

THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK *FOR CHILDREN FROM BIRTH TO FOUR*

ABRIDGED VERSION



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**The South African National Curriculum Framework for children from Birth to Four: Abridged Version
February 2015**

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Department of Basic Education
222 Struben Street
Private Bag X895, Pretoria, 0001
Telephone: 0123573000
Fax: 0123230601
Website: www.education.gov.za
Email: ecd@dbe.gov.za

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TERMINOLOGY

Terms used in the National Curriculum Framework for children from birth to four (NCF)

Child / children refers to all babies, toddlers and young children whatever their abilities, gender, background, language or culture

Parents refers to the main caregiver of the child

Families refers to the people with whom the child lives

Early Learning and Development Area (ELDA)

refers to six organisers relevant to children: Well-being; Identity and Belonging; Communication; Exploring Mathematics; Creativity; Knowledge and Understanding of the world

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FOREWARD

by the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs AM Motshekga, MP.



"Delays in cognitive and overall development before schooling can often have long lasting and costly consequences for children, families and society. The most effective and cost-efficient time to intervene is before birth and the early years of life. Investment in Early Childhood Development should be a key priority." National Development Plan: Vision for 2030 (2011) Research shows that the first 1000 days (pre-birth, early and late infancy) of life are highly sensitive to environmental effects.

The National Curriculum Framework for children birth to four years (NCF) is a response to challenges that the Early Childhood Development (ECD) sector is facing. The first step towards the development of the NCF was the development of the National Early Learning Standards (NELDS) in 2009. The finalisation of the NCF was informed by consultative processes which included comments from the public. These processes were used to shape and finalise the NCF.

The NCF comes at a time when we are celebrating 20 years of democracy in our country and it is one of the activities aimed at improving the quality of basic education by laying a solid foundation in the early years. The development of the NCF is a great achievement for our country as it is the first document of its kind. This will ensure that children from different backgrounds in different settings have access to quality ECD services.

The NCF will be used in a variety of settings and purposes to improve children's learning experiences. It will also be used by training organisations, universities, practitioners, parents and other care-givers to enhance children's learning and development.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Motshekga'.

Mrs AM Motshekga, MP
Minister of Basic Education

INTRODUCTION

The abridged version is a simplified version of the National Curriculum Framework for children from birth to four(NCF) document published by the Department of Basic Education.

The abridged version is in three parts. Section 1 explains what a curriculum framework is, and includes the vision and key ideas of the NCF.

Section 2 outlines important developmental goals, suggestions of activities to achieve these goals, and ways of assessing development and identifying concerns.

Section 3 provides the appendices that contain additional information.

SECTION 1

A curriculum framework

A curriculum framework outlines the vision for all children, the underpinning principles and main areas of development of babies, toddlers and young children.

A curriculum framework is what it says it is - a framework - and it is up to the adults to provide the detail. There are suggestions in this document of ways adults can support children to develop well, and how to provide an environment where children are safe and are also free to explore and investigate. These are only suggestions as there are many different ways and approaches that can be used.

This abridged version can be used by:

- Parents and caregivers
- Early childhood practitioners (in centres, family and community support services, child minders) and support staff
- Monitoring personnel (government and civil society) who visit the ECD programmes
- Training providers
- Older children (buddies) in child-to-child programmes.

The vision of the NCF

A vision statement inspires what we do, who we do it with and how we carry out our responsibilities.

The vision of the NCF states how we want to support the development of babies, toddlers and young children in South Africa:



Key ideas shaping the NCF

a. The importance of families

Families are made up of people who choose to live together and care for each other. Families are the first teachers of their children. It is from the family that children learn about beliefs, values, customs and manners and what it means to be loved and cared for. Families that support, guide and encourage children help them to value themselves.

b. The importance of play

Babies, toddlers and young children learn when they play with things around them – they learn how things feel, what you do with them, what they smell and taste and sound like. They also learn by watching other children play. They learn by watching what adults do. This takes time and adults need to make sure that all children have plenty of opportunities to learn through play, also called active learning.

c. The importance of ECD practitioners

Early childhood practitioners are people who work in ECD centres, family and community support services, as child minders or as support staff. Their role is to lay the foundation for life-long learning as well as make sure that each child enjoys the age and stage she is in.

A reflective ECD practitioner will facilitate learning. They will observe all children in their care and will plan and offer activities that will support their developmental and learning needs and interests.

d. Identification and response to children with disabilities or experiencing barriers

All children are children first. Children with disabilities for example, physical, intellectual or sensory impairment, medically fragile children (for example, HIV positive) may experience difficulties or barriers to participation and learning. All children wish to learn, develop and be curious and energetic. Children with disabilities or special educational needs are no exception. A child is disabled when the people in her environment do not take into account her physical or mental differences and do not cater for them in respectful ways.

A barrier is anything that stops a child from learning and developing. Barriers are more than disability; they include extrinsic barriers like hunger, abuse, and systemic barriers like large classes, lack of resources or support services.

Early identification of disabilities and / or barriers refers to observing or screening all children to identify early the signs of a challenge in any aspect of child development.

Early intervention is when something is done about the identified disabilities and/or barriers and includes all inter-sectoral services available to support the child and her family

A disability or barrier is only one part of a child's life. Adults need to observe and support the things children do well and the ways they are growing and changing. This will send the message to everyone that children with special needs are competent too.

e. Indigenous and local knowledge, skills and behaviours

It is important to build a society that pays attention to equity and diversity and respects indigenous African experiences. Indigenous knowledge is that knowledge which is held by families, and groups. It is passed down from generation to generation.

Local knowledge and practice is that which is used in geographical regions for example, Limpopo province may use local knowledge and practices which suit that environment, and which may be different from that of the Karoo region of the Eastern Cape. Local, indigenous and traditional knowledge must uphold children's rights and allow all children to be curious about the world, energetic as they explore their world safely.

This curriculum framework promotes the use of indigenous and local knowledge and practices about babies, toddlers and young children which supports their development and learning.

f. Mother tongue language and multilingualism

All children need to hear and learn to speak in their mother tongue. If they have a solid foundation in their mother tongue, they will find it easier to learn another language as they will have already found out how language is structured and how to communicate with others. This will help them if they are cared for in a place where more than one language is spoken.

g. All children have rights

All children have the rights stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child and the South African Constitution. Adults have the responsibility of ensuring that these rights are met. (See Appendix A: The Rights of Children)

h. Transitions

Transitions refer to shifting or moving from activity to activity, from location to location, or from person to person. Seamless transitions are carried out by the adult by preparing the child for change, discussing it while it is happening and helping the child to reflect on the experience of change.

i. Links with other documents

The NCF builds on the desired results for children from birth to four detailed in the National Early Learning Development Standards (NELDS) and flows into the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) used from Grade R onwards. (See Appendix B: How the NCF links with NELDS and CAPS)

SECTION 2

The overview of the NCF

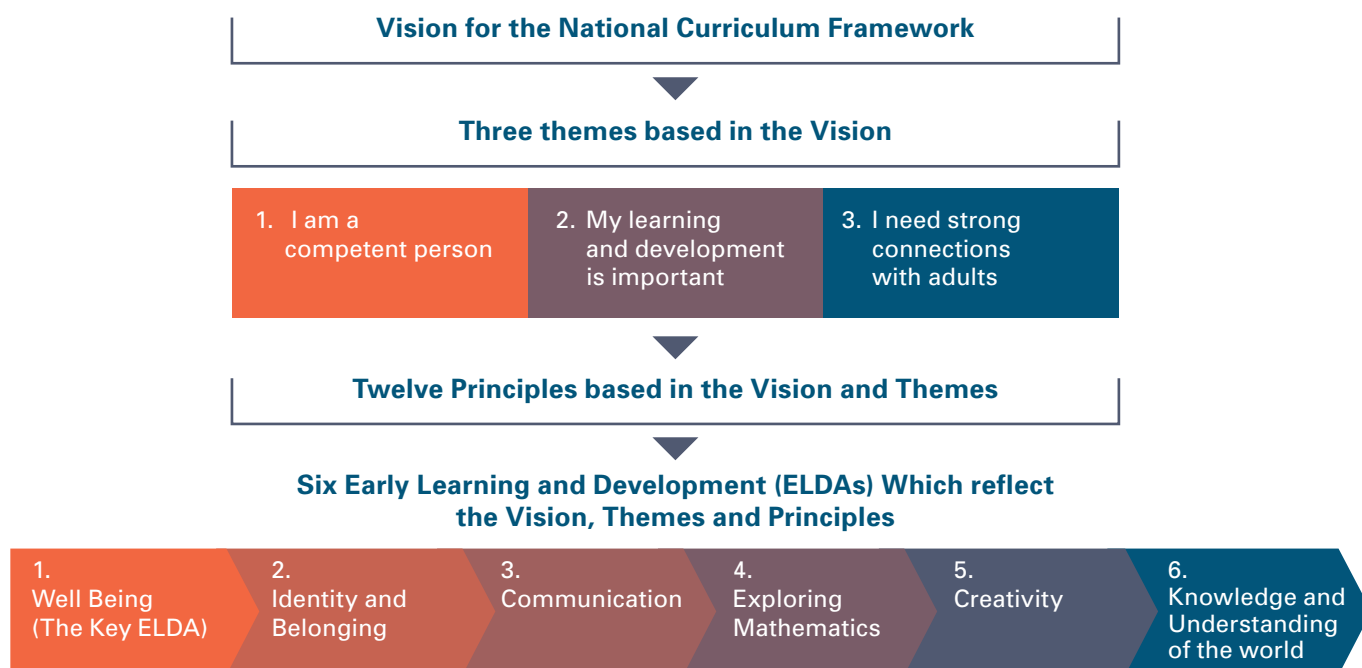


Figure 1 The structure of the NCF

The Structure of the National Curriculum Framework

The vision for the NCF was stated and explained in Section 1. In Figure 1 above we see what makes up the NCF:

