

CHCSAC004

Support the holistic development of children in school age care

Learner guide

Aspire Version 1.1

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CHCSAC004 Support the holistic development of children in school age care



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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCSAC004 Support the holistic development of children 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.



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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

The assessment conditions for this unit of competency are:

- Skills must be demonstrated in a regulated education and care service.
- In addition, simulations and scenarios must be used where the full range of contexts and situations cannot be provided in the workplace or may occur only rarely. These are situations relating to emergency or unplanned procedures where assessment in these circumstances would be unsafe or is impractical.
- Simulated assessment environments must simulate the real-life working environment where these skills and knowledge would be performed, with all the relevant equipment and resources of that working environment.
- Assessment must ensure use of:
 - National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care
 - the relevant approved learning framework under the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care.

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

Supporting physical development

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

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

In this chapter you will learn about:

- 1A Understanding the principles of physical development
- 1B Working toward physical development outcomes
- 1C Applying practice to physical development

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

Understanding the principles of physical development

Researchers studying human development collect information (data) to try to explain and predict development and behaviour and come up with theories – a set of ideas put forward as an explanation for why something happens. Theories can be developed, modified or even discarded as they are tested against observations.

Theories provide proof that quality care practices have a sound basis in research, practice and discussion. Your service regulations, policies, procedures, standards and so on are based on the results of theory and research.

Maturation

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

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

Learning

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

Learning is a problem-solving process that utilises one learning experience to produce possible solutions to use in the next learning experience. This means that the process of learning is just as important as the result of learning.

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

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

Teachable moments also occur spontaneously when you notice learning can take place and you take advantage of this. The following example describes one of these critical periods.

Example

Beginning to write is a developmental milestone that occurs around 5 years of age. Some children may learn to write at 4 years, others at 6. A child approaching this milestone has a critical period just before they begin to write when they gain more control over the pencil and start to create figures that look like letters.

To acknowledge this milestone, enrich this learning and recognise this critical period, you could provide:

- chunky pencils that are easy for small hands to grip
- plain or lined paper
- play experiences that develop the fine motor control of the hand, such as pegging out
- activities like washing, squeezing playdough or cutting paper shapes
- a model of letters or the child's name to copy
- encouragement through smiling and positive comments.

Environmental effects on learning

Windows of opportunity are valuable times for learning; however, there are environmental aspects that may affect early childhood development, including:

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

Illness can also delay development; for example, if a child is unwell for a long period at the start of their school life, they may not read or write at the level of their peers, or may have reduced physical skills.

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

- intellectual delay
- learning difficulties
- depression
- anxiety
- suicidal thoughts
- aggression
- impulsiveness
- criminality

- hyperactivity
- substance abuse
- poor health.

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

Biological versus environmental

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

The following case study illustrates how to define biological and environmental characteristics.

Case study

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

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

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

- Patient: Gina may have been born with a patient personality, but she was also born into a large family where they need to help each other and share things; therefore, this has a biological and an environmental aspect.
- Good at maths: Gina was probably born with a brain that works well with numbers, but she also had positive mathematics experiences in kindergarten, and in grade two her teacher encouraged the class to see numbers as fun and organised lots of interesting mathematics activities; therefore, this also has a biological and environmental aspect.

Developmental milestones

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

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

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

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

The milestones of child development are divided into major areas called aspects or areas of development. The aspects of development that are described in this resource are:

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

When considered collectively, they are called 'holistic learning and development'.

These aspects are the foundation of a quality education and care curriculum. The quality areas in the National Quality Standard (NQS) and *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia* (MTOF) are based on your ability to understand development, develop relationships and provide an environment appropriate to this understanding.

Growth and development

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

Here are some facts relating to physical growth:

- At birth, an infant's head is one-quarter of their body length.
- As adults, our heads are one-eighth of our body length.
- During the first five years of life, body proportions change rapidly as the body grows quickly to catch up to the head.
- In the first year, there is significant weight gain, and infants double their weight in the first six months.
- By age 4, a child has doubled their length (height).
- Children with slower bone growth usually walk later and may also reach puberty later.

Influences on growth and development

Children's growth is influenced by genetics, culture and environment. Australian society comprises a diverse range of racial and cultural groups, so aspects of children's health care and nutrition often vary greatly.

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

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

Practice task 1

1. After reading this section, which two points about child development theory did you find most interesting? Why?
2. Find the NQS Introduction to Quality Area 3 (p. 78–80 of the *Guide to the National Quality Standard*). Read the section that starts from 'Physical learning environments are characterised by both indoor and outdoor learning spaces ...' on p. 81. Identify one point that your service does well and one point that could be improved in this quality area.
3. One of the causes of poor early childhood development is 'lack of materials and resources'. Which element/s from the NQS provide/s guidance to your service in relation to having sufficient resources, materials and equipment?

You can find the NQS and MTOP at your service or online at: www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/the-national-quality-standard.

PC 1.1
PC 1.2
PC 1.3
PC 1.4

1B

Working toward physical development outcomes

My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia (MTO) guides your work with children. Outcomes have been designed to capture the learning and development that you observe when working with children aged from 5 to 12 years. Each child will progress at their own pace and each outcome will have different importance to each child during their learning and development.

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

MTO helps you understand the importance of physical development and how you can work toward supporting children's learning and development.

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

Using daily routines

When children are encouraged to follow a daily routine and develop their independence, they learn about their bodies and how to care for their own health. Children learn from modelling.

Here are examples of routine activities that are ideal opportunities for children to:

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

Mealtimes	Hygiene and self-care	Care for others
Preparing or cooking basic foods independently such as cereal, sandwiches or toast	Bathing independently	Cleaning up messes
Following recipes and completing most recipe functions	Taking care of their own belongings	Serving lunch and pouring drinks
Preparing their own lunch for school	Tying their own shoelaces	Helping around the house and being responsible for tasks



Encourage children to complete tasks independently where appropriate.

During routines you can talk to children about the following.

Discussion ideas	Examples
Celebrate achievements – learning to shoot basketball hoops, using a skipping rope, etc.	‘Yes! You did it!’
Talk about the activities they are doing.	‘That requires a lot of effort.’
Involve the community through activities and visits.	Invite a dietitian to talk about healthy food and to provide healthy recipe ideas.
Discuss individual abilities and achievements.	‘Hayley jumps very high and Stacey can run fast. They both use strong leg muscles.’
Talk about their body structures – muscles, bones, eyes – and how these work.	‘Exercise and healthy foods enable us to develop strong muscles.’

Physical environment

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

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

Consider the service setting from a child’s point of view; every aspect sends a message to children about how they should participate. It is important to ensure these messages are encouraging.

Preparing the physical environment for play involves five main aspects:

- Time
- Space
- Resources (materials and equipment)
- People
- Safety

Time

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

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

Children need time to:

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

Space

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

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

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

The following table provides some more detail about these aspects.

What	Why
Hands-on experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explore, touch, smell, move and create – not only in play, but also when undertaking routine activities
Opportunities to be solitary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To concentrate and not be distracted • To take a break when tired and over-stimulated
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To offer a variety of skill levels • To invite the children to complete tasks at their own level with adult support when required
Safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have the chance to explore and learn while feeling and being safe

Resources

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

It is important that:

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

People

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

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

Safety

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

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

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

Practice task 2

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

Case study

It is snack time. One educator is at the lockers with eight children. They are taking their own coats off and, as their shoes are wet, they are taking these off too. The educator is chatting to them while this occurs. At the same time, the educator is observing three children in the bathroom washing their hands at the trough with three taps.

A second educator is already at the table with seven children and she is placing the sandwiches and tongs on the tables for their snack.

The tables seat four children each, and there are five tables prepared for the eighteen children. Each place is set with a placemat and plate and there are places available for each educator.

How have the educators in this case study considered:

- time
- space
- resources
- people
- safety?

1C

Applying practice to physical development

PC 1.2

Motor skills are the sequences of movements we use when muscles of the body are coordinated to perform a particular action. Gross motor skills are the actions that use the large muscles of the body. Fine motor skills are the actions that use the small muscles of the body. When you observe the movements that a child makes as they are involved in activity, you can identify whether they are using their gross or fine motor skills.

Gross motor skills

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

- sitting up
- walking
- running
- hopping
- catching.

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

Fundamental movement skills can be divided into three categories:

- Body management skills – involving balance; for example, bending, swinging, climbing, lifting and reaching
- Loco-motor skills – involving moving the body in a direction; for example, skipping, jumping, running, galloping and hopping
- Object control skills – involving the control of objects; for example, throwing catching, batting, kicking and shovelling

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

- climbing frames
- ladders
- skipping ropes
- outdoor space to run, skip and hop
- balls
- bicycles
- monkey bars
- shovels
- trampolines.

Fine motor skills

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

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

To allow children to practise and develop their fine motor skills, they must have access to equipment, games and toys that encourage this. In your service, this means supplying equipmentsuch as:

- puppets
- pasting and painting brushes
- scissors
- playdough
- pencils, pens, markers
- staplers
- nails and hammers
- toy cars and car mats
- building blocks and LEGO
- clothing with buttons, press-studs, studs, ties and zips
- cutlery
- computer keyboards
- books
- small sorting items such as buttons, coins, bottle tops and pebbles
- wool for knitting, sewing, stitching or making pom-poms
- puzzles.



A variety of equipment encourages children to develop their gross motor skills.



Stitching is an example of a fine motor skill.

Providing physical activities and equipment

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

Indoor physical activity

Indoor play mainly provides opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills. The way children are grouped may affect how you set up these areas. For example, your workplace may group children by age range such as 5–8 and 9–12, or by family groupings where the ages are mixed from 5- to 12-year-olds.

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

School-age children benefit from indoor activity areas. Suggestions for their play include areas for:

- creativity – art, sewing and model building areas
- construction – carpentry, building and block areas
- reading and writing – reading, bookmaking and language areas
- discovery – science, nature, mathematics and texture areas.

Outdoor physical activity

The outdoor space requires the same level of consideration as indoor space; there should be opportunities for fine and gross motor skill development. Almost every activity that can be done in the outdoor environment can provide many valuable opportunities for learning, if it is thoughtfully set up. Many services provide

children with the opportunity to move indoors and outdoors as they please. Your staff ratios and service design will determine whether this is an option for your service.

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

The potential to rearrange equipment, change location, add to or remove pieces and provide either simple or complex play arrangements is catered for by providing a selection of:

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

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

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

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

Encouraging challenges, choice and spontaneity

Children will be occupied and learn through play effectively when:

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

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

Challenging experiences are ones that:

- suit the children’s abilities
- can be adapted to develop with the children
- are based on things the children are interested in
- allow children to make choices, solve problems and make decisions
- children can change to meet their interest at the time.

When you offer challenging experiences, you need to consider:

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

Physical milestones of early childhood

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

Physical development milestone	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
5 to 9 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becoming skilled with a skipping rope • Catching a small ball in one hand • Writing within lines • Cutting irregular shapes with scissors • Tying and untying shoelaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidelines and challenges • Provide resources • Allow the child to complete tasks and activities independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rope skipping games • Hopscotch • Ball games: basketball, tennis, soccer, football, baseball • Art and craft activities

continued ...

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Physical development milestone	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
10 to 12 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body proportions are similar to those of an adult • Signs of puberty emerge – sexual development, voice changes, increased body odour • Interested in competitive activities and team sports • Prefer to make decisions about own physical needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide furniture and materials of an appropriate size • Allow privacy • Support children when changes are occurring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team sports: basketball, tennis, soccer, football, baseball • Discussion groups • Provide reading materials about topics of interest or physical health • Allow the children to take responsibility for the healthy choices of the group

Practice task 3

1. Observe the space you are working in currently. What can you see that tells you children are encouraged to:

- select materials and equipment themselves
- arrange equipment to suit their physical play (using gross and fine motor skills)
- take up challenges
- make choices in physically active play
- behave spontaneously in physically active play.

Explain each of your choices.

2. Demonstrate to your supervisor or trainer/assessor how you:

- provide an experience to support children’s physical development that encourages use of gross and fine motor skills
- interact with children accessing the experience, to support their physical development.

Chapter summary

1. Routines are excellent times for children to learn and practise new skills.
2. Gross and fine motor skill development is complemented by your careful set-up of the environment.
3. Children benefit from having choice in physical activity.
4. The way materials are arranged helps children to make choices and create spontaneous ideas for physical play.
5. Children can be supported to take responsibility for their own physical health and wellbeing by providing them with information and allowing them to practise skills without hurrying.

