended recipient.

Access and equity

Access and equity are terms that refer to providing services to all children on equal terms wherever possible. For example, a child who uses a wheelchair might have access to the facilities because two adults lift the wheelchair up a flight of stairs, but this type of access is not equitable. It does not permit the child to enter and leave the building on equal terms with other children. Provision of ramps, however, can provide the child with freedom to enter and leave independently, without depending on two adults to be present if they wish to go outside to play.

Access and equity do not relate just to physical access, nor just to children with disabilities. It can include a range of types of access, such as ability to join in an activity or game, and many differences, such as children who have language barriers or behavioural problems. Your organisation's policies and procedures make it clear how you can ensure that access to programs and activities is made fair and equal to all children. If you are uncertain about these issues, consult with your supervisor for clarification.

Program planning

Your requirements for program planning include the need for a broad range of activities that respond to children's interests and meet their needs. When establishing a program plan, you should always include your supervisor in the process.

Program planning includes designing everyday routines and activities, as well as excursions and outings. These activities, outings and routines must:

- provide variety and challenges appropriate to the children's ages
- allow all children to participate equally
- meet the particular preferences of children that have been identified by talking to children and families
- take into account the safety and wellbeing of children
- encourage emotional growth and learning
- promote inclusion through recognising and celebrating difference and diversity.

Child protection

When working with children, you are legally bound in some states and territories to notify government authorities when you have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child might be subject to neglect and/or physical, emotional or sexual abuse, either within or outside their home. This process is called mandatory reporting. Reviews of safe and appropriate care takes into account whether the child is being adequately protected from harm according to the law.

Any suspicions that you have regarding the possible harm of children attending your service should always be reported to your supervisor.

Behaviour support

Reviews of individual support must ensure that children who show behaviours of concern are provided with behaviour guidance strategies that comply with your organisation's policies and procedures, and with the law.

Your supervisor should be able to help clarify your organisation's policies and procedures regarding concerning behaviours. It is not appropriate to use physical punishment of any kind towards a child in your service, or to use strategies designed to humiliate or isolate the child.

Behavioural matters should also be raised with the family of the child concerned as soon as possible. A consultative process involving your supervisor and the family of the child should be adopted so as to produce a positive outcome.

Ensuring support reflects industry standards

The National Quality Standard sets compulsory benchmarks and includes a list of performance measures that can help you to determine how well you are meeting the relevant standards of care.

The Standard is divided into seven areas that contribute to the quality of early childhood education and care:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements (including the number of staff looking after children)
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Leadership and service management

Each standard contains a number of elements and the *Guide to the National Quality Standard* provides an assessment guide that shows how your service can meet the standard.

The *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia* (MTOF), which forms part of the NQS, also provides details of how you can meet industry expectations and respond effectively to the needs of families and children.

Ensuring that support reflects industry standards is closely linked to the funding and approval to operate awarded to your service by government departments. The standards can also provide you with a benchmark, or comparison, against which you can measure the effectiveness of your support.

Ensuring support reflects respect for children

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child requires governments and children's services to respect children as individuals, with their own unique personality, experiences and beliefs. Your organisation's policies and the National Quality Standard also reflect this requirement. Some ways that these rights are interpreted include the following:

- Children have the right to have their opinions and ideas heard regarding decisions that affect them. Your service should involve children in decision-making about programs and activities that suit their individual needs and preferences.

- Differences between children should be celebrated, rather than discouraged. Children should be allowed the freedom to express themselves in ways that are meaningful to them, whether that relates to their interests, the way that they look or dress, or the activities that they choose to take part in.
- You should never make assumptions about a child simply because they belong to a certain culture, religion, age group or gender. Stereotyping children and expecting them to conform to those stereotypes can restrict their ability to develop as individuals.

Regular consultation with family members is fundamental to the review of effectiveness of support provided by your service, especially concerning the issue of respect. Family members potentially have a lot of information to share with you about the child attending your service.

The following case study illustrates an educator ensuring that their service respects the rights of children.

Case study

Jackie is reviewing the ability of her service to respect the rights of children as individuals. Her review process relating to this requirement includes the following strategies:

- She asks her supervisor where she might find specific information about how her service can demonstrate this requirement. Jackie's supervisor tells her that the organisation's policies and procedures supply information about how educators must demonstrate respect for individuality.
- Jackie finds a policy that outlines the rights of children to play games that suit their own individual preferences.
- She looks for evidence in the programs that children are respected as individuals. Jackie notices that one of the girls in the program likes to play with the cars and trucks with the boys. She observes that the educators at the service understand her right to choose activities that she enjoys. They respect her right to be treated as an individual, rather than expecting her to conform to traditional ideas of appropriate games for girls.

