CHCSAC005
Foster the holistic development and wellbeing of the child in school age care

Learner guide

One World for Children Pty Ltd

Aspire learning resources

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Aspire Version 1.1

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

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

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Contents

Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCSAC005 Foster the holistic development and wellbeing of the child 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: • 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
  - the relevant approved learning framework under the National Quality Framework.

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* (MTOP), 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
Fostering physical development

Children's physical development is influenced by genetics, culture and environment. Understanding how children develop and what influences this development helps you provide appropriate environments and opportunities to ensure children reach appropriate milestones for their age and stage.

Educators are responsible for ensuring that children have the opportunity to develop in a stimulating and safe physical environment. This requires a program that includes planned and spontaneous activities that are age and stage appropriate. Assessment and monitoring provides information you can use to plan and provide appropriate experiences to foster each child's motor skills and fundamental movement skills, challenge their physical skills and abilities and promote physical fitness.

In this chapter you will learn about:

1A Understanding development theories and monitoring physical skills

1B Planning and providing experiences to foster physical skills

1C Challenging abilities and promoting physical fitness

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 development theories and monitoring physical skills

PC 1.1

My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia (MTOP) is the basis for your service's standards, policies and procedures, and encourages you to focus on children's physical strengths and interests. MTOP and the National Quality Standard (NQS) refer to the importance of monitoring children's development to assess their learning and identify whether additional support is required.

When you monitor children's development against milestones or MTOP Outcomes, you identify their abilities and what they can already do and understand. You also note the skills they are developing. This information helps you provide an ongoing and responsive curriculum.

Physical skills and development

Physical development relates to the way children grow and develop control over their bodies. Physical skills relate to the way the body is moved and controlled to complete activities such as running, jumping, hopping, balancing, pinching and cutting. Physical growth and skill development work together to enable children to achieve physical development milestones.

Milestones are a measure of ability and are demonstrated based on a child's age, stage of development and experience. You need to be aware of the following aspects of physical development to work with children safely and effectively:

- Gross motor and fundamental movement skills
- Fine motor skills
- Cephalocaudal and proximodistal development
- Kinaesthetic awareness
- Sensory integration

Gross motor and fundamental movement skills

Gross motor skills include the movement of the body's large muscles. These muscles allow locomotor movement (movements that transport the body from one place to another). They also allow the use of fundamental movement skills, which are movement patterns involving different body parts, like the legs, arms, trunk and head. Fundamental movement skills include skills such as:

- crawling
- walking
- static balancing
- running
- jumping, hopping, skipping and leaping

- catching
- side galloping
- overarm throwing
- kicking
- dodging
- two-hand striking.

These fundamental movement skills are used in more specialised, challenging and complex actions needed for play, active games, sports, gymnastics, physical recreation activities and dance.

Fine motor skills

Fine motor skills include smaller movements of the body, such as moving the wrists, hands, fingers, feet and toes. These are used for manipulation, movement and hand–eye coordination, and include skills such as:

- writing
- turning a page
- threading
- clicking fingers
- pinching clay
- weaving
- flipping cards
- playing the piano.

Hand grasp develops in sequence and influences a child's ability to control their activities. Dexterity is a word used to describe the manipulation of objects using your fine motor skills. Skills like hand grasp are influenced by the environment, so if a child is not provided with opportunities to use a grasp, this skill will not develop well and their dexterity may be poor.

Children starting school may still use a tripod grasp; for example, they may hold a thick crayon or piece of food with the fingers in a tripod style as follows.

A pencil grasp develops enabling the child to have greater control over their drawing or writing implement, as shown here.

Cephalocaudal and proximodistal development

Cephalocaudal and proximodistal development relates to the predictable sequence of physical growth and development. Development that starts from the head and works down is called cephalocaudal development; development that starts from the centre of the body and works outward is called proximodistal development.

This sequence of growth can be seen if you review the milestones of development, as infants use their torso, arms and legs and progress from large movements to the smaller, finer abilities of fingers and toes.

Since the large muscles of the body develop before the small muscles, this encourages you to consider development milestones in sequence. A child may experience splinter skills, where milestones are achieved out of sequence, which can cause a delay in development or make learning difficult for the child.

Kinaesthetic awareness

Kinaesthetic awareness is a sensory skill that allows you to know where your body is in space, which stops you from bumping into things or falling over objects. It is also about being aware of your muscles and being able to control and coordinate them.

To develop strong kinaesthetic skills, you need to practise using your brain to get your muscles to do what you need them to do. All children benefit from activities that develop kinaesthetic awareness, but it is especially useful for children who are tense and need to practise relaxation, and children who need to practise controlling parts of their body. Some children learn through kinaesthetic activities more clearly than by listening or watching.

Kinaesthetic activities involve actions and physical involvement where the child learns through doing. They include:

- dance (either free form or a coordinated routine)
- creative arts activities
- cooking
- computers
- building and fixing things
- drama
- crawl spaces
- blindfold games
- feely or surprise bag games.

Sensory integration

Sensory integration is the body's way of analysing all the information coming from its senses, both internally and from the environment, to produce an appropriate response. It helps you to understand who you are, where you are and what is happening around you, and allows you to complete activities.

Physical developmental theories and core principles

Child development theories help explain or predict development or behaviour. Understanding theories relating to physical development and knowing about physical development milestones:

- helps you understand individual children and their physical needs
- helps you understand why children act and react in the ways they do
- can be used to inform your practice in terms of program design and curriculum development.

Child growth standards

Since 2007, children up to 19 years of age have been measured against World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards. These standards were developed based on studies of 22,917 children. They provide a scale that can be used along with other information to determine whether a child is developing at an expected rate and/or within the appropriate weight, height and Body Mass Index (BMI).

Maturation

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

In the 1940s, Arnold Gesell, a psychologist, paediatrician and educator, formulated a theory based on observations he made of children during his work. His maturation theory states that developmental changes in children's bodies and behaviours are a result of the ageing process rather than from learning, injury, illness, or other life experiences. Maturation supports the idea that each individual's unique genetic and biological makeup determines their development rate regardless of other environmental influences.

As the term suggests, maturation requires children to mature to be ready to implement new skills. Maturation is believed to be driven by an individual's biologically determined developmental pathway or readiness. The experiences provided to children in the school age care environment give them the chance to use and test the skills they are developing at different maturational stages.

Learning, on the other hand, is often defined as a permanent change of behaviour that occurs as a result of experience. Whereas maturation is purely a biological process, learning is dependent on an individual's environment (although most learning theories imply that some part of development is contributed to maturation).

Learning is a problem-solving process that uses one learning experience to produce possible solutions to the next learning experience. This means that the process of learning is just as important as the result of learning. This process takes place through planned activities and everyday experiences, and can be observed by watching how children demonstrate new skills and knowledge.

By observing the stage a child is at, and then planning enriching experiences for that child, you are providing an opportunity for the child to consolidate their skills. It also allows you to identify when a child is ready to move on and be provided with opportunities to extend on previous learning.

When observing children and their developmental stage, it is important to understand the difference between maturational age and chronological age. Maturational age refers to the stage of development the child is at; for example, whether they can swing across the monkey bars or write lengthy stories. Chronological age refers to the biological age of the child; for example, the child is 10 years old.

Nature versus nurture

The concepts of nature and nurture are relevant to your understanding of development. Nature refers to your genetic programming, the things you do naturally – your instincts – so nature is linked to heredity, genetics and maturation. Nurture relates to personal experiences – what you experience and are taught through interaction with the environment and other people.

The following case study illustrates how someone defines their own nature and nurture characteristics.

Case study

Gina identifies some of her own characteristics and then tries to work out if they originate as a result of nature or nurture. This is what she thinks:

- Nature: blond hair, big feet, learns things quickly
- Nurture: afraid of spiders (her dad scared her with a toy spider as a girl), plays guitar (she has lessons at school), interested in gardening (her mum loves to spend time with her in the garden)

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

- Patient: she may have been born with a patient personality, but she was also born into a large family where they needed to help each other and share things, so this has a nature and a nurture aspect.
- Mathematical: she was born with a brain that works well with numbers, but she also had some positive mathematics experiences in kindergarten, and in grade two her teacher encouraged the class to have fun with numbers and organised lots of interesting mathematics activities, so this also has a nature and a nurture aspect.

Core principles

There are a number of core principles related to development. The following table shows principles relevant to physical development and provides examples applicable to your workplace practice.

Physical development principles	Description	Examples applicable to workplace practice
Belonging, being and becoming	Children learn best when they feel safe and valued.	• Make the physical learning environment safe and provide time for children to learn and then practise skills.
Sequence of development	Development progresses in a step-by-step pattern that advances from simple to complex (maturation).	• Jump before hopping • Throwing and catching a ball before shooting hoops
Rate of development	Children develop at different paces.	• Between 5 and 9 years children learn to use a skipping rope to jump.
Neurological or brain development	Brain and spinal cord development links to the acquisition of skills (cephalocaudal and proximodistal development).	• Gross motor skills are developed prior to fine motor skills.
Critical periods	Critical periods are points in a child's development when providing opportunities to learn is crucial. If these periods are not taken advantage of, the child may miss an important aspect of learning. Children are drawn to challenging experiences and enjoy intentional teaching.	• When children start to take responsibility for themselves, praise and encouragement ensures the child learns to take on more responsibilities. • If the child enjoys craft, you might model how to use a new piece of equipment, such as a sewing machine. The child will enjoy learning to use this.
Heredity and environment, and how children use active learning	This is also known as nature versus nurture, and relates to the aspects of development that are genetically programmed as opposed to those influenced by the environment. You provide rich environments for children to learn and children actively learn from this.	• Children learn to feed themselves if provided foods (nature). • Children learn to ride a two-wheel bike between the ages of 3 and 8. This development depends on the amount of practice provided (nurture).

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Physical development principles	Description	Examples applicable to workplace practice
Holistic development	All domains of development are closely related and interlinked.	Learning to cut with scissors: • Physical skills are used to open and close the scissors and to hold materials in place while they are being cut. • Social skills are used as the child watches their peers and others use the scissors. • Psychological skills are used as the child's self-esteem increases as they develop confidence in trying new skills. • Cognitive skills are needed to understand the concept of opening and shutting the scissors.
Play as learning	Play is used by children to learn and develop physical skills.	Physical skills develop in: • dramatic play; for example, dressing and undressing, using buttons and zips • sand play; for example, digging, scraping, moulding, jumping.
Individualised learning	Children learn and demonstrate what they know in different ways.	• Some children learn through group activities; others prefer one-to-one contact and direct instruction. • Some children do not notice things they can learn until they are brought to their attention.

Stages of physical development

Theories of physical development support milestones that occur in progression. These developmental milestones have been confirmed through research.

It is more useful to know specific milestones than general milestones, as you can measure achievement far more accurately with specific milestones. For example, a general milestone might be for the child to throw a ball with one hand and overarm. A specific milestone takes into account the steps along the way; for example, a milestone for a child around 5 years of age may be 'Catches and throws a basketball', then moving to a smaller ball and greater skill levels. Your milestones need to be flexible in order to take into account the development of the individual child, as children develop at different rates.

A guide to some common physical development milestones is provided in the following table.

Age/stage	Physical milestone
5–7 years	• Can control their body in space • Prefers active play over sitting still for long periods • Needs frequent small intakes of food and drink to sustain their high activity level • Moves rhythmically to music • Balances easily on either leg • Jumps, hops and skips for some distance • Jumps rope • Can hit a ball with a bat or racquet • Does a forward somersault • Bounces a large ball 2 or 3 times • Uses climbing equipment • Holds pencil in correct grip • Colours between the lines • Manages shoelaces and small buttons • Shows clear hand preference • Drawings include people, trees, animals, houses, buildings and transport
7–9 years	• Agile, coordinated and in control of body movements • Able to skip rope using more advanced techniques • Often practises new skills over and over to improve • Enjoys competitive sports • Girls might have a growth spurt around 9 years of age • Can write skillfully • Can use both hands independently • Enjoys boisterous activities • Can write for long periods of time
9–12 years	• Gross and fine motor skills are highly coordinated, with many at an adult-like level • Uses complex movements, strength and agility in sports • May take risks in their physical activity • Physical appearance may begin to change due to hormonal changes • Health, hygiene and lifestyle needs change as they become sexually aware and may begin puberty • May need larger furniture • May be committed to a variety of competitive sports

Factors influencing individual development

Physical development is not an isolated area of learning. Each action that uses physical skills is also integrated with other areas of development – social, emotional, psychological and cognitive.

Consider dramatic play. Physical skills are required for activities such as pouring tea, dressing up, riding bikes or washing dishes, but other skills are also used. For example:

- Social skills:
  - Relationships
  - Play stages
- Emotional and psychological skills:
  - Expressing feelings
  - Talking about feelings and/or how things might make you feel
- Cognitive skills:
  - Solving problems
  - Negotiating
- Communication skills:
  - Communicating plots and acting out roles
- Creative skills:
  - Developing roles
  - Improvising
  - Using materials and equipment in imaginative ways.

Other factors that influence individual physical development are detailed in the following table.

Factor	Explanation
Age	Some areas of physical development are linked with the child's age as they relate closely with body maturation and the development of vital skills (for example, using the toilet and eating solid food) whereas some relate to the sequence of skill development (for example, how a child learns to crawl, then stand, then walk, then run). There is no exact age that links to these abilities as each child develops in a slightly different way.

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Factor	Explanation
Gender	Gender can influence physical development as children tend to practise skills that relate to their interests. Although children each have their own likes and dislikes, there are interests that are more common to boys than girls (for example, gross motor activities and construction) and to girls than boys (for example, dramatic play, dressing and undressing dolls, dancing, sewing and threading). Children practise the skills they need to complete their favoured experiences. Studies have shown (*Science daily*, January 8, 2009) that girls participate in less vigorous physical exercise than boys. This is thought to occur due to girls being more involved in social, communicative and imaginative play.
Temperament	Temperament affects the way children approach activities and people, and how involved they may be. A child who takes time to warm up to an activity may gain less practice at using materials initially, but may spend more concentrated effort at the activity once they understand it. A child with a different temperament may have a low concentration span and choose not to try an experience.
Interests	Each child has a unique way of looking at the world and will be fascinated by different things. Sometimes interests will occur based on what they know about the world, what their family participates in or what friends enjoy; at other times, a child's interest will be determined by pure enjoyment of participation. If a child's interests include physical pursuits, they will practise skills more regularly than a child who is not interested in physical activities.
Peers	Peers can influence a child's interests and encourage a child to participate in physical games and experiences that they enjoy.
Genetics	Genetics influence the rate of growth, the size of body parts and the timing of development that is influenced by age. Physical development is affected by these aspects; for example, if a child wants to learn to ride a bicycle but their legs are short, they may not be able to reach the pedals.
Environment	The experiences a child is provided influence their ability and interests. For example, if a child is interested in using their fine motor skills to create craft items and construction sets, they will have a different set of knowledge to a child who has never been exposed to these items, but who plays outdoors, using gross motor skills to climb trees and playground equipment.
Nutrition	The body needs fuel to grow and stay healthy, so children with poor nutrition have less energy and may develop growth issues that hinder their physical performance.
Injury	Injuries may stop children participating in experiences that require the use of their injured parts and it may influence their use of equipment or materials; for example, if a child falls from a fort, they may choose not to use the fort anymore in fear that they will fall again.
Disease and illness	Both short-term and chronic illness and disease affect children's energy, and they may lose the use of part or all of their body.

Monitoring physical skills and development

Peers can have great influence over a child's interests.

Education and Care Services National Regulation 74 requires educators to document their assessments of each child's developmental needs. This is supported by MTOP Practice 'Evaluation for wellbeing and learning', which requires you to determine the extent to which children are progressing toward the Learning Outcomes. The Practice explains how you can use the developmental information you gather to make decisions about a child's progress, identify any barriers to their progress and identify any areas of additional need.

There are a number of methods you can use to make your expectations clear and ensure you capture the vital details you need to show the child's progress. Learning stories, anecdotal records and DVD recordings are popular and effective methods. For simple, measured assessment of children's developmental milestones, a checklist with comment spaces is an effective tool.

Developmental checklists

To create an effective developmental checklist, you must ensure the following:

- The contents of the checklist should include appropriate milestones that a child should demonstrate for their age and developmental stage.
- The checklist should help you identify when a child requires support or needs to be more closely monitored.
- You must consider chronological age (the number of years the child has lived) and maturational age (the stage of development the child is demonstrating) to ensure you are considering the child's individual needs, strengths and rate of development.

Each checklist should reflect the individual child rather than having one checklist for all children. The following is an example checklist for an individual child with achievement dates and progress comments.

Physical development	Developmental comments	Date achieved
Throws a basketball		6 June
Catches a basketball	6 June. Can catch the basketball but not consistently	24 June
Dribbles (bouncing while moving) a basketball	24 June. Can catch after one bounce	
Throws a basketball through a hoop	24 June. Throws toward the hoop	

To create a checklist that is individual to a child, involve the child's family in decision making. The child may also be interested in setting some goals for themselves. By consulting these people, you are considering cultural and family values and beliefs, and identifying the skills that each family feels are important for their child to develop.

This is an excellent way to involve the family in the service and is an opportunity to provide support and information to children and parents about the relationship between health and physical activity. By discussing this relationship and the role of the checklist for monitoring, you will encourage a collaborative relationship and the family will develop a greater understanding of the importance of physical development. Any aspects causing concern about the child's physical development may also be considered; for example, preventing obesity and poor health, expected activity levels for children, and nutrition and food values.

Monitoring children's physical development is essential to ensure you identify strengths, but it also identifies needs and developmental concerns. Your evaluation must be clear and non-judgmental, and must consider things that may be influencing the child's demonstration of a skill.

Developmental needs are quite common, and generally mean a child requires additional support to develop a particular skill to an expected level. The most effective way to do this is to provide activities for the child that are based on their abilities and interests, but use the skills they need to develop. For example, a child's monitoring checklist shows that their ball handling skills are less developed than their other gross motor skills. The child is interested in dressing up, so the educator provides children with basketball outfits and they play ball games.

Assessing physical skills and development

The assessment you undertake in relation to a child's physical skills and development allows you to identify:

- the value of the experience to the child, whether it was challenging and how you can increase the value
- how core principles and theories link to the developing child
- the learning the child has demonstrated
- the child's interests, strengths, skills and abilities.

MTOP Outcomes must be used as part of the assessment process as they enable you to work towards addressing the child's holistic needs. To assess children's progress toward specific MTOP Outcomes, you can use the following steps.

Step	Example
1. Gather and record information about the child.	Rose, 6 years, is trying to tie the straps on her apron behind her back. She twists the fabric together, but it is long and becomes tangled.
2. Use the MTOP to identify which of the five Outcomes your observation record links to.	Outcome 3 Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
3. Identify a specific sub-outcome of the MTOP.	Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing.
4. Clarify your selection by referring to the evidence examples that are provided for the identified MTOP Outcome.	This is evident when children 'combine gross and fine motor movements and balance to achieve complex patterns of activity'.

Practice task 1

1. Use a table similar to the following to monitor a 7-year-old child's physical development. Observe the child throughout a day to identify whether they have developed or are working on the skills listed in the table.

Age of child: 7 years		
Physical development	**Comments and date**	**Date recorded as achieved**
Ties shoelaces or other bows		
Hops, jumps and runs for a distance		
Draws people, houses, animals and scenery		
Independently cuts complex shapes with scissors		

2. Explain how each of the four skills in the table could be influenced by the following:
   - Social development
   - Psychological development
   - Cognitive development
   - Nature versus nurture
3. Link each of the four skills in the table to an outcome in the MTOP.

PC 1.2

1B Planning and providing experiences to foster physical skills

The opportunities you provide to children for physical development and movement will be influenced by the factors described in the following table.

Factor	Example
The characteristics of the children in care	• Age of the children • Peer group influences and/or pressure
The physical environment	• Availability of indoor and outdoor facilities • Venue and location • Educators' capabilities • Safety considerations • Desire and ability for children to set up equipment themselves
The purpose of your service	• Frequency and regularity of use of the service by the child • Type of service
Support	• Amount and type of support and/or participation you have from parents • Level of support available to you from outside resources such as specialists, resource workers and inclusion support workers
MTOP Outcomes	• MTOP Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing; Sub-outcome: Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing.

Gathering information and setting goals

The information you collect about children's physical skills and development from monitoring or records forms the basis for your program plan of activities.

From the information you gather, you will be able to set some goals and objectives for each child:

- A goal is long term. You do not usually expect to achieve a goal in a short period of time. Goals need to be clear, but they are not usually detailed.
- An objective is short term. You can expect to achieve an objective in a short period of time. Objectives must be clear so you know what you want to achieve and must be measurable so you know if they have been completed.

Selecting appropriate experiences

From the objectives you develop, you can identify suitable experiences. The following table shows how goals and objectives can be used to create relevant physical experiences. The goal sets an outline for the result you are aiming for, and the objective gives you the current plan; that is, it is the first step of the goal.

Goal	Objective	Experience and resources
For Henry to create something with sand (this goal may have been set as Henry has shown an interest in sand play or you may have noticed a developmental need)	For Henry to create a sand fort with a moat and decorate it with shells and pebbles	Sandpit play: • Long- and short-handled shovels • Shovels with large and small scoops • Hand scoops • Buckets and various shaped containers • Pebbles and shells • Interactions to encourage building with sand; for example, 'What is the plan for your fort, Henry?'
For Henry to create a bead necklace (this goal may have been set as Henry has shown an interest in creating or you may have noticed a developmental need)	For Henry to thread small beads on fine beading thread, then add a clasp	Threading: • Small beads of various colours • Fine beading thread • Clasp • Discuss how to hold the beads and thread, then how to attach the clasp • At first, hold the thread or demonstrate a technique for Henry if needed

Setting up for physical activity

The success of your planned experiences relies heavily on how you set up the environment and ensure it meets children's needs. Remember to consider the following:

- Time
- Space
- Aesthetics
- Materials and resources
- Safety

Time

To provide time for play and leisure, your plan must be unhurried and uninterrupted. When children are rushed through play, they do not have an opportunity to fully experience the activity and may become frustrated. Children need time to:

- make choices
- become involved
- change direction
- become involved again

- practise and master skills
- form relationships
- become independent.

Space

Every play space is different and the availability of indoor and outdoor environments may be limited or constricted by time or the needs of others. However, you can control the space available.

Work with children to think about how space will be used. When planning how to use space, remember the following:

- Children need hands-on experiences. They need to explore, touch, smell, move, create and build. Encourage children by setting the stage.
- Children need choices. Spaces must prompt children to choose an activity that interests them. There must be sufficient play spaces for children to have a choice of two or three activities at any time.
- Children need challenges. The space you arrange needs to invite children to use their physical skills in a variety of ways.
- Children need safety and security; they need to feel safe without feeling overprotected. Finding a balance between safety and healthy risk-taking can be challenging.

Hands-on experiences allow children to explore.

Aesthetics

An aesthetically pleasing environment means an attractive environment, and refers to how the environment is set up and how materials and experiences are offered. If experiences are presented with care and look appealing, children will be inclined to try them.

Children are central to your planning and evaluation. Children can talk about what they are learning, identify what they would like to do differently and report their interests and abilities. By letting children be part of the process of planning, they begin to have a vision for themselves and develop greater confidence. They become active participants in their own learning and are able to take great pride in their accomplishments.

When you set up experiences for children, try to imagine how the child is going to see the experience and identify what messages your set-up will send. An ideal set-up sends a 'Come and play!' message to the children.

Other messages you want to send are:

- this space is cared for
- play is valued and respected
- it is easy to play here
- you can change this space and play out your own ideas.

You can send positive messages such as these by ensuring:

- you use neutral colours that do not overload children's senses
- the environment is clean, bright and well-prepared
- materials and furnishings are child focused
- all children and parents are made to feel welcome
- the environment is safe and interesting
- the environment has boundaries
- there are inviting and attractive displays and experiences
- materials are changed according to children's interests
- safety is important, but children are still able to challenge themselves
- there are familiar staff.

Materials and resources

The materials and equipment you choose to make available to children have a huge impact on the quality and types of play children engage in. Choices should include active, passive, group and solitary physical activities and cater to each child's interests.

It is important that:

- materials match the children's interests, needs and abilities
- there are enough resources for the number of children in a group
- good quality resources are provided
- equipment can be used independently where possible
- the environment is set up safely without clutter
- the environment is attractive and inviting.

Open-ended materials are useful for creating spontaneous challenges as they can be used in a variety of ways, and children and educators can increase challenges with these materials without interrupting play or needing to rely on other people or resources. For example, blocks facilitate open-ended experiences as they can be used in a variety of ways. A child who is constructing a long road using blocks may see another child building a bridge. The first child then tries to make their own bridge.

When materials and resources are available to children, they are encouraged to be independent in their learning and choose activities and materials that interest them and are suited to their development.

Safety

When children feel safe, they more readily explore the environment and make use of experiences. Your service has policies and procedures to ensure the building, materials and resources are safe. These are likely to include a:

- child safe environment policy
- cleaning and safety checklists
- risk assessment procedure
- work health and safety policy.

Your knowledge of child development and children's individual abilities allow you to identify how the environment needs to operate and be presented to ensure safety. Part of this involves considering children's developmental abilities, such as their:

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

Other things that influence safety include:

- clothing choice
- weather conditions
- equipment placement
- flooring; for example, if it is slippery.

The following table provides some factors that may hinder children's full participation and clear recording of their skills.

Hindering factor	Issues this may cause
Dress/clothing	• If clothing is too warm or too cool, children may not be active. • Clothing may get stuck under children's feet when climbing or their sleeves may fall into the activity. • Clothing may be new or children may have been told not to get dirty. • If children's shoes are slippery, their feet may not be able to grip to climb.

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Hindering factor	Issues this may cause
Weather	• If the weather is hot, children may not be active or outdoor equipment may burn their skin. • If the weather is cold, children may restrict their movement until they are warmed up from activity. • If the weather is wet, activities may be slippery. • If the weather is icy, materials may be slippery or uncomfortable to touch.
Past experience (emotional elements)	A child may have had a negative experience with an activity in the past and their emotional concerns may influence how well they demonstrate these skills. For example, a child may be very skilled at ball handling, but one day they are bumped on the nose with a hard ball when going to catch it. After this occurs, the child may avoid ball handling or demonstrate difficulties such as turning away when the ball comes toward them.

Assist children to understand the hazards and risks in their environment by alerting them to these and encouraging safe actions. By explaining why things are hazardous and providing clear limits that children can link to the hazard, you support children to be able to assess hazards: an important life skill.

When communicating limits to children, use positive language that gives stage-appropriate detail and instruction. Describe acceptable behaviour rather than what is not accepted; it is much more effective to let a child know what you want them to do than what you don't want them to do as it allows the child to learn the appropriate action. For example, instead of saying 'Don't run', say 'Walk'. Instead of saying 'Don't fall', say 'Place your feet carefully on both rails'.

Limits and guidelines for behaviour let everyone know exactly what is expected of them while they are at the children's service. Limits and guidelines should be clearly communicated to:

- children, especially those new to the service
- parents
- potential users of the service
- all staff, including relief staff.

The following are examples of common limits, written in a positive way:

- We stay in the fenced area.
- We sit at the table to eat and drink.
- We are gentle with each other.
- We walk inside.

Encouraging participation

Strategies to encourage participation in physical development experiences include the following:

- Using interactions
- Acknowledging efforts and participation
- Demonstrating enthusiasm
- Participating with children

Using interactions

You can use your interaction and communication to:

- initiate physical play or activity
- encourage a child
- help the child feel comfortable and safe
- introduce new words and/or language
- involve the child in setting up and modifying activities
- assist the child to participate.

Many spontaneous and planned activities can be developed out of conversations you have with children and their responses to activities. When children are involved in open, stimulating activities, you may use their enjoyment to develop new skills and knowledge.

To achieve these goals:

- use open questions
- be prepared for the children to adapt materials or change the experience
- support experimentation
- be prepared to add more materials
- provide for all possible events; for example, cleaning up mess, slippery floors
- be curious and interested yourself and reflect this in your comments.

Acknowledging efforts and participation

Acknowledgment shows children that you value them and recognise their efforts. How and when you acknowledge children's efforts affects how they feel about themselves and can foster feelings of positive self-esteem. To provide healthy acknowledgment:

- Teach children to evaluate their own efforts by saying things like, 'Was that fun?', 'You seemed to enjoy that' or 'What do you think about what you have achieved?'
- Never use acknowledgment to compare children or make it seem like the child must meet your standards.

- Focus on the process rather than the product, and don't judge a child's work. This means that you pay attention to the time and effort applied rather than the outcome achieved. Do this by saying things like: 'You must have planned well to achieve that', 'You worked really hard on that' or 'How many materials did you use?'
- Keep it private. Avoid showing children up or make an example of them. Healthy acknowledgment is used to show value to the individual, not to show others weaknesses or demonstrate how things should be done. You might say, 'Thanks for helping out' or 'I appreciate you putting all those puzzles together'.

Demonstrating enthusiasm

Your attitudes are extremely influential during physical activity. If you don't show enthusiasm and interest in going outside to play or don't engage in physical activity, this sends a message to children that physical play is not interesting or encouraged. Children watch what you say, think and do and learn from this, so always consider what you are modelling for them.

Your enthusiasm is also demonstrated in how you prepare the environment and what activities and experiences you plan. If you plan dull, repetitive fine motor exercises, children will choose other more enjoyable activities.

The following table contains examples of how you may model enthusiasm and interact.

Situation	Modelling and interaction you may provide
Playdough with shape cutters and rolling pins	• Discussing actions of others • Rolling, pushing and pressing the dough • Discussing how enjoyable it is to squeeze or manipulate the dough • Filling a cake tin • Rolling dough into a snake
Obstacle course	• Allowing children to design the course • Following the children around the course or participating yourself (consider safety and supervision) • Using active body language when interacting; that is, if you say jump, jump up and down yourself • Laughing and smiling • Encouraging through each stage of the course

Remember that an experience's value relates to how you set it up and the materials you provide. For example, if you provide playdough on its own or with natural materials, it may be a creative and aesthetic experience as children use their imagination while manipulating the dough. If you set up the dough with tools like scissors, rollers and presses, you encourage the children to use their physical skills.

Participating with children

There are times when it is important for you to become involved in experiences to guide or model actions, such as showing a child how to use a particular piece of equipment or tool. This is called intentional teaching. For example:

- You may show a child how to hit nails with a hammer by doing it yourself.
- You may extend a child's play by asking open-ended questions that deepen the experience.
- When children are playing with clay you may ask how it feels when they squeeze and pound it.

When you are invited into an experience, you may find you are able to provide suggestions to enhance and extend the experience so the children learn through play. However, remember not to take over the children's experience; let the children guide your involvement.

Children can guide educators' involvement.

As you watch children in experiences and listen to their ideas, opportunities may arise for you to provide support and extend their activity. When you provide extensions, children remain engaged for longer periods and practise skills. It may be as simple as adding new props to a play space, suggesting a larger or smaller place for their play or sharing an idea about their play. Consider the following case studies.

Case study

- A group of 8-year-olds are creating a play about a child going to hospital. Maria, an educator, notices there aren't many materials available for this, so she suggests to the children that they come to the storeroom and see if they can find some more materials. Maria encourages the children's physical skills by suggesting bandages (which need to be rolled and wrapped) and dress-ups (which use buttons, Velcro and zips).

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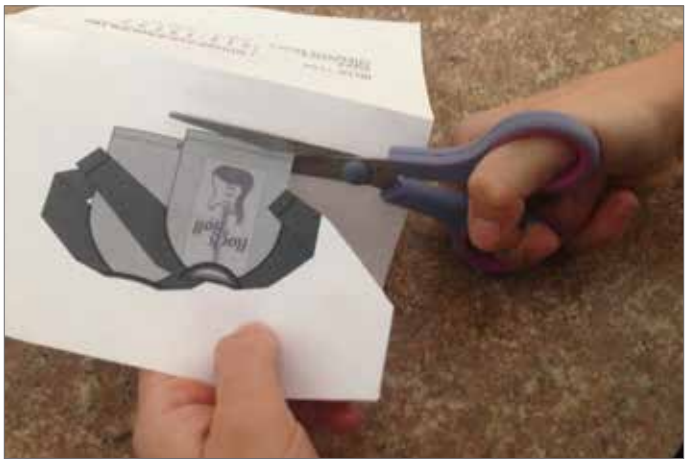
- Annabelle and Kaya (both 5 years) are using their fingers to poke and make patterns in the wet sandpit. Sharon (an educator) notices their interest and shows them how to make patterns with their fingers and hands in a traditional Aboriginal way. The girls continue to experiment by using their elbows and knees to make patterns. Later, Sharon sets up a painting activity for the children to experiment further with hand and foot printing. She also provides a range of natural materials for the children to make prints with and puts up some posters showing different styles of body painting.

Fostering fine and gross motor skills and fundamental movement skills

The success of your planned experiences relies heavily on how suitable the experiences are for the children you provide them for. When choosing experiences for fine motor, gross motor and fundamental movement skills, reflect on what you have noticed about the child and link experiences with the children's interests and level of development, so activities are enticing and safe. Provide school age children with both indoor and outdoor activities. They have a need for outdoor play where they can use their gross motor and fundamental movement skills such as running, jumping, throwing, catching, dancing and cycling. Indoor activities provide children with the opportunity to develop their fine motor skills through craft and other experiences.

Return to section 1A to reflect on more fine motor, gross motor and fundamental movement skill experiences.



Using scissors is a fine motor experience.

Providing variety and fostering emerging skills

Observing children playing helps you clarify a number of things, including:

- whether your plans and materials are suitable
- whether your play area is set up appropriately
- whether children are challenged

- current group and individual skills, abilities, needs and interests
- relationships
- motivations for learning.

You will also notice emerging skills, which are abilities that are just beginning to develop. For example, a child may be developing the ability to skip with a rope. When they can competently skip with a rope, they have this skill.

When a child is beginning to take an interest in learning a skill, you may need to provide guidance to assist the child until they have developed and mastered this skill themselves. Guide children's learning by providing a learning environment where play experiences and intentional teaching help the children develop skills. For example, if a child is learning how to tie their shoelaces you may use:

- learning through play: providing laces on dress-ups, dolls clothing and in craft activities
- intentional teaching: working one-on-one with a child when they take their shoes on or off to assist them to use the shoelaces.

Practising skills

To support emerging skills, provide spontaneous practice of physical skills, particularly as children participate in routine times. In any one day, many physical skills will be used, such as:

- washing hands
- dressing and undressing for weather conditions, toilet and/or rest
- applying sunscreen
- eating and using utensils, cups and cutlery
- manipulating play materials.

Opportunities for children to develop emerging skills vary according to factors such as:

- the physical environment
- the service's purpose
- the amount and type of support from parents
- the level of participation by parents
- the level of support available to the service from external bodies such as advice specialist services, resource workers and inclusion support workers
- how frequently and regularly the child uses the service
- the child's age.

New skills also emerge when children are introduced to ideas and materials they have not used or seen before. This type of learning environment encourages children to try new things. These opportunities challenge your planning and organisational ability as you must identify the right time to introduce new things and extend children. Some physically challenging experiences you may introduce include:

- choreographing dance moves
- gymnastics
- riding a skateboard
- using rollerblades
- throwing and catching a Frisbee
- flying a kite
- hopscotch
- different cooking styles and methods.

Practice task 2

1. Develop a plan for one child. Select a play experience that fosters the child's fine motor, gross motor or fundamental movement skills. Implement the plan and provide evidence of your preparation and implementation.
2. List one social benefit, one psychological benefit and one cognitive benefit the child would have gained during this planned experience.
3. Which Outcome of the MTOP links with this planned experience?

PC 1.3

1C Challenging abilities and promoting physical fitness

There is a fine line between providing a challenge and frustrating a child. You are likely to find this balance if you consider the development you have already seen and make activities a little more challenging than this.

It is important for children to be challenged by their experiences, as this engages them in the activity and ensures their skills are applied and being developed. Challenge is particularly important for gross motor and fundamental skill development as challenges in these areas help a child to be physically fit and feel motivated. This helps to avoid obesity and promotes the development of a healthy body.

Challenging skills and abilities

Developing challenging activities involves being able to competently extend and expand on a child's current skills. MTOP Principles encourage you to hold high expectations for children's achievement in learning. The Principle 'High expectations and equity' supports you to see that children are competent and capable, and that you should provide challenges so they can extend their skills.

The following table contains some examples of objectives that challenge the child.

What the child can do	What may challenge this child	MTOP Outcome
Steve (12 years) knows the rules of a soccer game.	Steve might be challenged by refereeing a game being played by younger children.	Sub-outcome of Outcome 3: Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing
Jessie (8 years) can skip a rope continuously.	Jessie might be challenged by jumping a rope held at each end by other children.	

To balance challenge and frustration, it is useful to prepare some ideas for use if needed; these may be useful for spontaneous activity or to increase or decrease the difficulty of a task if needed. This way, you will always be prepared to provide success for children. You can also be led by the children's ideas and their enthusiasm to try new things.

The examples in the following table show how you might change the challenging activities.

Who this challenge is for	What planned challenges occurred	What spontaneous challenges occurred
Steve will umpire a soccer game being played by younger children.	An educator supported Steve to enforce decisions and acted in the role of linesman.	• Steve made some independent decisions and ended up awarding one team a penalty shot. • Two older children asked Steve about some of the rules of soccer.
Jessie will try to jump continuously in the rope held by two other children.	Jessie: • sang a rhyming song with actions while skipping • ran out of the rope while it is turning, without stopping the rope.	• Jessie 'ran into' the rope while it was turning and continued to skip without stopping the rope. She called to other children, 'Look at me!'

Culture and physical skills

The way you present and prioritise physical play opportunities may be affected by the specific cultural and lifestyle priorities of the community your service operates in. Take these cultural considerations into account when determining how to approach health and physical fitness through exercise. For example, some communities place a high value on organic foods and active group experiences. Other communities have numerous takeaway food outlets and residents have few opportunities to be involved in sports or active pursuits.

In addition to these community factors, you need to work with family culture. Families have different patterns of eating and exercise, and some families are:

- aware of dietary and activity needs and encourage your service to promote healthy choices
- unaware of the potential dangers that unhealthy foods and lack of physical activity can have on long- and short-term health.

Families may or may not have appropriate resources to make informed choices about diet and physical fitness. Family culture impacts the choices you make in your service about menus and planned activities. Be responsive to family needs and expectations, and provide support when they need advice and direction.

Providing education to families

An essential point to introduce to children and families is the links between lack of physical exercise, childhood obesity and poor health. You may do this using newsletters, parent education forums, group times, individual discussions and meal or active play times. Share information relating to:

- health effects such as increased risk of diabetes and other illnesses
- physical activity playing a part in keeping children healthy and ensuring they have a balanced lifestyle; this relates to limiting time spent using the computer, playing video games and other sedentary activities
- balancing the energy being used and the energy being taken in from food consumed
- ensuring the body is able to function properly by reducing processed, snack and fast foods.

You can also promote healthy choices to children by:

- pointing out healthy foods and describing their benefits
- discussing physical activities and their benefits
- identifying which foods are 'sometimes' foods and which foods are healthy
- modelling healthy choices and being active yourself
- discussing sports, athletics, dance and other active choices
- developing healthy menus.

Promoting physical fitness

To promote physical fitness, you must start by providing active play that is suited to the children's needs. You must then:

- encourage children by making positive comments about their efforts
- think about safety
- include some organised activity each day; for example, a movement session or a game of basketball
- set a good example by being active yourself.

Some ways to provide for physical fitness include:

- active games
- exercises
- asking children to help set up games
- using a range of environments and equipment
- incorporating sociodramatic play
- using construction materials.

Practice task 3

Read the scenario, then answer the questions that follow.

Scenario

Felip (6 years) is using a cricket bat like a tennis racket, holding it high in the air and trying to hit a bouncing tennis ball. He lunges the bat forward and misses the tennis ball.

1. How would you modify this experience to help Felip participate in an appropriate challenge?
2. It is part of your service's procedure to link this challenge to the MTOP. What outcome from the MTOP relates to your appropriate challenge?