Assessment activity 1

Supporting physical development

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 *CHCSAC004 Support the holistic development of children in school age care*.

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

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in supporting physical development.

Requirements

To complete this assessment activity, you need:

- access to a children's services environment
- to answer the questions and submit responses as directed by your trainer/assessor/training organisation.

Part A

1. Choose one physically active experience that children choose to do spontaneously (not an organised activity). Provide a summary describing the experience, including the age of the children participating. Include two indicators showing that the experience is a choice, and explain why the children use it spontaneously.
2. Using a table similar to the one provided, provide the following information for the four physical skills identified in question 1.
 - Whether the skills are gross and fine motor skills
 - How equipment is arranged to support the development of each skill
 - One interaction that supports the child's development of each skill

Physical skills the children are acquiring or practising	Gross motor skill (G) or fine motor skill (F)	How equipment is arranged to assist the child to develop the physical skill	An interaction that supports this learning

Part B

1. Observe children in your service during routine times and provide two examples of children taking responsibility for their own health and wellbeing by showing an awareness of healthy lifestyles and good nutrition. Also explain how you can engage children in routines that promote safety, healthy lifestyles and nutrition.
2. A child is learning to use a skipping rope. Provide an example of another activity that supports the development of fundamental movement skills. Also provide one biological and one environmental factor that may result in a child having delayed gross motor skill development.

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

Supporting social development

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

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

In this chapter you will learn about:

- 2A Understanding the principles of social development
- 2B Working toward social development outcomes
- 2C Applying practice to social development

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

Understanding the principles of social development

PC 2.4
PC 2.5
PC 2.7
PC 2.9

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

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

As you observe children at play, you should gain a sense of how play affects a child's self-esteem, independence and sense of achievement. You should also see how play enables children to better understand themselves through expressing their fears, joys and frustrations. Play also enables them to understand their communities and to learn about how others express themselves in different ways.

When observing children at play you can see them learning and practising social skills. A typical play experience may involve:

- taking turns
- sharing
- negotiating
- cooperating
- thinking
- setting rules and guidelines.

Like physical development, social development has stages; for example, a 2-year-old doesn't yet have the social skills to play effectively with others; whereas a 4-year-old can happily play in a group. People who study children's play have noted these differences and classified them into play types.

Social play types

Theorist Mildred Parten (1902–1970) defined types of play to reflect its social dimensions. She identified the following types of play:

- Solitary play
- Parallel play
- Associative play
- Cooperative play
- Play with rules
- Unoccupied play
- Onlooker play

Solitary play

Solitary play occurs when children play alone and do not have any social contact with others. Solitary play is mostly seen in children under age 2, but older children may also engage in solitary play as they enjoy time alone to pursue their individual interests.

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



Solitary play allows children to pursue their own interests.

Parallel play

Between 2 and 3 years of age, children begin to enjoy being near others and participating in the same experience. Although at this age they are still self-centred and are usually unable to share or talk much with others, they may imitate a child nearby by playing in the same manner.

Older children may choose to play side-by-side in parallel play, even though they have the skills to play together. An example of parallel play would be when two children at any age are working with dough, but not interacting with each other.

To set up for parallel play, you should provide experiences that allow small groups of children to work on the same or similar play experiences independently, such as:

- puzzles
- collage (cutting and pasting)
- car mats
- blocks
- painting
- drawing
- a book corner
- hammering
- a sandpit.

Associative play

Associative play usually starts when children are early preschool age and are beginning to associate with each other. As a child's language skills increase and improve, they become more aware of other children and more able to communicate. A child may play with others, speak briefly to them, laugh with

them and react to them. Although these children are playing together, you will find their interactions are brief and the play episode may not last very long. For example, children may borrow and lend toys and laugh together without actually cooperating or playing with common ideas in mind.

Early superhero play is often observed at an associative play level as groups of children ‘fly’ around and deal with emergencies. However, the play is not organised and the children don’t talk together about plots or characters.

Cooperative play

By late preschool age, children become less focused on themselves and their interest in other children increases. Because their language is becoming more complex, their interactions with other children usually last longer as they begin to share ideas and solve problems together. They enjoy taking the roles of leader or follower, and they give roles to each other in their play; for example, ‘You be the dad, I’ll be the mum. Joey can be the baby.’ Plots will be discussed and played out; for example, ‘Now you go to the table and I will come in and serve dinner’.

Because children are working together and the play is lasting longer, this is called cooperative play. You can encourage cooperative play by providing for role-play, or imaginative or dramatic activities. You may include dress-ups, cubbies, home furniture, dolls houses and other props that children can use. Car mats, block corners and dress-up areas all provide children with the opportunity for imaginative play.



Cooperative play involves children playing together for longer.

Play with rules

Older preschool and early primary school age children become interested in more structured games; that is, games with clearly defined rules. Children choose to play these games during their leisure time at preschool, school or after school hours, with any number of friends.

Games with rules include:

- board games and table top games
- games played in lines or circles
- games with balls, bats or marbles
- skipping games

- hopscotch
- cricket
- football.

You can help support play with rules by ensuring materials and equipment are in good order and readily available to children. Most play with rules requires space and of course an understanding of the rules of play.

Avoid elimination games where possible, as they reduce children's opportunities to practise skills. In these games, the children with the greatest skill get lots of practice while the children with lesser skills are eliminated early. This reduces practice time, provides little chance for developing skills and can be damaging to self-esteem. The children who 'go out' early in the game may also become bored, upset or angry.

Children are often involved in competitive games during their school day and within out-of-hours activities. In your service you should offer non-competitive games to ensure all children participate most of the time. Instead of having a winning team or winning child, you will have a group of children developing their skills.

Unoccupied play

Children of all ages can become involved in unoccupied play, when the child is not playing as such, but is occupied by watching anything that happens to be of momentary interest. The child may play with their body or clothes, get on and off chairs, stand around, follow an educator or sit in one spot looking around the room. Unoccupied play may not seem important, but you must respect a child's decision not to participate and see the value in a child's observation of an environment and the people in it.

Onlooker play

A child who spends time watching other children at play is taking part in onlooker play. Children of all ages can become involved in onlooker play. The child may talk to the children they are observing by asking questions or giving suggestions, but the child does not enter into the play.

This type of play differs from unoccupied play in that the onlooker is definitely observing a particular group of children rather than anything that happens to be of interest at the time. The child stands or sits within speaking distance of the group so they can see and hear everything that takes place. As with unoccupied play, onlooker play may not seem important, but again you must respect a child's decision not to participate and see the value in a child's observation of others.

Pro-social behaviour

Pro-social behaviour is the successful and appropriate manner in which we interact. It also relates to the voluntary behaviour that benefits another person by helping, sharing, comforting or rescuing, showing sympathy and kindness, giving, showing positive verbal and physical contact, showing concern, taking the perspective of another person, and cooperating. This behaviour is based on altruism – the motivation is to benefit another person without expecting personal reward or acknowledgment of your actions.

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

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

Temperament and personality

Temperament refers to the behavioural characteristics that shape reactions and responses, and is believed to be a trait that individuals are born with. Temperament is mainly referred to when discussing infants and toddlers as the natural forces of their character predominate.

As children develop socially and emotionally, various positive and negative experiences impact upon them and their temperament may change as they begin to develop a personality that is based on more than their inborn traits.

The temperament of a child affects the way you interact, and may alter your expectations of a child. For some people, temperament influences how well they bond with a child.

There are three basic types of temperament that influence social development:

- Easy temperament – children with an easy temperament are cheerful, adaptable, fit well into routines and are positive in mood.
- Slow-to-warm-up temperament – children who display a slow-to-warm-up temperament adjust slowly to new experiences, tend to be negative in mood, inactive and show mild responses to the world around them.
- Difficult temperament – children with a difficult temperament are slow to adapt to new experiences, have strong reactions to change, have irregular routines, are negative in mood and are often withdrawn.

When you understand the impact of temperament and personality, you can adapt your interactions and responses to suit a child. You may even be able to assist a child with a difficult or slow-to-warm-up temperament to become more settled and ready for change.

Sense of belonging

Ideally you should match the environment and your interactions with the temperament or personality of a child to create a feeling of belonging for each child. When attempting to do this, you should consider the factors listed in the following table.

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

continued ...

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Factor	What to take into account
Approach	Respect a child's need to take things slowly when dealing with new people, places or practices. Rushing things may only cause the child to build mistrust and create further difficulty in dealing with new situations. Slow-to-warm-up children may need to begin with a short stay. Some children may benefit from an orientation where their parent also stays.
Attention span	Be realistic in the time you expect a child to concentrate on one activity. In a group of children, all with varying skills, temperaments and personalities, there will be some children who can stick with an activity for a long period of time and others who can maintain only a brief concentration span. Ensure your routines and experiences allow for these differences; in particular, group times should be flexible and suited to the individuals in the group.

Practice task 4

What stage of social play do you think the following children are demonstrating?

1. In a home corner set-up, Helen has told the other children what role they are to take and is explaining to another child that they need to do the shopping next. They collect handbags and talk about catching a bus to the shops.
2. Jo is at the kitchen sink washing dishes. Another child is at the table mixing in a bowl.
3. Lisa is sitting in book corner on a cushion. She is looking around the room and twisting her shoelaces.
4. Maryanne is standing next to a group of children who are playing ludo. Now and again she reminds the next player that it is their turn.

PC 2.1
PC 2.2
PC 2.3
PC 2.5
PC 2.6
PC 2.7
PC 2.8
PC 2.9

2B

Working toward social development outcomes

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

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

MTOP helps you understand the importance of social development and how you can work toward supporting children's learning and development. Consider the following table.

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

Developing trusting relationships

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

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

The children in your service have already developed their sense of trust or mistrust; you may notice this in their level of self-esteem and/or in their attitudes toward others. Despite the child's level of trust, you can still implement strategies for developing trusting relationships to support the child to gain confidence in you and the service.

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

Here is a case study showing how an educator demonstrates appropriate and respectful interactions to help build a relationship of trust.

Case study

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

- She asks Carol about how her new toy car is going.
- She tells Susan that there is painting and collage available today.
- She thanks Ashan for reminding her to water her pot plants last night as they were really thirsty.

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

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

One-to-one interactions

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

Routine times also provide opportunities for one-to-one interaction. This may occur during:

- welcome and farewell time
- mealtimes
- rest and relaxation.

During these routines you can:

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

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

- putting a hand on their shoulder
- rubbing their back
- holding hands
- singing
- reciting poems or finger plays.

NQS element 5.1.2 states that 'Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning'. This includes the way you engage, participate in play and develop secure relationships with children.

Empathy

Until around 6 years of age, children do not fully understand how others are affected by their actions. This ability to feel this is empathy. When you have empathy, it means that you understand what someone else is feeling as you have experienced the same or a similar thing. When you feel empathy for someone, you are caring for them and respecting their feelings.

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

Model how to care for others by:

- supporting children when they are upset, grumpy, frightened, etc.
- talking about how people feel
- redirecting negative comments.

To support children's understanding of empathy, you need to demonstrate the difference between empathy and sympathy. Empathy is about understanding and sharing the feelings of the other person, as you have experienced the issues yourself. You may demonstrate empathy by using phrases such as:

- 'I know how you feel, I have experienced this myself.'
- 'Ted will empathise; he has been through a similar situation.'
- 'You have my empathy. I expect you feel extremely hurt.'

Sympathy is about feeling sorrow for another person's situation, having not experienced something similar. You may demonstrate sympathy by using phrases such as:

- 'You must feel sad.'
- 'I sympathise with you.'
- 'It makes me so sad to hear this.'

The following case study provides an example of how you may model empathy and care.

Case study

Constance, an educator, is in the sandpit with Jervis (6 years) and Lisa (8 years). They have been playing parallel for some time, building near each other, when Jervis suddenly pushes Lisa over and grabs the shovel she is using.

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

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

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

In this case study, Constance says she is concerned that Jervis is so rough with another person. Often educators talk about how children treat their friends; however, use skills of empathy to ensure that inappropriate actions are avoided in relation to any person, not just a friend or someone you know.

Respecting individual differences

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

- gender
- race and language background
- culture
- age
- interests and preferences
- social activity and lifestyle

- communication style
- personality or temperament
- length of time and regularity of attendance in the service
- ability.

From as early as 2 years of age, children begin to notice physical differences in people, particularly relating to gender, skin colour and obvious physical disabilities. This is part of the child's self-discovery as they ask, 'Who am I?'

