Preschool Methods

PRESCHOOL METHODS

ECSP 1125

TANYA DALTON

NSCC

Nova Scotia

Preschool Methods is an adapted remixed work using content from several open textbooks:

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ABOUT THE BOOK

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Additional Canadian and Nova Scotia content has been added to make this resource relevant for students studying ECE in Nova Scotia.

More information about how this book was remixed with chapter mapping is contained at the back of the book in the chapter called Versioning History.

Cover image: Kids Frame Around Circle by Gordon Johnson via Pixabay shared with a free Pixabay license.

PART I.

PLANNING

INTRODUCTION TO PLANNING

Learning Objectives

By the end of this introduction, you should be able to:

- Summarize the developmental characteristics of preschoolers
- Explain what learning foundations are
- Describe the purpose of the curriculum frameworks
- Discuss the role of the Desired Results Developmental Profile
- Identify the domains that we categorize curriculum into for the purpose of learning about planning and implementing it

WHAT PRESCHOOLERS ARE LIKE

In order to plan for children it is vital to begin with one aspect of developmentally appropriate practice, which relates to the developmental characteristics of children based on their age. Here are some representations of what children are like at each age in the preschool years.

This is 2-year-old Aniyah. She can run and walk up and down stairs while holding on. She prefers using her right hand and makes lines and circles when she draws. She is getting better at feeding herself. She loves completing sentences in her favorite books and can match real life objects to those in books. She knows the names of body parts and follows simple instructions. She speaks in 2 to 4 word sentences and will repeat words she hears. She gets excited when around other children. She can be defiant and is showing increasing independence.
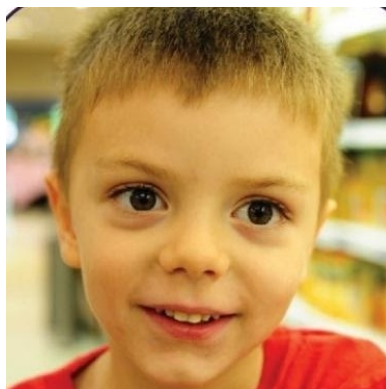

Tanner is three years old. He rides a tricycle, kicks a ball, and throws a ball overhand. He turns pages in book one at a time and can build a tower of more than 6 blocks. He loves simple puzzles and playing make believe with his toys animals. He can follow two- to three-step instructions. Most of the time strangers can understand him.

He now separates easily from his parents. He is learning to take turns during games. He can get upset with big changes in his routine.

Four-year-old Isabella catches a bounced ball and can stand on one foot for two seconds She c n pour from a small pitcher. She uses scissors and has begun to copy some capital letters. She names some colours and numbers. She has begun to play board and card games. She has a sound understanding of the basic rules of grammer and can sing familiar songs from memory. She knows her first and last name. She enjoys doing new things and cooperating with other children. She struggles to distinguish real from make-believe.
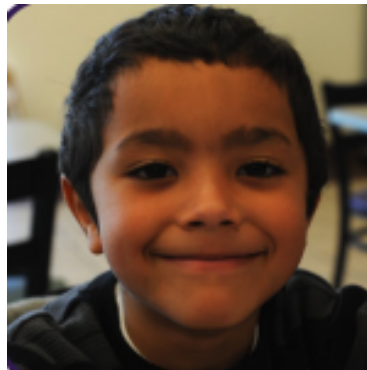
Mateo is five years old. He can skip and do a somersault. He loves swinging and climbing. When he draws a person it has six body parts. He prints his name and some other letters and numbers. He can count more than ten objects. He speaks very dearly in sentences of more than five words. He loves to tell stories. He is aware that he is a boy. He now understands what is real and what is make-believe.

You will notice that consideration for the other two aspects of developmentally appropriate practice which are also critical to our work, understanding individual children and seeing children in the context of their families and larger culture, are included throughout each domain based chapter.

A VISION FOR CHILDREN'S LEARNING[1]

Learning is joyful and engaging. It nourishes children's developmental health and well-being.
−Survey feedback from a Nova Scotia early childhood educator

Image of the Child

An individual's Image of the Child—and definition of childhood itself—is influenced by that person's experiences, culture, values, and beliefs. This image is often influenced by their own experiences as a child. Family circumstances provide children with a variety of life experiences; a child growing up in a large extended family with many siblings, cousins, aunts, and uncles who are all involved in their life has a different perspective on what family and childhood means than a child who is an only child, even though both children are equally as loved and cherished. Children come from many different family backgrounds. People all draw on a vast range of experiences to inform their own Image of the Child.

Everyone's Image of the Child shapes their decisions and beliefs about how children learn. The

1. Province of Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood DevelopmenT. (2018). *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework*. https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/nselcurriculumframework.pdf

image influences the types of early learning environments that are provided for children, the role of the educators in preparing early learning environments, and relationships with children and families. If an educator believes that children are capable human beings, that their ideas and interests matter, and that their natural curiosity and love of learning inspires them to explore their environments—then the early childhood environment will be designed and structured to allow children to explore, use their senses, and confidently express their own ideas and opinions.

The framework views children's learning as dynamic, complex, and holistic. Physical, social, emotional, personal, spiritual, creative, cognitive, and linguistic aspects of learning are all interrelated. It allows children to actively construct their own understandings, act independently, and contribute to the learning of others. Children have a right to participate in making decisions that affect them and to have their ideas and opinions welcomed, respected, and valued. Respecting these rights encourages children to share their ideas with confidence, and listen to and respect the ideas and opinions of others.

The Principles, Practices, and Learning Goals, Objectives, and Strategies described in this document are based on children as eager and avid learners, with individual strengths, capacities, and interests.

This image sets out expectations and responsibilities for educators to be:

- knowledgeable about child development

- respectful and responsive to children

- inclusive in their interactions with children and their families

- reflective of the communities where children and families live

- respectful of the cultures, languages and traditions of children

> In many ways, the image of the child reflects not only a person's beliefs about children and childhood, but also their beliefs about what is possible and desirable for human life at the individual, social, and global levels.[2]

Early childhood pedagogy

The term pedagogy is a fairly new term to educators across Nova Scotia. The term pedagogy stems from the Greek terms paÍs (child) and ágō (to lead, to guide). Pedagogy refers to the holistic nature of an educator's professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships. Early childhood pedagogy is different than a program plan, or defined activities intended to produce a defined outcome. It encourages educators to ask questions—about what they do, and why—and what impact their decisions have on how children learn. Pedagogy informs curriculum decision-making, and the facilitation of learning in a rich and inviting child-centered environment.

2. British Columbia Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Children and Family Development Early Learning Advisory Group. (2008). *British Columbia Early Learning Framework (p.4)*. Victoria, BC: Government of British Columbia. www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early- learning/teach/early-learning-framework

image

Early childhood pedagogy is not focused on merely providing experiences for children. It also encourages educators to observe children, engage in conversations, and guide children's activities based on what they learn. In this way, the curriculum is co-constructed by children and educators. At the same time, educators explore and learn from families and communities, which helps to inform the construction of curriculum.

When educators view children as capable learners and establish respectful and caring relationships with them and their families, everyone works together to co-construct curriculum and learning experiences relevant to children in their local context. These experiences gradually expand children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Professional judgement is a key component of early childhood pedagogy, and central to facilitating children's learning. It requires educators to be reflective and intentional, to consider what they do, why they practice as they do, and how their actions impact children and their families. Professional judgement is driven by a vision of children's potential.

In making professional judgements, educators weave together their:

- professional knowledge of child development, children's learning, and skills to guide children's learning in an intentionally planned play-based environment

- knowledge of children, families and communities, and cultural traditions

- awareness of how their beliefs, values, and Image of the Child impact children's learning

Nova Scotia's early learning framework is a social pedagogical framework that emphasizes relationships and experiences. It builds on developmental (Is this appropriate for a two-year old's stage of development? What activities would help to develop these skills for three-year olds?), and socio-cultural perspectives (What do I need to consider about this child's family and cultural background? Are the books in our library representative of the families and cultures of the children in the program?), and emphasizes the need for fairness, justice and equity for all children (Do all children have the same chance for success at this activity? Is the language we use free of bias about gender, race?).

> A social pedagogical approach recognizes the context of children's learning and the importance of attending to the today-ness of children's lives and their diverse personal, social, and cultural experiences. A curriculum grounded in this approach has the simultaneous effect of promoting overall well-being and capacity for learning. [3]

Attribution

Chapter adapted from *Introduction to Planning for Preschoolers* in Introduction to Curriculum for Early

3. University of New Brunswick Early Childhood Research and Development Team. (2008). *New Brunswick Curriculum Framework for Early Learning and Child Care—English (p.183)*. Fredericton, NB: Department of Social Development, Government of New Brunswick. www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/education/elcc/content/curriculum/curriculum_framework.html)

Childhood Education by Jennifer Paris, Kristin Beeve, & Clint Springer. College of the Canyons. CC BY license.

New content added from pages 9-11 in *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework.*

NOVA SCOTIA'S FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES, AND CULTURES

FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND CULTURE

Children's lives are shaped by their families, communities, and culture. Their earliest development and learning takes place through these relationships, particularly within families, who are children's most influential teachers. As children participate in daily life, they develop interests, construct their own identities, and make meaning of the world they live in.

> Families are composed of individuals who are competent and capable, curious, and rich in experience. They love their children and want the best for them; they are experts on their children. Families are the first and most powerful influence on children's learning, development, health, and well-being. Families bring diverse social, cultural, and linguistic perspectives to the learning situation. Families belong, are valuable contributors to their children's learning, and are engaged in a meaningful way.[1]

A sense of belonging is integral to human existence. Children belong first to a family, then a cultural group, then a neighbourhood, and then their wider community. The framework acknowledges children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. In early childhood and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a child's developing sense of self—they shape who children are and who they become.

NOVA SCOTIA'S PEOPLE AND CULTURES

Nova Scotia's people reflect diverse cultures, many which are language-based. In relation to child development and learning, culture influences the way that children engage in and form relationships, and how they provide information to and communicate with others. Culture is the understandings, patterns of behaviour, practices, and values shared by a group of people. Collectively, these shared understandings help people make sense of the world and communicate with one another. Culture represents a group's accepted values, traditions, and lifestyles that guide the way people lead their day-to-day lives. Children and families may identify as belonging to more than one culture. Today, more than 100 cultures are represented across the province, providing educators with a wealth of creative opportunities to celebrate the province's peoples and cultures, as well as the responsibility to be inclusive and responsive to children in their programs.

Nova Scotia's Indigenous people, Acadian/Francophone population, African Nova Scotian, and the Gaels communities have greatly underpinned the uniqueness of the province's population. An

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1. Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). *How does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* (p.7). Toronto, ON: Government of Ontario. www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/ HowLearningHappens.pdf

awareness of the history of Nova Scotia's founding cultures is necessary to developing relationships with children's parents, families, and communities, and to creating environments that reflect the cultures and traditions of all Nova Scotians.

Respecting cultural and linguistic differences is more than celebrating different holidays—it involves a deep understanding of the culture's values, the experiences of its members, and their ways of knowing. Cultural identity comes from having access to your own culture—its institutions, land, language, knowledge, social resources, economic resources; the institutions of the community (lifestyle) and its codes for living related to social, environmental, and physical respect such as nutrition, safety, protection of physical, spiritual and emotional integrity of children and families; as well as cultural expression and cultural endorsement.[2]

It is generally accepted that children's cultural backgrounds influence their learning. In early infancy, children do not consciously make sense of and analyze their surroundings—but they very quickly begin to understand patterns of activities, different ways of responding, and the sounds and tones of their first language.

Nova Scotia's founding cultures: A brief history

This section was developed by contributors from the early childhood education field and EECD. It provides brief histories and contexts of four major cultural groups in Nova Scotia: the Mi'kmaq, Acadians, African Nova Scotians, and the Gaels.

Mi'kmaq people

The Mi'kmaq are the original people of Nova Scotia and remain the predominant Indigenous group within the province. Nova Scotia is within the traditional, ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq, who, for time immemorial, have lived and prospered on this land. The traditional territory is divided into seven smaller territories across what is known as Mi'kma'ki. The territory stretches from the southern portion of the Gaspé Penninsula eastward to Newfoundland and encompasses New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island.

Nova Scotia has 13 Mi'kmaw First Nation communities. The culture, language, and Indigenous knowledge of the Mi'kmaq has been passed down orally through hundreds of generations, and still guides Mi'kmaw way of life.

The Mi'kmaw language is an ancient language that has developed over the centuries in Mi'kma'ki. It is a sacred language, given to the people by Kisu'lkw. The Mi'kmaw language is the way in which Mi'kmaw values, customs, beliefs, and attitudes are passed on from generation to generation. To learn the language, therefore, is to deepen one's understanding of Mi'kmaw consciousness and identity.

Mi'kmaw language is a verb-oriented language. This means that all words in a clause are based around the verb and not, as in English, around the subject. Unlike French, there is no gender in the Mi'kmaw language, but there is a clear distinction between animate and inanimate objects. Mi'kmaw language has free word order; there is no predetermined syntax. When the language is written in Nova Scotia, the Smith-Francis orthography is the recognized writing system.

Mi'kmaw language education is holistic in nature and unifies language, knowledge, and culture. Consciousness and identity are at the heart of the Mi'kmaw language. There is no disconnect between language and culture; the culture is embedded in the language. Promoting the understanding and expressions of Mi'kmaw worldview through the use of the Mi'kmaw language is crucial.

2. Durie 2003

Recently, there has been a tremendous increase in the development of technology that supports language development, especially apps, digital books, videos, and web resources. This increase in technologies that reinforce language development will help teachers to support students of all learning modalities. Community support is integral to Mi'kmaw Education. The community has an obligation to support language revitalization, enhancement, promotion, and development. Educators should find ways to involve the community in the school through events and activities in order to enhance language development. Educators should also provide opportunities for Elders to be present in the classroom as a resource, because Elders are the keepers of knowledge and language.

All Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia have Kindergarten–4 (K–4) programs for children the year before they enter primary. These programs are either stand-alone programs or combined with Aboriginal Head Start Programs on Reserve or child care programs.

Early childhood programs in Mi'kmaw communities do not fall under provincial regulations and do not receive provincial funding. However, educators are educated in provincial programs and follow as closely as possible guidelines for provincially regulated care. They also follow guidelines for programs that are specific to First Nation programs. There is a great deal of consistency between provincial programs and those offered in Mi'kmaw communities.

Acadian Nova Scotians

The Acadian population of Nova Scotia has a unique place in this province's history. They are descendants of one of the first permanent French settlers in North America, having arrived with Samuel de Champlain in Port Royal in 1605. In July 1755, approximately 6,000 Acadians were deported from mainland Nova Scotia, mainly for refusing to take an oath of allegiance to the British Crown. Most were captured and sent by ship to colonies along the Atlantic Coast. However, some were imprisoned in Halifax, others sent to France and a small number went into hiding or spent many years wandering. By 1764, Acadians were given permission to return to what was then Acadia, but had to settle on lands that were not taken by the British settlers. Today's Acadian communities are dispersed throughout Nova Scotia and located mainly in Digby, Yarmouth, Inverness, Richmond, Antigonish, and Halifax counties.

In the mid 1800s, the Government of Nova Scotia condoned bilingual Acadian schools until after 1969, when the federal government proclaimed the Official Languages Act. The Act gave French-language minorities in Canada official rights to services in their language. In 1982, Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms became a major stepping-stone in the advancement of French-language minority education in Canada. It clearly defined the rights of all Canadians to have their children educated in their own official language.

After a Canadian Charter challenge based on the interpretation of Section 23 in 1996, the Government of Nova Scotia created a single school board to manage all Acadian and French schools for the entire province—the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP). It took yet another court challenge that ended in October 1999 to replace the existing bilingual school system with homogeneous French first language schools. In 2004, the Province of Nova Scotia enacted the French-language Services Act, giving official status to the delivery of French-language services by the public service.

Since the 1970s, Acadian and Francophone early childhood education programs have been developed in various French minority language communities across Nova Scotia. They have played an important role in valuing the Acadian language and culture in all aspects of the child's life at home,

in society, and at school. The integration of these French early childhood centres or centres de la petite enfance within French schools has become a fundamental catalyst to redress past injustices and provide the official language minority with equitable access to high-quality education. The French Early Years Centre and the CSAP's allocation of space for many early childhood education programs, including their own 4-year-old language acquisition program Grandir en français, are positive indicators of restorative progress.

Due to a bilingual population, there are many challenges facing the Acadian and Francophone community with regard to the early years including assimilation, reclaiming lost language, access to French early years services, training for educators, and exogamous or mixed language (English and French) families. Statistics bring to light an urgent need to support mixed language families in order to ensure the survival and future of the Francophone community of Canada.

In 2006, of the nearly 64,000 right-holder's children from birth to age 4 living in Francophone minority provinces, 61per cent are part of French exogamous families; and only 38 out of every 100 speak French at least regularly at home. In Nova Scotia, 3.8 per cent of the population possess French as their first language and, for children –from birth to age 4, this falls to a mere 1.9 per cent. In addition, 71.9 per cent of Nova Scotia children are part of exogamous families and French is transmitted to these children less than 20 per cent of the time. For the 2011–2012 school year, Nova Scotia's French schools were faced with nearly 68 per cent of new children who speak little to no French, a direct consequence of these factors.[3]

French being one of Canada's two official languages, it is important that all children and their families have access to equitable services in their language of choice. High-quality French first language early learning programs and environments build strong cultural identities for not only today's children but for future generations as well. By understanding that the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits begins at birth, Acadian and Francophone educators are in a unique and ideal position to counteract the linguistic and cultural assimilation of the Acadian and Francophone population. By effectively addressing the specific cultural and linguistic needs of Nova Scotia's Acadians and Francophones, they can become the instrument of change for the historically downward trajectory of the AcadianFrancophone culture and language.

African Nova Scotians

People of African ancestry have deep roots in the history of Nova Scotia. They were part of the earliest non-indigenous settlement of our province and, as a founding culture, African Nova Scotians continue to contribute to the diversity and infrastructure that defines Nova Scotia today. Their history is woven into the very fabric of Nova Scotian culture. They represent a myriad of ethnicities, cultural experiences, and knowledge.

The first recorded African believed to have visited Nova Scotia was Mathieu de Costa. He was hired to serve as an interpreter between the French and Mi'kmaq when the first settlement in Nova Scotia was established at Port-Royal.

By 1769, almost 8,000 New England Planters had settled in Nova Scotia. It is estimated that approximately 200 Africans accompanied the New England Planters. Among them was Barbara Cuffy

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3. Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. (2016). *Early Childhood: Fostering the Vitality of Francophone Minority Communities*. Gatineau, QC: Minister of Public Services and Procurement. www.officiallanguages.gc.ca/en/publications/other/2016/early-childhood-report .

and her family, the only known free Black settlers to arrive with the Planters. Barbara Cuffy is a compelling figure as she was a Black woman landholder in Nova Scotia during the 1760s, fifty years before slavery was extinguished in the province and more than one hundred and fifty years before women got the vote.

The end of the American Revolution prompted the first large wave of immigration to Nova Scotia. Between April and November of 1783, approximately 50,000 Loyalists arrived in Nova Scotia. About 10 per cent of them were of African ancestry. Among them were approximately 3,500 free Black Loyalists and 1,500 enslaved Africans. These Black Loyalists had risked their lives to reclaim their freedom. They were people with remarkable determination and survival skills. These brave men and women settled in every Township of the province and they established the first of the more than 50 African Nova Scotian communities in the province including at Guysborough, Granville, Birchtown, Brindley Town (Digby), Little Tracadie, Halifax, and others.

In 1796, 600 exiled Jamaican Maroons settled in the Preston area. Less than four years after their arrival, most of the Maroons set sail for Sierra Leone. Only a few families chose to stay behind. However, their legacy endures, they helped build new fortifications at the Halifax Citadel and they worked at the Government House and the Governor's Farm.

The War of 1812 between the United States and Britain provided more enslaved Africans the opportunity to reclaim their freedom. By 1816, approximately 1,800 Black Refugees had come to Nova Scotia. Most were settled at Preston and Hammonds Plains. Others settled in Halifax and smaller communities around the province including at Cobequid Road, Five Mile Plains, Porter's Lake, Fletcher's Lake, Beechville, and Prospect Road.

Despite almost insurmountable hardships, by the 1830s, Black immigrants to the province had started to create a unique African Nova Scotian identity. Black churches and schools were established in most African Nova Scotian communities. As their communities organized, African Nova Scotians started to become a political force in the province. Led by Richard Preston, African Nova Scotians began an era of activism. They honoured the memory of their motherland Africa and they remembered her in the names of their organizations such as the African Baptist Association and the African Friendly Society.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Nova Scotia's landscape was further enhanced by the immigration of almost 500 men and women from the Caribbean (formerly known as the West Indies). As citizens of the British Commonwealth, these individuals were intentionally recruited for employment within the steel mill and coal mining industries of Cape Breton. Immigrating by choice, they fully expected to receive the same rights and privileges afforded all Commonwealth citizens and Canadians. They included expert tradespeople, entrepreneurs, professionals, and students who hoped to attend university. Most were settled in the Whitney Pier area of Sydney. Others settled in Glace Bay, New Waterford and Sydney Mines. These newcomers to Nova Scotia were educated, resourceful, politically engaged, and trailblazers. Their accomplishments and those of their ancestors positively impacted various facets of the Nova Scotian landscape towards a more equitable society.

People of African ancestry continue to immigrate to Nova Scotia. They come from Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States and, just like the earliest Black immigrants to our province, dream of building a better life for themselves and their families in Nova Scotia. These newcomers continue to strengthen Nova Scotia's vibrancy and actively contribute to its economic viability and identity.

African Nova Scotians have made and continue to make important contributions to the political, social and cultural life of our province and our country. They have served with distinction in various

military conflicts and they have captivated audiences with their poetry, singing, acting and writing. They have been leaders and pioneers in every profession and they have served as the vanguard for equal rights in Nova Scotia. With a legacy that spans more than 400 years, African Nova Scotians continue to represent our province with honour and their achievements endure as a great source of pride for all Nova Scotians and all Canadians.

Gaels in Nova Scotia

From 1773 up to the 1850s an estimated 50,000 Gaels from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland arrived in Nova Scotia. Gaels settled along family and religious lines in Nova Scotia—this phenomenon of uprooting whole communities and relocating in the New World context became referred to as chain migration. Settlement occurred in Colchester, Pictou, Antigonish, Guysborough, Inverness, Richmond, Victoria, and Cape Breton counties. For the majority, Gaelic would have been their only language.

Gaelic language and its cultural expression, family, relatives, the broader community, and the Christian faith are what Gaels valued most and it is these aspects that sustained immigrant Gaels through many challenges in the Nova Scotia context. The Gaels' presence as a people through language, culture, and identity underpinned the social and economic fabric of communities in the province's eastern districts and throughout Cape Breton Island. It is estimated that by the later 1800s there may have been as many as 100,000 Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia.

It is estimated that over two dozen Gaelic dialects were introduced into Nova Scotia; 1,000s of fiddle and pipe tunes were composed; regional step dance styles, such as Mabou, Iona, and Glendale, thrived; thousands of songs—some brought over from Scotland and others composed here—were shared; over 300 place names; thousands of personal nicknames; and between 1791—1902; there were one dozen different Gaelic publications initiated.

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, Gaels experienced marginalization and exclusion as their language was not supported in official institutions, like the government, churches, universities, and public school programs in the province. This resulted in significant loss of Gaelic language and cultural expression, and severely eroded the collective Gaelic identity. While the reasons for language, cultural expression, and identity loss are complex, evidence reveals how low status for Gaelic language directly impacted the loss of cultural expression and identity across Gaelic settlement districts in the province.

UNESCO's position on language loss reflects, in large measure, the experience of Gaels in Nova Scotia:

> Cultural/political/economic marginalization/hegemony. This happens when political and economical power is closely tied to a particular language and culture so that there is a strong incentive for individuals to abandon their language (on behalf of themselves and their children) in favor of another more prestigious one. This frequently happens when indigenous populations, in order to achieve a higher social status, have better chance to get employment, or are forced to it in school, adopt the cultural and linguistic traits of a people who have come to dominate them through colonisation, conquest, or invasion.[4]

4. Austin, P. & Sallabank, J. (2011). *The Cambridge Handbook of Endangered Languages*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University

During the 20th century, efforts by the Gaelic community and changes in societal attitudes allowed for greater appreciation, acceptance and inclusion of Gaels' language and cultural expression in community, institutions, and government. These efforts and changes led to the creation of Comhairle na Gàidhlig (the Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia) in 1990 and the Office of Gaelic Affairs in 2006. By October 2015, over 4,000 Nova Scotians were engaged in Gaelic language programming and 288,180 Nova Scotians or 31.9 per cent indicated Scottish ethnic origins (2006 Canada Census). Over time, social and economic reasons caused some Gaels to migrate, so today there are Nova Scotians who claim Gaelic background in almost all regions of the province.

Nova Scotia's Office of Gaelic Affairs' Gaelic language and cultural programs assist with language acquisition and use, cultural mentorships aimed at reclaiming a Gaelic group identity in the province, and raising greater awareness, appreciation, and understanding of Gaels.

Today, Nova Scotia is the only jurisdiction outside of Europe where a Gaelic language, culture, and identity have been passed down from generation-to-generation in community.

Immigration

Nova Scotia has a rich history of immigration. Halifax is the home of the national immigration museum, Pier 21. In 2016, 5,483 immigrants arrived in Nova Scotia, the highest number of immigrants since the end of the Second World War. The top five sources countries respectively included Syria, India, China, Philippines and Nigeria, with the top five mother languages being Arabic, English, Chinese, Talalog and Arabic–Syria. Of those that arrived in Nova Scotia in 2016, 1,445 were refugees and 670 were between the ages 0 to 4. These statistics are reflective of an evolving population, one that is changing the face of Nova Scotia as we know it and understand it.

A more diverse population certainly will have an impact on communities across Nova Scotia and therefore on early childhood education programs. These programs provide essential supports and resources for all Nova Scotians, including newcomer families. For example, these programs may see an increase in the number of newcomer children attending while their parents attend language training and other types of programs designed to ease their transition to Nova Scotia. Educators will need to find ways to welcome and support newcomer families, and try out new approaches, resources, and strategies necessary to engage and work with newcomer families. Building healthy relationships and establishing safe, inclusive early childhood education programs and practices is essential.

Working and supporting newcomer families brings with it many exciting opportunities for educators with respect to expanding their knowledge and learning. Families will have varying ideas and understanding about how children learn and develop based on their cultural and lived experiences. It is important, therefore, to be respectful of this uniqueness and talk with families about how to integrate these cultural experiences into the early childhood education program. There is an opportunity for educators to create learning environments that reflect the many cultures of the children and families they work with.

Attribution

Content copied from pages 15-22 in *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework*

Province of Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2018). *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework*. https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/nselcurriculumframework.pdf

Press.

CHAPTER 3.

PRINCIPLES OF EARLY LEARNING

The principles below draw on contemporary theories and research evidence that support early childhood education practices that are focused on children's optimal development, and encourage joyful and engaging approaches to learning in the context of Nova Scotia's Learning Goals for children from birth to eight years old.

These principles reflect what we know about how young children learn and develop. They are relevant to children of all abilities and cultural backgrounds, and may be applied to all types of educator programs and settings. Nova Scotia's principles of early learning include:

- Play-based Learning

- Relationships

- Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity

- Learning Environments

- Reflective Practice

Play-based learning

Research on the brain demonstrates that play is a scaffold for development, a vehicle for increasing neural structures, and a means by which all children practice skills they will need in later life.[1]

In July 2012, the Council of Ministers of Education Canada unanimously endorsed the importance of play-based learning for children. Citing evidence on the importance of play, the Ministers agreed that:

> *When children are manipulating objects, acting out roles, or experimenting with different materials, they are engaged in learning through play. Play allows them to actively construct, challenge, and expand their own understandings through making connections to prior experiences, thereby opening the door to new learning. Intentional play-based learning enables children to investigate, ask questions, solve problems, and engage in critical thinking. Play is responsive to each child's unique learning style and capitalizes on his or her innate curiosity and creativity. Play-based learning supports growth in the language and culture of children and their families.* [2]

Play provides opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise, and imagine. When children play together, they create social groups, test out ideas, challenge each other's thinking, and build new understandings. In play, children also experiment with the world, discover how things work, and learn to interact with others. Play provides a context for learning that is freely chosen by the child, and allows for the expression of personality and individuality. Educators understand that

1. Association for Childhood Education International. Play: Essential for All Children—A Position Paper of the Association for Childhood Education International. Olney, Maryland: Association for Childhood Education International

2. *Council of Ministers of Education Canada. (2012). Early Learning and Development Framework. Toronto, ON: CMEC Early Learning Working Group*

when they observe and document children's play, they discover children's interests and abilities, and assess their development and learning.

Play promotes positive dispositions toward learning, by providing supportive environments where children:

- build competencies in all areas of development
- ask questions
- solve problems
- expand their reasoning skills and engage in critical thinking
- build language and communication
- negotiate with others
- resolve conflicts
- enhance their desire to know and to learn

Educators take on many roles when playing with children and use a range of strategies to support learning. They engage in sustained shared conversations with children to extend their thinking. Educators provide a balance between child-led and child-initiated, and educatorled and educator-supported learning. They create learning environments that encourage children to explore, solve problems, create, and construct. Consistent routines and carefully planned play experiences allow educators to interact with infants and children, demonstrate commitment to them, and create attachment bonds. Educators also recognize spontaneous moments as they occur, and use them to build on children's learning. Educators work with children to promote and model positive ways to relate to others, and actively support the inclusion of all children in play, help children recognize when play is unfair, and offer constructive ways to build caring, fair, and inclusive learning communities.

Educators know that play:

- encourages curiosity and creativity
- helps children connect prior experiences and new learning
- engages children in the development of many types of skills
- allows children to develop genuine relationships and friendships
- promotes the development of language, reasoning, and different styles of communication
- stimulates a sense of well-being

Play also enhances the development of self-regulation by encouraging children to consider the perspectives of others, take on different roles, and learn to negotiate during times of disagreement.

Children's play develops and increases in complexity as children grow and mature. Infants play when they engage in back and forth interactions with other children and adults. As children develop, their increased motor control and eye-hand coordination allows them to touch, listen to, and taste objects. Learning to eat is a sensory experience, as babies play with their food to learn how it tastes, feels on their skin, and spreads or rolls.