Chapter summary

1. Physical development relates to how children grow and develop control over their bodies.
2. Understanding theories relating to physical development and knowledge of physical development milestones helps you understand the physical needs of individual children.
3. Physical development is not an isolated area of learning. Each action that uses physical skills is also integrated with other areas of development.
4. When assessing and monitoring development, a number of methods can be used to ensure you capture the details you need to show the child's progress.
5. The success of your planned experiences relies heavily on how you set up the environment and how well it meets children's needs.
6. Fine and gross motor skills, fundamental movement skills and physical fitness can be fostered and promoted through play.
7. Developing challenging activities requires you to competently extend and expand on children's current skills.
8. Some essential points to introduce to children and families include the links between lack of physical exercise, childhood obesity and poor health.

Assessment activity 1
Fostering 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 *CHCSAC005 Foster the holistic development and wellbeing of the child in school age care*.

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

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in fostering 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

For each of the physical development aspects shown in the following table, list:

- two skills used in daily activity (including routines)
- two indoor play experiences that would develop these skills
- two outdoor play experiences that would develop these skills.

Highlight the experiences in your table that you think would improve a child's physical fitness.

Physical development aspects	Skills used in daily activity	Indoor play experiences	Outdoor play experiences
Gross motor skills	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.
Fine motor skills	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.
Eye–hand coordination	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.
Grasp	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.
Balance	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.
Fundamental movement skill	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.
Kinaesthetics	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.
Perceptual development	1. 2.	1. 2.	1. 2.

Part B

1. a) Develop a physical skills checklist that would suit a specific age group of children you work with. You will use this checklist to work with one child in that group.

   Ensure the checklist includes:

   - the age of the child
   - at least six specific physical development milestones (include fine and gross motor skills and fundamental movement skills)
   - space to record the date that the child demonstrated the skill
   - space to make comments about how the child is progressing toward achieving the milestone.

   b) Give your checklist to the child's family and have them provide any additional milestones/skills that are important to them. Amend the checklist by incorporating these changes/additions to suit the needs of their child.

2. Use the final checklist to complete the following tasks.

   a) Ask the family to complete the checklist by putting a date next to the skills/milestones they believe their child can do already.

b) Use the same checklist to observe the child. Record the skills you have observed the child demonstrating and date these. Provide any additional comments such as progress made or further details of the skills demonstrated.

3. Use the results from your checklist to complete the following:
   a) List the child's physical strengths.
   b) Describe one play experience you would provide for this child that would challenge one or a number of these physical strengths.
   c) Explain why you chose this experience.
4. Use the results from your checklist to complete the following:
   a) List the child's emerging physical skills.
   b) Describe one play experience you would provide for this child that would support one or a number of these emerging physical skills.
   c) Explain why you chose this experience.
5. Implement the play experiences from questions 3b and 4b and then answer the following questions.
   a) Was the child challenged by the experiences? How do you know?
   b) Explain how the experiences helped the child to develop physical skills.
   c) Add further information about the child's milestone achievement into the checklist.
   d) Explain how each of the following developmental aspects were included in some way during your experiences:
      - Social
      - Psychological
      - Cognitive

Part C

Prepare a report of 1–2 pages explaining how you promote MTOP sub-Outcome of Outcome 3 in your daily work with the children in your service, 'Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing'.

In your report:

- explain the organisational standards, policies and procedures you follow to work towards this sub-Outcome
- link the information you provide to at least two development theorists or core principles of development.

In addition, demonstrate how you plan and provide experiences that foster and challenge children's physical skills that are connected to this sub-Outcome by using a range of documentation methods, such as:

- photos
- learning stories
- anecdotal reports
- diary entries
- jottings
- samples of work
- checklists
- sociograms
- other methods as agreed with your trainer/assessor.

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
Fostering social development

Children's immediate carers, particularly their family, along with those from the wider social environment, are the primary influences on social development. Educators are responsible for building on children's social skills and knowledge by providing developmentally appropriate experiences and activities; interactive environments; guidance; support; and ongoing assessment and monitoring of social skills and development. In-depth knowledge of a range of development theories and how they relate to social development and work practices provides the basis from which to monitor social skill development, and plan and deliver appropriate programs and experiences for each child.

In this chapter you will learn about:

2A Understanding development theories and monitoring social skills

2B Providing opportunities for social interaction

2C Encouraging a sense of community and cooperation

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

PC 2.1

2A Understanding development theories and monitoring social skills

Many of the Principles, Practices and Outcomes of *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia* (MTOP) are linked to social development. As children develop confidence, relationships, responsibility, control of their feelings and the ability to work with others, the understanding you show enables you to provide an environment that meets these growing needs and encourages, supports and challenges their skills.

Social skills and development

Social skills are the means by which people communicate and interact. They include cultural rules that are learnt and involve both verbal and nonverbal actions. Social development refers to the learning of social skills, including how to behave in culturally acceptable ways.

Play is a means for children to practise their social skills and to use skills that assist them in their everyday communications with others. Dramatic play in particular helps children to simplify events; act out things they are trying to understand, experiment and take on roles they would not usually experience. Their relationships with others may be explored through play to investigate what it may be like to be more popular, be famous, have rights not usually given, or to care for others as they wish they were cared for or in other ways they understand are appropriate.

When you monitor children's development against milestones and/or the MTOP Outcomes, you ensure their abilities and the things they already understand, know and can do, are being identified. You are also taking note of the skills they are developing. By recognising and recording these, you are gathering assessments for learning that assist you to provide an ongoing and responsive curriculum.

Further to this, theories of development allow you to understand why children do what they do; to draw on experience that is research-based; and to understand the way the child functions.

Theories of children's social development

Social development is defined by a range of approaches and theories that guide you to identify the milestones that children are expected to achieve and to provide an understanding of why children approach social interaction in the way they do.

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 and infants are able to form attachments with a number of people; usually the attachment with a primary caregiver (usually a parent or guardian) is strongest, then any number of other attachments may follow.

Other attachments are equally as important to the child's social and emotional development, and as each child commences education and care, your goal is to develop an attachment relationship. Children who are securely attached usually experience less distress than other children. You will notice that young children who are securely attached demonstrate the following behaviours:

- Proximity maintenance – a desire to be near the person the child is attached to
- Safe haven – returning to the attachment figure for comfort and safety in the face of fear or a threat
- Secure base – the attachment figure acts as a base of security from which the child can explore the surrounding environment
- Separation distress – anxiety that occurs in the absence of the attachment figure

Bowlby also identified the following range of attachment characteristics in children. These are of value to consider when working with school age children.

Secure attachment characteristics as a child	Ambivalent attachment characteristics as a child	Avoidant attachment characteristics as a child	Disorganised attachment characteristics as a child
• Develops independence and autonomy • Able to separate from the attachment figure • Seeks comfort from the attachment figure if hurt or frightened	• Wary of strangers • Becomes greatly distressed when the attachment figure leaves • Does not appear to be comforted when the attachment figure returns	• May avoid the person they are most attached to • Does not seek much comfort from the person they are most attached to • Shows little or no preference between the person they are most attached to and a stranger	• Shows a mixture of avoidant and resistant behaviours • May appear dazed, confused or apprehensive • Independence and autonomy difficult to develop

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Secure attachment characteristics as a child	Ambivalent attachment characteristics as a child	Avoidant attachment characteristics as a child	Disorganised attachment characteristics as a child
• Have trusting, lasting relationships • Have a high self-esteem • Able to share feelings with others • Seeks social support	• Struggles to develop independence and autonomy • Reluctant to develop close relationships • Becomes overly distressed when a relationship ends • Dependent on others to meet their emotional needs	• Independence and autonomy developed as a coping mechanism • May have intimacy problems • Does not share emotions in social or romantic relationships • Unable or unwilling to share feelings with others • Resistant rather than independent	• May take on a parenting role • Some children take on the role of parent to their educator • Become depended upon rather than independent

You can assist children in developing a greater depth of attachment if you:

- help children to understand the pattern of the day; for example, by telling them what is happening next
- use routine opportunities, such as meal and snack times, for one-on-one interactions
- make the child feel important throughout the entire day
- talk with children if you are unable be near them
- use singing, poems and rhymes as a way to comfort children
- ensure that educators remain consistent; it is detrimental in building relationships and security if there are frequent educator changes
- work at children's eye level.

Behaviourist theory

Behaviourists believe that the environment and interactions alone influence behaviour and learning. If positive responses are provided, the child learns and therefore increases their understanding. If negative responses are provided then the child ceases the behaviour. This theory (also called operant conditioning) is based on a system of reward and punishment, and particularly on positive reinforcement.

A number of theorists have worked with this theory, including Pavlov (1849–1936), Skinner (1904–1990), Thorndike (1874–1949) and Watson (1878–1958). Each has a specific take on the theory, but all are based on positive reinforcement. Consider the following case study.

Case study

Rosie is 6 years old. Last week she spoke in front of the group in a group discussion and her educator told her how well she did and that she is very clever. Due to this positive reinforcement Rosie now wants to talk in front of the group again.

Ecological approach

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917–2005) developed the ecological approach to childhood development, where the entire environment and any connecting or influencing forces impact on all aspects of a child's development.

The connecting or influencing forces that may impact a child include:

- government decisions and laws
- parent workplaces
- culture and traditions of parents, carers, educators and the community
- events that occur in the family and community
- settings and their values
- carers, educators, babysitters, relations and family members that make up the child's world.

The ecological approach highlights the need for you to consider the broader situation of each child, their family and the other influences in their lives. It is represented by structures that comprise central forces that influence the child, as described in the following table.

Ecological structure	What this includes	Some examples
Microsystem ('micro' means small)	Relationships that include face-to-face interaction between the child and others	• Home • Education and care services • School • Relatives • Friends • Sports (and other extracurricular) groups
Mesosystem ('meso' means in the middle)	Relationships between two or more settings that the child is involved in	• Service and parents • Service and school • Relatives and parents

Exosystem ('exo' means outside or external)	The child does not directly participate in these relationships or settings but they have a direct influence on the child	• Parent's workplace and associated conditions • Community support services • Support organisations • Government
Macrosystem ('macro' means large)	These systems influence the culture and beliefs of the family	• Religion • Laws • Customs • Barriers
Chronosystem 'chrono' means time)	The time frame in which the child's life is set; for example, 2014	

Friendship theory

The concept of friendship has changed in recent times as social relationships have changed and each individual identifies acquaintances, general friendship and close friends differently.

Despite this, Robert Selman's (1957–) ideas on friendship stages are still useful as his guidelines help demonstrate the importance of these relationships to children at various stages and identify ways to support the development of peer relationships. It is noted that despite the stages of friendship, even toddlers interact differently with friends than with non-friends.

Friendship is a valuable development tool, as through friendship and relationships children learn about:

- compromise
- sharing
- decision-making
- problem-solving
- how their emotions affect others
- leadership
- winning and losing
- social and pro-social behaviours
- viewpoints and perspectives
- similarities and differences
- character and personality.

Friendship is a valuable development milestone.

The following guide to friendship stages is based on the age and stage of children you care for, although Selman's theory extends into young adulthood.

Stage	Characteristics
Pre-friendship (0–3 years) Momentary playmates	• Relationships with adults are most important at this stage as needs must be met • The child has momentary physical playmates • Not able to articulate their ideas about friendship
Stage 1 (3–7 years) What's in it for me?	• Relationships begin to turn to peers • Not able to understand that others have different perspectives • A friend is someone who is in the same space at the same time and sharing the same activity • Friendships are often temporary or related to needs • Enduring friendship is not understood • One-way feelings or friendship actions are acceptable

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Stage	Characteristics
Stage 2 (6–12 years) Two way, fair weather cooperation	• Realises different perspectives occur but has trouble understanding two or more perspectives at once • A friend is someone who does something that pleases or is helpful • A close friend is someone the child knows better than others • Cooperation and some reciprocal action is evident
Stage 3 (10–15 years) Caring and sharing	• Friendship is a mutual agreement; it includes intimacy and a continuing relationship • The child can view others from a third party point of view and give their opinion • They know how to compromise and will do so • May want to do everything with a particular friend
Stage 4 (12–adult) Friends through thick and thin	• Perspectives can be shared including common interests and deeper feelings • Emotional closeness is important • May feel possessive if their friend has other friends • Accept that friends are fun and might do nice things for each other

Friendship involves forming a stable and intimate relationship with a peer. Popularity involves gaining acceptance among peers. Popular children are seen to be friendly, helpful and considerate, and become popular by:

- making attempts to enter groups
- initially going along with play or others ideas
- not asking too many questions
- not trying to change a group's agenda.

Popularity and friendship, including peer acceptance, both contribute to a child's wellbeing as they:

- serve as a context in which children develop
- assist in the development of leadership skills, assertiveness and conflict resolution strategies
- provide a safe context for self-exploration
- meet their needs for intimacy and social support.

You can assist children to develop positive friendship relationships by:

- respecting each child's friendship choices
- understanding that some children have large groups of friends while others have fewer close friends
- acknowledging that some children make friends easily and quickly, while others make friends slowly
- letting them choose their own friendships
- encouraging children to spend time together
- providing free play time to develop relationships
- supporting them to resolve problems, conflicts and other issues.

You can assist children to understand what friendship means and to treat all people fairly by:

- avoiding the phrase 'We are all friends'; children will not be able to understand the word 'friends' if you use it so generally, so try saying, 'We all need to care for each other'.
- avoiding using phrases like 'Be gentle with your friends' when aggression occurs. By using this phrase you are advising the child that if someone is not your friend then it is okay to be rough. Try saying, 'Be gentle with people' or 'Nobody likes to be hurt' instead.

Moral theory

Lawrence Kohlberg (1927–1987) based his theory of moral development on another theory relating to cognitive development (Piaget). Kohlberg identified seven stages of moral thinking that cover all life stages. The three stages that are shown in the following table relate to children of the age you may care for. The stages are sequential and are worked through without any being skipped.

Level 1: Preconventional morality **Our morality is shaped by the standards of adults and the consequences of breaking their rules.** **Authority is outside of us and the consequences of our actions tell us what is right and wrong.**		
Stage 0: Egocentric judgment	**Stage 1: Obedience and punishment**	**Stage 2: Individualism and exchange**
• The child makes a judgment of right or wrong based on what they want or what is helpful to them. • There is no concept of rules or obligations.	• The child sees morality as something external to themselves. • The child responds to cultural rules and labels of good and bad, right and wrong.	• The child realises that different individuals have different viewpoints. • The child sees that they need to make their own judgment about what is right or wrong.

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Stage 0: Egocentric judgment	Stage 1: Obedience and punishment	Stage 2: Individualism and exchange
• The child has no concept of needing to obey or conform.	• The child sees rules as things that adults impose or 'hand down'. • The child sees physical consequences as being linked to what is good or bad. • Punishment is linked with doing wrong things and the child wishes to avoid punishment.	• Punishment is a risk that you should avoid. • Elements of fairness, reciprocity and equal sharing are present. • Concepts of loyalty, gratitude and justice are not yet understood.

Level 2: Conventional morality **We start to develop our own moral compass.** **Authority is not questioned.** **Reasoning relates to the group in which we belong.**	
Stage 3: Good interpersonal relationships	**Stage 4: Maintaining the social order**
• The standards of our role models are influential • Approval from others helps to create moral judgment • Whether an action is moral or not is judged by the intention	• Wider societal rules are understood • Decisions about upholding laws and avoiding guilt emerge • Respect for authority and maintaining social order are important • We want to earn regard from others; we want them to see us as moral

This moral theory supports the following strategies for assisting children to develop moral understanding:

- Offer discussion groups for children to solve different problems.
- Encourage children to be assertive.
- Foster choice.
- Include children in the development of limits and guidelines.
- Hold children accountable for their actions.
- Explain situations that occur that demonstrate right or wrong, including why this is so.
- Provide warm, secure relationships to enable the child to distinguish the difference between good and bad feelings and actions.
- Step in when you see a moral issue about to occur and help children to understand the issue.
- Model good character.

- Be clear about your values.
- Show respect for others.
- Demonstrate and encourage manners (this is also called pro-social behaviour).
- Interact as much as possible.
- Involve children in community activities.
- Discuss celebrations, holidays and cultural events and show respect for what they mean to others.
- Take advantage of 'windows of opportunity' or 'teachable moments' to guide children morally.
- Provide children with responsibilities appropriate to their age and stage.
- Provide a wide range of positive activities.

Play stages theory

Children develop many social skills through their play experiences where they have opportunities to interact in a variety of situations and where they learn to cooperate with others, choose activities, make decisions and experience failure and success.

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

As you observe children at play you should get a sense of how play impacts on a child's self-esteem, independence and sense of achievement. You should also see how play enables children to better understand themselves, their fears, joys and frustrations and how they express themselves, relate to their communities and learn about how others express themselves in different ways.

In play you can see children:

- learning and practising social skills, including taking turns, sharing, cooperating and setting rules and guidelines
- using cognitive skills, including negotiating, thinking and solving problems
- expressing psychological aspects of themselves, including sharing feelings and working out emotional issues.

Due to the complicated nature of social development, a 2-year-old doesn't have the social skills to play effectively with others, so they use a different type of social play than a 12-year-old who happily plays in a group. People who study children's play have noted these differences and have classified them into play types.

Theorist Mildred Parten (1902–1970) defined types of play that reflect the social dimensions. They include the social play stages described in the following information.

Solitary play

Solitary play includes situations where children play individually and do not have any social contact with others. Children under 2 years play in this state all the time. However, all children engage in solitary play as they enjoy time alone to pursue their individual interests.

An environment set up for solitary play should have activities that are for one child only, such as a craft activity, drawing, a computer game or a puzzle. Space that is suitable for one child to work at should also be provided, such as a small table with one chair, a cushion with an activity, or an easel. If individual spaces are not possible, ensure that each child at least has enough room to participate in their activity unhindered by others.

Parallel play

Children enjoy being near others and participating in the same activity. An example of parallel play is when two children are at a playdough table and are both squeezing and poking the dough, but not interacting. All children may choose to play side-by-side in parallel play, even though they have the skills to play together.

To set up for parallel play, you should provide activities where small groups of children can work in the same or similar play activities independently, such as:

- puzzles
- collage (cutting and pasting)
- car mats
- blocks
- painting
- drawing
- library activities
- hammering
- sandpit play.

Children may choose to play side-by-side.

Associative play

Associative play usually occurs when children are between ages 3 and 5. It is called associative play as children are beginning to associate with each other. As a child's language skills increase and improve, they also become more aware of other children and are better able to communicate. A child may play with others at activities, speak briefly to them, laugh together and react to them. Although these children are playing together, you may find their interactions 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 isn't organised and the children don't talk together about plots or particular character themes.

To encourage associative play, provide props for imaginative play or activities that require children to share materials with others; for example, car mats, block corners and dress-up areas all give children the opportunity to associate with each other.

Cooperative play

Between the ages of 3 to 5 years, children become less focused on themselves and their interest in others increases. As 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: '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!' As the children are working together and the play is lasting longer, this is called cooperative play.

By providing for role-play, imaginative or dramatic play, you can encourage cooperative play. You may include dress-ups, doll's houses, cubbies, home furniture or other props that children can use in their dramatic roles. Car mats, block corners and dress-up areas all provide children the opportunity to develop ideas for imaginative play.

Play with rules

As well as their involvement in cooperative play, school age children become interested in more structured games – those with clearly defined rules. Children often choose to play these games during their leisure time at school or in school age care programs 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 rope games
- hopscotch
- cricket
- football
- netball.

You can help support play with rules by ensuring all 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.

Avoid competitive games where possible as they may reduce some children's opportunities to practise their skills. In competitive games the children with the greatest skills get lots of practice where the children with poor or lesser skills 'go out' or are eliminated early. This not only reduces practice time and provides little chance for developing skills, but it can also be damaging to self-esteem and even see children becoming bored, upset or angry.

By incorporating non-competitive games you ensure all children participate in some activity most of the time and that there is not a winning team or winning child but a group of children all developing skills. The need for rules is still satisfied.

Here is an example of how a game of musical statues can be adapted.

Example

Commence the game with all children moving to the music. When you stop the music the child who stops moving last can come out of the game and be in control of stopping and starting the music (if able), or directing the remaining children into movement ideas (for example, jump, spin, do star jumps and so on) until the music stops. The child who stops moving last comes out of the game and the child who missed the last turn goes back into the game again. This means that all children are occupied and all children continue to practise their skills. It also means that the game can continue for the period of time chosen.

Unoccupied play

Children of all ages can undertake unoccupied play, which involves a child not playing as such, but being occupied watching something of momentary interest. When there is nothing exciting taking place, the child may play with their own body or their clothing, get on and off chairs, stand around, follow an educator or sit in one spot glancing around the room. Unoccupied play may not seem important, but you must respect a child's decision not to participate and also see the value in a child's observation of an environment and the people in it.

Onlooker play

Children of all ages can also become involved in onlooker play. A child who spends time watching other children at play is using 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 observing particular groups 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. Just as with unoccupied play, you must respect a child's decision not to participate and also see the value in a child's observation of an environment and the people in it.

Social learning theory

Albert Bandura's (1925–) social learning theory is also known as the social cognitive theory as it links a person's environment, behaviour and psychological processes.

Bandura believes that a child's (and adult's) behaviour is affected by the environment (essentially modelling), and that this modelling does not cause learning but rather motivates us to demonstrate what we have learnt. He believes there are certain stages required if modelling is to influence behaviour. These stages include attention, retention, reproduction and motivation. The following table elaborates on each of these stages.

Modelling stage	What this means	Positive modelling	Negative modelling
Attention	We need to pay attention to gain learning from modelling; it also helps if the modelling takes into account aesthetics – being attractive and enjoyable.	If positive actions and interactions are modelled in ways that are encouraging and enthusiastic, then children will want to reproduce these as they will see the benefit.	If negative actions and interactions are modelled and these are shown to 'work' in achieving a goal or to have an influence, then these negatives may be modelled.
Retention	To learn from any modelling, you need to pay attention and retain the information gained; this is where the cognitive processes of imagery and memory are important.	Consistent and repeated modelling of positive actions and interactions allow children to take on positive actions as the modelling practices are continually demonstrated and so remembered.	The lack of positive modelling or consistent and repeated negative modelling is remembered more clearly due to its continued demonstration.

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Modelling stage	What this means	Positive modelling	Negative modelling
Reproduction	To reproduce what has been modelled we need to have the skill to do this; interestingly, skills can increase through imagination as well as practice.	Positive actions require skill that needs to be supported and children need encouragement and guidance to reproduce skills such as problem-solving, negotiation and conflict resolution. They may also need support to play in positive ways.	Negative actions are sometimes easier to reproduce as they often require minimal skill. As an example, it is easier to hit another child and grab a toy than to problem-solve and negotiate unless you have developed these skills.
Motivation	The motivation that gets us to reproduce modelled actions involves encouragement or reinforcement.	We can be motivated to reproduce positive actions that are modelled if we link them to positive reinforcements such as promised or expected rewards, imagined rewards or memory of the model being rewarded. In this case a reward does not necessarily mean that a 'prize' is received; it really means that something is gained from the action such as a positive outcome or an enjoyable experience.	We can be motivated to reproduce negative actions that are modelled if we link them to positive reinforcements just as positive actions. When negative modelling receives positive reinforcement, difficult behaviour can develop and this is why we must consider what children gain from negative behaviour when developing behaviour plans.

Bandura believes that punishment is not an effective reinforcement tool as it can often turn into an attention gaining activity, which may then be used as positive reinforcement. He suggests that the strategies outlined in the following table are useful for developing self-control and hence positive behaviour.

Strategy	Implementation
Self-control therapy	Assist the child to understand what behaviour is inappropriate and what behaviour is desired. You then assist and support the child to manage this behaviour using reflection and also by addressing issues as they arise through identifying triggers and changing the environment where possible. Self-control therapy relates clearly to the behaviour guidance planning you have or will do in working through the diploma learner guides.
Modelling therapy	This strategy relies on you demonstrating to the child how a situation may be dealt with in a positive way. You may do this by explaining, giving examples, undertaking pretend play or modelling in your own situation.

Sociocultural theory

Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) believed that social interaction not only increases levels of knowledge, but it also changes children's thoughts and behaviour. He also believed that when children are exposed to a variety of social and cultural experiences their world becomes richer and their perceptions of the world become more open and positive.

The sociocultural theory suggests there are three ways that learning is passed to individual children:

- imitative learning where the child copies another person
- instructed learning where the child is directed and then puts the information to use
- collaborative learning where the child works with their peer group, cooperating and learning about each other to achieve goals.

Vygotsky's 'zone of proximal development' also demonstrates how children learn socially and in other areas of development. This theory shows that if scaffolding is provided and the child is ready, then soon after, they can develop and master the skill themselves.

The following case study illustrates scaffolding that shows how social interaction and support can help children develop skills.

Case study

Belinda (an educator) has previously observed Josie (aged 6 years) at the climbing frame. She climbed to the top of the ladder, grabbed a rung of the monkey bar, but, although she wanted to swing out, she was unable to release her feet from the ladder.

Josie is demonstrating an emerging skill – using the monkey bars. Belinda notices this skill by observing Josie.

By supporting Josie's emerging skills through scaffolding, Josie will gain confidence and competence over time, until she can independently use the monkey bars.

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Zone of proximal development – scaffolding (guidance)

Josie's educators will help Josie to use the monkey bars safely and confidently – they will provide gross motor strengthening activities like running and doing gymnastics; and they will stand close to the climbing frame when Josie is on the ladder to give her support and encourage her efforts.

If Josie has trouble leaving the ladder to hang on the bars, technology will help her as there are extra soft fall mats that can be used to give Josie a greater feeling of safety; the educators are also able to stand close and hold her body slightly to encourage her to plunge off the ladder and hang.

Josie might see gymnasts using equipment on television and she may also see pictures of children using different types of gymnastics equipment.

Josie's parents may erect a gym set at home or take Josie to the park; they may provide space and time for her to strengthen her body and show enthusiasm at Josie's efforts at gymnastics activities.

Josie will watch her peers and see how they use the monkey bars and what they can use the bars for. Josie's peers may encourage her use of the bars and model their skills.

Reciprocal teaching

Another aspect of sociocultural theory involves reciprocal teaching, which provides a learning environment where open and frequent interaction occurs between the child and educator. The educator in this model will alternate leadership of the conversation with the child, until the child becomes confident in this role and assumes a leadership and instructional role themselves.

All of these ideas demonstrate you should:

- challenge children and provide ideas and activities that take their learning to the next stage
- guide children to look for answers by imitating what they see in others, listening to instruction and working as part of a group
- provide opportunities for them to expand their current knowledge base.

The sociocultural theory shows a link between social, communication and cognitive development and how cultural experiences provide opportunities for learning.

Pro-social behaviour

Pro-social behaviour relates to the successful and appropriate manner in which we interact; it also relates to the voluntary behaviour that benefits another person by helping, sharing, giving, comforting or rescuing; showing sympathy and kindness; showing positive verbal and physical contact; showing concern; taking the perspective of another person; and cooperating.

This helping behaviour is motivated by altruism, which means that any motivation is based on the benefits another person gains and that the person helping is not looking for personal reward or acknowledgment.

When you assist children to develop pro-social behaviour you are also helping them to succeed in friendships and gain group acceptance. You can do this by helping children to:

- notice social cues
- interpret social cues
- formulate social goals
- generate possible problem-solving strategies
- evaluate probable effectiveness of strategies
- take peer perspectives
- have knowledge of social rules
- remember past experiences and link these to expectations for future experiences.

Temperament

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 depict their temperament.

As children develop socially and emotionally, various positive and negative life experiences impact them and their temperament may change as they begin to develop a personality that is not only based on inborn traits.

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

Many children have an easy temperament.

Core principles of development

A number of core principles that relate to social development are outlined in the following table.

Principle of development	Description	Examples of links with social development
Belonging, being and becoming	Children learn best when they feel safe and valued.	• Children's interactions with you will be limited if they do not feel a sense of belonging. Their involvement in experiences will be limited as they will not be comfortable exploring and feeling curious.
Sequence of development (maturation)	Development progresses in a step-by-step pattern that advances from simple to complex.	• Children play individually and with others. • Children use their imagination to use items in various ways. These imaginings become more complex as the child gains experience.
Rate of development	Children develop at a different pace.	• Between the ages of 5 and 12 years, children begin to see that others have different perspectives.
Neurological or brain development	Brain and spinal cord development links to the acquisition of skills.	• Listening to others. • Developing an understanding of other people's needs and what is right or wrong.
Critical periods and scaffolding	There are times when the opportunity to learn is at its most crucial. If these times are not taken advantage of, the child may miss an important aspect of learning. Children are drawn to challenging experiences and enjoy intentional teaching.	• Access to other children to develop child-stage understanding of people.
Heredity and environment, and how children use active learning	Also known as nature versus nurture, this relates to the aspects that are genetically programmed, in contrast to how the environment influences development. You provide rich environments for children to learn.	• Access to play. • Attitudes of parents/carers to play.

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Principle of development	Description	Examples of links with social development
Holistic development	All domains of development are closely related and interlinked.	• Learning to pretend play: – Physical – acting out roles and completing tasks (such as washing dishes and dressing up) – Psychological – expressing feelings in the roles taken – Cognitive – understanding the role, memorising actions, imitating and imagining – Social – communicating with co-players, expressing their ideas
Play as learning	Play is used by children to learn.	• Social skills develop in: – dramatic play – role-play, interacting with others – group times – speaking in front of others, having turns, sharing ideas.
Individualised learning	Children learn in different ways and demonstrate what they know in different ways.	• Some children learn through group activities, others prefer one-to-one contact and direct instruction. • Some children do not notice things they can learn until they are brought to their attention.

Stages of social development

Theories of social development support milestones that occur in progression. Some theories that demonstrate progressive milestones are Parten's social play stages, Kohlberg's moral theory and Selman's friendship theory.

A guide to some of the most common social development milestones is provided in the following table.

Age/stage	Social milestone
5–7 years	• Maintains friendships and chooses own friends • May barter for friends; for example, 'I will be your best friend if you let me have the first turn' or 'I will never be your friend if you talk to her'. • Begins to apply rules to games • Directs other children in play • Tells jokes and tries to be funny • Fantasy play occurs • Enjoys solitary play • May sulk if they lose • Finds routine reassuring
7–9 years	• Is sensitive to criticism and failure • Blames others when things go wrong • Has a confidante • Enjoys competitive sports • Able to discuss problems • Likes to debate • Can be self-critical • Is loyal to teams and groups • Likes to be a member of a group • Sees that authority figures can make mistakes • Things are right or wrong • Capable of taking care of themselves • Understands that they can improve skills with practice or learning
9–12 years	• Likes to have secrets and rituals • May show interest in those of the opposite sex and will show this by teasing, joking or showing off • Looks to their peers to gain an impression of their own self-esteem and identity • Often plays in pairs or small groups • Usually plays with others of the same gender • Relationships with siblings are inconsistent; they may fight at home but will defend them outside the home • Is developing independence along their with sense of identity

Factors influencing individual social development

There are many different ways that adults and children interact. Needs, interests and developmental stages influence these interactions. The activities you provide can reflect these influences and also contribute new aspects.

The influences on social development are described in the following table.

Influence	Description
Age-related stages	Some areas of social development are linked with the child's age, as they relate to their developing use of imagination or understanding of concepts that are difficult to grasp. For example, children's development allows them to learn how to play games with rules.
Gender	Gender can influence social development as children practise skills that relate to their interests. Although each child has their own likes and dislikes, there are interests that are more common to boys than girls, and often the interests of boys are less interactive or verbal than those of girls. Girls are also more likely to communicate with each other verbally and therefore often have a higher level of social interaction skills.
Temperament and personality	This affects the way children approach activities and people, and how involved they may be. Their level of understanding of their impact on others can influence relationships.
Interests	If a child's interests include social pursuits, they will be practising skills more regularly than a child whose interests are not social or who finds social activity unattractive as an option for enjoyment.
Peer group acceptance	How peers see the child and how the child portrays themselves to their peers influences the involvement they have and practice they gain interacting.
Cultural beliefs and practices	Family life experience is also an influence. Known as the child's cultural capital, it represents not only their home lifestyle, but also links heavily with the child's community connections and their individual interests, abilities and needs. Cultural capital has an immense influence on each child's abilities as they experience and are affected by the expectations of their family and community as well as their environment and social opportunities.
Environment	An environment can be rich in social opportunities and encourage children to participate with others in a collaborative activity, group experiences, individual sharing with adults and problem-solving.
Ability	Children with autism spectrum disorders will have degrees of difficulty in understanding social cues and may lack interest in other people. They may have great difficulty making or maintaining friendships.

Monitoring social development and skills

A variety of recording methods can be used to collect information about a child's social skills and development and the culture and lifestyle they contribute, share or have extended. Social interaction occurs throughout the day, so records of interactions may be taken during:

- formally organised activities
- unplanned or spontaneous interaction
- meetings and group discussions
- travelling on excursions
- conversations with others
- care routines
- excursions
- setting up
- sociodramatic play
- construction play
- art and craft activities.

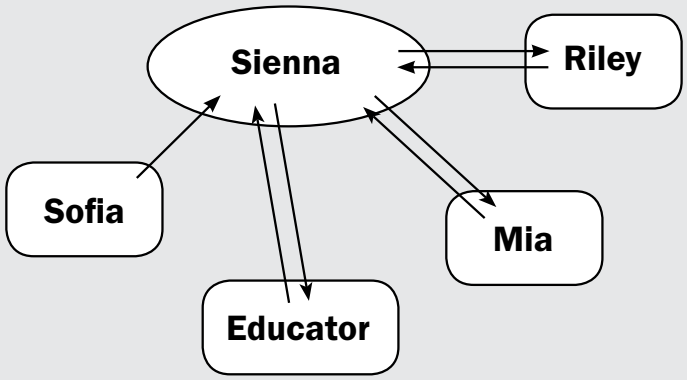
To ensure your records contain useful information about each child, you should base them on developmental milestones or stages; approaches or theories; cultural capital and interests.

Most commonly you will reflect on the MTOP Outcomes as the NQF requires you to monitor the child's progression towards these Outcomes.

The following case study shows how a sociogram has been used to monitor a child's interactions and then how this was measured against MTOP Outcomes.

Case study

Oliver (an educator) wants to monitor the interactions of Sienna during a 10-minute morning snack time. He uses a sociogram as this is an effective way to record lots of information about interactions. The sociogram looks like the following and demonstrates that on this occasion Sienna spoke to the educator most. It also demonstrates that Sienna interacted with Riley, but did not respond to Sofia's interaction.



The previous case study shows Oliver that Sienna:

- initiated conversations with educators – Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity; sub-outcome: Children feel safe, secure, and supported
- interacted with a range of people – Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators; sub-outcome: Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.

Recording development

Records of social skills and development provide you with data you can use to plan and provide appropriate social activities, experiences and interactions.

Children may require encouragement and assistance to develop skills in initiating and developing contact with others. To ensure children are encouraged to interact with a variety of people in a range of ways, you first need to gain an understanding of who the children already interact with and how they do so.

You need to record information about children to use it to provide a variety of opportunities to participate in different types of social interactions. The types of social interaction children may be involved in include exchanging information, achieving goals, solving problems or conflicts, and working together.

Monitoring

The details you collect when monitoring will assist you to plan and provide opportunities for social interaction. You need to take into consideration the type of social situation you are monitoring, then choose the most relevant method for recording this.

Social situations you may monitor were discussed earlier in this section.

In the following case study an educator monitors a child's social interaction then uses the information to plan experiences suited to the child.

Case study

By observing Leopold and keeping records of his needs, interests and developmental stage, Wilma (an educator) learns that Leopold:

- enjoys interacting with two particular children
- plays in a cooperative play stage
- can speak in front of a small group.

Wilma can then provide activities and experiences that extend Leopold's interaction skills. Wilma plans:

- small group play spaces where the three children can work together in cooperative play
- for Leopold to take on some responsibility and leadership roles within the group, serving lunch and snacks.

The social skills to monitor mostly relate to:

- general interactions
- individual patterns, needs, abilities and experiences
- relationships with others
- group involvement
- cooperation, decision-making and conflict resolution.

By monitoring these areas you can identify:

- the way each child interacts with others
- how their interactions alter when communicating with different people
- how you can provide for increased interaction
- how you can support the child to interact with those who are important to their learning and wellbeing
- the types of activities and experiences that would benefit the child or help them explore areas of interest.

When you understand how a group works and how each individual child operates within different groupings, you can ensure that your planning meets their needs and extends their skills appropriately.

Here are some social aspects to monitor and some recording types you may find useful.

Important aspects to monitor	Recording types
• Developmental milestones or stages (needs and abilities) • Modelling • Attachment or security • Play stages • Skills in problem-solving, negotiation, collaboration and conflict resolution • Moral understanding and use • Friendships • Pro-social behaviour • Attitudes to difference • Gender attitudes • Implementation and use of cultural capital • Environmental effects: time, space, materials, people • Behaviour and play patterns throughout the day • Behaviour in relation to other individuals and groups • Group involvement • Individual time	• Photographs • Learning stories • Video or DVD recordings • Audio tapes • Checklists • Sociograms • Diaries, journals, logs and communication books • Event samples • Anecdotal records • Incidental records • Time samples • Records of questioning; for example, graffiti sheets, daily evaluation sheets, surveys, questionnaires and forms

Assessing social skills and development

In Chapter 1, the steps for assessing children's progress toward the MTOP Outcomes were set out. They included:

1. Gathering and recording information about the child.
2. Using MTOP to identify which of the five Outcomes your observation record links to.
3. Identifying a specific sub-outcome of MTOP.
4. Clarifying your selection by referring to the evidence examples that are provided for the identified MTOP Outcome.

MTOP Outcomes most commonly related to social skills and development include the following:

- Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity
  - Children feel safe, secure, and supported
  - Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency
  - Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities
  - Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect
- Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world
  - Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation
  - Children respond to diversity with respect
  - Children become aware of fairness
  - Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment
- Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
  - Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing
- Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners
  - Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
  - Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating
  - Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials
- Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators
  - Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes

Practice task 4

Choose one child who is participating as part of a small group of children in your care and do the following:

- Record the age of the children.
- Map the group interactions during a discussion using a sociogram.
- Identify the social play stage the children are participating in.
- Identify which Outcome of the MTOP links to this observation.
- Outline the physical, cognitive and psychological learning you noticed taking place.

PC 2.2
PC 2.3
PC 2.4
PC 2.6

2B Providing opportunities for social interaction

Children will participate in social interaction with you spontaneously and also during planned discussions as part of a small or large group experience where you have children share their ideas. There are a variety of experiences you can offer children to provide opportunities for communicating and learning.

Providing play environments for interaction

Research has demonstrated that play is one of the best ways for children to learn social skills. Educators have many opportunities during the program to help children to develop their social skills while engaging in routine tasks. The social play time you plan for children influences the quality of interactions they have with each other and provides messages about how interactions are acknowledged and encouraged by you.

To ensure your messages are appropriate it is important that you consider time, space and safety. These features were discussed in detail in Chapter 1.

Time

The routine or timetable of your service must be unhurried and uninterrupted. When children are rushed through play they don't have an opportunity to fully experience the activity and may become frustrated. Children also need time to interact with each other in unplanned activities. Allowing time to do this assists children to create and maintain friendships.

Space

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

- Opportunities – to undertake the type of play appropriate for their age and stage.
- Choices – the space available should assist children to choose an activity that interests them; therefore, there must be sufficient play spaces available for children to have a choice of two or three different activities.
- Challenges – the space you arrange should offer a variety of possibilities and should encourage children to collaborate, think creatively, solve problems and make decisions together. The space should be flexible to allow children to play in self-created play or to combine two or more play experiences. For example, children may move the animals in the sand trough to the block area and extend their own play and interaction.

Some theories you have studied can guide you in how to set up an environment well prepared for social activity. These theories suggest it is important that:

- materials match the child's interests, needs and abilities
- there are enough materials for the number of children in the group
- good quality materials are provided
- materials reflect the cultural capital of those in care
- materials introduce new concepts
- aesthetics have been considered.

In addition, there should be spaces where friends can interact and play in different activities, and play stages are accommodated; for example, spaces for solitary play, cooperative play and games with rules.