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

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

Cultural differences

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

- allowing children to play out depictions of their culture/s, through role-playing, modelling or using their home language
- being aware of children's cultures and incorporating relevant resources; for example, Chinese cookware for home corner, saris for dress-ups, dolls with varied skin colours or Aboriginal musical instruments
- making cultural diversity part of the day-to-day environment rather than just bringing out cultural resources on special days or occasions
- realistically depicting life outside the service setting so everyone feels accepted
- respecting all cultures
- educating yourself about the children's lives outside the service
- not allowing yourself to stereotype any child or family
- celebrating special occasions that are important to each of the children at the service.



It is important to incorporate inclusive resources to embrace different cultures.

Gender differences

To encourage children to accept gender differences, you should:

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

The following case study shows how an educator models interactions about gender equality.

Case study

Belinda, an educator, is in home corner with a group of 6-year-old children. She is part of their play as they make breakfast using toy foods and do the dishes. Belinda says, 'When I go to work today, I need to drive my grader (earth mover) today so I can build the new road'. She points to the poster of the graders and says, 'That's my grader, the big one at the top'. She then asks each child where they will be working today as she dries the dishes. The children respond as they help Belinda dry the dishes. Belinda says, 'Thank you, everyone!' They all say goodbye and head off to 'work'.

Children with additional needs

To encourage children with additional needs to play and be social, you can:

- include them in all types of play for all areas of development
- participate in the play to model ways to include the child and encourage interactions
- provide specific equipment or set-up to ensure success
- follow individual programs the child has had developed by a specialist service

- ensure that the child’s individual programs are incorporated into the overall play setting to provide an inclusive experience for the child
- encourage other children to participate in the activities specified by specialist services as well.

When you encourage all children equally, you are modelling communication and interactions from which the children will learn appropriate communication.

Using play

Educators can use play to help children learn to accept and value all people, particularly those who may appear different from themselves. The following table provides some examples of how you can support this learning.

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

Supporting children’s communication skills

Children’s social play is influenced by their interaction and communication skills. These skills include those where children are expressing themselves and those where they are listening to others. For communication to be effective, both processes need to occur.

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

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

Skill	Example
Communicating ideas	'Kip, tell Eustacia about your plan for building.'
Negotiating	'Kip, Eustacia wants to build with you. Can you talk to Eustacia and tell her what she could do to work with you?'
Collaborating	'Kip, Eustacia has some ideas for the building. Maybe she could tell you and you can both work together.'
Understanding each other	'Eustacia, Kip would like to explain his idea. We can stop and listen and then we will know what he means.'

Supporting children with communication difficulties

Most children choose solitary or quiet play at times; they enjoy working alone and achieving their goals. Some children, however, have difficulty working with others or becoming involved in group play. These children may be shy or inexperienced, or they may have a specific communication difficulty.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Type of game	Examples
Name games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Hello’ and ‘name’ songs, chants and rhymes. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ‘Who stole the cookie?’ – ‘How do you do?’ • Photos of children’s faces made into puzzles • Photo albums of children in the group
Facial expression and emotion games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotion flash cards for matching • Copy the emotion • Pretend to ... (be happy, sad, etc.)
Laughter games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the statue laugh • Who can do the funniest laugh
Cooperation games and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large-scale construction • Murals • Ball games • Garden projects
Negotiation games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooking a pizza in pairs – deciding on the toppings liked by both • Small groups setting the table for lunch – working out who will do what task • Planning an activity together

Respecting choice to watch and observe

There are a number of reasons why a child may choose to observe others, some of which may be:

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

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

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

Your observations of the child and some gentle questioning can assist you to find out if they need support. You may ask:

- ‘Would you like to play too?’
- ‘Can I help you to ...?’

- ‘Can [the child] play too?’
- ‘What would you like to do?’

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

Case study

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

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

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

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

Taking responsibility for actions

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

- discussing what is occurring in a simple way
- being consistent
- encouraging children to help rectify a situation.

Read about these strategies in the following table.

Strategy	How you can do it
Discussion	Discuss what is occurring simply; for example, say to the child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘You have thrown the ball, it has gone on the roof, you cannot play with it now.’ • ‘If you push people during the game they will not want to play with you.’
Consistency	Be consistent and follow through with limits and guidelines. This is important as the child will quickly learn that testing you is not necessary and that you will continue to have the same expectations and support for them.
Rectifying	Encourage the child to help rectify a situation they have caused. This may include hugging a child they have hurt (with the other child’s permission) or cleaning up a spill.

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

Practice task 5

1. Obtain a copy of a plan of activities that have been implemented at the service. Identify the following things on this plan:
 - a) When one-to-one interactions were or could have been used
 - b) Where respect for difference is or could have been included
2. Role-play one of the following situations:
You assist a child to use communication with others to:
 - communicate their ideas
 - negotiate
 - collaborate
 - understand each other.
3. Ask a supervisor or your trainer/assessor to give you feedback on how well you model care, empathy and respect for others.
4. If you wanted an 8-year-old child to take responsibility for spilling a jug of water on the floor, what would you say and do?

2C

Applying practice to social development

PC 2.1
PC 2.4
PC 2.6
PC 2.7
PC 2.8

Like physical development, social development is also influenced by the following aspects:

- Time
- Space
- Resources
- People
- Safety

Time

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

Children need time to:

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

Space

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

Aspects to plan for	How to provide for it
Opportunities	The type of play should be appropriate for their age. Opportunities for each social play stage should be offered. When children are in a group all day long, every day, they may become tired and overstimulated, so they need space to escape the hustle and bustle of the group for some quiet time.
Choices	The space available should assist children to choose to do something that interests them; therefore, there must be sufficient play spaces available for children to have a choice of two or three activities or experiences.

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Aspects to plan for	How to provide for it
Challenges	The space should offer a variety of possibilities and should encourage children to think creatively, solve problems and make decisions. The space should be flexible to allow children to play in self-created play or to mix two or more play experiences. For example, children may move the doll's house into the construction area to extend their own play.
Safety and security	The space should be safe and secure without making the children feel over-protected. Finding a balance between safety and healthy risk-taking is a challenging part of your job.

Resources

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

People

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

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

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

- If you feel it is necessary to show a child how to use a particular piece of equipment, then join in the play and model how this is done rather than stopping the play and directing the child.
- When you are invited into play, enter the play in a subtle manner. After some time passes, you can provide suggestions to enhance and extend the play instead of taking over and directing.
- You may want to teach a craft or a game that there has been interest in. Once the skills are established, you can leave the play to the children.

- When you provide support and extensions to play, children remain engaged for longer periods and can find a broader range of options for their play as well. You may add new props, suggest a larger or smaller space, or add a new idea about the topic of play.
- Support negotiation, problem-solving and conflict resolution as needed without interrupting the play.

The roles that you take when entering a play situation are as follows:

- Observer – watching the play
- Provider – supplying materials and resources
- Mediator – resolving conflicts and suggesting options
- Player – joining in

Safety

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

Social milestones

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

Social development milestone	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
5 to 9 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starts to measure their performance against other children Communicates in a range of contexts independently Wants to be liked and accepted by peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind children and support them to measure themselves against their own abilities Provide opportunities for them to solve problems independently Promote respect for all people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-competitive games – you may adjust regular games; for example, musical statues, tag games or ball games Any activity involving two or more children ‘Getting to know you’ games; for example, ‘all about me’ posters, scavenger hunt, friendship webs or human bingo
10 to 12 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefers to be around peers more than adults Enjoys using rituals, secret codes and made-up languages Enjoys being a member of a club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer responsibilities Understand and accept that you may not be included Support group activities Ensure clubs started by children follow inclusive practices by setting appropriate rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer time for activities chosen by the children Offer sessions where children plan the program of activities for a space, group or themselves ‘Break the code’ game Puzzles children can solve together such as sudoku, crosswords or word searches

Practice task 6

Choose one of the social experience examples from the table of social development milestones.

1. What specific social experience did you choose?
2. How would you set up and provide this experience?
3. Explain how you would participate in this social experience.
4. Choose one child in your service. How many play choices are available to this child during a play period? Describe at least two of these.

Chapter summary

1. Children need support to take responsibility for their own actions.
2. There are a range of times when you can spend one-to-one time with children.
3. When you model care, empathy and respect for others, the children learn from your example.
4. The language used to express ideas, negotiate roles and collaborate to achieve goals can be modelled.
5. Trusting relationships can be developed with children; this can extend to educators, other adults and other children.
6. Children enjoy your participation in their play and learn from your modelling.
7. As children start forming relationships with others, they develop attitudes about differences.
8. Children may wish to simply observe at times.

Assessment activity 2

Supporting social development

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 *CHCSAC004 Support the holistic development of children in school age care*.

Part	Element	Performance criteria
Whole activity	2	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in supporting social development.

Requirements

To complete this assessment activity, you need:

- to answer the questions and submit responses as directed by your trainer/ assessor/training organisation.

Read the scenario, then answer the questions that follow.

Scenario

Casper, a new child aged 5 years, is extremely shy and hasn't yet adjusted to the new environment of the service. His mother tells you that he has been this way since she separated from her husband.

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

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

1. Explain how you would spend one-to-one time with Casper.
2. Explain how you would join in Casper's play and extend his social experience.
3. How would you model care, empathy and respect?
4. Give two examples of how you would talk to Casper to show him how to communicate with the other children at the table.
5. Give one example of how you would respond if Casper wanted to watch the other children at play and not participate.
6. How would you explain to another child why Casper is sometimes upset when his mum drops him off?
7. Provide an example of an indicator that would tell you Casper is ready to join an activity or experience.
8. Explain what you would do to ensure Casper develops a trusting relationship with you.
9. What would you tell Casper to say to the other children if he also wanted to use some feathers and pebbles? Explain why you would suggest this.
10. Explain what you would do if another child would not allow Casper to use the feathers and pebbles with his playdough. Explain how you would support this child to accept responsibility for their own actions.

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

Supporting emotional development

Strong attachments with children are built through your prompt and consistent attention to each child's needs and by recognising and supporting them through negative feelings. During the school years, children are heavily influenced by the responses of their peers; they are constantly aware of how they are being received by others and take effort to gain popularity.

In this chapter you will learn about:

- 3A Understanding the principles of emotional development
- 3B Working toward emotional development outcomes
- 3C Applying practice to emotional development

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

Understanding the principles of emotional development

PC 3.4
PC 3.5

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

- Humanistic theory
- Attachment theory
- Separation anxiety
- Fear

Humanistic theory

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



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

Once our basic physical needs are met, emotional needs are tied in with all other levels, forming a foundation for success. Safety, security, limits and consistency allow us to feel like our emotional needs are being met and acknowledged. Love and belonging support our feelings of being needed. Self-esteem and the need for respect, attention and appreciation are directly linked to how we experience and react to feelings and change, as well as how we feel others will experience and react to these. An emotionally cared for and confident child is likely to reach their potential.

Maslow's theory can help you to recognise priorities in caring for children, as in the following example.

Example

If a child feels insecure and unsafe (second-level needs), they won't feel loved and cared for (third-level needs). They also may not participate fully in the experiences you plan and may not develop secure relationships with those in the service. In addition, the child's developmental progress may be affected as they are focused on being safe and secure, rather than being involved and challenged.

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

Attachment theory

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

Bowlby believed that children are able to form attachments to a number of people; usually the attachment with a primary caregiver (most often a parent or guardian) is strongest, then any number of other attachments may follow.

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

When children have experienced a lack of attachment in their early years, they are likely to exhibit behaviour of concern; they are less likely to seek help when they have problems and can be anxious and avoid others.

Children with secure attachment histories view others as supportive, positive and helpful. They have a higher self-esteem and relate more successfully with others.



An attachment relationship allows you to respond to the emotional needs of children.

Separation anxiety

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

Common signs of distress a child may display include:

- withdrawal
- aggression
- crying
- behaviour that is out of character (any action or emotion that is unusual for this child).

Fear

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

It is important to address children's fears so they feel safe and secure. When your routine is stable and predictable, you can eliminate some of their fears, such as:

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

School-age children begin to fear real-life issues, such as how safe they are in their own home, as they realise that safety is not always in their or their parents' control. Later, they extend these fears from their own home to the environment outside the home. In addition, they may fear the unknown, embarrassment and failure. These fears are all linked to their greater understanding of social status and their desire to be accepted as part of their peer group.