Children move through different types of play in how they interact with others, from solitary, to parallel, to cooperative play. Literature on the concept of children's play identifies many different types of play, such as:

- socio-dramatic play

- active play

- pretend or fantasy play

- rough and tumble play

By their early school years, children are better able to control their own behaviour and emotions, and play may become complex and sophisticated. At this age, play often involves games with rules.

> Children's play is rich in its complexity. When children are engaged in play, and especially in socio-dramatic pretend play, they are creating their own meaningful fantasy worlds. During this type of play, children are able to re-construct and test out theories or concepts in a secure, safe manner where the child is in control of the situation. By assuming various roles and responsibilities in the play activity, the child is able to integrate the learning that comes from reviewing and re-thinking the experience.
>
> Complex socio-dramatic play gives children opportunities for language development, conflict resolution, negotiation skills, social skills, problem solving, inquiry based learning, logic and reason, and opportunities to explore emotional responses to experiences. The ability to converse, explain, and think in stories helps children to develop the foundation for reading comprehension and indirectly prepares children for social studies, history, and an appreciation for literature.[3]

Based on their observations about how children choose and construct their own play activities, it is the responsibility of the educator to construct and adapt indoor and outdoor environments with the intention of preparing them for children's joyful learning. The educator's role is to scaffold children's learning—to expand on children's curiosity and questions, deepen their understanding, encourage their explorations, and challenge their skills—by introducing new elements to the play-based learning environments.

You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than you can in a year of conversation.
—Plato

Relationships

Educators who are responsive to children's thoughts and feelings help children to develop a strong sense of well-being. They positively interact with young children in their learning and development. Research has shown that infants are both vulnerable and competent. Their first attachments within

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3. Flanagan, K. (2012). *PEI Early Learning Framework—Relationships, Environments, Experiences (p.17)*. Charlottetown: PEI: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/eecd_eyfrwrk_full.pdf

their families and other trusting relationships form the foundation for emotional development, and provide them with a secure base for exploration and learning.[4]

> Peers play important roles in children's lives at much earlier points in development than we might have thought. Experiences in the first two or three years of life have implications for children's acceptance by their classmates in nursery school and the later school years. Children who are competent with peers at an early age, and those who show prosocial behaviour, are particularly likely to be accepted by their peers. (Hay 2005, 3)

Widening networks of secure relationships helps children develop confidence and feel respected and valued. They become increasingly able to recognize and respect the feelings of others and to interact positively with them. By their early school years, children are better able to manage their behaviours and emotions, and engage in more complex play with their peers.

Educators who prioritize nurturing relationships and provide children with consistent emotional support will support children to develop the skills, understanding, and confidence they need to interact positively with others. They also help children to learn about their responsibilities to others, to appreciate their connections and interdependence as individuals, and to value collaboration and teamwork.

Children's learning and development are enhanced when educators value families as children's first and most influential teachers. An important part of the educator's role is to establish respectful relationships with parents and work in partnership with families.

Educators create welcoming environments for all children and families where they are respected and actively encouraged to collaborate on curriculum decisions, ensuring that learning experiences are meaningful. In school-age child care settings, educators recognize the unique role they play in being a link between schools and families, and the importance of those partnerships.

Partnerships with families are based understanding each other's expectations and attitudes. They build on the strength and trust of each other's knowledge. Together, families and educators:

- value each other's knowledge of each child
- value each other's contributions to and roles in each child's life
- communicate freely and respectfully with each other
- share insights and perspectives, including information about child development
- engage in shared decision-making

The partnerships between educators in school-age programs and teachers in elementary school ensure smooth transitions from one setting to the other. These partnerships depend on respect, confidential communication, and sharing of information and insights. Partnerships also involve educators, families, and support professionals working together to explore the learning potential in everyday events, routines, and play. This approach means that children with additional needs,

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4. Community Child Care Victoria. (2011). *Responding to the Needs of Babies and Toddlers*. Australia: Community Child Care. www.gowrievictoria.org.au .

including those that are most vulnerable due to developmental, social, economic, cultural, or linguistic challenges, are provided with daily opportunities to actively engage in early childhood education programs.

Inclusion, diversity, and equity

Educators recognize that each child's social, cultural, and linguistic diversity, including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances, and geographic location, are important considerations to be factored into the implementation of the framework. The intent is to ensure that all children's experiences are recognized and valued; that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and that all children have opportunities to demonstrate their learning and learn to value differences.

There is a consensus in the literature regarding the benefits of inclusive practice in programs for children[5]. In addition to the benefits of early intervention for children with developmental challenges who may need additional support, there is general recognition that there are similar benefits for all children who participate in the program. Whitty[6] noted that all children participating in inclusive programs have opportunities to, "…a) learn empathy and sympathy for self and others; b) develop an understanding of and respect for diversity and acquire a positive regard for each other; and c) raise questions and act to change unfair practices."[7]

Early childhood education programs rich in cultural diversity help children develop broader language skills, increase their cultural awareness, and build respect and appreciation for differences. Culturally diverse programs celebrate similarities as well as differences, and help build a sense of connection with the child's community. The framework is founded on a commitment to inclusive early childhood education practices, and considers inclusive practice to be a core element of high-quality early childhood education. The concepts of inclusive practice and appreciation for diversity are further embedded in the framework (e.g., learning environment).

Respect for diversity

There are many ways of living, being, and knowing. Children are born belonging to a culture, which is not only influenced by traditional practices, heritage, and ancestral knowledge, but also by experiences, values, and beliefs of individual families and communities. Respecting diversity within the framework means valuing and reflecting the practices, values, and beliefs of families.

Educators honour the histories, cultures, languages, and structures and traditions of families. They value children's different capacities and abilities and have respect for children's families. Educators recognize that diversity contributes to the richness of our society. When educators respect the diversity of families and communities and the aspirations they hold for children they foster children's motivation to learn and reinforce children's sense of themselves as competent learners. Educators design early learning environments that uphold children's rights to have their cultures, identities,

5. Lero, D. (2010). *Assessing Inclusion Quality in Early Learning and Child Care in Canada with the SpeciaLink Child Care Inclusion Practices Profile and Principles Scale: A Report Prepared for the Canadian Council on Learning.* Sydney, NS: SpeciaLink—The National Centre for Child Care Inclusion. www.specialinkcanada.org/about/pdf/SpeciaLink%20Research%20Report%20on%20Inclusion%20Quality%20Rating%20Scale.pdf

6. Whitty, P. (2008). *Culture and Diversity in Early Learning and Care*. Early Learning and Child Care Foundational Papers. Fredericton, NB: University of New Brunswick

7. Ibid.

abilities, interests, and strengths acknowledged and valued. They provide opportunities for children to learn about similarities, differences and interdependence, and ways in how we can learn to live together.

Gender-based diversity

As our understanding of gender evolves, it is important that educators create early learning environments that are gender inclusive, and that they avoid making gender-based assumptions about children and how they play. Seeing a child as capable and full of potential also means trusting their choices when it comes to toys, play, self-identification, and expression. In the early years, children may be observed to begin to develop a sense of gender identity, a sense of gender that may or may not match with the child's biological sex. As well, children in the early years may begin to express their gender identity (gender expression) through their appearance, dress, and behaviour. There are children who do not identify with their assigned sex, or with their assigned or expected gender roles. There are children who have different cultural or familial understandings of gender and how it impacts their own social contexts. All of these children need and deserve a place in the learning environment to be themselves.

Equity

Educators who are committed to equity believe in all children's capacities to succeed, regardless of their life circumstances and abilities. Children progress well when they, their families, and their educators hold high expectations for their learning, and have appropriate and timely supports as required.

Educators recognize and strategize how to remove barriers to positive outcomes and optimal development for children. They challenge practices that contribute to inequities and make pedagogical decisions that promote inclusion and participation of all children. By developing their professional knowledge and skills, and working in partnership with children, families, communities, other services, and agencies, educators continually strive to find equitable and effective ways to ensure that all children experience learning opportunities.

Learning Environments

Learning environments are welcoming spaces when they reflect and enrich the lives and identities of children and families participating in the program and respond to their interests and needs. Environments that support learning are vibrant and flexible spaces, and are responsive to the interests and abilities of each child. Environments include the design of the physical space (indoor and outdoor), the furniture, materials available for children within those spaces, and the time (schedules and routines) allowed for children to freely explore, extend their play, and sustain their learning activities.

The early learning environment has been identified by a number of early childhood education proponents as a key feature in children's learning, such as Loris Malaguzzi and Maria Montessori.

Loris Malaguzzi was the founder and director of the renowned municipal preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, and defined the environment as the third teacher. In Reggio Emilia schools, the

environment is well-planned, flexible, and has the potential to, "…shape a child's identity as a powerful player in his or her own life and the lives of others."[8]

Maria Montessori described the importance of the "prepared environment", where both the educators and the child influenced and were influenced by the learning environment. The role of the educator is to observe children's interaction with the environment, and continually modify the learning environment based on those observations.

Outdoor learning spaces are an important feature of children's learning environments. They offer a vast array of possibilities not available indoors. Play spaces in natural environments include plants, trees, edible gardens, sand, rocks, mud, water, and other elements from nature. These spaces invite open-ended interactions, spontaneity, risk-taking, exploration, discovery, and connection with nature. They foster an appreciation of the natural environment, develop environmental awareness, and provide a platform for ongoing environmental education.

Indoor and outdoor environments support all aspects of children's learning and invite conversations between children, educators, families, and the broader community. They promote opportunities for sustained shared thinking and collaborative learning.

Learning materials enhance learning when they are easily found in nature, such as sticks, rocks, and leaves, and familiar, while at the same time introducing novelty to provoke interest and more complex and increasingly abstract thinking. For example, the use of "loose parts" (materials that can be moved, taken apart, lined up, and put back together in multiple ways) encourage creativity and open-ended learning. Environments and resources can also highlight responsibilities to create a sustainable future and promote children's understanding about their own responsibility to care for the environment. These environments foster hope, wonder, and knowledge about the natural world.

Educators also encourage children and families to contribute their own ideas about the learning environment. They can support engagement by allowing time for meaningful interactions, providing a range of opportunities for individual and shared experiences, and finding opportunities for children to contribute to their local community.

Reflective practice

Stand aside for a while and leave room for learning, observe carefully what children do, and then, if you have understood well, perhaps teaching will be different from before. —Loris Malaguzzi

Educators continually seek ways to build their professional knowledge and share their insights with colleagues in various types of learning communities. They are co-learners with 33 children, families, communities, and other educators in early childhood education and schoolbased settings.

Reflective practice is a form of ongoing learning that involves engaging with questions of philosophy, ethics, and practice. Through their own reflective practice, educators gather information and gain insights that support, inform, and enrich decision-making about children's learning. As professionals, they examine what happens in their programs, and reflect on what works well and on what they might change.

Reflective practice is not necessarily something that is done by educators, alone. There is some evidence that reflective practice is more likely to lead to change if it is undertaken as an exercise with others. This type of professional collaboration requires trust among educators; reflection not only

8. Biermeier, M. (2015, November). Inspired by Reggio Emilia: Emergent Curriculum in Relationship-Driven Learning Environments. *Young Children*. Washington DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children

enriches educators' practices, but builds a culture of respect among all who are involved in children's lives.

The importance of reflective practice by educators working in early learning environments has been emphasized in almost every early learning curriculum framework developed over the past 20 years, across Canada, and around the world. While many cite Donald Schön's The Reflective Practitioner (1983) as the beginning of a renewed focus on reflective practice in education (as well as other professions), educational and developmental theorists have long promoted a reflective approach, including John Dewey and Jean Piaget. In fact, the theory of reflective practice goes back to Buddhist teachings, Plato, and Socrates.

> Research tells us that educators who regularly reflect on what they do, why they do it and how this new knowledge can be used to improve their practice achieve the best outcomes for children and families. [9]

Reflective practice also contributes to professional learning for adults. Through it, educators are able to identify topics for further exploration in ongoing professional lines of inquiry. These topics may be pursued through individual study, professional development for staff at individual early childhood education programs, or may be brought forward to professional organizations for inclusion in regional or provincial strategies for ongoing education for the early childhood education sector.

Reflective practice underpins intentional teaching. Schön identified three types of reflective practice: **reflection-in-action**, **reflection-on-action**, and **reflection-for-action**.

Reflection-in-action occurs naturally and continually during the day with children. When an educator spots a three-year-old climbing to the top of the slide, reflection-in-action considers whether the child has ever done this before, or whether the educator should move closer to the slide.

Reflection-on-action occurs after the fact, when educators reflect on the activities and interactions of the day, and question whether a situation may have been handled differently, or what new insights were gained as a result of children's interactions with each other or with adults. Such reflection can be done alone, or in conversation with other educators. Educators working in school-age programs may engage in this type of reflection with other school personnel.

Reflection-for-action describes critical reflection, which involves closely examining all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives. Educators often frame their reflective practice within a set of overarching questions, developing more specific questions for specific areas of inquiry. Critical reflection considers the educator's Image of the Child and the values they hold, which are framed against the present set of experiences and circumstances, with an eye toward future changes or actions.

A lively culture of professional inquiry is established when educators and those with whom they work—including those in the school system—are involved in an ongoing cycle of review, examining current practices, reviewing outcomes, and generating new ideas. In this climate, broad issues relating to curriculum, quality, equity, and children's well-being can be raised, explored, and debated.

9. MacNaughton 2005; Sylva et al. 2004; Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2008; Raban et al. 2007, as quoted in Marbina, L., Church, A., and C. Tayler. (2010). *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: Evidence Paper*. Practice Principle 8: Reflective Practice. Melbourne, Australia: University of Melbourne Graduate School of Education.

Overarching questions that can be used to guide critical reflection may include:

- What personal and professional values influence my Image of the Child?

- What is my understanding of each child?

- What theories, philosophies and understandings shape and assist my work?

- Who is advantaged when I work in this way? Who is disadvantaged?

- What questions do I have about my work? What am I challenged by? How can I meet those challenges?

- What am I curious about? What am I confronted by?

- What can I do as an educator to expand this child's experience and development?

- Are there other theories or knowledge that could help me to understand better what I have observed or experienced? What are they? How might those theories and that knowledge affect my practice? Who else do I need to talk to?

Attribution

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Province of Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2018). *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework.* https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/nselcurriculumframework.pdf

PRACTICE IN EARLY LEARNING

Those things you learn without joy you will forget easily.
—Finnish saying

Learning principles underpin each educator's practice, and draw on a rich repertoire of pedagogical practices to facilitate children's learning by:

- adopting approaches that recognize the interrelated nature of children's learning and development

- being responsive to children

- teaching intentionally

- valuing the cultural and social contexts of children, their families, and communities

- providing continuity in experiences and enabling children to have successful transitions throughout early childhood

- monitoring and supporting children's learning and development through authentic assessment

Holistic approaches

Holistic approaches to teaching and learning recognize the connections between mind, body, and spirit. When educators take a holistic approach, they pay attention to children's physical, personal, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being, as well as cognitive aspects of learning. While educators may plan or assess with a focus on a specific outcome or component of learning, they see children's learning as integrated and interconnected. They recognize the connections between children, families, and communities, as well as the importance of reciprocal relationships and partnerships for learning. Educators see learning as a social activity and value collaborative learning and community participation. Integrated, holistic approaches to teaching and learning also focus on children's connections to the natural world. Educators foster children's capacities to understand and respect the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals, sea, and land.

Responsiveness to children

Educators value and are responsive to all children's interests and competencies by recognizing:

- children's lived experiences

- children's culture and ways of knowing

- children's language(s) spoken

- children's individual needs

Educators are also responsive to children's ideas and approaches to play, which form an important basis for curriculum decision-making. In response to children's evolving ideas and interests, educators assess, anticipate, and extend children's learning via open ended questioning. They also provide feedback, challenging children's thinking, and guide their learning, while making use of spontaneous teachable moments to scaffold children's learning.

> Responsive relationships are significant features of school age care settings. This form of collaborative engagement is evidenced between educators and children, among children, between educators and parents and various stakeholders including schools, working to support children, families and the community.[1]

Responsive learning relationships are strengthened as educators and children learn together and share decisions, respect, and trust. Responsiveness enables educators to respectfully enter children's play and ongoing projects, stimulate their thinking, and enrich their learning.

Intentional teaching

Intentional teaching is deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful. Educators who engage in intentional teaching have specific knowledge of how children learn and develop. They not only have a repertoire of strategies to use with all children, but they also understand when and how to use such strategies. Intentional educators recognize that learning occurs in social contexts and that interactions and conversations are vitally important for learning.

> To be intentional is to act purposefully, with a goal in mind and a plan for accomplishing it. The teacher who can explain why she is doing what she is doing is acting intentionally—whether she is using a strategy tentatively for the first time or automatically from long practice, and whether it is used as part of a deliberate plan or spontaneously in a teachable moment.[2]

Intentional teaching is influenced by the educator's Image of the Child, guided by professional knowledge of how children learn and develop, and shaped by reflective practice.

This type of teaching uses approaches that allow for the co-construction of knowledge between children and educators. This process of co-constructing knowledge results in new knowledge and

1. Australian Government Department of Education and Training. (2011). *My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Child Care in Australia.* Canberra, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia. www.docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/my_time_our_place_framework_for_school_age_care_in_australia_v4_1.pdf

2. Epstein, A. (2014). *The Intentional Teacher—Choosing the Best Strategies for Young Children's Learning* (Revised Edition). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

meaning, rather than facts. It builds on, for example, Vygotsky's theories of children's learning, and recognizes children's intelligence, curiosity, and sense of discovery[3]

> Co-constructing knowledge refers to an educators' decisions and actions that build on existing knowledge and skills to enhance learning; a responsiveness to what children know, what they wonder about, and their working theories about the world around them. When educators engage with, observe, and listen to children; discuss with other educators, children and families the possibilities for further, increasingly complex exploration, they contribute to the process of co-constructing knowledge.[4]

Intentional teaching extends to the environment as well as interactions with children. Educators use intentionality when they design the layout of the learning environment, the types of materials that are included, how the materials are made available to the children, and the schedule of activities—including the length of time for each type of activity and the balance of active and quiet times of the day.

Valuing the cultural and social contexts of children

Educators who are culturally responsive respect all cultural ways of knowing, seeing, and living; celebrate diversity; and understand and honour differences. This is evident in educators' everyday practice when they demonstrate ongoing commitment to developing their own cultural responsiveness in a two-way process with families and communities.

Educators view culture and the context of family as central to children's sense of being and belonging, and to success in lifelong learning. Educators also seek to promote children's cultural responsiveness. Cultural responsiveness is much more than being aware of cultural differences. It is the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures. Culturally responsive practice means:

- being aware of one's own world view
- gaining knowledge of different cultural practices, historical perspectives, and world views
- developing positive attitudes toward and appreciation of cultural differences
- developing skills for communication and interaction across cultures and languages

Continuity of learning experiences

Children bring family and community to their early childhood education programs. When educators build on children's prior and current experiences, it helps them feel secure, confident, and connected to the familiar, which facilitates continuity in their lives. Continuity is key to helping children transition easily between home and their early childhood education programs, school and before

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3. (Barnes, S. (2012). Making Sense of 'Intentional Teaching'. New South Wales: Children's Services Central; John-Steiner and Mahn 1996).

4. Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). *How does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* (p.15). Toronto, ON: Government of Ontario. www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/ HowLearningHappens.pdf

and after school settings, or school and home. Different places and spaces have their own purposes, expectations, and ways of doing things.

In partnership with families, educators ensure that children have an active role in preparing for transitions. They assist children in understanding the traditions, routines, and practices of the settings to which they are moving, and in feeling comfortable with the process of change.

As children make transitions to new programs (including school), educators working in early childhood education programs and schools should arrange time to share information with teachers to build on children's earlier learning. Educators work collaboratively with children's new educators and other professionals to ensure successful transitions.

Authentic assessment

Authentic assessment approaches are part of an ongoing cycle that includes observation and documentation to assess children's development. Such practices allow educators to observe children in their own play environments, and in their relationships and exchanges with other children and adults. Educators are able to talk with children, and understand how each child thinks, plans, and understands.

> Authentic assessment allows teachers to "capture" what developmental checklists, rubrics, and some assessments do not—the children's thinking and learning processes. With authentic assessment, teachers view individual children from a strength- based perspective, incorporating their individual interests and unique qualities. These observations assist teachers to design and develop classroom environments and select activities to scaffold each child's learning. When done with intentionality, authentic assessment helps teachers create the link between assessment and developmentally appropriate curriculum.[5]

Authentic assessment provides opportunities to reflect on pedagogical practices and the appropriateness of learning environments. It involves communicating with parents and families, to give context to observations and to fully understand children's development in a more holistic manner. For example, sharing observations with parents may touch on a child's social, physical, and cognitive development by providing an analysis of how a child approached the activity, rather than simply speaking about one specific area of development.

Authentic assessment approaches, "…engage or evaluate children on tasks that are personally meaningful, take place in real life contexts, and are grounded in naturally occurring instructional activities. They offer multiple ways of evaluating students' learning, as well as their motivation, achievement, and attitudes." (Epstein et al. 2004, 6) It also allows educators to partner with families, children, and other professionals to effectively plan for children's current and future learning, communicate about children's learning and progress, identify children who may need additional support to achieve learning objectives, and assist families in accessing specialist services.

Educators use a variety of strategies to collect, document, organize, synthesize, and interpret the

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5. Rice, M. (2014). "What Can We Learn from Children's Play? Using Authentic Assessment in the Early Childhood Classroom." Innovations and Perspectives, (p.1-3). Virginia: Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Department of Education's Training and Technical Assistance Center.

information gathered to assess children's learning. They search for appropriate ways to collect rich and meaningful information that depicts children's learning in context, describes their progress, and identifies their strengths, skills, and understanding.

More recent approaches to authentic assessment also examine the learning strategies children use and reflect on how learning is co-constructed through interactions between educators and children. Used effectively, these approaches become powerful ways to make the process of learning visible to children and their families, educators, and other professionals.

Each child demonstrates their learning in a variety of ways and authentic assessment allows educators to use assessment practices that are culturally and linguistically relevant and responsive to the physical and intellectual capabilities of each child. It allows for attention and consideration to be given to children's abilities and strengths, and allows them to demonstrate their competence.

The inclusion of children, families, and other professionals in the development and implementation of relevant and appropriate assessment processes allows for new understandings to emerge that would not be possible if educators relied solely on their own strategies and perspectives. The use of inclusive assessment practices with children and their families demonstrates respect for diversity, helps educators make better sense of their observations, and supports learning for both children and adults.

Assessment, when undertaken in collaboration with families, can assist them in supporting children's learning and empower them to act on behalf of their children beyond the early childhood setting. When children are included in the assessment process they develop an understanding of themselves as learners, as well as an understanding of how they learn best.

Reflective practice, when it is applied to an educator's role in children's learning and assessment, allow the educator to examine their own views and understanding of pedagogical theory, research and practice. This brings the following into focus:

- how experiences provide opportunities for children within the context of Learning Goals

- the extent to which they know and value culturally specific knowledge about children and learning embedded within the community where they are working

- each child's learning in the context of their families, drawing on family perspectives, understandings, experiences, and expectations

- learning opportunities build on what children already know

- how learning experiences are inclusive of all children

- how unacknowledged biases may influence their assumptions about children's learning or cause them to set lower expectations for some children

- how incorporating pedagogical practices that reflect knowledge of diverse perspectives and contribute to children's well-being and successful learning

- whether there are sufficiently engaging experiences for all children

- what evidence demonstrates children are learning

- how to expand the range of ways they assess to make assessment richer and more meaningful

Early learning curriculum frameworks from Canada and other countries have adopted similar

approaches when assessing children's learning and development. While the language used to describe these approaches may be different, the message is the same:

- New Brunswick and New Zealand describe "learning stories" as part of the assessment and documentation process

- British Columbia refers to "pedagogical narration"

- Saskatchewan, Ontario, Reggio Emilia, and Sweden refer to "pedagogical documentation"

- Australia describes the process as "action research"

This framework refers to authentic assessment to capture the broad range of strategies used in early childhood education programs.

> Children, like adults, are natural assessors of their own progress and achievements. The adult can enrich and extend children's learning through assessment by identifying learning and development, feeding information back to children, celebrating their progress and achievement with them, and adapting practice and planning for further learning. In this way, assessment helps the adult create portraits which show the richness of children's learning and development. In doing this, assessment also guides the journeys children make as they go. [6]

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6. (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment 2009,102)

PART II.

DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 5.

INTRODUCTION

OBSERVATION AND DOCUMENTATION: THE KEY TO INTENTIONAL TEACHING

To provide children with a safe and nurturing learning environment and to maintain program effectiveness, teachers must incorporate observation, documentation and assessment into their daily routines. To truly be effective, teachers must develop skills and strategies that are grounded in *best practices.* In this chapter you will be presented with information that highlights how observation and documentation can be used as a key strategy to ensure intentional teaching. You will examine the initial steps to take to becoming a skilled observer, and you will reflect on how to objectively document the interactions that you see and the conversations that you hear. It is important to note that becoming a skilled observer takes time and practice, and that learning how to incorporate observation, documentation and assessment into your regular routines and daily duties requires some thoughtful consideration.

THE ROLE OF OBSERVATION

Observations are conducted every day in early childhood classroom environments. Teachers are constantly surveying the environment and completing safety checks to make sure the equipment and materials are safe for the children to use. Teachers also perform daily health screenings to ensure their children are healthy enough to participate in program activities.

Beyond the standard safety check and health screening, teachers have many other important tasks and duties that they must do in order to maintain a copasetic classroom environment. Intentional teachers use their observations to plan and implement curriculum, set up engaging learning environments, monitor the children's social interactions, track behaviors, communicate with families, and assess each child's progress and development. Essentially, observations help teachers be more accountable. By conducting regular observations intentional teachers can:

1. Evaluate program effectiveness

2. Evaluate teacher effectiveness

3. Make improvements to ensure quality practices

4. Plan and implement developmentally appropriate curriculum

5. Measure and assess a child's development

6. Develop respectful family partnerships

7. Understand the cultural practices and family structure

8. Select effective learning strategies to support and accommodate the diverse needs of children

9. Ensure ethical conduct and professional standards of practice

10. Teach with confidence

OBJECTIVE

BUILD

STRENGTHEN

ENGAGE

REFLECT

VERIFY

AWARE

TWEAK

INFORM

ONGOING

NOTES
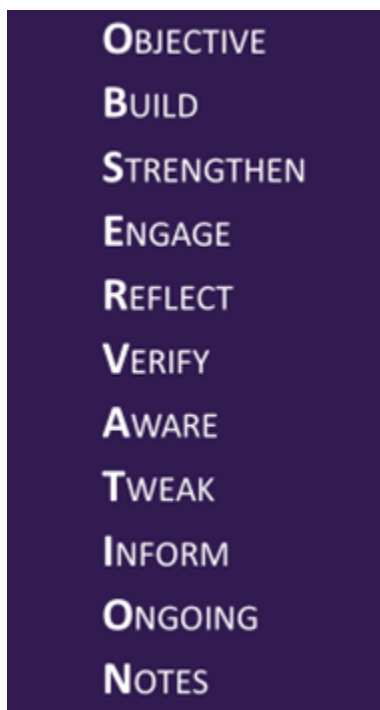
COC OER. Image by College of the Canyons ZTC Team is licensed under CC BY 4.0

> Observation is defined as "the process of gathering information about objects and events using senses of sight, smell, sound, touch and taste, noticing specific details or phenomena that ordinarily might be overlooked" [1]

If we want to understand children, we must first watch them and listen to them. Then, we must try to make sense of what we observed and give it meaning. The role of observation is to provide teachers with information and evidence that they will need to make informed decisions on how to best support the children in their care. With each observation, you will get a glimpse into a child's developing mind. Not only will you see a child's personality emerge, you will be able to see what a child can do. As you watch your children, you will see how they problem solve when conflicts arise and how they cope with the stress from being in a group setting. You will learn about their individual needs and their cultural practices. When you watch children closely, their interests and abilities are revealed. With each observation, you will gain useful insight that will help you become an intentional teacher.

BECOMING A SKILLED OBSERVER

To truly observe a child, you must be present, knowledgeable, inquisitive and intentional. With every

1. California Department of Education. (2016). The Integrated Nature of Learning. Retrieved from https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/intnatureoflearning2016.pdf

observation, you will sharpen your skills as you learn how to effectively gather objective evidence and detailed data.

Be present

To capture all the individual mannerisms, subtle social nuances, non-verbal body language and dynamic conversations that occur throughout the day you must be attentive, focused and ready to go at any given moment. Children move fast. When we blink, we are bound to miss some little detail or precious moment, that's a given. Being present takes considerable effort and careful planning.

Be knowledgeable

Understanding the core concepts of early childhood education is extremely important if you are to set reasonable expectations and plan developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Familiarizing yourself with child development theories will help you understand and appreciate why children do what they do. Learning about the key principles in early care and education will provide you with a solid foundation and a wide range of instructional strategies to support a child's development.

Be inquisitive

Think of yourself as a researcher. Your primary mission is to investigate the children in your care by routinely gathering evidence, using a variety of observation methods and tools. As a good researcher you will need to ask some thoughtful questions. These questions will guide you as you plan purposeful observations and as you select your method of observation. Here are some sample questions you may ask yourself: *What activities interest Max? How many times did Stevie hit today? What skills did Hazel master today with this activity, and what skills need further support? How long did Zoey stay engaged while playing in the sandbox? What milestones will this activity support?* By asking thoughtful questions, you will learn more about the children in your care and you will do a better job at supporting each child's individual needs. Rather than fixating on a child's behavior, in time you will begin using focused observations to try and figure out the reasons why a child acts the way they do.

Be intentional

As you organize learning experiences, set up the classroom and outside environment, assess children's developmental progress, engage in activities, and interact with your children and families – you must have a thoughtful plan of action in place. "Intentional teaching means that everything you do as a teacher has a specific goal and purpose" [2]. Even as spontaneous situations arise, intentional teachers must make
   the most of teachable moments. Intentional teachers conduct regular observations and gather objective documentation data to be accountable for the actions they take, the plans they generate and the assessments they make.

OBSERVATIONS CAN BE SPONTANEOUS OR PLANNED

Spontaneous observations occur all the time. Whether teachers are actively engaged with their children during an activity or in the background cleaning up after an activity, teachers have numerous opportunities to see and hear some wonderful developments as they randomly occur. According to

2. (Gordon & Browne, 2016 p. 103)

Piaget, children require long uninterrupted periods of play and exploration so that they can discover things for themselves. If we truly believe that children are capable of socializing, problem solving, and creating complex systems with rules, then we can successfully use spontaneous observations to capture a child's development as it unfolds naturally.