1. In Figure 1 above we see what makes up the NCF:

There are six Early Learning and Development Areas (ELDAs):

1. Well-being
2. Identity and belonging
3. Communication
4. Exploring mathematics
5. Creativity
6. Knowledge and understanding of the world

There are three themes:

- I am a competent person
- My learning and development is important
- I need strong connections with adults

The three themes are underpinned by twelve principles. The principles focus on children's needs and interests and on working with children. They are captured in a child's voice.

Theme 1: I am a competent person

Principles

1. I am a competent person who actively creates my own identity and my own understanding of the world.

2. I am unique and have a unique life-story.
3. I flourish when attention is paid to equality of opportunities where I can participate to develop my own potential.
4. I am sensitive to individual and group differences and must be educated in ways that help me to celebrate differences.

Theme 2: My learning and development is important

Principles

5. I am curious, energetic and active and I learn by taking up opportunities to make meaning about the world around me.
6. Appropriate local and indigenous knowledge and skills are resources that can be used to promote socially, culturally and linguistically sensitive learning environments for me.
7. Play and hands-on (active) experiences enhance my learning and development.
8. A comprehensive ECD learning programme for quality and equality of opportunities pays attention to
 - my developmental domains (social, emotional, cognitive, physical –with a focus on health and nutrition),
 - the content areas (languages and mathematics) and
 - my strong links with my family and later, my links to schooling

Theme 3: *I need strong connections with adults*

Principles

9. Parents and families in their different forms play a central role in my overall development.
10. I benefit from a close and loving relationship with an adult.
11. Adults have the responsibility for the protection and promotion of my rights regardless of my age, background, ethnicity, ability and gender.
12. I would like adults to promote my well-being, positive identity, inclusivity, child-focused activities and competence for living and coping with life.

The Structure of each ELDA

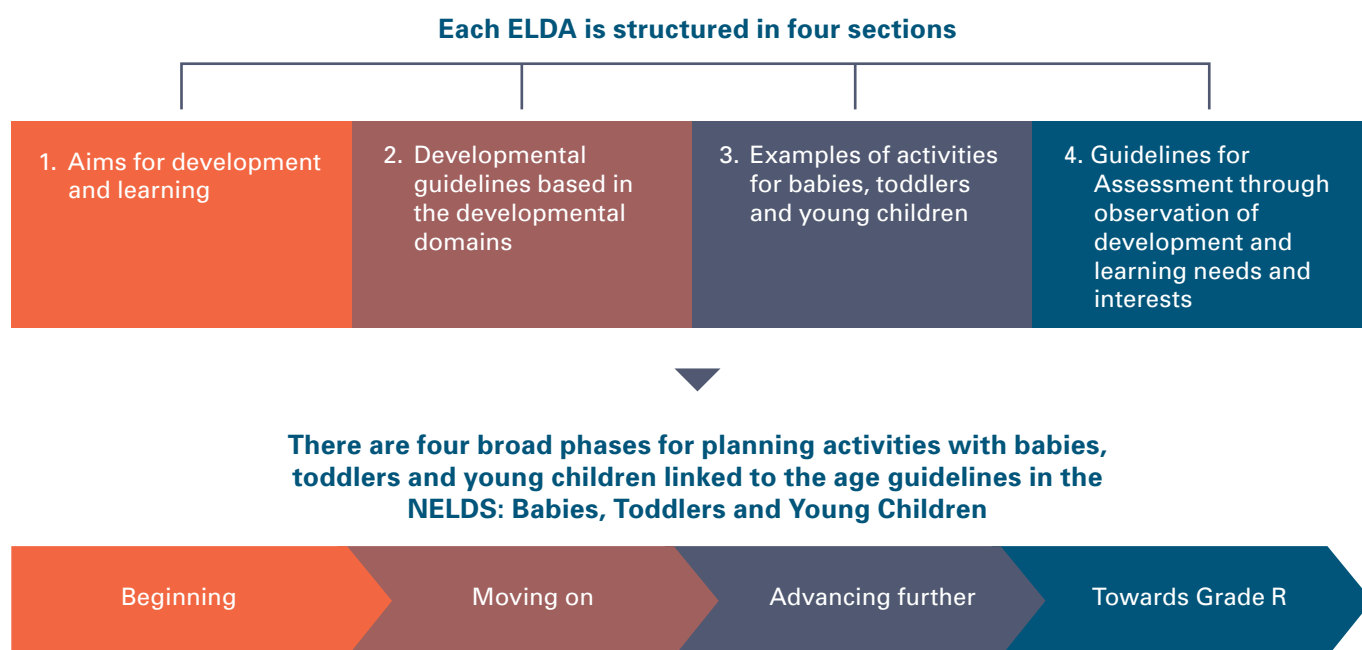


Figure 2 *The structure of each ELDA*

Arrangement of the ELDAs

1. Aims

- focus on the child's own needs at that phase of her development and interests

2. Developmental Guidelines

- examples of some competencies that can be expected at each stage – there are many more competencies, only a few are provided as examples
- some examples are provided in each of the four stages
- Beginning - Babies: from birth to 18 months
- Moving on - Toddlers from 18 – 36 months
- Advancing Further - Young children from 3 – 4 years
- Towards Grade R - Transition to Grade R

3. Suggested adult support

- Some examples of what adults can do at home or in an ECD site to support children's development. Only a few ideas are provided here as examples

Children often have developmental spurts and show greater interest and ability in a particular activity. Adults then need to offer activities that are more challenging. Suggestions for these activities can be taken from the next category of activities.

Children may also often experience delays in their development which may be long term or short term. They may often show a lack of interest in a certain type of activity or discussion. When this happens the activities from the earlier category can be used until the child is ready to enjoy activities suggested for their age.

4. Assessment opportunities

- related to the developmental guidelines – only a few are provided as examples
- provide 'watch points' for adults to identify possible challenges faced by children – only a few examples are provided here

EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

AREA ONE: WELL-BEING

The child's voice



I need to experience an environment where I can enjoy good health, nutrition, safety and security and where I can develop confidence and resilience. I want to be happy. This is my right.

I am usually physically very active and my body is developing and growing rapidly. I need enough nutritious food. Proper health care and a safe environment are very important to ensure growth and development. This is my right.

What is 'well-being' about?

Well-being includes the emotional, social as well as the physical aspects of children's development. Well-being is very important because when children are healthy, physically active and well-nourished then they are motivated to learn.

The state of children's well-being also depends on whether they are valued, respected and supported by the adults in their families and in their ECD programmes to deal with the daily stresses in their lives.

Reflection Points

- How do the home environment, the family and early childhood programme influence each child's well-being in a positive way?
- How might the home, family and ECD programme influence children's well-being in a negative way?
- How can positive opportunities and resources be built on to help children to develop a good sense of well-being?
- How can the negative aspects be dealt with and minimised?
- Is there enough support to all children for the development of a strong sense of well-being?