Practice task 11

Download the *Guide to the National Quality Standard* available at: www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/the-national-quality-standard.

1. What feature in the guide allows services to measure their performance against the standards?
2. How are these standards measured during an assessment of your service?

Chapter summary

1. Reviewing individual support is the process of looking objectively at your approach to each child, and determining the quality of care that you provide.
2. Without regular reviews, it is difficult to see what you are doing well and what could be done better.
3. Family members and carers can and should be consulted about the participation of their child in your school age care service.
4. Being familiar with the policies and procedures of your organisation is one way to ensure that services reflect industry best practice.
5. Meeting industry standards also ensures that your services meet the high expectations of quality care that are expected by the Australian community.

Assessment activity 3

Determining the effectiveness of individual support

Your trainer or assessor may require you to complete this assessment activity and will provide you with instructions as to how to present your responses. They may provide alternative or additional assessment activities depending on the circumstances of your training program.

The following table maps the assessment activity for this chapter against the element and performance criteria of Element 3 in *CHCSAC001 Support children to participate in school age care*.

Part	Element	Performance criteria
A	3	3.1, 3.2, 3.3
B	3	3.1, 3.2, 3.3

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in determining the effectiveness of individual support.

Requirements

To complete this assessment activity, you need:

- access to a children's services environment
- access to the National Quality Framework and National Quality Standard
- access to *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia*
- to answer the questions and submit responses as directed by your trainer/ assessor/training organisation.

Part A

Design a six-point questionnaire that could be distributed to families to determine their satisfaction with their child's level of participation in programs. Include the following in your questionnaire:

- Instructions for completing the questionnaire
- A list of questions for determining the child's level of participation in programs
- Instructions about how the parent may provide you with further information or comments

Part B

1. What can attendance records tell you about a child's level of interest in programs? Why is it important to rely on additional sources of information rather than attendance records alone?
2. Explain the purpose of the National Quality Standard, and why you should be familiar with it.
3. Describe how you could ensure that your service is implementing appropriate privacy and confidentiality requirements in relation to children's records and information.
4. Outline the processes used in your organisation for reviewing the appropriateness of children's diets.
5. Access the policy of your service that reflects safety and risk management strategies. Which industry regulations and standards are related?

Record your foundation skills

When you have completed the assessment activity, make sure you record evidence of how you have developed and applied foundation skills. You may use the table at the end of this learner guide for this purpose. Keep copies of material you have prepared as further evidence of your skills. Refer to the information on foundation skills in Appendix 2 of this learner guide for further guidance.

Chapter 4

Monitoring and adjusting support strategies to include review outcomes

An assessment of a child's needs is not a single event that takes place only at the beginning of their time at your service. As children grow and develop, their needs change. Children can outgrow resources such as books and activities. Their needs for information can change as their cognitive abilities improve. Their level of participation in activities can change according to the child's emotional needs and level of interest in activities.

The results of your regular reviews can help you to consider adjustments and monitor improvements in a formal way. In some cases, trial and error can show you the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to support. In this way, programs can change with the needs of children, rather than becoming irrelevant.

In this chapter you will learn about:

- 4A Reviewing information and support provided to children to assess continuing relevance and effectiveness
- 4B Attending meetings to identify and evaluate school age care services
- 4C Identifying problems and introducing adjustments

The following table maps this chapter to the National Quality Standard and *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia*.

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: Leadership and service management
My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care	
Principles	
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
✓	High expectations and equity
✓	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
✓	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

4A

Reviewing information and support provided to children to assess continuing relevance and effectiveness

The relevance of the information and support that is provided to children can be assessed regularly by considering the child's developmental stage, and by using many of the review processes that were discussed earlier in this learner guide.

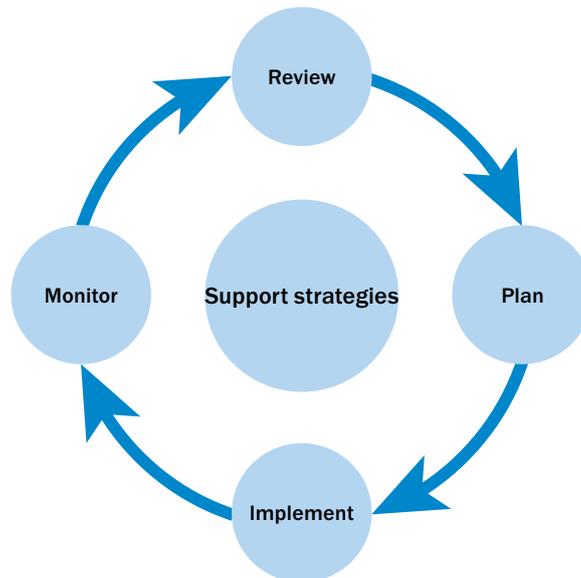
Changes are often introduced on a 'trial and error' basis. This means that new strategies can be trialled for a set period, monitored through observation, and then reviewed again at a later time. If the strategy proves to have been ineffective, future reviews might then consider whether another alternative should be trialled.