As intentional teachers, we can also appreciate when teachable moments arise unexpectedly. These golden moments are noteworthy as well. For example, as we witness a child attempting to master a milestone, we may provide some verbal support or guidance to scaffold the child's learning. For example, when Abraham is becoming frustrated with not being able to get a piece of his puzzle to fit, a teacher might ask, "What happens when you turn the piece around?" During spontaneous situations, we must remember to simultaneously make mental notes so that we can later write down and reflect on a more formal plan of action that can be later used to help the child achieve their developmental goals.

Let's review the advantages and disadvantages associated with spontaneous observations.

Advantages

Being in the moment allows you to enjoy your children, and children appreciate your presence. When you are present, you can celebrate a child's success or provide positive reinforcements to help them master major milestones. While being spontaneous, you can focus on the child's interests and pose thoughtful questions to extend and enrich their learning experience. When a teacher keeps a low profile, a child is less likely to be self-conscious or nervous.

Disadvantages

The longer you wait to document your spontaneous observation evidence, the harder it will be to remain objective and recall the vital details which is important when tracking behaviors or assessing development. Also, the more time that passes, the more difficult it will be to access accurate data. For example, by not documenting the children's dialogue or capturing their key quotes in a timely manner, you may find it difficult to remember their actual word choices and use of vocabulary which is essential for assessing a child's expressive language development.

Let's now discuss focused or planned observations. Becoming a skilled observer takes practice. At first you may be slightly overwhelmed with trying to incorporate an official observation time into your already busy schedule. You may struggle with finding that delicate balance between knowing when to interact with your children and realizing when to step back and observe. Once you do observe, you might be surprised by the amount of evidence you have collected on each child. What's more, you will have to sift through all the evidence, and that can be both time consuming and exhausting. Since your time is limited and you cannot possibly observe everything, incorporating a planned observation will help you navigate through your busy day and you will be able to gather more specific evidence [3].

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3. Grouland, G. & James, M. (2013). Focused observations : How to observe young children for assessment and curriculum planning. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

QUESTIONS YOU MAY WANT TO ASK YOURSELF AS YOU PLAN YOUR NEXT OBSERVATION

When should I observe?

From the moment a child walks into their classroom until the time they leave, opportunities to learn are occurring. Some observations will happen spontaneously, while others will be scheduled. To see a child's full potential, you will need to observe at various times throughout the day. For example, some children are slow-to-warm and it may take them some time to get acclimated before they can fully engage and interact with others. If a child is slow -to-warm, the morning drop-off may not be the best time to document their social development. You will want to track them throughout the day, at various times (including transition times and snack/meal times), to get a full picture of who they are and what they can do.

Where should I observe?

Many times, observations are centered around structured, teacher-directed activities. This is, in fact, a perfect time to witness what major milestones a child has mastered. However, observing a child while they are exploring in the dramatic play area (*inside*) or while they are in the sandbox area (*outside*) can prove to be just as enlightening. During child-directed play or open exploration, you will no doubt be able to document many of the developmental skills as suggested in the DRDP or Rating Scales, especially how they communicate, cooperate, solve dilemmas and create. Because children can play and learn differently while they are inside as compared to when they are outside, it is necessary to observe in both environments. Likewise, it is important to observe in all activity areas and play spaces.

What observation method should I use?

Use a variety of methods to record and document your children. You will want to "try out" several tools and techniques to find your "go to" method. Because each tool has a specific purpose or focus, using a variety of methods will provide you with sound documentation data to better understand the whole child's development. *Note:* In the next chapter, you will examine the various tools and techniques more closely.

Who should I observe?

You will want to observe each child as individuals, and you will want to track group interactions. Becoming aware of who is in your class is necessary if you are going to create a caring classroom community and respectful learning environment. *Look for those who are the leaders in your group; find out who needs more one-to-one support and who are your helpers; watch for who plays with who.* This insight can help you organize peer scaffolding opportunities which can free up some of your time. As a gentle reminder, sometimes we connect with certain children for one reason or another, and other times a child may challenge us. Either way we need to regularly observe each child with an open mind and an open heart, and we need to look at children with a clear lens that is free of bias. Each child needs your attention; each child has unique gifts; and each child needs your support.

What is the focus of my observation, what am I looking for?

With focused observations, there usually is a specific goal in mind. For example, you might want

to know what milestones a child has mastered. For that, you would use a developmental checklist to "check-off" all the skills the child was observed doing. Maybe you want to learn what the child's interests are and what they like to play with. For that, you can use a frequency count to tally up all the areas and activities the child used during that observation. Keep in mind that you can observe several skills and competencies across multiple domains during one observation. For example, one day you might set out a math activity and the children are expected to create patterns using colorful beads and pipe cleaners, While they work and play, you can listen to the children's conversations as they describe the patterns they are making; and you can note their fine motor development based on how well they string the beads onto the pipe cleaner; you can also see how they shared space and materials with their peers.

Although this was a math activity, many other areas of development can be observed.

THE ROLE OF DOCUMENTATION

One of the cornerstones of a high-quality early care and education program is the practice of observing, documenting and assessing children's development. In order to make formative decisions that will guide what goes on in the classroom, there needs to be an organized system in place to collect information. When we record our observations and collect data, we "hold in memory the actions, nonverbal communication, or comments that seem to be significant to children's thinking" [4] When we document children's learning and collect key artifacts, we create tangible evidence that we can share with the children and their families, along with administrators and stakeholders. There are many ways you can record and document children's learning. In fact, you should attempt to utilize several methods as part of your regular observation routines.

To collect and record data you can use the following methods:

- running records
- anecdotal notes
- checklists
- frequency counts
- learning stories

To store your documentation

- time or event samples
- work samples
- taking photos, videotaping, or audio recordings

To safely store your collected data, you will need to have an organized system in place. Portfolios are a popular strategy used by intentional teachers. To create a portfolio, you can use a binder or notebook, a file or accordion-style folder, or a cardboard box. As you collect observation evidence for each child, it is vital that you date everything so you can organize it chronologically. This will help you track each child's progress throughout the school year more efficiently. Portfolios help you construct a well-rounded and authentic picture of each child in your class. Knowing the "whole child" you are better

4. California Department of Education. (2015). *California Preschool Program Guidelines*.

equipped to build on each child's individual interests, and you are more apt to plan developmentally appropriate activities.

Each child should have their own portfolio. A well-organized portfolio will contain observations and artifacts of children's work that are collected at different time periods throughout the school year. It is recommended that you include some type of documentation that highlights each developmental domain. For example:

- **Gross Motor:** Take photographs of your child while they are engaged in outside activities like running, jumping, climbing, riding a bike or playing in the sandbox.

- **Fine Motor:** Keep a checklist of when your child learns to button, zip, and tie his shoes. Include work samples of their cutting, coloring, painting, and samples of emergent writing

- **Social-Emotional**: Write anecdotal notes when your child engages in open-ended, child-directed play. Take note of how they share and cooperate with others. Do a frequency count to see which centers your child chooses to spend their time in and tally their play patterns to see if they prefer to play alone or with others.

- **Cognitive:** Chart a science experiment and take photos. Photograph a completed puzzle. Use a video camera to record a child as she builds a block bridge. And, as she explains her process and she had to figure out all the steps to take so that the bridge wouldn't fall down – be sure to record that too.

- **Literacy and Oral language**: Save writing examples to track how the child writes her name. Include illustrations of stories they love and the stories they write themselves. Write down quotes in your running record or make audiotapes of conversations during circle time.

- **Creative expression**: Videotape your child while playing in the dramatic play area or while performing a dance during music and movement. Photograph a clay creation, painting or block tower.

To be clear, it isn't the amount of documentation you collect for each portfolio that matters, it's the quality of information you gather. Portfolios tell a story of the whole child. There should be a beginning, middle, and an end. Each work sample, anecdotal note, checklist, frequency count and learning story should be used to showcase how a child processes information, develops relationships, and learns while playing.

To document children's learning

Whether you collect evidence through spontaneous or planned observations, you will use your documentation to ultimately assess a child's learning, growth, and development. With well-organized documentation, intentional teachers can effectively communicate with a child's family, using the evidence and artifacts they have collected over time. Families appreciate being able to see their child's progression and how they interact with others. Families also enjoy seeing the types of activities their child engages in during a typical day at school. Here are a few ways documentation can be used to showcase a child's learning, growth and development:

- rating scales and formal developmental assessments
- daily progress reports

- documentation boards

10 Teacher Tips When Gathering your Documentation

1. Date – this is key in tracking development over time

2. Time – start time and end time

3. Setting – note the location (indoor or outdoor; center or play area)

4. Purpose – what is the intended goal

5. Note the child (or children) who are involved in the activity

6. Record only the facts – Write down exactly what you see and hear

7. Be as concise (to the point) as you can

8. Record the facts in the order as they occur

9. Be descriptive and provide vivid details -create a visual picture so others can "see" what is happening

Be specific and avoid vague or general terms – this is helpful when you go back to review your data

OBJECTIVE VERSUS SUBJECTIVE OBSERVATION EVIDENCE

Intentional teachers must learn how to write objective observations. As you observe, it is best to write down all that you see and hear, and report just the facts. It takes practice to learn how to separate facts from opinions. Here are some helpful tips for you to review:

Table: Objective Observations vs. Subjective Observations

Objective Observations	Subjective Observations
Objective observations are based on what we observed using our senses, we record exactly what we see, hear, taste, touch, and smell	Subjective observations are often influenced by our past events, personal experiences and opinions, and can be biased based on our cultural backgrounds
Objective information is based on the facts we gather. If we don't see it, we don't report it. We report only details and provide vivid descriptions	Subjective information is based on our opinions, assumptions, personal beliefs, prejudice feelings or can be based on suspicions, rumors and guesses
Results are more likely to be valid and reliable from child to child	Results are often inconsistent and vary from child to child
Objective Terms that can be Used: Seems to be; Appears to	Subjective Words to Avoid: Just; because; but; always, never; can't; I think; happy, smart, helpful, pretty, angry, shy, likes, loves, hates, sad

RECOGNIZING YOUR BIASES

Google the word bias and this is what pops up: "prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair."

Biases, we all have them. Biases stem from our upbringing. Every interaction and every experience we have had has shaped who we are. To some degree, our biases influence our beliefs and behaviors, they sway our attitudes, and they affect our personalities. Because our biases are so ingrained into who we are, it would be unrealistic to simply say "ignore your bias." Therefore, a valuable exercise

might be to do a self-check and examine your own biases. Look for those biases that are "triggers." More specifically, think about the behaviors, temperamental traits, and moods that make you feel uncomfortable, frustrated, or annoyed.

It is important to note, that we might not be fully aware of all our biases. For example, when a child says, "give me some milk!" Our first response might be "Ummm, how do you ask?" We might not realize that manners (or lack of them) can make us react in a judgmental way. What's important to recognize is that how we feel about the child's behavior can taint how we see them. What's more, our biases can influence how we gather our observation evidence. As intentional teachers we have to recognize our biases so we can treat all children with the respect that they deserve. According to NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment (2011),

> Principle 1.3—We shall not participate in practices that discriminate against children by denying benefits, giving special advantages, or excluding them from programs or activities on the basis of their sex, race, national origin, immigration status, preferred home language, religious beliefs, medical condition, disability, or the marital status/family structure, sexual orientation, or religious beliefs or other affiliations of their families.[5]

So as not to lose our objectivity, it is important to keep an open heart, an open mind, and a clear lens. Rather than letting a child's behavior trigger you, look beyond their behavior, look beyond your bias. Focus on collecting objective observation evidence and use that data to reflect on what might be causing that behavior. Consider ways that you can support the child through redirection, modeling, scaffolding or positive reinforcements. As intentional teachers, one of our primary roles is to empower children, and to build meaningful relationships by creating warm, caring environments[6].

Common Mistakes to Avoid When Writing Observation Evidence

- **Making Conclusions**: Billie can't do anything by himself *because* he is the youngest in a large family and they do everything for him; Sharon's parents are getting a divorce, *so she is sad*

- **Making Assumptions**: Annie *never* shares; Denise **always** hits Thomas

- **Labeling:** Rosie *is mean*; Jeff is such a *good boy*

- **Comparing:** Tommy *can't* ride the bike *as well as* Sam; Zoey was *the best* listener at circle time

- **Focusing on Feelings or Emotions**: Max looks so *sad* today; Jax looks so *happy* as he slides down the slide

- **Adding Opinions**: Martha *really likes* playing dress up, she is in the dramatic play area every day; Suki *is shy* and never says anything during circle time.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES WHEN OBSERVING CHILDREN

Every day, teachers observe, record and capture essential moments in a child's development. The evidence and artifacts that are gathered are then used to plan curriculum and assess development. Although we have highlighted the importance of gathering work samples and observation evidence as

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5. NAYEC. (2011). Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment. https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/Ethics%20Position%20Statement2011_09202013update.pdf

6. (Epstein, 2007)

a key element to be an intentional teacher, we must also consider the perspective of the child. In the article "Who is Watching? Thinking Ethically about Observing Children" the authors highlight some of the ethical tensions that can arise within early childhood settings when trying to balance the rights of children, the responsibilities of teachers and the role of a student who is training to be a future teacher.[7]

In most classrooms, a typical day includes teachers grabbing their cameras to take snapshots of the children in their care so that they will have ample documentation. Consider this – does the teacher's presence change the context of the child's experience? Does the thought of being monitored make the child behave any differently? How does the child feel about having their picture taken? Are teachers becoming overly concerned about capturing children in precious moments, rather than being engaged in teachable moments? As a "student" who is learning to observe and document a child's development it is important for you to consider the following guidelines when observing children:

- Take every precaution to maintain confidentiality and to ensure privacy

- Remember to ask if it is OK to take photographs of children and their work

- Understand that children have the right not to take part in activities

- Be respectful and keep a reasonable amount of space between you and the child so as not to interfere with their play and learning

- Be attuned to children's body language, temperament and styles of communication

- See each child as a unique individual who has their own perspective, set of feelings, interests, and way of socializing, along with their own cultural context, belief system, and values

- Be upfront and inform children about the purpose of your observation visit if you are approached

- Share information with the child about what you have observed when appropriate

- Write quotes down just as they were said without adding context, or trying to rationalize what the child may have meant

- Be aware that photos and observation data should be collected in a non-intrusive manner

- Ensure that observation evidence and photos are used only for the purposes intended

- Handle photos and data with care and sensitivity, and always store information securely

- Realize that a child's reactions, behaviors and conversations may not be what you expect and therefore you should refrain from being judgmental or tainted by your cultural biases

By following these guidelines, you are providing the children you observe with the respect they deserve while ensuring their dignity and safety. The centers and programs where you are observing are trusting you to act with integrity while you are at their site observing their children. Lastly, families will appreciate that you have their child's best interest at heart.

7. Mehan, S., & Moore, L. (n.d.). *Who is watching? Thinking ethically about observing children*. Early Childhood Australia. Retrieved from http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our- publications/every-child-magazine/every-child-index/ every-child-vol-17-3-2011/watching- thinking-ethically-observing-children-free-article/

Observing the world through a different lens. Image by Andrew Seaman on Unsplash.

OBSERVATION AND DOCUMENTATION DOS AND DON'TS

Whether performing a planned or spontaneous observation here are some helpful tips to ensure you are recording quality evidence:

Table : Observation and Documentation Do's and Don'ts

Observation and Documentation DOs:	Observation and Documentati
1. Note the date, time, setting, 2. Note the child (or children) involved 3. Record only the facts – in a concise (to the point) manner 4. Record the facts in the order as they occur and exactly as you see it 5. Collect vivid details and quotes 6. Use a variety of Observation Methods 7. Observe with an open heart, an open mind and a clear lens, free of bias 8. Be attentive and alert, and use all your senses 9. Note what the child CAN DO rather than what he cannot do 10. Keep a low profile and respect the children's space while they are playing	1. Do not interfere or pressu 2. Do not assume or state you 3. Do not record anything y 4. Do not label behaviors, a 5. Avoid using subjective, b 6. Avoid using exaggeration 7. Do not summarize inform 8. Avoid using generalizatio

CONCLUSION

To become a skilled observer takes time and practice [8]. You will need to figure out your rhythm so that you can incorporate observation and documentation into your regular routine. As an intentional teacher, you will want to plan systematic observations so that you can document each child's unique qualities, interests, developmental strengths and needs, as well as uncover their cultural practices, approaches to learning and play preferences throughout the school year. As you gather evidence you will want to be as objective as you can be, and you will have to recognize your biases. As you collect your documentation on each child, you will want to organize it in a chronological manner and store it safely. Lastly, be sure to observe every child in your class, be aware that some children may catch your attention more than others for one reason or another. In the next chapter, we will examine several observation tools and techniques that you will want to use as part of your regular observation routine to ensure high-quality practices.

Attribution

Chapter 1 : Observation and Documentation: The Key to Intentional Teaching from *Observation and Assessment in Early Childhood Education* by Peterson and Elam, CC-BY-4.0.

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8. (Gronlund & James, 2013)

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PRESCHOOL YEARS

Chapter Objectives

After this chapter, you should be able to:

- Describe the physical changes that occur in early childhood.

- Explain how to provide health nutrition for 3- to 5-year-olds.

- Summarize how to support the progression of motor skills with age-appropriate activities.

- Discuss sleep needs during early childhood and sleep disorders that may affect children.

- Explain the development behind toilet training and some elimination disorders that children may experience.

- Discuss risks of and a variety of ways to promote and protect children's health and safety.

INTRODUCTION

During the early childhood years of ages three to five we see significant changes in the way children look, think, communicate, regulate their emotions, and interact with others. Children are often referred to as preschoolers during this time period. We'll examine the physical changes of the preschooler in this chapter.

GROWTH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Preschool aged children tend to grow about 3 inches in height each year and gain about 4 to 5 pounds in weight each year. A 3 year old is very similar to a toddler with a large head, large stomach, short arms and legs. But by the time the child comes out of this stage, their torso has lengthened, and their body proportions have become more like those of adults. According to WHO[1], the average 5 year old weighs approximately 43 pounds and is about 43 inches in height. This growth rate is slower than that of infancy.

NUTRITIONAL CONCERNS

That slower rate of growth is accompanied by a reduced appetite between the ages of 2 and 5. Children between the ages of 2 and 3 need 1,000 to 1,400 calories, while children between the ages

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1. World Health Organization. (2021). Weight for age (5-10 years). Retrieved from https://www.who.int/tools/growth-reference-data-for-5to19-years/indicators/weight-for-age-5to10-years,

of 4 and 8 need 1,200 to 2,000 calories [2]. This change can sometimes be surprising to parents and lead to the development of poor eating habits. However, by providing adequate, sound nutrition, and limiting sugary snacks and drinks, the caregiver can be assured that 1) the child will not starve; and 2) the child will receive adequate nutrition. Caregivers need to keep in mind that they are setting up taste preferences at this age. Young children who grow accustomed to high fat, very sweet and salty flavours may have trouble eating foods that have more subtle flavours such as fruits and vegetables. Consider the following advice about establishing eating patterns for years to come[3]. Notice that keeping mealtime pleasant, providing sound nutrition and not engaging in power struggles over food are the main goals[4].

TIPS FOR ESTABLISHING HEALTHY EATING HABITS

1. Don't try to force your child to eat or fight over food. Of course, it is impossible to force someone to eat. But the real advice here is to avoid turning food into a power struggle so that food doesn't become a way to gain favour with or express anger toward someone else.

2. Recognize that appetite varies. Children may eat well at one meal and have no appetite at another. Rather than seeing this as a problem, it may help to realize that appetites do vary. Continue to provide good nutrition at each mealtime (even if children don't choose to eat the occasional meal).

3. Keep it pleasant. This tip is designed to help caregivers create a positive atmosphere during mealtime. Mealtimes should not be the time for arguments or expressing tensions. You do not want the child to have painful memories of mealtimes together or have nervous stomachs and problems eating and digesting food due to stress.

4. No short order chefs. While it is fine to prepare foods that children enjoy, preparing a different meal for each child or family member sets up an unrealistic expectation from others. Children probably do best when they are hungry and a meal is ready. Limiting snacks rather than allowing children to "graze" continuously can help create an appetite for whatever is being served.

5. Limit choices. If you give your preschool aged child choices, make sure that you give them one or two specific choices rather than asking "What would you like for lunch?" If given an open choice, children may change their minds or choose whatever their sibling does not choose!

6. Serve balanced meals. Meals prepared at home tend to have better nutritional value than fast food or frozen dinners. Prepared foods tend to be higher in fat and sugar content as these ingredients enhance taste and profit margin because fresh food is often more costly and less profitable. However, preparing fresh food at home is not costly. It does, however, require more activity. Including children in meal preparation can provide a fun and memorable experience.

7. Don't bribe. Bribing a child to eat vegetables by promising dessert is not a good idea. First, the child will likely find a way to get the dessert without eating the vegetables (by whining or

2. Mayo Clinic, 2016a, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

3. Rice, 1997, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

4. Leon, A. (n.d.). Children's development: Prenatal through adolescent development. Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/document/d/1k1xtrXy6j9_NAqZdGv8nBn_I6-lDtEgEFf7skHjvE-Y/edit

fidgeting, perhaps, until the caregiver gives in). Secondly, it teaches the child that some foods are better than others. Children tend to naturally enjoy a variety of foods until they are taught that some are considered less desirable than others. A child, for example, may learn the broccoli they have enjoyed is seen as yucky by others unless it's smothered in cheese sauce! [5].

Two children cooking together. (Image by the Air Force Medical Service is in the public domain)

MEAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRESCHOOL AGED CHILDREN

The Dieticians of Canada recommend that preschool aged children should be offered the same foods that the rest of the family eats. It is recommended that families/caregivers offer foods with different tastes, textures and colours according to Canada's Food Guide [6]

Table : Sample Menu 1 for Preschoolers: 3 to 5 years old[7]

Sample Menu 1	
Breakfast	Mini mushroom omelettes or breakfast cups Strawberries and banana slices Milk
Morning Snack	Quark and berries parfait Water
Lunch	Cream of parsnip and carrot soup 100% whole wheat unsalted crackers or pita bread Raw vegetables (carrots, celery sticks, red pepper slides) with salad dressing for dipping Milk
Afternoon Snack	Apple slices with nut butter or cheddar cheese Water
Dinner	Mini meatballs Whole wheat pasta with tomato and vegetable pasta sauce Milk
Bedtime Snack	Granola and fruit bites

5. Ibid.

6. Dieticians of Canada. (2020). Sample meal plan for feeding your preschooler (Ages 3 to 5). Retrieved from https://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Articles/Childrens-Nutrition/Cooking-and-Meal-Planning/Sample-meal-plan-for-feeding-your-preschooler-(age

7. Ibid.

Table Sample Menu 2 for Preschoolers: 3 to 5 years old[8]

Sample Menu 2	
Breakfast	Oatmeal pancakes with apple sauce Milk
Morning Snack	Yogurt and fruit smoothie
Lunch	Tuna grilled cheese or mini sandwiches on multigrain or whole wheat crackers Cucumber slices with dip Orange wedges Milk
Afternoon Snack	Hummus with raw vegetables (carrots, celery sticks, red pepper slices) baked tortilla chips or whole wheat pita bread Water
Dinner	Tofu vegetable stir fry with brown rice Milk
Bedtime Snack	Chocolate and almond bites bars

BRAIN MATURATION

BRAIN WEIGHT

Brain growth slows during the preschool years. The brain is about 75% its adult weight by two years of age and by age 6, it is approximately 95% its adult weight. Myelination and the development of dendrites continues to occur in the cortex and as it does, we see a corresponding change in the child's abilities. Significant development in the prefrontal cortex (the area of the brain behind the forehead that helps us to think, strategize, and control emotion) makes it increasingly possible to control emotional outbursts and to understand how to play games. Consider 4- or 5-year-old children and how they might approach a game of soccer. Chances are, every move would be a response to the commands of a coach standing nearby calling out, "Run this way! Now, stop. Look at the ball. Kick the ball!" And when the child is not being told what to do, he or she is likely to be looking at the clover on the ground or a dog on the other side of the fence! Understanding the game, thinking ahead, coordinating movement, and handling losing improve with practice and myelination [9].

VISUAL PATHWAYS

Children's drawings are representative of the development of visual pathways; as children's brains mature the images in their drawings change. Early scribbles and dots illustrate the use of simple motor skills. No real connection is made between an image being visualized and what is created on paper. At age 3, the child begins to draw wispy creatures with heads and not much other detail. Gradually pictures begin to have more detail and incorporate more parts of the body. Arm buds become arms and faces take on noses, lips and eventually eyelashes.

8. Ibid.

9. Lumen Learning. (n.d.). Physical development. In Lifespan development. Retrieved from
https://courses.lumenlearning.com/lifespandevelopment2/chapter/physical-development-during-early-childhood/

Early scribbles (CC BY-SA 3.0; Image by Wikimedia)

Creatures with heads (CC BY 4.0; Image by torange.biz)

A detailed face. CC-BY 4.0; Image by torange.biz

GROWTH IN THE HEMISPHERES AND CORPUS CALLOSUM

Between ages 3 and 6, the left hemisphere of the brain grows dramatically. This side of the brain or hemisphere is typically involved in language skills. The right hemisphere continues to grow throughout early childhood and is involved in tasks that require spatial skills such as recognizing shapes and patterns. The corpus callosum which connects the two hemispheres of the brain undergoes a growth spurt between ages 3 and 6 and results in improved coordination between right and left hemisphere tasks.

MOTOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Early childhood is a time when children are especially attracted to motion and song. Days are filled with jumping, running, swinging and clapping and every place becomes a playground. Even the booth at a restaurant affords the opportunity to slide around in the seat or disappear underneath and imagine being a sea creature in a cave! Of course, this can be frustrating to a caregiver, but it's the business of early childhood.

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

Children continue to improve their gross motor skills as they run and jump. They frequently ask their caregivers to "look at me" while they hop or roll down a hill. Children's songs are often accompanied by arm and leg movements or cues to turn around or move from left to right.

GROSS MOTOR MILESTONES

The Continuum of Development shares that during the preschool years the development of gross

motor skills focus on increasing in coordination, speed, and endurance [10]. Specifically, the following motor movements are being refined[11]:

- Walking: beginning to walk with opposite leg-arm swing, walking up stairs with alternating feet, walking down stairs with alternating feet;

- Jumping: jumping increases in co-ordination;

- Hopping: hopping on one foot increases;

- Galloping: galloping and one-foot skipping emerge;

- Throwing: throwing with rigid movements and throwing with increased co-ordination;

- Riding: pedaling and steering riding toys, and riding a tricycle smoothly;

- Movement and Expression: increasing control over own movements skills, becoming expressive using movement, expressing moods in movement, moving to music, matching movements to the rhyme and mood of the music, making patterns while moving to music, working together in shared dance and movement activities.

Indigenous Perspectives

Connecting to mother earth through dance. Montanabw,
CC BY-SA 3.0

Indigenous children love to dance with or without their Regalia (outfits). Their spirit soars when they dance. It gives them a sense of belonging and connects them to mother earth. It also reinforces what the Continuum of Development says [the development of gross motor skills focuses on increasing

10. Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). Exerpts from "ELECT". Retrieved from https://countrycasa.ca/images/ExcerptsFromELECT.pdf

11. Ibid.

coordination, speed, and endurance]. As they have been watching the adults dance, young children's dance movements really improve at this age.

ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

Here are some activities focused on play that young children enjoy and that support their gross motor skill development.

- Tricycle
- Slides
- Swings
- Sit-n-Spin
- Mini trampoline
- Bowling pins (can use plastic soda bottles also)
- Tent (try throwing blankets over chairs and other furniture to make a fort)
- Playground ladders
- Suspension bridge on playground
- Tunnels (try throwing a bean bag chair underneath for greater challenge)
- Ball play (kick, throw, catch)
- Simon Says
- Target games with bean bags, ball, etc.
- Dancing/moving to music
- Pushing self on scooter or skateboard while on stomach

Child riding a bicycle. Photo by Chip Vincent on Unsplash

FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Fine motor skills are also being refined as they continue to develop more dexterity, strength, and endurance. Fine motor skills are very important as they are foundational to self-help skills and later academic abilities (such as writing).

FINE MOTOR MILESTONES

The Continuum of Development shares that during the preschool years the development of fine motor skills focus on the following[12]:

- Dressing: mastering simple items of clothing; dressing without assistance.
- Eating: eating using forks and knives.
- Tool Use: stringing large beads, cutting paper with scissors, cutting a straight line.
- Drawing: copying straight lines, copying triangles and crosses.

ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Here are some fun activities that will help children continue to refine their fine motor abilities. Fine motor skills are slower to develop than gross motor skills, so it is important to have age-appropriate expectations and play-based activities for children.

- Pouring water into a container
- Drawing and colouring
- Using scissors
- Finger painting
- Fingerplays and songs (such as the Itsy, Bitsy Spider)
- Play dough
- Lacing and beading
- Practicing with large tweezers, tongs, and eye droppers

12. Ibid.

Children colouring. Image by Spangdahlem Air Base is in the public domain

SLEEP AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

Along with food and water, sleep is one of the human body's most important physiological needs—we cannot live without it. Extended sleeplessness (i.e., lack of sleep for longer than a few days) has severe psychological and physical effects. Research on rats has found that a week of no sleep leads to loss of immune function, and two weeks of no sleep leads to death. Recently, neuroscientists have learned that at least one vital function of sleep is related to learning and memory. New findings suggest that sleep plays a critical role in flagging and storing important memories, both intellectual and physical, and perhaps in making subtle connections that were invisible during waking hours [13].

How much sleep do we need?

The amount of sleep an individual needs varies depending on multiple factors including age, physical condition, psychological condition, and energy exertion. Just like any other human characteristic, the amount of sleep people need to function best differs among individuals, even those of the same age and gender.

Though there is no magic sleep number, there are general rules for how much sleep certain age groups need. According to The Hospital for Sick Children [14] in Toronto, during the preschool years, children are sleeping approximately 10-12 hours each day, with most of the sleep occurring in one large chunk at night. This change in sleep patterns means that daytime naps will be dropped organically or weaned in order to make room for that important nighttime sleep. This may be a challenging time for children and their families as they respond to the transition. Some children may struggle to remain awake during the latter part of the day and may need extra support to regulate their behaviours and emotions during this stressful period. If the child attends a full day child care program, it is essential that the family and the educators work together to develop a sleep strategy designed in the best interest of the child.