Figure 3 Working with families and their young children to promote well-being

Aim 1: Children are well nourished

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- grow from birth according to the Road to Health Booklet – adults take babies for all scheduled clinic visits
- explore food by experimenting and playing with it – adults offer a variety of foods in an attractive way, spend time singing and talking to the baby and expect babies to make a mess as they learn about food and ways of feeding themselves

Moving on: Toddlers

- begin to recognise new and different food and the difference between nutritious and 'junk' food – adults look at pictures of food e.g. food advertisements from shops and together talk about which foods help us to

grow strong, and make collages of nutritious foods

- help serve food or set out plates, spoons and other utensils – adults involve toddlers in meal time routines

Advancing further: Young children

- know that they should eat nutritious and clean food – adults involve young children in choosing and preparing food
- show an interest in trying new foods – adults offer new foods in an encouraging way but never force young children to eat
- help clean up spilt drinks and food – adults provide cleaning material and encourage young children to clean up any spills

Towards Grade R - Transition to Grade R: the child will understand

- more about food groups and the importance of eating food that will help them to grow strong – adults and

children can make collages of food in the different groups; adults can discuss the importance of good nutrition with the children

- where food comes from and the production processes – adults can show the children books on farming and factories and how some products are made in the home; adults can talk about food when they take children with them to do grocery shopping

Assess development by observing children's

- drinking and eating habits and preferences
- levels of energy and hunger
- growth
- knowledge of different types of food, nutrition and hygiene routines
- use of cutlery and crockery according to the ways of the family

Watch points

- Underweight or obese according to Road to Health Booklet and undernourished e.g. kwashiorkor
- Illness such as loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhoea, great thirst, lack of thirst

Aim 2: Children are healthy and have a sense of good hygiene

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- show an interest in washing hands, clothes and utensils – adults show older babies how to wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet and always model this hygienic behaviour themselves; adults talk to babies about what they are doing when carrying out health and hygiene routines

Moving on: Toddlers

- imitate washing face, hands and cleaning teeth – adults encourage toddlers to wash different parts of their body themselves; adults allow toddlers to experience and enjoy being dirty when playing outside and make it fun to wash themselves afterwards; adults praise toddlers when they remember to wash their hands before eating and after going to the toilet
- ask for their nose to be wiped when necessary – adults respond positively to these requests

Advancing further: Young children

- wash themselves, clean their teeth and blow their noses well – adults sing songs, tell stories and help young children make up dramas on ways to keep clean and healthy
- identify some of their own symptoms when not well – adults listen seriously to young children when they talk about how they feel

Towards Grade R – Transition to Grade R

- understand more about how disease is transmitted and can identify symptoms of illness and injury – adults talk about bacteria, viruses and unhygienic conditions in a way that informs the child but does not frighten them

Assess development by observing children's

- energy levels and interest in food
- awareness of hygienic practices such as hand washing, nose blowing and toilet routines and ability to do these according to their stage of development

Watch Points

- a child often or always having little or no energy
- a child often having fevers, coughs and colds
- a child who looks physically neglected e.g. unwashed, decayed teeth, uncombed hair

Aim 3 : Children build a sense of safety and security

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- develop feelings of trust and belonging – adults give babies lots of loving care and talk, listen, smile sing to them
- begin to understand basic safety rules and to respond to warnings of danger – adults use words and gestures to indicate dangers such as plugs and open fires

Moving on: Toddlers

- want to explore everything around them – adults pay toddlers loving attention as they explore so that they feel safe and know that what they are doing is acceptable
- will listen to warnings of danger – adults remind toddlers about dangers in their environment; adults in ECD sites practice safety drills

Advancing further: Young children

- can identify some dangerous situations and objects and symbols – adults point out safety symbols e.g. stop signs, fasten seatbelts, poisonous substances
- understand basic safety rules and follow simple directions of what to do if in danger – adults help children learn about and practice basic safety rules and procedures
- know their full name and address – adults help children to learn their addresses or to be able to describe where they live

Towards Grade R – Transition to Grade R

- can identify and confidently report dangers in their environment – adults listen and respond to children if they talk about what they see as dangerous
- give their personal details i.e. name, age, address and contact number to people they know – adults help children in a playful way to learn their personal details and understand that these are not to be given to strangers

Assess development by observing children's ability

- to seek help from and respond appropriately when adults tell them to be careful
- to be cautious around potentially dangerous objects such as traffic, knives, scissors, sharp pencils
- to understand and follow safety routines

Watch Points

- sign of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect

- children not noticing burns or injuries
- inability to make judgements about safety for example not noticing traffic

Aim 4: Children are physically strong and show abilities and interest in physical activities

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- begin to use large muscles to turn over, twist, sit, crawl, stand, walk up stairs with help and run – adults support babies to move safely and try new movements
- develop eye-hand coordination and small muscle control to grasp, feel and manipulate objects – adults provide lots of objects for babies to grasp, pick up, and use when playing, eating, scribbling and discovering

Moving on: Toddlers

- refine their skills and become more competent in using their large muscles to, for example, run, jump with two feet together, stand and walk on tiptoe – adults provide items, equipment and activities so that toddlers can practice climbing, balancing, running, and kicking and throwing balls; adults play music and dance with the toddlers
- become more able to use their small muscles to, for example, cut with scissors, thread large beads or build with blocks – adults provide clay and play dough as playing with these will strengthen small muscles; adults provide toys and materials for construction activities, doing puzzles, playing throwing and catching games

Advancing further: Young children

- become more able to skip, gallop, jump backwards and forwards – adults encourage young children to follow simple dance steps; adults make simple obstacle courses with boxes, cushions etc
- use small muscles competently to, for example hold scissors and cut along a line, hold drawing tools – adults provide round-ended scissors and old magazines and newspaper for children to cut up; adults provide different tools for drawing and painting and play finger rhymes with young children

Towards Grade R – Transition to Grade R

- children can move in more complex and complicated ways – adult play games with children where they copy or initiate different movements

Assess development by observing children's

- ability to use their large or small muscles
- development of eye-hand coordination
- enjoyment of different physical activities such as dances and games

Watch Points

- lack of muscle tone (floppy limbs)
- difficulty in moving
- poor small muscle development

Aim 5: Children build a sense of resilience (being strong and resistant to daily stresses)

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies learn

- that they are loved unconditionally – adults express their love physically and verbally and offer comfort and encouragement whenever necessary
- that there are limits to behaviour so that danger or trouble is avoided – adults provide explanations for clear boundaries for behaviour using gestures and simple words
- to recognise feelings and how to express them – adults acknowledge and name feelings such as being sad, glad, happy, angry or frightened

Moving on: Toddlers

- learn that they are lovable and likeable – adults give unconditional love even when toddlers challenge boundaries
- are learning to respect themselves and others – adults always show respect for the toddler and praise her for helping, being respectful and good mannered according to family culture

Advancing further: Young children

- know how to find someone to help them and how to talk to others about what bothers or frightens them – adults must listen to young children and encourage and comfort them when necessary and reinforce the young child's ability to find ways to solve problems; adults can prepare children for difficulties by talking or reading stories about these

Towards Grade R - Transition to Grade R

- children understand the reasons for rules – adults discuss and explain rules and boundaries
- children are more able to calm themselves and to find different ways to solve problems – adults can listen to children and let them know that their feelings are understood; adults can help children find solutions and also ask them to think of different ways to solve problems or complete projects

Assess development by observing children's

- levels of happiness, trust and independence

Watch Points

- surprisingly high levels of fear even when with a familiar person
- restlessness, sleeplessness, anxiety and inability to concentrate

EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

AREA TWO: IDENTITY AND BELONGING

The child's voice



I need to experience an environment where I develop a strong sense of self, experience positive relationships and celebrate differences.

What is identity and belonging about?

Identity and belonging is closely linked to well-being. It is about personal development, social development, secure relationships and celebrating difference. The stronger the child's identity and sense of belonging, the more resilient he or she will be.

- Identity relates to children's development of their sense of self.
- They are making sense of who they are by finding out what they know, what they can do and cannot do.
- They are building ideas of their interests and abilities. In order to build awareness of their strengths and confidence in getting to know themselves and their world they need to develop socially.
- Belonging is related to children's identity.
- Children have a strong sense of belonging when they have secure relationships within their families and have opportunities to learn about the values, traditions and beliefs of the community.

Reflection Points

- How do the home, family and ECD centre influence children's development of their sense of self and belonging?
- How does the family or ECD programme help children to feel confident in their explorations?
- What aspects of the environment help children feel that this is a place they belong to?
- What kinds of events are celebrated and how are they celebrated?