Challenging play spaces encourage collaboration.

Safety

Your knowledge of child development and the individual abilities of children allow you to consider the safety of the environment and identify how it should operate and be presented. In terms of social development, this means there should be enough equipment to allow children to participate.

Safety must also be considered in relation to the type of materials that are used for dramatic play. You must ensure they are sturdy and in good condition, and placed in positions that allow their use to be maximised.

Children who are in a safe environment have more opportunities to explore, work together, develop and achieve goals together and feel secure in their play.

Encouraging participation

Cultural priorities, such as education, play, language, rituals and religious beliefs, all affect the way you present your play space, 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. To encourage participation you can:

- support children to become involved in play – ask questions such as 'Do you need another person to play?' or 'Can Kristin join in?'; model how to enter play; or encourage the child by offering words to use or giving action ideas
- highlight differences in opinion, ideas and goals and encourage children to explore these – discuss these things as they arise in conversation or play; for example, 'Isn't it interesting that you both have different ideas?'
- support the development and maintenance of relationships – support children to commence interactions and relationships with others and then offer ideas and assistance if difficulties arise
- support positive and effective interactions between children – model, guide and set up situations that are challenging but not frustrating.

Respecting individual needs

Children who are denied their need for privacy, solitude and/or quiet time may become unsettled or upset; they may even display behaviours that are concerning or uncharacteristic.

Become aware of each child's specific needs and think about how they change over the time they are with you. Through assessing and monitoring, watch out for and find out about:

- the expectations at home
- the child's routine at home and how it links with their need to be solitary or quiet
- how the environment impacts the child's daily routine – they may become tired from being more stimulated or need time to themselves as they are used to often being alone
- how the child communicates their need for privacy, solitude and/or quiet time – some children make this choice while others need guidance
- whether the child spends time alone due to choice or lacks friendships
- whether the child is exhibiting a solitary, unoccupied or onlooker play stage
- whether the environment is providing the spaces needed by the child
- whether the child is able to use the spaces in the environment for the purposes for which it is designed (to provide privacy, solitude and/or quiet time)
- how the child's needs alter depending on the group they are participating with.

Supporting children who have difficulty participating

Most children do choose solitary or quiet play at times and most enjoy working alone and achieving their goals. There are a group of children, however, who have difficulty working with others or becoming involved in small or large groups. These children may just need experience, or they may have some type of communication difficulty, which in some circumstances may indicate that a child has an additional support need. A child may misinterpret a social situation; for example, 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 needs time to become familiar with the situation they plan to enter. They may also need to prepare themselves to become part of the activity. These difficulties may relate to temperament or their sense of belonging.

A child who has difficulty forming relationships and interacting with play partners can benefit from gaining the skills they learn in these situations. Through your own interactions and the planned experiences you provide, you can support the child to learn to:

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

Friendship theory discusses popularity, its importance to a child's self-esteem and how it extends into a variety of areas of the child's life. A child with 'popular' friendship skills may be better able to manage a social relationship and develop further relationship skills.

In the following case study, an educator demonstrates flexibility to allow children to develop social relationships.

Case study

Hilda, an educator, notices that Ben, who usually spends the morning in solitary play, is involved in dramatic play with Gerard. She decides to extend the play period for a little longer before packing up so Ben can continue to enjoy and develop skills from this experience.

A child's interactions in social situations should be considered an important area of competence as this is a lifelong learning skill. The child must become capable of communicating with adults, siblings and children of different ages, as these relationships are essential for their ongoing learning and to meet their social and emotional needs.

Listening to children's views

The most important aspects of clear communication and respectful acknowledgment when listening to children's views are active listening and physically getting down to the child's level.

Active listening requires you to acknowledge, encourage, clarify, restate and reflect what you hear to ensure the child knows you have received their message.

Getting down to a child's level allows you to make eye contact (where culturally appropriate) and also enables you to see and hear any messages a child is relating to you. In addition, the child is less likely to feel overwhelmed by your standing over them as they communicate with you.

When children are listened to in respectful ways and their ideas are taken seriously, they develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities (MTOP Outcome 1). These actions are also supported by theories of social development as outlined in the following table.

Theories	How it relates to children's views
Ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner)	• Each child is receiving a totally different life experience based on the intertwining and influencing people and environments they are exposed to. • These variations are an indication of how many different ideas and views you will encounter in relation to each topic of discussion you may have with a child and their family.
Social learning theory (Bandura)	• When children feel their views are listened to, they are more likely to express themselves and provide information. • In situations where children express inappropriate views, your ability to use self-control therapy (assisting the child to adopt more appropriate attitudes) is useful. An example of this may be in a situation where a child has a strong gender or racial bias. • When you listen to, acknowledge and value the views of children, they learn from your actions and then are able to respect others' views.
Behaviourist theory (Watson)	• When children participate and provide their ideas and views, and these are listened to and responded to respectfully, the child is receiving positive reinforcement and they will take this as a sign that they should continue doing this.

Moral theory (Kohlberg)	• Despite the appropriateness of a child's view, their confidence in expressing it to you allows you to identify areas of strength and need in relation to moral views. • Expressed moral views are excellent sources for discussion and problem-solving, which enable children to learn about others and to consider what is right or wrong at their level of understanding.
Pro-social behaviour	• A child's individual views and experiences relating to pro-social behaviour can be expressed through discussion of their views. For example, a child who does not use manners at home may not automatically understand that they are required at care.

In the following case study, an educator listens to children's views.

Case study

Harrison (8 years) and Sam (8.5 years) are talking with Jenna (an educator) about shopping for groceries. Harrison talks about how his mum goes to the market as the food is fresher there. Sam talks about how his family goes to the supermarket and how they take their own shopping bags so they don't have to use plastic ones.

While the children are talking, Jenna sits at their level, reflects what they are saying, adds her own experiences of shopping and also asks questions such as, 'What would your mum do if there were no apples at the market?'

Providing opportunities for group discussion and decision-making

Small or large groups of children can be involved in a variety of discussion activities. These activities aim to use different media to enrich, extend and develop the children's areas of interest and development.

Small groups allow for the development of self-esteem and a more intimate interaction with educators and other children; whereas larger groups are supportive in developing patience, turn-taking and cooperative skills.

Group activities can be either spontaneous informal sessions or formal planned sessions and can focus on the children's interests as well as provide learning experiences and extend their development.

Spontaneous group experiences may include unplanned songs, stories or puppet shows that you initiate during the day to contribute to an activity or develop a new interest. They may also be used to regain control of an energy-charged room, calm a noisy period or extend upon a new interest of the group.

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

The success of this type of group relies on how meaningful the topic is; how well you prepare; whether the discussion fits with the children's interests and developmental understanding; whether you use open questions and other strategies for discussion; and how you influence the children to take an interest in the subject.

Decision-making, problem-solving and conflict resolution

Environmental conditions can lead to problems and conflicts between children. Careful planning can control environments and assist in avoiding such issues. The following table provides some ideas.

Condition	Prevention strategies
Noise and overstimulation– an environment that is too noisy and over stimulating often encourages behaviour in children that leads to conflict.	• Adults should use quiet voices. Children will raise their voices to talk over loud adult voices and this can lead to a high noise level. • Reduce background noise; for example, use music selectively. Children learn to 'tune out' if there is constant background music. This can have a negative effect on their ability to listen carefully when required.
Crowded activities – activities that are too crowded often encourage conflict.	• Set up activities so the number of children is automatically limited. For example, if you have decided that you have enough dough for two children to work at the table, have two lumps of dough and two chairs. If both chairs are occupied, other children can see that there is no space for them at that time. This avoids overcrowding.
Insufficient equipment – insufficient equipment shifts the child's focus from the activity itself to making sure equipment isn't taken by another child. The younger the child, the harder it is to share.	• Ensure that each child has individual equipment when possible; for example, six paper plates and six glue pots for a mask-making activity at a table that comfortably accommodates six children. • Where it is not practical to have enough for each child, expect to help children resolve conflicts related to sharing or being selective about the materials – it is an important part of their learning and requires understanding support. • Remember that some 5-year-old children are still learning to share.
Overtired or overexcited children – children who are overtired are less able to cope with other children and conflict may occur; overexcited and boisterous behaviour is often an indication of tiredness in children.	• Provide rest options in the routine to cater for these needs. The needs will fluctuate according to factors such as age, weather and time of year. • 'Rest' can be a sleep, lying quietly with or without a book or playing quietly by oneself; for example, with LEGO. • Listening to music or a story tape can also provide rest time.

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Condition	Prevention strategies
Activities that cause frustration – activities need to be appropriately challenging; if activities are too challenging or are unable to be completed, children may become frustrated. This can lead to conflict and aggression between children.	• Provide activities that are suited to the children's development levels. They will then be fully involved and conflict is less likely to occur. • If an activity requires the adult to be 'doing' or 'directing' much of the time, then it is probably not developmentally appropriate. • As well as structured activities such as puzzles, provide plenty of open-ended activities so children can work at their own pace, at their own level. For example, playdough, water play, water and soap suds, clay, dry sand tray, box work, painting, drawing, home corner and block corner.
The need for time alone – it is valuable for children to enjoy their own company and to learn to work alone at times. Many children who are in school age care programs need extra time for working and playing uninterrupted by other children. Children who need time for solitary play may become involved in conflict more easily if this need is not met.	• Provide areas where one child can choose to work alone; for example: – LEGO – books on a cushion – a table with just one chair for drawing – a felt board and figures – any other regular activity. • Create these areas using screens and furniture. • Encourage children to ask the child first before joining one who is working alone. A negative response needs to be respected. This is part of learning to respect the rights of others. • In your planning make sure you offer a balance of solitary and group play.

When decisions need to be made, problems solved or conflicts defused it is often an on-the-spot situation and the educator needs to apply appropriate skills immediately. However, there are times when you can use a group discussion as time to develop these skills in children. In doing so you are involving children in learning about limits, barriers, choices and relationships. When used regularly these skills become a part of everyday thinking, which helps the child deal with other issues when they arise.

Providing support

To support decision-making, problem-solving and conflict resolution, you should:

- recognise when problems are developing and intervene before issues arise
- clarify goals by talking children through what they want to achieve
- plan strategies for supporting children to learn about and use decision-making, problem-solving and conflict resolution, and plan experiences that require these skills
- find solutions to issues that occur

- ask open questions so children think about what is happening and what they can do themselves
- support children to share their ideas with others
- answer questions so children learn the information they need to make good choices
- provide open-ended materials so a range of options and ideas are available for the children to think about and experiment with
- provide new and stimulating materials so children are busy and involved with their learning
- use everyday events as a basis for discussing how others may have made decisions, solved problems and dealt with conflict
- talk about routines and choices so children see options are available and that there are different ways to look at things
- encourage children to consult each other
- support parents to provide learning environments at home so children can transfer their skills to other environments.

When you assist children to develop their decision-making, problem-solving and conflict resolution skills, you can:

- give them a strategy to use when they are faced with decisions, problems and conflicts; for example, breaking the issue into manageable tasks
- help them identify what issues to tackle in which order
- assist them to see other people's points of view.

Cooperative processes

To ensure that decision-making, problem-solving and conflict resolution processes are cooperative, your interactions must be encouraging – make suggestions rather than give directions. You can do this by:

- encouraging children to interact with each other: introduce open-ended activities; this encourages children to feel important and to develop their own ideas
- helping children clarify or adapt their shared goals: to successfully make a decision all participants need to have the same or a similar goal; you can help them talk about what they want to achieve
- involving children who are unlikely to initiate: quieter children are less likely to initiate and state their ideas so it is critical for you to support their involvement
- avoiding demonstrating or solving problems for the children: allow the children to think about their options and consider all outcomes.

To extend the children's ability to make decisions, solve problems and resolve conflicts you can implement a common decision-making strategy. When implementing the six steps of this strategy with children, you can encourage them to work with others to gain a broader view or support them to work through the steps themselves.

Step	Decision, problem and conflict
1. Define the situation	• What is the issue? Pick one issue and work on that. Be specific: What is the situation and why does it feel like an issue? • What is the decision? Pick one decision and work on that. Be specific: What is the decision about and why do you need to make this decision?
2. Brainstorm	Search for solutions; any suggestion should be considered.
3. Select ideas	Sometimes children select a solution as soon as it is identified rather than considering a range of ideas. When they need to choose, it is important that you support them in thinking about the pros and cons for each option before they select one.
4. Put plans in action	Encourage the children to implement their solution. You may need to help them do this, or just remind them of their decision. In some cases the solution may not work. This does not mean you should take over and decide for the children; it means that you need to help them identify a more suitable option.
5. Review what happened	Note how the issue was solved and remember to give feedback.
6. Keep going	The solution the children used may also be useful in another situation. Encourage the children to reflect on the issue they solved and use the information and skills to solve other issues.

Interacting in play

Play experiences can assist children to learn to accept and value all people, particularly those who may appear different from themselves. Play can also assist children to learn positive attitudes of acceptance and respect for a range of people. You can support this learning with the following strategies:

- Create a play environment that reflects many different people and many different ways of living; for example, by adding one or two new or cultural items to a dramatic play materials; including music or pictures of people from various cultures; inviting visitors to participate as volunteers or guests; or including aspects of the cultural capital of each child.
- Arrange a play setting that promotes participation of boys and girls, children with disabilities and children of various cultural backgrounds.

- Challenge any behaviour that alerts you to negative attitudes that may be developing in children; for example, if a child refuses to include another child in play due to their appearance, skin colour, physical ability and so on, you should deal with this situation sensitively through discussion. Identifying similarities and differences is useful, as is encouraging the child who is being discriminated against to develop their own strategies for response. For example, a child who wears a headdress should be aided to develop a response about why they wear the headdress; this will enable them to develop confidence and assist them to feel capable of gaining acceptance through this confidence.
- Involve parents in any issues that centre on children's play.

Aim to arrange play settings that invite both boys and girls to interact.

Bear in mind that children:

- need time to observe, think things through and take note
- benefit from hands-on experiences in 'real' situations
- prefer varied levels of autonomy; some children prefer to be completely dependent on the adults around them and others want to be independent
- may have experienced different levels of responsibility; some children may never have been expected to take any responsibility and others may have been responsible for a wide range of things that are appropriate or inappropriate for their age
- play and learn best when their family and peers are around
- like to observe and imitate
- are very active and enjoy physical activity
- dislike being singled out
- often prefer to experiment and use their initiative in play rather than being directed by others
- play cooperatively and competitively
- like to persist and practise over and over to succeed at something

- use body language and words
- speak their first language before any new or second language and may not speak English – if you work with children from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, it is important to develop appropriate methods of supporting play and learning in ways that reflect and respect their backgrounds.

The following case study demonstrates how an educator provides a range of resources for children to explore, which encourage the children to interact.

Case study

In the dramatic play space, the educators have placed a sari and a pair of chopsticks. These items are added to the regular items in the areas such as pots and pans, dolls, dress-ups, plates, cups and cutlery. An educator remains close by the area most of the session so she can listen and observe the children.

At one time the educator enters the area as a child doesn't know what the chopsticks are. The educator explains that they are used to eat food like a spoon or fork and that if you go to an Asian restaurant you may use them there. She also explains that Ling (a girl of Chinese heritage) uses chopsticks to eat at home and may be able to demonstrate how to use them.

Relationship preferences

Children will demonstrate their preferences for either children or adults during their play. This is due to a number of influences. Theories that relate to children's preference for adults and peers are outlined in the following table.

Theory	How the theory relates to children's relationship preferences
Ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner)	• The child's web of life influences impact on their choice of peer and adult relationships.
Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky)	• A child may learn more effectively if they receive modelling via a child or adult they relate to or prefer. • A child may learn new skills if they receive modelling from a child or adult who has alternative ideas to their own yet is a preferred person.
Social learning theory (Bandura)	• Modelling is an effective strategy for learning. A child learns from a preferred adult or child more readily than a person they do not relate to. • Preferred adults more readily provide self-control therapy where appropriate behaviour is modelled. • Positive reinforcement encourages interactions to extend.

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Theory	How the theory relates to children's relationship preferences
Behaviourist theory (Watson)	• Children may receive some type of reward from a relationship. This may be that they feel enjoyment or that they reach goals. Or it may be that the person provides them with a type of positive reinforcement they relate to.
Attachment theory (Bowlby)	• Children feel safest with primary caregivers. • A child is able to form secondary relationships. • The more securely attached a child is, the less likely they are to become distressed.
Play stages theory (Parten)	• Children participate in play relevant to their peer group and their stage of development. • Children will be involved more intensely if their peer/s have similar interests and play goals.
Friendship theory (Selman)	• Children develop peer relationships that can be classed as friendships. It is natural that these children want to spend time together as these relationships are rewarding and stimulating.
Pro-social behaviour	• Children may find similarities and differences in their peers that draw them to each other. • When pro-social behaviour is used it may create a feeling of security or it may help a child feel valued or respected.

Problem-solving in play

There are many benefits to a problem-solving approach to play. Research has shown that in a problem-solving environment children learn to appreciate others' ideas and points of view sooner, and gain knowledge and better develop ideas and skills due to this modelling from others.

A problem-solving approach to play can be achieved by:

- planning activities where children have a shared goal
- ensuring that the goal is based on the interests of the child or children
- making it possible for children to achieve their goal through their own actions
- making the results of an activity visible and immediate.

The theories that relate to empowering children to make their own decisions are shown in the following table.

Theory	How it relates to empowering children to make their own decisions
Social learning theory (Bandura)	• The child's self-esteem is reflected in their ability to confidently decide. The child may choose above or below their ability. • To empower the child you should model decision-making skills and abilities and provide positive feedback when the child attempts to make decisions.
Attachment theory (Bowlby)	• Depending on the child's feelings of security, they may make decisions based on the placement or availability of adults or other children. • To empower the child you should use your secure relationship to provide support that the child is confident with.
Ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner)	• The child's environment and its associated links provide messages to the child demonstrating whether they should make decisions, what decisions may be made and how confident others are in the child's ability to do this. • To empower the child, provide messages and activities in the environment that require decision-making. When you do this you are creating a place where children feel they belong, as they are making decisions about their environment.
Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky)	• The world around us provides the child with many opportunities to explore. The art of understanding and solving problems forms part of this world of opportunities as peers and others provide their input and modelling, agree or disagree and offer new considerations. • To empower the child, offer choices so they can practise decision-making. This may occur during scaffolding as you provide different methods for completing a task or ask the child how they may do the task differently.

In the following case study, two children are assisted to support each other's goals.

Case study

Two children are interested in working with wool. Felicity has strengths in knitting and Pim has an interest in making pompoms.

When wool is provided for the afternoon program, both children decide to use it creatively. The educator comments on Felicity's knitting and includes Pim by saying, 'Pim, look at how long Felicity's knitting is, she is making a scarf. Maybe Felicity could show you how to knit a scarf and you could show her how to make pompoms. Pompoms would make excellent decorations on the end of a scarf.'

These comments encourage the children to notice each other's strengths and consider how they can work together using their interests. They also give the children opportunities to learn from each other.

Practice task 5

Plan and implement a group discussion that encourages children to interact and participate in shared decision-making about how to resolve a conflict.

Describe the experience focus.

1. What age is the experience suited to?
2. Which children's interests did the experience build on and how did this make the discussion meaningful?
3. It is an organisation requirement to link experiences to MTOP Outcomes. What Outcome did the experience link to and how?
4. If a participating child decided to leave the discussion to be alone, how would you support their need for privacy or solitude?
5. Describe a play experience where children may use the skills of decision-making and conflict resolution that you have introduced.

2C Encouraging a sense of community and cooperation

PC 2.4
PC 2.5

One way to accommodate a child's social needs in the care and education environment is to explore each child's family life and link family aspects to your program. This increases the link between home and the service and extends each child's experience as they share their skills and knowledge. Also, when children gain a sense of community, they feel a sense of belonging and develop an understanding of their own identity.

Supporting cultural identity

Children enjoy learning about others through interacting with their cultural capital, which provides the opportunity for you to introduce many new ideas and to involve children in discussions, play and games related to finding out how they are similar to and different from others.

Cultural priorities such as education, play, language, rituals and religious beliefs all affect the way you present your program, how you communicate to others and what priorities you place on various interaction and planning aspects. The same cultural priorities also affect the types of play and interaction that children engage in. To encourage children to respect each other you can:

- highlight differences in opinion, ideas and goals and encourage children to explore these: discuss these things as they arise in conversation or play; for example say, 'Isn't it interesting that you both have different ideas?'
- demonstrate positive and effective interactions between children; for example, modelling and guiding
- set up situations where children share skills and knowledge, or support each other to achieve a goal.

There are many factors that make up the elements of a particular culture; some are easy to see, while others are harder to recognise. Knowledge of these factors will assist you in developing trusting and non-discriminatory relationships and help you to meet the needs of children, families and co-workers.

Educators can incorporate various types of celebrations into the service's routines. For example, if a child has a birthday everyone can sing 'Happy birthday'; or children can sing Christmas carols or learn about Hanukkah at these times of the year. This provides a variety of social experiences and also acknowledges that diversity is valued and respected. In addition, you are widening your own view of the world and its people to gain a better understanding of how to approach your role. These actions fit well with the ecological approach of Urie Bronfenbrenner.

There are many occasions for celebration and the variety you offer may depend on the cultural mix of families in your care. Celebrations may include: birthdays, name days, festivals, celebration of achievements, cultural or religious occasions, community events, the beginning and end of a school term or holiday and graduation from the service.

A sense of community comes from the experiences people share, so the inclusion of celebrations is an effective way to promote a sense of community in the service. Celebrations can be exciting, personal, varied in their learning content and involve new and unusual items and content to explore. They can help children learn about respect for others and their views and opinions. Celebrations are a part of most people's lives, so children and their family members can all be involved.

You can justify your inclusion of celebrations by reflecting the interests of the children. Deciding to include Christmas just because it is coming up is not valid, but including Christmas because children are talking about it and are excited to be involved in Christmas activities is appropriate. Including Hanukkah or Eid due to these celebrations being important to some children is also appropriate. Celebrations that do not link with children's interests or backgrounds may also be added to the program as they allow you to expand the children's cultural knowledge, and to celebrate activities that are occurring within your local community.

Cultural and religious celebrations

Religious and cultural calendars alter year to year. In Australia, there are dates that correspond with celebrations such as Christmas on 25 December. However, there are also celebrations that are based on a lunar (moon) calendar, such as Easter, which occurs on the first Sunday after the Paschal full moon. In addition, there are days that acknowledge particular celebrations or events such as Anzac Day, Father's Day and Education week.

There are calendars available online that outline most cultural and religious events.

Community events

Community events to include in the program may vary in size and relevance according to the age group of the children you work with. Socially, community events provide children with opportunities to see how they can make a difference to others and how the community values their contributions.

Community events may be based on state or national activities or be more focused on local community needs, and may include occasions for:

- specific groups, such as a seniors day
- whole communities, such as the Melbourne Show
- education, such as a Vietnamese cultural day
- charity, such as a fundraising event to raise money to build a playground in a local park.

Your local council or shire website provides information on upcoming community events.

Family celebrations

Family celebrations are usually linked to religious beliefs and to the family's priorities and interests. The best way to find out about each family's celebrations is to ask them. You will find that most families celebrate similar events, such as birthdays, yet they each celebrate them differently, as shown in the following case study.

Case study

Emily and Tim are turning 10 years old on the weekend. The educators ask each family if they are planning a celebration.

Emily's family plan to have a party and:

- invite all the children in Emily's class
- invite all of Emily's relatives and friends
- have a BBQ in the evening
- hire a jumping castle and a clown
- have a large store-made cake with sparklers and sing 'Happy birthday' in Dutch.

Tim's family plan to:

- invite 10 of Tim's friend's – he is turning 10 years old so has the option of choosing 10 friends
- have some finger foods for lunch
- have cupcakes with candles and sing 'Happy birthday'.

Each family is excited about the birthday celebrations and feel that they are providing an age-appropriate and culturally-suited celebration.

Encouraging cooperation

Language is an important part of social interaction and includes verbal and nonverbal messages, cues and written skills. Children with strong language skills may have strong social relationships as they are able to communicate their needs, identify others' needs and interact to achieve goals. Communication is required for successful cooperation, which relies on the child's ability to solve problems and resolve conflicts.

A child's ability in these areas can affect their success as part of a group or in a friendship, as other children appreciate those who are cooperative, capable problem-solvers and conflict resolvers, as their play is less distracted.

In addition to having cooperation modelled, a child needs to do the following to cooperate appropriately:

- have their point of view listened to and considered
- be involved in any solutions or problem-solving
- be provided with relevant information
- have the opportunity to consider another person's point of view (this may be difficult for young children)

- have some choices
- have successful cooperation acknowledged.

Children may be less likely to cooperate, and more likely to engage in a power struggle if:

- they are interrupted without warning from an activity they are enjoying
- their routine is changed unexpectedly
- they hear 'No' often from adults
- they don't know how to do a task or what they are being asked to do.

Providing opportunities to investigate ethical issues

An ethical issue involves morals and understanding what is right and wrong. Theories of development link to moral development and demonstrate how important it is to support children to understand expectations and limits so they can develop lifelong skills. There will always be ethical decisions to make within the service, the child's home and the community that children can become involved in. Some examples are described in the following table.

Concept	Ethical issues to consider
Squashing bugs	Is this appropriate? Is it appropriate indoors but not outdoors where bugs live? Is it appropriate to move them outdoors rather than squash them?
Sustainability	Should a recycling project start at the service? Should money be saved up for a water tank or should it be spent on toys and equipment?
Renovations	Should a tree be removed to enable a shade cloth to be constructed over the sandpit?
Materials	Should the children use a paint that is non-toxic and environmentally friendly if it is less colourful than another that is bright but dangerous to the environment?
Food	Should fees rise so children can be provided organic foods?
Smacking	If educators are not allowed to smack children, should children be allowed to smack dolls while playing?

Children may not be able to take part in all decision-making, but they can be involved in the process of discussion and lobbying for what they think is right. When this occurs they will take a greater responsibility and interest in the outcome.

Ethical development theories

The theories related to ethical issues include those outlined in the following table.

Theory	How it relates to ethical development
Ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner)	The child's cultural links and life experiences influence their understanding of ethics and how they treat others.
Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky)	Social and cultural experiences open the child's world so they can see alternatives to their norm and learn about others and how they would like to be themselves.
Social learning theory (Bandura)	Modelling influences a child's understanding of ethics and their experience of pro-social skills and expectations.
Play stages theory (Parten)	The stages of play clearly define the ability of the child to relate to others: • Associative and cooperative play may challenge ethical attitudes; that is, superheroes and villains and so on. • Associative and cooperative play often require pro-social skills or reflect the modelling of these skills. Cooperative play is also a place where ethics and moral issues can be explored. • In play with rules, ethics may relate to winning and losing and whether it is suitable to cheat.
Moral theory (Kohlberg)	There are stages of moral development and these relate directly to ethics. Children below school age mostly consider moral issues in terms of good and bad as imposed by adults.
Friendship theory (Selman)	Pro-social skills and understanding of right and wrong contribute to a child's ability to develop and maintain relationships with their peers.
Pro-social behaviour	Pro-social skills assist children to succeed in friendships. The cues and actions linked with pro-social skills also relate to a child's understanding of morals as they determine what behaviour is right or wrong, and how to treat others.

You can include ethical and moral thinking and pro-social behaviours in your program by:

- introducing topics by asking questions about issues
- identifying situations to discuss; for example, say, 'Do you think it would be fair if ... ?' and then following up by asking why each child has that particular point of view
- modelling and guiding
- identifying opportunities for children to use their pro-social skills; for example, you may say, 'Helen needs some help, would you like to help her?'
- providing opportunities to develop and practise skills and ideas in a range of situations and activities.

The following case study shows how a discussion about right and wrong can help children to understand limits.

Case study

During a discussion group an educator asks the children whether they think it is right or wrong to take a ball from another child's bag if they think the child would let them play with the ball if they asked. The children come up with many ideas for why or why not this would be okay. The group concludes that it would only be okay if they did ask the child first and the child agreed.

This discussion gave the children an opportunity to see what others thought and to come to a final understanding of what is right and wrong in this particular situation.

Practice task 6

1. Find a book that you could use with children to discuss an ethical issue. Record the title and author of the book, what the book is about, and the age of the children you are targeting.
2. Develop an activity that promotes discussion of an ethical issue based on the information from the book and implement the activity.
3. Provide details about the activity. Explain how you encouraged children to cooperate during the experience.
4. How does the activity link with the MTOP Outcomes?
5. Describe one way that your service promotes a sense of community.

Chapter summary

1. As children develop confidence, relationships, responsibility, control of their feelings and the ability to work with others, the understanding you show enables you to provide an environment that meets these growing needs and encourages, supports and challenges their skills.
2. Social development is defined by a range of approaches and theories that guide you to identify the milestones that children are expected to achieve and to provide an understanding of why children approach social interaction in the way they do.
3. Theories related to social development include: attachment theory, behaviourist theory, ecological approach, friendship theory, moral theory, play stages theory, social learning theory and sociocultural theory.
4. Assessing and monitoring social skills provides you with information from which to plan and implement development experiences appropriate for each child's interests, goals and development stage.
5. A variety of recording methods can be used to collect information about a child's social skills and development.
6. It is important to plan and provide opportunities for different forms of social interaction between children during play. Each child's interests, goals and development stage need to be considered when providing these opportunities.
7. Provided experiences need to be structured in a way that promotes cooperation and conflict resolution.
8. When children feel a sense of community they feel a sense of belonging and develop further understanding of their identity.
9. Offering a variety of experiences in the environment gives the child options for communicating and for learning. This may include spontaneous social interaction, planned group discussions where children share their ideas and investigate ethical issues, activities requiring cooperation, and opportunities for privacy, solitude or quiet.

Assessment activity 2
Fostering 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 *CHCSAC005 Foster the holistic development and wellbeing of the child in school age care*.

Part	Element	Performance criteria
A	2	2.3, 2.4, 2.7
B	2	2.1, 2.2, 2.6
C	2	2.5

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in fostering social 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

Plan and implement a discussion with a group of children that focuses on investigating an ethical issue that is meaningful to the children. The group should attempt to make decisions to resolve the ethical issue.

1. Provide details of the group, including the age and number of children involved. Explain the strategies you will use to encourage cooperation if there is a conflict within the group.

2. Document evidence of what occurred in the group discussion. Include:
    - how the children's level of moral understanding (relate this to theory) influenced the outcome of the group discussion
    - how you extended the children's psychological (in particular, self-esteem) and cognitive development while involved in the discussion.

Part B

Read the scenario, then answer the questions that follow.

Scenario

Ula (6 years) has been attending the service for some time. She is a quiet yet busy child and usually works independently on activities.

Today you notice that Ula is sitting at the sidelines of a basketball game where five 8–10-year-old children are playing. Ula is watching the children, but not interacting or participating. You walk over to Ula and ask if she also wants to play basketball too.

1. If Ula says yes she wants to play, what strategy would you use to help Ula enter this situation? Give reasons for your choice of strategy, including why your strategy is important to Ula's development.
2. How would you support Ula differently if she was 12 years old? Justify your answer by making reference to relevant aspects of development theory.
3. If Ula said no she wanted to be on her own, explain what you would do to accommodate her needs and the reasons for your actions.

Part C

Develop a 1–2 page report explaining how you promote MTOP Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world, in your daily work with children in your service.

In your report:

- explain the organisational standards, policies and procedures that you follow to work towards this Outcome
- link the information you provide to at least two social development theorists or core principles of development.

In addition, demonstrate how you promote a sense of community within the service by using a range of documentation methods to support your report, such as:

- photos
- learning stories
- anecdotal records

- diary entries
- jottings
- samples of work
- checklists
- sociograms
- other methods as agreed with your trainer/assessor.

Chapter 3
Fostering emotional development

To care for children's feelings, needs and ideas, you must have an understanding of each child's method of expression and individual development. Many children experience fears and feelings that are common, while children in special circumstances may have additional concerns and issues. A child's ability to be expressive and understood relies on the way you present the environment, interact and provide suitable experiences for their expression.

Doing this requires you to assess and monitor children's emotional development. The information you obtain can be used to plan and implement appropriate experiences and activities, and provide appropriate support and guidance. This information guides you to create opportunities for children to experience individual strengths and successes during play; challenge emerging skills and capabilities; engage independently with tasks; explore self-image and identity; and express feelings and emotions through suitable experiences.

In this chapter you will learn about:

3A Understanding development theories and monitoring emotional development

3B Providing challenges and opportunities for success

3C Supporting development of independence and identity

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

PC 3.1

3A Understanding development theories and monitoring emotional development

MTOP Outcome 3 focuses on how you support children to become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing. It encourages you to provide a responsive environment that promotes a sense of belonging and is a safe place to share feelings and information about the family.

Emotional development is about feelings and emotions, and learning to recognise what the emotions are and how to express them appropriately. Emotional development is also about how you see yourself, your self-concept and resulting self-esteem.

Although emotional and social development are closely linked, emotional development is different to social development as social development is about relationships and interactions with others, whereas emotional development focuses on how you feel within yourself and how you deal with and express these feelings.

Theories of children's emotional development

An understanding of theories relating to emotional development, alongside your knowledge of emotional development milestones, enables you to understand individual children and their emotional needs.

Attachment theory

Chapter 2 introduced attachment theory in relation to social development. This theory equally applies to emotional development.

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

Other attachments are important to the child's social and emotional development. As each child commences in your service, your goal is to develop an attachment relationship.

Attachment behaviours allow you to observe how well you have developed relationships with the children and provide guidance as to what is required of you by a child who is attached to you. These indicators evolved from Bowlby's initial theory where he identified behaviours demonstrating that a child is positively attached, including proximity maintenance, safe haven, secure base and separation distress. Bowlby also identified a range of attachment states, shown in a table in section 2A.

Behaviourist theory

Chapter 2 also introduced behaviourist theory in relation to social development. This theory also applies to emotional development.

To recap, behaviourists believe that the environment and interactions alone influence behaviour and learning. If positive responses are provided, the child learns and increases their understanding in response. If negative responses are provided, the child ceases behaviour. Called operant conditioning, this theory is based on a system of reward and punishment, particularly on positive reinforcement.

The following case study illustrates aspects of the theory in the context of emotional development.

Case study

Rosie is 8 years old. She is often alone when she is at the program. Today, she is on a bean bag. She is looking around the room, but not interacting or participating in any activity. Usually Peggie, an educator, asks Rosie what is wrong and Rosie will not answer. Today, Peggie asks Rosie if she is okay. Rosie looks up and says that she misses her mum and doesn't like the program. Peggie tells Rosie how brave Rosie is and how she is pleased that Rosie can talk about how she feels. Peggie sits near Rosie and then helps her choose a quiet activity that she is interested to do.

The next day, Rosie comes to Peggie when she arrives. She tells her that she feels sad about her mum not being there. Peggie tells Rosie how proud she is that Rosie can tell her that she is sad; she then helps Rosie become involved in some activities.

Brain development

Various theorists have studied brain development and concluded that it has an enormous impact on how a child learns. Heredity (nature) defines the framework of a brain, but the environment (nurture) has a huge effect on the depth of its development.

If a child is lovingly cared for and provided with appropriate, stimulating and emotionally meaningful interactions and activity at critical learning periods, the child's brain will develop to a greater extent and the brain wiring will form stronger and more permanent connections than if they are not provided with this care and these interactions or activity. This emotional aspect is just as important as the intellectual aspects if the most successful brain development is to be achieved.

As children grow, they do not develop more brain cells; rather, they make more connections between cells as they learn. These connections are called synapses and they connect through learning and develop strength if this learning is continued and practised. If the particular connection is not used, then it will break down.

Cognitive theory

Jean Piaget (1896–1980) was foremost in cognitive theory and strongly believed that we learn as constructionists. A constructionist is someone who learns actively from the world around them and develops (or constructs) meaning from what is found. Educators who follow this theory encourage children to think about the activities and experiences provided and support children socially and emotionally.

The following table explains some of Piaget's ideas about constructionist learning.

Player	Characteristics
The learner	• Is individual and has their own background, needs and culture • Is influenced by culture and world view, including the language, logic and mathematics they are exposed to • Must interact with others to acquire social meaning • Initiates their own learning • Has a potential for learning that is influenced by their feelings of independence and autonomy
The educator	• Should adapt to provide what the learner needs • Should facilitate learning by encouraging problem-solving and decision-making related to what they are learning • Should ask questions, observe and guide, create an open learning environment and interact consistently and frequently • Should encourage the child to be an independent thinker

Following the constructionist model, you must encourage and promote the skills of decision-making and problem-solving to enable the child to have success in learning. As each new experience is provided, the child must decide which information is vital or new, then decide which information they will retain and develop.

The journey children take through cognitive development links to their emotional attachment to others.

Cognitive theory in the infant links to a process called 'object permanence'. Object permanence is the process of learning that leads to recognising that an object, including people, exist even if it can no longer be seen. Infants have fully developed object permanence by age 1. This development helps explain why infants are not concerned about the whereabouts of their parent in the early months and yet demonstrate separation anxiety as they approach their first birthday.

In the second stage of cognitive development (preoperational stage, 2 to 7 years), logical thought is not consistent. This is caused by some underdeveloped skills and predictable preoperational processes, including those outlined in the following table.

Process	Characteristic	How this might influence emotional development
Transductive reasoning	The child makes errors in connecting two unrelated events or objects. This may occur if two things happen in close succession, causing the child to think they are related.	Children may not understand what has occurred and become scared or confused.
Irreversibility	The child is unable to see that a process can be undone or reversed.	Children may react strongly as they think something is irreversible or cannot be resolved.
Single classification	The child can only sort an object based on one characteristic.	Children may value an object or activity based on one category, rather than seeing other values.
Either/or thinking	The child is only able to see events one way or another; the child cannot understand that there may be an answer in the middle of these two ideas.	Children may not be able to view things from alternative perspectives or be able to resolve issues in a fair way.
Overgeneralising	The child links things they know to all situations of that kind.	Children may preconceive situations based on prior experience even though the new situation has many differences and outcomes.
Animism	The child gives animate characteristics to inanimate things.	Children might believe that inanimate objects have control or are the cause of an issue.

Children between 5 and 7 years of age begin to enter the concrete operational period of cognitive development. During this stage logical thinking is achieved and the child will have a greater ability to:

- understand themselves and others
- focus on many different aspects, including the thoughts they have of themselves and others
- work out how they feel and how to deal with these feelings
- take on different points of view
- reflect on events and on how they should react
- cope with rules, tactics, strategies and methods, particularly for resolving problems and/or conflicts.

Ecological approach

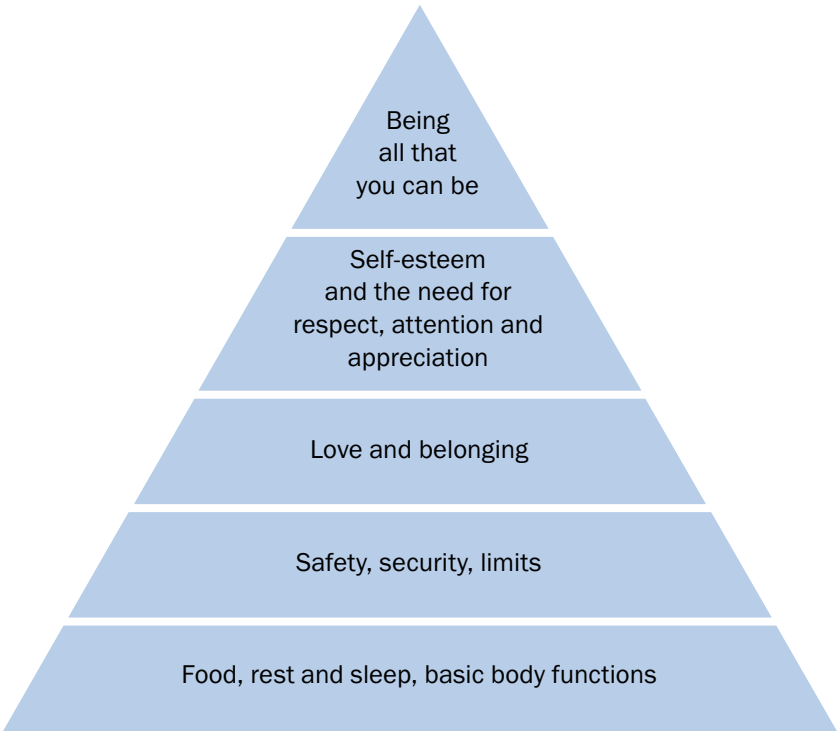
Chapter 2 introduced Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach, where the entire environment and any connecting or influencing forces impact on the child in all areas or domains of development.