13. Leon, A. (n.d.). Children's development: Prenatal through adolescent development. Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/document/d/1k1xtrXy6j9_NAqZdGv8nBn_I6-lDtEgEFf7skHjvE-Y/edit

14. SickKids. (2020). Sleep: Benefits and recommended amounts. Retrieved from https://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/article?contentid=645&language=english

A child sleeping. Image by Peter Griffin is in the public domain.

SLEEPWALKING (SOMNAMBULISM)

Sleepwalking (sometimes called sleepwalking disorder, somnambulism, or noctambulation) causes a person to get up and walk during the early hours of sleep. The person may sit up and look awake (though they're actually asleep), get up and walk around, move items, or dress or undress themselves. They will have a blank stare and still be able to perform complex tasks. Some individuals also talk while in their sleep, saying meaningless words and even having arguments with people who are not there. A person who sleepwalks will be confused upon waking up and may also experience anxiety and fatigue.

According to Healthline[15], sleepwalking is most common in children aged 4-8. Most children who sleepwalk begin to do so an hour or two after falling asleep and episodes usually last from five to 15 minutes. This behaviour is typically harmless, and most children grow out of it. However, it can be dangerous if left unaddressed. It's important to protect your child from possible injury from sleepwalking by gently guiding them back to bed once discovered. Do not try to wake the sleepwalker, as this could aggravate them. Instead, simply reassure the child with words and help steer them back to bed.

NIGHT TERRORS AND NIGHTMARE DISORDER

Night terrors are characterized by a sudden arousal from deep sleep with a scream or cry, accompanied by some behavioural manifestations of intense fear. They are often accompanied by sleep walking. Night terrors typically occur in the first few hours of sleep, during stage 3 NREM sleep and tend to happen during periods of arousal from delta sleep (i.e., slow-wave sleep). According to the Hospital for Sick Children [16], unlike nightmares, children who have night terrors rarely wake up during the episode. They often do not have memories of the night terror. During the episode, they will show signs of fear, anxiety and general disturbance. Children are typically not fully conscious and may speak without making sense. Night terrors are common in children younger than six years old.

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15. Healthline. (2018). Pediatric sleepwalking. Retrieved from https://www.healthline.com/health/sleep/sleepwalking-and-children

16. SickKids. (2011). Sleep terrors. Retrieved from https://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/Article?contentid=305&language=English

TOILET TRAINING (OR TOILET LEARNING)

Learning how to use the toilet typically occurs between the ages of 2-4. Some children show interest by age 2, but others may not be ready until months later. The average age for girls to be toilet trained is 29 months and for boys it is 31 months, and 98% of children are trained by 36 months [17]. The child's age is not as important as his/her physical, emotional and cognitive readiness. If started too early, it might take longer to support a child in learning how to use the toilet.

According to the Canadian Paediatric Society via Caring for Kids (2018), caregivers can assume that a child is ready for toilet learning when they:

- Show an interest in the potty (by watching you, or by liking books about learning to use the potty).

- Are dry in their diaper for several hours in a row.

- Have regular and predictable bowel movements or knows when they are urinating or having a bowel movement. For example, child might go into another room or hide behind furniture.

- Are steady and balanced when sitting on the toilet or potty.

- Can follow one or two simple instructions.

- Can let you know when they need to use the potty.

- Want to be independent.

If a child resists being trained or it is not successful after a few weeks, it is best to take a break and try again when they show more significant interest in the process. Most children master daytime bladder control first, typically within two to three months of consistent toilet training. However, nap and nighttime training might take months or even years.

A child learning to be toilet trained. Image by Manish Bansal is licensed under CC-BY-2.0

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17. Boyse & Fitzgerald, 2010, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

ELIMINATION DISORDERS

Some children experience elimination disorders including:

- enuresis – the repeated voiding of urine into bed or clothes (involuntary or intentional) after age 5

- encopresis – the repeated passage of feces into inappropriate places (involuntary or intentional).

The prevalence of enuresis is 5%-10% for 5 year-olds, 3%-5% for 10 year-olds and approximately 1% for those 15 years of age or older. Around 1% of 5 year-olds have encopresis, and it is more common in males than females. These are diagnosed by a medical professional and may require treatment [18].

HEALTH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Childhood obesity is a complex health issue. It is diagnosed when a child is well above the normal or healthy weight for his or her age and height. Childhood obesity is on the rise; obesity rates among children and youth in Canada have nearly tripled in the last 30 years [19]. Where people live can affect their ability to make healthy choices. Obesity disproportionally affects children from low-income families.

CAUSES OF OBESITY

The causes of excess weight gain in young people are similar to those in adults, including factors such as a person's behaviour and genetics. Behaviours that influence excess weight gain include:

- eating high calorie, low-nutrient foods

- not getting enough physical exercise

- sedentary activities (such as watching television or other screen devices)

- medication use

- sleep routines

18. Lally, M. & Valentine-French, S. (2019). Lifespan development: A psychological perspective (2nd ed.). Retrieved from http://dept.clcillinois.edu/psy/LifespanDevelopment.pdf

19. Government of Canada. (2019). Childhood obseity. Retrieved from https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/childhood-obesity/childhood-obesity.html

A child using an electronic devise instead of playing. Photo by zhenzhong liu on Unsplash.

CONSEQUENCES OF OBESITY

The consequences of childhood obesity are both immediate and long term. It can affect physical as well as social and emotional well-being.

More immediate Health Risks:

- High blood pressure and high cholesterol, which are risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD).

- Increased risk of impaired glucose tolerance, insulin resistance, and type 2 diabetes.

- breathing challenges, such as asthma and sleep apnea.

- Joint problems and musculoskeletal discomfort.

- Fatty liver disease, gallstones, and gastro-esophageal reflux (i.e., heartburn).

Childhood Obesity is also related to:

- Psychological challenges, such as anxiety and depression.

- Low self-esteem and lower self-reported quality of life.

- Social problems such as bullying and stigma.

Future Health Risks:

- Children who have obesity are more likely to become adults with obesity. Adult obesity is associated with increased risk of a number of serious health conditions including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and cancer.

- If children have obesity, their obesity and disease risk factors in adulthood are likely to be more severe.

To fight off the risk of obesity in preschool aged children, the Government of Canada [20] suggests that caregivers support children in developing healthy eating habits and encourage physical activity. They suggest the following:

20. Ibid.

Tips for developing healthy eating habits:

- Use the Canada Food Guide to plan meals/snacks.

- Set a good example by being a role model for healthy eating. Children are more likely to try new foods if you eat them too.

- Limit distracted eating by keeping the food at the meal the focus.

- Involve children in planning and preparing meals and snacks.

Tips for encouraging physical activity:

- Aim for at least 180 minutes spent in a variety of physical activities spread throughout the day, including at least 60 minutes of energetic play [21].

- Set a good example by being a role model for participating in consistent physical activity.

- Limit the amount of time your children spend on sedentary activities like watching television, playing video games, and surfing the web.

FOOD ALLERGIES

According to Food Allergy Canada [22],

- more than 3 million Canadians self-report having at least one food allergy.

- almost 500,000 Canadian children under 18 years have food allergies.

- peanut allergies in Canada affect about 2 in 100 children.

A food allergy occurs when the body has a specific and reproducible immune response to certain foods. Although the immune system normally protects people from germs, in people with food allergies, the immune system mistakenly responds to food as if it were harmful. The body's immune response can be mild, moderate, severe or life-threatening. An example of a severe or life-threatening response would be anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a sudden and severe allergic reaction that may cause death. Children at risk of anaphylaxis will likely have immediate access to an epinephrine auto-injector (e.g. EpiPen®, ALLERJECT®) which contains life-saving medication to treat an allergic reaction. Under Sabrina's Law, every school board in Ontario is required to establish and maintain an anaphylactic policy. The law also requires schools to create individual plans for each child at risk of anaphylaxis.

Symptoms of anaphylaxis generally include two or more of these body systems[23].

- Skin: hives, swelling (face, lips, tongue), itching, warmth, redness

21. CSEP. (2021). Canadian 24 hour movement guidelines for the early years. Retrieved from https://csepguidelines.ca/early-years-0-4/

22. Food Allergy Canada. (2021). Food allergy FAQ's. Retrieved from https://foodallergycanada.ca/food-allergy-basics/food-allergies-101/food-allergy-faqs/

23. Food Allergy Canada. (2021). Food allergy FAQ's. Retrieved from https://foodallergycanada.ca/food-allergy-basics/food-allergies-101/food-allergy-faqs/

- Respiratory (breathing): coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest pain/tightness, throat tightness, hoarse voice, nasal congestion or hay fever-like symptoms (runny itchy nose and watery eyes, sneezing), trouble swallowing

- Gastrointestinal (stomach): nausea, pain/cramps, vomiting, diarrhea

- Cardiovascular (heart): paler than normal skin colour/blue colour, weak pulse, passing out, dizziness or lightheadedness, shock

- Other: anxiety, sense of doom (the feeling that something bad is about to happen), headache, uterine cramps, metallic taste

Some preschool children may not have diagnosed food allergies, rather suffer from food intolerances. A food intolerance is the inability to digest or absorb certain foods. For example, someone with lactose intolerance doesn't have enough of the enzyme lactase to break down the sugar (lactose) in dairy products. The symptoms of food intolerance affect the gastrointestinal tract and can cause discomfort but are generally not life-threatening[24].

Indigenous Perspectives

Poverty and the lack of access to healthy foods affect all remote Indigenous communities in Canada. Healthy foods are so expensive that poor families cannot afford it. The following link opens a paper on Tackling Poverty in Indigenous Communities in Canada   The following blog The Challenge of Feeding the North discusses food insecurity in remote communities in Canada This is a problem that has been at the forefront since Indigenous people have been placed on reservations.

ORAL HEALTH

According to the Ontario Dental Hygienist's Association [25], teeth are an integral part of overall health and with proper care people can keep their teeth for a lifetime. Preschool aged children should be encouraged to build healthy eating habits to protect their teeth and encouraged to brush their teeth twice a day. When teeth are not well taken care of, children can suffer from oral infections and early childhood cavities (ECC). ECC is a severe form of tooth decay in the primary teeth of infants and toddlers. It affects more than 10% of preschool-age children in Canada. ECC can be caused by passing bacteria from the parent/caregiver to the child (e.g., through kisses, sharing toothbrushes, food and utensils), the amount of sugar and starches in the diet, and the time and frequency of feedings.

Tips to support positive oral care in preschool aged children:

- At this stage caregivers should still need to supervise and help children brush and floss properly. The parent can check after the child has brushed.

- The best way to check the child's mouth after brushing is to stand behind the child so that both are facing the mirror. Lift the lip to assess the gums and the back teeth.

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24. Ibid

25. Ontario Dental Hygenists Association. (n.d.). Dental hygiene facts: Oral care for children. Retrieved from https://odha.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/ODHA-Facts-children.v2.pdf

- Toothpaste with fluoride should only be used when the child can rinse and spit properly because swallowing toothpaste with fluoride can permanently stain a child's adult teeth. Use only a small amount of toothpaste (pea-size or smaller).

- Encourage regular brushing and flossing as the child gets older.

A dentist checking a child's teeth. Image by Keesler Air Force Base is in the public domain

PROTECTION FROM ILLNESS

Two important ways to help protect children from illness are immunization and hand-washing.

Immunizations

While vaccines begin in infancy, it is important for children to receive additional doses of vaccines to keep them protected. These boosters, given during the preschool years, are doses of the vaccines they received earlier in life to help them maintain the best protection against vaccine-preventable diseases.
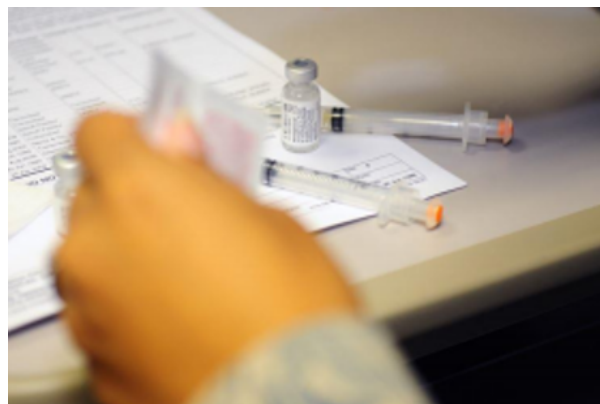
Vaccines. Image by Ramstein Air Base is in the public domain.

The following chart shows the recommended schedule of immunizations during childhood for the province of Ontario as of December 2016. For the most current recommendations according to the National Advisory Committee on Immunization and for each province and territory go to the Government of Canada website.

Immunization Schedule

The following is the recommended schedule of immunizations during childhood:

Age	DTap-IPV-Hib	Pneu-C-13	Rot	Men-C	MMR	Var	Tdap-IPV	MMR-Var	Men-C-A,C,Y,W-135	HB**	HPV	Tdap	Inf
2 m	✓	✓	✓										
4 m	✓	✓	✓										
6 m	✓												
12 m		✓		✓	✓								
15 m						✓							
18 m	✓												
4-6 y							✓						
Gr 7									✓	✓	✓		
14-16 y												✓	
Every year*													✓

m=Month; y=Year; Gr=Grade
* The influenza vaccine is approved for use beginning at age 6 months.
** The Hep B vaccine is approved for use beginning at birth and should be given to babies whose parents or household contacts are known Hep B carriers.

www.aboutkidshealth.ca

The Province of Ontario [26], shares in the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 that families are to provide proof of immunization (or appropriate exemption documents) for certain diseases if their child attends a licensed childcare centre in Ontario. A child may be exempt from immunization requirements for medical reasons, philosophical reasons or religious reasons. It should be noted that children who are not vaccinated are at increased risk of disease and may be removed from the child care centre during a disease outbreak [27].

Hand-Washing

Hand-washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of illness. It's important for children (and adults) to wash their hands often, especially when they are likely to get and spread germs, including:

- Before, during, and after preparing food.
- Before eating food.
- After blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- After using the toilet.
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste.
- After touching garbage.

It's important for children to learn how to properly wash their hands. When washing hands children (and adults) should follow these five steps every time.

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.

2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.

26. Province of Ontario. (2014). Child care and early years act 2014, O. Reg. 137/15: General. Retrieved from https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/150137

27. Eastern Ontario Health Unit. (2021). Immunization requirements for children in licensed child care centres (Daycare). Retrieved from https://eohu.ca/en/my-community/immunization-requirements-for-children-in-licensed-child-care-centres-daycare

3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum or sing the Happy Birthday song or ABCs from beginning to end twice.

4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.

5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them [28]

A mother helping her son wash his hands. (Image is in the public domain)

Caregivers can help keep children healthy by:

- Teaching them good hand-washing techniques.

- Reminding their kids to wash their hands.

- Washing their own hands with the children [29].

SAFETY

Childhood injury is defined as "the physical damage that results when a human body is subjected to energy that exceeds the threshold of physiological tolerance or results in lack of one or more vital elements, such as oxygen" [30].

Through statistics shared via the Canadian Pediatric Society [31],

- In Canada, injury is the leading cause of death for not only children, but for all Canadians between the ages of one and 44.

- Between 1994 and 2003, approximately 390 Canadian children age 14 years and under died from unintentional injuries annually, while another 25,500 were hospitalized.

- In 2004, injuries to Canadians cost $19.8 billion in health care costs and lost productivity, of which $16.0 billion resulted from unintentional causes. Of this, almost $3 billion could be

28. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). When and how to wash our hands. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Ffeatures%2Fhandwashing%2Findex.html

29. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). Handwashing: A family activity. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/handwashing-family.html

30. Canadian Pediatric Society. (2020). Child and youth injury prevention: A public health approach. Retrieved from https://www.cps.ca/documents/position/child-and-youth-injury-prevention

31. Ibid

accounted for by falls and transport-related injuries to children and youth from birth to 19 years of age.

The most common causes of injury in preschool aged children are due to the following[32]:

- **Falls:** Falls are the leading cause of injury in preschool aged children. Examples of how falls can occur are as follows: on the stairs and steps, off furniture, by slipping, tripping and stumbling, by using furniture to climb out windows or balconies, by not using age appropriate playground equipment, and/or on hard surfaces.

- **Choking, strangulation and suffocation** are leading causes of injury-related deaths for children in Canada. Children can be harmed by: choking on food and small objects, strangling from items such as ropes, blind cords, or draw strings in clothing, suffocating in cribs or beds, being left in a car.

- **Burns:** A child's skin burns four times faster and deeper than an adult's at the same temperature. Common causes of burns include: scalds from steam, hot water, tipped-over coffee cups, hot foods or cooking fluids, contact with flames or other hot objects such as curling iron or fireplace, chemical burns from items such as batteries or bleach, electrical burns from biting on electrical cords or sticking fingers or objects into outlets, too much exposure to the sun.

- **Poisoning:** Half of all poison exposures happen to children under five years of age. Common poisonous products: medications, household cleaners, alcohol, plants, fertilizers, pesticides, paint thinner, antifreeze, carbon monoxide

- **Drowning or near drowning:** All children are at risk for drowning but children under age five have a higher risk. It can happen quickly and silently in only a few centimetres of water.

Childhood injuries are preventable. It is important for caregivers to consistently and thoroughly supervise young children.

Children playing on a jungle gym at a park. Image is in the public domain

32. City of Toronto. (2021). Common childhood injuries. Retrieved from https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/public-safety-alerts/safety-tips-prevention/home-high-rise-school-workplace-safety/child-safety/common-childhood-injuries/

Summary

In this chapter we looked at:

- The physical characteristics of preschoolers.

- Healthy nutrition.

- The changes in the brain.

- The progression of motor skills and developmentally appropriate ways to support that development.

- Sleep and sleep disorders.

- Toilet training and elimination disorders.

- And ways to keep children healthy and safe.

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COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE PRESCHOOL YEARS

Chapter Objectives

After this chapter, you should be able to:

- Compare and contrast Piaget and Vygotsky's beliefs about cognitive development.
- Explain the role of information processing in cognitive development.
- Discuss how preschool-aged children understand their worlds.
- Put cognitive milestones into the order in which they appear in typically developing children. Discuss how early child education supports development and how our understanding of development influence education.
- Describe autism spectrum disorder as atypical cognitive development

INTRODUCTION

Understanding of cognitive development is advancing on many different fronts. One exciting area is linking changes in brain activity to changes in children's thinking[1]. Although many people believe that brain maturation is something that occurs before birth, the brain actually continues to change in large ways for many years thereafter. For example, a part of the brain called the prefrontal cortex, which is located at the front of the brain and is particularly involved with planning and flexible problem solving, continues to develop throughout adolescence [2].

PRESCHOOL COGNITIVE SKILLS

The Continuum of Development [3] describes the core skills which are part of the preschool/kindergarten stage of development. These skills are also reflected the overall and specific expectations

1. Nelson et al., 2006, as cited inLeon, A. (n.d.). Children's development: Prenatal through adolescent development. Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/document/d/1k1xtrXy6j9_NAqZdGv8nBn_I6-lDtEgEFf7skHjvE-Y/edit

2. Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006, as cited in Leon, A. (n.d.). Children's development: Prenatal through adolescent development. Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/document/d/1k1xtrXy6j9_NAqZdGv8nBn_I6-lDtEgEFf7skHjvE-Y/edit

3. Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). Exerpts from "ELECT". Retrieved from https://countrycasa.ca/images/ExcerptsFromELECT.pdf

in the four frames in Ontario's the Kindergarten Program[4]. This document will be referred to throughout the chapters on preschool development.

Below is a summary of the core skills in preschool cognitive development as described in the Continuum of Development by Ontario Ministry of Education [5].

During the preschool years children continue to observe their world, ask questions, and develop and test their theories about how things work. During this stage of development children master new ways of describing and making meaning of their experiences. At this stage their reasoning is more logical. They solve problems by collecting and organizing information, reflecting on it, drawing conclusions and communicating their findings with others. This may include the skills of classifying and seriating. Increased verbal abilities allow them to use spatial terms and positional words such as behind, inside, in front of, between. They can follow directions, creating and using maps.

Preschoolers' exploration of mathematics continues to grow with an increasing understanding of numeracy, which includes counting in meaningful ways to determine quantity, comparing quantities, and completing simple number operations using number symbols. They explore ways to represent number such as tally marks. They demonstrate a growing ability to describe attributes of 2 dimensional figures and 3 dimensional solids, to identify patterns and show an interest in measurement, particularly linear measurement. They become more skilled at understanding time and how it is measured.

The ability to represent is demonstrated through using materials to express ideas which may be in the form of 2D and 3D creations. In socio dramatic play preschoolers can take on a role pretending to be someone else, sustaining the play, and using props to tell a story. [6]

Early childhood is a time of pretending, blending fact and fiction, and learning to think of the world using language. As young children move away from needing to touch, feel, and hear about the world toward learning some basic principles about how the world works, they hold some interesting ideas. For example, while adults have no concerns with taking a bath, a child of three might genuinely worry about being sucked down the drain. A child might protest if told that something will happen "tomorrow" but be willing to accept an explanation that an event will occur "today after we sleep." Or the young child may ask, "How long are we staying? From here to here?" while pointing to two points on a table. Concepts such as tomorrow, time, size and distance are not easy to grasp at this young age. Understanding size, time, distance, fact and fiction are all tasks that are part of cognitive development in the preschool years.

PIAGET'S PREOPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Piaget's stage that coincides with early childhood is the **preoperational stage**. The word operational

4. Ontario Ministry of Education (2016). The kindergarten program. Retrieved from https://files.ontario.ca/books/kindergarten-program-en.pdf?_ga=2.18670905.1886719864.1639406346-482631340.1639406346

5. Ibid.

6. Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). Exerpts from "ELECT". Retrieved from https://countrycasa.ca/images/ExcerptsFromELECT.pdf

means logical, children are learning to use language and to think about the world symbolically. Let's examine some of Piaget's assertions about children's cognitive abilities at this age.

MENTAL REPRESENTATION

As children move through substage 6 in sensorimotor development they begin to work with symbols, words ,and gestures to form an internal working model of their world. They demonstrate deferred imitation by imitating actions they have seen at a previous time. They begin to use objects to represent other things so a block can be a phone for example. These new skills support the emergence of make-believe play.

PRETEND PLAY

Pretending is a favourite activity at this time. A toy has qualities beyond the way it was designed to function and can now be used to stand for a character or object unlike anything originally intended. A teddy bear, for example, can be a baby or the queen of a faraway land!

A child pretending to buy items at a toy grocery store. (Image by Ermalfaro is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0)

According to Piaget, children's pretend play helps them solidify new schemes they were developing cognitively. This play, then, reflects changes in their conceptions or thoughts. However, children also learn as they take on roles. examine perspectives, pretend and experiment. Their play does not simply represent what they have learned [7]. In their play they make meaning of their lived experiences and explore possibilities as they consider 'what is' and 'what if'?

Indigenous Perspectives

This is the perfect age to introduce Indigenous Storytelling with role playing the animals in the story. Let them change the story and have fun with it. Children will see themselves in the story. This relates to what Piaget says: "In their play, they make meaning of their lived experiences and explore possibilities as they consider 'what is' and 'what if'?".   Plenty of outdoor play will help to connect children to the land.

7. Berk, 2007, as cited Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

At this age, children also have to have clear directions in order to complete what they are asked to do. For example, if the child is not looking at you. You say listen to me. The child says "I am listening to you." The educator has to be precise in what they are asking of the child. It is important to note that a lot of Indigenous children might not look you in the eyes. This is a cultural thing.

EGOCENTRISM

Egocentrism in early childhood refers to the tendency of young children to think that everyone sees things in the same way as the child. Piaget's classic experiment on egocentrism involved showing children a 3-dimensional model of a mountain and asking them to describe what a doll that is looking at the mountain from a different angle might see. Children tend to choose a picture that represents their own view, rather than that of the doll. However, children tend to use different sentence structures and vocabulary when addressing a younger child or an older adult. This indicates some awareness of the views of others.

Piaget's egocentrism experiment. Image by Rosenfeld Media is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

SYNCRETISM

Syncretism refers to a tendency to think that if two events occur simultaneously, one caused the other. Example: A family is planning to go on a picnic. The preschooler misbehaves by taking a toy away from their younger sibling who cries. The family reacts firmly to the situation. As they are sorting out the situation, they hear the sound of distant thunder and decide to postpone the picnic. The preschooler may believe that their behaviour caused the storm which resulted in the cancellation of the plans.

ANIMISM

Attributing lifelike qualities to objects is referred to as animism. The cup is alive, the chair that falls down and hits the child's ankle is mean, and the toys need to stay home because they are tired. Cartoons and animation frequently show objects that appear alive and take on lifelike qualities. They may also think that a small gardening tool could grow up to be a full-size shovel. Young children do

seem to think that objects that move may be alive but after age 3, they seldom refer to objects as being alive [8].

CLASSIFICATION ERRORS

Preoperational children have difficulty understanding that an object can be classified in more than one way. For example, if shown three white buttons and four black buttons and asked whether there are more black buttons or buttons, the child is likely to respond that there are more black buttons. As the child's vocabulary improves and more schemes are developed, the ability to classify objects improves.

CONSERVATION ERRORS

Conservation refers to the ability to recognize that moving or rearranging matter does not change the quantity. Let's look at an example. A father gave a slice of pizza to 10-year-old Keiko and another slice to 3-year-old Kenny. Kenny's pizza slice was cut into five pieces, so Kenny told his sister that he got more pizza than she did. Kenny did not understand that cutting the pizza into smaller pieces did not increase the overall amount. This was because Kenny exhibited Centration or focused on only one characteristic or attribute of an object to the exclusion of others.
Kenny focused on the five pieces of pizza to his sister's one piece even though the total amount of pizza was the same. Keiko was able to consider several characteristics of an object rather than just one.

The classic Piagetian experiment associated with conservation involves liquid [9]. As seen below, the child is shown two glasses (as shown in a) which are filled to the same level and asked if they have the same amount. Usually, the child agrees they have the same amount. The researcher then pours the liquid from one glass to a taller and thinner glass (as shown in b). The child is again asked if the two glasses have the same amount of liquid. The preoperational child will typically say the taller glass now has more liquid because it is taller. The child has concentrated on the height of the glass and fails to conserve [10].
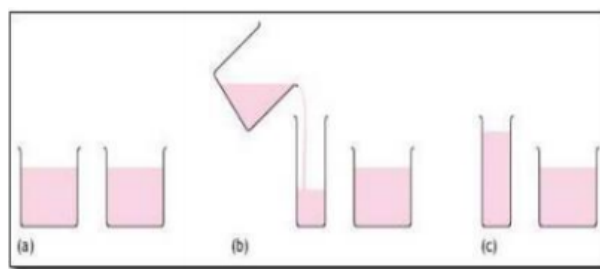
Piagetian liquid conservation experiments. Image by Martha Lally and Suzanne Valentine-French is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

8. Berk, 2007, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

9. Crain, 2005, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

10. Lally, M. & Valentine-French, S. (2019). Lifespan development: A psychological perspective (2nd ed.). Retrieved from http://dept.clcillinois.edu/psy/LifespanDevelopment.pdf

COGNITIVE SCHEMAS

As introduced in the first chapter, Piaget believed that in a quest for cognitive equilibrium, we use schemas (categories of knowledge) to make sense of the world. And when new experiences fit into existing schemas, we use assimilation to add that new knowledge to the schema. But when new experiences do not match an existing schema, we use accommodation to add a new schema. During early childhood, children use accommodation often as they build their understanding of the world around them.

VYGOTSKY'S SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY OF DEVELOPMENT

Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding
Vygotsky's best-known concept is the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky stated that children should be taught in the ZPD, which occurs when they can perform a task with assistance, but not quite yet on their own. With the right kind of teaching, however, they can accomplish it successfully. A good teacher identifies a child's ZPD and helps the child stretch beyond it. Then the adult (teacher) gradually withdraws support until the child can then perform the task unaided. Researchers have applied the metaphor of scaffolds (the temporary platforms on which construction workers stand) to this way of teaching. Scaffolding is the temporary support that parents or teachers give a child to do a task.
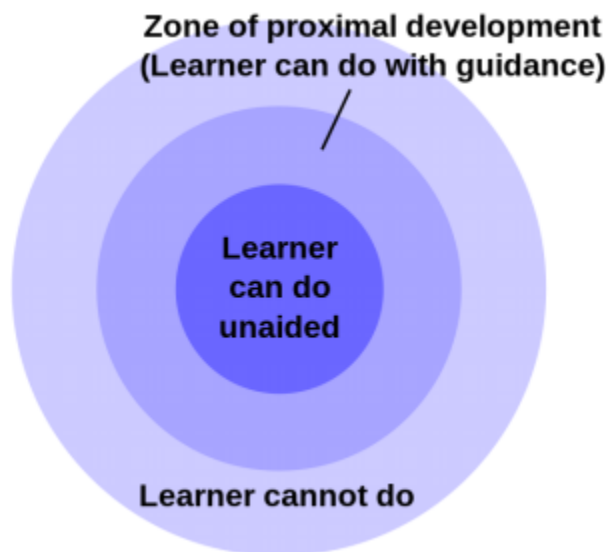
Zone of proximal development. Image by Dcoetzee is licensed under CC0 1.0

PRIVATE SPEECH

Do you ever talk to yourself? Why? Chances are, this occurs when you are struggling with a problem, trying to remember something, or feel very emotional about a situation. Children talk to themselves too. Piaget interpreted this as egocentric speech or a practice engaged in because of a child's inability to see things from another's point of view. Vygotsky, however, believed that children talk to themselves in order to solve problems or clarify thoughts. As children learn to think in words, they do so aloud before eventually closing their lips to engage in private speech or inner speech.

Thinking out loud eventually becomes thought accompanied by internal speech, and talking to oneself becomes a practice only engaged in when we are trying to learn something or remember something. This inner speech is not as elaborate as the speech we use when communicating with others [11].

CONTRAST WITH PIAGET

Piaget was highly critical of teacher-directed instruction, believing that teachers who take control of the child's learning place the child into a passive role[12]. Further, teachers may present abstract ideas without the child's true understanding, and instead they just repeat back what they heard. Piaget believed children must be given opportunities to discover concepts on their own. As previously stated, Vygotsky did not believe children could reach a higher cognitive level without instruction from more learned individuals. Who is correct? Both theories certainly contribute to our understanding of how children learn.