Practice task 7

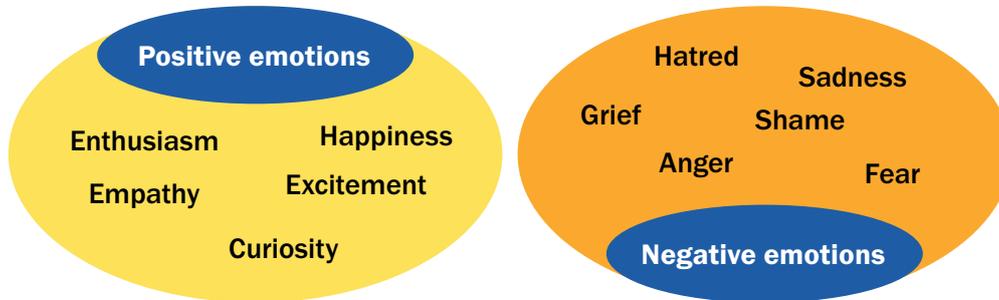
Describe the actions you have taken to:

- provide adequate food and rest for a child
- support a child who is suffering from separation anxiety.

3B Working toward emotional development outcomes

PC 3.1
PC 3.2
PC 3.3
PC 3.4
PC 3.5
PC 3.6
PC 3.7

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



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

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

MTOP helps you understand the importance of emotional development and how you can work toward supporting children’s learning and development. Consider the following table.

MTOP	Areas of focus
Children feel safe, secure and supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressing and managing feelings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative feelings Attachment Separation anxiety Fear
Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging children’s efforts Providing choices about behaviours Making choices Dealing with anger Supporting decision-making about behaviours
Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising and sharing successes Sharing successes with families

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MTOP	Areas of focus
Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting children through frustration and mistakes Monitoring frustration Using mistakes as opportunities to learn

Expressing and managing feelings

There are a number of strategies you can use to encourage children to express and manage their feelings appropriately and to support their efforts. This section looks at strategies to help children through the following:

- Negative feelings
- Separation anxiety
- Fear

Negative feelings

The most common negative feelings experienced by children are caused by:

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

When children express feelings and ideas, both positive and negative, you can respond using the following strategies.

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

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

Separation anxiety

When a child displays signs of separation anxiety, you can settle them using strategies that are very similar to those for reacting to a child with any emotional upset. For example:

- Physically comfort the child with a hug (if appropriate) or a rub on the back, arm or shoulder.
- Listen to the child.
- Talk to the child.
- Provide comforters to relax the child.
- Redirect the child to another activity.

Fear

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

Strategy	How to do it
Anticipate fears	Anticipate fears and act to prevent them. If you know that a child is afraid of something, you may be able to prepare the child for the fear or, if possible, avoid it completely.
Remove objects causing fear	Remove the objects that cause the fear. If the child is afraid of a particular toy or noise, this is simple. If the child is afraid of something that cannot be removed, such as an educator, person or something in the play space, you will have to try another strategy.
Prepare children	Prepare children for unpleasant times and events. Children's lives may involve occasional unpleasant experiences; for example, having an immunisation, going to hospital, changing educators or moving play spaces. You can use the suggested experiences identified previously to encourage emotional expression, and to provide ways for children to find out more about what the experience involves. Be honest and give the child accurate information, as telling children that an experience will be different from what it actually is may only make them more afraid once they undergo the experience.
Devise appropriate routines	Ensure routines are appropriate for the age and stage of the child and provide a stable and predictable environment. When routines are not flexible or if materials and messages in the environment do not match a child's needs, they may become fearful or distressed, and the common causes of negative feelings may become a regular part of the day.

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

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

When working with school-age children, you can often empower and enable them to manage the fear themselves by talking to them about their fears in the lead-up to an unpleasant event. This is due to their level of understanding and ability to rationalise a situation. Children may try to manage their own fear by:

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

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

Encouraging children's efforts

Acknowledgment and encouragement shows children that you value them and their efforts – it gives them the motivation to do things for intrinsic reasons (to please themselves or because the task is worth doing). Acknowledgment and encouragement should focus on the child's efforts or the process of doing something rather than the result, and be aimed at helping children feel good about themselves, which then develops their self-esteem. For example, when a child is

helping pack away some toys, you may encourage them by saying, ‘Matilda, you are working really hard to put all the toys away’. There are a range of ways you can demonstrate acknowledgment and encouragement during or after an event, as described in the following table.

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

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

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

In the following case study, an educator considers an experience from a child’s perspective.

Case study

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

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

In this case study, when Christine shows interest and comments on his drawing, Daniel’s feelings of success are acknowledged and his self-esteem improved.

Providing choices about behaviours

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

Making simple choices

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

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

- knowing the appropriate choices to offer a child
- being able to respect the child's decision
- following through with their choice.

You must always offer choices that are realistic and can be followed through. Choose your words carefully – ensure you use questions when there are choices; and statements when there are no choices.

These considerations are demonstrated in the following case study.

Case study

When Kyal is taking the children outside, he asks, 'Can you put your hats on?' The children reply, 'No!'

When Finn is taking the children outside, he says, 'Everyone needs to put their hats on now, please'. The children go to get their hats.

Dealing with anger

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

Children's outbursts can be frightening and even dangerous. If so, they demonstrate that the child is not in control of their feelings or not capable of expressing themselves safely.

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

Children deal with emotions differently – some children need quiet time to themselves away from others; some children need to sit and talk and problem-solve or just express themselves to someone who is prepared to listen. Other children may need to express their emotions physically.

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

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

Supporting decision-making about behaviours

To support decision-making about behaviours, you can:

- recognise problems
- clarify goals
- plan strategies
- find solutions
- ask open-ended questions
- support children to share their ideas with others
- answer questions
- talk about routines and choices
- encourage children to consult each other
- support parents to provide learning environments at home.

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

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

A child who has a strong sense of 'being able' will more confidently make a choice and be better able to make informed decisions.

The following case study illustrates how an educator can support children to resolve issues and make decisions about their behaviours. The approach uses open-ended questions and encourages the children to talk to each other about issues to ensure they understand each other.

Case study

Katrina, 7 years, has crossed arms, a scowl on her face and is stomping her feet and growling as she stands very close to May, also 7. Iris, the educator, approaches the pair and moves to their level. She asks what is wrong and Katrina says, 'Grrrrr!'

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

Iris asks May, 'Do you know what Katrina is upset about?' May shakes her head no.

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

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

Iris explains to Katrina that May only knows this because Katrina has told her, and she thanks Katrina for letting May know. Iris tells Katrina that when she uses a growling voice, May is scared and doesn't know what she wants.

Iris supports Katrina to ask May about using the scarf: 'May, can I play with the scarf when you are finished?' May replies, 'Yes, I am nearly finished!'

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

NQS Element 5.2.2 states that 'Each child is supported to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts'. NQS Element 1.1.6 states that 'Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and influence events and their world'. When you help children share their feelings with others in an appropriate manner and make informed choices, you are demonstrating these elements in practice.

Recognising and sharing successes

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

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

To positively influence a child's self-esteem:

- give individual attention to each child
- encourage children to attempt skills and activities
- give positive feedback
- provide opportunities for children to be independent
- support children be considerate of others

- help children be clear communicators
- acknowledge children when they help you or others
- provide children with positive messages about themselves
- encourage realistic ideals by providing materials, experiences and models that show diversity
- discourage put-downs by never using them and telling others who use them that this is not appropriate behaviour
- avoid comparisons and competition
- accept mistakes as learning opportunities
- be genuine in your interactions with children
- allow children to make decisions, problem-solve and negotiate
- provide age- and stage-appropriate activities, equipment and expectations
- identify and celebrate children’s emotional successes.

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

- when children achieve something and experience success
- when children are being challenged positively.

The following table can assist you to identify these situations and respond positively to achievements to encourage pride and confidence.

What they may say	What cues they may give	What you can do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Look what I have done.’ • ‘We did it.’ • ‘I did it myself.’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smiling • Finishing and sharing their work • Wanting to do the activity again • Telling others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment on the process or skill • Ask how the activity was done • Offer tasks for a similar skill level or area of interest

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

What they may say	What cues they may give	What you can do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘This is hard but I can do it.’ • ‘I know I can do it if I try hard.’ • ‘Look what I can do.’ • ‘I need some help, but not very much.’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smiling • Humming or singing • Concentrating hard • Working on the task for some time with progress • Asking for a little bit of help or feedback, but not wanting you to take over or complete the activity for them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay nearby to ensure you provide timely support • Offer ideas and help only when needed or asked for • Comment on the process or skill • Do not interrupt concentration • Allow time and space for success

Sharing successes with families

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

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

Supporting children through frustration and mistakes

As well as supporting and acknowledging successes, it is also important to take time to identify and monitor:

- when children are frustrated or overly challenged
- when children make mistakes.

Monitoring frustration

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

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

Using mistakes as opportunities to learn

Mistakes are a common occurrence for adults and children. If mistakes are characterised as weaknesses and failures, children may develop a fear of trying because they may make an error.

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

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

Not all socially inappropriate actions can be labelled as mistakes. Sometimes children repeat behaviours or actions that are inappropriate. This may be by habit, because they are testing the boundaries or because they are upset about something else. If you teach children that their actions affect others and that they can change their behaviours, they can take responsibility for their actions and their feelings. You can help them achieve this by:

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

Practice task 8

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

Case study

Mason is a student educator. It is a hectic morning and many children are irritable. During the morning, several situations arise that Mason has to resolve.

When two children are fighting over a computer game, Mason resolves the issue by putting the game away and changing to a new activity.

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

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

1. What could Mason have said to the children fighting over the computer game to help them express their feelings and make informed choices to solve the conflict?
2. When the child was frustrated while struggling to complete a puzzle, what could Mason have done to reduce the child's frustration yet still encourage his puzzle play?
3. When the child made a mistake in washing the floor, what could Mason have said to encourage the child to see the mistake as an opportunity to learn?

PC 3.1
PC 3.4
PC 3.5
PC 3.6

3C

Applying practice to emotional development

As you care for children, you provide valuable attention, feedback and guided challenges that influence children’s emerging sense of self. The following tables illustrate the emotional milestones for each age group, which have been linked to interactions and experiences in the service setting.

Emotional development milestones	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
5–9 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wants to do things ‘right’ Attempts to perform well Finds criticism and failure difficult to manage Feels issues are either wonderful or terrible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give support and clear guidelines Use positive language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide suitable responsibilities such as caring for an animal, assisting to prepare snacks or cleaning up Implement games that are non-competitive; for example, ball games and chasing games that rotate players
10–12 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is easily offended May experience mood swings Seeks independence Seeks adult and peer acceptance Believes their personal issues are unique to themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid blaming or singling out Demonstrate empathy Maintain calm interactions Encourage negotiation and problem-solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide responsibility; for example, buddying with a new child or younger child, developing the menu or choosing activities for the program Involve the child in some adult roles with supervision and support, such as organising teams for a game or leading a group of younger children

Practice task 9

Role-play the following:

1. If a child was having difficulty tying their shoelaces, what would you say to encourage them?
2. What would you say when they achieved this goal?
3. What would you tell the child’s parent about this achievement?

Ask your supervisor or a colleague to provide feedback.

Chapter summary

1. Children can be provided with a range of strategies to make choices about their behaviour.
2. Pride and confidence are feelings children should experience through achievement.
3. Mistakes are opportunities to learn, so acknowledge and support children.
4. Support children when they experience frustration.
5. Allow children to express their feelings.
6. Provide children with strategies to manage their feelings.
7. Assist and encourage children's efforts.
8. You can encourage children to persevere by motivating them through challenges.
9. Families will enjoy sharing their child's successes.

Assessment activity 3

Supporting emotional development

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 *CHCSAC004 Support the holistic development of children in school age care*.

Part	Element	Performance criteria
Whole activity	3	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in supporting emotional development.

Requirements

To complete this assessment activity, you need:

- access to a children's services environment
- to answer the questions and submit responses as directed by your trainer/ assessor/training organisation.

1. Provide a question that you could ask a child who needed:
 - a) help to choose an appropriate behaviour
 - b) to have feelings of frustration acknowledged
 - c) to see a mistake as a way to learn
 - d) to express their feelings appropriately
 - e) their efforts supported.
2. Describe how you would display children's artwork in a positive way that includes sharing with parents. Explain one way that it would support the children to experience pride and confidence in their achievements.
3. Describe how you would help children persevere with challenges.

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

Supporting cognitive development

Children's cognitive or intellectual development is influenced by their biological make-up and the environment in which they grow.