To recap, the ecological structures are as follows:

- Microsystem
- Mesosystem
- Exosystem
- Macrosystem
- Chronosystem

Humanistic theory

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



Once our basic physical needs are met (food, rest and sleep, basic body functions), emotional needs can be addressed. Safety, security and limits allow us to feel that 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, fears and change and how we feel others will also experience and react to these. A child who is emotionally cared for and confident can attempt to be all they can be, including becoming independent and autonomous.

Maslow's theory helps you recognise priorities in caring for children's wellbeing because your expectations must match the child's immediate needs. If a child feels insecure and unsafe (second-level needs), they will not feel loved and cared for (third-level needs). They also may not participate fully in the activities 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.

Psychosocial theory

Erik Erikson (1902–1994) provides a theory of development that clearly links to emotional development. This theory describes stages from birth to death. Erikson's theory suggests that:

- people have the same basic needs
- personalities develop and change in response to how these needs are met in our lives
- development proceeds in stages that match biological lifespan changes.

The psychosocial theory can be presented in stages, as shown in the following table. Each stage has a conflict based on life experience that is resolved either positively or negatively. This determines how positively or negatively the next stage can be managed. You will notice children who have no trust (the crisis as an infant) are affected in their ability to feel competent (the crisis at school age). At any time a stage can be re-entered based on life experience, so all stages are important to your work. For example, a child who does not feel competent can be supported to develop trust and so self-worth and so on.

Age/crisis	Explanation	Your role
Infants: trust or mistrust The child is developing a sense of drive and hope in others.	The developing trust between caregivers and infant is a vital part of their healthy emotional development. Infants are helpless, use cues to express their needs and rely on caregivers to understand and respond to these cues appropriately. If the infant's needs are not met or their cues are not acknowledged, they develop a lack of trust in those around them and do not develop the ability to make things happen, lowering their self-esteem.	When working with infants: • Caregivers should spend as much individual time with each infant as possible and should respond to crying and other cues immediately to help establish trust. When working with older children: • Acknowledge the lack of trust and build a relationship that is consistent and stable.

continued ...

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Age/crisis	Explanation	Your role
	An infant who cries is doing so for a reason, such as pain, hunger, a soiled nappy or being too hot or cold. When this infant crisis is complete, the child will either trust others or mistrust others. The outcome determines how positively or negatively the child moves into the next emotional crisis. A child without trust may be wary and hostile as they will try to protect themselves from an unpredictable world.	• Let the child know what you expect from them and how you will react. • Be clear about consequences. • Boost their self-esteem with genuine reactions and let them know they are valued.
Toddlers: autonomy or doubt The child is developing a sense of self control, courage and will.	During toddlerhood, autonomy is not always viewed positively by caregivers as children: • become more assertive • wish to have control over their environment • regularly use the word 'no'. This may be a challenging time for parents and educators as they may feel toddlers are being uncooperative. However, this is a normal stage of development that can be managed in a positive manner. Toddlers experience egocentrism, where they think the world revolves around them and they find it difficult to share and take turns. Many children begin to show these skills around the third year, but, even at this age, it is important to consider each individual due to varying rates of development and maturation. Frustration, difficulty in sharing and tantrums may be common. These can occur at any time and due to a range of different reasons; however, they are usually related to the child's frustration, tiredness or developing autonomy. Between 18 months and 3 years, children are exploring more and can easily become overwhelmed. Tantrums result mainly from the mismatch between what a child	When working with toddlers: • Only give toddlers choices when appropriate and realistic, and where the choice allows the toddler to feel in control. Choices such as whether they would like milk or water to drink give them independence but do not threaten their safety. • Be aware of asking 'Would you like to ...?' when you are actually giving an instruction. Many educators are puzzled by a child's noncompliance with an instruction, failing to recognise that they have asked instead of instructed. • To minimise tantrums: – allow children to make realistic choices throughout the day – ensure children have their physical needs met, are well rested and have had adequate food and drink – re-direct children to areas of interest to prevent tantrums escalating

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Age/crisis	Explanation	Your role
	would like to do or thinks they can do, and the realities of their skills, the needs of others, the environment and the expectations, safety and health concerns imposed on them. When the toddler crisis is complete, the child will either show autonomy or demonstrate feelings of doubt in themself. This outcome determines how positively or negatively the child will move into the next emotional crisis. When this stage is complete the child will either feel autonomous or feel doubt in themselves. A child that doubts themselves will not try new things, will not have a high self-esteem and will fear responsibility and independent thought. Some older children will continue to demonstrate tantrum behaviour.	– incorporate stories and songs about feelings to help children identify their emotions – have multiples of popular equipment to avoid conflicts – stay calm, as this reassures the child that they are safe. When working with older children: • Provide simple ways that they can take responsibility. • Set them up for success and celebrate when they succeed. • Boost their self-esteem. • Encourage them to attempt new skills with support so you can intervene if frustration is apparent or if safety is a concern. Allow time for the child to complete a task for themselves rather than doing it for them.
Preschoolers and early school age: initiative or guilt The child is developing a sense of purpose.	Initiative refers to the ability to take on new tasks and complete these with energy and enthusiasm. This skill emerges at preschool age. If a preschooler has learnt that they can trust the world and they have a strong sense of autonomy, they will also have a lot of ideas, energy and enthusiasm to explore the world. However, preschoolers do not always have a wide knowledge of how to achieve projects. They are still learning to negotiate and solve problems, so they still need adult support. When the preschool crisis is complete, the child will either demonstrate initiative or show feelings of guilt in having their needs met or taking control of their needs. The outcome determines how positively or negatively the child will move into the next emotional crisis.	The environment and the questions you ask aid children to become more independent by providing opportunities for decision-making. Decision-making skills help promote positive behaviour as children choose what they want to do themselves, put away their things and get them out when they need them. Encourage children to make decisions when appropriate; for example, what activity to participate in, whether they would like more to eat or drink, or how they might set up an activity. Adults must make decisions about safety, such as whether to wear a hat outside or take medication.

Age/crisis	Explanation	Your role
School-age: industry or inferiority The child is developing a sense of method and competence.	School-age children are developing industry, which means they are learning to apply skills and work effectively with others. If they are not supported to become industrious or if their efforts are given little or negative feedback, they will develop a sense of inferiority.	• Show interest in the children's ideas. • Encourage and praise efforts children make. • Motivate children to extend their skills. • Help the children to work cooperatively with each other.
Adolescent: identity or role confusion The adolescent is developing a sense of devotion and fidelity.	The adolescent is attempting to find out who they are as an individual. Peer relationships feature greatly here. Until this stage, psychosocial development is largely related to what is done to the child. Now development relates to the choices an individual makes.	• Accept and encourage children to explore their identity within boundaries. • Be consistent with your expectations. • Accept choices the child makes if they are within the boundaries provided. • Listen. • Support the child when they have questions about themselves and others. • Answer questions honestly or support children to find out.

As this theory relates to a person's whole life, you should be aware of the other stages Erikson predicts.

Age/crisis	Explanation
Young adulthood: intimacy or isolation The person in young adulthood is developing a sense of affiliation and love.	Mutually satisfying relationships are sought and families are started in the search for companionship and love. Distance from others occurs if we are unsuccessful at this stage.
Middle adulthood: generativity or self-absorption and stagnation The person in middle adulthood is developing a sense of production and ability to care for others.	In middle adulthood, the adult often takes a leadership role at work in a higher role or at home as a parent. As a leader, the person sets examples and defines the culture and expectations of their family. As children leave home or relationship goals change, a mid-life crisis may occur in an effort to find new purpose and goals.

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Age/crisis	Explanation
Late adulthood: integrity or despair The person in late adulthood is developing a sense of wisdom.	Erikson feels that our emotional development from birth relates directly to how we manage our role in middle adulthood. In late adulthood, the purpose is to look back on our life and feel a sense of integrity. Erikson also feels that at this time, we develop a sense of completion and acceptance of death. For those who do not feel integrity and feel a lack achievement in their life, despair can occur.

The changing social expectations of our cultural group challenge us at each stage as we develop physically and emotionally. Motivation to meet these challenges varies from stage to stage with our needs. It is always possible to return to a particular stage and progress through again in a positive manner.

Consider the following case study.

Case study

Andrea had a difficult childhood and was raised by parents who were unable to meet her needs. She did not trust others, doubted her own abilities, felt guilty about asking others for help and was unable to participate properly in many activities as she felt inferior. Andrea did not have a strong sense of identity.

In her early 20s, Andrea met someone she cared deeply about. She learnt from this person that trust was possible, as they were consistent and cared for her needs carefully. This positive experience of trust (trust or mistrust) helped Andrea feel more confident in her own ability to achieve things (autonomy or doubt), including confidence in meeting this other person's needs. As her confidence developed, she also felt less guilty (initiative or guilt) as she could see she was able to contribute to situations too and this made her feel less inferior (industry or inferiority). Andrea began to find out what she really wanted to achieve in her life and this gave her a sense of self (identity or role confusion) and she was able to develop new life goals and make strong healthy relationships (intimacy or isolation.

Social learning theory

Chapter 2 introduced Bandura's social learning theory in relation to social development. The theory is also known as the social cognitive theory, as it links a person's environment, behaviour and psychological processes, including imagination and language. This theory also has specific relevance to emotional development.

To recap, Bandura believes that behaviour is affected by the environment (modelling) and that this modelling does not cause learning, but motivates us to demonstrate what we have learnt. He believes there are certain stages required if modelling is to influence behaviour, including attention, retention, reproduction and motivation.

Bandura's theory includes self-esteem as a central influence and suggests that self-regulation (controlling our own behaviour) is combined with modelling and behaviour reinforcement to create our personality and how we behave. There are three parts to this self-esteem theory:

- Self-observation – looking at ourselves and monitoring how we behave or act
- Judgment – comparing what we observe in ourselves with a model or expectation; these models or expectations may be traditionally imposed (such as using manners) or self-imposed (such as wanting to read a book each week)
- Self-response – measuring how your self-observation meets your judgment

These three parts link together and are influenced by past experiences and how we measure ourselves. If we have high expectations of ourselves or are measured through competition with others, we are more likely to have a low self-esteem as we might battle to meet these expectations.

Here are some potential thoughts a child may have that link with self-esteem.

Self-observation thoughts	Judgment thoughts	Self-response thoughts	High or low self-esteem?
When I played ball with Nelson, I dropped the ball three times. Nelson threw the ball to me and it was out of my reach, but I should have been quicker. I missed the other catch as it was coming towards my face, but I should be braver. Nelson only drops the ball sometimes and he never looks away!	If I was good at ball games, I wouldn't drop the ball at all and I would not be scared when it comes toward my face.	I am bad at ball games. Nelson is much better than me. Maybe I should avoid playing with the ball. I should give up. I am just hopeless. I don't know why Nelson asks me to play ball.	Low self-esteem
Today when I played ball with Nelson, I dropped the ball a couple of times, but the other times I did really well. The ball nearly hit my nose, but I looked away and it was fine.	I have good ball skills if I can do my best to catch the ball and only drop it sometimes – often the other person does a bad throw. If I feel scared because the ball comes toward my face, that is okay because it hurts if it hits my nose.	I am pretty good at ball games. I like playing with Nelson and he always asks me to play ball with him too.	High self-esteem

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Self-observation thoughts	Judgment thoughts	Self-response thoughts	High or low self-esteem?
Today Nelson asked me to play ball. When I played ball I laughed a lot. Nelson and I had fun and we played for ages.	I have good ball skills if I have fun and no one tells me I am bad at it.	I like ball games and I have lots of fun. Nelson asks me to play ball nearly every day.	High self-esteem

Sociocultural theory

Chapter 2 introduced Vygotsky's sociocultural theory in relation to social development. To recap, Vygotsky believed that social interaction increases levels of knowledge and actually changes children's thoughts and behaviour. The world of children becomes richer and their perceptions of the world become more open and positive when they are exposed to a variety of social and cultural experiences.

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development demonstrates how children learn in all areas, particularly in regard to self-help skills. The child moves from not being able to do a task, to doing it with guidance, to doing it on their own.

When a child seeks guidance, or you identify their need and provide it, Vygotsky calls this scaffolding. If scaffolding is provided and the child is ready, then soon after they can develop and master the skill themselves. The child's emotional and psychological development impacts this process; a child who demonstrates independence and autonomy will have confidence in moving into the zone of proximal development. They also accept and take notice of any scaffolding provided.

Another aspect of Vygotsky's theory involves reciprocal teaching. Reciprocal teaching provides a learning environment where open and frequent interaction occurs between the child and educator. The educator in this model alternates leadership of the conversation with the child until the child becomes confident in this role and assumes a leadership and instructional role themselves. Leadership requires the skills of independence and autonomy. If children are exposed to new and more-skilled activities, they will be encouraged to move forward themselves and attempt to learn these skills too. An example of this might be an 8-year-old who is helped to knit. The child may watch the older children knit independently and learn how to complete basic stitches themselves.

Reciprocal teaching is one of the reasons some services group their children in 'family groupings', meaning that the children are of all ages. You can find out more about family grouping on the One World Children's Centre website at: www.owfc.com.au/Childcare.asp.

Temperament

Chapter 2 also introduced the concept of temperament. Temperament refers to the behavioural characteristics that shape reactions and responses, and is believed to be a trait we are born with. Temperament is mainly referred to when discussing infants and toddlers as the natural forces of their character depict their temperament. As children develop socially and emotionally, various positive and negative life experiences impact them and their temperament may change as they begin to develop a personality that is based on more than inborn traits.

Chapter 2 discussed the three basic types of temperament: easy, slow-to-warm-up and difficult. However, some theorists, Alfred Adler (1870–1937) and Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) in particular, believed that there are four temperaments, as described in the following table.

Temperament	Positive aspects	Negative aspects
Sanguine	• Light-hearted • Fun-loving • A people-person • Entertaining • Spontaneous • A leader • Confident	Can be: • arrogant • cocky • indulgent • a daydreamer • impulsive • unpredictable.
Choleric	• Lots of ambition • Energetic • Passionate • Tries to instil passion in others	Can be: • dominating • easily angered • bad-tempered • mean-spirited • suspicious • angry.
Melancholic	• Thoughtful • Kind and considerate • Highly creative • A perfectionist • Particular about what they want and how they want it in some situations	Can be: • overly preoccupied with tragedy and cruelty in the world • depressed • unsatisfied with their own work • constantly critical of themselves.

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Temperament	Positive aspects	Negative aspects
Phlegmatic	• Calm • Generally self-content • Kind and compassionate • Shy • Consistent and reliable • Relaxed • Rational • Curious • Observant • Has many friends • Is a dependable friend	Can be: • resistant to change • lazy • inhibiting of enthusiasm • unemotional.

Independence, autonomy and self-esteem are influenced by a child's temperament. A child with an easy, sanguine or choleric temperament may be more independent, autonomous and have a higher self-esteem than a child with a slow-to-warm-up, difficult, melancholic and/or phlegmatic temperament.

You can adapt your interactions and responses to suit a child's temperament, and you may even be able to help those with a difficult or slow-to-warm-up temperament to become more settled and ready for change.

Matching the environment and your interactions with the temperament of a child helps ensure a 'goodness of fit' (Thomas and Chess). When attempting to provide goodness of fit, consider the characteristics outlined in the following table.

Characteristic	Issues to consider to provide goodness of fit
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 planning changes or actions.
Activity level	Each child may require a different amount of activity – some children can be active all day without rest; others of the same age require a regular rest period. Children require both quiet and active choices throughout the day – be aware of individual children's needs and be flexible in your day to ensure you cater for their needs.
Adaptability	Constantly changing play spaces, educators and routines is disruptive to some children and may cause great anxiety. When a child is new to your service, it is important to establish a routine with minimal changes. Prepare the child in advance for any changes that do occur.

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Characteristic	Issues to consider to provide goodness of fit
Approach	For new children, use transition actions, a strategy where you use a familiar item or object to bridge your relationship and break down the barriers between you and the child. Respect a child's need to take things slowly when dealing with new people, places or practices. Rushing things may only cause mistrust and create further difficulty in dealing with new situations. Children with a slow-to-warm-up temperament may need their parent to stay longer than other children, so encourage this to happen.
Attention span	Be realistic in the time you expect a child to concentrate on one activity. In a group of children who have varying skills, temperaments and personalities, a number of children will be able to stick with an activity for a long period of time while others will maintain only a brief concentration span. Ensure your routines and activities allow for these differences.

Core principles of emotional development

There are a number of core principles that relate to development. The following table shows those relevant to emotional development and explains how they link.

Principle of development	Description	Example links with emotional development
Belonging, being and becoming	Children learn best when they feel safe and valued.	• Children need to feel safe and have a sense of belonging to express their emotions. When you express emotions, you may feel vulnerable.
Sequence of development	Development progresses in a pattern that advances from simple to complex.	• Children progress through initiative versus guilt before industry versus inferiority (psychosocial theory). • The child needs their basic needs met prior to feeling safe and secure (humanistic theory).
Rate of development	Children develop at different paces.	• A child who is provided with consistent and responsive care by a primary caregiver will quickly develop attachment relationships.
Neurological or brain development	Brain and spinal cord development links to the acquisition of skills.	• Children who are provided with secure, safe and rich learning environments will develop stronger skills in self-expression and be able to express their feelings.

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Principle of development	Description	Example links with emotional development
Critical periods and scaffolding	There are times when the opportunity to learn is at its most crucial. If these times are not taken advantage of, the child may miss an important aspect of learning. Children are drawn to challenging experiences and enjoy intentional teaching.	• Children need to have their ideas and choices listened to and accepted. They also need adults to motivate them and give praise (psychosocial theory).
Heredity and environment, and how children use active learning	Also known as nature versus nurture, this relates to the aspects that are genetically programmed in contrast to how the environment influences development. Children actively learn from rich environments.	• Temperament influences the way a child approaches situations. • When goodness of fit is provided, the child will be better able to participate and contribute.
Holistic development	All domains of development are closely related and interlinked.	• Naming feelings: – Cognitive – understanding and attributing the names of emotions – Social – developing relationships where information can be shared – Emotional – feeling and then expressing the emotion and understanding what it means
Play as learning	Play is used by children to learn.	• Children learn emotional skills through group discussions and dramatic play.
Individualised learning	Children learn in different ways and demonstrate what they know in different ways.	• Emotional skills are learnt through close contact and trusting relationships, but are also demonstrated by peers and in friendships and through group activities.

Stages of emotional development

Theories that demonstrate progressive emotional milestones include cognitive theory and psychosocial theory. The following table shows some common emotional development milestones.

Age/stage	Emotional milestone
5–7 years	• Uses words to describe feelings and emotions • Takes on responsibilities • May demonstrate nervous habits such as nail biting • Enjoys time to themselves • Mood swings may be evident • Anxious to please others, particularly adults • Feel frustration if they fail • May sulk if they lose
7–9 years	• Able to discuss problems • Can be self-critical • Demonstrate confidence in skills they have attained • Able to take responsibility for themselves and show independence • Understand that if they try they can improve
9–12 years	• Friends and membership of groups link to the child's self-esteem and how they view their position or status • May speak negatively of their home environment • Will seek support from home when issues arise with friendships • Will be experimenting to find out who they are and what their identity is • May be resistant to requests, making comments such as 'You can't make me do that' or 'That's just dumb'.

Factors influencing individual emotional development

Each child is unique. Their environment and personal characteristics influence their emotional development. A range of influences are commonly identified, including those factors outlined in the following table.

Factor	Influence on emotional development
Age	Older children can understand and control their feelings more readily. They are also able to label these feelings and work with you to self-regulate; that is, take control and be in charge of their own reactions.
Gender	Some cultures have different social expectations for males and females; for example, that females may demonstrate emotion openly while males should keep their feelings private.

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Factor	Influence on emotional development
Family background, lifestyle and culture	As with gender, families have unique values, which may place expectations on children in relation to expressing and understanding. Some norms influence how people demonstrate emotions; for example, there may be different expectations following a death or serious incident, such as hiding their feelings or expressing grief loudly.
Abilities	Some challenges affect emotional responses. Autism spectrum disorder is known to interfere with a child's ability to understand, express and regulate emotion, including having difficulty understanding the feelings, reactions and cues of others.
Level of egocentrism	Children may respond to the emotions of others or ignore them. They may be overprotective. Their level of empathy or sympathy may cause them to be unsupportive due to their lack of ability to look beyond their own needs.
Temperament	Slow-to-warm-up, difficult, melancholic or phlegmatic temperaments may be overly emotional or demonstrate a higher level of emotion. They may also appear to be in a negative emotional state more often than other temperaments. More-even temperaments may not appear to react to difficult times with emotion.
Interests	The child's interests may be emotionally charged; that is, upsetting or exciting. This may occur due to their pursuits matching their temperament, or their temperament matching their pursuits.
Peer groups	Children who relate well to other children enjoy a greater level of positive emotions. They may also enjoy a number of learning experiences as they relate to others who manage emotions and learn how these occur and affect people.

Monitoring emotional development

To ensure your records contain useful information about each child, you may base your assessment and monitoring on:

- developmental milestones or stages
- approaches or theories
- children's ideas and feelings.

When monitoring an individual child's ideas and feelings, you can use the guidelines outlined in the following table.

Why monitor this area	What to look for	Observation method(s) suited to this area
Individual child's ideas and feelings: • The individual child's needs, abilities and experiences are unique. • Your observations of each child allow you to plan experiences that suit the child. • When you understand the individual child, you can ensure your planning meets their needs and extends their skills without overchallenging them. • Your expectations will be appropriate to the individual.	• Developmental milestones or stages (needs and abilities) • How the child fits with theories or approaches • Ways the child expresses themselves • Learning or windows of opportunity • Attachment or security • Interests and ideas • Environmental effects; for example, time, space, materials, space and people • Autonomy and independence • Level of self-esteem and understanding of who they are	• Photographs • Learning stories • Video or DVD recordings • Audio tapes • Checklists • Diaries, journals, logs and communication books • Time samples • Event samples • Running records • Anecdotal records • Incidental records • Records of questioning; for example: – graffiti sheets – daily evaluation sheets – surveys – questionnaires – forms.

Assessing emotional development

Chapter 1 set out the steps for assessing children's progress toward MTOP Outcomes. These steps can be used to help assess the emotional development of the child, and include:

1. Gathering and recording information about the child
2. Using MTOP to identify which of the five Outcomes your observation record links to
3. Identifying a specific sub-outcome of the MTOP
4. Clarifying your selection by referring to the evidence examples that are provided for the identified MTOP Outcome

MTOP Outcomes most commonly related to emotional development include:

- Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity
- Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Practice task 7

1. Collect information about a child using record types of your choice. Provide the age of the child and information about:
   - self-help and independence skills
   - ability to express thoughts, feelings and ideas
   - influences that may impact the child's emotional development, including self-esteem and identity.
2. Use emotional development theories or core principles of development to explain the child's abilities.
3. In line with your service procedures, link each of the findings with MTOP Outcomes.
4. What one experience would you provide to support this child's self-concept or self-esteem? Explain your choice.

3B Providing challenges and opportunities for success

PC 3.2
PC 3.3

Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing (MTOP Outcome 3) when they are supported to develop skills and succeed in completing challenges they feel are meaningful.

Children may use a variety of skills and abilities to complete activities, tasks and experiences; however, their emotional health dictates their attitude toward any challenge or success, and their ability to feel a sense of achievement.

Creating opportunities to develop individual strengths during play

An indicator of social, emotional and/or psychological success is when a child is pleased with something they have achieved during play and learning. This may be a simple task or activity they have participated in or completed, or it may be connected to a relationship they have with another child or adult. Many children feel an increase in self-esteem from achievement, but most will gain further positive feelings if they are acknowledged by another person.

Open-ended play allows children to decide how it will challenge their strengths. Each 'player' participates at a level appropriate to them. Adults can support individual learning through play by providing play that involves areas suited to children's interests and abilities. Children's play should not be onerous; it should allow children to feel and experience achievement in a positive manner.

When children are experiencing an achievement, you may notice the following things.

What they may say	What cues they may give	What you can do
'Look what I have done.' 'We did it.' 'I did it myself.'	• Smiling • Finishing and sharing their work • Wanting to do the activity again • Telling others	• Comment on the process or skill • Ask how the activity was done • Offer similar skill level or interest tasks

Focus acknowledgment and encouragement on efforts or the process of doing something, and aim to help the child feel good about themselves. This then develops positive self-esteem, by showing children that you value them and their efforts and encouraging them to be motivated to do things for intrinsic reasons (to please themselves or because the task is worth doing).

For example, if you noticed that a child has achieved something, you could acknowledge this by saying, 'Matilda that was a great effort. Excellent job'.

There are a range of ways you can demonstrate acknowledgment and encouragement, both during or after an event. You might:

- provide feedback on the child's work by commenting on the effort they are taking, the structure or colour, the materials used or what parts you are particularly interested in or attracted to
- ask questions that demonstrate your interest and appreciation, such as: 'How did you do that?', 'What materials did you use?' or 'What do you think of your work?'
- thank children for their contribution by commenting using basic manners; for example, saying please and thank you.

Support children when they display a sense of achievement.

Providing opportunities that challenge emerging skills and capabilities

Sociocultural theory focuses on the child's emerging skills and uses the term scaffolding to describe the actions taken to support emerging skill development. You can recognise emerging skills by noticing what children say and do, and then act to scaffold this learning.

When children are being challenged positively or are experiencing an achievement, you may notice the following.

What they may say	What cues they may give	What you can do
'I want to do this.' 'How do you do this?' 'Why is it like that?' 'What do I do?'	• Trying something you haven't noticed them do before • Watching others do something they cannot do themself	• Provide modelling and demonstration • Provide technology and appropriate materials • Inform others so they can support the child • Encourage the child • Work with the family to support the learning

Scaffolding takes place in response to you identifying a child's developing skills. Refer to the zone of proximal development (ZPD) to ensure you provide challenging but not frustrating experiences and build on skills using this scaffolding concept. Experiences that scaffold development are naturally challenging, especially if you match them with the way a child learns each skill.

The scaffolding you plan leads you towards appropriately challenging activities. Through observations and interactions, you will identify and monitor the child's level of confidence as they are challenged, which enables you to ensure they do not become frustrated or overwhelmed.

The following table provides examples of how you can identify when a child is being challenged positively and how you can support them.

What they may say	What cues they may give	What you can do
'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 a little help, but not much.'	• Smiling • Humming or singing • Concentrating hard • Succeeding • Working on the task for some time with progress • Asking for a little bit of help or feedback, but not wanting you to take over or complete the activity for them	• Stay nearby to ensure you provide timely support • Offer ideas and help only when needed or asked for • Comment on the process or skill • Avoid interrupting concentration • Allow time and space to succeed

Your reaction to and expectations of children can greatly affect the scaffolding you provide and a child's enjoyment of experiences. When you have appropriate expectations of children, you make an effort to ensure that the environment meets their needs, that they are challenged and that your response shows you understand that learning takes time. You will also expect that, while skills are being developed, children will make mistakes, have accidents, make poor decisions and explore choices.

To build on these learning opportunities, you may:

- comment on the child's use of problem-solving skills to help them see that persistence is useful and mistakes help you learn; for example, you may say, 'Wow! You started with a problem and now you have organised everything.'
- ask the child about ways to succeed in the future and comment positively about their ability to plan what they can do
- tell the child you can see they are trying and that this is important
- ask the child what they found out from the experience
- respond in the least dramatic yet positive way possible; for example, if the child has knocked some things off the table as they tried to spread their work out, instead of commenting, 'Oh no, what a mess', frame your comment positively; for example, 'Let's see how we can make more room.'
- provide additional time, space, materials, resources, support and encouragement.

Be prepared to consider things from the child's perspective. The most effective way to do this is by continually providing a child-focused curriculum. The following case study shows an educator considering an activity from a child's perspective.

Case study

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

Daniel is proud – he has drawn a horse. Christine can see that although the horse is not perfectly formed, it is one of Daniel's most detailed drawings. 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 or if he wants to take it home tonight.

When Christine comments on Daniel's drawing, Daniel's feelings of success are acknowledged and his self-esteem increased.

The power of scaffolding and challenging children is demonstrated through your understanding of the following:

- Behaviourist theory: positive reinforcement encourages success.
- Humanistic theory: emotional security and a high self-esteem allow children to be successful in their pursuits.
- Psychosocial theory: conflicts that result in positive outcomes help children grow into productive and stable adults.
- Social learning theory: self-image affects self-esteem.

Practice task 8

Read the case study, then complete the tasks that follow.

Case study

Benjamin has been observed completing 100-piece puzzles. Benjamin completes these without help.

James has started to bounce a tennis ball, dropping it down then catching it with two hands.

Vey has started to swing her hips in rhythm when music is played.

Carmel has spent all week working on a project using collage. She has finished the project today.

1. Identify an activity or experience you think would appropriately challenge each child. Explain your choice.
2. Give one example of what you might say or do to support the child's self-esteem during this challenging experience.
3. Give one example of what you might observe that tells you this challenge is appropriate.

Relate each of your responses to theory and core principles of emotional development.

3C Supporting development of independence and identity

PC 3.4
PC 3.5

The theories described in section 3A assist you to understand a child's emotional development as well as their individual needs. Each child requires different attitudes and interactions to successfully achieve independence and use appropriate self-help skills.

Providing opportunities to engage independently with tasks

Self-help skills are actions used every day to complete tasks that assist with your own and others' care. They allow children to take responsibility for themselves and take on jobs that contribute to the group's success.

A child must feel independent and autonomous to attempt and succeed at self-help skills. Conversely, they feel independent and autonomous when they are completing self-help skills; so a cycle exists, very much like positive reinforcement in behaviourist theory. You can support children's independence, autonomy and self-help skills if you demonstrate actions and responses such as those outlined in the following table.

Action or response	Example
Have realistic expectations	• 5-year-olds may not be able to pour milk from a large container themselves, but they will be able to pour from a jug or small container. • Children may be able to feed pet fish, but they may not be able to remember to do this every day.
Show children that you have confidence in them	• Tell children you know they can do it.
Provide opportunities for children to do things for themselves	• Create routines and timetables that include tasks for children. • Assume children will complete tasks themselves and ask if they need help.
Give warnings	• Tell children prior to the task so they can prepare and complete what they are doing; for example, 'In two minutes we are going to pack up' or 'After you finish this puzzle, we will prepare the snack table'.
Offer children choices	• Provide options that are realistic and within the child's range of abilities. • Do not provide too many choices. • Create routines and timetables where choice is expected; for example, 'Would you like to set the table or serve the food?'

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Action or response	Example
Ensure routines and care are child-centred	• Ensure programs provide opportunities for children to complete self-help tasks themselves; for example, serving their own food, packing away their belongings or washing their own hands. • Create routines and timetables that allow the child to feel they are not being rushed. • Display a positive and encouraging attitude; for example, 'That's all right, Helen. Take your time and try again', rather than 'Hurry up, Helen, it's time for a snack!'
Make it fun	• Clap when the child succeeds. • Link tasks with upbeat music; for example, a fast marching beat could mean it is time to pack up. The children will be motivated by the sounds and the speed of the music.
Give positive feedback	• Reflect on the process (how the child did a task) rather than the product (result) by saying things like, 'You worked for ages on that!' or 'What a lot of pieces you put together!' rather than 'You finished the puzzle – great!'
Give reasons	• Demonstrate the usefulness of self-help tasks by explaining their benefit; for example, say, 'When you tie your own laces, you don't have to wait for me' or 'The LEGO won't get broken if we pack it away when we're finished'.

Developing positive relationships

Your positive relationships with children enable them to develop independence and autonomy. The following strategies help create this positive relationship:

- Help children understand the pattern of the day; for example, by telling them what is happening next.
- Use routine opportunities such as snack times for one-on-one interactions.
- Make the child feel important throughout the day.
- Talk with children if you are unable to be near them, and use singing, poems and rhymes as a way to comfort children.
- Ensure that educators remain consistent; it is detrimental in building relationships and security if there are frequent educator changes.
- Work at children's eye level.

Applying theory

The following theories provide reminders about the information you have learnt about self-help skills.

Approach	How it relates to planning and providing opportunities to develop self-help skills and independence
Temperament (Adler/Steiner)	When you provide 'goodness of fit' you are supporting the child based on their needs and giving them a feeling of worthiness and acceptance. These feelings translate to allow the child to become independent and to attempt and learn self-help skills.
Social learning theory (Bandura)	A child's level of self-esteem can be directly linked to their ability to be independent and autonomous.
Attachment theory (Bowlby)	Securely attached children are more likely to feel safe to explore the world and develop independence and self-help skills as a result.
Humanistic theory (Maslow)	An emotionally cared for and confident child can attempt to be all they can be; this includes becoming independent and autonomous and developing self-help skills.
Ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner)	The way ecological relationships impact the child and the links each of the systems has all influence the child's ability to become independent and autonomous. For example, if the child is given the message that they are not capable, they will not attempt tasks.
Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky)	Self-help skills are learnt through each of the three ways of learning: imitative learning, instructed learning and collaborative learning.
Psychosocial theory (Erikson)	The crises in this theory link with a child's thoughts about themselves and how they view their environment. These views influence the child's ability to see themselves as capable beings and influence the things they try and the level of effort they apply to succeed.
Brain development	The synapses that are created as children develop new skills and knowledge allow them to make choices and become more independent and autonomous.
Cognitive theory (Piaget)	The child has a potential for learning that is influenced by their feelings of independence and autonomy. The child should be encouraged to be an independent thinker.
Multiple intelligences (Gardner)	The child may demonstrate independence and self-help skills in areas that best match their 'intelligence'. There is more on this in Chapter 4.

Creating opportunities to explore self-image and identity through play

Self-esteem is the feeling of confidence in your own ability. Identity is about who you are and how you believe you fit into the world. A child with high self-esteem generally wants to attempt new play activities and will feel satisfaction through participation in their play. They enjoy a stronger sense of identity due to feeling that they are valued and hold an important role in the lives of people that are meaningful to them.

A child with low self-esteem is generally less enthusiastic, avoiding new play activities and feeling frustration if challenges in play are posed. Their sense of identity is low, as they are not sure where they fit into the lives of others and may not feel their needs are important or that others are interested in seeing them succeed.

These reactions in children are learnt through experience. A child who is encouraged, supported and provided opportunities to play and be independent is learning to feel self-confidence. A child who is questioned, overshadowed and provided limited opportunities to be independent and play is receiving a message that they are incapable, and they will have little confidence in their abilities as a result. Refer back to the psychosocial theory for more in-depth discussion.

To positively influence a child's self-esteem:

- give individual attention to each child and provide opportunities for children to be independent
- encourage children to attempt skills and activities as individuals and part of a group
- provide children with positive feedback about themselves on attempts and products as individuals and part of a group
- support children to be clear communicators and considerate of others
- acknowledge children when they help you or others
- encourage realistic ideals by providing materials, activities and models that show diversity
- prohibit put-downs, avoid comparison and competition, and accept mistakes as learning opportunities
- be genuine in your interactions with individual children and groups
- allow children to make decisions, problem-solve and negotiate as individuals and part of a group
- provide age- and stage-appropriate activities, equipment and expectations
- identify and celebrate the social, emotional and psychological successes of individuals and groups.

When children are not noticed, they learn to have little confidence in themselves. Some children are quiet achievers; perhaps they are not demanding or they may have positive behaviour and continue work without expectation that you will acknowledge or support them. In a busy program these children may not receive much attention or any positive interaction at all. They may seem to have a positive self-esteem, but many may not feel like they fit in with the group or may feel they are unworthy of attention.

In addition to ensuring you spend time with all children and interact in ways that demonstrate all children are worthwhile, Bandura's social learning theory suggests the following strategies for children who have a low self-esteem:

- Help the child to develop an accurate picture of their abilities and behaviour.
- Redirect a child's inaccurate or confused beliefs about themselves.

Children with high self-esteem feel satisfaction through participation in new activities.

Developing an accurate picture of self

You can help a child develop an accurate picture of themselves, their abilities and their behaviour through encouragement and by demonstrating that their abilities are appropriate to their age and stage of development. Talk positively about the child's work and provide measures appropriate to the child's stage of development.

The following table sets out some strategies for a child to develop an accurate picture of themselves.

Strategy	Explanation
Children measure their own achievements	By measuring against themselves, rather than against other children, children can see improvement in their own performance and think about factors such as how much enjoyment they experience during activities.
Rotate games	Rotate games so that skilled players are not always central. All players should assume an important role in an activity they are involved in. This may mean changing the rules or developing a new game from an old one.
Keep expectations realistic	Make sure your expectations or challenges are not set too high, or you will set children up to fail. Similarly, if you set the standards too low, they will be meaningless. You can get the balance right if you monitor the children regularly and ensure you are aware of their skill level.
Scaffold skills to support challenging experiences	If a child is able to do something with support, you can respond to this by scaffolding their skills and providing appropriate challenges. If a child is not in the zone of proximal development or you have not noticed an opportunity, you may be setting up the child to fail or become frustrated.
Encourage children to reward themselves	Encourage children to reward themselves and discourage negative self-talk. Support children to do this by giving them words to use and telling them what you think as well. Celebrate achievements and help children see that mistakes are ways to learn.

Redirecting inaccurate or confused beliefs

Another important way you can explore and support positive self-image is by redirecting a child's inaccurate or confused beliefs about themselves. Usually these beliefs occur when the child makes generalisations about their abilities, personal appearance or anything else they feel is important. This may also occur when they believe they should think, feel or act in a particular way. Children are provided messages about these things constantly as they hear or see others being praised or encouraged, and hear or see images of what a boy or girl should be like or how a certain culture should behave or look.

The following case study illustrates how children can become confused about their self-image.

Case study

Kerryn finds the skipping game she is playing is too hard. She decides from this experience that she is not good at doing any skipping games and subsequently avoids skipping completely. In fact, Kerryn is quite clever at skipping for her age and can complete very difficult skipping challenges.

In cases where a child's self-image is confused or inaccurate, your interaction and the experiences you provide can help the child separate their abilities from their insecurities. You might:

- discuss things you know about the child that disperse their insecurities
- demonstrate that the child's insecurities are false by showing them previous work
- provide images or experiences that demonstrate that gender and culture do not determine likes and dislikes or personality
- invite people to the service to share their experiences, knowledge, interests and different images
- ensure the child is provided with attention
- create opportunities for the child to participate positively in the area they are concerned about
- discuss or introduce strategies that help the child become more skilled in the area of weakness
- celebrate areas of interest, ability and enjoyment
- eliminate competitive games and activities, as these boost the winner's self-esteem and highlight weaknesses and failures of other participants
- pair the child with others that complement their skills or place the child in a position where their skills or abilities are valuable.

These types of activities, along with your positive and supporting interactions, allow the child to reassess their feelings and self-perceptions. They also provide opportunities for the child to build on and extend their achievements.

Self-esteem and self-concept are often developed indirectly as a child is provided with experiences that are successful and rewarding, meet their individual interests and strengths, and provide for success.

MTOP Outcome 1 emphasises the importance of self-esteem and identity, while Outcome 2 looks at the child's feelings of belonging in their world. These promote the child's emotional wellbeing as a foundation to success in all other areas of their learning, which closely resembles a humanistic view.

Providing opportunities to express emotions

Emotions are the feelings we experience. Emotions may be positive (for example, happiness, excitement, enthusiasm, empathy and curiosity) and may also be negative (for example, grief, fear, hatred, shame and anger).

Every child experiences emotions to different degrees and may even experience different emotions relating to the same event. Some emotions are used as cues to communicate messages. Your response to these emotions and your demonstration of empathy is crucial; the way you respond can have a long-lasting effect on a child's self-esteem throughout their life.