INFORMATION PROCESSING

Information processing researchers have focused on several issues in cognitive development for this age group, including improvements in attention skills, changes in the capacity, and the emergence of executive functions in working memory. Additionally, in early childhood memory strategies, memory accuracy, and autobiographical memory emerge. Early childhood is seen by many researchers as a crucial time period in memory development [13].
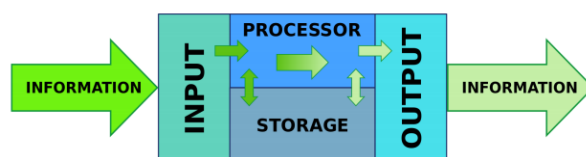
How information is processed. Image by Gradient drift is in the public domain

ATTENTION

Changes in attention have been described by many as the key to changes in human memory [14] [15]. However, attention is not a unified function; it is comprised of sub-processes. The ability to switch our focus between tasks or external stimuli is called divided attention or multitasking. This is separate from our ability to focus on a single task or stimulus, while ignoring distracting information, called selective attention. Different from these is sustained attention, or the ability to stay on task for long periods of time. Moreover, we also have attention processes that influence our behaviour and enable us to inhibit a habitual or dominant response, and others that enable us to distract ourselves when upset or frustrated.

11. Vygotsky, 1962, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

12. Crain, 2005, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

13. Posner & Rothbart, 2007, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

14. Nelson & Fivush, 2004 as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

15. Posner & Rothbart, 2007, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

SELECTIVE ATTENTION

Children's ability with selective attention tasks, improve as they age. However, this ability is also greatly influenced by the child's temperament[16], the complexity of the stimulus or task [17], and whether the stimuli are visual or auditory [18]. Guy et al. [19] found that children's ability to selectively attend to visual information outpaced that of auditory stimuli. This may explain why young children are not able to hear the voice of the teacher over the cacophony of sounds in the typical preschool classroom [20]. Jones and his colleagues found that 4- to 7-year-olds could not filter out background noise, especially when its frequencies were close in sound to the target sound. In comparison, 8- to 11-year-old children often performed similar to adults.

A child playing a game that measures her sustained attention.
Image by Fabrice Florin is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

MEMORY

Based on studies of adults, people with amnesia, and neurological research on memory, researchers have proposed several "types" of memory (see Figure 4.14). Sensory memory (also called the sensory register) is the first stage of the memory system, and it stores sensory input in its raw form for a very brief duration; essentially long enough for the brain to register and start processing the information. Studies of auditory sensory memory show that it lasts about one second in 2-year-olds, two seconds in 3-year-olds, more than two seconds in 4-year-olds, and three to five seconds in 6-year-olds [21]. Other researchers have also found that young children hold sounds for a shorter duration than do older children and adults, and that this deficit is not due to attentional differences between these age groups, but reflects differences in the performance of the sensory memory system [22]. The second stage of the memory system is called short-term or working memory. Working memory is the component of memory in which current conscious mentalactivity occurs.

Working memory often requires conscious effort and adequate use of attention to function effectively. As you read earlier, children in this age group struggle with many aspects of attention and

16. Rothbart & Rueda, 2005, as cited Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

17. Porporino, Shore, Iarocci & Burack, 2004

18. Guy, Rogers & Cornish, 2013, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

19. Ibid.

20. Jones, Moore & Amitay, 2015, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

21. Glass, Sachse, & von Suchodoletz, 2008, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

22. Gomes et al., 1999, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

this greatly diminishes their ability to consciously juggle several pieces of information in memory. The capacity of working memory, that is the amount of information someone can hold in consciousness, is smaller in young children than in older children and adults. The typical adult and teenager can hold a 7-digit number active in their short-term memory. The typical 5-year-old can hold only a 4-digit number active. This means that the more complex a mental task is, the less efficient a younger child will be in paying attention to, and actively processing, information in order to complete the task.

Changes in attention and the working memory system also involve changes in executive function. Executive function (EF) refers to self-regulatory processes, such as the ability to inhibit a behaviour or cognitive flexibility, that enable adaptive responses to new situations or to reach a specific goal. Executive function skills gradually emerge during early childhood and continue to develop throughout childhood and adolescence. Like many cognitive changes, brain maturation, especially the prefrontal cortex, along with experience influence the development of executive function skills.

A child shows higher executive functioning skills when the parents are more warm and responsive, use scaffolding when the child is trying to solve a problem, and provide cognitively stimulating environments for the child[23]. For instance, scaffolding was positively correlated with greater cognitive flexibility at age two and inhibitory control at age four[24]. In Schneider, Kron-Sperl and Hunnerkopf's [25]longitudinal study of 102 kindergarten children, the majority of children used no strategy to remember information, a finding that was consistent with previous research. As a result, their memory performance was poor when compared to their abilities as they aged and started to use more effective memory strategies.

The third component in memory is long-term memory, which is also known as permanent memory. A basic division of long- term memory is between declarative and non-declarative memory. **Declarative memories**, sometimes referred to as explicit memories, are memories for facts or events that we can consciously recollect. Declarative memory is further divided into semantic and episodic memory. **Semantic memories** are memories for facts and knowledge that are not tied to a timeline, **episodic memories** are tied to specific events in time. **Non- declarative memories**, sometimes referred to as implicit memories, are typically automated skills that do not require conscious recollection.

NEO-PIAGETIANS

As previously discussed, Piaget's theory has been criticized on many fronts, and updates to reflect more current research have been provided by the Neo-Piagetians, or those theorists who provide "new" interpretations of Piaget's theory. Morra, Gobbo, Marini and Sheese[26] reviewed Neo-Piagetian theories, which were first presented in the 1970s, and identified how these "new" theories combined

23. Fay-Stammbach, Hawes & Meredith, 2014, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

24. Bibok, Carpendale & Müller, 2009, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

25. 2009, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

26. 2008, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

Piagetian concepts with those found in Information Processing. Similar to Piaget's theory, Neo-Piagetian theories believe in constructivism, assume cognitive development can be separated into different stages with qualitatively different characteristics, and advocate that children's thinking becomes more complex in advanced stages. Unlike Piaget, Neo-Piagetians believe that aspects of information processing change the complexity of each stage, not logic as determined by Piaget.

Neo-Piagetians propose that working memory capacity is affected by biological maturation, and therefore restricts young children's ability to acquire complex thinking and reasoning skills. Increases in working memory performance and cognitive skills development coincide with the timing of several neurodevelopmental processes. These include myelination, axonal and synaptic pruning, changes in cerebral metabolism, and changes in brain activity [27].

Myelination especially occurs in waves between birth and adolescence, and the degree of myelination in particular areas explain the increasing efficiency of certain skills. Therefore, brain maturation, which occurs in spurts, affects how and when cognitive skills develop. Additionally, all Neo-Piagetian theories support that experience and learning interact with biological maturation in shaping cognitive development [28].

CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Both Piaget and Vygotsky believed that children actively try to understand the world around them. More recently developmentalists have added to this understanding by examining how children organize information and develop their own theories about the world.

THEORY-THEORY

The tendency of children to generate theories to explain everything they encounter is called theory-theory. This concept implies that humans are naturally inclined to find reasons and generate explanations for why things occur. Children frequently ask questions about what they see or hear around them. When the answers provided do not satisfy their curiosity or are too complicated for them to understand, they generate their own theories. In much the same way that scientists construct and revise their theories, children do the same with their intuitions about the world as they encounter new experiences [29]. One of the theories they start to generate in early childhood centers on the mental states; both their own and those of others.

27. (Morra et al., 2008, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

28. Lally, M. & Valentine-French, S. (2019). Lifespan development: A psychological perspective (2nd ed.). Retrieved from http://dept.clcillinois.edu/psy/LifespanDevelopment.pdf

29. Gopnik & Wellman, 2012, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

What theories might this boy be creating? Image by Eglin Air Force Base is in the public domain

THEORY OF MIND

Theory of mind refers to the ability to think about other people's thoughts. This mental mind reading helps humans to understand and predict the reactions of others, thus playing a crucial role in social development. One common method for determining if a child has reached this mental milestone is the false belief task, described below.

The research began with a clever experiment by Wimmer and Perner[30], who tested whether children can pass a false-belief test (see Figure 4.17). The child is shown a picture story of Sally, who puts her ball in a basket and leaves the room. While Sally is out of the room, Anne comes along and takes the ball from the basket and puts it inside a box. The child is then asked where Sally thinks the ball is located when she comes back to the room. Is she going to look first in the box or in the basket? The right answer is that she will look in the basket, because that's where she put it and thinks it is; but we have to infer this false belief against our own better knowledge that the ball is in the box.

A ball.

A basket.

30. 1983, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

A box.

This is very difficult for children before the age of four because of the cognitive effort it takes. Three-year-olds have difficulty distinguishing between what they once thought was true and what they now know to be true. They feel confident that what they know now is what they have always known [31]. Even adults need to think through this task [32].

To be successful at solving this type of task the child must separate what he or she "knows" to be true from what someone else might "think" is true. In Piagetian terms, they must give up a tendency toward egocentrism. The child must also understand that what guides people's actions and responses are what they "believe" rather than what is reality. In other words, people can mistakenly believe things that are false and will act based on this false knowledge. Consequently, prior to age four children are rarely successful at solving such a task [33]. Researchers examining the development of theory of mind have been concerned by the overemphasis on the mastery of false belief as the primary measure of whether a child has attained theory of mind. Wellman and his colleagues[34] suggest that theory of mind is comprised of a number of components, each with its own developmental timeline.

Two-year-olds understand the diversity of desires, yet as noted earlier it is not until age four or five that children grasp false belief, and often not until middle childhood do they understand that people may hide how they really feel. In part, because children in early childhood have difficulty hiding how they really feel.

This awareness of the existence of theory of mind is part of social intelligence, such as recognizing that others can think differently about situations. It helps us to be self-conscious or aware that others can think of us in different ways and it helps us to be able to be understanding or be empathetic toward others. Moreover, this mind-reading ability helps us to anticipate and predict people's actions. The awareness of the mental states of others is important for communication and social skills [35].

The many theories of cognitive development and the different research that has been done about how children understand the world has allowed researchers to study the milestones that children who are

31. Birch & Bloom, 2003, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

32. Epley, Morewedge, & Keysar, 2004, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

33. Wellman, Cross & Watson, 2001, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

34. Ibid.

35. Lally, M. & Valentine-French, S. (2019). Lifespan development: A psychological perspective (2nd ed.). Retrieved from http://dept.clcillinois.edu/psy/LifespanDevelopment.pdf

typically developing experience in early childhood. Understanding how children think and learn has proven useful for improving education.

In 2010, Ontario introduced the full day kindergarten program which was fully implemented by 2014. Children can attend the program at 3 years 8 month of age. There is a year one and a year two of the program. In 2016 The Kindergarten Program document was released describing a play-based curriculum which includes four frames to guide teaching, learning and assessment of learning. Overall and specific expectations are described in each of the four frames.
The frames are:

- Self-regulation and Well-Being

- Belonging and Contributing

- Problem Solving and Innovating

- Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours

In each kindergarten classroom an RECE and a qualified teacher registered with the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) work in partnership as an educator team to implement the curriculum. There is an expectation for the educator team to observe children's play, 'notice and name' the learning and assess individual progress against the Overall and Specific Expectations. The progress is formally shared with families as their child moves through Year One and Year Two of the Kindergarten Program. In the delivery of the curriculum the educator team provides opportunities for children to demonstrate the expectations, and design and implement learning opportunities specifically related to the expectations. Two of the four frames; Problem Solving and Innovating and Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours relate directly to children's cognitive development. In the latter frame children are expected to, for example, use language to communicate their thinking and to solve problems, to demonstrate an interest in writing and reading, to demonstrate cardinality and the ability to subitize, to describe the properties of three-dimensional solids and to identify, create and describe simple patterns in mathematical terms [36].

APPLICATION OF "THE KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM" TO THE EARLY YEARS

Even before they enter kindergarten, the mathematical knowledge of children from low-income backgrounds lags far behind that of children from more affluent backgrounds. Ramani and Siegler [37] hypothesized that this difference is due to the children in middle- and upper-income families engaging more frequently in numerical activities, for example playing numerical board games such as Chutes and Ladders. Chutes and Ladders is a game with a number in each square; children start at the number one and spin a spinner or throw a dice to determine how far to move their token. Playing this game seemed likely to teach children about numbers, because in it, larger numbers are associated with greater values on a variety of dimensions. In particular, the higher the number that a child's token reaches, the greater the distance the token will have traveled from the starting point, the greater the

36. Ontario Ministry of Education (2016). The kindergarten program. Retrieved from https://files.ontario.ca/books/kindergarten-program-en.pdf?_ga=2.18670905.1886719864.1639406346-482631340.1639406346

37. 2008, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

number of physical movements the child will have made in moving the token from one square to another, the greater the number of number-words the child will have said and heard, and the more time will have passed since the beginning of the game. These spatial, kinesthetic, verbal, and time-based cues provide a broad-based, multisensory foundation for knowledge of numerical magnitudes (the sizes of numbers), a type of knowledge that is closely related to mathematics achievement test scores [38].

Playing this numerical board game for roughly 1 hour, distributed over a 2-week period, improved low-income children's knowledge of numerical magnitudes, ability to read printed numbers, and skill at learning novel arithmetic problems. The gains lasted for months after the game-playing experience [39]. An advantage of this type of educational intervention is that it has minimal if any cost—a parent could just draw a game on a piece of paper.

AUTISM: DEFINING SPECTRUM DISORDER

Sometimes children's brains work differently. One form of this neuro-diversity is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). ASD describes a range of conditions classified as neuro-developmental disorders in the fifth revision of the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5). The DSM-5, published in 2013, redefined the autism spectrum to encompass the previous (DSM-IV-TR) diagnoses of autism, Asperger syndrome, pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS), and childhood disintegrative disorder. These disorders are characterized by social deficits and communication difficulties, repetitive behaviours and interests, sensory issues, and in some cases, cognitive delays.

Autism spectrum disorders are considered to be on a spectrum because each individual with ASD expresses the disorder uniquely and has varying degrees of functionality. Many have above-average intellectual abilities and excel in visual skills, music, math, and the arts, while others have significant disabilities and are unable to live independently. About 25 percent of individuals with ASD are nonverbal; however, they may learn to communicate using other means.

In Canada 1 in 66 children between the ages of 5 and 17 years of age are diagnosed on the ASD spectrum [40]. Males are four times more likely to be diagnosed than females. The statistics are one in 44 males compared to one in 165 females [41].

Summary

In this chapter we looked at:

- Piaget's preoperational stage.

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38. Booth & Siegler, 2006, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

39. Ramani & Siegler, 2008; Siegler & Ramani, 2009, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

40. Government of Canada. (2018).Autism prevalence among children and youth in Canada: Report of the national autism spectrum disorder (ASD) surveillance system. Retrieved from https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/infographic-autism-spectrum-disorder-children-youth-canada-2018.html

41. Ibid.

- Vygotsky's sociocultural theory.

- Information processing.

- How young children understand the world.

- The Full Day Kindergarten Program

- Autism spectrum disorder.

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CHAPTER 8.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PRESCHOOL YEARS

Chapter Objectives

After this chapter, you should be able to:

- Describe the continuum of development of social skills in preschoolers.
- Compare and contrast different styles of parenting.
- Discuss the role of siblings and peers.
- Describe the types of play.
- Discuss the development of social understanding in preschoolers.
- Summarize the influences on social and emotional competence.

INTRODUCTION

In the preschool years, children's understanding of their role in the world expands greatly. Let's examine some of the important interactions in social development between the ages of 2.5 and 6 years.

CONTINUUM OF DEVELOPMENT

The Continuum of Development set out in *Early Learning for Every Child Today: A framework for Ontario early childhood settings* identifies several root social skills that are emerging in children between 2.5 and 6 years of age.

Seeking out and making friends gains importance during the preschool years. This is facilitated by improved skills in conflict resolution, social problem-solving skills, peer group entry skills and co-operation. Preschoolers are more competent at identifying emotions in others, taking another person's point of view, empathizing and offering help. These emerging competencies improve the preschooler's ability to interact with others positively and respectfully. Preschoolers often seek out adult attention and approval and have developed the social skills to do so in a positive manner [1].

FAMILY LIFE

Relationships between parents and children continue to play a significant role in children's development during early childhood. We will explore two models of parenting styles. Keep in mind

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1. Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). Exerpts from "ELECT". Retrieved from https://countrycasa.ca/images/ ExcerptsFromELECT.pdf

that most parents do not follow any model completely. In reality, people tend to fall somewhere in between these styles. And sometimes parenting styles change from one child to the next or in times when the parent has more or less time and energy for parenting. Parenting styles can also be affected by concerns the parent has in other areas of their life. For example, parenting styles tend to become more authoritarian when parents are tired and perhaps more authoritative when they are more energetic. Sometimes, parents seem to change their parenting approach when others are around, maybe because they become more self-conscious as parents or are concerned with giving others the impression that they are a "tough" parent or an "easy-going" parent. And of course, parenting styles may reflect the type of parenting someone saw modelled while growing up.

Indigenous Perspectives

Parenting styles are different in Indigenous people's family life. For instance, in many nations, aunties and uncles are the ones who discipline the children to keep harmony in the home. Grandparents offer teachings and show cultural and traditional ways of life; they also sometimes discipline but in a different way.

Baumrind

Diana Baumrind[2] offers a model of parenting that includes four styles. The first, authoritarian, is the traditional model of parenting in which parents make the rules and children are expected to be obedient. Baumrind suggests that authoritarian parents tend to place maturity demands on their children that are unreasonably high and tend to be aloof and distant. Consequently, children reared in this way may fear rather than respect their parents and, because their parents do not allow discussion, may take out their frustrations on safer targets-perhaps as bullies toward peers.

Permissive parenting involves holding expectations of children that are below what could be reasonably expected from them. Children are allowed to make their own rules and determine their own activities. Parents are warm and communicative, but provide little structure for their children. Children fail to learn self-discipline and may feel somewhat insecure because they do not know the limits.

Authoritative parenting involves being appropriately strict, reasonable, and affectionate. Parents allow negotiation where appropriate and discipline matches the severity of the offense. In Ontario, many EarlyON Child and Family Centres offer parenting programs, including **Triple P (Positive Parenting Program)** and **Nobody's Perfect.**

Uninvolved parents (also referred to as rejecting/neglecting) are disengaged from their children. They do not make demands on their children and are non-responsive. These children can suffer in school and in their relationships with their peers [3].

Lemasters and Defrain

Lemasters and Defrain [4] offer another model of parenting. This model is interesting because it looks

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2. 1971, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

3. Gecas & Self, 1991, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

4. 1989, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

more closely at the motivations of the parent and suggests that parenting styles are often designed to meet the psychological needs of the parent rather than the developmental needs of the child.

The martyr is a parent who will do anything for the child; even tasks that the child should do for himself or herself. All of the good deeds performed for the child, in the name of being a "good parent", may be used later should the parent want to gain compliance from the child. If a child goes against the parent's wishes, the parent can remind the child of all of the times the parent helped the child and evoke a feeling of guilt so that the child will do what the parent wants. The child learns to be dependent and manipulative as a result.

The pal is like the permissive parent described previously in Baumrind's model. The pal wants to be the child's friend. Perhaps the parent is lonely or perhaps the parent is trying to win a popularity contest against an ex-spouse. Pals let children do what they want and focus mostly on being entertaining and fun and set few limitations. Consequently, the child may have little self-discipline and may try to test limits with others.

The police officer/drill sergeant style of parenting is similar to the authoritarian parent described by Baumrind. The parent focuses primarily on making sure that the child is obedient and that the parent has full control of the child. Sometimes this can be taken to extreme by giving the child tasks that are really designed to check on their level of obedience. For example, the parent may require that the child fold the clothes and place items back in the drawer in a particular way. If not, the child might be scolded or punished for not doing things "right". This type of parent has a very difficult time allowing the child to grow and learn to make decisions independently. And the child may have a lot of resentment toward the parent that is displaced on others.

The teacher-counselor parent is one who pays a lot of attention to expert advice on parenting and who believes that as long as all of the steps are followed, the parent can rear a perfect child. "What's wrong with that?" you might ask. There are two major problems with this approach. First, the parent is taking all of the responsibility for the child's behavior-at least indirectly. If the child has difficulty, the parent feels responsible and thinks that the solution lies in reading more advice and trying more diligently to follow that advice.

Parents can certainly influence children, but thinking that the parent is fully responsible for the child's outcome is misguided. A parent can only do so much and can never have full control over the child. Another problem with this approach is that the child may get an unrealistic sense of the world and what can be expected from others. For example, if a teacher-counselor parent decides to help the child build self-esteem and has read that telling the child how special he or she is or how important it is to compliment the child on a job well done, the parent may convey the message that everything the child does is exceptional or extraordinary. A child may come to expect that all of his efforts warrant praise and in the real world, this is not something one can expect. Perhaps children get more of a sense of pride from assessing their own performance than from having others praise their efforts.

A father interacting with his son who is drawing a picture. He could be portraying the style of teacher-counselor or athletic coach. (Google Images)

So what is left? Lemasters and Defrain [5] suggest that the athletic coach style of parenting is best. Before you draw conclusions here, set aside any negative experiences you may have had with coaches in the past. The principles of coaching are what are important to Lemasters and Defrain. A coach helps players form strategies, supports their efforts, gives feedback on what went right and what went wrong, and stands at the sideline while the players perform. Coaches and referees make sure that the rules of the game are followed and that all players adhere to those rules. Similarly, the athletic coach as parent helps the child understand what needs to happen in certain situations whether in friendships, school, or home life, and encourages and advises the child about how to manage these situations. The parent does not intervene or do things for the child. Their role is to provide guidance while the child learns firsthand how to handle these situations. And the rules for behavior are consistent and objective and presented in that way. So, a child who is late for dinner might hear the parent respond in this way, "Dinner was at six o'clock." Rather than, "You know good and well that we always eat at six. If you expect me to get up and make something for you now, you have got another thing coming! Just who do you think you are showing up late and looking for food? You're grounded until further notice!"

The most important thing to remember about parenting is that you can be a better, more objective parent when you are directing your actions toward the child's needs and while considering what they can reasonably be expected to do at their stage of development. Parenting is more difficult when you are tired and have psychological needs that interfere with the relationship. Some of the best advice for parents is to try not to take the child's actions personally and be as objective as possible.

Indigenous Perspectives

First Nation parenting would likely fall under the athletic coach style of parenting in all aspects referred to in the textbook, with a twist. Each extended family members and some community members would play a different role. They would all help the player form strategies, support their efforts, give feedback on what went right and what went wrong (through teachings and storytelling), and stand at the sideline while the players perform. Elders and grandparents are the knowledge keepers that would give the teachings and guide the player (child) through storytelling. It is well known in our culture that children see themselves

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5. Lemasters and Defrain.(1989), as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

through the animal characters from the stories we use by which they learn values and lessons. Or they might choose a real-life story to help them learn a lesson.

Cultural Influences on Parenting Styles

The impact of class and culture cannot be ignored when examining parenting styles. The two models of parenting described above assume that authoritative and athletic coaching styles are best because they are designed to help the parent raise a child who is independent, self-reliant and responsible. These are qualities favored in "individualistic" cultures.

Canadian First Nation cultural groups, while diverse, all stress the critical importance of parenting during the first seven years. "In addition to parenting our children, we also are parenting our grandchildren, those yet to be born." [6]. Parents, extended family, elders and the community are all responsible for providing unconditional love and discipline. Children are encouraged to make their own decisions (from among acceptable choices) and allowed to make mistakes. Story-telling is used to help teach children important life lessons. Modeling desirable behavior is another key teaching tool. First Nations cultures strongly believe that children are to be treated as equals and never talked down, belittled or bribed as a form of discipline.

A family from a collectivistic culture. Image by the National Cancer Institute via Unsplash.

In "collectivistic" cultures such as China or Korea, being obedient and compliant are favored behaviors. Authoritarian parenting has been used historically and reflects cultural need for children to do as they are told. In societies where family members' cooperation is necessary for survival, as in the case of raising crops, rearing children who are independent and who strive to be on their own makes no sense. But in an economy based on being mobile in order to find jobs and where one's earnings are based on education, raising a child to be independent is very important.

Working class parents are more likely than middle class parents to focus on obedience and honesty when raising their children. In a classic study on social class and parenting styles called Class and

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6. Best Start Resource Centre (2010). A child becomes strong: Journeying through each stage of the life cycle. Retrieved from http://docplayer.net/27962989-A-child-becomes-strong-journeying-through-each-stage-of-the-life-cycle.html.

Conformity, Kohn [7] explains that parents tend to emphasize qualities that are needed for their own survival when parenting their children. Working class parents are rewarded for being obedient, reliable, and honest in their jobs. They are not paid to be independent or to question the management; rather, they move up and are considered good employees if they show up on time, do their work as they are told, and can be counted on by their employers. Consequently, these parents reward honesty and obedience in their children.

Middle class parents who work as professionals are rewarded for taking initiative, being self-directed, and assertive in their jobs. They are required to get the job done without being told exactly what to do. They are asked to be innovative and to work independently. These parents encourage their children to have those qualities as well by rewarding independence and self-reliance. Parenting styles can reflect many elements of culture [8].

Indigenous Perspectives

Due to the residential school legacy, laws have been put in place regarding the placement of children in non-indigenous families in foster care. For some but not all, the law states that the child will stay in the FN community whereby parents will go through cultural programming and healing to reintegrate the child back into the home. Also there is the issue of displacement for children from remote First Nation communities who do not have either elementary and/or secondary schools. Many grandparents or aunts and uncles decide to move out of the community to urban areas to take care of the children. Subsequently, other extended family members would be rearing the child/ren.

Changing Families in a Changing Society

The sociology of the family examines the family as an institution and a unit of socialization. Sociological studies of the family look at demographic characteristics of the family members: family size, age, ethnicity and gender of its members, social class of the family, the economic level and mobility of the family, professions of its members, and the education levels of the family members.

Currently, one of the biggest issues that sociologists study are the changing roles of family members. Often, each member is restricted by the gender roles of the traditional family. These roles, such as the father as the breadwinner and the mother as the homemaker, are declining. Now, the mother is often the supplementary provider while retaining the responsibilities of child rearing. In this scenario, females' role in the labor force is "compatible with the demands of the traditional family." Sociology studies the adaptation of males' role to caregiver as well as provider. The gender roles are becoming increasingly interwoven.

Indigenous Perspectives

The same can be said about the roles of women in certain First Nations. Traditionally the men were the

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7. Kohn (1977), as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021)

8. (Lumen Learning, n.d.)

hunters; however, it is not uncommon today to see young women hunting with a male relative. Women have always had a major role to play in FN societies. Whether it is a matriarchal or patriarchal society, men have high regard for women. This view changed with colonization. The same can be said about women as the breadwinner (hunters).

Diverse Family Forms

A single parent family usually refers to a parent who has most of the day-to-day responsibilities in the raising of the child or children, who is not living with a spouse or partner, or who is not married. The dominant caregiver is the parent with whom the children reside the majority of the time. If the parents are separated or divorced, children might live with their custodial parent and have visitation with their noncustodial parent. In western society in general, following separation a child will end up with the primary caregiver, usually the mother, and a secondary caregiver, usually the father. Divorced or separated parents can also share custody, which often means that the child spends an equal amount of time with each parent. Family courts in Ontario will often work with a family to come up with a schedule that works for both parents, so that the child may spend certain days with each parent or they may have a week by week schedule.

There is a growing community of single parent by choice families in which a family is built by a single adult (through foster care, adoption, donor gametes and embryos, and surrogacy).

Figure 11.4: A single-parent family. Image is in the Public Domain)

Cohabitation (also known as a common law relationship) is an arrangement where two people who are not married live together in an intimate relationship, particularly an emotionally and/or sexually intimate one, on a long-term or permanent basis. Today, cohabitation is a common pattern among people in the Western world. The 2016 Canadian census found common law couples make up 21.3% of all couples. Regional differences are significant. Quebec at 39.9%, Nunavut at 50.3%, Northwest Territories at 36.6% and Yukon at 31.9% were well above the average of 15.7% for the rest of Canada.[9]

Gay and lesbian couples are categorized as same-sex relationships. Prior to 2005, cohabitation

9. Statistics Canada. (2017). *Families, households and marital status: Key results from the 2016 census*. Retrieved from https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/170802/dq170802a-eng.htm

was the only choice for same-sex couples to live together in an intimate relationship in Canada. Same-sex marriage became legal in Canada in 2005 with the passage of the federal Civil Marriage Act. According to the 2016 Canadian census, same-sex couples represent 0.9% of all couples. Approximately 33% of those couples are married. The 2016 Canadian census also found that about 12% of same-sex couples (cohabiting or married) have children living with them [10].

A family with parents of the same sex. (Image by Emily Walker is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0)

Indigenous Perspectives

Traditionally, one of the roles of Two Spirit people (what society now refers to LGTBQ2S) was sometimes the rearing of the children for Medicine women.

MULTIGENERATIONAL FAMILIES

According to Statistics Canada, in 2011 approximately 600,000 grandparents aged 45 and older lived in the same household as their grandchildren. This represented about 8% of all grandparents in that age group. However, significant differences among cultural groups were found. 11% of grandparents who identified as Aboriginal (First Nations People, Metis or Inuit) lived with their grandchildren. This percentage increased to 22% in the Inuit population. 21% of recent immigrants to Canada (arriving between 2006 and 2011) aged 45 and older co-resided with grandchildren. These percentages are all significantly higher than the 3% of non-Indigenous Canadian-born grandparents who live in the same household as their grandchildren [11].

Today's grandparent is healthier and will live longer than previous generations. While they may or may not co-reside with their grandchildren, many contribute to family life, perhaps choosing to provide child care or helping out financially. Evolving family composition has increased the need

10. Statistics Canada. (2017). *Same sex couples in Canada in 2016.* Retrieved from https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016007/98-200-x2016007-eng.cfm

11. Statistics Canada. (2015). Study: Grandparents living with their grandchildren, 2011. Retrieved from https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/150414/dq150414a-eng.pdf?st=qilY03R4

for non-parental child care. According to Statistics Canada [12], in 2014, 69% of couples in Canada with children included 2 earners, up from just 36% in 1976. Likewise, the percentage of lone-parent families has increased from 1 in 10 in 1976 to approximately 1 in 5 in 2014.

Two factors can lead to grandparents being turned to for child care; lack of available, high quality, regulated child care and the cost. Availability varies among provinces and territories, but the need continues to far exceed availability across Canada. While there are many variables that go into the cost of child care (e.g.: urban versus rural, age of the child, centre-based versus home-based), as an example, "Ontario's Early Years and Child Care Annual Report 2020" found median parent fees for licensed centre-based care ranged from $66/day for infants to $22/day for school-aged children [13]. "Research shows that grandparent involvement in family life is significantly associated with child well-being, including greater prosocial behaviors and school involvement"[14]. This is particularly true among First Nations families, where grandparents are valued for their role in supporting cultural well-being in younger generations.

SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS

Siblings typically spend a considerable amount of time with each other and offer a unique relationship that is not found with same-age peers or with adults. Siblings play an important role in the development of social skills. Cooperative and pretend play interactions between younger and older siblings can teach empathy, sharing, and cooperation [15] as well as negotiation and conflict resolution [16]. However, the quality of sibling relationships is often mediated by the quality of the parent-child relationship and the psychological adjustment of the child [17]. For instance, more negative interactions between siblings have been reported in families where parents had poor patterns of communication with their children [18]. Children who have emotional and behavioral problems are also more likely to have negative interactions with their siblings. However, the psychological adjustment of the child can sometimes be a reflection of the parent-child relationship. Thus, when examining the quality of sibling interactions, it is often difficult to tease out the separate effect of adjustment from the effect of the parent-child relationship.

While parents want positive interactions between their children, conflicts are going to arise, and some confrontations can be the impetus for growth in children's social and cognitive skills. The sources of conflict between siblings often depend on their respective ages. Dunn and Munn [19] revealed that over half of all sibling conflicts in early childhood were disputes about property rights. By middle childhood this starts shifting toward control over social situations, such as what games to play, disagreements about facts or opinions, or rude behavior [20]. Researchers have also found that

12. Ibid.

13. Province of Ontario. (2021). Ontario's early years and child care annual report 2020. Retrieved from https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-early-years-and-child-care-annual-report-2020

14. Vanier Institute. (2017). Grandparent health and family well-being. Retrieved from https://vanierinstitute.ca/grandparent-health-and-family-well-being/

15. Pike, Coldwell, & Dunn, 2005, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

16. Abuhatoum & Howe, 2013, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

17. Pike et al., 2005, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

18. Brody, Stoneman, & McCoy, 1994, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

19. (Dunn and Munn (1987), as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021)

20. Howe, Rinaldi, Jennings, & Petrakos, 2002, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

the strategies children use to deal with conflict change with age, but that this is also tempered by the nature of the conflict.

Abuhatoum and Howe[21] found that coercive strategies (e.g., threats) were preferred when the dispute centered on property rights, while reasoning was more likely to be used by older siblings and in disputes regarding control over the social situation. However, younger siblings also use reasoning, frequently bringing up the concern of legitimacy (e.g., "You're not the boss") when in conflict with an older sibling. This is a very common strategy used by younger siblings and is possibly an adaptive strategy in order for younger siblings to assert their autonomy [22]. A number of researchers have found that children who can use non-coercive strategies are more likely to have a successful resolution, whereby a compromise is reached and neither child feels slighted [23, 24].

Not surprisingly, friendly relationships with siblings often lead to more positive interactions with peers. The reverse is also true. A child can also learn to get along with a sibling, with, as the song says "a little help from my friends" [25].

Siblings. Image by LEONARDO DASILVA is licensed under CC BY 2.0

PEERS

Relationships within the family (parent-child and siblings) are not the only significant relationships in a child's life. Peer relationships are also important. Social interaction with another child who is similar in age, skills, and knowledge provokes the development of many social skills that are valuable for the rest of life [26]. In peer relationships, children learn how to initiate and maintain social interactions with other children. They learn skills for managing conflict, such as turn-taking, compromise, and bargaining. Play also involves the mutual, sometimes complex, coordination of goals, actions, and understanding. For example, as preschoolers engage in pretend play they create narratives together,

21. (Abuhatoum and Howe (2013), as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

22. Ibid.

23. Ram & Ross, 2008;as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

24. Abuhatoum & Howe, 2013, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

25. (Kramer & Gottman, 1992, as cited in Lally, M. & Valentine-French, S. (2019). Lifespan development: A psychological perspective (2nd ed.). Retrieved from http://dept.clcillinois.edu/psy/LifespanDevelopment.pdf)

26. Bukowski, Buhrmester, & Underwood, 2011, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

choose roles, and collaborate to act out their stories. Through these experiences, children develop friendships that provide additional sources of security and support to those provided by their parents.

Navigating dramatic play provides great opportunities to continue to develop social skills with same-age peers. (Google Images)

However, peer relationships can be challenging as well as supportive[27]. Being accepted by other children is an important source of affirmation and self-esteem, but peer rejection can foreshadow later behavior problems (especially when children are rejected due to aggressive behavior).

Peer relationships require developing very different social and emotional skills than those that emerge in parent-child relationships. They also illustrate the many ways that peer relationships influence the growth of personality and self-concept[28].

PLAY

Freud saw play as a means for children to release pent-up emotions and to deal with emotionally distressing situations in a more secure environment. Vygotsky and Piaget saw play as a way of children developing their intellectual abilities [29]. Piaget created stages of play that correspond with his stages of cognitive development. The stages are:

Table: Piaget's Stages of Play [30].

27. Rubin, Coplan, Chen, Bowker, & McDonald, 2011, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

28. Leon, A. (n.d.). Children's development: Prenatal through adolescent development. Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/document/d/1k1xtrXy6j9_NAqZdGv8nBn_I6-lDtEgEFf7skHjvE-Y/edit

29. Dyer & Moneta, 2006, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

30. Grounds for Play, n.d., as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

Stage	Description
Functional Play	Exploring, inspecting, and learning through repetitive physical activity.
Symbolic Play	The ability to use objects, actions, or ideas to represent other objects, actions, or ideas and may include taking on roles. (reference: Symbolic Play (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.pgpedia.com/s/symbolic-play)
Constructive Play	Involves experimenting with objects to build things; learning things that were previously unknown with hands-on manipulations of materials. (reference: Constructive Play (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.pgpedia.com/c/constructive-play)
Games with Rules	Imposes rules that must be followed by everyone that is playing; the logic and order involved forms that the foundations for developing game playing strategy (reference: Games with Rules (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.pgpedia.com/g/games-rules)

While Freud, Piaget, and Vygostsky looked at play slightly differently, all three theorists saw play as providing positive outcomes for children.

Mildred Parten (1932) observed two to five year-old children and noted six types of play. Three types she labeled as non-social (unoccupied, solitary, and onlooker) and three types were categorized as social play (parallel, associative, and cooperative). The table below describes each type of play. Younger children engage in non-social play more than those who are older; by age five associative and cooperative play are the most common forms of play[31]

Table: Parten's Classification of Types of Play [32]

Category	Description
Unoccupied Play	Children's behavior seems more random and without a specific goal. This is the least common form of play.
Solitary Play	Children play by themselves, do not interact with others, nor are they engaging in similar activities as the children around them.
Onlooker Play	Children are observing other children playing. They may comment on the activities and even make suggestions, but will not directly join the play.
Parallel Play	Children play alongside each other, using similar toys, but do not directly act with each other
Associative Play	Children will interact with each other and share toys but are not working toward a common goal.
Cooperative Play	Children are interacting to achieve a common goal. Children may take on different tasks to reach that goal.

SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING

As we have seen, children's experience of relationships at home and the peer group contributes to an expanding repertoire of social and emotional skills and also to broadened social understanding. In these relationships, children develop expectations for specific people (leading, for example, to secure or insecure attachments to parents), understanding of how to interact with adults and peers, and developing self-concept based on how others respond to them. These relationships are also significant forums for emotional development.

Remarkably, young children begin developing social understanding very early in life. Before the

31. Dyer & Moneta, 2006, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021.

32. Lumen Learning, n.d., as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

end of the first year, infants are aware that other people have perceptions, feelings, and other mental states that affect their behavior, and which are different from the child's own mental states. Carefully designed experimental studies show that by late in the preschool years, young children understand that another's beliefs can be mistaken rather than correct, that memories can affect how you feel, and that one's emotions can be hidden from others [33]. Social understanding grows significantly as children's theory of mind develops.

How do these achievements in social understanding occur? One answer is that young children are remarkably sensitive observers of other people, making connections between their emotional expressions, words, and behavior to derive simple inferences about mental states (e.g., concluding, for example, that what Mommy is looking at is in her mind) [34]. This is especially likely to occur in relationships with people whom the child knows well, consistent with the ideas of attachment theory discussed above.

A father speaking to his child. Open domain Image via Pxfuel.

Growing language skills give young children words with which to represent these mental states (e.g., "mad," "wants") and talk about them with others. Thus in conversation with their parents about everyday experiences, children learn much about people's mental states from how adults talk about them ("Your sister was sad because she thought Daddy was coming home.") [35].

Developing social understanding is based on children's everyday interactions with others and their careful interpretations of what they see and hear. There are also some scientists who believe that infants are biologically prepared to perceive people in a special way, as organisms with an internal mental life, and this facilitates their interpretation of people's behavior with reference to those mental states [36]).

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

Social and personality development is built from the social, biological, and representational influences discussed above. These influences result in important developmental outcomes that matter to children, parents, and society: a young adult's capacity to engage in socially constructive actions (helping, caring, sharing with others), to curb hostile or aggressive impulses, to live according to

33. Wellman, 2011, as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

34. Gopnik, Meltzoff, & Kuhl, 2001, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

35. Thompson, 2006b, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

36. Leslie, 1994, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

meaningful moral values, to develop a healthy identity and sense of self, and to develop talents and achieve success in using them. These are some of the developmental outcomes that denote social and emotional competence.

These achievements of social and personality development derive from the interaction of many social, biological, and representational influences. Consider, for example, the development of conscience, which is an early foundation for moral development.

Conscience consists of the cognitive, emotional, and social influences that cause young children to create and act consistently with internal standards of conduct [37]). It emerges from young children's experiences with parents, particularly in the development of a mutually responsive relationship that motivates young children to respond constructively to the parents' requests and expectations. Biologically based temperament is involved, as some children are temperamentally more capable of motivated self-regulation (a quality called effortful control) than are others, while some children are more prone to the fear and anxiety that parental disapproval can evoke. The development of conscience is influenced by having a good fit between the child's temperamental qualities and how parents communicate and reinforce behavioral expectations.

Conscience development also expands as young children begin to represent moral values and think of themselves as moral beings. By the end of the preschool years, for example, young children develop a "moral self" by which they think of themselves as people who want to do the right thing, who feel badly after misbehaving, and who feel uncomfortable when others misbehave. In the development of conscience, young children become more socially and emotionally competent in a manner that provides a foundation for later moral conduct [38].

This child might be experiencing a guilty conscience. (Image by George Hodan is in the is licensed under CC0 public domain)

Indigenous Perspective

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37. Kochanska, 2002, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

38. Thompson, 2012, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

Storytelling is used for this.

Summary

In this chapter we looked at:

- The social developmental continuum for preschoolers.
- Family life, including parenting styles, diverse forms of families and the role of siblings.
- The role of peers.
- The types of play.
- The social understanding of preschoolers.
- Influences on social and emotional competence.

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EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PRESCHOOL YEARS

Chapter Objectives

After this chapter, you should be able to:

- Describe the continuum of development of emotional skills in preschoolers.
- Describe how preschoolers view themselves.
- Summarize Erikson's stage of initiative versus guilt.
- Explain how children develop their understanding of gender.
- Discuss personality and temperament.
- Identify the effects of stress on three- to five-year olds.

INTRODUCTION

In the preschool years, children's understanding of themselves continues to evolve. Let's examine some of the important interactions in emotional development between the ages of 2.5 and 6 years.

CONTINUUM OF DEVELOPMENT

The Continuum of Development set out in *Early Learning for Every Child Today: A framework for Ontario early childhood settings (2007)* identifies several root emotional skills that are emerging in children between 2.5 and 6 years of age [1].

The preschooler is starting to solidify their self-concept, identity and self-esteem. They have improved their ability to recognize and express their emotions appropriately. A typically developing preschooler is developing the ability to regulate their attention, emotions and behavior. These emerging competencies help them persevere when faced with challenges and cope when unsuccessful at a task.

Interactionism and Views of Self

Early childhood is a time of forming an initial sense of self. A self-concept or idea of who we are, what we are capable of doing, and how we think and feel is a social process that involves taking into consideration how others view us. So, in order to develop a sense of self, you must have interaction

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1. Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). Excerpts from "ELECT". Retrieved from https://countrycasa.ca/images/ExcerptsFromELECT.pdf

with others. Interactionist theorists, Cooley and Mead offer two interesting explanations of how a sense of self develops.

Cooley

Charles Horton Cooley [2] suggests that our self-concept comes from looking at how others respond to us. This process, known as the looking-glass self involves looking at how others seem to view us and interpreting this as we make judgments about whether we are good or bad, strong or weak, beautiful or ugly, and so on. Of course, we do not always interpret their responses accurately so our self-concept is not simply a mirror reflection of the views of others. After forming an initial self-concept, we may use it as a mental filter screening out those responses that do not seem to fit our ideas of who we are. Some compliments may be negated, for example. The process of the looking-glass self is pronounced when we are preschoolers, or perhaps when we are in a new school or job or are taking on a new role in our personal lives and are trying to gauge our own performances. When we feel more sure of who we are, we focus less on how we appear to others [3].

A child looking at herself wearing glasses in a mirror. (Image is in the public domain)

Mead

Herbert Mead [4] offers an explanation of how we develop a social sense of self by being able to see ourselves through the eyes of others. There are two parts of the self: the "I" which is the part of the self that is spontaneous, creative, innate, and is not concerned with how others view us and the "me" or the social definition of who we are.

When we are born, we are all "I" and act without concern about how others view us. But the socialized self begins when we are able to consider how one important person views us. This initial stage is called "taking the role of the significant other". For example, a child may pull a cat's tail and be told by his mother, "No! Don't do that, that's bad" while receiving a slight slap on the hand. Later, the child may mimic the same behavior toward the self and say aloud, "No, that's bad" while patting his own hand. What has happened? The child is able to see himself through the eyes of the mother. As

2. (1964, as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021)

3. (Leon, n.d.)

4. (1967, as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021)

the child grows and is exposed to many situations and rules of culture, he begins to view the self in the eyes of many others through these cultural norms or rules. This is referred to as "taking the role of the generalized other" and results in a sense of self with many dimensions. The child comes to have a sense of self as student, as friend, as son, and so on.

Exaggerated Sense of Self

One of the ways to gain a clearer sense of self is to exaggerate those qualities that are to be incorporated into the self. Preschoolers often like to exaggerate their own qualities or to seek validation as the biggest, smartest, or child who can jump the highest. This exaggeration tends to be replaced by a more realistic sense of self in middle childhood.

Self-Esteem

Early childhood is a time of forming an initial sense of self. Self-concept is our self-description according to various categories, such as our external and internal qualities. In contrast, self-esteem is an evaluative judgment about who we are. The emergence of cognitive skills in this age group results in improved perceptions of the self, but they tend to focus on external qualities, which are referred to as the categorical self. When researchers ask young children to describe themselves, their descriptions tend to include physical descriptors, preferred activities, and favorite possessions. Thus, the self-description of a 3-year-old might be a 3-year-old girl with red hair, who likes to play with blocks. However, even children as young as three know there is more to themselves than these external characteristics.

Harter and Pike [5] challenged the method of measuring personality with an open-ended question as they felt that language limitations were hindering the ability of young children to express their self-knowledge. They suggested a change to the method of measuring self-concept in young children, whereby researchers provide statements that ask whether something is true of the child (e.g., "I like to boss people around", "I am grumpy most of the time"). They discovered that in early childhood, children answer these statements in an internally consistent manner, especially after the age of four [6] and often give similar responses to what others (parents and teachers) say about the child [7] [8].

5. Harter and Pike (1984), as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

6. Goodvin, Meyer, Thompson & Hayes, 2008, as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

7. Brown, Mangelsdorf, Agathen, & Ho (2008) as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021;

8. Colwell & Lindsey, 2003, as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

Young children tend to feel good about themselves. (Photo by Lukas Rychvalsky on Unsplash)

Young children tend to have a generally positive self-image. This optimism is often the result of a lack of social comparison when making self-evaluations[9], and with comparison between what the child once could do to what they can do now [10]. However, this does not mean that preschool children are exempt from negative self-evaluations. Preschool children with insecure attachments to their caregivers tend to have lower self-esteem at age four [11]. Maternal negative affect (emotional state) was also found by Goodwin and her colleagues to produce more negative self-evaluations in preschool children.

Self-Control

Self-control is not a single phenomenon, but is multi-facetted. It includes response initiation, the ability to not initiate a behavior before you have evaluated all of the information, response inhibition, the ability to stop a behavior that has already begun, and delayed gratification, the ability to hold out for a larger reward by forgoing a smaller immediate reward [12]. It is in early childhood that we see the start of self-control, a process that takes many years to fully develop. In the famous "Marshmallow Test"[13] children aged 3-5 years are confronted with the choice of a small immediate reward (a marshmallow) and a larger delayed reward (more marshmallows). Children who were able to distract themselves from thinking about how much they wanted the delayed reward were more likely to be able to wait for the reward. In follow-up research, Walter Mischel and his colleagues over the years have found that the ability to delay gratification at the age of four predicted better academic performance and health later in life [14]. Self-control is related to executive function; as executive function improves, children become less impulsive ([15].

Attempts to replicate the findings of the original "Marshmallow Test" as well as Mischel's follow-up research have been inconsistent. The "Marshmallow Test" has been criticized because of the small

9. Ruble, Boggiano, Feldman, & Loeble, 1980, as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

10. Kemple, 1995

11. Goodvin et al., 2008, as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

12. Dougherty, Marsh, Mathias, & Swann, 2005

13. Mischel, Ebbesen, & Zeiss, 1972, as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

14. Mischel, et al., 2011, as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

15. Traverso, Viterbori, & Usai, 2015, as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

sample size (50 children) and because the children all came from wealthy families with well-educated parents.

Dr. Stuart Shanker believes that the "Marshmallow Test" is actually a stress test. He suggests that a lack of self-control is a symptom of stress. This view is consistent with other critics of the "Marshmallow Test" who believe the results should not be applied to less affluent populations. For example, a child who comes to school hungry because they live in a food-insecure family is experiencing physical stress that would make it very difficult to wait for a food reward instead of taking an immediate food reward. When we reduce stressors in a child's life, their ability to control their own behaviour improves (Shanker's concept of "self-regulation").

SELF-CONTROL AND PLAY

Thanks to the new Centre for Research on Play in Education, Development and Learning (PEDaL), Whitebread, Baker, Gibson and a team of researchers hope to provide evidence on the role played by play in how a child develops, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021.

"A strong possibility is that play supports the early development of children's self-control," explains Baker. "These are our abilities to develop awareness of our own thinking processes – they influence how effectively we go about undertaking challenging activities."

In a study carried out by Baker with toddlers and young preschoolers, she found that children with greater self-control solved problems quicker when exploring an unfamiliar set-up requiring scientific reasoning, regardless of their IQ." This sort of evidence makes us think that giving children the chance to play will make them more successful and creative problem-solvers in the long run."

If playful experiences do facilitate this aspect of development, say the researchers, it could be extremely significant for educational practices because the ability to self-regulate has been shown to be a key predictor of academic performance.

Gibson adds: "Playful behavior is also an important indicator of healthy social and emotional development. In my previous research, I investigated how observing children at play can give us important clues about their well being and can even be useful in the diagnosis of neuro-developmental disorders like autism" [16].

Moral Development

Dr. Charles A. Smith, in his paper "Beyond 'I'm Sorry': The Emergence of Conscience in Young Children" defines conscience as "an internal voice that obliges us to act with kindness, respect, and fairness and to make things right as best we can when we do not" [17]. Brain development during the first three years of life enables the preschool-aged child to begin to understand the difference between right and wrong. Emerging skills of self-control, compassion, sympathy and empathy also contribute

16. University of Cambridge. (n.d.). Play's the thing. Retrieved from https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/features/plays-the-thing

17. Smith, C.A. (n.d.). Beyond "I'm sorry":The emergence of conscience in young children. Retrieved from https://www.k-state.edu/wwparent/ethics/mod1/beyond_sorry.pdf

to the development of a conscience. Parents, teachers and peers all play a role in helping children learn to care about themselves and others.

Preschoolers are beginning to be able to understand the difference between moral rules and social conventions. Moral rules are non-negotiable; for example, it is wrong to steal or murder. Social conventions are more arbitrary rules that a group has agreed upon; for example, standing in a line to board a bus. It is typical for children to test the limits of social conventions to learn what behavior is allowed and what will not be allowed. How adults respond to testing of limits is important. Dr. Smith believes "Preschool children do not fully understand the responsibility for repairing a wrong. Being forced to say, "I'm sorry" can become a magic incantation of absolution, as though words alone are enough to free them from the consequences of their choices" [18]. Children learn to truly care about others through their own relationships with caring adults.

Erikson – Initiative Vs Guilt

Psychologist Erik Erikson argues that children in early childhood go through a stage of "initiative vs. guilt". If the child is placed in an environment where he/she can explore, make decisions, and initiate activities, they have achieved initiative. On the other hand, if the child is put in an environment where initiation is repressed through criticism and control, he/she will develop a sense of guilt.

Children playing in the sand. (Image is in the public domain from Wikimedia Commons)

The trust and autonomy of previous stages develop into a desire to take initiative or to think of ideas and initiative action. Children may want to build a fort with the cushions from the living room couch or open a lemonade stand in the driveway or make a zoo with their stuffed animals and issue tickets to those who want to come. Or they may just want to get themselves ready for bed without any assistance. To reinforce taking initiative, caregivers should offer praise for the child's efforts and avoid being critical of messes or mistakes. Soggy washrags and toothpaste left in the sink pales in comparison to the smiling face of a five-year-old that emerges from the bathroom with clean teeth and pajamas! [19].

18. Ibid.

19. Leon, A. (n.d.). Children's development: Prenatal through adolescent development. Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/document/d/1k1xtrXy6j9_NAqZdGv8nBn_I6-lDtEgEFf7skHjvE-Y/edit

Another important dimension of the self is the sense of self as male or female. Preschool-aged children become increasingly interested in finding out the differences between boys and girls both physically and in terms of what activities are acceptable for each. While 2-year-olds can identify some differences and learn whether they are boys or girls, preschoolers become more interested in what it means to be male or female. This self-identification or gender identity is followed sometime later with gender constancy or the knowledge that gender does not change. Gender roles or the rights and expectations that are associated with being male or female are learned throughout childhood and into adulthood.

Freud and the Phallic Stage

Freud believed that masculinity and femininity were learned during the phallic stage of psychosexual development. According to Freud, during the phallic stage, the child develops an attraction to the opposite-sex parent but after recognizing that they cannot actually be romantically involved with that parent, the child learns to model their own behaviour after the same-sex parent. The child develops his or her own sense of masculinity or femininity from this resolution. And, according to Freud, a person who does not exhibit gender-appropriate behaviour, such as a woman who competes with men for jobs or a man who lacks self-assurance and dominance, has not successfully completed this stage of development. Consequently, such a person continues to struggle with his or her own gender identity.

Chodorow and Mothering

Chodorow, a Neo-Freudian, believed that mothering promotes gender stereotypic behaviour. Mothers push their sons away too soon and direct their attention toward problem- solving and independence. As a result, sons grow up confident in their own abilities but uncomfortable with intimacy. Girls are kept dependent too long and are given unnecessary and even unwelcome assistance from their mothers. Girls learn to underestimate their abilities and lack assertiveness but feel comfortable with intimacy.

A boy showing independence and confidence. (Image by Adam Jones is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0)

A girl showing dependence and comfort within a relationship. (Image by Free-Photos on Pixabay)

Both of these models assume that early childhood experiences result in lifelong gender self-concepts. However, current thinking refutes this assumption and sees gender socialization as a process of refinement and modification that continues throughout life.

Learning through Reinforcement and Modelling

Learning theorists suggest that gender role socialization is a result of the ways in which parents, extended family, teachers, friends, schools, religious institutions, media and others send messages about what is acceptable or desirable behaviour as males or females. This socialization begins early-in fact, it may even begin the moment a parent learns that a child is on the way. Knowing the sex of the child can conjure up images of the child's behaviour, appearance, and potential on the part of

some parents. And this stereotyping may continue to guide perception through life. Consider parents of newborns, shown a 7 pound, 20 inch baby, wrapped in blue (a colour associated with males in Western cultures) describe the child as tough, strong, and angry when crying. Shown the same infant in pink (a colour associated with baby girls in Western cultures), these parents are likely to describe the baby as pretty, delicate, and frustrated when crying. [20]. In Western cultures, female infants may be held more, talked to more frequently and given direct eye contact, while male infants play is often mediated through a toy or activity.

Parents who hold traditional views of male and females gender roles are more likely to give sons tasks that take them outside the house and that have to be performed only on occasion while girls are more likely to be given chores inside the home such as cleaning or cooking that is performed daily. These parents may also encourage sons to think for themselves when they encounter problems while daughters are more likely to be given assistance even when they are working on an answer. This impatience is reflected in teachers waiting less time when asking a female student for an answer than when asking for a reply from a male student [21]. Girls are given the message from teachers that they must try harder and endure in order to succeed while boys' successes are attributed to their intelligence. Cultural gender role stereotypes can also influence which kinds of courses or vocational choices girls and boys are encouraged to make.

Friends discuss what is acceptable for boys and girls and popularity may be based on modelling what is considered ideal behaviour or looks for the sexes. Girls tend to tell one another secrets to validate others as best friends while boys compete for position by emphasizing their knowledge, strength or accomplishments. This focus on accomplishments can even give rise to exaggerating accomplishments in boys, but girls are discouraged from showing off and may learn to minimize their accomplishments as a result.

Gender messages abound in our environment. The Western stereotypes that boys should be strong, forceful, active, dominant, and rational and that girls should be pretty, subordinate, unintelligent, emotional, and gabby are portrayed in children's toys, books, commercials, video games, movies, television shows and music.

Some School Boards in Ontario have developed policies and best practices concerning gender identity and gender expression. For example, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board's document "Gender Identity and Gender Expression: Guide to Support Our Students" expects its educators to challenge gender stereotypes. Specific actions include:

- Letting all students engage in an activity, not limit the number of boys or girls in a group.
- Encouraging students to take on various roles in a group.
- Avoiding separating boys and girls for activities (e.g. boys go to the gym and girls go to the library)
  Avoiding giving out awards based on gender (e.g. Most books read by a boy in a month versus most books read by a girl in a month)
- Intervening when children use gender-specific words to make fun of each other [22]. But does

20. Maccoby & Jacklin, 1987, as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

21. Sadker and Sadker, 1994, as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

22. Ottawa Carleton District School Board. (2021). Gender identity and gender expression: Fostering inclusive learning environments for all students. Retrieved from https://p13cdn4static.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_55394/File/Our%20Schools/Indigenous,%20Equity%20and%20Human%20Rights/2SLGBTQ/

this mean that each of us receives and interprets these messages in the same way? Probably not. In addition to being recipients of Western cultural expectations, we are individuals who also modify these roles [23]. Based on what young children learn about gender from parents, peers, media and those who they observe and interact with in society, children develop their own conceptions of the attributes associated with maleness or femaleness which is referred to as gender schemas.

Store shelves filled with pink and purple colors and girls' toys.
(Image by Janet McKnight is licensed under CC BY 2.0)

Store shelves filled with primary colours and boys' toys.
(Image by Janet McKnight is licensed under CC BY 2.0)

Indigenous Perspectives

Gender messages are seen in our ceremonies. Boy's and girl's responsibilities are taught as early as 1 year old during the Walking Out ceremony (this ceremony only pertains to the Anishinabe people). These are not seen as stereotypical but rather what Creator is asking of us. For instance, a boy is taught that he is the protector and the hunter with the responsibility of the fire during ceremony in patriarchal societies. As for

Gender%20Identity%20and%20Gender%20Expression.pdf

23. Kimmel, 2008, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

the girl, she is responsible for cooking, rearing the children, showing the children what is expected of them and protecting the water in life and in ceremony. Both genders are taught to be strong, active, rational, and respectful of the other gender including Two Spirit people. The girls are not taught that they are subordinate, unintelligent or just a pretty thing. Today it is not uncommon to see young girls taught to hunt, trap or fish or young men to take care of the children. There is more a sense of community and of respect towards all genders. The women are highly respected as the life givers and the men are highly regarded as the hunters and protectors. It is only because of colonization that these concepts started changing. Men started disrespecting and abusing women because of the Western ideologies. Men had lost their way which resulted in the women having to take over the roles and responsibilities of men. This is slowly starting to change due to the return of our cultural and traditional teachings.

Gender identity is not something that is/was important to First Nation communities but rather for the gifts that individual brought to the greater community. The term Two Spirit is a pan Indian term that was created in 1990s by non-Indigenous people. In many teachings, individuals who fall under LGBTQ are regarded as two spirited. Two Spirit individuals are wanting to reclaim the pre-colonial teachings.

"Historically, each nation had their own terms and concepts for Two Spirit people. The roles of the Two Spirit people were teachers, caregivers, medicine people and helpers. They were highly respected for their understanding of both man and woman. They were also seen as having special spiritual gifts." from the following source; Supporting the Sacred Journey. There is also a well-respected knowledge keeper called Albert McLeod who has worked tirelessly for the rights of Two-Spirit.

Gender Dysphoria

A growing body of research is now focused on Gender Dysphoria, or the distress accompanying a mismatch between one's gender identity and biological sex [24]. The 2018 Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces estimated that 0.24% of Canadians aged 15 or older identified as transgender [25]. Sexual minority people are almost three times more likely to experience violent victimization than heterosexual people [26]. Comments such as stating they prefer the toys, clothing and anatomy of the opposite sex, while rejecting the toys, clothing, and anatomy of their assigned sex are criteria for a diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria in children. Certainly, many young children do not conform to the gender roles modeled by the culture and even push back against assigned roles. However, they do not experience discomfort regarding their gender identity and would not be identified with Gender Dysphoria.

Personality

Parents often scrutinize their child's preferences, characteristics, and responses for clues of a developing personality. They are quite right to do so, because temperament is a foundation for personality growth. But temperament (defined as early-emerging differences in reactivity and self-regulation) is not the whole story. Although temperament is biologically based, it interacts with the influence of experience from the moment of birth (if not before) to shape personality [27].

24. American Psychiatric Association, 2013, as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

25. Statistics Canada. (2020). Sexual minority people almost three times more likely to experience violent victimization than heterosexual people. Retrieved from https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200909/dq200909a-eng.htm

26. Ibid.

27. Rothbart, 2011, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

Temperamental dispositions are affected, for example, by the support level of parental care. More generally, personality is shaped by the goodness of fit between the child's temperamental qualities and characteristics of the environment [28]. For example, an adventurous child whose parents regularly take her on weekend hiking and fishing trips would be a good "fit" to her lifestyle, supporting personality growth. Personality is the result, therefore, of the continuous interplay between biological disposition and experience, as is true for many other aspects of social and personality development.