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

In this chapter you will learn about:

- 4A Understanding the principles of cognitive development
- 4B Working toward cognitive development outcomes

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

Understanding the principles of cognitive development

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

This section looks at basic principles of brain development and cognitive theory.

Brain development

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

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

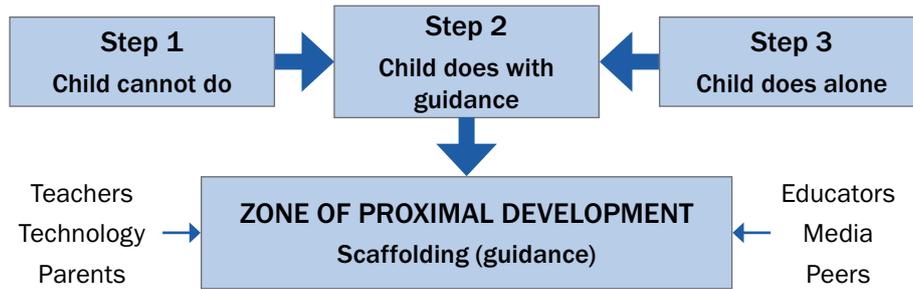
- adequate rest and nutrition
- clean drinking water
- a safe environment
- appropriate materials and equipment
- adequate space for development of motor skills
- good oxygen supply
- appropriate levels of stimulation – over-stimulation can distract children.

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

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

Cognitive theory

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



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

Writing your name is an excellent example for demonstrating Vygotsky’s theory. The following table lists the steps in writing and the role scaffolding plays.

Step	Description
Step 1	<p>A child is unable to write their name until their fine motor skills can manipulate the pencil and their brain understands the symbols and letters that are combined to make their name. Children show emerging skills (signs that they are ready) for writing their name by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> labelling their scribbled marks gaining control over the pencil recognising their name when written.

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Step	Description
Step 2	<p>When a child shows these signs, they have entered the zone of proximal development in relation to learning to write their name. Your role is to recognise this and provide guidance (or scaffolding) to the child. Note that the child is also influenced by other factors.</p> <p>Educators and parents provide scaffolding by encouraging the child to write their own name on their work and label their items; providing appropriate-sized pencils and paper; and assisting the child to write by providing the word to copy or letting the child know what letters to write next. They also make positive comments even when the child makes a mistake.</p> <p>Technology provides scaffolding such as pencils in different sizes or shapes (triangle grip, large lead, etc.), and paper that is easy to write on. The media provides scaffolding through using words to reflect meaning for images (in newspapers and magazines and on television). This shows children that writing is important and it conveys a message.</p> <p>Peers provide scaffolding as they learn to write their name; show pleasure in achieving this; and talk about their writing and what it means.</p>
Step 3	<p>All these areas of scaffolding work together to influence a child's abilities. Through these influences, the child develops emerging skills to a point where they have achieved the skill of writing their name independently.</p>

Practice task 10

1. Reflect on your day and identify a time that you have scaffolded children's learning as part of your usual interaction with them. If you have not scaffolded learning, ask your supervisor to explain when and how they have done this.
2. Explain how this action of scaffolding linked with the child's learning.
3. Do you think that your actions contributed to the child's brain development by creating an environmental influence, or do you think the child's biological influences are solely responsible for this learning? Why or why not?

4B

Working toward cognitive development outcomes

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

- heredity
- maturation
- the level of stimulation received from the physical environment
- the attitudes and values of the child's culture
- the degree of diversity and variety in the child's life experiences
- the social and emotional support the child receives
- the adult interaction and support the child receives
- the level of verbal stimulation the child experiences.

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

MTOP helps you understand the importance of cognitive development and how you can work toward supporting children's learning and development.

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

Opportunities for exploring

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

Understanding the various cognitive stages children progress through requires awareness of how a child progresses from birth. Although you may not come across children demonstrating infant-level cognitive exploration, you may find that some early school age children demonstrate a mix of toddler and preschool level skills along with school age abilities. The child's mind is developing and beginning to understand more complex concepts at different times depending on their cognitive abilities and experiences. When a child is not yet clear about a concept, you need to support them through concrete actions and activities.

Infants

From birth until around 18 months, infants make sense of the world by using their senses and physical actions on objects. Their imagination and memory are not strongly developed, so they react to what they see and experience. An infant does not have the skill to predict what is going to happen – they constantly experiment and learn through trial and error. Many of these experiments are repetitive, so the infant can determine whether the same thing happens each time.

You will notice that infant play involves:

- repetition – by you and them
- imitation
- the use of the senses to explore materials.

Toddlers and preschoolers

Between toddler and early preschool age (1–3 years), children begin to use language and quickly develop their memory and imagination. They start to use concepts that are new and develop life skills. They become increasingly interested in machinery and equipment – now collectively known as ‘technology’ – which can be electronic, such as computers, tablets, voice recorders or cameras; or manual, such as scissors, moving toys, hammers and other construction materials.

Children at this stage are:

- developing language skills rapidly
- participating in make-believe play
- interested in sorting, matching and naming items
- finding out about position – inside, under, over, on, in and next to
- learning opposites – over/under, fast/slow
- interested in colour
- interested in numbers and letters.

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

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

Concept	Difficulty
Counting	<p>Toddlers and preschoolers usually are not able to count objects accurately. They may say ‘1, 2, 3, 4, 5’ but be pointing at the objects in random order.</p> <p>The two actions are not coordinated as the child has learnt to count by memory, and does not yet understand what numbers are.</p>

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Concept	Difficulty
Mass	Toddlers and preschoolers usually do not understand how an object can change shape and still be the same quantity; for example, they may become upset if they receive a flat piece of dough and another child has a round ball of dough, if the ball shape looks bigger.
Money	If you try to change five 10-cent pieces for one 50-cent piece, the child will not agree as they believe that five coins are worth more than one coin.

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

The following case study illustrates how children of this age group may become confused by amounts and quantities.

Case study

Every time the 3-year-old children have a drink, there are arguments about who has the most drink and which of the individually decorated and sized cups is bigger.

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

Mel speaks to Nelson, another educator, and he points out that the 3-year-olds are at a learning stage where they can't fully understand quantity.

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

School age children

Young school age children may demonstrate the same difficulties in understanding that toddlers and preschoolers demonstrate. The following case study provides an example of how a child demonstrates different abilities at different levels.

Case study

Brougham, 5 years, is able to recognise his name, although he is not yet able to recognise the individual letters of his name or write this. Brougham is unsure of the time his parents will pick him up. Although he knows it is after snack time, he asks Maree, the educator, constantly if it is time for him to go home yet. Maree has told him that they will come when it is 4 o'clock, but he still asks her.

Children from 7 to 11 years are usually functioning at a higher level than young school age children, and their use of logic and manipulation of symbols helps them to think more creatively. Their thinking at this stage is less egocentric, allowing the child to see things from others' points of view.

By observing a child at play, you can identify whether they are at this stage if they:

- are or can be logical and organised
- understand counting, volume, mass, area, length, time and money
- use rules, tactics and strategies
- think in a way that closely resembles an adult; this is easier for the child when dealing with real information and objects.

Remember that cognitive stages cross over and you may identify that a child has more understanding in some areas than others.

Strategies to stimulate cognitive development

Young school age children may display a level of cognition equal to that of a preschooler and so may require additional support or assistance to understand the things you are offering and expecting. The following strategies can support a young child's learning. Be aware that all children at this age will be different: some functioning as their older peers and others struggling to understand certain concepts. Some older children may also benefit from these ideas.

Idea	How to do it
Dramatic/imaginary play props	Provide dramatic/imaginary play props and settings so children can play symbolically.
Basics first	Ensure that children have explored materials before you present a complex activity; for example, children should be familiar with the basics of paint (how it feels, how it moves) before you provide a large range of colours or marble painting materials.
Sorting, matching, naming	Provide sorting, matching and naming activities, such as organising toys, putting materials where they belong, playing board games or sorting different coloured pebbles into jars.
Measuring, weighing, counting	Provide measuring, weighing, counting and other opportunities that help this age group discover the properties of materials.
Size, shape, measurement	Change objects or the environment to fit the children's sense of size, shape and measurement; for example, if a child thinks they are getting less playdough than another child, roll the flat dough into a ball.
Avoid rote learning	Rote learning refers to memorising information through repetition, but without understanding. Although children love repetition and imitation at this age, they should be free to combine this with experimentation as they learn. For instance, you could teach a child to count to 10 perfectly by rote, but this won't help them attach meaning or understanding to the numbers any sooner.

All school age children will benefit from the following strategies.

Idea	How to do it
Language	Use language clearly, frequently and appropriately and introduce new words to describe things.
Problem-solving and negotiating	Provide opportunities and support for children involved in problem-solving activities and experiences, and in negotiation with others.
Enjoyment and meaning	Ensure activities are enjoyable by providing experiences that suit children's abilities and interests. Ensure activities are meaningful by having them complete real tasks such as setting tables, serving food, caring for gardens or helping to read a story.

Most school age children will use logical thought and understand complex cognitive ideas. You can use the following strategies to support their development.

Idea	How to do it
Responsibility	Encourage children to take responsibility for others and the group; for example, older children may run a planned activity or develop the menu alongside educators.
Autonomy	Respect children's ideas and provide appropriate information where needed; for example, if a group of children have an idea for an activity, allow them to develop this with your support. Give children the opportunity to plan and think out activities prior to participating.
Challenge thinking	Provide materials and activities that challenge thinking and develop problem-solving skills as well as counting, volume, mass, area, length, money and time skills. Extend discussion to how others live, what other families are like and how others feel. Encourage children to research to find out more about topics of interest.
Include morality and ethics	Pose questions that get children to think about what is right and wrong.
Technology	Include science, mathematics and technology tasks and present them as enjoyable activities.



Provide counting opportunities to promote cognitive development.

Cognitive development milestones

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

Cognitive development milestone	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
5 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows basic colours • Remembers stories and repeats them • Draws pictures that represent animals, people and objects • Counts up to 10 objects • Uses elaborate dramatic play • Is project minded, planning actions and drawings • Is interested in cause and effect • Understands many concepts, such as today, yesterday, big and bigger, under, over, before and after 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact at the level of the child • Listen to the child's stories and ask them to tell you stories • Ask the child if they have a plan • Provide materials required for planning; for example, paper and pencils (if suited) • Allow the child time to experiment and learn about new materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand puppets • Open-ended painting, drawing and pasting activities • Dramatic play areas • Sorting games • Peg boards • Snap card game • LEGO • Reading stories

continued ...

... continued

Cognitive development milestone	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
6–8 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading may become an interest • Is interested in magic and tricks • Enjoys creating collections • Able to implement strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the child about their interests • Encourage the child to share their interests and knowledge • Demonstrate or show magic and tricks and encourage the child to work out how they are done • Encourage the child to put on a magic show or to exhibit their collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books • Collection sharing activities • Collection development activities • Show and tell • UNO
8–12 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads fictional stories, magazines, how-to projects • May develop a special interest or hobby • May discuss future careers • Talks about the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer ideas for specific skill development • Listen to ideas and thoughts • Provide materials that support the child to learn about their ideas • Encourage the child to exhibit their collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest speakers based on children's interests • Magazines, fictional books and a how-to resource library • Discussion groups • Games with complex rules, such as Monopoly and Cluedo

Practice task 11

1. Look around your service. What experiences can you find that provide for the following:
 - Use of science and technology
 - Problem-solving and negotiation
 - Responsibility
 - Reading and writing
 - Autonomy
2. Choose one of the experiences and write down or tell your trainer/assessor what you may say to the child at this activity to scaffold their learning.

Chapter summary

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

Assessment activity 4

Supporting cognitive development

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 *CHCSAC004 Support the holistic development of children in school age care*.

Part	Element	Performance criteria
Whole activity	4	4.1, 4.2, 4.3

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in supporting cognitive development.

Requirements

To complete this assessment activity, you need:

- access to a children's services environment
 - to answer the questions and submit responses as directed by your trainer/ assessor/training organisation
 - to ensure you maintain confidentiality as required.
1. Provide a short report that focuses on the emerging skill of one child, addressing each of the following points:
 - Describe the skill and what indicates that the skill is emerging.
 - Describe how you would scaffold this learning.
 - Describe how the child's peers could scaffold this learning.
 2. Choose an experience that focuses on challenging children's thinking. It may relate to either counting, volume, mass, area, length, money, time or the skill of understanding how others live or how others feel. Use a range of materials and resources to set the experience up.