Carefully consider your attitudes and interactions and be aware of the way each individual child communicates their emotions. Emotions can be expressed through verbal interaction and body language, including the use of body movements, gestures or facial expressions; for example, children may communicate through the posture of their body. Sometimes cultural or individual circumstances may cause a child to display signs you do not understand. It will take some time for you to get to know each individual child and to understand how they communicate their feelings.

Once you understand the messages a child is trying to communicate about their feelings and ideas, you need to respond promptly to build relationships with children and show them that you care.

School age children need to:

- express themselves through activities such as clapping, stamping and dancing
- express their feelings verbally
- express their feelings through paintings, drawings and other creative activities.

Even a child seeking your attention requires time and understanding. A child who seeks attention and does not receive it may feel unworthy of love or become destructive in order to receive attention, as some children feel that negative attention from you is better than no attention at all.

Negative feelings

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

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

When negative feelings are expressed, you can respond in simple ways:

- Listen to what the child has to say and use body language to show you are listening, by facing the child and getting down to their eye level.
- Respond with simple comments.
- Use active listening to highlight specific feelings to help the child express how they feel; for example, 'You seem angry'.
- Ask the child what to do next or help them decide by providing materials or opportunities.
- Redirect them to the next activity.

Using play experiences to express emotion

Play experiences provide children with an excellent outlet for expressing feelings. Children may respond to play experiences differently; for example, one child may use playdough to soothe their anger by pounding and squeezing.

The following play experiences provide children with opportunities to express their emotions:

- Dramatic play props such as dress-ups, furniture and equipment can assist a child to act out their feelings.
- Drawing or painting allows children to express themselves without words.
- Tactile or manipulative play can have a calming quality; for example, messy play where the mess created is not a concern, water play, and playing with sand, clay or mud.
- Imaginative play with models and miniatures allows children to play out their feelings.
- Storytelling, props, puppets and books encourage indirect expression.
- Music and dance allow non-threatening physical expression.
- Swings have a movement that relaxes the body and mind and gives the child a feeling of freedom.
- Hammering can allow frustration to be expelled.
- Punching bags or pillows allow physical energy to be expended.

The following experiences provide opportunities for emotional enrichment and expression:

- Sociodramatic play: dress-ups, home corner, dolls, cars and roads
- Movement experiences: dancing and moving expressively
- Listening to different types of music
- Art experiences such as using clay, finger paints or any other open-ended materials

Ensure children have enough of the material they are using and enough space to use it. For example, if you only offer a small handful of playdough, how can a child pound or poke it? Ensuring enough space also avoids accidents.

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, and these may demonstrate that the child is not in control of their feelings or capable of expressing themselves safely.

Your ability to deal with children's emotional outbursts relies on you remaining calm. Your actions should be consistent and you should be open to comforting upset children even if they seem difficult to get close to.

Different children respond to different methods of calming. Some children need quiet time away from others; some children need to sit and express themselves to someone who is prepared to listen to what they are saying. Other children may need to express their emotions physically.

You can cater for each of these calming methods, 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 service. The limits and strategies you provide for the child at this stage will help them throughout their life.

Emotional outbursts of anger are common for some children, just as emotional outbursts of fear or frustration, sadness or joy are too. Sometimes children are placed in situations that impact their emotional state as well as other developmental areas. These situations include:

- ill health, or long periods of hospitalisation of the child or a family member
- changes in family circumstances and relationships
- accidents or embarrassing events that may occur during the day
- separation from familiar people and places, including starting in a school age care service
- difficult interactions with other children
- moving house or migrating
- the death of a family member or pet.

The feelings that children express in relation to these situations must be dealt with appropriately and respectfully.

Separation anxiety

Many children experience anxiety when separated from their parent or primary educator, or when being introduced to a new person. Common signs of separation and stranger anxiety include:

- withdrawal
- clinging
- lack of eye contact
- sleeping difficulties
- unusual quietness
- aggression
- crying
- other behaviour that is out of character.

Separation anxiety is linked with the three main theories outlined in the following table.

Theory	How it links to separation anxiety	What it means to you
Temperament	• Children react differently to others based on the temperament they possess. For example, a child with a phlegmatic temperament may be resistant to change.	• Consider how you introduce yourself to children. • Provide strategies for new people and situations based on what you know about the child's temperament. • Be sensitive to the child's ability to feel safe and secure.
Attachment theory (Bowlby)	• Children need secure attachments to feel safe in their exploration of the world. • Children are wary of people they don't know. • If children are securely attached, they will be less anxious in general.	• Your interactions and plans for every child should include developing close attachment relationships. • Use your secure attachment relationship to help children feel less fearful and develop new relationships with others.

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Theory	How it links to separation anxiety	What it means to you
Psychosocial theory (Erikson)	• Trust is a basic need of children if they are to develop positively. • Children who do not trust others will feel greater fear and anxiety when faced with new situations and people. • The development of autonomy and initiative relies on the child's ability to trust in others and the environment.	• Ensure those close to the child tell the child when they are leaving so the child is not confused or looking for the person. • Explain what is happening to children so they are not fearful or confused. • Create a stable, consistent and predictable routine and environment.

When a child displays signs of separation anxiety, the strategies to settle them are very similar to those for reacting to any emotional upset. You can use strategies such as:

- physically comforting the child with a hug (if appropriate) or a pat on the back, arm or shoulder
- talking to the child
- providing comforters to relax the child, such as favourite toys or a particular activity
- redirecting or distracting the child with another activity.

When you first meet a new child, some make eye contact with you and are happy to be close to you physically, while others keep their distance and turn their faces away. To help break down any barrier between you and a child, you can use a special toy or ritual. This process is called using a transition action and involves using something other than yourself to gain the child's interest and attention. The child links the toy or ritual with you and slowly becomes familiar and comfortable with you, as illustrated in the following case study.

Case study

Ally (8 years) is attending a new service for the second time. An educator, Dave, has observed Ally and noticed she is not participating in activities yet, and does not respond to educators or children if they speak directly to her. Dave plans to use a transition action to assist Ally to settle into the program.

Dave checks Ally's enrolment form, which reminds him that Ally is interested in card games. He brings out a game of UNO and sits near to Ally and starts to shuffle the cards. Dave asks Ally if she would like to play UNO with him. Ally agrees and they play together.

The next day, Dave has the UNO cards set up and also displays a set of 'snap' cards. He shows Ally as soon as she arrives. He sits with her and they play with the cards together. During this play other children participate in the games, each introducing themselves to Ally.

Determine what may work as a transition action by asking the parent or watching what activities the child goes to in the play space. Transition actions are also often a link between care and home. Consider the stage of development and interests that are common to children of this age and stage.

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. In children, fear often occurs as the result of not understanding a situation or not being prepared for change.

The way fear is managed can affect the security and safety felt by a child, and may also reflect issues a child may be managing. When your routine is stable and predictable, you can eliminate some fears children may have, such as fears relating to change and:

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

Some fears that are common to each age group are listed in the following table.

Age group	Common fears
5–6 years	Children show fear of imaginary things and often have nightmares. They have vivid imaginations and explore outside their familiar environment into things that they can make up. They often become afraid of things they don't understand, perhaps after having overheard an adult conversation they misunderstood.
7–12 years	Children have fears and phobias that are very common. They include: • physical injury • health issues • school performance • death • thunderstorms • earthquakes • floods • spiders • dogs. If a child's sleep, school performance and social activities are hindered by the fear, psychological help may be required.

A range of strategies you may find useful for managing fear are outlined in the following table. As fear is an emotion that affects individuals differently, you will need to vary strategies.

Strategy	Implementation ideas
Anticipate fears	Anticipate fears and act to prevent them; if you know a child is afraid of something or someone, you may be able to prepare the child or avoid the fear.
Remove objects that cause fear	Removing objects that cause fear is often a simple task because the child may be afraid of a toy or noise. This strategy may be more difficult if the fear relates to a particular educator, all people with a particular characteristic (for example, males or people in uniform) or the actual play space.
Prepare children	Prepare children for unpleasant times and events; children's lives may involve many unpleasant experiences; for example, having a blood test, going to hospital and moving house. Encourage emotional expression and provide ways for children to find out more about what the experience involves. Be honest and give accurate information, as telling children an experience may be different to what it actually will be may make them more afraid once they undergo the experience.
Age- and stage-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 causes of negative feelings may become a regular part of the day.

The following plan may be useful if a child expresses uncontrollable emotions of fear:

- Remove the child or the feared subject 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, such as an item they use for comfort. If the child doesn't have an item, provide something they can use if wanted.
- Comfort the child by talking calmly and quietly and using body language to let them know you care about what they are feeling.
- Acknowledge the fear by saying, 'I know you are afraid'. Ensure the child knows they are safe with you and continue to do so until the child has calmed. Don't talk too much; continuing to speak about the fear or reassuring the child continuously may increase their anxiety.
- Redirect if possible. Encourage the child to move to another area or activity to give them something other than the feared item or situation to think about. This step may not suit all children and timing may also be difficult to judge.

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

- humming – this distracts their minds from focusing on the fear
- taking deep breaths – this allows their bodies to slow down and relax
- squeezing a hand or item – this focuses tension and allows the level of fear to be transferred to this action.

Ensure you watch for indications of fear management so you can provide the child with the comfort and support they need.

Practice task 9

Read the scenario, then answer the questions that follow. Link MTOP Outcomes, theories and core principles of development to your responses.

Scenario

Mim, who is 6 years old, loves playing with construction sets, basketball and computer games. She knows she is a girl, but all the other girls she knows and the girls on TV play with dolls. Mim wonders why she is not like that. Today, you notice Mim sitting alone with her head down. You ask her what has happened and she tells you one of the boys pushed her off the basketball court and told her to play with the girls. When she went to play with the girls, they said she wasn't their friend.

1. What could you do to help Mim develop a stronger self-image and gain a greater understanding of her identity?
2. What might you do to provide Mim with an opportunity to release her feelings and emotions?
3. What responsibility could you give Mim that might develop her independence, while helping her to increase her self-image?

Chapter summary

1. Emotional development is about learning to recognise emotions and how to express them appropriately. Emotional development is also about how you see yourself, your self-concept and resulting self-esteem.
2. Understanding theories relating to emotional development and related milestones enables you to understand and cater for individual children and their emotional needs.
3. A child's emotional development can be assessed and monitored using a checklist of age-appropriate milestones.
4. Children may use a variety of skills and abilities to complete activities, tasks and experiences. However, their emotional health dictates their attitude toward challenges or successes, and their ability to feel a sense of achievement.
5. Sociocultural theory focuses on the child's emerging skills and uses the term scaffolding to describe the actions taken to support learning of emerging skills. You can recognise emerging skills by monitoring what children say and do.
6. Self-help skills are actions used every day to complete tasks that assist in the care of yourself and others. They allow children to take responsibility for themselves and take on jobs that contribute to the success of the group.
7. Create opportunities for children to explore their self-image and identity through play.
8. Provide children with opportunities to release feelings and express emotions through suitable experiences.

Assessment activity 3
Fostering 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 *CHCSAC005 Foster the holistic development and wellbeing of the child in school age care*.

Part	Element	Performance criteria
A	3	3.3, 3.4
B	3	3.2, 3.3, 3.6
C	3	3.1, 3.5

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in fostering 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
- to ensure you maintain confidentiality as required.

Part A

Observe the children in your service and complete the following tasks:

- Identify the self-help tasks that children participate in throughout the day. List four of these tasks.
- For each self-help task, identify emerging skills you may observe if a child was learning to complete this task independently.
- For each emerging skill, describe one way you could scaffold the child's learning through play. You may wish to record your information in a table similar to the following.

Self-help tasks	Emerging skills	Scaffolding provided through play

Part B

Use suitable documentation methods to demonstrate you are able to plan and provide for play that:

- caters for individual strengths and successes
- challenges children's emerging skills and capabilities
- caters for release of feelings and expression of emotions.

Show you can provide these experiences through documentation that provides evidence that you have:

- monitored play and learning – your documentation methods may be learning stories, anecdotal records, diary entries, jottings, samples of work, checklists, sociograms or other methods that demonstrate planning and your observations of children (include the date you took the record, the child's age and the setting relevant to the record)
- evaluated what is important about the documented information
- planned play experiences – explain what you planned, what materials and resources you provided and how you ensured the experience met your planned goals.

Part C

Develop a 1–2 page report explaining how you promote MTOP Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity, in your daily work with the children.

In your report, link the information you provide to at least two emotional development theorists or core principles of development.

Then explain how you:

- assess and monitor the children's emotional development
- create opportunities for children to explore self-image and identity through play.

You may use a range of documentation methods to explain this information, such as:

- photos
- learning stories
- anecdotal records

- diary entries
- jottings
- samples of work
- checklists
- sociograms
- other methods as agreed with your trainer/assessor.

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
Fostering cognitive development

Cognitive development is defined by a range of approaches and theories that guide us to identify the milestones children are expected to achieve. These theories also provide you with an understanding of why children approach learning and development the way they do. As children learn how to problem-solve and develop scientific, mathematical, technological and environmental knowledge and skills, the understanding you show enables you to provide an environment that meets these growing needs, and supports and challenges their abilities.

Educators play a significant role in helping children develop their critical thinking capabilities. To do this, you need to assess and monitor children's cognitive development and know how to apply relevant concepts from cognitive development theories and principles to enhance learning opportunities and cater for children's individual needs and abilities.

In this chapter you will learn about:

4A Understanding development theories and monitoring cognitive development

4B Constructing, sorting and comparing

4C Exploring and experimenting

4D Using play to experience consequences

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 development theories and monitoring cognitive development

PC 4.1

MTOP is focused on a view that children are capable human beings. Review the following to refresh your memory on how MTOP links with supporting cognitive development:

- Principle 3 – High expectations and equity
- Principle 5 – Ongoing learning and reflective practice
- Practice – Intentionality
- Practice – Environments
- Outcome 4 – Children are confident and involved learners

Understanding cognitive development

An understanding of theories relating to cognitive development, combined with knowledge of relevant milestones, enables you to plan and provide for individual children's cognitive needs.

Cognitive development is about how the brain functions, develops and makes sense of information. It involves thinking and learning development and relates to aspects such as language, attention span, planning, problem-solving and memory.

Studies show that the brain develops connections when learning occurs. These connections break down if the learning is not practised; however, if the learning is practised, the connections increase in strength and become a skill or knowledge.

Learning can take place through play and experience, or rote learning might be employed. Rote learning is a technique based on memorisation through repetition. Examples of rote learning include repeating numbers or the alphabet over and over, or writing something repeatedly. Contemporary learning theories suggest that more meaningful learning occurs through play and first-hand experience, as demonstrated in the following case study.

Case study

Gertrude is learning to count by twos by copying her educator in rote learning. They count items, repeating: '2, 4, 6, 8, 10', and then count again.

Marika is learning to count by twos while she plays. The educator sets up ten chairs back to back for musical chairs and they count the chairs and children by twos together. Later at pack up time they count the pieces to a game as they pack it up.

Perceptual development

Perceptual development is closely linked to cognitive development as it is about how the senses – touch, taste, smell, sound and sight – are all used to make sense of the world. The sensory experiences a child is involved in increase their ability to send messages from the brain to the body. Sensory experiences occur during activities such as patting children on the shoulder or providing tactile materials to explore; that is, rough, smooth, thin, thick, hard and soft materials.

Sensory experiences also occur when children participate in activities such as:

- washing
- cleaning
- cooking
- listening
- using different environments for play
- looking at faces
- comparing images.

Note that the environment must not be overloaded with sensory stimulation or children will find it difficult to focus and will be easily distracted.

Children explore their senses through play; for example, learning what clay feels like.

Brain development

The concept of brain development, which has a significant influence on the way a child learns, was introduced in Chapter 3 in relation to emotional development.

The quality of experiences and relationships 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
- drinking water
- safe environments

- appropriate materials and equipment
- adequate space for development of motor skills
- good oxygen supply
- appropriate levels of stimulation – overstimulation can distract children.

The environment and the types of stimulating and age-appropriate experiences you provide are important factors in supporting cognitive development. Brain research links cognitive development to these points consistently, which encourages you to consider how the care and education you provide children assists their brain function and their ongoing learning ability.

Infants are born with 100 billion brain cells that are ready to connect. As the infant learns about the world, their brain cells make connections called synapses. When the connections in the brain are developing, a substance called myelin covers the connection insulating it and strengthening it. This process is called myelination. It helps neural impulses travel more quickly and effectively, which results in a greater amount of control and a shorter reaction time.

Children do not develop more brain cells as they grow; instead, they form more connections between cells as they continue to learn. These connect during learning and develop strength if this learning is practised.

The synapses that are created as children develop new skills and knowledge allow children to make choices and become more independent.

Cognitive development theory

Chapter 3 also introduced Jean Piaget, who was foremost in cognitive theory and believed strongly that we learn as constructionists. In the constructionist model, the child must decide which information is vital or new, then decide which information they will retain and develop.

Before investigating the stages of development described by cognitive constructionist theory, it is important to understand some basic concepts of cognitive learning. These concepts link with brain development, but are more about the process of learning new things rather than how the brain grows.

The process of cognitive learning involves four concepts, which are explained in the following table.

Concept	Explanation
Schema	Schemata (plural for schema) are mental representations of things we know: perceptions, ideas and/or actions. They are the basic building blocks of thinking and they expand as new information is learnt. You can see how schemata relate to synapses in brain development. Synapses are the physical connections made in the brain, which hold schemata.

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Concept	Explanation
Assimilation	Assimilation occurs when new information is received. We use assimilation to match a new event or object with information we already know. When we link new information with our current ideas, it is easier for us to develop understanding and then accept the new information.
Accommodation	Accommodation occurs when the new information is understood and recognised. New schemata are developed when accommodation occurs and the new events or objects are understood and remembered.
Equilibration	Equilibration is the term used by Piaget to describe our need to assimilate and accommodate new information and create new schema in order to understand the world. Equilibration relates to the way we try to find logic in events and objects in our desire to understand them.

The following case study illustrates the previous four concepts in action.

Case study

Xavier has a friend, Mitch, who plays a musical instrument. Xavier is interested in musical instruments but does not have a great deal of knowledge about them. One day Mitch brings his musical instrument to the program to show Xavier and the other children. The musical instrument is a French horn. When Xavier sees the instrument he says, 'I know what that is, it's a tuba!' Mitch explains that it is a French horn and demonstrates how it is different to a tuba.

The next day Xavier wants to know how a trumpet is different to a French horn or tuba.

- Schema: Xavier already has ideas and perceptions about musical instruments. He has seen brass instruments in street parades and in the school band.
- Assimilation: Xavier links the French horn with the tuba as there are similarities. Xavier knows that a tuba is brass and that it is shaped in a particular way and expects the other brass instruments to link with these ideas. He doesn't realise there are many different brass instruments. Mitch provides new information so Xavier can develop new ideas (schema) about what a brass instrument might be.
- Accommodation: Xavier uses the information given by Mitch to develop an understanding of the instrument. He can now identify the differences between a French horn and a tuba.
- Equilibration: Xavier demonstrates equilibration as he listens and thinks about what Mitch is telling him (he wants to make sense of this new instrument).

Even though you work with school age children, the cognitive stages that occur during the infant years are useful to be aware of so you can understand how children develop intellectually. In addition, the cognitive stage of the preschool child may still be evident in many 5-year-old children, as they may develop at different times.

Sensorimotor stage

The sensorimotor stage is the first stage of cognitive development, which spans from birth to approximately 2 years and is determined by the child's use of physical actions to explore with their senses. Children in this stage are only able to think about people or events in the current situations they are in.

There are six sub-stages of the sensorimotor stage, and each of these has clear characteristics and relates to the concept of object permanence. This concept was introduced in Chapter 3 and defines the process of recognising that an object exists even if it can no longer be seen. Infants have fully developed object permanence by the end of their first year.

The following table outlines the sub-stages of the sensorimotor period through the characteristics that indicate each one, as well as object permanence development.

Sensorimotor sub-stage	Characteristics	Examples	Object permanence
Sub-stage 1: Reflexive (Birth to approximately 1 month)	• Reflexes are used. • There is little or no imitation.	• The child is occupied by inborn reflexes: looking about, grasping and sucking.	• None. Unable to find an object even when watching while it is hidden.
Sub-stage 2: Primary circular reactions (Approximately 1 to 4 months)	• Simple motor actions are centred on the child's own body. • The child copies another person's behaviour.	• Opening and closing fingers. • If the child blows bubbles and this is repeated by an adult, the child will do it a second time.	• None. Unable to find an object even when watching while it is hidden.
Sub-stage 3: Secondary circular reactions (Approximately 4 to 8 months)	• Actions are oriented towards recapturing interesting effects. • The child imitates the behaviour of a model, but only if the action is one the child has already learnt.	• The child may shake a rattle to repeat the effect gained or kick their feet to make a mobile move. • If the child is able to gurgle and an adult gurgles to the child, the child may repeat the action.	• Able to retrieve a partially hidden object. • Unable to find a completely hidden object even when it is hidden while the child is watching.

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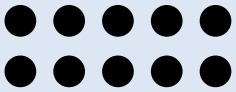
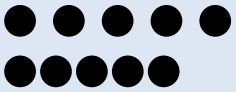
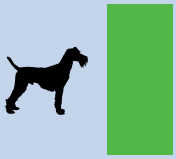
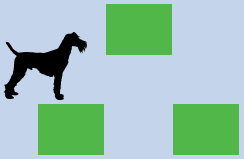
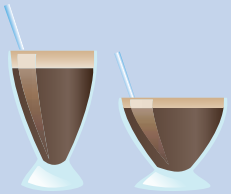
Sensorimotor sub-stage	Characteristics	Examples	Object permanence
Sub-stage 4: Coordination of secondary circular reactions (Approximately 8 to 12 months)	• Actions are goal-directed and serve as a means to an end. • The child can imitate actions that are slightly different from the ones they have already learnt.	• The child may reach out (the means) to grab a toy (the end). • If the child can gurgle and an adult gurgles with a start/stop action, the child may imitate. • The child is excited by pop-up toys and hide-and-find games as they challenge their development of object permanence.	• Able to retrieve a partially hidden object from the first location it is hidden in, but will not look in a second hiding place. • The child is beginning to understand that objects exist when out of sight – this links with the onset of separation anxiety.
Sub-stage 5: Tertiary circular reactions (Approximately 12 to 18 months)	• The child explores the properties of objects by acting on them. • The child imitates unfamiliar actions.	• The child explores objects through sucking, biting, throwing and so on. • If the child cannot clap but an adult claps in play, the child can imitate the action.	• The child is able to search in successive locations for a hidden toy.
Sub-stage 6: Mental representation (Approximately 18 months to 2 years)	• There is now some symbolic representation. • The child has a good memory of objects and events.	• The child may cradle a doll or make a 'brrroomm' noise as they push a car around on the floor.	• Able to find hidden objects without first seeing the hiding action.

Preoperational stage

The preoperational stage spans from approximately 2 years to 7 years and is determined by the child's use of exploration, imagination and symbolic representation, including language development. Children in this stage are egocentric; that is, they see everything from only their point of view.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, logical thought is not consistent in this stage, which is due to underdeveloped skills and predictable preoperational processes. The following table adds more detail to the one provided in section 3A.

Process	Characteristic	Example
Transductive reasoning	The child makes errors in connecting two unrelated events or objects. This may occur if two things happen in close succession, causing the child to think they are related.	Ferner slams the door. At the same moment, his friend Greg slips over on the path nearby. Although the sandy path is what causes Greg to slip, Ferner believes that slamming the door is the cause because of the timing. The next day Kerryn slams the door. Ferner calls to her, 'Kerryn, you will make someone slip!'
Irreversibility	The child is unable to see that a process can be undone or reversed.	Fleur is building with blocks. She has made a tower and roads with fences along the side. Atticus is playing nearby and bumps the fence, causing two blocks to fall. Fleur begins crying uncontrollably and starts to get angry at Atticus. The educator talks with Fleur about how they can repair the fence. She explains that they can put the two blocks back in place. Fleur remains upset, saying, 'It is all broken now!'
Single classification	The child can only sort an object based on one characteristic.	Bert is sitting at the puzzle table. There are a range of different items laid out and there are small tubs. The educator asks Bert to sort the items that are red into one tub and the items that are square into another. Bert finds all of the red items and all of the square items and sorts them. Later the educator asks Bert to sort the red squares into one tub and the yellow triangles into another. Bert struggles with this activity as he is required to look at each object in two ways at once.
Either/or thinking	The child is only able to see events one way or another; the child cannot understand that there may be an answer that is in the middle of these two ideas.	Daniel is playing with Dorothy at a non-competitive board game. When Dorothy completes the game, Daniel becomes angry. He says, 'I hate losing!' The educator explains to Daniel that he hasn't lost; it is a fun game and Dorothy just finished first, but Daniel holds his understanding that you either win or lose in any game.
Overgeneralising	The child links things they know to all situations of that kind.	Dulci has a sister that is often unwell and spends a lot of time in hospital. Dulci expects that all sisters will be unwell and spend time in hospital.
Animism	The child gives animate characteristics to inanimate things.	Delia gets a paper cut when she turns the page on a book. She tells the educator that the book has 'bitten' her.

Conservation task question	Original presentation	Child's response	Transformed (change only made to the appearance)	Child's response
Number: Is there the same number of dots in each row?		Yes		No, the top row has more.
Length: Are the sticks the same length?		Yes		No, one is longer.
Mass: Is there the same amount of clay in each ball?		Yes		No, one has more.
Area: Does the dog have the same amount of grass to play on?				No, the dog has less grass to play on.
Weight: Does each of these balls of clay weigh the same amount?		Yes		No
Volume: Do the glasses have the same amount of liquid?		Yes		No, one has more.

You may recognise that some processes from the previous table continue into adulthood. Sometimes this is caused by strong connections formed in early childhood; other times it is due to information that has been repeated to strengthen the conclusion made (such as thinking all games are either lost or won).

Two other abilities that link with preoperational processes are:

- the child's lack of understanding of the concepts of number, colour, shape and size
- the child's lack of ability to conserve in relation to number, length, liquid, mass, area, weight and volume.

These limitations are important to consider when developing programs for children and establishing appropriate expectations.

Conservation in relation to number, length, liquid, mass, area, weight and volume is difficult for a preoperational child to understand due to their tendency to think illogically. Indications that a child is unable to conserve can be gained from the way materials are presented. The following table includes examples of preoperational children not understanding that the transformed materials are equal to the original materials – even though only the appearance has changed. Even if the change in appearance occurs while the child is watching, they will still think the quantities have adjusted due to the different appearance.

There are many implications for children and educators arising from these conservation ideas. The following scenario illustrates how children in the preoperational stage may have difficulty understanding why they have different materials or equipment to others.

Scenario

Tahlia, 5 years, has five one-dollar coins and you offer her a five dollar note in exchange. She does not accept this. She says, 'Five coins equal more than one note!' Being in the preoperational stage means Tahlia sees the quantity of coins as 'more' and disregards the monetary value, despite the note being equal.

Even when you offer her a 10 dollar note in exchange, Tahlia continues to value the coins by number rather than value.

Concrete operational stage

In the concrete operational stage, from approximately 7 to 11 years, children are flexible, organised and logical and have an understanding of conservation and other concepts that preoperational children don't. Their thinking becomes close to that of an adult, although they still require real examples of information to help them apply logic. If you ask a child in a concrete operational stage to complete a conservation task, they may even laugh and say that you cannot trick them.

Children will enjoy and apply problem-solving to difficult concepts such as mathematical sentence problems. They will also be able to work out how much time it will take to complete an activity or what quantity of materials they will need for a creative activity. In the concrete operational stage, children see others' points of view as they are less egocentric than children in the preoperational stage.

Formal operations stage

The formal operations stage is entered during adolescence. The child finds it easier to make rational judgments with or without concrete information.

Cognitive development stages span from birth to adolescence. The stages occur at approximate ages and will overlap at times. If a child has entered a stage of overlap, you may observe abilities expected in two different stages, which indicates the child's emerging skills, as in the following case study.

Case study

When Ted says his drink is smaller, Nina (5 years) explains to him that it is his cup that is different and he still has the same amount of drink. Later, Nina is playing and tells Lana, an educator, that the bike is 'naughty' as it hurts her leg.

Nina displays concrete operational skills in her explanations about the cup to Ted. She displays preoperational skills in her bike comment.

Despite being in the preoperational stage, Nina shows cognitive characteristics that indicate she is progressing into the concrete operational stage.

Multiple intelligences

Howard Gardner (1943–) developed a theory of multiple intelligences in 1983, which suggests that people have different kinds of 'intelligences'. To capture the full range of abilities and talents, he suggested that people have more than one intellectual capacity, and possess many intelligences that rarely operate independently. While one person may be particularly knowledgeable in a single area such as linguistics, they can also possess a range of abilities in other areas. The theory suggests that all eight intelligences are needed to function productively.

The theory involves a set of eight different strengths (intelligences) that apply to a child's development and provide a basis for developing programs and experiences that suit their ability to learn, understand and express themselves in particular learning areas. When you recognise a child's strength, you can provide learning and support methods that focus on this child's strengths and learning styles.

The eight strengths are outlined in the following table.

Strength	Focus
Verbal-linguistic intelligence	Language and words
Logical-mathematical intelligence	Numbers, logic and reasoning
Spatial-visual intelligence	Pictures and diagrams
Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence	Movements of the body and objects
Musical intelligence	Music, rhythm and pitch
Interpersonal intelligence	Relating to people, moods, desires and motivations
Intrapersonal intelligence	Understanding the self
Naturalist intelligence	Plants, animals, nature in general

Following is an example of how Gardner's theory can aid the learning of a group of children. The range of activities extends on the group's interest in insects and caters for each type of intelligence.

Example

Strength	Suitable learning experience
Verbal-linguistic intelligence	• Using books relating to insects • Discussing insect information
Logical-mathematical intelligence	• Working out how insects eat and what they eat by watching them • Counting how many legs insects have
Spatial-visual intelligence	• Looking at pictures of insect species
Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence	• Moving like particular insects • Touching the insects and finding out what they feel like
Musical intelligence	• Singing songs about insects
Interpersonal intelligence	• Asking others what they know about insects
Intrapersonal intelligence	• Talking about information the child knows about insects • Finding out how the child feels about insects
Naturalist intelligence	• Finding out where insects live in nature • Exploring and finding insects in the garden

When you identify and build on children's strengths and link these with their interests, you acknowledge each child's ability to learn and provide them with the best opportunity for development. The following scenarios highlight how providing this opportunity can be useful to an individual child.

Scenario

1. Gordon demonstrates that he learns best through spatial intelligence. If you wish to extend his construction ability, you might address this by:
   - providing pictures of buildings or construction activities
   - looking at buildings and construction activities.
2. Rachelle demonstrates that she learns best through linguistic intelligence. If you wish to extend her construction ability, you might address this by:
   - reading books
   - discussing ideas and materials.

Sociocultural theory

As mentioned in chapters 2 and 3, sociocultural theory, also known as the social constructivist learning theory, builds on Piaget's theory to include learning that is acquired through social interaction. Vygotsky provides a clear picture of how critical learning periods or windows of opportunity are influenced by children's social environment and community. The strategies for supporting skills are based on scaffolding or social learning, as already described in Chapter 3, and require you to consider the zone of proximal development.

Another aspect of Vygotsky's theory, also discussed in Chapter 3 in relation to emotional development, is reciprocal teaching. This provides a learning environment where open and frequent interaction occurs between the child and educator. The educator in this model alternates leadership of the conversation with the child until the child becomes confident in this role and assumes a leadership and instructional role themselves. If children are exposed to new and more skilled activities, they will be encouraged to move forward themselves and attempt to learn these skills too.

A number of core principles relate to development. The following table outlines those relevant to cognitive development and explains the link.

Principle of development	Description	Examples of links with cognitive development
Belonging, being and becoming	Children learn best when they feel safe and valued.	• When children have a sense of belonging, they feel safe to be themselves. This means that they are curious and involved and demonstrate a sense of agency. Their ability to 'be' enables them to learn, develop and practise skills so they become a better person by demonstrating and achieving their full potential.
Sequence of development	Development progresses in a step-by-step pattern that advances from simple to complex (maturation).	• Children need to know what the letters of the alphabet look like before they identify the sounds they make.
Rate of development	Children develop at different rates.	• A child may remain in the preoperational stage between 18 months and 7 years, then display characteristics of two stages for an undetermined time.
Neurological or brain development	Brain and spinal cord development links to the acquisition of skills.	• Synapses develop when new information is learnt and practice occurs.

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Principle of development	Description	Examples of links with cognitive development
Critical periods and scaffolding	There are times when the opportunity to learn is at its most crucial. If these times are not taken advantage of, the child may miss an important aspect of learning. Children are drawn to challenging experiences and enjoy intentional teaching.	• When a new skill is learnt, practice must occur in order for the skill to be consolidated. • When children show agency, their interests need to be developed in order for them to remain enthusiastic and curious.
Heredity and environment, and how children use active learning	Also known as nature versus nurture, this relates to the aspects that are genetically programmed in contrast to how the environment influences development. You provide rich environments and children actively learn from this.	• A child's intelligence can be increased through consistent interaction with a stimulating environment. • The child's intelligence type (multiple intelligences) is genetic. • Schemata (cognitive theory) are limited if the environment does not provide variety.
Holistic development	All domains of development are closely related and linked.	• The child demonstrates a decrease in egocentric behaviour: – Psychological – the child's self-esteem is influenced by the thoughts and actions of others. – Social – the child sees the point of view of others and considers how this influences them. – Cognition – the child can problem-solve more effectively and take on leadership roles.
Play as learning	Play is used by children to learn.	• Cognitive skills develop in: – water play – pouring measuring, floating, sinking – construction play – balancing, counting, size, shape, colour, number.

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Principle of development	Description	Examples of links with cognitive development
Individualised learning	Children learn and demonstrate what they know in different ways.	• Children learn in different ways based on their learning style. They may prefer to listen to or watch how things work. • Some children are keen to investigate; others need encouragement. • Some children will talk about and demonstrate their knowledge and skill; others will demonstrate this only if asked.

Milestones of cognitive development

Children will use their cognitive skills at different levels according to their age. They will also require you to approach their learning in ways that suit their understanding. Some characteristic needs of children at each stage are shown in the following table.

Age group	Examples of needs
5–7 years	• Names a range of shapes and colours • Sorts objects by attribute • Names letters and knows alphabet sounds • Understands today, tomorrow, yesterday and the days of the week • Can recall events in sequence • Understands simple fractions • Understands first, second, ... last, etc. • Is learning to read • Remembers and tells jokes • Converses with adults and other children
7–9 years	• Can read • Begins to think of others • Collections are a focus • Likes to plan and have input into the program • Uses written and verbal methods to express themselves • Participates in lengthy conversations

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Age group	Examples of needs
9–12 years	• Is able to plan in advance and focus on detail • Enjoys board games • Reads magazines and fictional stories and project books • May develop a hobby • Thinks about future careers • Becomes product and goal oriented • Has many ideas • Understands weight and size • Focuses on fairness • Can recognise the moral of a story • Pop culture is important, including music, film and dress

Opportunities to extend children's knowledge of the world may include:

- excursions/incursions
- maps, posters, music and books
- walks in the local area
- visitors/guest speakers
- community resources.

The world and environment may include:

- the natural environment
- the social world
- the cultural environment
- the world of ideas
- the manmade environment.

Factors influencing individual cognitive development

Cognitive development is influenced by a range of factors. Some of these factors are outlined in the following table.

Factor	Influence on cognitive development
Age	Children progress through cognitive stages sequentially. Their understanding increases as their brains develop and they are able to understand more complex concepts. Children of 5–6 years often ask 'Why' questions.

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Factor	Influence on cognitive development
Gender	Traditionally boys have been known to show more interest in science, mathematics and technology. This usually occurs based on the types of activities they are presented with and drawn to. Educators can alter experiences to make them more attractive to both genders; for example, adding the doll house to the train set or the uniforms to the dress-up box.
Family background, beliefs and cultural practices	Family interest or accessibility to a diverse range of concepts and interests can influence the child's understanding of the world and what it has to offer. This may influence the child's opportunities for learning. In some families, children are expected to attain high levels of educational achievement. This may lead to different expectations about play and enjoyment, attitudes to learning and teaching methods. Some parents choose to ignore 'Why' questions from their children, which restricts learning opportunities.
Ability	Genetic level of intelligence influences the child's ability. The environment adds to their capabilities; however, some limitations may occur due to developmental challenges such as how well a child understands concepts or whether a material or resource is accessible or suits the purpose it is designed for. Some children may be naturally higher in intelligence and be able to ask questions and calculate information in a way that builds their understanding and interest.
Temperament	Children with particular temperaments may be more likely to participate in activities that are social rather than cognitive based. Other temperaments may find cognitive experiences challenging or frustrating.
Interests	Some children are genuinely drawn to activities that involve investigation, exploration and experimentation. Some children question constantly.
Peer groups	Peers learn from each other in play, as information is shared. Children may add their own cognitive skills and knowledge to the play environment, asking questions or relating their understanding to others.

Engagement and attention span

Attention is the ability to focus on particular activities or information for a significant amount of time. Attention is important for cognition and cognitive processes such as memory. The ability to maintain attention is needed to promote the thought processes that are necessary for learning to occur. When you engage children in an activity, you are stimulating them and using their abilities to concentrate or maintain attention. It is important that children continue activities and experiences for the length of time that they are interested. By strengthening their attention span, you provide them with a greater ability to be engaged and learn.

Engagement and attention span are closely linked and, although attention span is a cognitive skill, the manner in which you develop this skill is derived from the child's interests and current skills.

The following case study demonstrates some methods educators can use to extend a child's short attention span.

Case study

Leonard's attention span is very low during group work. He becomes agitated and often leaves the group within five minutes.

His educator uses his main intelligence and spatial-visual intelligence (multiple intelligences) by providing posters, books and signs during group work to enhance Leonard's experience. She decides the topic of the group will be 'planning activities about trains'. This is a topic that Leonard is interested in and has a great deal of knowledge about. The educator's use of these strength-based aspects sees Leonard participating in the full group activity.

Children will pay attention to an activity or experience that interests them for much longer than one that does not interest them.

Attention span is particularly evident among children with developmental needs such as attention deficit disorder (ADD). Children with this disorder display qualities such as poor self-control and difficulty maintaining attention.

The main theories that relate to attention span are presented in the following table.

Theory	How it relates to attention span
Brain development	Attention span and the ability to become engaged and involved in an experience are brain development outcomes. Synapses need to become strong in the area of interest for this to occur, as does the ability to focus thought and ignore other stimulation.
Cognitive theory (Piaget)	Attention span forms a large part of this constructivist theory as thinking, problem-solving and exploration each need the child to focus and use learnt strategies. In the preoperational stage, imagination and symbolic thought has emerged, which allows the child to use thought as a companion to their activity or as the activity itself. In the concrete operation stage, children have more abstract thought and so should be able to be enticed into attention with less effort.
Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky)	In particular, a child's emerging skills and the scaffolding they are provided are linked together by attention span. The child must concentrate for some time on the scaffolding in order to benefit. This is also true for reciprocal learning, as attention is required adult–child or child–child to ensure the greatest benefit from the opportunity.
Multiple intelligences (Gardner)	Attention span can be developed by approaching interests and skills via the appropriate intelligence. The child will respond more readily and continue the activity with more interest.

Monitoring cognitive skills and development

A variety of recording methods can be used to collect information about a child's cognitive development. Skills may include:

- reasoning
- developing understanding and explanations
- critical thinking
- use of mathematical concepts
- problem-solving
- inventing, discovering and planning.

Children can gain a mathematical understanding if you incorporate familiar materials.

Understandings may include:

- mathematical understanding
- scientific principles
- social understandings
- geographical awareness
- historical understanding
- mechanical understanding
- computers.

Development occurs during a range of different times over the day, so records may be taken during:

- formally organised activities
- unplanned or spontaneous interactions
- group discussions and meetings
- travelling times
- listening and responding
- routines
- excursions
- setting up
- sociodramatic play
- construction play
- art and craft activities.