Personality develops from temperament in other ways[29]. As children mature biologically, temperamental characteristics emerge and change over time. A newborn is not capable of much self-control, but as brain-based capacities for self-control advance, temperamental changes in self-regulation become more apparent. So an infant that cries frequently doesn't necessarily have a grumpy personality. With sufficient parental support and increased sense of security, the child may develop into a content preschooler that is not likely to cry to get her needs met.

A girl enjoying nature. (Image by Khanh Steven on Unsplash)

In addition, personality is made up of many other features besides temperament. Children's developing self-concept, their motivations to achieve or to socialize, their values and goals, their coping styles, their sense of responsibility and conscientiousness, and many other qualities are encompassed into personality. These qualities are influenced by biological dispositions, but even more by the child's experiences with others, particularly in close relationships, that guide the growth of individual characteristics. Indeed, personality development begins with the biological foundations of temperament but becomes increasingly elaborated, extended, and refined over time. The newborn that parents observed in wonder upon becomes an adult with a personality of depth and nuance.

CHILDHOOD STRESS AND DEVELOPMENT

Canadian researcher and author, Dr. Stuart Shanker (1952-), is a leading expert on how stress impacts children and their development. He believes that many developmental and behavioural challenges in children are caused by an overactive stress response. Typical behaviours seen in children under stress

28. Chess & Thomas, 1999, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021
29. Thompson, Winer, & Goodvin, 2010, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

include poor attention, emotion regulation, and self-control. These are the "symptoms". Like a fever is a symptom of an infection that won't go away until the infection is cured, the behavioural symptoms of stress can't be alleviated until the cause is addressed – reducing the child's stress.

What is the impact of stress on child development? Children experience different types of stressors. Normal, everyday stress can provide an opportunity for young children to build coping skills and poses little risk to development. Even more long-lasting stressful events such as changing schools or losing a loved one can be managed fairly well. But children who experience toxic stress or who live in extremely stressful situations of abuse over long periods of time can suffer long-lasting effects. The structures in the midbrain or limbic system such as the hippocampus and amygdala can be vulnerable to prolonged stress during early childhood [30]. High levels of the stress hormone cortisol can reduce the size of the hippocampus and affect the child's memory abilities. Stress hormones can also reduce immunity to disease. The brain exposed to long periods of severe stress can develop a low threshold making the child hypersensitive to stress in the future. However, the effects of stress can be minimized if the child has the support of caring adults. Let's take a look at childhood stressors.

Effects of Domestic Abuse

In 2015, about 10% of Canadians stated that, as a child, they had witnessed domestic violence [31]. There has been an increase in acknowledgment that children exposed to domestic abuse during their upbringing will suffer in their developmental and psychological welfare. Because of the awareness of domestic violence that some children have to face, it also generally impacts how the child develops emotionally, socially, behaviourally as well as cognitively. Some emotional and behavioral problems that can result due to domestic violence include increased aggressiveness, anxiety, and changes in how a child socializes with friends, family, and authorities. Bruises, broken bones, head injuries, lacerations, and internal bleeding are some of the acute effects of a domestic violence incident that require medical attention and hospitalization.

Child Maltreatment

Child abuse is the physical, sexual, or emotional mistreatment or neglect of a child or children. Most Canadian jurisdictions have added exposure to family violence as a distinct form of maltreatment in addition to physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and emotional harm. Accurate statistics about the rate of incidence of child maltreatment are difficult to obtain because of under-reporting.

CHILD MALTREATMENT IN CANADA

"Findings from an Ontario community-based survey indicate that maltreatment is a common experience for children living in that province. A history of experiencing physical abuse during childhood was reported by 31.2% of males and 21.1% of females, with similar proportions of males

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30. Middlebrooks and Audage, 2008, as cited in Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

31. Statistics Canada. (2017). Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2015. Retrieved from https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/170216/dq170216b-eng.htm

(10.7%) and females (9.2%) reporting a history of severe physical abuse. More females (12.8%) than males (4.3%) reported experiences of childhood sexual abuse. Overall, 33% of males and 27% of females reported that they had experienced one or more incidents of physical and/or sexual abuse during their childhood.

Given that this Ontario survey did not ask questions about neglect, emotional harm or exposure to family violence, the overall message it suggests is that at least one in three individuals experiences some form of maltreatment over the course of his or her childhood. It seems safe to say that if all five types of child maltreatment were taken into consideration, this proportion would be much higher" [32].

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a person in a position of trust or authority purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or youth. Examples of physical abuse include but are not limited to: shaking, hitting, excessively pinching, slapping or tripping a child, withholding sleep, food or medication, burning or scalding.

The distinction between physical abuse and discipline is not well understood. In Canada, Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada allows the use of some physical force by a parent (or person standing in for a parent) if the purpose is to discipline a child. However, the force must be "reasonable" under the circumstances. In 2004, the Supreme Court of Canada narrowed the definition of "reasonable" to mean " transitory and trifling" [33]. Any action that leaves a mark on a child, such as a bruise, would not be considered reasonable. The Supreme Court also issued the following guidelines:

- Physical punishment cannot be used on children younger than 2 years or older than 12 years.

- Objects such as belts or rulers cannot be used on a child.

- A child is never to be hit on the face or head.

- Any use of force cannot be degrading.

- Physical punishment cannot be used on a child who is not able to understand the situation because of a developmental delay[34].

Spanking as a form of physical punishment could be considered legal under the Criminal Code of Canada if the Supreme Court's guidelines are followed. However, this does not prevent provincial/territorial/Indigenous child protection agencies from considering spanking as grounds for protection.

32. Government of Canada. (2012). Child maltreatment in Canada. Retrieved from https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/stop-family-violence/prevention-resource-centre/children/child-maltreatment-canada.html

33. Government of Canada. (2021). Criminal law and managing children's behaviour. Retrieved from https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/mcb-cce/index.html

34. Ibid.

Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is a form of child abuse in which an adult or older adolescent abuses a child for sexual stimulation. Effects of child sexual abuse include guilt and self-blame, flashbacks, nightmares, insomnia, and fear of things associated with the abuse. In 2014, Statistics Canada conducted a survey of 33,000 individuals over the age of 15. 8% of respondents reported childhood sexual abuse. This would correspond to approximately 2.4 million Canadians. This is probably an under-representation of the true number, as it only captured respondents willing to self-disclose to an unknown person on a phone [35].

Emotional Abuse

Out of all the possible forms of abuse, emotional abuse is the hardest to define. It could include name-calling, ridicule, degradation, destruction of personal belongings, torture or killing of a pet, excessive criticism, inappropriate or excessive demands, withholding communication, and routine labeling or humiliation.

Neglect

Neglect is a passive form of abuse in which a perpetrator is responsible to provide care for a victim who is unable to care for himself or herself but fails to provide adequate care. Neglect may include the failure to provide sufficient supervision, nourishment, or medical care, or the failure to fulfill other needs for which the victim is helpless to provide for himself or herself. Neglect can have many long-term side effects, such as physical injuries, low self-esteem, attention disorders, violent behaviour, and even death.

CHILD PROTECTION LEGISLATION IN CANADA

In Canada, child protection falls under the jurisdiction of the provinces, territories and Indigenous welfare agencies. Legislation varies across these different jurisdictions. In Ontario, *The Child Youth and Family Services Act*, offers protection to children under the age of 18. In relationship to types of abuse, under this legislation a child is in need of protection when there is:

- Physical harm or a likely risk of physical harm
- A pattern of neglect
- Sexual abuse or exploitation or a likely risk of sexual abuse or exploitation
- Emotional harm or a likely risk of emotional harm
- Failure to agree to treatment to relieve physical harm, sexual abuse or neglect [36].

In Canada, some Indigenous communities manage their own child welfare services, ensuring culturally appropriate programs and services. However, not all communities, especially un-ceded communities or those not recognized by the government, fall under provincial child protection

35. Canadian Centre for Child Protection. (2018). Child sexual abuse by K-12 personnel in Canada: Executive summary. Retrieved from https://www.protectchildren.ca/pdfs/C3P_CSAinSchoolsReport_en.pdf

36. Province of Ontario. (2017). Child, youth, and family services act: S.O. 2017, c. 14, Sched. 1. Retrieved from https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/17c14

legislation. Some communities, including the Metis people, are still fighting to be included in child protection legislation. In Ontario, there are 11 Indigenous children's aid societies. The importance of self-governance in relationship to child welfare was a key finding of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015. [37].

Summary

In this chapter we looked at:

- The emotional developmental continuum for preschoolers.

- The development of self-concept and self-esteem.

- Erikson's psychosocial stage of initiative versus guilt.

- Gender identity, gender constancy, gender roles, and gender dysphoria.

- Personality development

- The effects of stress on children, including maltreatment.

Attribution

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Driskill, Q., Finley, C., Gilley, B. J., & Morgensen, S. L. (2011). *Queer Indigenous studies: Critical interventions in theory, politics, and literature.* Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.

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37. National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health. (2017). Indigenous children and the child welfare system in Canada. Retrieved from https://www.nccih.ca/docs/health/FS-ChildWelfareCanada-EN.pdf

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN THE PRESCHOOL YEARS

Chapter Objectives

After this chapter, you should be able to:

- Discuss communication language and literacy development that takes place during the preschool years

- explain theories of language development

INTRODUCTION

A child's vocabulary expands between the ages of 2 to 6 from about 200 words to over 10,000 words through a process called fast-mapping. Words are easily learned by making connections between new words and concepts already known. The parts of speech that are learned depend on the language and what is emphasized. Children speaking verb-friendly languages such as Chinese and Japanese, tend to learn verbs more readily. But those learning less verb-friendly languages such as English, seem to need assistance in grammar to master the use of verbs [1]

A woman instructing a girl on vocabulary. (Image by the U.S. Department of the Interior is in the public domain)

LITERAL MEANINGS

Children can repeat words and phrases after having heard them only once or twice. But they do not always understand the meaning of the words or phrases. This is especially true of expressions or figures of speech that are taken literally. For example, a supply educator explains that he is working

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1. Imai, et al, 2008, as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021.

with them because their regular educator has 'lost their voice'. The children, with great concern, want to know where they lost it and if they will find it again. Or a classroom full of preschoolers hears the teacher say "Wow! That was a piece of cake!" The children begin asking "Cake? Who took it? Are we having cake? "

OVERREGULARIZATION

Children learn rules of grammar as they learn a language but may apply these rules inappropriately at first. For instance, a child learns to add "ed" to the end of a word to indicate past tense. Then form a sentence such as "I goed there. I doed that." This is typical at ages 2 and 3. They will soon learn new words such as "went" and "did" to be used in those situations.

THE IMPACT OF TRAINING

Remember Vygotsky and the zone of proximal development? Children can be assisted in learning language by others who listen attentively, model more accurate pronunciations and encourage elaboration. The child exclaims, "I goed there!" and the adult responds, "You went there? Say, 'I went there.' Where did you go?" Children may be ripe for language as Chomsky suggests, but active participation in helping them learn is important for language development as well. The process of scaffolding is one in which the adult (or more skilled peer) provides needed assistance to the child as a new skill is learned.

COMMUNICATING WITH OTHERS

In the preschool years children become more skilled at communicating with others. They become increasingly aware of the conventions of effective conversations. Research shows that four year olds intentionally adjust their communication to match the listener and the context. [2]. In the study four year olds were asked to explain how a toy worked. The study showed that when explaining how the toy worked to adults, the children used longer sentences and talked more overall than compared to when they were explaining how the toy worked to two year olds. Their explanations to toddlers included simpler grammar and more attention getting words such as see, look, watch. Children are becoming increasingly aware of the responsibilities of the speaker to pay attention to the listener and if the listener appears to not understand that they as the speaker should address this [3]). This might mean more than simply repeating what they said and they may clarify or provide an example.
Preschoolers also become better listeners and can discern if a message makes sense and who is better informed about a particular topic [4].

According to the Ministry of Education [5], via the Continuum of Development, communication, language and literacy development continues to takes place during the preschool/kindergarten stage of development. The skills demonstrated by infants and toddlers continue to develop as children

2. Shatz & Gelman 1983, as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

3. Shwe & Markman, 1997, as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

4. Robinson, Champion & Mitchell, 1999, as cited by Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, & Johnson, 2021

5. Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). Excerpts from "Elect". Retrieved from https://www.dufferincounty.ca/sites/default/files/rtb/Excerpts-from-Early-Learning-for-Every-Child-Today.pdf

become skilled communicators using verbal and non-verbal styles of communication to converse with peers and adults. Their expanding vocabulary supports them to describe and make meaning of their experiences and the world around them. They notice environmental print, engage in literacy and become increasingly aware of its power as a human activity. Their phonological awareness increases as they manipulate words, recognize letters and begin to write them.

LANGUAGE MILESTONES

The prior aspects of language development in early childhood can also be summarized into the progression of milestones children typically experience from ages 3 to 5. Here is a table of those.

Table 13.1: Language Milestones

TYPICAL AGE	TYPICAL SKILL
3 years	- Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps - Can name most familiar things - Understands words like "in," "on," and "under" - Says first name, age, and sex - Names a friend - Says words like "I," "me," "we," and "you" and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats) - Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time - Carries on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences
4 years	- Knows some basic rules of grammar, such as correctly using "he" and "she" - Sings a song or says a poem from memory such as the "Itsy Bitsy Spider" or the "Wheels on the Bus" - Tells stories - Can say first and last name
5 years	- Speaks very clearly - Tells a simple story using full sentences - Uses future tense; for example, "Grandma will be here." - Says name and address

Table: Language Milestones (Developmental Milestones by the CDC is in the public domain)

Indigenous Perspectives

Please read the following article Fostering Literacy Success for First Nations, Metis and Inuit by Dr. Pamela Rose Toulouse. She shares that Indigenous learners should not be regarded as ESL but as bilingual.

Theories of Language Development

Humans, especially children, have an amazing ability to learn language. Within the first year of life, children will have learned many of the necessary concepts to have functional language, although it will still take years for their capabilities to develop fully. Here is a recap of the theorists and theories that have been proposed to explain the development of language, and related brain structures, in children.

Skinner: Operant Conditioning

B.F. Skinner believed that children learn language through **operant conditioning**; in other words, children receive "rewards" for using language in a functional manner. For example, a child learns to say the word "drink" when she is thirsty; she receives something to drink, which reinforces her use of the word for getting a drink, and thus she will continue to do so. This follows the four-term contingency that Skinner believed was the basis of language development—motivating operations, discriminative stimuli, response, and reinforcing stimuli. Skinner also suggested that children learn language through imitation of others, prompting, and shaping.

Chomsky: Language Acquisition Device

Noam Chomsky's work discusses the biological basis for language and claims that children have innate abilities to learn language. Chomsky terms this innate ability the "language acquisition device." He believes children instinctively learn language without any formal instruction. He also believes children have a natural need to use language, and that in the absence of formal language children will develop a system of communication to meet their needs. He has observed that all children make the same type of language errors, regardless of the language they are taught. Chomsky also believes in the existence of a "universal grammar," which posits that there are certain grammatical rules all human languages share. However, his research does not identify areas of the brain or a genetic basis that enables humans' innate ability for language.

Piaget: Assimilation and Accommodation

Jean Piaget's theory of language development suggests that children use both assimilation and accommodation to learn language. **Assimilation** is the process of changing one's environment to place information into an already-existing schema (or idea). **Accommodation** is the process of changing one's schema to adapt to the new environment. Piaget believed children need to first develop mentally before language acquisition can occur. According to him, children first create mental structures within the mind (schemas) and from these schemas, language development happens.

Vygotsky: Zone of Proximal Development

Lev Vygotsky's theory of language development focused on social learning and **the zone of proximal development (ZPD).** The ZPD is a level of development obtained when children engage in social interactions with others; it is the distance between a child's *potential* to learn and the *actual learning* that takes place. Vygotsky's theory also demonstrated that Piaget underestimated the importance of social interactions in the development of language.

Summary

In this chapter we looked at:

- Preschooler's communication language and literacy development
- theories of language development

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CHAPTER 11.

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

TWO MONTHS

Cognitive

- Pays attention to faces
- Begins to follow things with eyes and recognize people at a distance
- Begins to act bored (cries, fussy) if activity doesn't change

Fine Motor

- Grasps reflexively
- Does not reach for objects
- Holds hands in fist

Alloftheairatonetime shared by CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Gross Motor

- Can hold head up and begins to push up when lying on tummy
- Makes smoother movements with arms and legs

Language

- Coos, makes gurgling sounds
- Turns head toward sounds

Social and Emotional

- Begins to smile at people
- Can briefly calm himself (may bring hands to mouth and suck on hand)
- Tries to look at parent

Cognitive

- Lets you know if she is happy or sad

- Responds to affection

- Reaches for toy with one hand

- Uses hands and eyes together, such as seeing a toy and reaching for it

- Follows moving things with eyes from side to side

- Watches faces closely and recognizes familiar people and things at a distance

Fine Motor

- Brings hands to mouth

- Uses hands and eyes together, such as seeing a toy and reaching for it

- Follows moving things with eyes from side to side

- Can hold a toy with whole hand (palmar grasp) and shake it and swing at dangling toys

Cpl. Meloney R. Moses, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Gross Motor

- Holds head steady, unsupported

- Pushes down on legs when feet are on a hard surface

- Maybe able to roll over from tummy to back

- Brings hands to mouth

- When lying on stomach, pushes up to elbows

Language

- Begins to babble

- Babbles with expression and copies sounds he hears

- Cries in different ways to show hunger, pain, or being tired

Social and Emotional

- Smiles spontaneously, especially at people

- Likes to play with people and might cry when playing stops

- Copies some movements and facial expressions, like smiling or frowning

SIX MONTHS

Cognitive

- Looks around at things nearby

- Brings things to mouth

- Shows curiosity about things and tries to get things that are out of reach

- Begins to pass things from one hand to the other

- Looks for partially hidden object

- Looks for fallen toys

Fine Motor

- Reaches with both arms

- Brings things to mouth

- Begins to pass things from one hand to the other

Mehregan Javanmard, shared by " data-url="http://">CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Gross Motor

- Rolls over in both directions (front to back, back to front)

- Begins to sit without support

- When standing, supports weight on legs and might bounce

- Rocks back and forth, sometimes crawling backward before moving forward

Language

- Responds to sounds by making sounds

- Strings vowels together when babbling ("ah," "eh," "oh") and likes taking turns with parent while making sounds

- Responds to own name

- Makes sounds to show joy and displeasure

- Begins to say consonant sounds (jabbering with "m," "b")

Social and Emotional

- Knows familiar faces and begins to know if someone is a stranger

- Likes to play with others, especially parents

- Responds to other people's emotions and often seems happy

- Likes to look at self in a mirror

Cognitive

- Watches the path of something as it falls
- Looks for things he sees you hide
- Plays peek-a-boo
- Puts things in her mouth
- Moves things smoothly from one hand to the other
- Picks up things like cereal o's between thumb and index finger

תהלה הרץ, by ," data-url="http://,">CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Fine Motor

- Puts things in her mouth
- Moves things smoothly from one hand to the other
- Picks up things between thumb and index finger (pincer grip)

Gross Motor

- Stands, holding on
- Can get into sitting position
- Sits without support
- Pulls to stand
- Crawls

Language

- Understands "no"
- Makes a lot of different sounds like "mamamama" and "babababababa"
- Copies sounds and gestures of others
- Uses fingers to point at things

Social and Emotional

- May be afraid of strangers
- May be clingy with familiar adults
- Has favorite toys

ONE YEAR

Cognitive

- Explores things in different ways, like shaking, banging, throwing
- Finds hidden things easily
- Looks at the right picture or thing when it's named
- Imitates gestures
- Starts to use things correctly; for example, drinks from a cup, brushes hair
- Bangs two things together

Fine Motor

- Reaches with one hand
- Bangs two things together
- Puts things in a container, takes things out of a container
- Lets things go without help
- Pokes with index (pointer) finger

Avsar Aras, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Gross Motor

- Gets to a sitting position without help
- Pulls up to stand, walks holding on to furniture ("cruising")
- May take a few steps without holding on
- May stand alone

Language

- Responds to simple spoken requests
- Uses simple gestures, like shaking head "no" or waving "bye-bye"
- Makes sounds with changes in tone (sounds more like speech)
- Says "mama" and "dada" and exclamations like "uh-oh!"
- Tries to say words you say

Social and Emotional

- Is shy or nervous with strangers
- Cries when mom or dad leaves

- Has favorite things and people

- Shows fear in some situations

- Hands you a book when he wants to hear a story

- Repeats sounds or actions to get attention

- Puts out arm or leg to help with dressing

- Plays games such as "peek-a-boo" and "pat-a-cake"

18 MONTHS

Cognitive

greg lilly by CC BY-NC 2.0 via Flickr

- Knows what ordinary things are for; for example, telephone, brush, spoon

- Points to get the attention of others

- Shows interest in a doll or stuffed animal by pretending to feed

- Points to one body part

- Scribbles on his own

- Can follow 1-step verbal commands without any gestures

Fine Motor

- Scribbles on his own

- Can help undress herself

- Drinks from a cup

- Eats with a spoon with some accuracy

- Stacks 2-4 objects

Gross Motor

- Walks alone

- Walks up stairs holding for support

- May run

- Carries and pulls toys while walking

- Can help undress herself

- Climbs onto and down from furniture

Language

- Says several words

- Say and shakes head "no"
- Points to show someone what is wanted
- Uses two word sentences
- Repeats words overheard in conversation

Social and Emotional

- Likes to hand things to others as play
- May have temper tantrums
- May be afraid of strangers
- Shows affection to familiar people
- Plays simple pretend, such as feeding a doll
- May cling to caregivers in new situations
- Points to show others something interesting
- Explores alone but with parent close by.

TWO YEARS

Cognitive

- Begins to sort shapes and colors
- Completes sentences and rhymes in familiar books
- Plays simple make-believe games
- Follows two-step instructions such as "Pick up your shoes and put them in the closet."
- Names items in a picture book such as a cat, bird, or dog
- Matches object to picture in book

Fine Motor

- Builds towers of 4 or more blocks
- Might use one hand more than the other
- Makes copies of straight lines and circles
- Enjoys pouring and filling
- Unbuttons large buttons
- Unzips large zippers
- Drinks and feeds self with more accuracy

Yoshiyasu NISHIKAWA. Shared under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 via Flickr

Gross Motor

- Stands on tiptoe
- Kicks a ball
- Begins to run
- Climbs onto and down from furniture without help
- Walks up and down stairs holding on
- Throws ball overhand

Language

- Points to things or pictures when they are named
- Knows names of familiar people and body parts
- Says sentences with 2 to 4 words
- Follows simple instructions
- Repeats words overheard in conversation
- Points to things in a book

Social and Emotional

- Copies others, especially adults and older children
- Gets excited when with other children
- Shows more and more independence
- Shows defiant behavior (doing what he has been told not to)
- Plays mainly beside other children, but is beginning to include other children, such as in chase games

Cognitive

- Can work toys with buttons, levers, and moving parts
- Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, and people
- Does puzzles with 3 or 4 pieces
- Understands what "two" means

Fine Motor

- Copies a circle with pencil or crayon
- Turns book pages one at a time
- Builds towers or more than 6 blocks
- Screws and unscrews jar lids or turns door handle
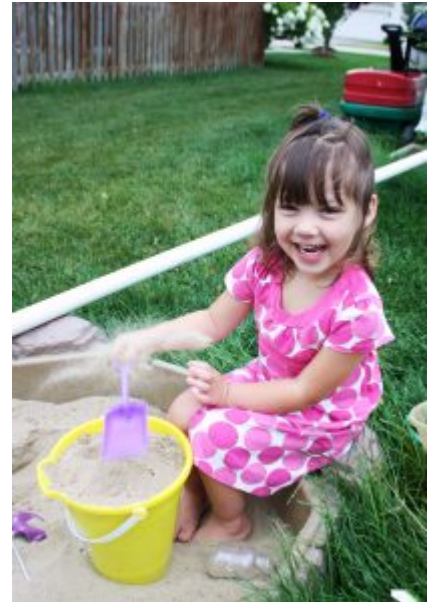
Gross Motor

- Climbs well
- Runs easily
- Pedals a tricycle (3-wheeled bike)
- Walks up and down stairs, one foot on each step
- Kicks ball forward
- Throws ball overhand

Matt B by CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 via Flickr

Language

- Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps
- Can name most familiar things
- Understands words like "in," "on," and "under"
- Says first name, age, and sex
- Names a friend
- Says words like "I," "me," "we," and "you" and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats)
- Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time
- Carries on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences

Social and Emotional

- Copies adults and friends
- Shows affection for friends without prompting
- Takes turns in games

- Shows concern for a crying friend

- Understands the idea of "mine" and "his" or "hers"

- Shows a wide range of emotions

- Separates easily from mom and dad

- May get upset with major changes in routine

- Dresses and undresses self

FOUR YEARS

Cognitive

- Names some colors and some numbers

- Understands the idea of counting

- Starts to understand time

- Remembers parts of a story

- Understands the idea of "same" and "different"

- Plays board or card games

- Tells you what he thinks is going to happen next in a book

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Fine Motor

- Pours, cuts with supervision, and mashes own food

- Uses scissors

- Starts to copy some capital letters

Gross Motor

- Hops and stands on one foot up to 2 seconds

- Catches a bounced ball most of the time

Language

- Knows some basic rules of grammar, such as correctly using "he" and "she"

- Sings a song or says a poem from memory such as the "ltsy Bitsy Spider" or the "Wheels on the Bus"

- Tells stories

- Can say first and last name

- Recalls parts of a story

Social and Emotional

- Enjoys doing new things
- Plays "Mom" and "Dad"
- Is more and more creative with make-believe play
- Would rather play with other children than by himself
- Cooperates with other children
- Often can't tell what's real and what's make-believe
- Talks about what she likes and what she is interested in

FIVE YEARS

Cognitive

- Counts 10 or more things
- Knows about things used every day, like money and food
- Correctly names 4 colors
- Better understands concept of time

David Kabiru, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Fine Motor

- Can draw a person with at least 6 body parts
- Can print some letters or numbers
- Copies a triangle and geometric shapes
- Uses a fork and spoon and sometimes a table knife

Gross Motor

- Stands on one foot for 10 seconds or longer
- Hops; may be able to skip
- Can do a somersault
- Can use a toilet on her own
- Swings and climbs

Language

- Speaks very clearly
- Tells a simple story using full sentences
- Uses future tense; for example, "Grandma will be here."
- Says name and address

- Speaks in sentences of more than 5 words

Social and Emotional

- Wants to be like and please other friends
- More likely to agree with rules
- Likes to sing, dance, and act
- Is aware of gender
- Cantell what's real and what's make-believe
- Shows more independence
- Is sometimes demanding and sometimes very cooperative

SIX YEARS

Cognitive

- Shows increased attention span
- Understands simple time markers
- Understands simple motion concepts
- Enjoys the challenges of puzzles, mazes, and games
- Names and correctly holds up right and left hand fairly consistently
- Inquisitive about surroundings and everyday events

marviikad shared under CC BY-SA 2.0 via Flickr

Fine Motor

- Enjoys painting, modeling with clay, drawing, coloring
- Writes numbers and letters with varying degrees of precision and interest (might reverse or confuse certain letters: b/d, p/q, g/q, t/f)
- Traces around hand and other objects
- Folds and cuts paper into simple shapes
- Ties own shoes (some still struggle)

Gross Motor

- Movements are more precise and deliberate
- Moves constantly
- Enjoys vigorous activity
- Rides bicycle with training wheels

- Swings a bat

Language

- Talks nonstop
- Carries on adult-like conversations; asks many questions
- Uses appropriate verb tenses, word order, and sentencestructure
- Uses language to express displeasure
- Talks self through steps required in simple problem solving
- Imitates slang and profanity; finds "bathroom" talk extremely funny
- Delights in telling jokes and riddles
- Recognizes some words by sight;
- Attempts to sounds out words

Social and Emotional

- Becomes less dependent on parents
- Needs and seeks adult approval
- Anxious to please
- Sees events from almost entirely own perspective
- Easily disappointed and frustrated by self-perceived failure
- Has difficulty composing and soothing self
- Dislikes being corrected or losing at games
- Often fibs, cheats, or takes items belonging to others
- Knows when he or she has been bad based on expectations and rules
- Can be increasingly fearful

Cognitive

- Understands concepts of space and time in ways that are both logical and more practical

- Begins to grasp conservation

- Gains better understanding of cause and effect

- Tells time by clock and understands calendar time

- Plans ahead

- Shows fascination with magic tricks

- Enjoys counting and saving money

- Continues to reverse some letters and substitute sounds on occasion

Fine Motor

Donna Cleveland, " data-url="http://">CC BY 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons

- Manipulates computer mouse or paintbrush with greater precision

- Uses knife and fork appropriately, but inconsistently

- Holds pencil in tight grasp near the tip; rests head on forearm, lowers head almost to the table top when doing pencil-and-paper tasks

- Produces numbers and letters in deliberate and confident fashion (more uniform)

Gross Motor

- Balances on either foot

- Runs up and down stairs with alternating feet

- Throws and catches smaller ball

- Practices a new motor skill over and over until mastered, then drops it to work on something else

- Finds floor more comfortable than furniture when reading, playing, or watching TV

- Legs are often in constant motion

Language

- Engages in storytelling

- Uses adult-like sentence structure and language in conversation

- Uses more adjectives and adverbs

- Uses gestures to illustrate conversations

- Verbal exaggeration is common

- Describes personal experiences in great detail

- Understands and carries out multiple-step directions

- Enjoys writing simple notes to friends

- Finds reading easier

- Reading skills are better than spelling skills

Social and Emotional

- Criticizes own performance

- Is cooperative and affectionate towards adults

- Is more outgoing

- Seeks outs friendships

- Can find things to do independently

- Quarrels less often

- Still tattles

- Prefers same-sex playmates; more likely to play in groups

- Blames others or makes up excuses for own behavior

- Worries about not being liked

- Feelings are easily hurt

- Can be trusted to carry out directions and commitments

- Worries about being late or not getting school work done

Cognitive

- Organizes and displays items according to more complex systems
- Bargains and trades collectible items
- Plan and saves money for small purchases
- Begins to take interest in what others think and do
- Understands there are distant countries and differences of opinion and culture
- Understands perspective (shadow, distance, shape)
- Grasps basic principles of conservation
- Uses more sophisticated logic in efforts to understand everyday events
- Adds and subtracts multiple digit numbers
- Learning multiplication and division