Determining whether IT equipment needs to be updated should be part of a school age care service's evaluation.

Continuous improvement cycles

Trial and error processes can continue over time until a suitable strategy for managing the problem is found. The cyclical nature of this approach contributes to the naming of evaluation processes as 'continuous improvement'. The following diagram shows the nature of implementing strategies as continuous improvement processes.



Using this model, the following steps are taken in a continuous loop:

1. Review – a problem is identified during the review process.
2. Plan – a strategy to approach the problem is planned through collaboration with other educators, parents and the child where appropriate.
3. Implement – the planned strategy is trialled.
4. Monitor – the effectiveness of the new strategy is checked regularly through methods such as observing the child and questioning parents.

Frequency of reviews

Although reviews take place informally through your consistent observations and questioning during programs, the frequency of formal reviews depends on several factors.

These might include:

- the nature of the program, such as programs held after school or on school holidays
- the frequency of the child's attendance, such as daily or on a casual basis
- additional needs that the child might have, such as a physical disability, behavioural problems or language barriers
- when there is evidence that the child's level of participation needs more frequent reviews.

Follow your organisation's requirements when determining how often formal reviews should take place. This may vary from once every two to three weeks for children who are supported daily, to every few days during a school holiday or vacation care program.

Determining relevance of information and support

When conducting a review, it is important to focus on information that is valid and timely in relation to continuous improvement processes. The types of reviews that you are able to conduct may need to be prioritised. For example, it might be more important to review the support needs of a child who has just commenced a full-time place in your service, rather than focusing on the ongoing needs of a child who will be a casual user of the service.

Reviews should be relevant to the services you are likely to provide to children in the near future. For example, at the beginning of the school term, it would be more important to review the age-appropriateness of playground equipment for children attending services after school than to review transport safety for excursions that only take place over school holidays.

When reviewing individual needs, it is important to consider the context and limitations of the service environment. It may not be relevant to review the physical needs of a fit child at upper primary level who is active at sports during school hours, but who wishes to complete homework and then relax at the program. Teachers and parents can help you to recognise when certain needs are being met at different times of the child's day, so that you can focus on providing support that fits with the child's expectations and needs.

The following case study illustrates how information and support provided to children is reviewed for continuing relevance and effectiveness.

Case study

Janet runs a school holiday program with seven children. The program includes outings and excursions twice a week, and the children stay at the service on the remaining days.

Short notes about each child's level of participation are taken at the end of each day to record informal observations and communication with children and parents. Formal reviews are undertaken regularly at the end of each week. Janet asks the children to complete a simple questionnaire at the end of Friday's session. The questionnaire asks the children about their preferred activities and includes questions about what the children like most and least about the service.

On Friday afternoon, Janet also spends time making a formal record about each child, reviewing the relevance of the program and making comments about additional support or activities that could be incorporated.

Practice task 12

Think of a child you have supported in the past who might have struggled to participate fully. Complete a table similar to the following, reviewing the child's needs using the headings outlined below. Maintain confidentiality when presenting this information.

Area reviewed	Review of needs
Communication	
Physical aids/equipment	
Encouragement	
Cultural needs/activities	
Other activities	
Life/social skills	
Homework assistance	
Provision of information	
Hygiene issues	
Provision of food and drink	

4B

Attending meetings to identify and evaluate school age care services

PC 4.2

Review meetings can be one of the most important communication processes available to your work team. They can be a source of information about children's participation needs, a forum for evaluation of current programs and an opportunity to plan future directions.

Meetings might be formal and with broad objectives, such as annual review meetings with parents and supervisors. They can also be more spontaneous and informal, with a specific outcome in mind, such as a gathering of educators to discuss a specific problem with a child's level of participation.

Annual review meetings

Review meetings usually aim to consider the child's level of participation by asking questions and discussing the individual child's needs with their parents or carers. These meetings also provide an opportunity for parents to raise concerns or make comments about their child's participation in programs. Together, parents, carers and educators can discuss problems and determine solutions to improve the child's experience. Questions that might be asked of parents about their child's level of participation were outlined in section 3A, and these can be applied during formal care review meetings.

Educator meetings

Regular educator meetings can be useful forums to discuss problems and needs of individual children. They can also help you to identify program areas that can be improved. Discussion can be flexible or it can run to a set agenda.