To ensure your records contain useful information about each child, base them on one or more of the following:

- Developmental milestones or stages (needs, abilities and strengths)
- Approaches or theories
- Cultural capital
- Interests

Monitoring an individual child

When monitoring an individual child's cognitive development, you can use the guidelines outlined in the following table.

Why	What to look for	Observation method(s) suited to this area
• The individual child's needs, abilities and experiences are unique. • Your observations of each child will allow you to plan experiences that suit the child. • When you understand the individual child, you can ensure that your planning meets their needs and extends their skills without over-challenging them. • Your expectations will be appropriate to the individual.	• Developmental milestones or stages (needs and strengths) • Cultural capital • Learning or 'windows of opportunity' • Interests • Skills in problem-solving, thinking skills, negotiation, collaboration and conflict resolution • Multiple intelligences (Gardner)	• Photographs • Learning stories • Video, audio or DVD recordings • Checklists • Sociograms • Diaries, journals, logs and communication books • Time samples • Event samples • Running records • Anecdotal records • Incident records • Records of questioning; for example: – graffiti sheets – daily evaluation sheets – surveys – questionnaires – forms.

Monitoring groups of children

When monitoring the cognitive development of groups of children, you can use the guidelines outlined in the following table.

Why	What to look for	Observation method(s) suited to this area
• Each group has individual needs, abilities and experiences. • A group may include all children in care. • Groups that you observe may include friendship groups, play area groups or other groups that come together for a purpose.	• Implementation and use of cultural capital • Modelling • Interests • Skills in problem-solving, thinking skills, negotiation, collaboration and conflict resolution • Multiple intelligences (Gardner)	• Photographs • Learning stories • Video, audio or DVD recordings • Checklists • Sociograms • Diaries, journals, logs and communication books

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Why	What to look for	Observation method(s) suited to this area
• Individual grouping choice may alter throughout the day and include children of the same age, children of different ages, adults and siblings. • Your observations of each group will allow you to plan experiences that suit the group and any child participating in the group. • When you understand how a group works and how each individual child operates within different groupings, you can ensure that your planning meets their needs and extends their skills appropriately.		• Time samples • Event samples • Anecdotal records • Incidental records • Records of questioning; for example: – graffiti sheets – daily evaluation sheets – surveys – questionnaires – forms.

Monitoring use of problem-solving, thinking skills, negotiation, collaboration and conflict resolution

When monitoring the use of problem-solving, thinking skills, negotiation, collaboration and conflict resolution, you can use the guidelines outlined in the following table.

Why	What to look for	Observation method(s) suited to this area
• These skills are essential for successful lifelong learning. • The level of ability a child has in these areas can affect their success in understanding the world around them and exploring this world. • Other children appreciate those who are capable problem-solvers as their play is less distracted. • It is essential that educators support the development of these skills.	• Developmental milestones or stages (needs and strengths) • Implementation and use of cultural capital • Learning or 'windows of opportunity' • Modelling	• Video, audio or DVD recordings • Diaries, journals, logs and communication books • Learning stories • Event samples • Anecdotal records • Incident records

Assessing cognitive skills and development

The steps for assessing children's progress toward MTOP Outcomes were set out in Chapter 1. These steps can be used to help assess the cognitive skills and development of the child. They include:

1. Gathering and recording information about the child
2. Using MTOP to identify which of the five Outcomes your observation record links to
3. Identifying a specific sub-outcome of MTOP
4. Clarifying your selection by referring to the evidence examples that are provided for the identified MTOP Outcome

MTOP Outcomes most commonly related to cognitive skills and development include the following:

- Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners:
  - Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
  - Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating
  - Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another
- Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators
  - Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts
  - Children collaborate with others, express ideas and make meaning using a range of media and communication technologies

Practice task 10

1. Complete a table similar to the following to monitor a 7-year-old child's cognitive development.

Cognitive skill	Comments	Date recorded as achieved
Understands first, second, third and last		
Remembers and tells jokes		
Recalls events in appropriate sequence		
Understands half and quarter		

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2. Explain how each of the four skills in the table can be influenced by:
   - social development
   - psychological development
   - brain development (nature versus nurture).
3. According to organisation procedure, link each of the four skills in the table to an Outcome in MTOP.

4B Constructing, sorting and comparing

PC 4.6
PC 4.7
PC 4.8

Children from around 2 to 5 years become interested in constructing, sorting and comparing. During activities involving these concepts, children see the world differently as each layer of understanding unfolds. An item that has been explored a few months ago might be viewed totally differently when presented again due to the child's developing cognition. MTOP Outcomes, including the sub-outcomes, emphasise the importance of these abilities. For example:

- Outcome 4: Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating
- Outcome 5: Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts

Exploring concepts

A concept is a thought or idea that can be developed through:

- encouraging active exploration, experimentation and learning
- introducing new ideas and experiences via formal and informal, planned and spontaneous experiences
- encouraging program input from children, staff, parents and the community
- encouraging problem-solving and curiosity.

Most children in school age care have developed an understanding of concepts, so these can be extended and used in different ways to stimulate curiosity and learning. Concept development can be further stimulated by:

- being enthusiastic
- creating an interesting environment
- being safe, but allowing for exploration
- using your direct environment to explore; for example, listening to the wind or rain, finding out what lives in the yard, watching clouds and playing in sand or mud
- using materials that engage the senses
- allowing children to find out how things work through experimentation
- responding to individual interests
- using a problem-solving approach
- including children in community activities
- encouraging collections.

Using construction as a learning strategy

The interest children have in construction and taking things apart starts early in life. An infant shows interest in stacking cups and building towers on stacker frames, spends time putting things in and taking things out and checking they are still in place over and again. They attempt to find new materials and move the old ones to new places, experimenting with sensorimotor development of object permanence.

For older children, construction may be as simple as building structures using blocks, boxes or construction sets, or as complicated as taking apart and rebuilding appliances and automobiles.

Provide children with a safe opportunity to practise using a screwdriver.

Taking apart and constructing is an excellent method for answering 'why' questions. Children with 'why' questions are trying to make sense of the world and, by providing concrete materials for them to examine, they will find out about things in their own way at their own pace. The child will be learning:

- cognitively – about size, shape, weight, length and other concepts, including memorising how things come apart and go back together
- physically – how to manage screws, clips and knobs
- socially and through communication – when asking questions, explaining to others what they know and sharing their knowledge of new names for items
- creatively – as they try to imagine how things work
- emotionally and psychologically – as they gain skills and knowledge and receive feedback, or achieve success.

In this digital age, there are so many concepts that are difficult to explain – wireless communication being just one. Children use the things they understand to make up stories of how things work, so seeing reality makes learning exciting. Intentional teaching then explains what cannot be seen. Additional activities may help consolidate the information or children could undertake research.

With adult support, children can see how a car, motorcycle, lawn mower and other machinery works. This is a great activity to encourage parent participation. Almost any broken appliance can be used: radios, fans, telephones, CD players, blenders, computers, bikes, prams, toys with batteries and clocks.

You may need parent permission before you begin projects such as deconstruction. The children need to be aware that they need your permission before taking things apart; the items must be old or discarded.

To progress safely, you require a toolkit. This on its own can be a source of excitement for many children. They can learn about each tool and its purpose, practise using it and develop lifelong skills. The tools most likely to be required include:

- safety glasses
- flat head and Phillips head screwdrivers
- pliers
- allen wrenches/allen keys/hex wrenches (these are the same thing, but known as different names).

Useful extras would include:

- a socket set
- spanners
- hammer.

Be sure to provide enough room to spread materials out and place a protective sheet down. This will keep the area clean, enable the project to be cleaned up or moved quickly and allow you to find pieces that are not secured.

To challenge children's thinking, you could:

- ask them to draw what they might find inside the item prior to taking it apart
- take the item apart and see if the children can guess what it is (take a photograph first so that you can show the children what it originally looked like)
- take photographs at various stages so children can understand sequence and refer back to the photographs to put the item back together.

Creating patterns, sorting and comparing

Cognitive theory describes how making patterns, sorting and comparing are important activities for preoperational children. At this stage, these are emerging concepts and you scaffold children's skills by providing activities to consolidate and further develop ideas. Children in a concrete operational stage use pattern, sorting and comparing in their hobbies and pastimes. They might sort their card collection, complete a number puzzle or compare items of interest with others.

The patterns you see and the sorting and comparing you do each day as part of your normal routine supports a major part of your activities. You might sort laundry in a variety of ways, organise a desk, compare items in a shop or set up a table for an art experience. Sorting, comparing and recognising patterns are lifelong skills.

Open-ended materials are excellent for creating patterns and practising sorting and comparing. You can also make games that employ these concepts. There are also commercial materials available for use in game-style activities.

Comparing and sorting are used for developing and maintaining collections of objects. Assimilation and accommodation (cognitive theory) are also required. When children become able to sort and compare, they begin to take interest in items that are similar but different. Common items children collect include shells, rocks and leaves. They may be interested in the number of items they find, or they may focus on how different each item is in relation to the other.

Practice task 11

Plan and provide at least one experience for children for each of the following areas:

1. Exploration of concepts through play
2. Taking apart and constructing
3. Creating patterns, sorting and comparing
4. Link a cognitive theory, MTOP Outcome/s or a core principle to each of the experiences.

4C Exploring and experimenting

PC 4.2
PC 4.5

When you engage children in exploring and experimenting, they become engrossed in what they are doing and are led into an experience that may bring out new skills and knowledge and encourage them to explore.

Children are more likely to be engaged in activities that are based on their interests and strengths. They are also more likely to become engaged when they have participated in developing the plan of activities and/or when they are curious. Curiosity is related to natural inquisitive behaviours such as exploration, investigation and learning. Curiosity is about finding things out and experimenting.

MTOP includes curiosity in Outcome 4: Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.

Curiosity is important as it:

- makes the mind active rather than passive
- makes you observant of new ideas
- opens up new possibilities and ideas
- enables excitement.

You can demonstrate and encourage curiosity by:

- keeping an open mind: be ready to see things from other points of view, especially the child's
- not taking things for granted: start from scratch; approach each idea as though it is the first time you have thought about this point and you are discovering it again
- asking questions: open questions encourage communication, interest and enthusiasm; the questions may be about the activity or the learning experience
- not labelling things as boring: use positive attitudes
- seeing learning as fun: be confident
- showing interest in a variety of topics and ideas.

Curiosity is significant when initiating a new activity or experience; it may encourage participation and build on existing knowledge, skills and interests.

The theories that relate to using exploring and experimenting as a learning strategy are shown in the following table.

Theory	How it relates to introducing new ideas or activities that may build on existing knowledge, skills and interests
Brain development	The brain is being developed through the cycle of exploring, understanding and solving problems. The skills learnt through these actions enable the child to develop strong synapses and so increase their ability to build on existing knowledge, skills and interests. They also encourage a positive attitude toward trying new things.
Cognitive theory (Piaget)	A child explores the environment in a variety of ways. They use their logical and illogical thought to understand what they explore. They are inspired by curiosity and explore many areas, so are able to identify a number of strong interests that shape their personality.
Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky)	A child has many opportunities to explore the world around them. The art of understanding and solving problems forms part of this world of opportunities as peers and your planned and spontaneous input provides modelling and stimulation.
Multiple intelligences (Gardner)	When children are approached with their 'intelligence' in mind, they will be better able to develop knowledge, extend skills and develop interests.

Investigating mathematics, science and technology

Mathematic, scientific and technological experiences are valuable parts of the program and children enjoy these activities. It is important to take a positive and confident approach and reflect this in your presentation of experiences.

Your planning and preparation needs to consider several factors, described in the following table.

Teach the children to learn about time by incorporating clocks and stories about time into their play.

Factor	Examples
Time	During science, mathematics and technology experiences, children need time to: • explore • be involved • try new ideas • understand concepts • research • ask questions. When you provide challenges, you must allow time for children to succeed. Some children will understand concepts immediately; others require repetition, simpler presentations or may show that they are not ready to learn the concept.
Space	When planning to use a space, remember the following: • Children need hands-on experiences. They need to explore, touch, smell, move, create and build. Encourage children in these activities by setting the scene. • Children need opportunities to be alone sometimes, to think, to experiment further and to try things on their own. • Children need safety and security; they need to feel that any new concepts are not frightening or based on things they fear. • Children need to be able to set their materials out logically, see what they are doing and know that their work will not be damaged or moved.
Aesthetics	Aesthetics form a large part of any activity; with science, maths and technology experiences, you need to present with care and ensure the experience looks appealing. Resetting the experience is sometimes essential as the value of many activities will be lowered if the result is already displayed.
Materials	It is important that: • materials match the needs of the activity – it is difficult to achieve a successful outcome if you have inappropriate materials • there are enough resources for the number of children in the group • good quality resources are provided.
People	Children who are learning, exploring and experimenting will need support to work through problem-solving tasks. They may have illogical explanations that you can support positively to assist them make sense of what they are doing. Positioning can be important to the safety of many experiments and, in some cases, your full attention is required for the activity to occur at all. By being available, you can encourage curiosity.

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Factor	Examples
Safety	When children feel safe, they will more readily explore the experience. To ensure that children understand your expectations and are ready to experience your ideas, consider developmental abilities of the children such as their level of: • spontaneous behaviour • ability to follow limits and guidelines • curiosity • independence (and attempts at greater independence) • understanding of consequences • mobility and stability • skills in handling materials • fear and anxiety.

Creating opportunities

Most children find scientific, mathematic and technological learning experiences intriguing and enjoyable. Your outlook should reflect interest and confidence; a nervous or unsure approach can affect the child's curiosity and learning. Science, mathematics and technology are covered in MTOP within the following sub-outcomes:

- Outcome 4: Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating
- Outcome 5: Children collaborate with others, express ideas and make meaning using a range of media and communication technologies

The following are some things you can do to present science, maths and technology experiences in a fun and valuable way:

- Identify the use of science, maths and technology experiences. When you are measuring ingredients while cooking, say, 'Look, we are doing maths!' If you are watching a bug, comment, 'Wow, this is science, isn't it interesting!' The children can begin to link the experience to the enjoyment they are having.
- Be ready for questions you don't know the answer to. When you don't have an answer, you can show the children that investigation is important and that nobody needs to know everything. This is a perfect opportunity to investigate together – get some books from the library or search on the internet to show children how they can find out more. To extend the children's abilities, you may even say that you think they should find out themselves (whether you know the answer or not) and then help them with the research.

The following table provides some examples of how cooking links with maths, science and technology activities.

Experience	Examples		
	Maths	**Science**	**Technology**
Cooking muffins for afternoon tea	• Counting how many children will need to be fed • Working out how many muffins will be needed • Reading the recipe and identifying the numbers or quantities and then measuring these • Dividing the mixture into individual muffin pans	• Watching how each ingredient changes the mixture • Observing how heating the mixture changes it from batter to cake • Noticing how the mixture rises when heated	• Using utensils: cups, spoons, knives, bowls, beaters, muffin pans, etc. • Searching for a recipe, then printing it off

You can find many activities online that support the development of mathematics, science and technology at: www.kidspot.com.au/kids-activities-and-games/.

Cultural influences

Cultural priorities such as education, play, language, rituals and religious beliefs all affect the way you present your program, how you communicate to others and what priorities you place on various interaction and programming aspects. The same cultural priorities also affect the types of play and interaction that children engage in and the types of things they notice. Some things that you can do to encourage children to observe what is happening around them include:

- highlighting differences in opinion, ideas and goals and encouraging children to explore these – discuss these things as they arise by saying, 'Isn't it interesting that you both have different ideas?'
- encouraging positive and effective interactions between children by modelling and guiding
- setting up situations where children share skills and knowledge, or support each other to achieve a goal.

In your efforts to present stimulating experiences, you must also consider the impact of cultural capital and its influence on a child's attitudes and application of different concepts. In relation to scientific, mathematic and technological activities and experiences, children will demonstrate cultural capital based on home experiences. Some examples are illustrated in the following table.

Cultural capital	Linked concepts and examples
Games they play	• Science: matching games • Maths: counting games, hide and seek (counting before finding) • Technology: counters and boards used for games
Toys they possess or enjoy	• Science: textas that change colour, chalkboards • Maths: board games, water play, measuring • Technology: bicycles, paint brushes, computers, TV
Responsibilities they manage and home tasks they participate in	• Science: feeding animals, washing dishes, cooking • Maths: cooking, setting the table, shopping, paying for items or receiving pocket money • Technology: cleaning, hanging washing
Events and celebrations they participate in and entertainment they enjoy or are exposed to	• Science: using candles, musical instruments • Maths: birthdays, dance (spatial) • Technology: cinema, religious rites and rituals
How they are involved in family decision-making	• Science: observing and communicating, understanding human relationships • Technology: telephone, email/internet, mail
Access to a computer or electronic games	• Technology: Xbox, Nintendo, PlayStation, TV, DVD

Encouraging children to view the world around them

At times, children will express views spontaneously; other times these will be planned discussions where you ask for views or have children share their ideas.

When encouraging children to view the world around them, active listening and open questioning are important aspects of clear communication and respectful acknowledgment.

Aspect	Explanation	Examples
Active listening	• Requires you to acknowledge, encourage, clarify, restate and reflect what you hear to allow the child to identify that their message is being received by you appropriately. • Active listening uses body language and verbal communication.	• Body language through facing the child, using eye contact, showing you are open to communication and facial expressions that match the message • Verbal communication through short responses that either reflect what you hear ('So you mean ...'), demonstrate you are listening ('Okay, I see') and acknowledge feelings ('You seem angry')

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Aspect	Explanation	Examples
Questioning	• Closed questions encourage a one-word answer that does not reveal details. • Open questions encourage an explanation or some description, details or views.	• Closed questions are useful for testing your understanding of another person's discussion, concluding a discussion or making a decision; that is, 'Did you notice that?' • Open questions are useful for developing conversation and finding out information; that is, 'What did you think of that?'

Risk-taking as a learning process

Risk-taking occurs when a child is learning to hop, climb, develop ball skills or balance. Almost every milestone, in every area of development, has an element of risk. This risk may be physical (someone might get hurt) or emotional (you might be embarrassed, ridiculed or punished).

When it comes to cognitive development, risk-taking in learning relates to the chances children take in their thinking, reasoning, hypothesising and experimenting. Children need to be encouraged to try new ideas and practices; these involve taking a risk, as the idea or practice may not be successful. Children who are not confident taking a risk to ask a question or explore an answer will not be able to work out their ideas.

For example, inquiry-based learning requires an environment that supports risk-taking in learning. Through inquiry-based learning, children explore, experiment and investigate. Children are encouraged to ask questions and make mistakes; mistakes are valued as natural learning experiences.

To facilitate learning environments where children feel comfortable taking risks, you need to:

- encourage children to ask questions and try new ideas and new ways of doing things
- model acceptance and value unusual ideas
- plan for open-ended experiences and activities
- provide for inquiry learning; that is, exploring, experimenting, testing and investigating
- encourage spontaneity and advise children that mistakes are opportunities to learn
- provide appropriate levels of challenge
- encourage guesswork and hypothesising (speculating on what they think might happen)
- avoid labelling them as 'right' or 'wrong' when children present their ideas.

Mathematics

Maths applies when you ask questions such as:

- How many?
- How big?
- How long?
- What fits?
- When?

Mathematics focuses on three particular areas as outlined in the following table.

Area	Aspect	Example
Number	Counting	• 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and so on • Counting backwards
	Number facts	• What numbers look like • How many items you need
	Operations	• Addition • Subtraction • Multiplication • Division • Fractions
Measurement	Length	• Long • Short • Centimetres • Metres
	Money	• Cents • Dollars
	Time	• Hour • Minutes • Seconds • Long time • Short time
	Temperature	• Hot • Cold • Warm • Degrees
	Mass	• Heavy • Light • Grams • Kilograms

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Area	Aspect	Example
Measurement	Capacity	• How many can fit in • How much fits in
	Volume	• Large • Small • Units • Cubic dimensions • Millilitres • Litres
	Area	• Large • Small • Acre • Metre square • Centimetres square
Space	Dimension	• Length • Breadth • Depth • Height
	Position (preposition)	• High • Low • Under • Over • In • Out • Beside

Science: attitudes, processes and concepts

Science is about exploring, studying and attempting to understand the world around us. Science applies when you ask questions such as:

- What is that?
- What can that do?
- What happens when ...?
- How does that work?
- Why does that happen?

Science focuses on three particular areas as outlined in the following table.

Area	Aspect
Attitudes	• Curiosity • Determination • Willingness
Processes and skills	• Cognitive skills: – Observing – Classifying – Communicating – Measuring – Experimenting
Concept	• What you learn about the world around you

A science experiment does not need to be an organised scientific activity; it may be a simple 'finding out' exercise. A simple experiment may include:

- using sensory exploration to find out about an object
- trying things out
- working out what happens.

Some common, simple experiments include:

- the changes that occur to playdough when it is left out, dampened or has flour added to it
- how water moves in the trough and what happens if you add things to it
- how puddles form
- how shadows move
- what happens when you spill something.

You can see from this list that these simple experiments may occur by accident or be engineered as part of a plan. Either way, their main outcome is learning what happens from experience. Analysis and lengthy explanations are unnecessary.

Be prepared that things may not go as planned. This is part of how experiments work, and children will value seeing that things change and can be influenced by a range of factors. You may want to talk about how interesting it was that the experiment was different to what you expected or you might want to try the experiment again or investigate (with the children) what happened.

Never feel that an experiment is a failure. An experiment that does not turn out how you planned is just another opportunity to experiment again. This is a good opportunity for you to model risk-taking as a learning process and represent mistakes and unexpected events as opportunities to learn.

Keep it simple. By clearly identifying the simplicity of scientific, mathematic and technological experiences, your approach will focus on the learning potentials of children.

Thinking, reasoning and hypothesising

Thinking, reasoning and hypothesising are each ways to explore the world, make sense of it and learn:

- Thinking – the processes of using your mind to come up with ideas, remember, develop an opinion or make a decision
- Reasoning – the ability to think logically
- Hypothesising – to suggest or believe the reason for something occurring, but have no proof

Instead of telling children the answers to questions, encourage them to use thinking, reasoning and hypothesising and then experiment to reach a solution. You can start the discussion or follow on from a child's lead. Consider the following case study.

Case study

Dawn asks the children if they know what plants need for healthy growth. The children think about the question and then hypothesise and offer suggestions. The children come up with different suggestions relating to light, water and soil. They all agree that the plants need soil as that is how they come from the nursery. Together they decide to experiment in order to find out the answer. They set up the following experiments with seedlings:

- One sits in the sun, but is given no water.
- One is given water, but sits in a dark cupboard.
- Another plant is given water and sunlight.

Dawn suggests they place another seedling in a bottle of water so they can see its roots without soil. The children watch and wait to see the outcome. When the result identifies that the plants need water, soil and light, Dawn implements a range of further experiences about growing plants and seeds.

Exploring the natural environment

Environmental experiences include finding out about how people interact with the environment. Ultimately, you are seeking to build knowledge and skill so children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment (MTOP Outcome 2). Opportunities to explore the local environment differ according to a range of factors such as the:

- distance or proximity to any new experience
- risks and hazards
- time available.

Some common environmental activities you can easily include involve:

- nature and life science: watching insects; taking notice of the garden; planting seeds or plants; identifying similarities and differences in peers
- environmental science: recycling materials; saving water; sun safety; where creatures live; weather watching; seasons; planting trees; what people, insects and animals need to stay alive.

Sustainability

The word sustainability is commonly used in environmental education to explain our need to manage current world resources so that future generations are not affected. The impact of environmental sustainability relates to your work in the following ways:

- Waste disposal practices: paper/plastic/metal recycling, composting, worm farming, reduce/recycle/re-use
- Water conservation practices: installing water saving devices, water tanks, monitored and timed water use, using grey water, reduce/recycle/re-use
- Maintenance and cleaning practices: green cleaning, reduce/recycle/re-use
- Using waste, natural and recycled materials in programs: reduce/recycle/re-use

Using hankies instead of tissues is one way to promote sustainability.

Technology

Technology links closely with science. Science is about discovering things (concepts), and technology is applying the knowledge; for example:

- Science is exploring and finding out about how magnets work.
- Technology is using magnets to help achieve things like sticking your photo on the fridge.

Technology is something that children see as part of their everyday existence. They may interact with televisions, laptops, radios, DVD players, electronic tablets, mobile phones and numerous toys and things that talk, move, jump, calculate and count. However, technology is not all about gadgets. Other technology includes cutting with scissors, painting with brushes, building a structure using staplers and using glue guns for beading material.

Examples of activities involving children using technology include:

- art: using staplers, masking tape, pieces from broken radios, paint programs on the computer or spy kits
- cooking: using frypans, beaters, blenders, egg rings, ovens or utensils
- making movies
- designing and building vehicles using materials such as LEGO and Mobilo
- creating circuits using simple electronics kits
- making websites
- taking photos of their own work for educators' learning stories.

Children can take photos of their own work to expand their learning and increase their confidence in using technology.

Practice task 12

1. Develop and implement a group discussion. The discussion should encourage the children to think, reason and hypothesise, taking risks to share their understanding. Provide evidence of the planning and implementation of your discussion, including the age of the children participating.
2. Follow up the discussion by implementing an experiment or exploration of the topic. Provide evidence showing the planning and implementation of your experiment or exploration.
3. List a scientific, mathematic and technological experience that could support the children's learning.
4. Link an MTOP Outcome, a core principle or a theory to each experience.
5. Choose one of the experiences and show how it is of value to the children's social, physical and psychological development.

PC 4.3

4D Using play to experience consequences

There are two main cognitive areas that relate to experiencing the consequences of choices, actions and ideas during play:

- The manner in which choices, actions and ideas result in feelings
- Consequences resulting from problem-solving and decision-making

Cognitive development links very closely with all other areas of development. Cognitive skills allow children to think about what they are doing, link what has occurred to a result or consequence, and communicate their thoughts, feelings, attitudes and additional ideas.

Consequences can be natural; that is, a natural result of something that happens. Other consequences can be logical, positive or negative. Consider the following case study.

Case study

The children are watching ice blocks in water. The natural consequence of this activity is that the ice will melt. The logical consequence is that there is no longer any ice left. The positive consequence is that the children learn what happens to ice in water. The negative consequence may be that the experience is complete or the children wish they could watch longer.

Consequences and feelings

The ideas that children express often relate to their feelings. Feelings are the consequence or outcome of occurrences and/or interactions. We all experience a range of different feelings every day. Once children are old enough, it is useful for them to start labelling these feelings so that they become familiar with them and consider how they have occurred. This means that they will be identifying what the emotional consequence of behaviour or another action feels like. If children gain an in-depth knowledge of their feelings, they will be able to recognise these sooner and manage them appropriately. You can also help them to see that actions and choices create consequential feelings by reminding them. For example, by asking, 'Miguel, how does it feel to achieve that?' or 'Muriel, how does it feel when your idea works differently to what you expect?'

Some common feelings that you may encounter in children are described in the following table.

Common feelings	Explanation
Excitement	This may be the consequence of positive outcomes such as an experiment working, a hypothesis being proven or a reconstruction being successful. Many young children lose control of this positive emotion and can become overexcited or extremely reactive.
Anger	Each child will express anger differently and sometimes the appropriate expression is difficult to identify. Nonetheless, children need to be aware that anger must be expressed in a way that does not hurt others or the environment. Children may feel anger if others interfere with their ideas or a hypothesis turns out to be incorrect.
Frustration	This is a difficult feeling for children to identify and often it has a very similar response to anger. Children need to recognise when they feel anger and understand why, as the origin will most likely assist in redirection of the frustration. Frustration may occur if the child cannot come up with a hypothesis they agree with, if the experiment or deconstruction activity is beyond their ability, or their materials or resources are not suitable.

Managing feelings

Strategies for managing feelings relate to cognitive ability. These are outlined in the following table.

Strategy	Example	Cognitive relationship
Acknowledge feelings by reflecting what you think they are.	'You seem very frustrated.'	• Language is used; this is a skill that requires symbolic thought. • The child needs to develop understanding of the feeling and outcome.
Discuss how the child feels.	'Tell me how it feels to be so frustrated.'	• The child must consider the feelings and problem-solve, then make a decision on what they really feel. • Various feelings must be identified and recognised.
Link the feeling to the event if appropriate.	'Tell me why you feel this way.'	• This is a challenge to logical thought, particularly as there is not always a logical explanation.

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Strategy	Example	Cognitive relationship
Use the event to put the feeling into context.	'If the puzzle makes you feel this way, maybe this is not the right puzzle for you. Why don't you try a different one?'	• Decision-making and problem-solving skills are used.
Redirect inappropriate actions (for example, hurting others or damaging the environment) to a more appropriate one.	'It is okay to feel frustrated, but not to throw the puzzle. When you feel frustrated, maybe you need to take a break or come and tell me.'	• The child is altering usual behaviour using new information. • The child is using language or thoughts in times of distraction. • New ideas need to be understood, implemented and practised.

Theories relating to consequences and feelings

Theories that relate to consequences and feelings are outlined in the following table.

Theory	How it relates to consequences of their choices, actions and ideas
Brain development	• Understanding feelings • Recognising feelings • Developing appropriate understanding and responses to feelings
Cognitive theory (Piaget)	• The young child's choices, actions and ideas may evolve from a lack of logic, so natural consequences may either be unexpected or linked incorrectly. Older children, showing signs of the concrete operation stage, will use logic to work through and identify consequences independently. • Children are able to make informed choices and actions and their ideas can be considered. This shows that the child should be supported in considering natural and logical consequences and developing critical thinking skills. • Feelings relate to logical incidents. A child who links logical issues with realistic feelings is able to deal with most issues.

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Theory	How it relates to consequences of their choices, actions and ideas
Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky)	• Children are seen as worthy of being listened to, so their views are important to the whole program and child-centred environment. • Children are given time to express themselves. This includes time to think about their ideas and views and then to express them in ways they feel are appropriate; for example, through art, craft, discussion or emotional reactions. • The social and cultural aspects of this theory support the involvement of children in the investigation of natural and logical consequences as these relate to how the world operates and allows the child to learn from their environment and those around them.

Consequences and problem-solving

A child who has the opportunity to practise and explore relevant cognitive aspects of their development will be able to solve problems and make sense of the world around them. These specific cognitive processes are outlined in the following table.

Cognitive process	Explanation
Logical thinking	Logical thinking is a learnt mental process where reasoning allows a conclusion to be reached. To think logically, the child must be able to collect ideas, facts and possible solutions (consequences) relating to a problem and then link them sequentially to enable problem-solving. Logical thinking skills allow children to see themselves as capable and competent; instead of thinking, 'I don't know', they think, 'Let me work it out'. Some children may need support to ensure logical thinking occurs.
Concentration	Concentration requires focus of attention. This focus consists of two parts – the will to focus and the skill to focus. Concentration allows the child to receive necessary information; concentration is developed more effectively if the child has an interest in the topic being explored or experienced.
Perception	Perception is about using the senses and then understanding what they are telling you. The more experience a child has of the world, the greater their ability to link what they see, hear, taste, smell and touch to things they know about.

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Cognitive process	Explanation
Memory	Memory is broken into a number of areas: • Receptive memory relates to the skill of recognising things later; for example, shapes, sounds, letters and faces. • Sequential memory relates to the order of things. This assists in speaking, reading and mathematics as sequences or patterns occur. • Rote memory refers to the ability to learn from repetition rather than understanding. It also links to the ability to recall information. • Short-term memory refers to remembering occurrences from a few seconds or a minute ago; for example, telephone numbers or a new person's name. • Long-term memory refers to memory of things from the past.

Problem-solving and thinking skills are important in childhood due to the brain development that occurs during this period. Young children's brains form connections (synapses) based on the skills that are used and, as mentioned previously, these connections strengthen the more the skill is used.

Your attitude toward children and how they learn has a strong influence on how successfully you plan and provide opportunities for exploring, understanding and solving problems in the environment. You need to provide plans that allow children to think and solve problems, hypothesise and identify possible consequences.

The following tables illustrate the outcomes of some problem-solving strategies based on beliefs that you may have.

Educator strategies and/or beliefs	Consequence
Negative	
• I solve the children's problems for them. • I think that things should occur the way I want them to. • I don't think the children are capable of solving their own problems.	• Children rely on you to solve problems. • Children use inappropriate solutions when you are not present. • Children have reduced social, emotional and cognitive development opportunities.
Positive	
• I should support problem-solving and provide strategies when children need them. • Children are capable of solving problems. • I think there are many ways events and issues can occur or be solved.	• Children attempt problem-solving themselves. • Children use appropriate solutions when unsupervised. • Children increase social, emotional and cognitive development opportunities.

When you think in a positive manner, you will be able to promote in children the skills that increase brain activity. You can do this by:

- providing environments with lots of conversation and stimulation
- recognising problems
- clarifying goals
- planning strategies
- asking open-ended questions
- answering questions and finding solutions
- providing open-ended materials
- scaffolding emerging skills
- using everyday events to explore the world
- supporting exploration
- talking about routines and choices
- supporting parents to provide learning environments at home.

Problem-solving in play

There are many benefits to a problem-solving approach to play. Research has shown that in a problem-solving environment, children learn to appreciate the ideas and points of view of others sooner, gain new knowledge and develop greater ideas and skills due to this modelling from others. This means they are learning that the consequences of working with others are positive and that it leads them to greater learning.

A problem-solving approach to play can be achieved by:

- planning activities where children have a shared goal
- ensuring that the goal is based on the interests of the children
- making it possible for children to achieve their goal through their own actions
- making the results of an activity visible and immediate by acknowledging the consequences of the problem-solving approach.

Case study

Ashleigh, an educator, has observed Tim and Robbie playing for long periods with Mobilo and considers construction activities to be an interest for these children.

To encourage a problem-solving approach and help the boys see that a consequence of working together would be creating a greater outcome, she sets up the Mobilo on a rug under a shady tree outdoors. She adds animals and the doll's house, and then places a poster of a farm on an easel next to the space.

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To ensure the problem-solving approach goes to plan, she:

- is present in the construction area when Tim and Robbie arrive and she discusses the area she has set up, assisting them to talk together and identify what they would like to achieve – they set a goal
- observes Tim and Robbie's reactions to the experience to ensure they are both interested in the activity and the goal
- ensures that any additional materials are provided and assists Tim and Robbie to talk about new ideas and how to solve issues as the goal is being achieved
- discusses the children's progress, takes a photo of their work and encourages others to have a look
- encourages Tim and Robbie to stand back and look at their progress.

Tim and Robbie set a goal to create a farm. During the time spent achieving this goal, they set other objectives. They:

- build a barn
- make fences
- make a road to the farm bordered by parts they collect
- clear areas for animals
- collect food for animals
- use the Mobilo to make a tractor and a four wheel drive
- create a duck pond using a tub.

Upon completion of their work, Ashleigh asks them how it feels to have worked together and how different the outcome is because of this collaboration.

Cognitive theories and problem-solving

Problem-solving and thinking about consequences is not just about solving issues or negotiating – it also relates to answering questions and investigating. For example, 'What are the qualities of this object?' or, 'What will happen if I ...?' and 'How will I find out about ...?'

The cognitive theories that relate to encouraging children to solve problems in play are outlined in the following table.

Theory	How it relates to encouraging children to explore, understand and solve problems in their environment
Brain development	The brain is being developed through this cycle of exploring, understanding and solving problems. The skills learnt through these actions enable the child to develop strong synapses and so increase their ability to be independent and autonomous. They also encourage a positive attitude toward trying new things.

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Theory	How it relates to encouraging children to explore, understand and solve problems in their environment
Cognitive theory (Piaget)	Children explore the environment in a variety of ways. They use their logical and illogical thinking to understand what they explore. At times, their thought processes enable them to see issues clearly; other times they are confused or misdirected by their reasoning.
Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky)	Children have many opportunities to explore the world around them. The art of understanding and solving problems forms part of this world of opportunities, as peers and others provide their input and modelling, agree or disagree and offer new considerations.
Multiple intelligences (Gardner)	When children are approached with their intelligence in mind, they are able to explore, understand and solve problems using this strength. The same outcome can be achieved using all intelligences as building blocks.

Encouraging problem-solving

To ensure the problem-solving in play occurs in a cooperative way that encourages children to think about consequences, your interactions must be encouraging and make suggestions rather than provide directions or answers. This can be achieved by doing the following:

- Encourage children to interact with each other – introduce activities in open-ended ways so children feel important and are encouraged to have their own ideas.
- Help children clarify or adapt their shared goals – to successfully make a decision, all participants need to have the same or a similar goal. Help them to talk about what they want to achieve.
- Involve children who are unlikely to initiate – it is critical that you support everyone's involvement; quieter children are less likely to speak up first and state their ideas.
- Avoid constantly demonstrating or solving problems for the children – allow children to think about their options and consider all outcomes.

All children need the opportunity to practise trial and error.

Practice task 13

1. For each of the two case studies, identify a positive and negative consequence and explain how you would ensure the child experiences the consequence in an appropriate way.

Case study	Positive consequence	Negative consequence	What would you do?
Radja (8 years) finds a ball of playdough on the floor. He is about to drop it into a puddle outside.			
Dean (10 years) has his head down working at the take apart activity on his own. The item set up to take apart is a simple radio. As you approach you notice Dean has brought his handheld electronic game into the service. He is using the tools supplied to take apart the game console.			

2. Identify an MTOP Outcome, theory or core principle that relates to each of the case studies.

Chapter summary

1. Cognitive development is about how the brain works, develops and makes sense of information.
2. Children use cognitive skills at different levels according to their age. These skills can be assessed and monitored by using a milestone checklist.
3. Constructing and deconstructing are strategies for learning. The interest children have in construction and taking things apart begins early in life.
4. When you engage children in experiences involving exploring and experimentation, you are providing challenging activities that are open-ended and stimulate inquiry and risk-taking.
5. Activities involving thinking, reasoning and hypothesising foster the development of cognitive skills.
6. Most children find science, mathematics and technology learning experiences intriguing and enjoyable.
7. Children need to be provided with opportunities to experience the consequences of their choices, actions and ideas.
8. Children should be provided with a wide range of everyday materials to create patterns and sort, categorise, order and compare.

Assessment activity 4
Fostering 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 *CHCSAC005 Foster the holistic development and wellbeing of the child in school age care*.

Part	Element	Performance criteria
A	4	4.3, 4.4, 4.7, 4.8
B	4	4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.8
C	4	4.2, 4.4, 4.6, 4.8
D	4	4.1, 4.5

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in fostering 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.

Part A

1. Plan, prepare and implement a learning activity that requires construction and/or deconstruction, involves a technology item and involves problem-solving.

   Provide evidence of your implementation. Include:

   - the age and number of children involved
   - any permission you gained from parents or other people
   - safety precautions you took
   - the materials and resources you used and how you set them up

- how you introduced the activity
- how you implemented the activity.

2. Based on the learning activity from question 1, provide one example for each of the following developmental aspects:
   a) Cognitive
   b) Physical
   c) Social
   d) Emotional
3. Explain, using examples, how you supported children during the activity to:
   a) experience the consequences of their choices, actions and ideas when problem-solving
   b) take risks in their learning.

Part B

1. Plan and implement a science experience that involves an appropriate level of challenge. Ensure it enables the children to:
   - investigate ideas and complex concepts
   - explore, experiment and take risks in their learning
   - use thinking, reasoning and hypothesising skills.
2. Provide evidence of your planning and implementation, including the name of the experience, the age of the children involved, the materials you used, the set-up and how you carried out the experience.
3. Provide evidence that your experience challenged children and encouraged them to explore and experiment. Do this by providing a record summarising the experience in the form of a learning story, diary entry or anecdotal record.
4. Explain how the activity relates to:
   a) an MTOP Outcome
   b) a cognitive development theory or core principle of child development.

Part C

1. Develop a game for a particular age group of children. Design the game to explore one or more of the following:
   - Pattern
   - Sorting
   - Categorising
   - Ordering
   - Comparing

Summarise the rules of the game, the skills it is designed to develop and the materials that are required. Also explain how you would interact with the children to support their cognitive development while playing the game.

Demonstrate and explain the game to your trainer/assessor so they can see how you have included the concepts in the children's play.