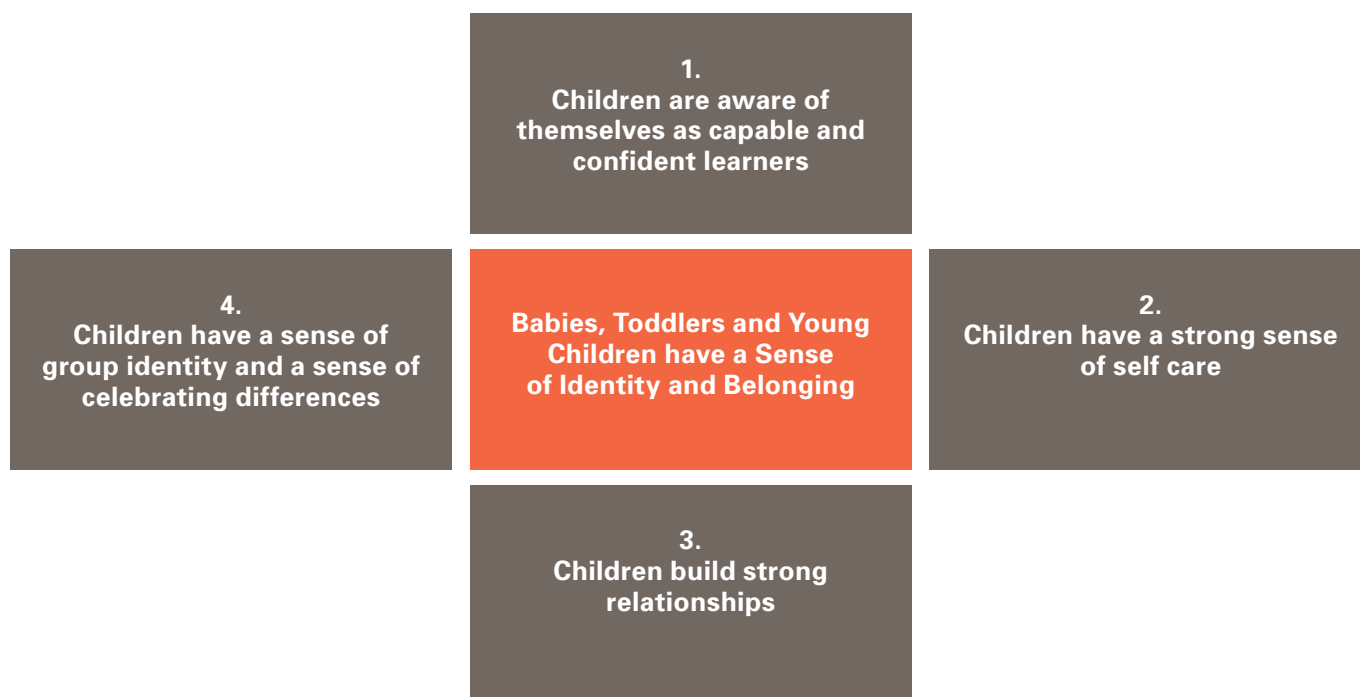


Figure 4 Working with families and their young children to promote well-being

Aim 1: Children are aware of themselves as capable and confident learners

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- start to become aware of themselves and others – adults should use the baby's name when speaking to her; adults should talk to the baby about others, using their names and showing photos of that person; adults can play games where they point to and name different parts of the baby's body for as long as this interests the baby
- have a strong drive to explore their immediate environment – adults must provide toys and safe objects for babies to reach for; adults must make sure the area where babies are is clean and safe

Moving on: Toddlers

- develop an interest in people, places and objects around them – adults should allow toddlers to explore their surroundings and have conversations about what the toddler is seeing and doing
- learn about themselves and what they can do – adults should notice what the toddler is able to do and praise them for their efforts and achievements

Advancing further: Young children

- are willing to play with, ask for help from, and cooperate with others – adults can arrange activities where young children can play together

- are becoming more independent – adults must allow young children to try things on their own but be near to offer help and support when this is needed
- are able to spend longer periods of time on an activity – adults should allow young children to carry on playing for as long as they want to and should try not to interrupt them unnecessarily

Towards Grade R - Transition to Grade R

- children become more aware of their own views, feelings and begin to show sensitivity to others needs, views and feelings – adults should arrange activities where children are able to show and name different feelings and match these to pictures
- children begin to develop an interest in and respect for their own and others culture – adults must speak positively about the child-friendly aspects of their own and other's cultural practices; adults can tell stories and show items that help children learn more about their own culture and that of others

Assess development by observing children's

- confidence in exploring their environment
- ability to deal with new activities and situations
- willingness to share with others
- satisfaction with their own achievements and skills

Watch Points

- stress caused by violence, separation from primary caregiver, illness, arrival of a new baby, death in the family

- poor interpersonal skills, for example hurts others deliberately, is aggressive and has difficulty listening to others

Aim 2: Children have a strong sense of self care

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- are able to let adults know when they are hungry, thirsty or uncomfortable – adults can allow babies to gradually take some control when being fed; adults can provide opportunities for babies to smell, taste, touch, reach and grasp during meal times
- become aware of routines such as meal times – adults can talk about routines so that babies know when these will take place and what to expect

Moving on: Toddlers

- want to participate in routines for example getting dressed and bath time and try to do things on their own – adults can provide support by, for example placing clothing where the toddler can reach it or letting the toddler choose what to wear; adults should praise toddlers when they ask for help or do something on their own

Advancing further: Young children

- take initiatives and are proud of being able to take care of themselves, for example dressing, washing, eating – adults can sing songs and rhymes with the young child that reinforce ways of self-care and hygiene e.g. This is the way we wash our hands, It's tidy up time
- take pleasure in working independently, are willing to experiment and ask for assistance when needed – adults should create predictable routines and ask young children to think about what will happen next or what the young children want to do differently

Towards Grade R – Transition to Grade R

- children function independently and show confidence in asking for support and guidance when needed – adults should allow children time to try things before offering help; adults should create an atmosphere where children's successes are valued
- dress and undress independently and manage personal hygiene – adults can provide problem solving opportunities and encourage children to make suggestions as well as guiding them on how to care for themselves

Assess development by observing children's ability to

- indicate their needs through words and gestures
- do things independently as well as ask for help when necessary

Watch Points

- fearfulness and anxiety when having to participate in any new activity or where they have to take care of themselves

Aim 3: Children build strong relationships

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- mostly enjoy being with others – adults can provide opportunities for babies to be with other children and adults and watch them and listen to them; adults can make up stories or show pictures of babies interacting with others
- show attachment to those they spend most time with – adults respond to babies in a way that shows they love the baby

Moving on: Toddlers

- actively seek out the company of others to share experiences – adults have conversations, look at pictures and tell stories about relationships with others ; adults in ECD sites can make time where toddlers can share their ideas, for example circle time/rings

Advancing further: Young children

- are able to be more flexible, show self-control and can adapt behaviour to suit different routines and situations – adults can support young children by providing predictable routines as well as encouraging young children to try different ways of behaving

Towards Grade R - Transition to Grade R

- children are more able to take turns, follow simple rules and share – adults provide predictable routines and alert children to changes so that they can prepare themselves for the transition; adults can provide opportunities where children play with others, where children can ask for help

Assess development by observing children's

- response to others and show developing social skills e.g. listening and taking turns
- ability to show self-control and adaptation of behaviour to different situations and routines

Watch Points

- poor verbal and non-verbal communication skills
- poor handling of conflict e.g. reacts with tantrums, destroying own belongings and those of others
- copies negative behaviour of others rather than making positive behaviour choices

Aim 4: Children have a sense of group identity and a sense of celebrating differences

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- show awareness when things in their environment change and at these times show excitement or fear and look for support from adults – adults talk to babies about different places and familiar and unfamiliar people to reassure them and offer comfort when necessary

Moving on: Toddlers

- show greater awareness of similarities and differences and show affection for other people – adults can take toddlers on visits or outings where they can meet children of different ages and cultural backgrounds; adults should use resources and material that show differences in families, genders, abilities and cultures

- see themselves as part of a family or cultural group
–adults can talk positively about the toddler’s own family and culture as well as showing respect for others

Advancing further: Young children

- participate in appropriate rituals and customs and become more aware of differences between them – adults can talk about and celebrate events such as birthdays, Christmas, Diwali, Eid, Ramadan, Rosh Hashanah, Easter; adults can provide photos and stories about these events to talk about them with young children

Towards Grade R - Transition to Grade R

- a child understands and respects differences between their own families and others – adults can help children experience their own cultural beliefs and religion in a positive way; adults can use stories to start conversations about similarities and differences and how to respect these

Assess development by observing children’s

- ability to show that they understand similarities and differences between themselves and others
- ability to show respect for those who are different from themselves and are at ease in activities that celebrate differences

Watch Points

- family perceptions of people who are different from themselves
- displays biased behaviour e.g. racist remarks, bullying and aggression towards those who are different
- keeps away from activities which involves those from different cultures, gender, abilities etc



EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

AREA THREE: COMMUNICATION

The child's voice



I need to experience an environment where I can learn to listen attentively, speak openly, learn to love books, stories and reading, record and to write, and to get ready for formal reading and writing as I grow and develop.

What is Communication about?

Most children are born with the ability to communicate. Verbal and non-verbal communication (and assisted communication for children with special communication needs) is extremely important. Children use many ways to communicate which go beyond words, phrases and sentences. Methods of communicating include dance, music, art, pictures, signing, body movement, and creative play. All of these methods are used to share and reflect on experiences and to explore the world and new ideas. Understanding of the world grows as children's communication becomes more developed and complex. Children who receive a firm grounding in their mother tongue are better able to learn new ideas and words. They use their mother tongue to develop their sense of identity and for conceptual development.

Reflection Points

- How do the home, family and ECD programme influence children's abilities to communicate in a positive way?
- How do the home, family and ECD programme influence children's abilities to communicate in a negative way?
- How can the positive aspects be built on as opportunities and resources to help children to develop their abilities to communicate in each of the areas identified in the diagram below?
- How can the negative aspects be minimised?