Evaluating services during meetings can involve considering several sources of information, and discussing how improvements could be made accordingly. Information that can be evaluated during meetings includes:

- results of annual review meetings with parents
- verbal feedback given to educators from parents and children during and after sessions
- suggestions offered through suggestion boxes and surveys
- formal and informal complaints made by parents and children
- results of incident reports that might show injury patterns
- reports provided by professionals who have assessed an individual child
- observations that have been made and recorded about children's participation
- a comparison of current processes with industry standards and recommendations
- an assessment of policies and procedures against legislation
- identification of problems related to a child's level of participation.

When you are invited to take part in a meeting, you have a responsibility to contribute effectively. Prepare any information that you have been asked to collect in advance, and present the information to others objectively. Leaving out information that might be relevant to evaluation, such as when your own programs have provoked a negative response, can reduce the potential for improvement.

Ask questions to ensure that the group members understand the outcomes discussed during the meeting. It is also important that you clarify any actions that you have been asked to take following the meeting. These may include recording the outcomes of the meetings, making immediate changes to programs or collecting further information to contribute to future evaluations.

The following case study shows an educator taking part in a meeting.

Case study

Penny's school age care service holds regular review meetings on various safety and support issues throughout the year. A recent meeting considered the effectiveness of the centre's SunSmart policy. The agenda of the meeting contained the following items:

1. Review information collected from educator observations about how frequently shaded areas are used by children.
2. Evaluate the SunSmart behaviour of children as recorded by educators over the past month.
3. Take suggestions for updating SunSmart educational materials for parents and children.
4. Discuss how the service can incorporate recommendations from latest SunSmart initiatives into programs.

Penny prepares for the meeting by collecting a list of observations that have been made by her work team about SunSmart behaviour and children's play routines under the shaded areas. She asks children, parents and members of her work team who will not be attending the meeting for any contributions or suggestions that she might present for discussion. These ideas include:

- the need for shade cloth
- having sunscreen available near the door
- requiring children to wear hats.

During the meeting, Penny listens carefully to the suggestions and ideas of others. She stays focused on the agenda items being discussed by referring to the agenda throughout the meeting. Penny contributes the suggestions arising from her own area when she is asked. She speaks up calmly and clearly when she has an additional idea or suggestion relating to the discussion, and allows others to do the same.

Practice task 13

1. Find a meeting agenda for a past or future meeting at your workplace.
2. Write some notes relating to the agenda about possible contributions that you might make to a particular discussion.

4C

Identifying problems and introducing adjustments

PC 4.3
PC 4.4

Problems that may affect the participation of children in programs can be identified through review processes. When problems have been recognised, your evaluation processes should consider strategies to improve any problem.

Recording reviews and problems in a formal way can contribute to your organisation's commitment to identifying improvements. Formal records of reviews are also necessary for triggering discussion among educators during evaluation meetings, and are usually required for quality assurance processes and funding purposes as evidence of continuous improvement.

Recording review outcomes

The outcome of your review is recorded according to your organisation's policies and procedures. Your service may record results in a child's individual file notes, or on specially designed forms. Review records can also include examples of potential changes that could be made to programs in response to a problem or difficulty.

Quality improvement plans

Changes you identify may be recorded on a quality improvement plan (QIP). A QIP is requested by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) at the point at which they commence their assessment and rating process for the service.

A QIP template is provided by ACECQA. It includes:

- information about the service, its philosophy and its context
- a summary of the quality of practice and strengths identified through self-assessment for each Quality Area and Elements, matched against the National Regulations and National Quality Standard
- key improvements and how they are linked to the standards and elements of the Quality Areas
- an improvement plan, which includes:
 - the goal or outcome
 - priority
 - steps to achievement
 - success measure
 - time lines
 - progress notes.

A service may develop its own format for recording as long as it contains this information.

The QIP must be shared and implemented by all stakeholders so everyone can contribute to a successful implementation. The QIP is a living document that requires regular monitoring and review to ensure the service is meeting its compliance obligations and becomes part of the service's continuous improvement cycle.

For more information, visit: www.acecqa.gov.au/quality-improvement-plan. This includes a downloadable *Guide to developing a Quality Improvement Plan*.

Developing alternative strategies

When you feel that a change or adjustment is necessary, collaborative approaches help to ensure that the adjustment is developed and introduced in a positive way. Potential changes should be discussed with stakeholders whenever relevant. Depending on the nature of the problem, the alternative approach can be raised with children and their parents, supervisors and other educators. You can seek feedback from stakeholders before introducing the change through discussion, written information, meetings, questionnaires or by inviting suggestions.

In some cases, professional advice should be obtained about potential changes, such as obtaining information about the types of aids that might be available to assist children with physical disabilities. Professionals may also be involved in making adjustments to behaviour plans for a child who shows ongoing aggressive or abusive behaviour.