2. Explain how you applied a theory relating to cognitive development to the game design.

Part D

Develop a 1–2 page report explaining how you promote MTOP sub-outcome of Outcome 4 in your daily work with the children in your service: 'Children use a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating'.

In your report:

- include an explanation of any organisational standards, policies and procedures that you follow to work towards Outcome 4
- link the information you provide to at least two cognitive development theorists or core principles of development.

Then explain how you:

- monitor and assess the children's development of cognitive skills in Outcome 4
- encourage the children to develop and use the skills and processes in Outcome 4.

You may use a range of documentation methods to explain this information, such as:

- photos
- learning stories
- anecdotal records
- diary entries
- jottings
- samples of work
- checklists
- sociograms
- other methods as agreed with your trainer/assessor.

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
Fostering communication development

As children develop, they gain a keener sense of self-awareness. They are developing and learning about how to express themselves. Language and communication experiences allow children opportunities to develop their own sense of self in the world.

An important part of an educator's role is to foster children's communication and language skills by providing developmentally appropriate experiences and activities that stimulate them to use and understand language. Ongoing assessment and monitoring of skills and development is also important. In-depth knowledge of developmental theories and how they relate to language development provides the basis for monitoring communication skill development and planning and delivering appropriate programs and learning experiences for each child.

In this chapter you will learn about:

5A Understanding development theories and monitoring language skills

5B Providing opportunities to develop language skills

5C Valuing linguistic diversity

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

PC 5.1

5A Understanding development theories and monitoring language skills

MTOP Outcome 5, Children are effective communicators, expands your view of communication to show that development of communication skills influences many areas of learning, including a child's ability to feel a sense of belonging. Using communications that are meaningful to children aids them to participate in ways that demonstrate their feelings of acceptance and help them to learn and share important skills and knowledge.

Understanding language and communication skills

Communication skills include the use of speech and language. Speech includes the ability to produce sounds and words; language relates to the words that you use and understand.

In our multicultural nation, you will come into contact with many different languages, including international languages and nonverbal languages such as Auslan or Compic. You may also become familiar with made-up terms that have meaning to particular people or families.

To understand language more clearly, ensure you are familiar with the following key terms related to language and communication.

Words and terms	Meaning
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
NESB	Non-English speaking background
Language	Communication, whether spoken or nonverbal, and the particular words and meaning related to a particular community or country
Literacy	Reading and writing
Pre-language communication	Cues that are used by an infant (for example, cooing, crying and grunting), to which adults may attach meaning
First words	A child's first word is usually defined as one that sounds like an adult word and is used consistently in similar situations; this usually occurs late in the first year and accompanies gestures that enable communication; for example, waving goodbye when asked
Holophrase	A single word that stands in for a complete sentence; for example, saying 'drink' instead of 'I would like a drink'
Telegraphic speech	Two or more words used together in a meaningful sentence, with small words such as 'a', 'to' and 'the' left out; for example, 'Go sleep car'

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Words and terms	Meaning
Sentences	By 3 years of age, most children can form sentences of two, three or more words
Grammar	Syntax: the rules by which we organise words into sentences Morphology: the application of markers that denote number, tense, case, person, gender, active and passive voice; that is, the –s and –ed endings in English words
Pronunciation	The sounds of speech
Semantics	The meaning of words
Standard Australian English	The spoken and written English language used in Australia; this includes pronunciation and accents, as well as particular words commonly used in Australia
Overgeneralisations	Applying the rules of grammar consistently, but incorrectly; for example, applying plurals ('Look at the sheeps') and past tense ('I goed to the shop')
Parentese (motherese) or child-directed speech	How we modify our speech to suit the child's development using shorter, simpler sentences, more repetition, careful articulation, slow speech, basing talk around a child's interest and expanding on telegraphic speech
Phonology	How we understand and produce speech sounds
Pragmatics	How we engage in communication with each other, take turns to speak, maintain a topic of conversation, communicate clearly, and use gestures and tone of voice
Questions	Questions are complex forms that involve reordering a sentence and using tone to express a query; 'what' and 'where' questions are usually asked first, 'why' and 'when' follow and then 'can't' and 'don't' questions are included
Closed questions	Questions that are answered with a yes or no comment
Open-ended questions	Questions that must be answered with information; for example, 'What did you do today at school?'

Understanding theories of children's language development

Understanding theories about language development and knowing language development milestones enables you to understand individual children's language needs.

Behaviourist theory

Behaviourist theory has been covered in chapters 2 and 3 in relation to social and emotional development. The following case study shows how the theory applies to language development.

Case study

Brit is 6 years old. When she asks an educator for materials that she needs to complete her ideas, the educators do their best to provide these and support Brit to complete her experiments. This encourages Brit to continue asking for materials when she has ideas, and to include educators in discussions about how she might achieve activities. Communication occurs between educator and child.

Brain development

Refer to Chapter 3 for a summary of brain development. In short, theorists studying brain development concluded that it has an enormous impact on how a child learns. Heredity (nature) defines the framework of a brain, but the environment (nurture) has a huge effect on the depth of development. Brain development has a direct relationship to language skill development.

Cognitive theory

Cognitive theory, including Piaget's theories, was also covered in chapters 3 and 4. To recap, Piaget believed strongly that we learn as constructionists; that is, someone who learns actively from the world around them and develops (or constructs) meaning from what is found. The process of cognitive learning involves four concepts:

- Schema
- Assimilation
- Accommodation
- Equilibration

Cognitive development stages span from birth to adolescence at approximate ages that will at times overlap. During overlap, you will observe a child demonstrating abilities expected in two different stages, which are their emerging skills.

The preoperational stage of cognitive development spans from approximately 2 to 7 years and is depicted by the child's use of exploration, imagination and symbolic representation, including language development. Children in this stage are egocentric; this means they see everything from their point of view. Language in the preoperational stage develops fast as the child is able to pick up symbolic understanding quickly and interpret more abstract ideas and label these with language.

In the concrete operational stage, at approximately 7 to 11 years, children are flexible, organised and logical. Their thinking becomes close to that of an adult, although they still need concrete information to help them apply their logic. Children in the concrete operational stage enjoy developing more complex language patterns and understanding. They participate in conversations and use the rules required to communicate their feelings, ideas and thoughts.

Multiple intelligences

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences was discussed in chapters 3 and 4. To recap, when you recognise the 'intelligence' that is a child's strength, you can provide learning, support methods and approaches that focus on this child's strengths and learning styles. Refer to Chapter 4 for a list and explanation of the eight intelligences.

Case study

- Sol has bodily kinaesthetic intelligence. He uses a lot of body language and expresses himself by showing others through actions.
- When Michelle is happy, she sings happy tunes. When she is sad, she hums in a low tone. She demonstrates musical intelligence to communicate her feelings.
- Ted watches others communicate and uses facial expressions and active listening. His strongest intelligence is interpersonal.

Children who have linguistic intelligence as their strength:

- are more sensitive to spoken and written language
- have a greater ability to learn new languages
- can use language to accomplish goals
- express themselves using language
- use language to remember.

Nature versus nurture

Nature and nurture are further concepts relevant to your understanding of communication and language development. This concept was introduced in Chapter 1 in relation to physical development. To recap, nature refers to your genetic programming and the things you do naturally, and is linked to heredity, genetics and maturation. Nurture relates to personal experiences and what you are taught through interaction with the environment and other people.

The following case study defines nature and nurture characteristics in relation to communication.

Case study

Mansa is 5 years old. He has two older sisters. During his early childhood, Mansa would just need to point and grunt and his sisters would run to get him the item. Mansa's language acquisition was less developed than others his age, although his school experiences are seeing his skills improve rapidly.

Marquelle is 5 years old and an only child. Her mother speaks to her all day and they converse constantly about things they like, think about and enjoy. Marquelle's mother introduces her to new words regularly. Marquelle holds sustained conversations with adults and other children.

Sociocultural theory

The sociocultural theory, also known as the social constructivist learning theory, builds on Piaget's work to include learning that is acquired through social interaction and scaffolding emerging skills.

Critical learning periods, teachable moments and windows of opportunity relate to Vygotsky's work on emerging skills and the social learning provided to enable a child to develop and learn. If children are exposed to new and more skilled activity, they are encouraged to move forward themselves and attempt to learn these skills. An example in relation to communication development is a 10-year-old who has commenced a new hobby. The child may listen to others speaking and labelling in relation to the hobby and hear how they can express themselves in different ways relevant to the hobby. This demonstrates one way that Vygotsky's theory links to social learning.

Core principles

A number of core principles of communication development are described in the following table.

Principle of development	Description	Examples of links with communication development
Belonging, being and becoming	Children learn best when they feel safe and valued.	• When children have a sense of belonging, they feel safe to 'be'. This means they are curious and involved, and demonstrate a sense of agency. Their ability to 'be' enables them to learn, develop and practise skills; hence, they 'become', demonstrating and achieving their full potential.
Sequence of development	Development progresses in a pattern that advances from simple to complex (maturation).	• Children communicate in short conversations. As they develop, they increase the length and complexity of the conversation and the words they use may be more descriptive.
Rate of development	Children develop at different rates.	• Experience with language determines the rate of development. If a child is not exposed to or encouraged to use language, their rate of language skill development will be reduced.
Neurological or brain development	Brain and spinal cord development links to the acquisition of skills.	• Synapses develop when new information is learnt and consolidated.

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Principle of development	Description	Examples of links with communication development
Critical periods and scaffolding	There are critical periods for learning and, if these times are not taken advantage of, the child may miss an important aspect of learning. Children are drawn to challenging experiences and enjoy intentional teaching.	• When a new skill is learnt, practice must occur to consolidate the skill. • When children show agency, their interests need to be developed for them to remain enthusiastic and curious.
Heredity and environment, and how children use active learning	Also known as nature versus nurture, this compares aspects that are genetically programmed to how the environment influences development. Children learn from the rich environments you provide.	• A child's language can be increased through consistent interaction with a stimulating environment. • The child's intelligence type (multiple intelligences) is genetic.
Holistic development	All domains of development are closely related and interlinked.	• The child communicates in a conversation: – Psychological – the child gains feedback from others, which encourages further interaction. – Social – the child is interested in sharing their ideas with others. – Communication – the child uses language skills to communicate their ideas. – Cognitive – the child understands concepts and can communicate these to others.
Play as learning	Play is used by children to learn.	• Communication skills develop in: – dramatic play – discussing roles, imagining and sharing ideas – games – as the child talks about rules of play, they ask questions and talk about the game play.
Individualised learning	Children learn in different ways and demonstrate what they know in different ways.	• Children learn in different ways based on their learning style. They may prefer to listen, watch or be shown how things work. • Some children will talk about and demonstrate their skills and knowledge; others will demonstrate these only if asked.

Stages of language development

A child's language development begins from the moment they are born, with newborns making noises and attempting to communicate. Because these basic language skills are fostered and developed into speech and more comprehensive language skills over the first years of their lives, it is essential to provide children with activities and experiences that assist this transition from an early age. The language skills children develop form the basis for the advanced skills they will develop later in life.

The first signs of formed language are through an infant's experimentation with different sounds. Infants may often begin by making 'raspberries' with their mouths and experimenting with different volumes and tones such as squeals and moans. These simple sounds then begin to form 'babble' and eventually simple words. Even at a very early age, you will notice infants communicating with you by watching your face and responding with smiles and noises. This communication is in a conversation style, with you and the infant taking turns to interact. As a child's speech develops, they begin to form the basics of language.

Children's listening skills also begin to develop from birth. Infants from 3 or 4 weeks of age begin to demonstrate their listening skills by using simple gestures such as turning their head towards the direction of different sounds. These simple signs of listening develop further as children are exposed to a variety of experiences that support and enrich this development.

The same efforts of encouragement used to support the language learning of an infant are required to extend the language development of older children. You will be watching body language, helping children to converse and adding new words to their vocabulary.

When fostering language development, encourage children to express themselves verbally at their own rate. Children use nonverbal cues for communication even when they are developmentally capable of using complex language. You can model the use of words, introduce new words and encourage conversation.

The milestones of communication development for school age children are less marked. The basics of speech and language are consolidated and they use their knowledge in an adult-like manner.

Age	Development	Expectations
5–6 years	• Clear speech with only a few grammatical errors • Asks questions • Tells stories and recalls past events • Understands advanced concepts such as same and different • Is capable of reciting their name and address • Understands opposites • Recognises simple words and symbols • Takes turns in conversations	• Children of this age: – show interest in stories as well as informative literature – enjoy stories that help them deal with emotions, feelings or situations – are able to memorise and recite stories and 'read' them aloud • Plan individual language, literature and listening experiences for children of this age group. Group experiences may be more lengthy and complex. • Include new words and correct terms. • Encourage children to use language in fun ways that show they have mastered this skill..
6–12 years	• Plays with words and language • Uses silly verses, chants, tongue twisters, riddles and jokes • Can relay messages correctly • Can listen without interrupting • Asks about the meaning of new words • Uses language to plan activities • Uses language to share experiences • May swear • Participates in family or service discussions • Reads magazines and books for research	

Factors influencing individual language development

Language and communication development links closely with development in other areas; for example:

- Fine motor skills include tongue and mouth coordination as well as subtle body language.
- Gross motor skills include body language.
- Emotional and psychological development includes the ability to express feelings and thoughts through verbal communication.
- Social development includes interaction with peers and others, the expression of needs, and the use of pro-social skills.

- Cognitive development includes symbolic understanding and memory, which allows children to develop language.
- Creative development includes self-expression.

Language development is also influenced by a range of factors, such as those in the following table.

Factor	Influence
Age	Children progress through language stages sequentially.
Gender	Girls generally use communication more than boys due to their interests. Girls commonly use language to communicate with each other and play out roles, which involve the use of various forms of language and relationships.
Family background, beliefs and cultural practice	Families all communicate differently and sometimes family dynamics affect their ability to communicate together. The languages families use may also influence development as some children may be expected to use verbal, nonverbal or sign language. 'Baby talk' and words that are specifically used by the family may also influence the child's ability to be understood by others.
Ability	Genetic ability and the environment influence children's skills; however, some limitations may occur due to developmental challenges. Some children may have a naturally higher ability to use language.
Temperament	Children with particular temperaments may prefer to participate in activities that require less communication than other activities. Some children take more time than others to become involved, which may put them behind others in experience.
Interests	Some children are genuinely drawn to activities that involve discussion and listening. Some children notice changes in language and new words, while others utilise specific language concepts regularly.
Peer groups	Peers learn from each other in play as information is shared and play occurs. Children may add their own language to the play environment, asking questions and relating their understanding to others.

Monitoring language development and skills

Prior to establishing a child's level of language and/or communication abilities, observe the child in a range of situations to form the foundation of a monitoring and/or screening process. The information you gather from a series of observations:

- clarifies their abilities
- allows you to gain a greater understanding of the child
- provides information for others

- looks at the child from different perspectives
- helps you gain insight by investigating the child's behaviour, their level and types of interaction with adults and other children, and their emotions, including any anxieties and/or frustration they express at the time.

Evaluation is how you identify whether your program is relevant and meets the needs of children, families, the service and the children's services industry. There are a range of things you can evaluate or review; each helps you plan what to do next and improve your practice. Your evaluations will form new observation records about the child's language and communication abilities and enable you to identify and record progress.

When monitoring how an individual child uses language, use the guidelines in the following table.

Why monitor this area	What to look for	Observation method(s) suited to this area
How a child uses language: • Language is an important part of all development. • Language includes verbal and nonverbal messages, including cues and written skills. • Children with strong language skills may also have strong skills in other developmental areas.	• Developmental milestones or stages • Learning or windows of opportunity • Modelling • Skills in problem-solving, negotiation, collaboration and conflict resolution • Ways the child expresses themselves • Attachment or security • Interests and ideas • Environmental effects: time, space, materials and people • Autonomy and independence • Level of self-esteem and understanding of who they are	• Video, audio or DVD recordings • Checklists • Sociograms • Diaries, journals, logs and communication books • Learning stories • Time samples • Event samples • Anecdotal records • Incidental records • Records of questioning, such as graffiti sheets, daily evaluation sheets, surveys, questionnaires and forms

Assessing language skills and development

Chapter 1 set out the steps for assessing children's progress toward MTOP Outcomes. These steps can be used to help assess children's language skills and development:

1. Gather and record information about the child.
2. Identify which of the five MTOP Outcomes your observation record links to.
3. Identify a specific sub-outcome of MTOP.
4. Clarify your selection by referring to the evidence examples that are provided for the Outcome.

MTOP Outcomes most commonly related to language skills and development include:

- Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity:
  - Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities
- Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world:
  - Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation
- Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators:
  - Children interact verbally and nonverbally with others for a range of purposes
  - Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts
  - Children collaborate with others, express ideas and make meaning using a range of media and communication technologies

Practice task 14

1. Use a table similar to the following to monitor a 7-year-old child's language development. Include a comment and date in every space.

Language development	Comments	Date recorded as achieved
Tells jokes		
Shares experiences by talking about what happened		
Asks a lot of questions		
Likes to read stories and use books to find things out		

2. Explain how each of the four skills in the table may be influenced by:
   - social development
   - psychological development
   - brain development (nature versus nurture).
3. Link each of the four skills in the table to MTOP Outcomes.

PC 5.2
PC 5.3
PC 5.5
PC 5.6
PC 5.7

5B Providing opportunities to develop language skills

Children communicate more readily and openly when they feel a sense of belonging. Aim to develop a warm and communicative relationship with children and spend time interacting and talking with them. To demonstrate your respect for children:

- greet and farewell every child
- use children's names often
- respect children's names by using them correctly
- be affectionate, but avoid terms like 'darling' or 'sweetie'
- never give children nicknames unless these are provided by parents as the name the child is known by; in particular, never use negative nicknames.

As you interact with children each day, your modelled speech and communication will form the basis of their interaction skills. The signals you give children may be through words, gestures, stance (posture), tone and facial expressions. This modelling is an important part of enriching and supporting children's development. You model active listening techniques, negotiation skills, expression and emotions that you want children to mimic. Your positive body language helps foster children's listening skills by ensuring they feel valued and worthy when they speak; this inspires them to make others feel the same. When listening to children, use your body language to show them you are interested in what they are saying.

A sub-outcome of MTOP Outcome 2, Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation, reminds you of your role as a language model.

MTOP Outcome 5 encourages you to view children as effective communicators, in particular reflecting on the following areas:

- Children interact verbally and nonverbally with others for a range of purposes
- Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts
- Children collaborate with others, express ideas and make meaning using a range of media and communication technologies

Fostering language and literacy through play

Many different types of language and literature experiences can be planned for individual children or small and large groups. Everyday activities and routines all provide opportunities for children to listen to, practise and use language. Social play in particular can support language learning and enable a child to practise and experiment. Some ideas you may like to use are listed in the following table.

Experience	Examples of activities
Music	• Headphones with songs and stories • Background sounds or music at display or nature tables, such as bird or water sounds • Singing, including action songs • Multicultural music • Dance and choreography using a variety of music styles
Stories, songs and poems	• Reading or telling stories • Rhymes • Poems • Learning words of songs • Reading to themselves
Drama/visual	• Videos and DVDs • Hand and finger puppets • Props • Felt boards • Imaginary and dramatic play: – Cars – People – Dolls – Animals – Home/community areas – Dress-ups
Personal interactions	• One-on-one interactions • Decision-making activities • Group discussions • Show and tell
Discovery activities	• Mirrors • Magnifying glasses • Discussing photographs • Creating hand and foot prints • Looking at shadows or silhouettes • People pictures: matching and sorting • Poster or picture discussions • Hobbies • Collections

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Experience	Examples of activities
Games	• Word games • Board games • Puzzles • Group activities and games: – 'Who am I?' – Guessing games – Fill-the-gaps games; leaving words out of rhymes, stories or sentences – Matching games

Reading stories extends children's language, literacy and listening skills.

When providing language, literacy and listening experiences, consider the guidance in the following table.

Topic	Guidance
Listening	• Children can listen to each other or be by themselves at a listening experience if you provide quiet spaces. • Children find it easier to listen if the words are relevant to them, so choose appropriate language and topics that interest them. • When children are playing, involve yourself sensitively in their play and listen carefully, giving your full attention.

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Topic	Guidance
Modelling and interactions	• Young children learn by listening, watching and copying. • Your interactions must be frequent and positive. • Modelling shows children how to respect each other when speaking, listening and taking turns. • When you show enjoyment in your presentation of activities, you encourage children to be involved.
Supporting experiences	• During periods of child-initiated learning, you can sensitively remind children of the skills they are developing and help them use these skills. • Enhance your communication by using puppets and props. • Small groups allow children space to think; large groups can be distracting. • Language, literature and listening experiences may occur indoors and outdoors. • Children will naturally want to contribute if they are interested in what is going on. • Include words that extend understanding. • Use correct terms; for example, instead of saying we need to use the tool for making holes in the soil for seeds, introduce the tool as a 'dibber', explain what it is for and continue to use this term.
Resolving conflict	• When children are involved in conflicts over space, friends or resources, you can use your conflict-resolution skills to help them listen to each other and resolve their difficulties, thus developing essential skills for life and learning.

Engaging children

Children are more likely to be engaged in activities that are based on their interests and strengths, and if they have participated in choosing the activities. Curiosity is about finding things out and experimenting; it is great for initiating a new activity or experience and encouraging participation.

To capture children's attention and stimulate a response, you need to:

- use open questions
- be prepared for the children to adapt materials or change the experience
- support experimentation
- be prepared to add more materials
- provide for all possible events including cleaning up mess
- be curious and interested yourself and reflect this in your comments.

When presenting experiences, be aware of the aesthetics and the availability of equipment. To do this:

- model the value of materials by handling them with respect and care
- use posters, pictures, mobiles, books, and poems to enhance areas of the room in formal and informal presentations
- present library areas with a variety of books, a display and posters
- make the area look interesting and inviting to encourage children's participation in the experiences you are offering
- add books and language resources to display tables
- incorporate language, literature and listening into other experiences, both indoors or outdoors.

Spontaneous learning

There will be opportunities to engage children based on spontaneous occurrences. By reacting to these opportunities, you ensure children are gaining your positive feedback. This, as suggested in the behaviourist theory, is an excellent way to encourage children to continue to express themselves openly and develop greater language skills. Some of the most challenging, stimulating and educational activities and experiences come from simple ideas or discussions that occur spontaneously throughout the day.

A child may ask a question, notice something they have not seen or thought about before or become involved in new play themes. When this spontaneous activity occurs, it is important to ensure the children continue to lead the activity that evolves. To do this, consider the way you use your verbal and nonverbal language to:

- allow children time to explore their ideas
- provide appropriate materials and resources
- enable children to continue play
- encourage children to investigate
- see mistakes as learning opportunities.

With language, literacy and listening development, just as with any other developmental area, children may make mistakes and use their skills incorrectly at times. When children need to use language skills to solve problems or negotiate, support them by providing appropriate words to use. Be mindful that not all children have the ability to use words with skill. Model positive examples of words that can be used in a variety of situations. Telling children to 'use their words' sets a child up to make a mistake. The child may use words that are not suitable, or they may not know which words fit the situation. Always give the child some words to use to express themselves.

When a child says a word with incorrect pronunciation, don't stop the child and ask them to repeat it in the correct manner; instead, model the correct way to say the word, as described in the following case study.

Case study

Thomas is sitting at the construction table building a vehicle. He turns to Megan (an educator) and says, 'Megan, I am making an expavator!' Megan looks at his vehicle, smiles and replies, 'You look like you are building a very sturdy excavator!'

Asking questions

Open-ended questions are a useful and important tool to incorporate into your everyday interactions with children. You need to think about how to word and present your questions to ensure children are given an opportunity to explain and extend their answer beyond a yes or no.

Questions that involve a yes, no or one-word answer are called closed questions. 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 to children

Once you understand the messages a child is trying to send about their feelings and ideas, it is important to respond promptly. By responding to all feelings, you start building relationships with children and show them that you care. Children need to:

- express themselves through activities such as clapping and stamping
- express their feelings verbally
- express their feelings through paintings, drawings and other creative activities
- express themselves through writing activities such as adding to a journal, diary or writing a story.

Planned group experiences

Language and literacy experiences that involve resources and props are stimulating for children. These enriched experiences create curiosity and encourage children to be involved and to want to learn. Some suggestions to encourage children to become engaged in experiences are to:

- use a variety of media in discussions, such as magazines, video, music, books and posters
- respond to all children's conversations and ensure you follow up on them
- plan experiences related to children's interests
- plan a variety of experiences involving music, movement, stories and directions
- ensure all are positioned appropriately
- project your voice so all can clearly hear you
- use props such as puppets, felt board stories, toys, dolls and mobiles
- ask open-ended questions
- provide new equipment for children to explore (such as headphones or microphones).

The following is an example of a group time session plan, which provides many opportunities for sharing and experiencing language and literacy, while also supporting the children's ability to listen, participate and respond.

Example

Child or group identification: **Group 1 (10 children)**	**Age of child or group:** **10–12 years old**
Name and description of experience: Writing lyrics of a song	
Date: 17th January 2014 **Observation:** (attach record if not a written record and describe) The four older children in the group have started saying they are bored in the group and they want to participate in activities separate from the younger children. They enjoy listening to popular tunes (these have been censored).	
Why this observation encouraged you to plan this experience: The children need to feel they are respected as part of the group. They also need their interests catered for.	
What is the value of this experience: Social and emotional: working together to develop the song, expressing themselves through music and song lyrics Language: putting feelings into words and expressing how they might feel, talking to each other about what the song is about and what words to use Cognitive: problem-solving, rhyming, completing word patterns	

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Materials required:

Lyric-free music (look online for licence-free music or pay a small fee for music from websites such as www.melodyloops.com/music/)

Paper and pencils

Computer

Table and five chairs

Strategies used to foster creativity during the experience:

Being prepared for children to express other emotions and linking them into the lyrics

Allowing children to share their own ideas and disagree if they have a different points of view

Being open to children sharing stories or scenarios

List your strategies for settling:

I will bring the group of four children together and explain I have a special activity that I hope they will enjoy. Suggest that we need some space to talk and work and ask them to help me set up the table and chairs, etc.

Explain the introduction:

I will discuss the idea I have, which is for the children to listen to the music on the CD and choose one, then to develop lyrics to fit the music. They can then practise and present a concert to the other children if they wish. I might give them a topic of 'expressing how you feel' if they are unsure about what the song might be about. I would ask that they ensure the words and meaning are appropriate for the other children to listen to; for example, there should be no swearing or using terms that are rude.

Explain the body of the experience:

The children can work on this activity independently. I would be close by and would help if needed. I will check in periodically to see if things are going well.

Explain the conclusion:

The children can develop the song and tell me when they are finished. We can go over what they had written to check it is appropriate. The children can perform their song to the larger group of children – those who are interested.

Explain your dispersal:

I would discuss with the children how they thought the experience went, whether they learnt anything from it and how they think the other children felt about the message of their song and the way it was delivered. I would also offer them opportunities to do this again or to do something similar.

Spontaneous interests catered for, extensions or changes to planned activity: (complete after experience has been implemented)

The children decided that two of them would sing and two would dance.

They also wanted to make costumes that made them look a bit similar to each other, like a group.

They talked about arranging for a video to be made. They would like to create more songs and add to this video.

Listening and responding to language

Listening is a critical communication skill – we listen for enjoyment and to obtain information to learn and understand. Children need to learn to listen, but you should also be an active listener and role model for children. This includes responding to children's conversations and language, using correct pronunciation when speaking and reflecting the child's conversations and words when responding to them. By modelling this behaviour, you will teach children to do the same.

Listening skills

Factors such as background noise, stress and time-pressed routines can affect children's ability to listen effectively.

Listening requires skills to direct your attention to what is heard, gather meaning, interpret and decide on action. If you encourage listening, children interpret and gain an understanding of the world around them. Poor listening habits produce misunderstood messages, language and relationships.

Strong social listening skills involve a lifelong learning ability to:

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

Creating opportunities for children to listen and respond

Children have the opportunity to develop their listening and responding skills when you consult them and give them instructions. There are also a number of specific games and activities you can provide that will assist the development of these skills, such as:

- puppet play
- talking books
- group discussions
- games such 'Simon Says', 'Secret whispers', 'Who am I?' or 'I spy'
- show and tell
- talking about stories after you read a book.

There are many other ways to create opportunities for children to listen and respond, which were discussed in the previous section 'Fostering language and literacy through play'.

Following directions

Listening skills are required for a child to be able to follow directions. To ensure children are given the best possible opportunity to follow directions or instructions appropriately, consider the following:

- Use positive directions to ensure the child understands what you want them to do, such as 'Put the paper on the table'. Avoid using negative directions such as 'Don't put the paper in the bin'.
- Express directions clearly, and repeat the direction if needed.
- Model good listening skills.
- Try to make following directions fun.
- Provide appropriate directions and give children the opportunity to practise.
- Provide the direction in the order it is required (older school children will be able to decipher order, younger children will need practice).
- Give directions in context; for example, if the child is painting, they may become confused or have difficulty remembering if you give a direction about sand play.
- Play non-competitive direction games to build skills.
- Have children practise following recipes (drawn recipes for young children).

Consultation

One of the most effective ways to encourage children to listen and respond is to consult them. By consulting them, you are supporting them to express their ideas and views.

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

Consultation works best if you get to know the child's communication style and consult them about simple matters that concern them, such as the activities and experiences that are interesting to them. Most children are skilled enough to help plan activities with you; so you can try the following suggestions:

- Offer possible play choices and listen carefully to children's ideas.
- Use open questions to encourage children to consider all options; for example, 'Could you make something with those boxes?'
- Only give a choice when it is appropriate; it is unfair to offer a choice you do not intend to provide.
- Help children understand the choices they have; never assume children know what you mean.
- Use both verbal and nonverbal communication to help children understand; for example, pointing or showing.
- Encourage children to consult each other.

Creating literacy-enriched environments

Literacy is the ability to read and write words. School-age children may use these skills to communicate with each other, express themselves and complete activities. Activities such as experimenting with images and print can capture children's attention and stimulate a response. These activities may be at the beginning of a child's reading and writing skills and, if they capture the child's attention and the child is interested, they enable the child to start to read and write and understand the many symbols used to communicate.

All written language reflects the culture from which it originated. Familiar culturally constructed text is usually material that matches the language you understand and use. Unfamiliar culturally constructed text is material that uses language you are not used to.

By providing children with the opportunity to engage with diverse text types, you are allowing them to become familiar with the different cultural capital of others.

The following table includes some strategies for creating a literacy-enriched environment that introduces images and print from a variety of culturally constructed origins.

Literacy areas	What you can do
Developing a positive attitude toward the use of print	• Get excited about books. • Provide books written in different languages. • Talk about the books you have read. • Show children your favourite books. • Bring in interesting articles and pictures from newspapers or magazines from different countries.
Developing an awareness of print	• Point out print in the environment. • Provide opportunities for writing and drawing and allow access to various media such as crayons, markers, pencils, pastels, charcoal and so on. • Encourage children to write; for example, labelling their own items, writing poems or writing to friends. • Provide help with spelling, printing or writing stories if asked. • Let the child know that you consider their writing to have meaning by responding to what they want their writing to say.
Gaining skills and knowledge for reading	• Show how books can be used to find out things. • Encourage children to work out what words mean in English and other languages. • Encourage children to think about a story: to predict, imagine and project. • Discuss how stories relate to children's lives or what they already know, including stories about children living in non-English-speaking countries.

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Literacy areas	What you can do
Playing with words	• Follow the children's lead when they play with words spontaneously. • Make up new songs to old tunes. • Point out interesting things about words and names, such as words that start with the same letter, long words and short words. • Sing familiar songs in different languages or use sign language.

The ability to play with words is a milestone demonstrating that the child can use and understand language. Encourage this as you see it developing.

Give young children opportunities to experiment with writing.

Literacy experiences

Literacy experiences are a good way for children to start developing an enjoyment of written words, and include the following:

- Reading stories
- Telling stories
- Posters and displays
- Poetry
- Puppets and felt stories
- Digital technology

Reading stories

Reading stories involves reading already published literature aloud or to yourself. It helps to develop language skills and imagination. Stories can help children cope with stress and provide breaks from regular daily routines to relax and understand what is going on around them. Stories can support, extend and develop interests and also inspire children's creativity by exposing them to the visual aspects of illustration.

You can provide a library area for children to access stories and non-fiction books or you can read a story to a group or to an individual child. Reading stories with children can be a good learning experience as many stories are informative and may answer questions. By using books to explain or demonstrate things in a child's life, you can impact how they deal with aspects of their lives.

Telling stories

Telling stories is the process of developing a story as you tell it to others. It is different to reading a story that has been written by someone else; it allows you to use your own creativity and engage the children's creativity to develop stories of your own. Storytelling plays a vital role in providing enriching language, literature and listening experiences for children of all ages and stages.

There are some important points to remember when you are implementing a storytelling session. The purpose of the activity is to enrich and extend the children's language development. Children need to enjoy the story to engage with it, so it must be energetic and interesting. You may have a vivid imagination and be able to create an exciting story without needing to take inspiration from anywhere else, or you may wish to start by using an existing story and elaborating on it. Another way to get more inspiration for storytelling is to gather ideas from the children themselves; children are a great source of imaginative material.

Posters and displays

Posters and displays provide opportunities for discussion and can link children to new topics or an understanding of others. Assess posters and displays using the following guidelines to ensure they lead the discussion appropriately:

- Are people represented using present day clothing and environments or are they only presented in a historical context?
- Are people represented positively and without bias, or are some people only presented negatively?
- Do a variety of people contribute to a variety of activities or do only some people contribute?
- Does each person have an individual appearance or does everyone look the same or similar?
- Are a range of emotions and abilities shown or is everyone happy?
- Do various people take on various roles or do only some people contribute?
- Are a range of talents and skills displayed or are no talents and skills displayed?
- Are talents and skills demonstrated by non-gender stereotypes or are gender stereotypes displayed?
- Are a variety of people represented or is one group of people represented a lot more than others?

Chants and poetry

Chant, songs or poems are often accompanied by actions. They challenge memory and recall as well as physical skills as the body and the mind work together to act out the activity. Most children find these engaging and fun as the words can be musical, funny, nonsensical or patterned, and often encourage movement. Chants are often used when children use a skipping rope and play 'elastics' or hand clapping games.

Rhymes and poetry play are an integral role in the provision of exciting language experiences; they develop children's understanding of words and their sounds. You may choose to recite poems and rhymes that are meaningful to you, or you could support the children to write and develop their own poems or rhymes.

There are many different types of poems, including those in the following table.

Type	Description
Acrostic	In an acrostic poem, the first letter of each line forms a word vertically. The word the poem forms may be the focus of the poem; for example, a person's name.
Ballad	A ballad is a poem that tells the story of an event. The event may be from history, the news or your life. Ballads are rhyming poems and are commonly used by poets to recall significant historic events. However, you may write a lighter version about a birthday party or teddy bear picnic.
Haiku	This is a form of poetry originating from Japan. Haikus focus on what you see or feel. It has three lines: the first line has five syllables, the second line has seven syllables and the last line has five syllables.
Limerick	A limerick is a rhyming poem that consists of five lines. The last words of the first two lines rhyme, both with each other and with the final word of the poem. The last words of other two lines rhyme only with each other. Limericks also have a strong rhythm to them and are often humorous.
Rhyming poems	Couplets are two-line poems where the last word of each line rhymes. Triplets are three-line poems with two alternatives of rhyming patterns; either all lines of the triplet rhyme or just the first and last line rhyme. Quatrains are four-line poems with two alternatives of rhyming patterns; either every second line rhymes or the first two lines rhyme with each other, as do the last two.

Puppets and felt stories

Puppets and felt stories help enrich a child's enjoyment and experience in a storytelling or language experience. Puppets and felt characters add a visual aspect to language experiences. They are great activities for small groups and a valuable individual experience as children can act out their own stories with the puppets or felt characters, developing their use of language. Children can make their own puppets, felt characters and even develop their own puppet shows. They may also be able to use puppets to express their feelings, concerns or other ideas.

Digital technology

Digital technology is advancing rapidly. Technology has introduced us to new media; for example, digital videodiscs, compact camcorders, iPods and MP3/4 players, video recorders, webcams and tablets such as leap pads. Introducing new technology to children stimulates their curiosity and improves ways to listen, see and explore. Consider the technology in the following table.

Type of technology	Description
Computers	Computer programs can provide children with stories, music, pictures and other language experiences. Children can learn words, hear multicultural languages, create their own stories, make posters and design a range of ideas. Children may use the internet to look up pictures and information. By observing how children use the internet to access different sites, you gain an idea of what they are interested in and like to do. To ensure children are safe online, install software that blocks inappropriate content and any contact from others online. You can build pictures or information that children find into other activities in your program; for example, printing items for group discussions, reading stories from the screen or using the computer for children to find objects – a trivia hunt.
CDs/DVDs and headphones	DVDs 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 allow children time to be alone 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.
Radio	The radio is not generally recommended for use with children as the content cannot be controlled. The program you choose may be interrupted by news events, inappropriate language or comments. Some radio programs play music that is not appropriate for younger children.
Television	Television may be used to watch a program being broadcasted or a video or DVD. For school-age children, television may form part of your recreation program as it allows children time to relax or extend on interests. Only use television if your service philosophy supports its use and parental permission is gained for the rating level of the program you choose. The overuse or misuse of television is a concern as it is linked with childhood obesity. If you choose to use television as a part of your program, ensure that you: • have parental permission • follow service policies and procedures • preview the program before showing it to children • supervise the children when they are watching it • are prepared to answer any questions that arise from the content • encourage children to discuss what they watched afterwards • plan the program as part of your day, never just 'put on the television'.

Children may listen to a story or music while engaging in another activity.

Practice task 15

1. Plan and implement at least one experience for children for each of the following areas:
   - Language and literacy in play
   - Listening and responding
   - Experimentation with image and print
2. Link theory, MTOP Outcomes and/or a core principle to each of the experiences.
3. Show your supervisor how you set up each experience and ask them to comment on how well you have displayed home languages, including Australian English.
4. Provide a list of four ways you can add unfamiliar culturally constructed text to the play environment.

PC 5.4

5C Valuing linguistic diversity

MTOP demonstrates the importance of language and communication through its Outcomes, particularly Outcome 5, which focuses on the different ways children communicate and how communication involves many different concepts, including identity and language.

Encouraging the use of home languages

Linguistic heritage is the term used to describe language that is passed on from your ancestors. Many families in Australia use languages other than English. This language heritage makes up their identity and is valued as part of their history or way of life.

Children who demonstrate appropriate development in their first language are likely to establish new languages more easily. You must always consider a child's abilities in languages other than English when identifying their level of development. Keep in mind that some families may have special words or phrases that you might use.

Collecting information at orientation

You should get to know a new child and family and collect information about them during your service orientation process. By the end of orientation, you should have built a relationship with both parent and child, and gained enough information to effectively educate and care for the child.

A lot of information may be collected at your service through informal methods such as general conversations, but formal methods are also required to ensure you have all relevant details. You may use:

- an enrolment form: a standard form that collects the same information for each family and is updated annually or more often
- an enrolment interview: an orientation process where families are shown around the service and introduced to the environment while chatting about the family and child's experiences and preferences
- a referral agent: shared information from other services used by the family, with the family's consent; this may be ongoing or a one-off situation
- a meeting: uninterrupted time where information about children's needs, interests, routines and preferences can be exchanged discussed and negotiated
- a survey: asking about particular information; this may be done regularly or just on certain occasions
- a planning strategy: involving parents at planning times and requesting their knowledge of certain areas and/or their needs, goals or hopes for their child
- discussions, surveys or questioning of children: to find out about their family, what they need to feel belonging and what their interests are.

If a family does not speak English, you need to access translators and interpreters so you can gather appropriate information, prepare to meet the child's needs and ensure the family understands your service requirements. Encourage parents to explain the environment and what is happening to their child in their first language. Ensure you discuss the child's first language use with the parent and explain clearly that the better developed the child becomes in their first language, the greater skills they will establish in a new language.

You may discuss the value of this new language and its cultural input to all children in the service as you:

- incorporate different rhymes
- teach songs
- display and teach simple words and phrases
- encourage the group to learn about each other.