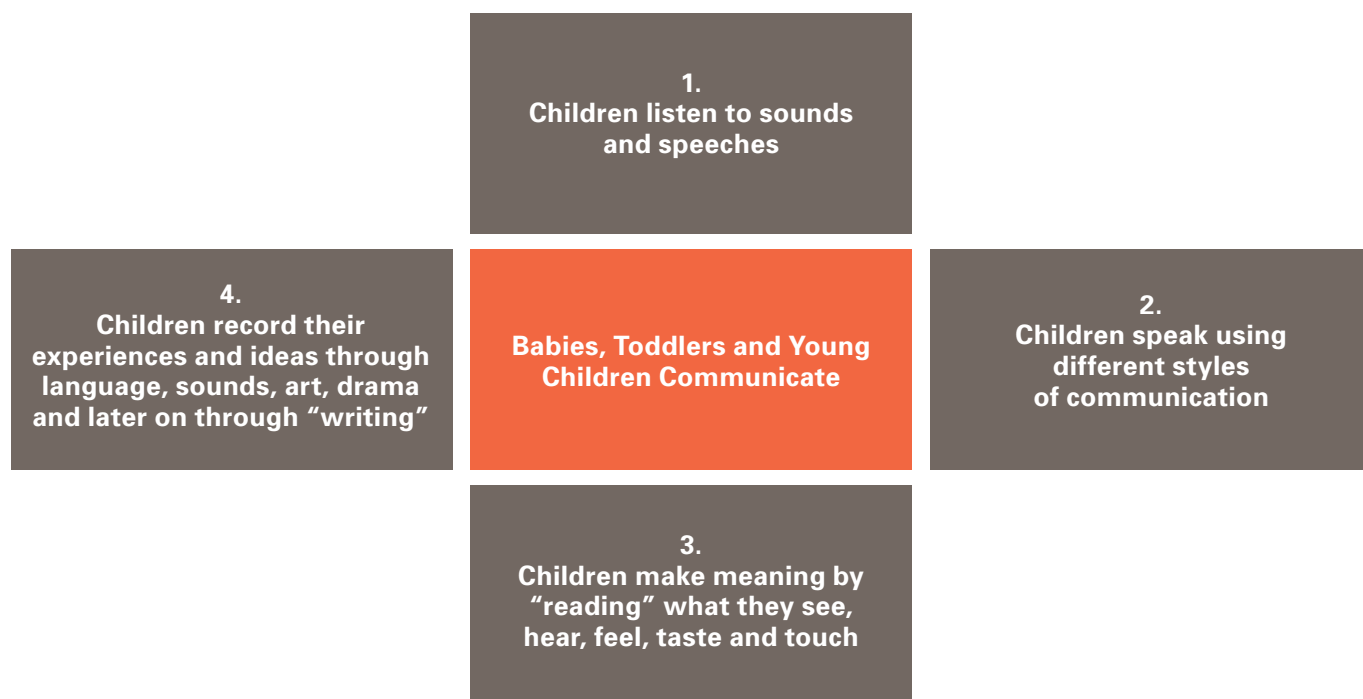


Figure 5 *Working with families and their young children
to promote communication*

Aim 1: Children listen to sounds and speech

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- listen and respond to human voices and imitate adult's conversation by babbling – adults talk to babies and repeat sounds and words in a playful, turn-taking way
- start to show understanding of several words – adults should speak clearly and make eye contact with the baby; adults should say more positive things than using negative words such as 'no'; adults can talk during everyday activities and name objects, food, clothing, animals etc
- enjoy sound games, rhythm and pitch (high, low) and simple melodies – adults should sing and repeat rhymes for babies

Moving on: Toddlers

- pay attention when spoken to and understand what is said in conversations and ask questions – adults should speak clearly to toddlers and listen to what they say and answer questions seriously
- love to listen to stories and songs and play games with sounds – adults should sing with toddlers and play games using familiar and unfamiliar words
- can follow verbal instructions – adults should give simple instructions clearly and praise toddlers when these are carried out

Advancing further: Young children

- listen attentively and continue to want to learn new words – adults can introduce new words into conversations with young children
- remember stories they have heard and want to tell their own stories – adults can tell and read stories often and at least once a day and listen when young children want to tell a story
- enjoy increasingly complex songs and rhymes – adults and young children can sing and say rhymes and play word games together

Towards Grade R – Transition to Grade R

- listens to stories with concentration and tells more complex stories – adults can read and tell stories from South Africa and elsewhere; adults should listen carefully to children when they tell their own stories
- can carry out complex instructions – adults can make games out of complex instructions and praise children when they carry even a part of them out
- listens to others, takes part in conversations and asks questions – adults model how to take turns and listen as well as speak when having a conversation; adults must

listen to the questions children ask and answer honestly and seriously as well as ask follow-up questions to stimulate conversation

Assess development by observing children's ability to

- hear and identify where sounds come from
- concentrate on stories and respond appropriately
- speak clearly

Watch Points

- does not react to nearby sounds and/or complains of difficulty hearing
- talks too softly or too loudly

Aim 2: Children speak using different styles of communication

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- communicate through crying, smiling, moving limbs and gestures – adults can interpret what the baby is communicating and put this into words e.g. "I see you are hungry, let's feed you now"
- babble to themselves with changes in tone and loudness – adults can respond to babies by speaking rhythmically
- begin to say simple words and to put two or three words together – adults can repeat what the baby says, adding new words to what she has said

Moving on: Toddlers

- recognise more words than they can say – adults should speak to toddlers using full sentences and introducing new words
- start to use personal pronouns, for example "me" and "mine" – adults should repeat what toddlers say to show understanding and appreciation

Advancing further: Young children

- talk in complete sentences, take turns in conversations and can be understood even by those not familiar with the child – adults should include young children in conversations wherever possible
- enjoy language games and rhymes – adults should encourage young children to experiment and have fun with words; adults should introduce new words and ideas by providing new experiences for the young child

Towards Grade R – Transition to Grade R

- children are interested in finding rhyming words in what they and others say as well as in rhymes and songs – adults should play language games with children and encourage them to take the lead in these

- use past, present and future tenses and learn new words every day – adults should discuss the concepts of yesterday, today and tomorrow with children; adults should introduce new words into conversations with the child

Assess development by observing children's interest in

- copying sounds and words
- asking questions
- using more complex language

Watch Points

- difficulty in producing sounds for example, lisping, stuttering or not able to make certain sounds
- difficulty in understanding what is said to them

Aim 3: Children make meaning by 'reading' what they see, hear, feel, taste and touch

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- play at holding and pretending to read books – adults should read to babies so that they can see how to handle books as well as learn that stories and books are something to be enjoyed
- talk about illustrations, signs, photos – adults can show many pictures to babies and have conversations about illustrations etc that they see around them

Moving on: Toddlers

- recognise that writing is different from pictures – adults should show toddlers pictures in books when reading to them; adults should encourage toddlers to say what they think is happening in the pictures
- start to recognise that reading begins from the top of the page and from left to right in most South African languages – adults can point out where they are reading when they read to toddlers

Advancing further: Young children

- notice words around them and ask for them to be read – adults should listen and respond when young children talk about environmental print

Towards Grade R - Transition to Grade R

- arrange sets of pictures to form a story – adults and children can make story cards together and use these to tell stories
- listen to stories and then make up their own – adults should continue to read and/or tell stories to children every day; adults can offer to write down stories that children tell and children can illustrate these
- recognise own written name – adults can write the child's name on drawings, lunch boxes etc

Assess development by observing children's

- level of interest in pictures and books
- ability to listen to stories with interest

Watch Points

- babies who do not watch or follow an object with their eyes
- frequent 'drifting' or 'jerky' eye movements
- avoids or is sensitive to bright lights

Aim 4: Children record their experiences and ideas through language, sounds, art, drama and play and later on, 'writing'

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- make marks with crayons and fingers on paper and sand – adults can provide what babies need to scribble; adults can respond to the scribbles with words and appreciation

Moving on: Toddlers

- act out their experiences in make believe play – adults can join in pretend play if the toddler asks them to do this
- draw people and objects and name them – adults can talk about the drawing and ask the toddler to tell them more about what has been drawn

Advancing further: Young children

- start to draw and name letters – adults can encourage the young child to talk about the letters and their shapes
- ask for their stories to be written down – adults should write down whatever story the young child tells

Towards Grade R – Transition to Grade R

- draw patterns and letters – adults can join the child in playing with letters and making patterns
- develop games that include literacy activities – adults can provide, for example, pens and paper for the child to use in games

Assess development by observing children's

- ability to use tools to draw and to paint their experiences and talk about them
- to show an interest in making up games that include literacy activities such as drawing letters and writing their own name

Watch Points

- unable to grasp writing tools such as crayons and pencils or has an awkward pencil grip
- has difficulty in drawing pictures or forming shapes

EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

AREA FOUR: EXPLORING MATHEMATICS

The child's voice



I need to experience an environment where I can find patterns, make connections, recognise relationships, work with numbers, sort out objects, match and classify things. This helps me to think, solve problems and ask questions.

What is exploration of mathematics about?

It is about children developing an understanding of how to solve problems, how to reason and how to use mathematical concepts in their environment. Mathematical concepts develop as children investigate and communicate their ideas about numbers, counting, shape, space and measures. Children need to be encouraged to explore their environment to solve problems, design things, match, and count and create their own questions.