Show your trainer/assessor or provide a photograph or description. Provide a short report describing the experience and addressing the following questions:

- Which concept does your experience focus on and what do you expect the child to do?
- What will you say to support the child to explore and solve problems during this experience? Give two examples.
- What technology could you add to extend this experience?
- Do you think this experience contributes to the cognitive development of the child? Explain your answer using at least one example.

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 5

Supporting communication development

Communication development is characterised by predictable patterns and by individual learning and rates of development. A language-rich environment is one where children are able to practise their skills through appropriate role-modelling, repetition and support for experimentation.

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

In this chapter you will learn about:

- 5A Understanding language and communication skills development
- 5B Applying practice to communication development

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

5A

Understanding language and communication skills development

PC 5.1
PC 5.2
PC 5.3
PC 5.4
PC 5.5
PC 5.6
PC 5.7
PC 5.8
PC 5.9

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

MTOP	Areas of focus
Children interact verbally and nonverbally with others for a range of purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respecting linguistic heritage • Supporting children who speak languages other than English • Language for expression • Two-way communication • Group discussion and exchange of views • Communicating thinking
Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading stories, verse and lyrics • Storytelling • Using electronic technology • Using text for instruction in leisure and sport
Children collaborate with others, express ideas and make meaning using a range of media and communication technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with media and technology for fun and for making meaning • Creating roles, scripts and ideas • Using creative arts

Language development

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

Once speech begins, children constantly build on their vocabulary and, at around age 5, are able to have detailed conversations with children and adults. New forms of language constantly emerge as children expand their verbal skills and develop the ability to use written language.

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

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

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

Respecting linguistic heritage

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

If the child's home language is not English, educators need to gather information about the family's culture. Being aware of the child's cultural heritage helps support the child in developing English language skills, while still maintaining their home language. Regular communication with the child's family is necessary to ensure the home language is also being maintained.

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

- Learn how to pronounce the child's name correctly – seek assistance from parents if necessary.
- Learn some key words from the child's home language to assist interactions.
- Use quality books and storytelling for one-to-one child reading. Encourage parents or volunteers to assist and read stories in the child's home language. Stories should be simple to help the child acquire vocabulary.
- Model words and phrases in English. This gives the child experience in hearing vocabulary, phrases and simple sentences and can help the child understand the meaning of the same words in their home language.
- Always speak clearly and slowly.
- Introduce words, then give the child time to practise them.
- Explain activities as you do them.
- Point to objects and pictures to give clues.
- Include activities with chanting, words set to music and drama.

- Use songs and music.
- Display text around the room in the home language and English.
- Partner the bilingual child with an English-speaking child in games.
- Encourage social support between the bilingual child and English-speaking children. Play and interactions with English-speaking children encourage development. Acceptance within the peer group is crucial for successful language acquisition.
- Support and encourage the child generally to build their self-confidence.

You should also encourage children's parents and family members to maintain their home language away from the service environment. Some parents worry that their children may be disadvantaged if they are slow in acquiring English and may discourage them from speaking their home language. However, educators need to actively support maintenance of the home language and ensure the parents understand that this will not have a detrimental effect on the child's ability to learn English.

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

Supporting children who speak languages other than English

Children who can't communicate with those around them may feel isolated, confused and frustrated, just as an adult would in the same situation. To support these children, you should:

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

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

Language for expression

By role-modelling to children, you encourage the child's communication skills and their self-esteem, as they hear the correct way to pronounce words without being unnecessarily corrected.

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

- talk about the things you are doing with the children as you do them
- name objects and emotions
- use a variety of sounds and voice pitches
- sing songs and rhymes
- read stories
- speak clearly and introduce new words
- use every opportunity for interaction
- give the child time to speak.



Reading stories encourages language development and communication.

Children sometimes need guidance to know what words are best for a situation. They may need you to give them options to choose from or even an exact phrase to use. Without your help, the child may use words that are not suitable, or they may not know which words fit the situation. Always ask the child if they need some help to find the right words.

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

Practice task 12

1. Think of a time when children needed to use their language skills to express themselves. What words did you or could you provide them with? Explain.
2. Find out how to say please and thank you in four languages other than English. Either tell your trainer/assessor or write them down. One of the languages should be an Indigenous Australian language. You can achieve this by asking someone who speaks this language or by doing research online.

Developing communication skills

You can support children's developing communication skills by:

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

Two-way communication

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

Asking and encouraging questions

Open questions are a useful and important tool to incorporate into your everyday interactions with children. They can also be used to effectively consult with children. Open questioning requires you to think about how your questions are worded, so children respond with more than just a 'yes' or 'no'. Questions that require a 'yes', 'no' or another one-word answer are called closed, because the response is limited.

Some examples of closed questions are:

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

Some examples of open questions are:

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

Listening

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

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

Strong social listening skills involve the ability to:

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

Here are some strategies to model careful listening:

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

Consulting with children

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

- food
- limits, guidelines and guidance policies

- activity choices
- programming ideas
- behaviour expectations
- parent involvement
- staff involvement.

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

The level of consultation and method of communication you use with children depends on their stage of development and their needs at the time, as described in the following table.

Stage	Characteristics of consultation	Strategy
Early school age	Get to know their communication style and consult them on simple matters that concern them. Consult children to help provide experiences that are relevant and interesting to them. Some children will easily be able to plan activities with you; others may require support and encouragement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer possible play choices and listen carefully to children's ideas. • Use open questions to encourage children to consider all options, such as, 'What could you make with those boxes?' • Only give a choice when it is appropriate; it is unfair to offer a choice that is not viable. • Too many choices confuse children; give a small number of choices suited to the child's abilities to decide. • Help children understand the choices they have; never assume children know what you mean. • Use verbal and nonverbal communication to help children understand; for example, pointing to the options as you say, 'Would you like to use this one or this one?' • Encourage children to consult each other.

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Stage	Characteristics of consultation	Strategy
Mid-to-late school age	<p>Older children who are consulted regularly usually develop a strong relationship with their educators and are content in their environment. They are provided opportunities to practise becoming good communicators and develop their leadership skills.</p> <p>You can encourage a cooperative and democratic approach to making decisions by using the strategies suited to other age groups. Once again, you must adapt your communication to each child's needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage children to listen to each other's ideas. • Encourage children to think flexibly about their options. • Show children how you think about problems by explaining or demonstrating what you may do or how you do things. • Accept and acknowledge children's suggestions in a positive way. • Explain things that limit children's options. • Accept children's suggestions and, if they are not practicable, explain why. • Allow children time to make suggestions; never rush them or decide for them. • Make sure all children are consulted about matters that concern them or are in their best interests. • Make sure children understand safety considerations that affect their choices. • Offer new ideas or encourage children to consider new ideas or interests. • Provide new and stimulating material or discussion to encourage interest.

Group discussion and exchange of views

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

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

Consider the following case study.

Case study

Julia, an educator, is sitting with four children at the modelling clay table. They are talking about Easter and what they would like to buy at the bakery, particularly hot cross buns. Julie remembers a song about hot cross buns and she asks the children if they would like to hear it. They agree, so Julie sings the song.

They pound on the clay as they sing the song with Julie, 'Hot cross buns, hot cross buns, one a penny, two a penny, hot cross buns'.

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

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

The lifespan of a discussion group will vary depending on the age and stage of the children involved, and the depth of their interest or connection to the topic or activity.

The success of a group discussion relies on:

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

The following case study shows how these points can be implemented.

Case study

Lindy, an educator, notices that the children are spending a lot of time in the garden looking at caterpillars and chasing butterflies. She recognises that this is an interest shared by many children, so she decides to extend their learning.

Lindy prepares some materials, including colourful resource books and posters showing the life cycle of a butterfly. She finds poems about butterflies and a copy of *The very hungry caterpillar*.

To enable the children to join in and exchange views, Lindy starts a discussion group by asking the children open questions, 'What do you think the butterflies and caterpillars like about our garden?' and 'Where do you think butterflies come from?'

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

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

Reading stories

Reading and storytelling help children develop listening and communication skills, so these activities that support language development must be included in the program.

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

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

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

Reading stories is not only about learning, it is also an opportunity for the children to relax and have fun.

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

- appropriate text level for children's skills
- imaginary stories
- fiction and non-fiction books in a series
- age-appropriate content
- stories that are appealing
- illustrations that are attractive or interesting
- descriptions that allow the child to imagine.

Asking questions and answering

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

Questions you may ask before reading a story include:

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

To determine what questions to ask during the story, read the book before you read it to the children and pick out points in the story that are of interest or could be extended. The difficult part here is balancing between the questions and the flow of the story. If the story includes a build-up or language rhythm, it is a good idea not to interrupt this.

Questions to ask during a story include:

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

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

- Did you enjoy the story?
- Should we read it again?
- What happened?
- What do you think may happen next?
- What other books are like this one?

Storytelling

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

When stories are told well, it encourages children to concentrate and form their own mental images of the story rather than the illustrations in a picture book. Storytelling, like reading, can occur at any time during the day and with children of any age.

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

Story types	What children like to hear
Stories about themselves (the child)	Children love to hear stories about themselves, so they can recall events and even be a part of the storytelling.
Stories about their immediate environment	Children relate to stories about their immediate environment and the things they know.
Stories about imaginary adventures	Children enjoy stories that include them going on imaginary adventures and that have an element of suspense.
Stories about familiar and new songs	Familiar and new songs take on a new meaning when they are expanded by storytelling; for example, you may sing or play an Aboriginal song that links to a Dreaming story; <i>Tiddalik the frog</i> is an example.

Ideas for stories can come from story collections, picture books, movies, CDs or other storytellers. Older people recalling their childhood days can be of great interest to children.

Storytelling skills

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

Here are some tips for telling stories well.

Tips

- Ensure you maintain eye contact with the children.
- Ensure you monitor the interest level of the children as you are speaking.
- Use tone, pitch, volume and speed to dramatise the text.
- Use props to maintain children's interest and involve the audience.
- Have children repeat chants with you; for example, 'Run, run, as fast as you can; you can't catch me, I'm the gingerbread man'. (Participation encourages children to make up their own stories to tell.)

Practice task 13

1. Think of three stories you could read that are age appropriate for the group you work with. Remember to include what age group this is.
Use the following selection criteria to identify whether each of the three books is suited to the children:
 - The text and pictures are age appropriate
 - The content is age appropriate
 - The illustrations are attractive or interesting
2. Choose one book and identify one question you could ask at the beginning of the story and one you could ask at the end.
3. Choose a story to tell a group of children. Prepare and then deliver it to a group of children while your trainer/assessor is present. Ask for feedback.
4. Note at least two ways you could improve your reading and storytelling for next time.

Puppets and other props

Puppets and felt characters are a wonderful way to enrich a child's enjoyment and experience of a storytelling or language experience. They add a visual aspect to language experiences, are a great extension for group time sessions and also provide an individual experience or adult-free activity. Children can use puppets to extend and develop their own use of language by acting out and telling their own stories. Older children can make their own puppets and felt characters and put on their own puppet shows.



Using felt puppets can help to extend on language experience.

Children may wish to make up their own stories and create puppets to act the story out; they may also be able to use puppets to express feelings such as anger or concern.

You can also use other kinds of props to dramatise a story. For example, you may use a scarf over your head to change your character, or hold a toy frying pan to show you are cooking pancakes.

Using props

The use of props in the language development program creates interest and enjoyment for children of all ages. A prop can be as simple as a firefighter's hat worn on your head while telling a story or as complex as producing a puppet play. Anything that adds another dimension to the language activity and engages the child is worth using.

The physical environment is full of props that can engage children's interest. For example, exploring different ground textures in the playground such as sand, dirt, grass and softfall may stimulate language; a book about a chick hatching from an egg can stimulate extension of vocabulary as you talk about change and time; and working in the garden can extend language to include horticultural terms and actions.

Try to maintain awareness of what can be used in the immediate environment to capture and sustain children's interest and enjoyment of language.

Electronic technology

Technology is evolving rapidly – music, photography, drawing and stories have found new expression on computers and other electronic devices. The equipment we use is always changing: from record players, to tape decks, to CD players, to MP3 players.

The things we can do have also changed; for example, video chats, touch-screen storybooks and recording video with a smartphone. We can introduce new technology to children to stimulate their curiosity and allow them to listen, see and explore, as described in the following table.