Adjustments to programs and strategies to support individual children might come about following the review process. However, adjustments may also be spontaneous, such as when you feel that children are becoming restless and need to be directed to alternative play rather than following your plans. Changes are sometimes put into place in a more formal way, such as following discussion between educators and collaboration with children and parents.

Implementing changes

Formal changes are usually recorded as improvements or alterations to program plans, resources or communication styles. Alternatives can be put into place just for an individual child, or they can be made to programs affecting all children.

Making adjustments

Adjustments to programs or resources can include:

- changing the timing, frequency or duration of activities when children have a low attention span or appear tired
- reducing the complexity of resources when children are easily distracted or are having difficulty understanding or using current resources; for example, introducing books that are easier to read
- replacing equipment used for activities, such as play equipment, so that it is safe for children with disabilities

- increasing the number of breaks to allow children to have more frequent snacks, drinks or meals
- increasing the number of educators on duty during excursions
- using alternative aids or equipment for activities when a child has difficulty with gross or fine motor skills.

Implementing alternative strategies

Alternative strategies can be trialled to help increase the participation of individual children or groups. They can include:

- changing your approach to aggressive or resistant behaviour; for example, by asking a child to find an alternative activity when positive support strategies have been ineffective
- altering your communication style when children do not appear to be following instructions
- introducing alternative forms of communication, such as word boards or picture boards, when there is a language barrier
- drawing up rules and regulations in collaboration with children to enable them to take more responsibility for their actions and behaviours
- using games and songs as an alternative method for attracting children's attention
- rewarding children with certificates and other forms of acknowledgment to thank them for their participation.

Ensuring consistency

When a change has been made to a program in response to a problem, consistency is important. Unless all educators understand and comply with the change, the original problem may not be solved. Consistency can be maintained through processes such as:

- holding educator meetings to disseminate the information about the intended change
- recording broad changes that affect all or most children on memos or newsletters to educators and parents
- rewriting program plans to reflect the change
- talking to children about the reason for the change in order to gain their cooperation
- recording alternative strategies or approaches in an individual child's file.

The following example illustrates how problems and alternative strategies for an individual child might be identified and recorded.

Example		
Name: Hannah Goldberg		
Review date: 20 March		
Age: 6 years		
Date scheduled for next review: 20 June		
Other information: Hannah has mild autism, and attends a mainstream service in the afternoons after school.		
Area reviewed	Review outcome, including problems identified	Possible alternative strategy to be trialled
Communication	Hannah is learning to share more effectively with other children by asking politely for what she wants, rather than just snatching it. She is responding well to regular reminders to use her manners when talking and not to interrupt a group discussion when another person is speaking.	-
Physical aids/ equipment	Hannah does not require specialist aids or equipment.	-
Encouragement	Hannah loves attention, and she is responding well to praise and encouragement. However, she is often reluctant to participate in group activities.	Educators should join in at the beginning of each activity with Hannah until she feels content to continue on her own.
Cultural needs/ activities	Hannah is Jewish and her family does not celebrate Christmas. However, she has a visit from Santa every year, and her mother would like her to participate in Christmas activities with the other children. Hannah was very enthusiastic about telling the other children about the meaning of Hanukkah, and they were keen to listen.	Educators will incorporate Hanukkah celebrations into the end of year celebrations for all children.

continued ...

... continued

Other activities	<p>Hannah dislikes organised sports. She prefers to play a game that involves only two or three other children.</p> <p>Hannah loves to create artwork. She very much enjoyed the recent group activity of making a large mural.</p>	<p>Educators have agreed to look into arranging for a badminton set to be put up, as Hannah's mother has indicated that this is a sport that she enjoys.</p> <p>A second collaborative artwork will be commenced soon with children in Hannah's age group.</p>
Life/social skills	<p>Hannah tends to prefer to be alone a lot of the time.</p> <p>Hannah needs a great deal of structure and routine. She feels happier when she knows what is happening next.</p>	<p>Educators can encourage Hannah to participate with other children by helping her to form a small group of two or three children for activities, rather than asking her to join a large group.</p> <p>Educators can help Hannah to feel more comfortable by making her aware of the activity or routine that will be taking place in advance.</p>
Homework assistance	<p>Hannah is in her first year of school and requires help with her reading. Educators spend 10 minutes every afternoon listening to Hannah read. Because Hannah thrives on routine, this task is completed as soon as possible after her afternoon snack. This seems to be effective, but Hannah is easily distracted by the other children.</p>	<p>Hannah could benefit from doing her reading in a quieter area of the facility.</p>
Provision of information	<p>Hannah has trouble listening to instructions.</p>	<p>Educators should ask Hannah to stand directly in front of them when giving important safety instructions, make eye contact with Hannah and ask her to repeat it back to them.</p> <p>When sending notes home, educators should hand the notes directly to Hannah's parents, rather than relying on Hannah to remember.</p>

continued ...