Reflection Points

- What kinds of opportunities do the indoor and outdoor environments provide for children to explore, learn and practise their emerging mathematical understandings?
- How do children's own activities (drawings, play, experiments) show their competence in solving problems, thinking logically and making decisions?
- Are there sufficient experiences for children to explore real-life problems, to make patterns, to count, match and measure?
- How do adults support children who use means of communication other than spoken language to indicate their mathematical ideas?
- How are early mathematical experiences integrated with other learning opportunities?



Figure 6 Working with families and their young children to promote early mathematics

Aim 1: Children show awareness of and are responsive to number and counting

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- develop an awareness of naming things and number names through experiences – adults can sing number rhymes during everyday activities
- enjoy songs and rhymes about counting – adults can encourage baby's participation through clapping and tapping and using finger rhymes

Moving on: Toddlers

- develop an awareness of categorising things – adults can talk to toddlers about things that are grouped together and encourage them to group everyday objects like shoes, toys, items of clothing
- use number language like one, two, more – adults can use mathematical language in conversation with toddlers, for example "I would like to give you another book. Then you will have two books."

Advancing further: Young children

- experiment with counting – adults can help young children make books about numbers and counting; adults and young children can sing songs and rhymes about numbers and counting
- make estimations – adults can play guessing games with young children, taking turns to ask "how many?"

Towards Grade R - Transition to Grade R

- count concrete objects – adults can play counting games and encourage children to count in different situations
- find similarities and differences – adults can design activities where children have to find matching items

Assess development by observing children's

- ability to participate, pay attention, solve problems and find solutions
- ability to talk about number, number names and use number language

Watch Points

- slow growth in vocabulary
- lack of interest in listening and difficulty in paying attention

Aim 2: Children sort, classify, make comparisons and solve problems

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- make attempts at logical thinking – adults should always talk to babies about what they are doing and what is happening around them
- want to explore their environment and find out about things that challenge them – adults can talk to babies about things that challenge them, for example how to get a toy that is not near them

Moving on: Toddlers

- sort objects – adults can play games with toddlers where they find things that are the same, for example the same colour or same shape
- try to solve problems – adults can give children time to find things out for themselves and encourage them to

talk about what they are doing

Advancing further: Young children

- attempt to solve number problems – adults can tell stories and ask questions where the answer is a number
- count objects in a group - adults can tell stories and play games to draw attention to language such as 'few', 'less', 'more than'

Towards Grade R - Transition to Grade R

- sort, classify and make comparisons – adults can create activities where children separate objects in unequal and equal groups and talk about these
- solve simple problems related to immediate experiences – adults should show a keen interest in how children are solving problems and the answers they come up with

Assess development by observing children's

- curiosity in their environment
- ability to sort, classify and use mathematical language

Watch Points

- poor processing of information
- confuses objects, letters and numbers

Aim 3: Children explore shape, space and measurement

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- discover the properties of objects such as toys through exploration – adults can talk to babies about things in the environment and mention shape and size
- make attempts to fill containers – adults can provide containers, objects that are easy to hold and clean sand for the babies to play with

Moving on: Toddlers

- show greater awareness of shapes and patterns - adults can talk to children and ask what patterns they see on clothing, in nature, in books, on buildings
- categorise objects according to properties, for example size or shape – adults can provide objects of different size and shape for toddlers to play with

Advancing further: Young children

- can find items if directions are given – adults can play treasure hunt type games involving verbal directions
- show an interest in shapes by using them, talking about them and taking note of similarities and differences – adults can encourage young children to talk about items and help them learn words to express what they are noticing

Towards Grade R - Transition to Grade R

- describe positions for example, in front, behind, on top – adults can play games where children place themselves and objects in relation to other things e.g. a child behind a chair, a ball on top of a book

Assess development by observing children's ability to

- use gestures, words, phrases and sentences to describe objects, activities and people
- explore their environment and experiment with activities related to shape, space and measurement

Watch Points

- poor grasp of concepts

EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

AREA FIVE: CREATIVITY

The child's voice



I need to experience an environment where I can identify challenges and problems, try out solutions in safety and freedom and experiment with play, make believe play, drawing, painting, cutting and pasting, modelling and music, rhythm, dance and drama.

What is Creativity about?

Creativity means that children produce new and useful ideas and solutions to problems and challenges. To create is to invent and to find solutions by asking questions. The main purpose is to encourage children to be creative, imaginative individuals, with an appreciation of the arts and the importance of critical thinking and problem solving skills. Children enjoy make believe play, visual arts, (drawings, paintings, modelling, making pictures) and music (singing, making music with instruments and making rhymes) and also dance and movement. The focus of all activities should be on the development of skills through enjoyable, experiential processes, rather than on working towards highly polished products.

Reflection Points

- What opportunities do the indoor and outdoor environments provide for children to be creative?
- How do children's own activities (drawings, play, experiments) show their competence in solving problems, using play, visual and performing art?
- Are there enough opportunities for children to explore real-life problems, to be creative?
- How do adults support children who use means of communication other than spoken language, visual art and performing art to indicate their creativity?
- How are early creative experiences other learning opportunities?



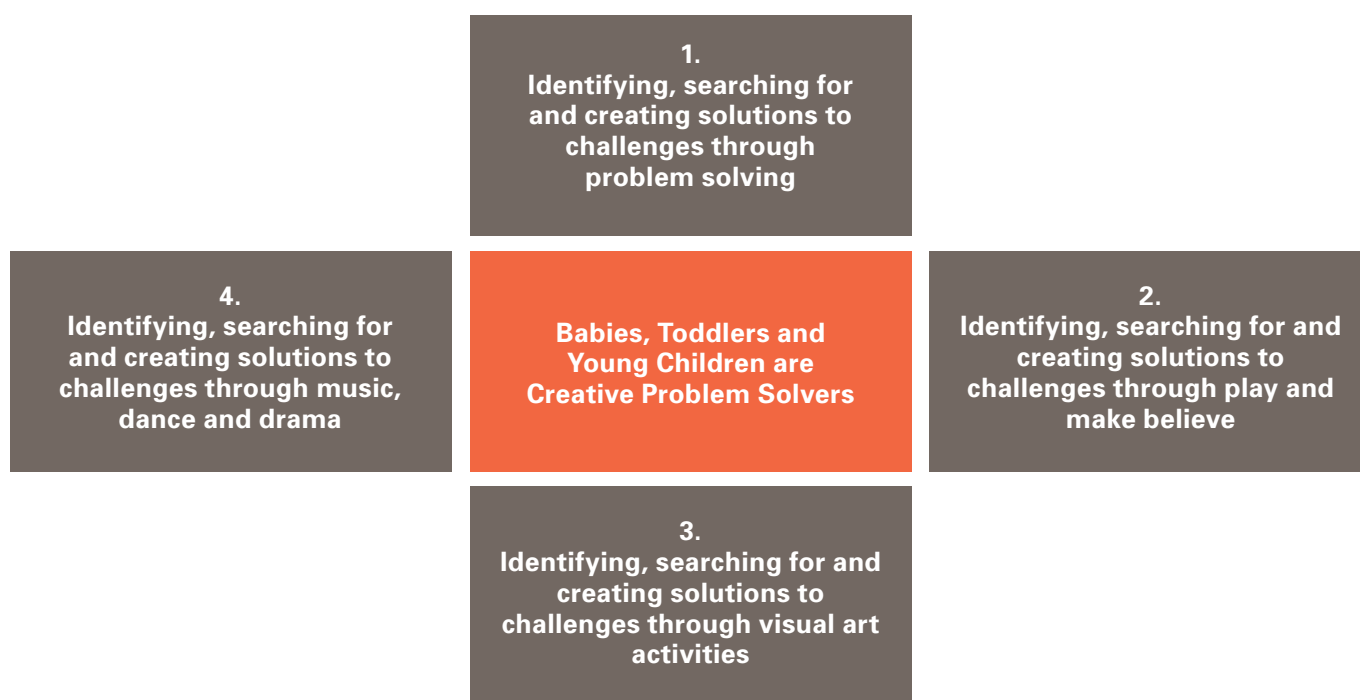


Figure 11 *Working with families and their young children to promote Creativity*

Aim 1: Children identify, search for and create solutions to challenges through problem solving

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- set out to solve problems of sitting, crawling, standing, walking and running by experimenting and taking risks
 - adults can ask the baby if she needs help rather than giving it without speaking
- experiment with all objects that they come across by using their senses to make meaning of each one
 - adults can provide many clean and safe objects for the baby to experiment with

Moving on: Toddlers

- experiment with handling objects – adults can provide toys, puzzles and everyday objects and the space where the toddler can play with these
- ask questions – adults should listen carefully to questions and provide answers as well as asking follow up questions for the toddler to think about

Advancing further: Young children

- try out different solutions to challenges – adults can read or tell stories and stop at different points to ask the young child to predict what happens next or what she would do in a similar situation
- ask a lot of ‘Why’ questions – adults should listen to questions and answer them until the young child is satisfied