Technology	How you can use it
Computers	<p>Computers can provide open-ended experiences that encourage language and creativity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs for computers can provide children with stories, music, pictures and other language experiences. Children can learn words, hear other languages spoken by native speakers, create their own stories with pictures, make posters and poems, and design a range of ideas. • Older children may wish to use the internet to look up pictures and stories of interest. Pictures or stories on the computer can be used to build into other experiences. Items can be printed out for group discussions; stories can be read from the screen; or the computer can be used for children to find objects in a trivia hunt.
CDs and headphones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDs and headphones can be used to offer small and large group experiences as well as individual activities. Listening to music, poetry and stories can be soothing and relaxing and allow children the time to be alone and away from the group, while encouraging learning, language, listening, imagination and creativity. • You can use a range of CDs with or without headphones to play music, multicultural languages and stories. CDs can be used for dancing, singing or listening in a group. • Ensure that the music used is devoid of sexual, racist and gender-biased language. Many popular songs include these references.

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Technology	How you can use it
Radio and podcast programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now that there is no longer specialised content broadcast for young listeners in Australia, radio is not generally recommended for use with children as the content cannot be controlled. Any program could be interrupted by inappropriate news stories, language or advertisements. Popular music can be overtly sexual or sexist. • Podcasts are an update on the traditional radio program format. A podcast may have originally been broadcast as a program on a radio station, or it may be created solely for download. You can access free, high-quality podcasts produced by broadcasters, educational publishers, teachers, school children, musicians and scientists. Content includes stories, poems, music, interviews and magazine-style programming. Review the content of the podcast first to make sure it is suitable.
Television programs and DVDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many excellent children's programs are available to watch as television broadcasts or as recordings on DVD; however, the overuse or misuse of television is a concern. To use television effectively, you need to overcome its shortcomings: it is not interactive or participative, it is inflexible and cannot change its focus with the children's needs, and it is a sedentary activity. Having children sit in front of a television could be seen as a lazy option instead of planning quality interactive experiences for children.

If you choose to use television programs and DVDs as a part of your program, ensure you:

- provide other options; children should not be made to watch TV
- have parental permission (for the rating level or content type)
- are following service policies and procedures
- review the program carefully before showing it to children
- sit with the children while they are watching
- are prepared to answer any questions that arise from the content
- participate in any actions or questions in the program to encourage children to participate
- plan the program as part of your day, rather than just 'putting on the television'.

Symbols and patterns

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

- letters
- numbers
- time
- money
- musical notations/symbols.

Play is a wonderful way to learn about symbols and patterns. There may also be intentional teaching times when you plan to introduce particular symbols and patterns. To ensure children remain engaged, encourage them through enthusiastic presentations and non-repetitive activities.

Letters

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

What to do	How to do it
Introduce written information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate how you use reading for everyday activities; for example, reading labels, instructions and signs. • Talk about times that you read. • Ask children to read instructions.
Provide written language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read books. • Provide a library for children to use. • Demonstrate how words and pictures go together – encourage children to write and illustrate stories. • Use books with complex text. • Label objects and spaces in the room. • Use resource or text books.
Provide story details	Introduce the title of the book, the author and illustrator, and make sure the children know what these roles are.
Encourage the use of written language	Set up pretend play or real situations that involve writing shopping lists, creating signs, writing letters or making birthday cards.

Numbers, time and money

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

What to do	How to do it
Recognise numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match numbers • Sort numbers • Create sensory art • Incorporate jigsaws, posters and games that use number symbols • Cook with recipes that use numbers for measuring ingredients, etc.
Use time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use clocks for routines; for example, we have a snack when it is four o'clock • Play time games; for example, how long does it take to pack up or build a stack • Include books about time; for example, <i>Clean-up time</i> or <i>The very hungry caterpillar</i> • Play games with egg timers or stop watches • Make event sequences – what do you do first, second and last • Incorporate calendars
Use money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add play money to home corner or create shop play • Discuss how much money is needed to purchase items • Create a simple budget for completing a project • Count money • Take money rubbings • Sort coins by size, shape, colour and value

Musical notation

Musical notation is the written system of symbols that represent music and tell you what to play. It tells you what pitch to use, what rhythm to use and extra information such as to play loudly or softly, fast or slow, and so on. Many children enjoy learning about music.

Some ways to involve the children in musical activities include:

- using movement games such as stomping feet or clapping to a beat
- playing a variety of percussion instruments
- singing; for example, children love learning songs with different sounds and may enjoy adding actions or clapping to the melody
- learning how the different notes are represented in notation; for example, learning the letter names for the four spaces (F, A, C, E) and the five lines (E, G, B, D, F) on the music stave

- listening to songs and identifying whether they use high or low pitches, whether they seem happy or sad and what instruments the children think may be used
- making musical instruments.

You can find many support materials online. Try 'Let's Play Music' at: www.letsplaykidsmusic.com, which has ideas for music, songs and resources.

Practice task 14

1. Look around your service play space and describe where you can find the following things represented in children's experiences:
 - Children's names
 - Letters of the alphabet
 - Numbers
 - Time
 - Money
 - Musical notation
2. If any of the items on the list are not represented, describe one way you could include the item in a play experience.
3. Initiate a discussion or activity with a child about their name. The discussion or activity should be based around how the child's name is spelt, what their full name is and/or the origins of their name. Document the discussion.

5B

Applying practice to communication development

PC 5.7
PC 5.9

For children to develop their communication skills, they need opportunities to practise.

The following tables illustrate the communication development milestones for school age children, which have been linked to interactions and experiences in the service setting. At this age, children have gained many skills and are consolidating these abilities and developing them to an adult level.

Communication development milestones	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
5–12 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehension becomes more sophisticated • Can share ideas and opinions using clear speech • Is able to follow more complex instructions and group instructions • Can participate in adult-like conversation • Can learn to read and write, increasing complexity as they develops • May have specialist language based on their knowledge of an area of interest; for example, they may be very familiar with the scientific names for certain animals or insects, or they may know jargon related to a particular sport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children interact in an adult-like way, increasing complexity as they develop • Converse about interests • Provide opportunities for reading and writing • Extend vocabulary particularly in specialist areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion groups, with the educator modelling appropriate language and behaviour such as taking turns • Collection groups • Show and tell • New word for this week – introduce a complex word each week • Discuss instructions to games • Library

Practice task 15

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

Chapter summary

1. Communication development is characterised by predictable patterns, individual learning and rates of development.
2. Linguistic heritage should be valued and acquisition of home languages should be encouraged.
3. Children rely on verbal cues until their expressive language develops.
4. It is important to provide a language-rich environment.
5. Strong social listening skills involve a lifelong learning ability.
6. Storybooks, puppets and felt characters are a wonderful way to enrich a child's enjoyment and experience of language and literature.
7. Group discussions are an excellent way to discuss topics of interest and to encourage children to exchange views.
8. Educators model language and encourage expression through language in all interactions they have throughout the day.

Assessment activity 5 Supporting communication development

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 5 in *CHCSAC004 Support the holistic development of children in school age care*.

Part	Element	Performance criteria
A	5	5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9
B	5	5.1

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in supporting communication development.

Requirements

To complete this assessment activity, you need:

- access to a children's services environment
- to answer the questions and submit responses as directed by your trainer/assessor/training organisation.

Part A

For this task, you need to implement a group experience with children. Read through all the instructions first to ensure you can complete the task correctly.

1. Choose a story and a puppet or prop you could use with it. Check the story is appropriate using a table similar to the following, and provide a brief explanation supporting your choice.

✓	Check	Explain
	The text and pictures are age appropriate	
	The content is age appropriate	
	The illustrations are attractive or interesting	

2. Provide a brief explanation of how you would implement the group experience. Provide the title, author and illustrator of the book and give two reasons why you chose this book and what props you will use.
3. Give an example of a question you can ask before, during and at the end of the story. Also describe two ways you can interest the children in any symbols, numbers, letters and words in the book while you are reading.
4. List two topics that might be raised during or after this story and describe how you would encourage children to exchange views about these topics.
5. Read the story and implement your planned questions and discussion for the children with your trainer/assessor or supervisor present. Use a table similar to the following to record your trainer/assessor's responses to the five items listed in the checklist.

Checklist	Trainer/assessor initials and date
• The story and materials were appropriate.	
• The children were engaged in the story.	
• You altered your plans to meet the needs and interests of the children.	
• You modelled appropriate language and communication strategies, including listening.	
• You answered questions clearly.	

Part B

Demonstrate your ability to value linguistic heritage.

1. Choose a language other than English that you could share with children.
Describe three ways you could share this language, or words from this language, with a child or group of children.
2. Explain one way you could encourage the use of home languages.

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 6

Creating an environment for holistic learning and development

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

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

In this chapter you will learn about:

- 6A Understanding the principles of holistic learning and development
- 6B Working toward holistic learning and development outcomes

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

6A

Understanding the principles of holistic learning and development

PC 6.7
PC 6.8

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

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

The ECA Code of Ethics was developed primarily for working with children aged from birth to eight years; however, the principles are relevant for educators working in all school age care services.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

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

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

Some developments in Australia that support the Convention include the National Quality Framework (NQF) and the ECA Code of Ethics.

For more information about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child access: www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx.

The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics

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

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

The ECA Code of Ethics describes the commitments made to:

- children
- families
- colleagues
- communities
- students
- employers
- yourself as a professional
- research.

The Code of Ethics has the following values as central:

- Respect
- Democracy
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Justice
- Courage
- Inclusivity
- Social responsiveness
- Cultural responsiveness
- Education

These core values are regarded as important for every service and person working with children and their families.

Access the ECA Code of Ethics at: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/code_of_ethics.html.

Practice task 16

Think about the rights of children and children's learning.

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

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

Holistic learning theory

Dugan Laird (–1984) suggests that, in order for a child to learn, certain elements of their personality should be activated. These elements include:

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

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

Skill	How the skill is manifested
Physical skills	The child is able to hold the pencil and control its movements (fine motor skills).
Social skills	The child has a desire to learn to write in order to be connected to their community where writing is important for communication.
Emotional skills	The child has the patience to keep trying, leading to feelings of success and a growing self-esteem when they succeed.
Cognitive development	The child can understand the letter symbols and what a word is.
Communication development	The child realises that the symbols of letters make a word and that other people can also understand these words.

Partnerships

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

You can communicate with families by:

- scheduling parent–educator–child meetings to establish goals and share service changes
- listening to parents tell you about their children’s strengths and how they learn
- ensuring you have access to telephones or email to communicate with parents during the child’s day
- ensuring parents know the telephone numbers or email addresses of the service and the times you are available to take phone calls or emails from them
- sending home positive messages about children

- making an effort to communicate with the parent who does not usually attend the service; for example, if the child's father always drops off and picks up the child, how can you make contact with their mother?
- providing parents with structured ways to comment on the service's communications; for example, email, telephone or take-home surveys
- speaking to parents directly (not just leaving messages on voicemail or sending emails)
- providing copies of service information in a variety of ways; for example, on CD, in printed handbooks and online.

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

Ongoing learning

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

Personal and professional development is important and continues throughout life. It helps you to remain enthusiastic when the work you do is challenging. To remain motivated, you often need to develop new skills and improve old ones. Quality educators devote time and energy to learning more about their profession and following through on their professional interests so they do not become 'stale' in their practice.

Professional development includes the learning you do with colleagues in your service as well as the activities you are involved in outside your daily work environment. You can learn and exchange information about child development and wellbeing by:

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

Practice task 17

Think about the information you share with colleagues.

1. What have you learnt about child development and wellbeing from those working in the same service with you?
2. What have you learnt about child development and wellbeing from the parents of children at your service?

6B

Working toward holistic learning and development outcomes

PC 6.1
PC 6.2
PC 6.3
PC 6.4
PC 6.5
PC 6.6

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

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

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

Promoting a sense of belonging and connectedness

Promoting children’s sense of belonging and connectedness is important for their social and emotional wellbeing. To help children to feel they belong, the service should provide:

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

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

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



Displaying 'Welcome' in home languages promotes a sense of belonging for children who don't speak English at home.

Offering new ideas

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

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

Children are more likely to be engaged in activities that reflect their interests and strengths. They are also more likely to maintain a sense of agency when they participate in planning activities and are inspired to be curious.

Curiosity, which is about experimenting, exploring, and asking 'I wonder why?' is an excellent tool for initiating a new activity or experience. It is also good for encouraging participation. Curiosity assists in leading children through learning with the aid of scaffolding, as they use trial and error to work things out, experiment and develop new ideas. This learning, particularly trial and error, is sometimes seen as children making mistakes. However, trial and error is important as it allows children to see what does and does not work, as well as how different approaches affect an outcome. Consider the following case study.