... continued

<p>Hygiene issues</p>	<p>Hannah can use the toilet herself. She needs to be reminded to wash her hands before meals. Hannah has psoriasis (a skin condition) on her arms and face at times of stress, such as at the beginning of a new term.</p>	<p>Hannah must be encouraged not to scratch this area. Her mother has supplied a cream that Hannah can use herself when necessary to prevent itching. The area needs to be kept very clean and free from paints or dirt. A bandage may be used to cover the area so that Hannah can participate in activities. Other children should be reminded to take care not to knock Hannah's arm when the bandage is on.</p>
<p>Provision of food and drink</p>	<p>Hannah has a snack early in the session, when a drink of water and some fruit is provided. Hannah's mother has told educators that she needs to have more milk in her diet.</p>	<p>Hannah's family have a kosher diet. Milk must be kept in the small bar fridge separate from any meats. Educators must not store their own foods in this fridge. Pork products are not served in the centre out of respect for Hannah's beliefs.</p>

Practice task 14

Consider the following potential problems with participation in programs. Devise an alternate strategy that might be trialled to deal with each problem.

1. Lucy has an allergy to wheat and wheat products, and another child's mother has asked if she could bring in a home-baked cake for her child's birthday.
2. 9-year-old Jonathan has a learning disability and requires assistance with his homework. The educators have been spending more time with him in the afternoons in order to help him complete all of his work, but Jonathan looks tired and restless, running away whenever the suggestion of homework is made.
3. Children seem to be easily distracted during the quiet time that has been allocated early in the day. They are constantly fidgeting, talking and rising from their seats while the educator reads them a story.

Chapter summary

1. Trial and error processes can continue over time until a suitable strategy for managing the problem is found.
2. When conducting a review, it is important to focus on information that is valid and timely in relation to continuous improvement processes.
3. When reviewing individual needs, it is important to consider the context and limitations of the school age care environment.
4. Meetings can be a source of information about children's participation needs, a forum for evaluation of current programs and an opportunity to plan future directions.
5. When problems have been recognised, your evaluation processes should consider strategies for working at improving the problem.
6. Unless all educators understand and comply with the change, the original problem is less likely to be solved.

Assessment activity 4

Monitoring and adjusting support strategies to include review outcomes

Your trainer or assessor may require you to complete this assessment activity and will provide you with instructions as to how to present your responses. They may provide alternative or additional assessment activities depending on the circumstances of your training program.

The following table maps the assessment activity for this chapter against the element and performance criteria of Element 4 in *CHCSAC001 Support children to participate in school age care*.

Part	Element	Performance criteria
A	4	4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4
B	4	4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in monitoring and adjusting support strategies to include review outcomes.

Requirements

To complete this assessment activity, you need:

- access to a children's services environment
- access to the National Quality Framework and National Quality Standard
- access to *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia*
- to answer the questions and submit responses as directed by your trainer/ assessor/training organisation.

Part A

1. Describe the meaning of continuous improvement in relation to program plans in your workplace.
2. Explain why it might not be a priority to review the effectiveness of homework support strategies for a child who only attends once a month.
3. What information would you collect before a meeting to discuss alternative strategies for a child who has been demonstrating ongoing behaviours of concern?

4. Provide an example of an adjustment or alternative strategy that may need to be developed in consultation with a professional or expert external to your organisation.
5. How might changes to a program plan be communicated to educators in your service?

Part B

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

Case study

6-year-old Kepa does not listen to other children when they are talking in groups. Educators have developed a strategy of ignoring Kepa when he interrupts other children who are talking, but this strategy seems to be making his behaviour worse.

1. How can continuous improvement processes be applied to this problem?
2. How could a meeting with other educators contribute to identifying alternative approaches?
3. Identify an alternative approach that may be used to improve this situation.
4. Why is it important that all educators show consistency in their approach to Kepa's behaviour?

Record your foundation skills

When you have completed the assessment activity, make sure you record evidence of how you have developed and applied foundation skills. You may use the table at the end of this learner guide for this purpose. Keep copies of material you have prepared as further evidence of your skills. Refer to the information on foundation skills in Appendix 2 of this learner guide for further guidance.

Appendices

Appendix 1: How the learner guide addresses the unit of competency

The following table details the elements and performance criteria for this unit of competency. The second column shows where they are covered in this learner guide.