Towards Grade R – Transition to Grade R

- asks “Why” “What” “When” “How” questions – adults should encourage the children to ask themselves and others questions to find solutions and to discover new information
- enjoys problem solving games, for example finding different ways to move from place to place – adults can play lots of riddle and guessing games, giving the child lots of clues to think about

Assess development by observing children’s

- levels of curiosity
- interest in open-ended questions

Watch Points

- little curiosity or wish to explore and investigate

Aim 2: Children identify, search for and create solutions to challenges through play and make believe

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- play alone, next to or with an adult, alongside other children – adults can organise times when babies can be with or near other babies or older children
- start to act out situations that they have experienced – adults can provide items for make believe play

Moving on: Toddlers

- play more complex make believe games for longer times and often about home life – adults can make sure there are a lot of opportunities and items for toddlers to play their make believe games
- enjoy creating structures and objects – adults can provide safe, clean items such as cardboard boxes, string, cushions, plastic containers

Advancing further: Young children

- play more often in small cooperative groups to develop complex structures and games using available materials – adults can discuss ways of cooperating and playing together if young children need guidance

Towards Grade R - Transition to Grade R

- play the same game and construct the same project/structure over several days – adults can organise space for games and constructions that can be left for the children to return to over a few days

Assess development by observing children's

- use of different materials to invent games
- make believe different roles to act out

Watch Points

- child does not play make believe games alone or with others

Aim 3: Children identify, search for and create solutions to challenges through visual art activities

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- scribble and make marks on paper or sand with crayons or fingers – adults can provide paper, space with sand, and crayons
- play with clay, mud or play dough and name their creations – adults can provide these materials and the space for the baby to play with them

Moving on: Toddlers

- start to draw recognisable circles and lines and human face shapes – adults can appreciate and talk about the drawings
- start to cut and paste – adults can provide the old magazines, newspapers, round-ended scissors and glue for the toddler to play with

Advancing further: Young children

- cut out simple shapes and paint shapes using separate colours – adults can provide the materials the young child needs to experiment and play with

Towards Grade R - Transition to Grade R

- often draws ground and sky lines as well as humans, animals and plants – adults can encourage children to look carefully at what is around them
- tell stories about their creations – adults can write down stories about their creations when children ask for this to be done

Assess development by observing children's ability to

- enjoy working with visual art materials
- use tools in an increasingly controlled way

Watch Points

- cannot use tools for visual art activities at the appropriate level

Aim 4: Children identify, search for and create solutions to challenges through music, dance and drama

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- enjoy rhymes, singing, rhythmic movements – adults can sing to babies and play finger rhymes and hold them while moving around
- make noise by, for example shaking rattles and beating drums – adults can provide different items for babies to use to make noise

Moving on: Toddlers

- listen for sounds and rhythms, for example high, low, fast, slow and move to these – adults can provide instruments or play music or sing with the toddlers

Advancing further: Young children

- sing, dance and clap at the same time – adult can encourage young children to make up movements and dances to accompany parts of stories and rhymes
- make up songs and rhymes – adults can ask young children for their ideas for songs or dances and join in with them

Towards Grade R – Transition to Grade R

- play in percussion bands (drums, shakers, triangles) along to music on the radio or singing or their own creations – adults can organise a band with the children using different instruments
- invent stories to act out – adults can listen to the children's stories or suggest topics if this is necessary

Assess development by observing children's ability to

- take an interest in music, dance and drama
- make believe with stories, music, drama and dance

Watch Points

- child cannot move easily
- child cannot hear well

EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

AREA SIX: KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

The child's voice



I want to make sense of my world through active participation in my real world and through practical experiments. Please support my learning by providing me with opportunities to learn about people, objects, places, plants and creatures from my natural environment.

What is knowledge and understanding of the world about?

Children's worlds include their immediate physical surroundings (people, animals, vegetables and minerals of all kinds); the history of their own families and later on their neighbourhoods; the geography of their surroundings (for example, hills, rivers, flat spaces, rocks, weather and climate) and the tools that they use such as pencils, scissors, cutlery, household equipment on to cameras, mobile phones, computers

Children are curious about the world. They grow in confidence when they are encouraged to show their knowledge and skills in practical ways.

Reflection Points

- How do the centre, family and community provide opportunities for developing knowledge and skills through practical activities?
- How are children's need for hands-on experiences, exploration, experimentation, observation, problem-solving, decision making and demonstrations of their learning catered for?
- Are there sufficient opportunities for children to share their understandings and to reflect on these?
- How do adults support children's need for the use of different technologies such as cameras, radios, electronic toys and computers?



Figure 8 Working with families and their young children to promote knowledge and understanding of the world

Aim 1: Children explore and investigate their world

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- use their senses and increasing mobility to move to explore the environment, look for and reach out for objects – adults can encourage babies to touch, feel and investigate the adult and objects surrounding the adult

Moving on: Toddlers

- focus on features of objects or how to do something and enjoy repetition – adults can talk to toddlers as they are exploring things

Advancing further: Young children

- talk about what they see, how things work and why things happen – adults can encourage young children to further investigate things that interest them
- show awareness of change – adult can use questions and discussions to help children understand change

Towards Grade R – Transition to Grade R

- explore, investigate and talk about objects and materials – adults can encourage children and respond to their interests and create opportunities for them to explore
- ask questions about why things happen and how they work – adults can help children notice details that will help them understand how things happen and work

Assess development by observing children's ability to

- use resources to make sense of their world
- be curious and notice and comment on changes

Watch Points

- poor processing of information and communication of ideas

Aim 2: Children explore design, make items and use technology

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- show awareness and interest in how things work – opening, closing, pressing buttons and achieving effects such as sounds and movements – adults can talk about what babies see, hear and touch and provide explanations of what is happening

Moving on: Toddlers

- are interested in pushing and pulling things and begin to build things – adults can be aware of a toddler piling and stacking objects and talk about what they are doing

Advancing further: Young children

- experiment with different tools and techniques – adults can introduce young children to different tools and techniques and discuss these with them

- join construction materials together for balance and purpose – adults can provide a variety of construction materials such as boxes and cartons and encourage young children in their efforts

Towards Grade R – Transition to Grade R

- build and construct things using tools and techniques – adults can offer explanations and demonstrations of how equipment works and listen to the children's ideas

Assess development by observing children's ability to

- participate in activities that allow the development of interest in how things work
- investigate and use different objects

Watch Points

- too fearful and anxious to explore
- destroying resources provided

Aim 3: Children explore and investigate time and place

Some examples of Developmental Guidelines with suggestions for support from adults

Beginning: Babies

- become aware of daily routines – adults can talk about what is happening during the day
- explore space through increasing movement – adults can talk to the baby about what she sees and feels

Moving on: Toddlers

- understand time in experience-based ways for example, now, later, before – adults can use words such as now, later, before, when talking to the toddler

Advancing further: Young children

- show they understand change and can use time-related words – adults can encourage children to use the language of time and tell stories that draw attention to different times
- observe and are curious about the place they live in and the people who live there – adults can read and/or make books with young children that show events, experiences and festivals

Towards Grade R – Transition to Grade R

- describe their personal experiences with confidence – adults can do sequencing activities with children so that they can create pictorial time lines with photos and drawings and words
- find out about technology and identify its uses – adults can provide opportunities for children to see and talk about different technology and use if safe

Assess development by observing children's ability to

- show understanding of time
- recall and talk about familiar people and events

Watch Points

- fear and anxiety related to trying out new things
- difficulty in understanding changes in time

ASSESSMENT

The purpose of assessment is to support and encourage development and learning in babies, toddlers and young children and to assess their needs in all aspects of their lives.

Assessment helps adults to decide what the child's needs and interests are at that present moment, so that further activities can be planned immediately in time to work with the child to enrich her development and interests. Adults assess the special needs of children with developmental and learning disabilities to find ways of supporting the child and getting help from specialist services when necessary.

- Parents assess their children informally – parents watch their children and see what they need and provide this. If they are worried they contact their local clinic or specialist services to check that their child is developing well.
- Assessment in an ECD centre is a continuous planned process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about the development and learning of all children. It is important for ECD practitioners and parents to share information with each other. Parents want to know what their child is doing while in the ECD centre and ECD practitioners must take into account what parents tell them what the child does at home.

Assessment in an ECD centre

Each child has at least two experiences:

- the home experience which is very important and
- the experiences in an ECD programme, whether home-based or centre-based

Each child will have similar and also unique developmental experiences in each area with different knowledge about the world, skills, attitudes and behaviours learned in each.

ECD practitioners need to ensure that as far as possible, these two sets of experiences link together to form a seamless transition for each child between home and school. They do this by working very closely with the parents and families of each child in their care.

Assessment is always formative at this stage of the child's life. The child cannot 'pass' or 'fail'. She develops and grows and learns. There are no formal tests or examinations.

Steps to take in assessing children's developmental needs and learning interests

Step 1: Preparing for ongoing assessment

Assessment in these early years is informal and is carried out every day for each child. Children are observed in an

ongoing and planned way, during their daily routines, structured and free play activities.