Case study

Henry, an educator, sets up a new activity. He provides marbles, paper and paint. He also places trays on the table. Henry plans to inspire the children's curiosity and creativity through his interactions. Instead of telling the children 'This is marble painting and this is how it is done', Henry says things like, 'Can you work out how to use these things?' and 'What do you think you could do with these?'

In this case study, Henry thinks about how to engage children and realises that engagement is not just an exercise in getting them to complete an activity; it is about exploring, experimenting and being engrossed in what they are doing. Engagement is about the process rather than the product. You know when you have engaged a child's interest as they will concentrate on their activity, ask questions and stay involved for some time.

Challenge, intrigue and surprise

The need to challenge a child is difficult to balance. If the activity or experience is too easy they may be bored, and if the activity or experience is too hard they may become frustrated.

When evaluating the appropriateness of an experience, look at how you may extend it. Never wait for the children to become bored or lose concentration before increasing the challenge. Look at the ease of their participation and consider whether extension is required.

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

Inquiry processes

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

Step	Example
1. Identify something the children are interested in, or provide a new item or experience.	Rex has brought a new magic trick in to show the group. The children are intrigued by the trick.
2. Find out what the children already know.	You ask the children questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you know how Rex does this trick? • What is he doing to make this trick work? • Could you do the trick?

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Step	Example
3. Find out what the children want to know.	You find out that the children would like to know if there is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a secret to this trick • a specific skill or knowledge used as part of the trick's success.
4. Discuss the item or interest and introduce correct terminology or language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You introduce a simple trick so the children can play and learn the skill – Rex may share his trick. • You talk about the materials needed and how they are specific to the trick. • You show the children how to implement any special actions. • You introduce new words. For a card trick, these may be: ace, spade, joker, sleight of hand and illusion.

Some skills children may develop through an inquiry process are:

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

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

Shared conversations

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

School age children have a large vocabulary, many interests and much knowledge about how to share their thoughts. They enjoy what, why, how, when and where questions; asking these types of questions encourages them to find an answer through exploration and research.

A conversation is not just about talking; it is an exchange of ideas between communication partners. If you want to be effective at conversing, you should:

- listen
- support
- encourage

- comment
- ask open questions
- use different styles of speech.

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

Consulting children

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

Practice task 18

1. Look around the play space and note where you can find the following things:
 - A challenging experience
 - Something intriguing or surprising
 - Inclusion of each child's family
 - Something that could start a conversation
 - A topic of interest that could lead to an inquiry process
2. Think of a new idea – something the children do not currently have in their environment. What is the idea and why do you think the children would benefit from this being introduced?

Chapter summary

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

Assessment activity 6

Creating an environment for holistic learning and development

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 6 in *CHCSAC004 Support the holistic development of children in school age care*.

Part	Element	Performance criteria
A	6	6.1, 6.2, 6.4
B	6	6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.8
C	6	6.3, 6.7

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in creating an environment for holistic learning and development.

Requirements

To complete this assessment activity, you need:

- access to a children's services environment
- to answer the questions and submit responses as directed by your trainer/ assessor/training organisation.

Part A

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

Case study

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

1. How could Joanna extend this experience to add something new and challenging as part of an inquiry process?
2. Describe two ways Joanna could initiate an inquiry process.
3. What resources and materials could be added to support an inquiry process?
4. What resource or material could be included to intrigue or surprise the children?
5. If Joanna wished to extend the experience through a conversation, what topic and content might extend their thinking? Name the topic and describe what Joanna could talk about.

Part B

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

Case study

Benjamin is 5 years old and is very interested in whales. He gets up and runs to find a toy seal and brings it back proudly and says excitedly, 'See! This is a baby whale!' Some of the other children laugh and make fun of him. Benjamin throws the toy seal in the corner and sits down away from the other children looking embarrassed. Joanna continues the discussion about whales and tries to engage Benjamin.

1. Outline two ways Joanna could support Benjamin to see the mistake as an opportunity to learn.
2. How could Joanna support Benjamin (for example, through discussion, scaffolding, etc.) to learn the skill or knowledge needed to complete this part of the experience?
3. Discuss these plans with a colleague and note their feedback on your ideas. Does your colleague think they would be successful? Why or why not?
4. Explain what adjustments you would make in future.

Part C

1. Describe two things about your service that demonstrate that children belong and are connected to your service.
2. Describe how families and parents contribute to your centre's learning community. If a family or parent was not involved, describe two ways you could involve them.
3. Identify which parts of the following apply to a child's belonging and connectedness:
 - The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - The ECA Code of Ethics

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.

CHCSAC004 Support the holistic development of children in school age care	Where covered in this learner guide
Element 1: Support physical development	Chapter 1: Supporting physical development
1.1 Use daily routines as opportunities to support children to acquire and practise skills	1B Working toward physical development outcomes
1.2 Assist in selecting and arranging equipment that will develop fine and gross motor skills, and to challenge and encourage choice and spontaneity in physically active play	1B Working toward physical development outcomes 1C Applying practice to physical development
1.3 Support creation of opportunities to build the emerging physical skills of individual children	1A Understanding the principles of physical development 1B Working toward physical development outcomes
1.4 Assist children to take increasing responsibility for their own health and wellbeing	1B Working toward physical development outcomes
Element 2: Support social development	Chapter 2: Supporting social development
2.1 Support children to understand and accept responsibility for their own actions appropriate to their level of understanding	2B Working toward social development outcomes 2C Applying practice to social development
2.2 Create opportunities for one-on-one interactions	2B Working toward social development outcomes
2.3 Model care, empathy and respect for children, educators and families	2B Working toward social development outcomes
2.4 Join in play and social experiences with other children	2A Understanding the principles of social development 2C Applying practice to social development

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CHCSAC004 Support the holistic development of children in school age care	Where covered in this learner guide
2.5 Assist and support children when they are having difficulty understanding or communicating with each other	2A Understanding the principles of social development 2B Working toward social development outcomes
2.6 Model language that children can use to express ideas, negotiate roles and collaborate to achieve goals	2B Working toward social development outcomes 2C Applying practice to social development
2.7 Assist children to develop trusting relationships with educators and other adults	2A Understanding the principles of social development 2B Working toward social development outcomes 2C Applying practice to social development
2.8 Encourage children to respect and regard each other's individual differences	2B Working toward social development outcomes 2C Applying practice to social development
2.9 Offer children play choices and respect children's choice to watch and observe	2A Understanding the principles of social development 2B Working toward social development outcomes
Element 3: Support emotional development	Chapter 3: Supporting emotional development
3.1 Provide children with a range of strategies to make informed choices about their behaviours appropriate to their level of understanding	3B Working toward emotional development outcomes 3C Applying practice to emotional development
3.2 Ensure children experience pride and confidence in their achievements	3B Working toward emotional development outcomes
3.3 Provide acknowledgment and support if a child experiences frustration, and encourage children to see mistakes as an opportunity to learn	3B Working toward emotional development outcomes
3.4 Encourage children to express and manage feelings appropriately	3A Understanding the principles of emotional development 3B Working toward emotional development outcomes 3C Applying practice to emotional development

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CHCSAC004 Support the holistic development of children in school age care	Where covered in this learner guide
3.5 Support children's efforts, assisting and encouraging as appropriate	3A Understanding the principles of emotional development 3B Working toward emotional development outcomes 3C Applying practice to emotional development
3.6 Motivate and encourage children to persevere with challenges	3B Working toward emotional development outcomes 3C Applying practice to emotional development
3.7 Share children's successes with families	3B Working toward emotional development outcomes
Element 4: Support cognitive development	Chapter 4: Supporting cognitive development
4.1 Intentionally scaffold children's learning	4A Understanding the principles of cognitive development
4.2 Provide children with a range of materials, resources, technologies and experiences to explore and problem-solve to stimulate cognitive development	4B Working toward cognitive development outcomes
4.3 Provide experiences that allow children to explore a range of concepts	4B Working toward cognitive development outcomes
Element 5: Support communication development	Chapter 5: Supporting communication development
5.1 Value the child's linguistic heritage and encourage the use and acquisition of home languages	5A Understanding language and communication skills development
5.2 Select, read and tell developmentally appropriate stories	5A Understanding language and communication skills development
5.3 Use puppets and other props to stimulate children's enjoyment of language and literature	5A Understanding language and communication skills development
5.4 Model and encourage two-way communication through questions and listening carefully	5A Understanding language and communication skills development
5.5 Encourage children to explore symbols, patterns and their relationships to each other	5A Understanding language and communication skills development

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CHCSAC004 Support the holistic development of children in school age care	Where covered in this learner guide
5.6 Draw children’s attention to symbols and patterns in their environment and talk about patterns and relationships, including the relationship between letters and sounds	5A Understanding language and communication skills development
5.7 Create opportunities for group discussions and exchange of views between children	5A Understanding language and communication skills development 5B Applying practice to communication development
5.8 Ask and answer questions during the reading and discussion of books or other texts	5A Understanding language and communication skills development
5.9 Model language and encourage children to express themselves through language in a range of contexts and for a range of purposes	5A Understanding language and communication skills development 5B Applying practice to communication development
Element 6: Create an environment for holistic learning and development	Chapter 6: Creating an environment for holistic learning and development
6.1 Support and initiate inquiry processes, try new ideas and take on challenges	6B Working toward holistic learning and development outcomes
6.2 Provide resources and materials that offer challenge, intrigue and surprise	6B Working toward holistic learning and development outcomes
6.3 Help to promote children’s sense of belonging and connectedness	6B Working toward holistic learning and development outcomes
6.4 Engage children in sustained shared conversations to extend their thinking	6B Working toward holistic learning and development outcomes
6.5 Provide the opportunity for scaffolding learning and development	6B Working toward holistic learning and development outcomes
6.6 Assist children to see their mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow	6B Working toward holistic learning and development outcomes
6.7 Facilitate families’ diverse contributions to the learning community	6A Understanding the principles of holistic learning and development
6.8 Share information with colleagues about child development and wellbeing	6A Understanding the principles of holistic learning and development

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
Supported the development of children in at least three different situations/activities (including different age groups and abilities), including:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> interacting with children to holistically support development and learning appropriate to the individual child's abilities and ages 	1B, 1C, 2A, 2B, 2C, 3B, 3C, 4A, 4B, 5A, 5B, 6B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing a variety of experiences and environments to support the different areas of children's development (including a combination of physical, creative, social, emotional, language and cognitive) 	1B, 1C, 2A, 2B, 2C, 3B, 3C, 4A, 4B, 5A, 5B, 6B
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
Code of ethics	6A
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	6A
How to access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the National Quality Framework the National Quality Standards the relevant approved learning framework 	1A, 2B
How to navigate through framework and standards documents to find areas relevant to this unit of competency	1A, 2B
Introductory-level child development for children, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> early brain development importance of the early years for subsequent educational success foundational knowledge of developmental theory 	1A, 2A, 3A, 5A, 6A

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Knowledge evidence	Where covered in this learner guide
Aspects of poor early childhood development, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• poor diet• lack of play• limited stimulation of brain development• lack of materials and resources• inconsistent or non-existent emotional support or comfort• trauma• other life experiences, which interrupt appropriate childhood activities, and their potential long-term harmful impacts	1A, 4A, 4B
Biological and environmental influences on development	1A, 4A
Symbol systems including letters, numbers, time, money and musical notation	4B, 5B

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 skills	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"> Find out about theories of development.
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 stories to the children.
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"> Introduce the children to letters and symbols.
Oral communication	<p>Clarifying instructions. Providing information.</p> <p>Supporting others through encouragement, negotiation and conflict resolution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model language and express your ideas.
Numeracy	<p>Calculating costs, weights, measurements of height and distance.</p> <p>Interpreting measurements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use numbers in daily activities and routines with children.
Teamwork	<p>Working well with other people by cooperating, collaborating, encouraging and building rapport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work together to provide scaffolding experiences for children showing emerging skills.

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Foundation skills	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"> • Develop routines that allow time for children to learn and experiment.
Making decisions	Understanding and applying decision-making processes. Reviewing the impact of your decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose materials that meet individual interests.
Problem-solving	Identifying problems. Working out how to fix a problem using problem-solving processes. Reviewing the outcome.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify ways to alter activities so children are challenged but not frustrated.
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"> • Provide children with an increasing amount of autonomy and responsibility.
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"> • Provide children with the opportunity to access available technology.

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	