During a child's orientation period, the information you collect about them should include specific details of key words and phrases. This applies to all children, whether they speak English or another language at home. You may find it difficult to use these key words and phrases, but they may be essential as you attempt to interpret and provide for the child's needs. For example, a child may call their mother 'mimi'.

Introducing new languages

To introduce new language to children, go slowly and do the following:

- Expose the child to the new language: for a child who does not speak English attending an English-speaking service, this will occur naturally. For an English-speaking child to learn another language, they could listen to songs, stories and communication if possible.
- Teach a word or phrase at a time: point out an object and identify it using both languages. Give the child time to think about this and practise it.
- Have realistic expectations: children will not learn a new language if you overwhelm them or if they are not exposed to the new language consistently.
- Provide positive reinforcement.

Here is an example of how a game could be played using two languages.

Example

To support English language development, you might play the game of 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' and support the child to respond in English; for example, '2 o'clock'.

To support new language development of children who speak English, you might play the game of 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' and support the children to respond in the new language they are learning; for example, 'deux heures' (French).

You can ask parents or others who use the languages to help you. There are also free programs on the internet where you can type in a word or sentence and it will provide a written and audio translation in the chosen language. Try:

- http://translate.google.com.au for translating a word, sentence or document (print and sound)
- http://imtranslator.net/translate-and-speak for translating a word, sentence or placing the translation into an email (print and sound).

These internet programs could be used on a phone, tablet or computer to help you to communicate easily with a child who is having trouble settling in or is trying to tell you something in a home language. You could also use them to support your communication with the child's family.

Choose a more reliable source (such as a professional interpreter) if the information is very important or related to health and safety.

You may need to encourage parents to allow you to support their first language. Many people have experienced prejudice or have been bullied as children because of the language they speak. To encourage parents to maintain this language with their child:

- collect relevant information
- include the first language as part of the orientation process
- respond with respect to any language used
- include the language in the care environment
- encourage all children to share their culture and language
- show how the children in the service value language differences.

Explain and demonstrate to the parent through your actions that you value all languages and their importance in children's learning. You may ask parents and family members who use another language to participate in the program and help teach skills.

Bilingualism

Simultaneous bilingualism refers to a situation where a child is exposed to two languages in infancy. Children learning two languages simultaneously usually learn in three stages:

1. They mix the two languages at times (infants).
2. They separate the words belonging to each language and use whole phrases (toddlers).
3. One language becomes dominant (school age).

Sequential bilingualism refers to a child learning a second language after three years. Children learn the second language in three stages:

1. They become involved in social interactions with speakers of the second language, often relying on memorised phrases.
2. They communicate with second language speakers in the second language using memorised phrases and new vocabulary. This stage progresses quickly if the child is not afraid to make mistakes.
3. They attempt to speak using correct grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.

Children cope well learning two languages. However, particular things determine how well the child will manage new language learning, including:

- how well the child learnt their first language
- the support provided by those using the new language
- the attitudes of others toward the child's first language and culture
- the extent to which the child becomes involved in the English language environment.

There are some normal patterns of language use to expect in second language learners:

- A silent period: this is a time when the child says very little for a long period of time, maybe even months. During this time, the child is listening, watching and building their knowledge of the new language before they use it. If this occurs, you should:
  - continue talking even if the child does not respond
  - continue to include the child in small group activities
  - use varied questions
  - include other children as the focus of any conversation
  - use the first language in activities if possible
  - accept nonverbal responses
  - encourage minimal effort
  - expect a response
  - provide activities with repetitive words and/or counting for success
  - use both languages in one sentence to provide meaning and fill gaps (known as code mixing).
- Loss of the first language: if the language is not used, respected and nurtured, the child will lose skills in it. This may be damaging to the child's self-image or it may occur because they feel like they do not belong.
- Numerous grammatical errors: this occurs as the child learns the new language rules.

Including a variety of languages in the curriculum helps children to develop a healthy self-esteem and self-image as you show them their language is valued. New languages offer an opportunity to learn new skills, find out about the world and develop interest and respect in the cultures and backgrounds of others.

A child learning a second language must accomplish many tasks. They must:

- develop a new set of sounds and sound groupings
- create new intonation patterns so that their meanings are understood
- recognise a new alphabet or script
- develop a new set of sound symbol relationships
- establish a new vocabulary
- organise new ways of putting words together and organising information in the expected sequence
- use new nonverbal signals and establish new signals for old nonverbal signals
- identify the new social rules for when to speak and what to say
- experience new sets of culturally specific knowledge and behaviour.

Practice task 16

You are welcoming a new family into the service. Their first language is Armenian. The mother tells you that she wants you to only use English when talking to her child as she wants him to fit in.

1. Role-play your response to the mother.
2. Explain three ways you could include the Armenian language in the service environment and program so its value for all children is evident.
3. Identify one MTOP Outcome, theory or core principle that relates to this practice task and explain the relationship.

Chapter summary

1. Children's language skills and development can be assessed and monitored against developmental milestones.
2. Children communicate more readily and openly when they feel a sense of belonging. When you develop warm and communicative relationships with children, you can spend time interacting and talking with them.
3. Everyday activities and routines all provide opportunities for children to listen to, practise and use language. Social play in particular supports language learning by giving children opportunities to practise and experiment.
4. Children should learn to listen and be given the opportunity to respond, and you should be an active listener and role model for children.
5. Linguistic heritage is the term used to describe the language passed on from your ancestors. Many families in Australia use languages other than English, so this language heritage makes up their identity and is valued as part of their history or way of life.
6. Provide children with opportunities to engage with familiar and unfamiliar culturally constructed texts.
7. Provide environments that are rich in literacy for children. These environments include those that display home languages and Standard Australian English.
8. By providing appropriate resources, you can encourage children to experiment with communication.

Assessment activity 5
Fostering 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 *CHCSAC005 Foster the holistic development and wellbeing of the child in school age care.*

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

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in fostering 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
- to ensure you maintain confidentiality as required.

Part A

1. Plan and implement an experience that celebrates a language other than English. The language chosen should be the home language of a child in your group. If this is not possible, choose any language other than English.

   The activity must include opportunities for children to:

   - engage with familiar and unfamiliar, culturally constructed text
   - experiment with print and images
   - foster positive self-concept and self-esteem.

Provide evidence of your planning and implementation, including:

- the name of the experience
- the age of the children involved
- the materials you used
- a description of the set-up
- an explanation of how you carried out the experience.

2. Explain how the experience relates to:
   a) a specific MTOP Outcome
   b) a language development theory and/or core principle of child development.

Part B

Plan and implement a play-based experience that provides developmentally appropriate opportunities for children to:

- use their language and literacy skills during play
- listen and respond to the language of others
- express their thoughts, feelings and ideas in a positive and safe environment.

Provide evidence of your planning and implementation, including:

- the name of the experience
- the age of the children involved
- the materials you used
- a description of the set-up
- an explanation of how you carried out the experience.

Explain how you encouraged children to listen and respond to the language used. Use examples to support your explanation.

Part C

Develop a 1–2 page report explaining how you promote MTOP sub-Outcome of Outcome 5 in your daily work with children, 'Children interact verbally and nonverbally with others for a range of purposes'. In your report:

- explain any organisational standards, policies and procedures that you follow to work towards this sub-Outcome
- link the information you provide to at least two communication development theories or core principles of development.

In addition, explain how you:

- assess and monitor the children's language skills and development
- encourage children to express themselves, listen to others and exchange information.

You may use a range of documentation methods to explain this information, such as:

- photos
- learning stories
- anecdotal records
- diary entries
- jottings
- samples of work
- checklists
- sociograms
- other methods as agreed with your trainer/assessor.

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
Fostering an environment for holistic learning and development

MTOP views the child as a capable learner who experiences a range of developmental areas. Environments that foster holistic learning and development incorporate:

- inquiry processes that encourage testing new ideas and taking on challenges
- resources, materials and learning environments that provide challenge, intrigue and surprise
- a sense of belonging and connectedness
- sustained shared conversations in which children extend their thinking
- scaffolded learning
- using mistakes as opportunities to learn
- environments where children engage themselves in self-directed play
- appropriate levels of challenge encouraging children to explore, experiment and take risks in their learning
- diverse contributions from families

To effectively implement holistic learning environments, educators need to:

- collaborate about assessments and evaluation
- share information with colleagues about child development and wellbeing
- recognise spontaneous teachable moments
- ensure a balance between child-initiated and educator-supported learning

In this chapter you will learn about:

6A Providing learning environments that initiate inquiry, challenges and experimentation

6B Guiding the learning process

6C Sharing information and collaborating about assessments

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 Providing learning environments that initiate inquiry, challenges and experimentation

PC 6.1
PC 6.2
PC 6.4
PC 6.6
PC 6.9
PC 6.12

This learner guide has presented different aspects of child development and ways you can use these ideas to provide meaningful learning environments. The consistent aspects to ensure and stimulate when creating a learning environment are challenge, engagement, curiosity and agency. This section reiterates the significance of:

- initiating inquiry processes and providing challenges
- engaging children in shared conversations
- seeing mistakes as opportunities to learn.

Initiating inquiry processes and providing challenges

An inquiry process is about making sense of the world. Inquiry is valuable to children as it helps them find out what is real, what is imaginary and what the answers to their questions are. It challenges cognitive abilities as children grapple with ideas such as measurement and number, and links to other developmental areas such as those shown in the following table.

Developmental area	Characteristics
Social	Sharing ideas and helping each other
Language	Asking questions, finding out about new terms and meanings
Emotional and psychological	Feeling a sense of pride in finding out an answer
Physical	Carrying out tasks of varying difficulties

The ideas children have may launch an inquiry process in which you provide intentional teaching and set up learning environments that build on their interests. To use inquiry as a strategy for learning, employ 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 Bocce set in to show the group. The children are intrigued by the balls.

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Step	Example
2. Find out what the children already know.	Ask the children questions: • Do you know what game you can play with the balls? • Do you know what Bocce is? • What are the balls made of? • Why are the balls different? • Do you kick the balls or throw them?
3. Find out what the children want to know.	You find out that the children would like to know: • the rules of Bocce • if there are any other requirements for a game of Bocce; for example, a court or pitch, or a bat • how the Bocce balls are made • where the game originates from • why Rex has this Bocce set.
4. Discuss the item or interest and introduce correct terminology or language.	Introduce a simple Bocce game so that the children can play and learn the rules. Allow Rex to take responsibility as much as possible. Show the children how to set up the Bocce court. Explain the ball that is the target is called the 'jack'. Demonstrate the aim of the game. Show how the balls may be rolled or thrown. Explain how turns are decided. Show how a winner is identified.
5. Expand the topic or item into other areas of the curriculum.	Focus on different countries and sports that are important to their culture. Introduce other types of games to play indoors and outdoors. Introduce different ball games.
6. Watch for decreasing interest; this tells you the children are finished with this inquiry.	After a week and a half, fewer children are playing. You decide to start a new inquiry topic.

Developing skills through inquiry

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 find the correct answer.

Inquiry processes can be implemented as group activities or individual experiences. Any time you are investigating a 'why' or 'how' question with the children, you are involved in inquiry. Children often ask 'why' or 'how', and there are regular opportunities for you to ask these questions of the children too, facilitating intrigue with something they have not thought of earlier.

New ideas and challenges

Inquiry is about new ideas and challenges. It involves exploring, examining something in detail, experimenting and performing some procedure or action to find something out. It can also involve risk as the child is unsure of the result and needs to be prepared for unexpected outcomes.

Some outcomes will challenge and intrigue the child. Intrigue may occur if the child is unable to complete the inquiry for some reason, or if they cannot find the answer. The child may also be surprised and may need further help due to their experiment not turning out how they expected. A child may be surprised when they work something out and feel excited that they can add this knowledge to their memory.

When involved in an inquiry, remember that younger children may have more questions and many ways of looking at things – not all of them logical.

Engaging in shared conversations

A shared conversation is a discussion – either spontaneous or planned – between adults and children. Shared conversations focus on a particular topic, but incorporate a range of ideas and thoughts, some initiated by the educator or parents and some by the children. Children may participate in the conversation depending on their interest and need.

A shared conversation might become part of an inquiry process or a construction activity. Sustained shared conversations extend children's thinking and listening skills.

Viewing mistakes as opportunities to learn

Mistakes are a common occurrence that both adults and children experience. If mistakes are seen as a weakness or failure, children develop a fear of trying because there is a chance they will make an error.

Mistakes should be seen as developmental norms. If they are viewed this way, children can accept that when a mistake does occur, they are safe to take responsibility for their actions and either solve the issue or develop skills to better manage the situation if it arises again.

Viewing mistakes as opportunities to learn relates to the theories in the following table.

Theory	How it relates to encouraging children to accept responsibility for their own actions
Temperament (Adler/Steiner)	The child's temperament may influence their ability to see that they have responsibility in certain areas. A child with a sanguine and choleric temperament may believe the issue is someone else's problem. A child with a melancholic or phlegmatic temperament may believe they are totally responsible and blame themselves.
Social learning theory (Bandura)	If you model accepting responsibility, it will be demonstrated by the children. This does not mean you must tell the children when you have made a major mistake at work or home, but sharing smaller and more relevant mistakes could be useful; for example: • 'I forgot to put out enough things. I will need to fix that.' • 'I dropped the glass, now I need to clean up the mess.' • 'I just stood on the toy. Let's see what has happened.'
Attachment theory (Bowlby)	A securely attached child is confident accepting responsibility as they know your response and feel safe in the outcome. A child who is not securely attached may fear any outcome and may even try to hide their actions so they don't need to take responsibility. This is common in some children when they are aggressive toward others; they may blame another child or act as if they are not involved.
Humanistic theory (Maslow)	The foundation of success is required for children to be able to safely and securely take responsibility for their actions. It may result in fear that their basic needs may be taken away. Punishment can have this effect; this can cause the child to hide from their responsibility.
Ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner)	The messages in the child's environment indicate whether it is safe to take responsibility or not. This theory links with all the other approaches in this particular area as the messages we are referring to come from needs, fear, unpredictability, attachment and modelling.
Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky)	Part of the scaffolding you do should include the limits of the experience. For example, if a child is learning to set the table, you might ensure they know to put a spoon, fork, cup and plate at each place. You would also let them know that if they forget something it is okay and they don't need to be scared or upset. By doing this you are letting the child know that they can accept responsibility for their actions without being placed in an unsafe or unpredictable situation. The child is then more likely to say, 'I will fix that' when a mistake occurs, rather than being upset or hiding the issue.

continued ...

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Theory	How it relates to encouraging children to accept responsibility for their own actions
Psychosocial theory (Erikson)	The child who trusts others, feels confident and independent and demonstrates initiative should have no trouble taking responsibility for their actions. This is part of their positive development. If the child is mistrusting, doubts their own abilities and feels guilt easily, they will be more likely to hide or avoid taking any responsibility for their actions – not by deceiving, but more because of fear of the outcome.
Brain development	When mistakes are seen as ways to learn, children will use these situations to develop greater understanding and increase their brain power.
Cognitive theory (Piaget)	Young children often have illogical explanations of how things may have happened. This may influence a child to refuse to take responsibility for their actions if they are not clear in their understanding of the situation. For example, they may fear it is worse than it really is. This difficulty with logic may lead to a child taking responsibility for something that is not related to them in a situation where they are upset.

Self-directed play

Self-directed play involves children controlling the direction and structure of their own play. They freely initiate the play from their interest and continue due to their enjoyment or fulfilment. Most children are involved in self-directed play most of the time. They need educators to demonstrate how to use materials or provide resources, and then they proceed to play independently or with peers. This method of play is suited to an emerging model, as the child is controlling the direction and their interests and projects emerge from these.

Self-directed play allows the child to use their own creativity to decide how the play will go and in what direction. They identify who is involved and how, developing social relationships and communication.

At times, an adult is required to demonstrate how to use materials.

Practice task 17

Observe each of the following situations. Use a log to list one practical example you observed for each.

1. An inquiry process
2. A situation where children displayed intrigue
3. A situation where children displayed surprise
4. A sustained shared conversation
5. A child made a mistake and this was used as an opportunity to learn
6. A situation where self-directed play occurred

For each item logged, include:

- a description of what happened
- details of how this links to MTOP as per organisational requirements
- details of how this links to a development theory and/or a core principle.

6B Guiding the learning process

PC 6.3
PC 6.5
PC 6.7
PC 6.10
PC 6.11

Educators have the ability to participate in the learning processes of children. There are a number of ways you can support children to learn from their play and structured activity. You can:

- scaffold learning and development
- recognise spontaneous teachable moments
- balance child-initiated and educator-supported learning
- promote a sense of belonging and connectedness
- facilitate diverse contributions from families.

Scaffolding learning and development

Scaffolding is integral to many of the concepts covered in this learner guide. It is a consistent strategy used to support children to develop their emerging skills. Scaffolding, part of sociocultural theory, relates to the actions and efforts that support a child to learn to use new skills. The theory, developed by Vygotsky, is an important part of being a receptive educator, and scaffolding has become a term that is often used to describe an important part of our pedagogy.

When you monitor learning, you find out whether a child is ready to learn or work independently. You then provide a range of support ideas to enable the child to learn and develop until they have the skills you are focusing on. Following is an example of how scaffolding is used to help a child take off their shoe.

Case study

Greg, 10 years, is learning to play chess. Helen, an educator, knows this is important to Greg and puts scaffolding strategies into place. She makes sure there is a chess board available each session. She loads a chess game on the computer. She talks to Greg about the actions of each chess piece and gives encouragement and acknowledges his efforts when he plays. She suggests that Greg watches his peers to see the strategies they use as well. She checks to see that he has access to a chess board at home.

Recognising spontaneous teachable moments

Spontaneous teachable moments occur throughout the day. A teachable moment is when you recognise a learning opportunity for which you can provide guidance. The following are some examples of spontaneous teachable moments:

- A child is watching a bird. You see this as a spontaneous teachable moment to support them to learn what type of bird this is, where it lives and what it eats.
- A child is using clay for the first time. You see this as a spontaneous teachable moment to talk about the feel of the clay and how it is moulded.

Scaffolding and teachable moments are very similar. Scaffolding relates to developing emerging skills; teachable moments are unplanned and are about appropriate learning relevant to that particular moment.

Recognise a teachable moment while a child is completing a task.

Balancing child-initiated and educator-supported learning

Children learn in different ways – through listening, seeing and doing. Child-initiated learning means that the child has chosen their activity and they are learning through this. This may be an informal learning experience that involves play and results in knowledge, or the child may initiate a learning experience where adults participate and guide the learning. The role of the educator is to support learning where children are inviting this to occur.

Current pedagogy supports child-initiated learning in the practices of school age care environments. It is promoted within MTOP under the following listed Practices, each supporting different methods by which the educator might provide the supported learning:

- 'Collaboration with children' involves working with the children to cater for their interests and abilities and participating as partners in child-initiated learning.
- 'Learning through play' involves respecting the value of play in learning and adding sustained shared conversations and encouragement to think and explore, including providing for teachable moments.
- 'Environments' involve catering for different learning styles and offering possibilities and experiences, knowing that the children will explore from the resources and ideas provided.
- 'Evaluation for wellbeing and learning' involves watching, noticing, observing and recording so that you find out what is next, what the children need and how the program and your pedagogy will adapt based on the knowledge you gain.

Supported learning interactions should not be disruptive to the learning that occurs naturally or through child investigation. Your curriculum will be balanced if you refer to the information you collect during assessment and monitoring. Your curriculum will also be informed by the learning you participate in with children and the important ideas generated from that experience. These can be turned into structured learning experiences.

Promoting a sense of belonging

Belonging and connectedness are the foundations to healthy relationships and enjoyable learning. MTOP is based on the goal that all children feel a sense of belonging. This is a priority for each child.

The humanistic psychological theory considers belonging a necessary step toward reaching your full potential. Children are unable to explore, experiment and ask questions if they are insecure, unsure of their position in the group and concerned about what will happen next. Play, a medium for learning, will not occur naturally unless a child feels a sense of belonging.

Being is about feeling comfortable and safe. When you can 'be' you are involved and settled in your environment. When participating in this way, learning takes place and the child commences their path to 'becoming' all they can be.

Each child requires something different to help them feel they belong; you will need to discover this through orientation processes, discussion with families and finding out about the child. Children in general will respond to your inclusion and recognition of their cultural capital, the places and spaces you make their own and how you incorporate their families and themselves.

Facilitating diverse contributions from families

Encouraging parents to participate in the service can be challenging as each family has their own commitments and level of comfort. The varying skills, abilities, time available, ideas and interests of individual parents influence their involvement, as do their ideas about what child care and education are.

Many services consider family involvement to be related to events and actions that occur or are arranged; for example, a family picnic or information evening. Some services consider family involvement to relate to parents doing something for the service; for example, fundraising or being on a committee.

A parent's ability to participate will vary according to the parents' situation; for example, many work full-time and may not have a lot of opportunity to interact. Remember that parent involvement can simply be them staying a little longer at drop-off or pick-up times and enjoying an activity with their child or a small group.

The most important aspect of family involvement is the relationship you develop with the child's parents. This relationship helps you to encourage active family involvement as you will know about the parents and target their individual interests and capabilities. Volunteer opportunities may encourage parents to become involved in the service. Some strategies include:

- encouraging families and other community members to volunteer their support by attending service events
- asking family members how they would like to participate as volunteers and respond in a timely manner to those indications
- encouraging family and community members to become involved as:
  - participants in management meetings
  - presenters of activities
  - assistants with art shows, read-aloud events, workshops, book swaps and other activities
  - volunteers on excursions
  - instructional assistants in specific activities
  - non-instructional assistants in general activities
  - from-the-home contributors; for example, assembling materials or typing.

Participation can also be increased by encouraging families to take part in learn-at-home activities. These activities should be designed to enable the family to gain a better understanding of how learning occurs, how it benefits the child, what is involved and how the service operates. You can do this by:

- offering enjoyable activities and events for the whole family
- inviting parents to borrow resources from service libraries for themselves and their families
- linking parents with resources and activities in the community
- linking home activities to those in the service.

Practice task 18

Continue your log from Practice task 17. List one practical example you observed for each of the following.

1. A child demonstrates that they have a sense of belonging or connectedness.
2. Scaffolding occurs.
3. A family contributes to the service community.
4. A teachable moment occurs.
5. A child-initiated learning experience involves some educator-supported learning.

Include:

- a description of what happened
- details of how this links to MTOP
- details of how this links to a development theory or a core principle.

6C Sharing information and collaborating about assessments

PC 6.8
PC 6.13

Information about a child's development and wellbeing may be gathered through:

- observation recording methods
- meetings
- communication books, logs and/or journals
- evaluation forms
- questioning
- surveys
- observing the way they react to the environment.

This information needs to be shared with colleagues so they can collaborate on the assessments and evaluation. Information you might exchange with others in regard to children's development and wellbeing includes:

- what the child's level of participation is and how they interact with others
- whether they use equipment appropriately
- whether modifications to equipment are needed to meet their abilities
- health-related information
- what their interests, strengths, abilities, skills and needs are
- background information about their family or living arrangements
- how they are progressing toward MTOP outcomes.

MTOP explains that assessment, based on the Practice 'Evaluation for wellbeing and learning', is the process of gathering and analysing information as evidence of what children know, can do and understand. It is also a part of the cycle of planning, recording and evaluating. Your assessments provide evidence of the effectiveness of learning in the environment – otherwise known as evaluation. If you assess the progress of the child toward MTOP Outcomes, and consider their health and safety needs, you have a complete picture of the child. This is the information you would share with others when they are co-educating the child, they are taking over the care of the child or are participating with others in strategies to enhance the development and wellbeing of individual children.

Sharing information with educators

Sharing information relies on the contribution of all involved parties, providing feedback, comments and suggestions as appropriate or gaining knowledge and skill as needed. Confidentiality must be respected, so the educators you share most information with will be the ones responsible for the direct education and care of the child. This open sharing enables educators to:

- create a holistic approach to the child to ensure successful outcomes
- become aware of each other's needs and goals so they can be assessed and applied or adapted
- develop an ongoing, trusting relationship with each other, enabling a greater ability to work together
- share concerns and issues about children openly
- show respect for each person's contribution to the child and their family
- share the specific skills and views that each educator's personal expertise can provide
- contribute alternative attitudes and ideas about children's development and wellbeing
- be acknowledged for the individual role they play in the child's life and be valued as a person rich in knowledge about individual children.

Sharing information with families and children

By collecting and using information about children, you will be acknowledging and valuing the work of children and their families. In addition you will be:

- consulting others about activity choices
- encouraging children to choose activities that support aspects of their development
- encouraging children to participate
- adapting the environment to make it belong to the children and families attending
- respecting different levels of participation – including the choice not to participate.

When your observations of the children are guided by the children's views, cultural capital, family knowledge and their peers, you will be ensuring the processes outlined in the following table are implemented.

Process	Benefit for child development and wellbeing
Consultation is taking place	You are using information from a range of related sources – each with their own perspectives and experiences. Children participate differently at home than they do in your program: they are influenced by their siblings and peers, they use different materials and their limitations are varied. Their cultural capital is untapped without consultation.
Diversity is being valued	Stories, visual materials and activities based on information gained through a consultative method of planning ensure that the similarities and differences between families (not just their religion or country of origin) are respected and become an influence that extends each child's experiences and initiates their ability to accept others. This type of opportunity enables each child to become excited and curious about the ways others participate in life.
Contingencies and extensions are prepared	By involving others in your planning process, you are preparing for success. In particular, when children participate in planning, especially choosing, setting up and modifying activities, they are given the opportunity to participate more successfully and gain a sense of excitement at seeing their ideas evolve.
Full participation is encouraged	By involving all stakeholders in every step, the activities and experiences you plan will be anticipated by others and increase levels of interest. Parents may have materials or resources to offer, which may be required to implement the activity, complement the resources you have already or allow you to proceed in a direction you had not considered before. As an educator, you will be stimulated to explore new ideas, develop deeper relationships, listen and learn, use your time differently and more effectively, and value children's contributions and abilities. You will also see your role as the manager of communication, not only to ensure routines meet children's needs, but to also work together with others daily to provide a lively environment valued by all.

Practice task 19

Complete your log from practice tasks 17 and 18. Use a log to list one practical example you observed for the following:

- You shared information about a child's development and wellbeing with a colleague. (This collaboration should include assessments and evaluations.)

Include:

- a description of what happened
- details of how this links to MTOP as per organisational requirements
- details of how this links to a development theory or a core principle.

Chapter summary

1. This learner guide has discussed different aspects of the child and how to provide meaningful learning environments. The consistent aspects to ensure and stimulate when creating a learning environment are challenge, engagement, curiosity and agency.
2. The ideas children develop may launch an inquiry process in which you provide intentional teaching and set up learning environments that build on the children's interests.
3. Sustained shared conversations with children may be spontaneous or planned. They enable a child to extend their thinking.
4. Mistakes should be seen as developmental norms. When mistakes are seen as appropriate methods for learning, children are likely to think that it is safe to take responsibility for their actions when a mistake occurs.
5. Self-directed play involves children controlling the direction and structure of their own play. They freely initiate the play from their interest and continue due to their enjoyment.
6. Scaffolding facilitates development of emerging skills.
7. Teachable moments are about appropriate learning relevant to a spontaneous moment.
8. Children learn in different ways – through listening, seeing and doing. Child-initiated learning means that the child has chosen the activity through which they are going to learn something.
9. Belonging and connectedness are the foundations to healthy relationships and enjoyable learning.
10. Facilitate team collaboration of assessments and evaluation to examine the child's development and wellbeing.

Assessment activity 6
Fostering 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 *CHCSAC005 Foster the holistic development and wellbeing of the child in school age care*.

Part	Element	Performance criteria
A	6	6.1, 6.2, 6.4, 6.12
B	6	6.3, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8, 6.9, 6.10, 6.11, 6.13
C	6	6.3

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in fostering 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
- to ensure you maintain confidentiality as required.

Part A

1. Plan and implement an inquiry experience that provides opportunities for children to explore, experiment, test and investigate. Ensure the experience:
    - encourages children to try new ideas and take on challenges
    - provides resources and materials that offer challenge, intrigue and surprise
    - includes an opportunity for sustained shared conversation
    - provides an appropriate level of challenge where the children are encouraged to explore, experiment and take risks in learning.

Provide evidence:

- of your planning and implementation, including the name of the experience, the age of the children involved, the materials you used, the set-up and how you carried out the experience.
- that your experience challenged the children and encouraged them to explore and experiment with new ideas.

2. Explain how:
   a) an MTOP Outcome relates to the activity (state the Outcome)
   b) a development theory or core principle relates to the activity.

Part B

Observe a child over 5 years of age over a period of five days in order to collect the following information.

Specify the child's age and demonstrate the following by providing evidence (for example, learning stories, anecdotal records, a log, event samples or other documentation as agreed by your trainer/assessor).

1. The child feels belonging and connectedness.
2. Learning and development was scaffolded.
3. The child made a mistake and this was used as a learning opportunity.
4. You or a colleague involved the child's family and they made a contribution to the learning community.
5. The child chose self-directed play, which led to a spontaneous teachable moment.
6. A colleague collaborated with you and provided information for you to use in your evaluation of the child's development and wellbeing. Detail the information they provided.

Part C

Develop a 1–2 page report explaining how the MTOP Practice 'Holistic approaches' influences your daily work with the children.

In your report:

- include an explanation of any organisational standards, policies and procedures that you follow that relate to MTOP Practice
- explain how you ensure the holistic child is represented, integrated and interconnected in the curriculum.

You may use a range of documentation methods to support your report, such as:

- photos
- learning stories
- anecdotal records
- diary entries
- jottings
- samples of work
- checklists
- sociograms
- other methods as agreed with your trainer/assessor.

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.

CHCSAC005 Foster the holistic development and wellbeing of the child in school age care	Where covered in this learner guide
Element 1: Foster physical development	**Chapter 1: Fostering physical development**
1.1 Evaluate and monitor children's physical skills and development	1A Understanding development theories and monitoring physical skills
1.2 Plan and provide appropriate experiences and opportunities to foster each child's fine and gross motor and fundamental movement skills through play	1B Planning and providing experiences to foster physical skills
1.3 Plan and provide experiences which challenge the physical skills and abilities of children and promote physical fitness	1C Challenging abilities and promoting physical fitness
Element 2: Foster social development	**Chapter 2: Fostering social development**
2.1 Evaluate and monitor children's social skills and development	2A Understanding development theories and monitoring social skills
2.2 Plan and provide opportunities for different forms of social interaction between children during play with respect for each child's interests, goals and development stage	2B Providing opportunities for social interaction
2.3 Plan and provide opportunities for children to participate in meaningful ways in group discussions and shared decision-making	2B Providing opportunities for social interaction
2.4 Structure experiences in a way that promotes cooperation and conflict resolution	2B Providing opportunities for social interaction 2C Encouraging a sense of community and cooperation
2.5 Promote a sense of community within the service	2C Encouraging a sense of community and cooperation

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CHCSAC005 Foster the holistic development and wellbeing of the child in school age care	Where covered in this learner guide
2.6 Arrange the environment to encourage interactions between children, as well as accommodating a child's need for privacy, solitude or quiet	2B Providing opportunities for social interaction
2.7 Provide opportunities for children to investigate ethical issues relevant to their lives and their communities	2C Encouraging a sense of community and cooperation
Element 3: Foster emotional development	**Chapter 3: Fostering emotional development**
3.1 Evaluate and monitor children's emotional development	3A Understanding development theories and monitoring emotional development
3.2 Plan and provide opportunities for children to experience individual strengths and successes during play	3B Providing challenges and opportunities for success
3.3 Plan and provide opportunities through play that challenge children's emerging skills and capabilities	3B Providing challenges and opportunities for success
3.4 Present opportunities for children to engage independently with tasks	3C Supporting the development of independence and identity
3.5 Create opportunities for children to explore self-image and identity through play	3C Supporting the development of independence and identity
3.6 Provide opportunities for children to release feelings and express emotions through suitable experiences	3C Supporting the development of independence and identity
Element 4: Foster cognitive development	**Chapter 4: Fostering cognitive development**
4.1 Evaluate and monitor children's cognitive skills and development	4A Understanding development theories and monitoring cognitive development
4.2 Engineer and provide opportunities for children to participate in science, mathematics and technology experiences	4C Exploring and experimenting
4.3 Plan and provide opportunities through play for children to experience the consequences of their choices, actions and ideas	4D Using play to experience consequences
4.4 Create learning environments with appropriate levels of challenge where children are encouraged to explore, experiment and take appropriate risks in their learning	4C Exploring and experimenting

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CHCSAC005 Foster the holistic development and wellbeing of the child in school age care	Where covered in this learner guide
4.5 Provide opportunities for involvement in experiences that support the investigation of ideas, complex concepts and thinking, reasoning and hypothesising	4C Exploring and experimenting
4.6 Facilitate opportunities through play for children to explore concept development	4B Constructing, sorting and comparing
4.7 Provide opportunities for children to both construct and take apart, as a strategy for learning	4B Constructing, sorting and comparing
4.8 Provide children with a wide range of everyday materials that they can use to create patterns and to sort, categorise, order and compare	4B Constructing, sorting and comparing
Element 5: Foster communication development	**Chapter 5: Fostering communication development**
5.1 Evaluate and monitor children's language skills and development	5A Understanding development theories and monitoring language skills
5.2 Plan and provide developmentally appropriate experiences and opportunities to foster language and literacy development through play	5B Providing opportunities to develop language skills
5.3 Provide opportunities for children to listen and respond to language	5B Providing opportunities to develop language skills
5.4 Value the child's linguistic heritage and encourage the use and acquisition of home languages	5C Valuing linguistic diversity
5.5 Provide opportunities for children to engage with familiar and unfamiliar culturally constructed text	5B Providing opportunities to develop language skills
5.6 Provide a literacy-enriched environment including displaying home languages and Standard Australian English	5B Providing opportunities to develop language skills
5.7 Provide resources that encourage children to experiment with images and print	5B Providing opportunities to develop language skills

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CHCSAC005 Foster the holistic development and wellbeing of the child in school age care	Where covered in this learner guide
Element 6: Foster an environment for holistic learning and development	**Chapter 6: Fostering an environment for holistic learning and development**
6.1 Support and initiate inquiry processes, try new ideas and take on challenges	6A Providing learning environments that initiate inquiry, challenges and experimentation
6.2 Provide resources and materials that offer challenge, intrigue and surprise	6A Providing learning environments that initiate inquiry, challenges and experimentation
6.3 Assist to promote children's sense of belonging and connectedness	6B Guiding the learning process
6.4 Engage children in sustained shared conversations to extend their thinking	6A Providing learning environments that initiate inquiry, challenges and experimentation
6.5 Provide the opportunity for scaffolding learning and development	6B Guiding the learning process
6.6 Assist children to see their mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow	6A Providing learning environments that initiate inquiry, challenges and experimentation
6.7 Facilitate families' diverse contributions to the learning community	6B Guiding the learning process
6.8 Share information with colleagues about child development and wellbeing	6C Sharing information and collaborating about assessments
6.9 Create learning environments where children are able to immerse themselves in self-directed play	6A Providing learning environments that initiate inquiry, challenges and experimentation
6.10 Recognise spontaneous teachable moments as they occur and use them to build on children's learning	6B Guiding the learning process
6.11 Provide a balance between child-initiated and educator-supported learning	6B Guiding the learning process
6.12 Provide learning environments with appropriate levels of challenge where children are encouraged to explore, experiment and take risks in their learning	6A Providing learning environments that initiate inquiry, challenges and experimentation
6.13 Facilitate team collaboration of assessments and evaluation in relation to child development and wellbeing	6C Sharing information and collaborating about assessments

Performance evidence

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

Performance evidence	Where covered in this learner guide
Planned and provided opportunities for at least three children ranging between the ages of 5 to 12 years, including:	
• facilitating and supporting emotional and psychological development in children	3A, 3B, 3C, 4D, 5C, 6A, 6B
• encouraging self-help and independence of children	3A, 3C, 5C, 6A, 6B
• planning opportunities to foster children's positive self-concept and self-esteem	1B, 1C, 2B, 3A, 3B, 3C, 5B, 5C, 6A, 6B
• providing a positive and safe environment to encourage children to express thoughts, feelings and ideas	2C, 3C, 4C, 4D, 5B, 6A, 6B
Performed the activities outlined in the performance criteria of this unit during a period of at least 240 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 addressed in the content of this learner guide.

Knowledge evidence	Where covered in this learner guide
How to access: • the National Quality Framework • the National Quality Standards • the relevant approved learning framework	1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 3C, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 5A, 5B, 5C, 6A, 6B, 6C
How to navigate through framework and standards documents to find areas relevant to this unit of competency	1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 3C, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 5A, 5B, 5C, 6A, 6B, 6C
Relevant aspects of theories of children's emotional and psychological development as they apply to the educator's role	3A, 3B, 3C, 4B, 4D, 5B, 6A, 6B, 6C
The links between social and physical development, and between psychological and cognitive development	1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 3A, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 5A, 5B, 6A, 6B, 6C
An in-depth level of a range of developmental theories for children between 5 and 12 years of age	1A, 2A, 2C, 3A, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 5A, 5B, 6A, 6B, 6C

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Knowledge evidence	Where covered in this learner guide
Contextual factors which influence the children's emotional and psychological development	3A, 3C, 4D, 6A, 6B, 6C
Factors which enhance the development of self-esteem and self-identity	2B, 3A, 3B, 3C, 5C, 6A, 6B, 6C
Core principles of child development and associated developmental tasks	1A, 1C, 2A, 3A, 3B, 3C, 4A, 5A, 5B, 6A, 6B, 6C
Organisational standards, policies and procedures	1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 3C, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 5A, 5B, 5C, 6A, 6B, 6C

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	• 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	Understanding your job role, organisational procedures and legal responsibilities. Managing your work and seeing how well you are going. Making goals for yourself at work. Seeking professional development opportunities for continuous improvement.	• Read about theories of development and apply them to your understanding of children. • Know milestones of development and provide appropriate learning experiences based on this information.
Reading	Understanding how documents are presented and being able to navigate through documents. Understanding industry- and job-specific terminology. Interpreting key information in relevant documents. Understanding routine workplace checklists and documentation.	• Access information from *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia* and apply the outcomes. • Understand the theories of development and how they influence your pedagogy.
Writing	Planning, drafting and writing reports and documents. Communicating through written letters, email and online. Recording progress; reporting incidents.	• Document developmental information to enable you to provide assessment for learning. • Prepare and display plans that work toward the achievement of outcomes.
Oral communication	Clarifying instructions. Providing information. Supporting others through encouragement, negotiation and conflict resolution.	• Talk to children about their interests. • Communicate with adults to develop a sense of community within the service.
Numeracy	Calculating costs, weights, measurements of height and distance. Interpreting measurements.	• Implement mathematics experiences. • Understand how to access the National Quality Standard using the numbering system.

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Foundation skills	What this skill means	How you can develop this skill
Teamwork	Working well with other people by cooperating, collaborating, encouraging and building rapport.	• Work as a team with other educators to provide experiences that meet children's needs. • Work with parents to gather a range of information about a child.
Planning and organising	Planning your workload and commitments. Implementing tasks. Completing work on time. Knowing how to deal with hazards and risks.	• Prepare resources and materials prior to use to ensure availability. • Create a balance of active, quiet, solitary and group activities.
Making decisions	Understanding and applying decision-making processes. Reviewing the impact of your decisions.	• Recognise when a child's development is exceeding or not meeting expectations. • Choose appropriate times to modify or remove experiences.
Problem-solving	Identifying problems. Working out how to fix a problem using problem-solving processes. Reviewing the outcome.	• Identify ways to reduce or increase challenges to suit children's abilities. • Help children resolve conflicts.
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.	• Provide experiences that engage children. • Create learning stories or other documentation that is meaningful, useful and shared with others.
Technology and digital literacy	Efficiently using digitally based technologies and systems correctly and safely. Accessing, organising and presenting information. Using equipment correctly and safely.	• Record information about children in useful ways. • Introduce children to technology relevant to their interests and abilities.

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	