Observation means watching and listening carefully to each young child each day.

Prepare for assessment by organising

1. a note book to keep close by, in which dated notes can be jotted down about each child during the day. Note important milestones and challenges that the child faces
2. a file for each child into which to transfer dated notes and to store all the information about the child (photocopies of the Road to Health Booklet, registration details, copies of reports to parents, notes on discussions with parents and so on)
3. a timetable of formal meeting times available for discussions with parents

Step 2: Identifying through observation: generating and collecting evidence of achievement

Observe each child's actions and behaviour each day.

- Look at her actions to see the skills she is developing for example, sitting up, taking steps, twisting her body, holding a crayon, making marks on paper (see the set of checklists in the Guidelines for Programme Development)
- Listen to the sounds that the child makes
- Use the senses of smell and touch to observe illness in the child (for example, the smell of the child's breath, faeces, temperature, dryness, sweating)
- The practitioner needs to remember what she has observed so that she can plan efficiently and effectively for each child's needs and interests, and so that she can discuss these needs and interests and her plans with the parents of each child. The best way to do this is to make notes on each child's key developments and interests.

Step 3: Reporting on and discussing the findings

Reporting is a process of communicating the child's development and learning status and needs to parents, schools, and other stakeholders. Reporting starts with written descriptions of the child's development and learning.

In these early years, NO marks or percentages are given to any child. ECD practitioners can use comments such as:

- The child is beginning to
- The child is
- The child is interested in
- We need to work together to provide more opportunities for the child to

There are three sets of people who need to be kept informed of each child's needs and interests. They are

- Parents and family of the child
- Professional colleagues if the child has special needs which require specialised attention
- Colleagues in the ECD programme and in Grade R just before the child moves to that class in the school.

Discussions are based on the evidence that is collected in the observation records.

Usually discussions are based on a written report to the parents and colleagues.

Discussions take place

- informally when the parents bring and collect the child

each day (usually about health and safety issues and to celebrate the child's achievements on that day). If another adult or older sibling is in charge of delivering and fetching the child, the parents will have to give permission for more in-depth discussions to take place, and they need to be informed in writing of any incidents.

- Informally through phone calls and notes to the parents in the child's home-programme notebook
- formally through individual parent-practitioner meetings which are arranged in advance

Forms for the assessment process are available in the Guidelines for Programme Development.

Acronyms

CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements for each grade in the public schooling sector
ECD	Faith Based Organisations
GPD	Guidelines for Programme Development for ECD Programmes for babies, toddlers and young children
NELDS	National Early Learning Development Standards
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations

Glossary

Term	Description
Baby, toddler and young child	In line with the NELDS, the age ranges are as follows: Babies: from birth to approximately 18 months Toddlers: from about 18 months to 36 months (three years) Young Children: from about three to four years Towards Grade R: from about four to the time that young children enter Grade R (in the year in which they turn five).
Child	A person under the age of 18 years.
Child minder/day mother	A person who, whether for gain or free of charge, takes care of a maximum of six children away from their homes, either in the child minder's own home, or in a space provided for children. Registration and assessment requirements are addressed in the Children's Act 38 of 2005. Some municipalities require child minders to register with them.

Term	Description
Curriculum	Curriculum for early childhood is about all the experiences that children from birth to four will have in different settings. These experiences include those that are planned for young children wherever they are being cared for and educated (adult- initiated) which are not consciously planned by adults (incidental learning/ teachable moments) created by the children themselves in order to make sense of their world (child- initiated)
Developmentally appropriate	This term is used to describe activities, equipment or programmes. It is a way of working with children that takes note of what is known about child development and also what is known or learnt about each child and her development within the environment and context in which she is born and grows up.
ECD	Early childhood development is an umbrella term that applies to the processes by which children from birth to at least nine years grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially.
ECD Centre	Any building or premises maintained or used, whether or not for gain, for the admission, protection and temporary or partial care of more than six children away from their parents. Depending on registration, an ECD centre can admit babies, toddlers and/or pre-school aged children. The term ECD centre can refer to crèche, day care centre for young children, a playgroup, a pre-school, after school care etc.
ECD Programmes	These are planned activities designed to promote the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, moral and social development of children from birth to nine years.
Environment	The environment in which the ECD programme is situated consists of the indoor, the outdoor and emotional environment in which the children develop and learn.
Grade R	Grade R is the year before Grade 1.
Pre-school child	A child under six years of age not yet attending formal school.
Teachable moment	This is a time when a child will find it easiest to learn something new. These moments are usually unplanned and the ECD practitioner needs to notice when they occur and use them to help the child learn something new.
Routines	Routines refer to arrival, departure, meals, toilet, resting, house-keeping (washing, cleaning up, putting away, tidying up), sleeping, and self-help skills appropriate to the developmental stage of the child. Routines are integrated as far as possible into activities, with sufficient opportunity for children to obtain a feeling of competence.
The Act	Children's Amendment (Act 41 of 2007) in operation from April 1, 2010
Vulnerability	Heightened or increased exposure to risk as a result of the child's circumstances.

APPENDIX A: *The Rights of Children*

Every child is born with rights.

The following are from "The State of the World's Children 2001, UNICEF: Section 28":

1. Protection from physical danger
2. Adequate nutrition and health care
3. Appropriate immunisations
4. An adult with whom to form an attachment
5. An adult who can understand and respond to their signals
6. Things to look at, touch, hear, smell, taste
7. Opportunities to explore their world
8. Appropriate language stimulation
9. Support in acquiring new motor, language and thinking skills
10. A chance to develop some independence
11. Help in learning how to control their own behaviour
12. Opportunities to begin to learn to care for themselves
13. Daily opportunities to play with a variety of objects
14. Opportunities to develop fine motor skills.
15. Encouragement of language through talking, being read to, singing
16. Activities that will develop a sense of mastery
17. Experimentation with pre-writing and pre-reading skills
18. Hands-on exploration for learning through action
19. opportunities for taking responsibility and making choices
20. Encouragement to develop self-control, cooperation and persistence in completing projects
21. Support for their sense of self worth
22. opportunities for self-expression
23. encouragement of creativity

Older babies and toddlers begin to develop a sense of responsibility as they

1. help with routines for example, washing, washing up, cleaning and sweeping
2. carry out simple instructions
3. listen to others
4. use the manners of the culture for example, when eating

Adults help children to realise their rights and gradually to carry out their responsibilities by

1. encouraging the development of language through talking, being read to, singing, pre-writing and pre-reading skills
2. providing activities that will develop a sense of mastery
3. encouraging hands-on exploration and active learning
4. providing opportunities for taking responsibility and making choices
5. encouraging the development of self-control, cooperation and persistence in completing projects
6. support for the development of their sense of self worth
7. providing opportunities for self-expression
8. encouraging creativity
9. modelling desired behaviours at all times (for example, listening to children in the same way as children are expected to listen)
10. explaining why behaviours are needed or not
11. demonstrating the steps required for each behaviour for example, how to blow the nose in an hygienic way
12. showing willingness to learn about children from children themselves



APPENDIX B How the NCF links with NELDS and CAPS

Early Learning and Development Areas	Relationship with the NELDS - Desired Results	Relationship with CAPS - Foundation Phase Subjects
1. Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are becoming more aware of themselves as individuals, developing a positive self- image and learning how to manage their own behaviour • Children are demonstrating growing awareness of diversity and the need to respect and care for others. • Children are beginning to demonstrate physical and motor abilities and an understanding of a healthy lifestyle. 	Life Skills Language
2. Identity and belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are becoming more aware of themselves as individuals, developing a positive self-image and learning how to manage their own behaviour • Children are demonstrating growing awareness of diversity and the need to respect and care for others. 	Life Skills (including historical and geographical understandings of self and family) Language
3. Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are learning how to think critically, solve problems and form concepts • Children are learning to communicate effectively and use language confidently. • Children are learning about mathematical concepts. 	Language Mathematics Life Skills
4. Exploring mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are learning how to think critically, solve problems and form concepts • Children are learning to communicate effectively and use language confidently. • Children are learning about mathematical concepts. 	Mathematics Language Life Skills (including scientific and environmental knowledge and skills)
5. Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are learning how to think critically, solve problems and form concepts • Children are becoming more aware of themselves as individuals, developing a positive self-image and learning how to manage their own behaviour • Children are learning to communicate effectively and use language confidently. 	Language Mathematics Life Skills
6. Knowledge and understanding of the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are learning how to think critically, solve problems and form concepts • Children are demonstrating growing awareness of diversity and the need to respect and care for others. • Children are learning about (mathematical) concepts 	Life Skills (including historical, geographical knowledge, scientific and mathematical knowledge and skills) Mathematics Language

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Ideas for practice have also been developed from internationally based programmes such as High/Scope, Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Head Start and Sure Start as well as from ECD programmes in New Zealand, Australia and Scotland. Best practice in South African ECD programmes has been incorporated.