CHCSAC001 Support children to participate in school age care	Where covered in this learner guide
Element 1: Identify the support needs of children in school age care	Chapter 1: Identifying the support needs of children
1.1 Evaluate specific support needs of the child and match to any existing experiences in the program	1A Evaluating the specific support needs of children and matching them to existing experiences
1.2 Use appropriate communication techniques to engage children and to identify specific needs	1B Using appropriate communication techniques to engage children and identify specific needs
1.3 Consult with supervisor or other staff about particular needs of children including cultural needs, abilities, and developmental and behavioural needs	1C Consulting with your supervisor or other staff about particular needs of children
1.4 Clarify individual children's support and guidance needs with the child, family, supervisor and other staff prior to working with child	1D Clarifying support and guidance needs of children
1.5 Recognise and support sibling relationships where appropriate	1E Supporting sibling relationships
Element 2: Implement appropriate support and guidance strategies	Chapter 2: Implementing support and guidance strategies
2.1 Implement strategies to ensure inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds and children with additional needs	2A Ensuring inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds and children with additional needs
2.2 Follow appropriate procedures to minimise effects of aggressive or abusive behaviour in children	2B Minimising the effects of aggressive or abusive behaviour of children
2.3 Use age-appropriate approaches and communication to enable children to express their need for support in a range of ways	2C Enabling children to express their need for support

continued ...

... continued

CHCSAC001 Support children to participate in school age care	Where covered in this learner guide
2.4 Access support from supervisor as required to optimise the child's participation in school age care	2D Accessing support from your supervisor to optimise children's participation
Element 3: Determine effectiveness of individual support provided	Chapter 3: Determining the effectiveness of individual support
3.1 Design and implement appropriate processes for the evaluation and review of individual child support needs	3A Designing and implementing processes for the review of an individual child's support needs
3.2 Ensure support provided reflects organisational procedures, industry standards and respect for the child as an individual	3B Consulting others to ensure support reflects organisational and industry requirements
3.3 Regularly consult with supervisor, other staff and family to review effectiveness of support provided in school age care	3B Consulting others to ensure support reflects organisational and industry requirements
Element 4: Monitor and adjust support strategies to include review outcomes	Chapter 4: Monitoring and adjusting support strategies to include review outcomes
4.1 Regularly review information and support provided to children to assess continuing relevance and effectiveness	4A Reviewing information and support provided to children to assess continuing relevance and effectiveness
4.2 Attend meetings with other staff as appropriate to identify and evaluate school age care service	4B Attending meetings to identify and evaluate school age care services
4.3 Identify and discuss problems experienced in providing support to children and develop alternative strategies in collaboration with supervisor, other staff and family	4C Identifying problems and introducing adjustments
4.4 Make adjustments and implement alternative support strategies as a result of the review process	4C Identifying problems and introducing adjustments

Performance evidence

The following table details the performance evidence required for this unit of competency and outlines where it is addressed in the content of this learner guide.

Performance evidence	Where covered in this learner guide
Planned and implemented at least three experiences focusing on different areas or opportunities for children, including:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> using strategies to engage children to participate fully in out-of-school-hours program 	1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 4C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying particular support needs of individuals and groups of children 	1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reviewing individual child's needs and ensuring program reflects those needs 	1A, 1C, 1D, 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consulting with supervisor and family regarding effectiveness of support and development, and alternative support strategies 	1C, 1D, 2B, 2D, 3A, 3B, 4B, 4C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reviewing program to determine effectiveness and adjusting support strategies where required 	2B, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C
Performed the activities outlined in the performance criteria of this unit during a period of at least 120 hours of work in at least one regulated education and care service	

Knowledge evidence

The following table details the knowledge evidence for this unit of competency and outlines where it is in the content of this learner guide.

Knowledge evidence	Where covered in this learner guide
How to access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the National Quality Framework the National Quality Standard the relevant approved learning framework 	2B, 3B, 4C
How to navigate through framework and standards documents to find areas relevant to this unit of competency	2B, 3B, 4C
Evaluative processes for school age care	1A, 1D, 2C, 2D, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C
Principles of inclusiveness	1A, 1D, 2A, 3A, 3B, 4A
Safety and risk management strategies	1C, 2B, 3A, 3B
Organisational standards, policies and procedures	1A, 1E, 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B, 4C

Appendix 2: Foundation skills

As an employee, you need to have a wide range of skills and knowledge to perform the various tasks you undertake as part of your day-to-day duties.

The specific skills and knowledge required for your job are listed in your position description; for example, you may be responsible for operating equipment, planning a program, maintaining financial records or caring for children. However, underpinning all your duties and tasks are a set of skills that are essential if you are to participate successfully in work and be a valuable and productive employee.

Employers and industry have identified these skills as:

- learning
- reading
- writing
- oral communication
- numeracy.

In addition, employers require people who can contribute effectively to the organisation by being able to:

- work in a team
- plan and organise
- make decisions
- identify and solve problems
- create and innovate
- use technology
- work in a digital world.

Together, these skills are referred to as foundation skills.

Most tasks use a range of foundation skills. For example, if you are required to operate equipment or machinery, you need to be able to read organisational procedures and manufacturers' instructions to use the technology safely and correctly; plan and confirm your task with others; carry out numerical calculations specific to the task; work as part of a team; solve any problems that may arise; meet a deadline; and perhaps complete a written record or form for the work carried out.

Foundation skills are discussed in each chapter of this learner guide as part of your learning program. They are included in the content, the practice tasks and the assessment activities. Sometimes they are easy to spot, but sometimes you will need to read carefully to see where a foundation skill is included.

Following the assessment activity at the end of each chapter, you have the opportunity to record the things you did to develop foundation skills while working through the chapter by completing the form at the end of this learner guide.

Providing evidence of foundation skills

The foundation skills you develop while working through this learner guide are assessed at the same time as the specific skills and knowledge outlined in Appendix 1.

It is important to keep notes and evidence of the actions you have taken that show you have developed these foundation skills. For example, if you work in a team, comment on the things you did to develop teamwork skills. If you wrote a letter, prepared a meeting agenda or developed a plan, use this material to show your written skills. If you carried out measuring, weighing or calculating, provide the results to show your numeracy skills.

You may also keep a written, audio or visual record and examples of your work as evidence of your skills.

Use the table at the end of this learner guide to record your achievements and describe the activities you have undertaken that demonstrate how you developed foundation skills as you worked through this learner guide. Here are some examples for oral communication.

Foundation skills	The activities undertaken to develop and apply the foundation skill
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asked my supervisor to clarify an instruction. Repeated the instruction to confirm I understood it. • Presented an item at a staff meeting. • Provided information to a colleague. • Gave feedback to a team member. • Accurately conveyed information to a customer. • Reported a hazard.

The following table provides a definition for each foundation skill and examples of how you can develop it as you work through this learner guide.

Foundation skill	What this skill means	How you can develop this skill
Learning	<p>Understanding your job role, organisational procedures and legal responsibilities.</p> <p>Managing your work and seeing how well you are going. Making goals for yourself at work.</p> <p>Seeking professional development opportunities for continuous improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review your own performance as a learner. Review the participation in a school age care program.
Reading	<p>Understanding how documents are presented and being able to navigate through documents.</p> <p>Understanding industry- and job-specific terminology.</p> <p>Interpreting key information in relevant documents.</p> <p>Understanding routine workplace checklists and documentation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read enrolment forms to access information about children. Read responses from surveys.
Writing	<p>Planning, drafting and writing reports and documents.</p> <p>Communicating through written letters, email and online.</p> <p>Recording progress; reporting incidents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop surveys for reviewing the service. Add information to communication books.
Oral communication	<p>Clarifying instructions.</p> <p>Providing information.</p> <p>Supporting others through encouragement, negotiation and conflict resolution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have regular conversations with children and families about their needs. Speak to other educators about the needs of children.
Numeracy	<p>Calculating costs, weights, measurements of height and distance.</p> <p>Interpreting measurements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate surveys. Organise routines within service hours.
Teamwork	<p>Working well with other people by cooperating, collaborating, encouraging and building rapport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the organisers and participants of a school age care program. Work together at meetings to resolve support needs.

continued ...

... continued

Foundation skill	What this skill means	How you can develop this skill
Planning and organising	Planning your workload and commitments. Implementing tasks. Completing work on time. Knowing how to deal with hazards and risks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively participate in planning and organising a school age care program. Review children’s individual needs and then cooperate with others to implement these.
Making decisions	Understanding and applying decision-making processes. Reviewing the impact of your decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide how to respond when children are involved in conflict. Choose appropriate actions when children are aggressive or abusive.
Problem-solving	Identifying problems. Working out how to fix a problem using problem-solving processes. Reviewing the outcome.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss issues that arise from a school age care program. Collect information and work out how it influences a child.
Innovation and creation	Recognising opportunities to develop and apply new ideas. Generating ideas by thinking of new ways to do something. Making suggestions to improve work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek out operators of school age care programs and research their programs and processes. Identify individual children’s needs, then work out how to meet all of these through a flexible program.
Technology and digital literacy	Efficiently using digitally based technologies and systems correctly and safely. Accessing, organising and presenting information. Using equipment correctly and safely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise the participation in and activity of a school age care program using appropriate computer software. Record information about children via cameras and videos.

Foundation skills

Using the following table (or similar), describe the activities you have undertaken that demonstrate how you developed and applied foundation skills as you worked through this unit. Keep copies of material you have prepared as further evidence of your skills.

Foundation skills	The activities undertaken to develop and apply the foundation skill
Learning	
Reading	
Writing	
Oral communication	
Numeracy	
Teamwork	
Planning and organising	
Making decisions	
Problem-solving	
Innovation and creation	
Technology and digital literacy	