Biswarup Ganguly, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Fine Motor

- Copies words and numbers with increasing speed and accuracy
- Has good eye-hand coordination
- Drawings reflect more realistic portrayal of objects

Gross Motor

- Likes to dance, skate, swim, wrestle, ride bikes, play basketball, jump rope, and fly kites
- Seeks out opportunities to play in team activities and games
- Exhibits significant improvement in agility, balance, speed, and strength
- Possess seemingly endless energy

Language

- Reads with ease and understanding
- Writes with descriptions that are imaginative and detailed
- Uses language to criticize and compliment others
- Repeats slang and curse words
- Understands and follows rules of grammar in conversation and written form
- Is intrigued with learning secret word codes or using code language
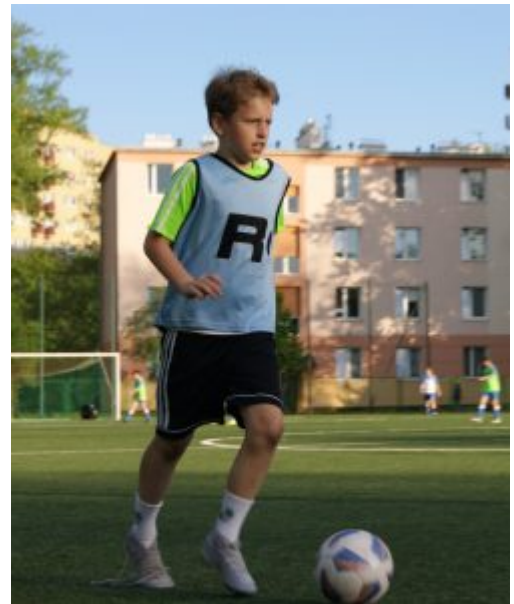- Able to think and talk about past and future

Social and Emotional

- Begins to form opinions about moral values and attitudes

- Plays with two or three best friends; most often of same age and gender

- Enjoys spending some time alone

- Participates in team games and activities

- Acceptance by peers is important

- Enjoys talking on the phone with friends and family

- Seems less critical of own performance, but is easily

- Understands others may have more talent in a specific area

- Enjoys performing for adults and challenging them in games

9 & 10 YEARS

Cognitive

- Develops ability to reason based more on experience and logic more than intuition

- Likes challenges in arithmetic but does not always understand complex mathematical concepts

- Learns best through hands-on learning (researching, experimenting, building models, dramatizing)

- Finds it difficult to sit still for periods longer than 30 minutes;

- Uses reading and writing skills for nonacademic activities

- Shows improved understanding of cause and effect

- Continues to master concepts of time, weight, volume, and distance

Polish soccer, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

- Able to think in reverse, following a series of occurrences back to their beginnings

- Prefers reading books that are longer and descriptive, with complex plots

Fine Motor

- Writes, sketches, and performs fine motor skills with improved coordination

- Likes to use hands for arts and crafts, cooking, woodworking, needlework, painting, building models, and taking apart objects such as a clock or telephone

- Draws pictures in details

- Takes great joy in perfecting handwriting skills

Gross Motor

- Throws a ball with accuracy
- Uses arms, legs, and feet with ease and improved precision
- Runs, climbs, skips ropes, swims, rides bikes, and skates with skill and confidence
- Enjoys team sports, but may still need to develop some of the necessary complex skills

Language

- Talks, often nonstop and for no specific reason; sometimes just for attention
- Expresses feelings in effectively through words
- Understands and uses language as a system for communicating with others
- Uses slang expressions commonly expressed by peers
- Recognizes that some words have double meaning
- Finds humor in using illogical metaphors in jokes and riddles
- Shows advanced understanding of grammatical sequences
- Recognizes when a sentence is not grammatically correct

Social and Emotional

- Becomes less dependent on parents
- Needs and seeks adult approval
- Anxious to please
- Sees events from almost entirely own perspective
- Easily disappointed and frustrated by self-perceived failure
- Has difficulty composing and soothing self
- Dislikes being corrected or losing at games
- Often fibs, cheats, or takes items belonging to others
- Knows when he or she has been bad based on expectations and rules
- Can be increasingly fearful

Cognitive

- Begins thinking in more abstract terms
- No longer needs to rely on experiencing an event to understand it
- Accepts the idea that problems can have multiple solutions
- Completes the majority of language develop by the end of this stage
- Often works through problems by talking aloud to self
- Develops solutions or responses based on logic
- Enjoys challenges, problem-solving, researching, and testing possible solutions
- Stays focused on completing tasks
- Develops detailed plans and lists to reach a desired goal
- Performs many routine tasks without having to think
- Learns from errors using cause-and-effect

MIKI Yoshihito from Sapporo City, Hokkaido, Japan, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Fine Motor

- Concentrates efforts on continued refinement of fine motor ability
- Likes to sew and paint

Gross Motor

- Displays movements that are smoother and more coordinated
- Rapid growth can cause temporary clumsiness
- Enjoys participation in activities and organized games in which improved skills can be used and tested
- Requires outlets for release of excess energy that builds during the school day
- Enjoys team sports, riding bikes, playing in the park, taking dance lessons, going for a walk with friends, shooting hoops, playing soccer
- Has an abundance of energy but also fatigues quickly
- Uses improved strength to run faster, throw balls farther, jump higher, kick or bat balls more accurately, and wrestle friends

Language

- Completes the majority of language develop by the end of this stage
- Often works through problems by talking aloud to self

- Talk and argues, often nonstop, with anyone who will listen

- Uses longer and more complex sentence structures

- Masters increasingly complex vocabulary

- Adds 4,000-5,000 new words each year

- Weaves elaborate stories with precise descriptions

- Becomes a thoughtful listener

- Understands that word statements can have implied meanings

- Grasps concepts of irony and sarcasm

- Enjoys telling jokes, riddles, and rhymes to entertain others

- Masters several language styles, shifting back and forth based on the occasion

Social and Emotional

- Organizes group games but may modify rules while the game is in progress

- View self-image as very important

- Defines self in terms of appearance, possessions, and activities

- Becomes increasingly self-conscious and self-focused

- Understands the need to assume responsibility for his or her own behavior

- Daydreams and fantasizes about the future (including career)

- Develops a critical and idealistic view of the world

- Expresses interests in other cultures, foods, languages, and customs

- Adopts dress, hairstyles, and mannerisms of celebrities

- May spend more time now with peers than with family members

- is able to discuss what is emotionally troubling

Attribution

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CHAPTER 12.

DIVIDING DEVELOPMENT AND CURRICULUM INTO DOMAIN

We know that children certainly do not develop in isolated domains (as the images earlier in this introduction might lead you to assume). Their development is holistic and the domains are interrelated. What happens in one domain or area influences and/or is influenced by what happens in other domains or areas. We also know that learning is integrated and that curriculum should reflect that. Children do not just learn about one curriculum area or domain. A spontaneous or planned experience will touch on numerous curriculum areas.
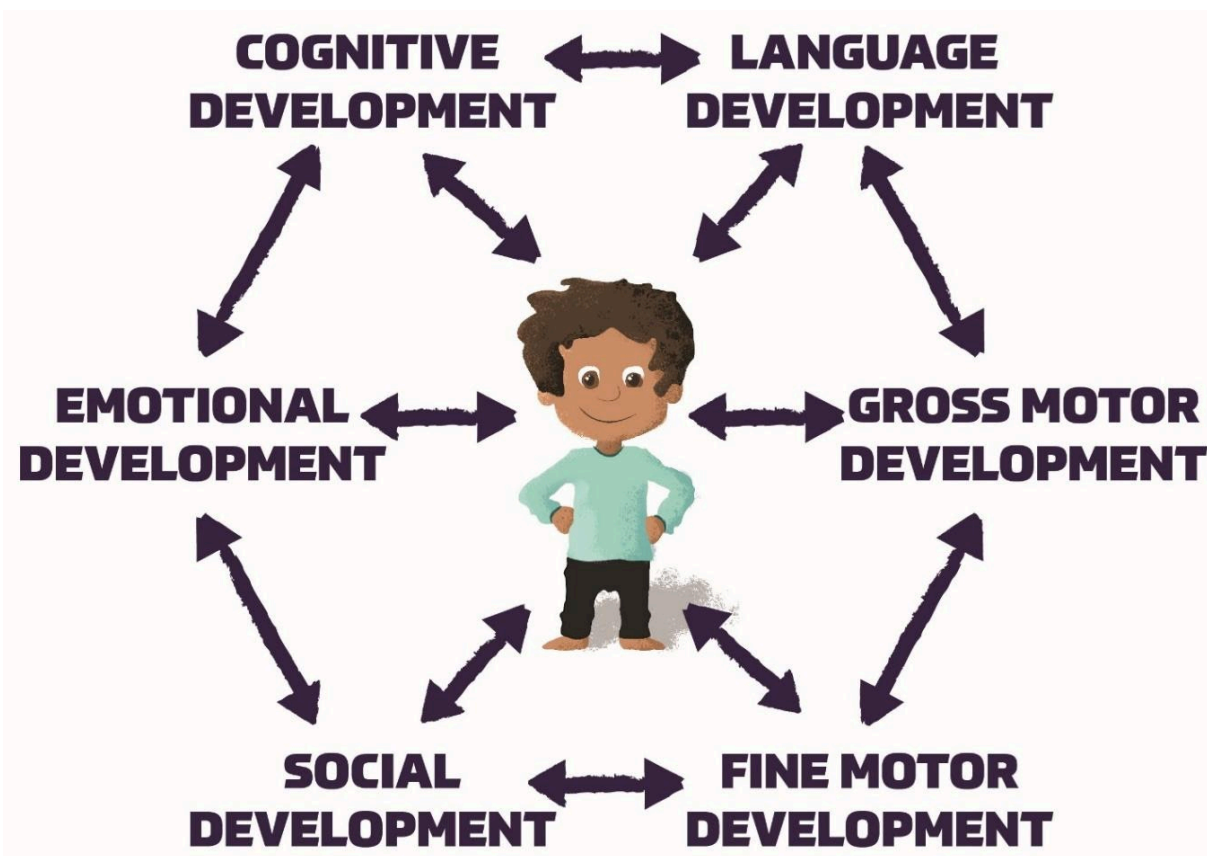
Domains of Development

Attribution

   Chapter adapted from *Introduction to Planning for Preschoolers* in Introduction to Curriculum for Early Childhood Education by Jennifer Paris, Kristin Beeve, & Clint Springer. College of the Canyons. CC BY license.

PART III.

CURRICULUM

CHAPTER 13.

DIVERSITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

What can educators do to create inclusive early childhood contexts that provide children and families with the opportunity to develop understandings of difference and diversity?

<div>

Learning Objectives

- Diversity is a characteristic of early childhood education.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out the principle that all children have the right to feel accepted and respected.
- It is important that all young children have the opportunity to develop an appreciation and respect for the diversity of their local and broader communities.
- Adopting a holistic approach to diversity is promoted as a strategy for educators working in contemporary early childhood settings.

</div>

INTRODUCTION

In early childhood education, diversity and inclusion go together like "roundabouts and swings, a pair of wings, fish and chips, hops and skips, socks and shoes, salt and pepper, strawberries and cream, pie and sauce, the oo in moo" [1]. Effective early childhood educators understand that creating an inclusive learning environment that is responsive to a diverse range of characteristics and needs, can be a challenging and overwhelming endeavour with sometimes limited or underwhelming results [2]. Traditionally, inclusive education in the mainstream early years classroom focussed on catering for children with special needs, such as physical impairment or autism, and for children considered 'at risk' or 'disadvantaged' in relation to issues such as socio-economic circumstances or geographical isolation [3]. Petriwskyj's [4] research extends this notion of inclusive education to include many more considerations, such as the social, political, cultural, English as a second language, trauma-related and economic backgrounds of educational stakeholders.

1. McKimmie, C. (2010). Two peas in a pod. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin

2. Petriwskyj, A., Thorpe, K., & Tayler, C. (2014). Towards inclusion: provision for diversity in the transition to school.International Journal of Early Years Education, 22(4), 359-379. doi: 10.1080/09669760.2014.911078

3. Petriwskyj, A. (2010). Diversity and inclusion in the early years. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 14(2), 195-212. doi: 10.1080/13603110802504515

4. Ibid.

This chapter is designed to reveal how early childhood educators could facilitate effective, inclusive pedagogies and programs in the mainstream classroom. Generally, when children have a diagnosed disability or a physical disability (such as needing a wheelchair or hearing aid), the general classroom teacher has access to support in the form of outside agencies or assisted technology [5]. However, when a teacher may think a child is 'odd', their learning progress is slow, or their behaviour is difficult to manage, then inclusive practices become difficult to seek, plan for and implement [6]. The following information, ideas and activities are designed to be a general 'teaching toolkit' for new teachers to implement in a mainstream early childhood classroom to assist them to be more responsive and inclusive to its diverse clientele of students and families.

DIVERSITY

Diversity is a characteristic of early childhood education. Children engaging with early childhood contexts come from a range of social, economic, cultural and ability groups, and bring with them a considerable variation in life's experiences.

Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework[7] is based on the concept of the Image of the Child which says that everyone's personal Image of the Child is influenced by their own experiences, biases, and knowledge. This framework's Image of the Child sees children as curious, creative, full of potential, capable, and confident. It values and honours children for who they are today, and for who they will become. It also values how all children's families, cultures, and communities influence on and contributions to children's learning and development. These beliefs informed each of the following sections of the document:

- Principles: Define how educators' approach early learning, with an emphasis on play-based learning; relationships; inclusion, diversity and equity; learning environments; and reflective practice

- Practice: Support the principles through holistic approaches, responsiveness to children; intentional teaching; valuing cultural and social contexts of children; continuity in experiences and successful transitions; and authentic assessment

- Learning Goals: Set broad categories of focus for children's development—Well-being, Discovery and Invention, Language and Communication, and Personal and Social Responsibility

- Learning Objectives: Further define the learning goals and provide direction on which areas of the goals educators should give the most attention to

- Learning Strategies: Outline examples of how children's behaviours may demonstrate each of the objectives, and how to support children in achieving those objectives; educators are

5. Forlin, C., Chambers, D., Loreman, T., Deppler, J., & Sharma, U. (2013). Inclusive education for students with disability: A review of the best evidence in relation to theory and practice.Retrieved from https://www.aracy.org.au/publications-resources/area?command=record&id=186

6. Petriwskyj, A. (2010). Diversity and inclusion in the early years. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 14(2), 195-212. doi: 10.1080/13603110802504515

7. Diversity section copied from:Province of Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2018). *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework.* https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/nselcurriculumframework.pdf

strongly encouraged to develop strategies that reflect high-quality practices within the context of their communities, informed by the cultures of the families, and the individual characteristics of the children in the program.[8]

Society has become increasingly diverse in terms of the cultural and ethnic backgrounds, composition and size of families[9]. Children's developmental pathways are also more diverse. Taken for granted approaches about parenting and child development and traditional early childhood practices are challenged by this changing diversity [10]. Bronfenbrenner's social ecology approach assists in the conceptualisation of the developing child in this changing diverse landscape because the model enables the recognition of "the broad range of contextual factors that can affect human development and education" ([11].
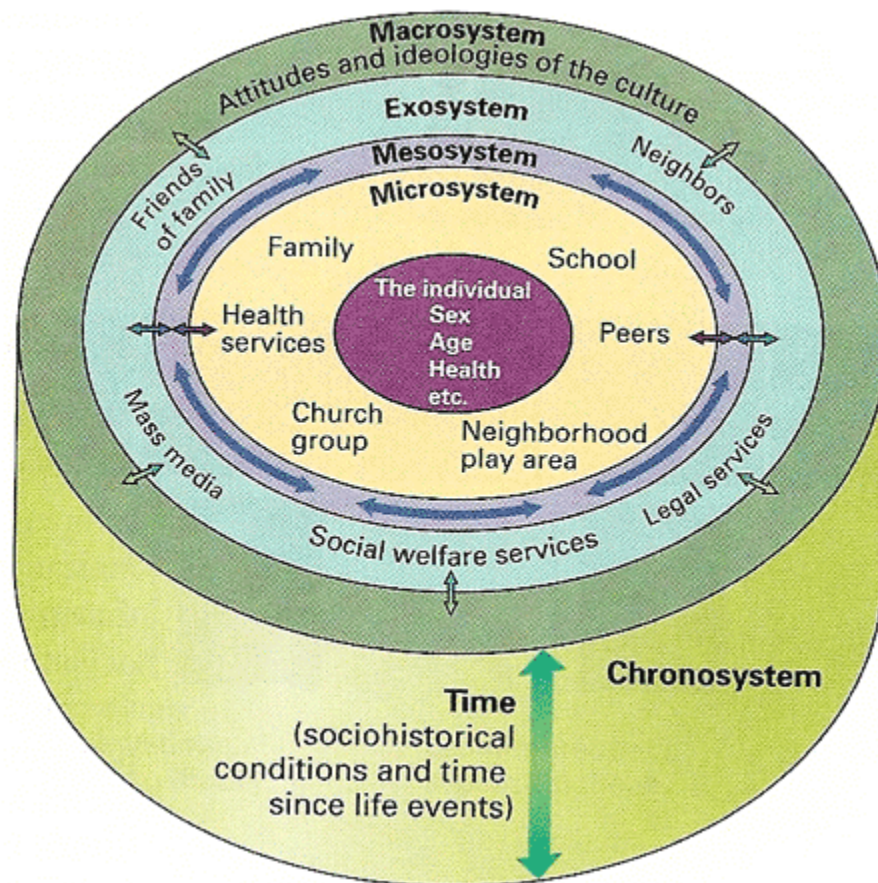
   In the model, the child is situated at the centre of a number of concentric layers. These surrounding layers move out from the centre to reflect the varying contexts associated with the child at any given time in their life's journey. Relationships between the child and surrounding layers are seen as dynamic.

8. Ibid.

9. Moore, T. (2008). Supporting young children and their families: Why we need to rethink services and policies. (CCCH Working Paper No. 1). Parkville, Victoria: Murdoch Children's Research Institute and The Royal Children's Hospital Centre for Community Child Health. Retrieved fromhttp://www.rch.org.au/emplibrary/ccch/ Need_for_change_working_paper.pdf

10. Fleer, M. (2003). Early childhood education as an evolving 'Community of Practice' or as lived 'Social Reproduction': Researching the 'taken-for-granted'. Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 4(1), 64-79.

11. Odom, S., Vitztum, J., Wolery, R., Lieber, J., Sandall, S., Hanson, M., Beckman,P., Schwartz, I., & Horn, E. (2004). Preschool inclusion in the United States: A review of research from an ecological systems perspective. Journal of Research in Special Education Needs, 41, 17–49.

Bronfenbrenner's social ecological model

Characteristics of the child such as age, health and personal traits, are embodied with the child in the centre of the model. The system closest to the child is called the microsystem and consists of the components in the child's immediate surrounds such as family, extended family and early childhood setting. These components are seen to influence the child physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively. Emotional attachment with other people was viewed by Bronfenbrenner as a significant element in this layer [12]. The next layer of the model is called the mesosystem and refers to the alignment between contexts in the microsystem [13]. It is desirable for the child to experience high levels of alignment between the differing contexts experienced within their microsystem. A child who encounters a misalignment between the early childhood centre they attend and their family life may not be able to experience the best opportunities for learning. A strong match, however, between the values of the centre and their home life is likely to lead to improved learning outcomes.

The next adjacent layer, the exosystem, represents those systems or contexts that the child is not directly involved in but will still be impacted by. Parental employment, for example, can impact the child through such things as lower levels of income, higher working hours and increased stress levels. The final layer, the macrosystem, refers to the broad cultural and societal attitudes and ideologies that may influence components in all of the other systems. This layer represents the overall values of the society in which the child lives and is impacted by across all aspects life. Grace, Hayes and

12. Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design.Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

13. Grace, R., Hayes, A., & Wise, S. (2017). Child development in context. In R. Grace, K. Hodge &C. McMahon (Eds.), Children, families and communities (5thed.) (pp. 3- 25). South Melbourne, Victoria: Oxford University Press

Wise [14] provide the example of a society in which females are treated as being inferior to males by being denied equal access to education and employment, which may result in the female child possibly having reduced opportunities in life.

A final important point the Bronfenbrenner model makes, is that the child is not viewed as a static participant. The child is a dynamic being and influences the environment in which they engage. For example, parents of a child with vision impairment may make decisions about support mechanisms that the child has access to and bring these with them to the early childhood centre. Children, according to Bronfenbrenner's social ecological model, will be influenced by, and will influence, their environment and the people in them [15]. Considering the child in their social, ecological surrounds can therefore assist educators in developing clearer understandings of children and their individual, unique diverse contexts.

ATTRIBUTION

This chapter is adapted from Chapter 4 Opening eyes onto inclusion and diversity in early childhood education by Michelle Turner in Opening Eyes by Susan Carter; Professor Lindy-Anne Abawi; Professor Jill Lawrence; Associate Professor Charlotte Brownlow; Renee Desmarchelier; Melissa Fanshawe; Kathryn Gilbey; Michelle Turner; and Jillian Guy shared with a CC BY-NC license.

14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.

INCLUSION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

INCLUSION

Ideas around inclusion in the early childhood field have evolved steadily over the past few decades, and are continuing to progress. This has occurred in a context of ongoing social change, which has been accompanied by similar changes across a range of social values and ideas. Definitions of inclusion traditionally focussed on readiness for assimilation into a general class (mainstreaming) [1] and integration in general classes with English language instruction and support for disability [2]. These views have shifted to those incorporating curricular and pedagogic differentiation to support children's senses of belonging [3]. Changing values and ideas about diversity and difference, ability and disability, and social inclusion and exclusion in early childhood have been influential in this shift [4],[5].

THINKING ABOUT DIVERSITY AND DIFFERENCE

Global populations are becoming more mobile, generating multi-cultural societies and therefore ethnic and cultural diversity in many world nations.[6]. Emerging from this is a growing awareness that everyone has their own cultural framework, which shapes perceptions, values and ideas [7]. Over[8] notes that to experience personal growth and wellbeing, positive social interactions and long lasting relationships are necessary. Current thinking acknowledges the importance of incorporating children's unique identities and diversities to enable positive experiences for personal growth and lifelong learning. Developing effective contexts for inclusion that support children manage their own needs in diverse and different multicultural group settings is therefore an important goal in an inclusive approach to diversity in early childhood settings.

1. Petriwskyj, A. (2010). Diversity and inclusion in the early years. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 14(2), 195-212. doi: 10.1080/13603110802504515

2. (Cook, Klein, & Tessier, 2008)

3. Gillies, R., & Carrington, S. (2004). Inclusion: Culture, policy and practice: A Queensland perspective. Asia-Pacific Journal of Education, 24(2), 117–28.

4. Moore, T., Morcos, A., & Robinson, R. (2009). Universal access to early childhood education: Inclusive practice – kindergarten access and participation for children experiencing disadvantage. (Background paper). Parkville, Victoria: Murdoch Children's Research Institute and The Royal Children's Hospital Centre for Community Child Health. Retrieved from https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccch/UAECE_Project_09_-_Final_report.pdf

5. paragraph copied from Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework

6. Arber, R. (2005). Speaking of race and ethnic identities: Exploring multicultural curricula.Journal of Curriculum Studies 37(6), 33–652. doi: 10.1080/00220270500038586

7. Gonzalez-Mena, J. (2004). Diversity in early education programs: Honouring differences(4th Ed.). Columbus, Ohio: McGraw-Hill College.

8. Over, H. (2016). The origins of belonging: Social motivation in infants and young children. Philosophical Transactions Royal Society Publishing B, 371, 1-8. doi:10.1098/rstb.2015.007220150072.

THINKING ABOUT ABILITY AND DISABILITY

Diversity exists in the way children develop. Development in children occurs at different rates across a population. However, when children fail to comply with the developmental pathways typically outlined and expected in the school culture, they are sometimes labelled as having a developmental disability. Disability is an overall term defined by the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health [9] and incorporates three components:

1. Impairment, which refers to body functions (for example, sensory or cognitive functions) and body structures (for example, organ or limb functions)

2. Activity limitations, which refers to the challenges of carrying out daily activities such as self-care, mobility and learning.

3. Participation restrictions experienced as the child endeavours to participate within the family and community settings.

Reframed notions of the continuum of what is 'normal' have emerged in thinking around disability in recent years. The impacts of social and environmental factors have come to be seen as additional components associated with disability and have led to challenging what is interpreted as normal. For example, the increased number of sites with wheel chair access has enabled wheel chair users to engage with a greater variety of facilities and therefore life experiences. Such inclusive actions works towards incorporating Article 23 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which specifies that children with disabilities have the right to special care with assistance appropriate to their condition in order to promote the child's social integration and individual development.

THINKING ABOUT SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

Developed nations have experienced social changes, which have not been beneficial for all members of society. Some people have failed to benefit from the changed social and economic conditions and instead have experienced social exclusion and therefore poorer outcomes [10].

Social changes have resulted in the fragmentation of communities, greater demands on parents, and systems that are ill-equipped to cope with the needs of children and families [11]. Social exclusion arises when children suffer from multiple factors that make it difficult for them to participate in society [12]. These factors may include growing up in jobless households, being a member of a minority group or living with a sole parent. This may lead to the child being at risk of living in poverty and being socially isolated [13].

9. World Health Organization (WHO). (2002). International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/classifications/icf/en/

10. Hertzman, C. (2002). Leave no child behind! Social exclusion and child development. Toronto, Ontario: The Laidlaw Foundation.

11. Moore, T. & Fry, R. (2011). Place-based approaches to child and family services: A literature review. Parkville, Victoria: Murdoch Children's Research Institute and The Royal Children's Hospital Centre for Community Child Health.

12. Hertzman, C. (2002). Leave no child behind! Social exclusion and child development. Toronto, Ontario: The Laidlaw Foundation.

13. Moore, T., Morcos, A., & Robinson, R. (2009). Universal access to early childhood education: Inclusive practice – kindergarten access and participation for children experiencing disadvantage. (Background paper). Parkville, Victoria: Murdoch Children's Research Institute and The Royal Children's Hospital Centre for Community Child Health. Retrieved from https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccch/UAECE_Project_09_-_Final_report.pdf

INEQUALITIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN CANADA[14]

Children who experience disadvantaged conditions are more vulnerable in all areas of their early development. Developmental vulnerability is assessed by the Early Development Instrument and reflects children whose skills and behaviours are below the levels exhibited by most of their peers.

1 in 4 Canadian children are vulnerable in at least one of five developmental areas:

- physical health and well-being
- social competence
- language and thinking skills
- communication skills and general knowledge
- understanding and managing emotions

Developmental vulnerabilities may lead to poorer health and social outcomes in later life, including:

- chronic diseases and conditions
- addictions and poor mental health
- lower literacy and economic participation
- violence and crime

Boys are more developmentally vulnerable than girls.

Children in lower income communities or living in areas with lower material and social resources, experience the greatest inequalities.

Vulnerability in early childhood development:

- 2.2X higher in **materially and socially deprived** communities
- 1.8X higher in the lowest-income communities
- 2.0X higher among Indigenous children than non-Indigenous children

Inequities experienced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis populations are anchored in colonial policies and practices that began with Residential Schools, loss of cultural continuity, territories and languages. Unaddressed intergenerational trauma adds to the ongoing challenges faced by Indigenous peoples.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

While social inclusion may appear to be the opposite of social exclusion it incorporates much more. Social inclusion infers a proactive, mindful approach that requires action to facilitate conditions of inclusion [15]. Current understandings about child development and learning, as well as social justice

14. Public Health Agency of Canada. (2018). Inequalities in Early Childhood Development in Canada. https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/science-research-data/inequalities-early-childhood-development-canada-infographic.html

15. Caruana, C., & McDonald, M. (2018) Social inclusion in the family support sector. (online) Canberra, ACT: Australian

and social inclusion, indicates that relationships, interactions and experiences in children's early lives have a profound influence on early brain development and future life outcomes[16]. Reducing boundaries, barriers and social and economic distances between people are important when promoting a more inclusive society [17]. To be inclusive it is vital that children and adults are able to participate as valued, respected and contributing members of society.

INCLUSION IN THE EARLY YEARS[18]

According to the Nova Scotia Early Years framework document, the early years, from before birth through school entry, are crucial for a child's healthy development. Children's early experiences – good or bad – can have a significant impact on their long-term development and well-being. The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to providing our children with the best possible start in life. That is why we have reached out to families, early childhood educators, health care professionals, community based agencies, partners and many others so together we can improve early learning for all children.

Every child should have opportunities to grow, learn, and develop a sense of belonging and safety within their families, communities, and society. The strengths and needs of children and families with diverse values, beliefs, abilities, and practices must be addressed, including tailoring the delivery of programs and services to meet social, cultural, jurisdictional, and linguistic considerations.

Our commitment to children has also led the Department of Education and Early Years branch to create the Provincial Early Years Partnership (PEYP), a diverse, child-focused network of people all over the province–all with expertise and experience in early years education and support. We know that especially in their first six years, child and family-centred programs and services can make a tremendous difference in the long term health, well-being and learning success of our children. The PEYP will build on our collective knowledge and expertise to provide a framework to ensure that children from birth through school entry have every opportunity for success.

POLICY AND LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR INCLUSION IN THE EARLY YEARS

The Nova Scotia framework aligns with the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child by aiming to ensure that all children have the opportunity to thrive, to be engaged in their own learning. The early learning framework Image of the child "sees children as curious, creative, full of potential, capable, and confident. It values and honours children for who they are today, and for who they will become."

Educators are important people in children's lives. They understand and respect child development, and ensure that children have opportunities to play, investigate, explore, question, pursue their own interests, be recognized for their abilities, and develop friendships. Educators encourage children's

Institute of Family Services. Retrieved from: https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/social-inclusion-family-support-sector/export

16. Centre on the Developing Child. (2011). Building the brain's air traffic control system: How early experiences shape the development of executive function.Working Paper No. 11. Retrieved from http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu

17. Hayes, A., Gray, M., & Edwards, B. (2008). Social inclusion: Origins, concepts and key themes.Canberra, ACT: Social Inclusion Unit, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/publications.htm

18. Province of Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2018). Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework. https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/nselcurriculumframework.pdf

capacity to learn through self-directed and increasingly complex play; opportunities to express their ideas, engage in conversation, and learn to appreciate others' perspectives and opinions; and to actively explore their environments.

Inclusion is acknowledged as an approach in the framework where educators recognise, respect and work with each child's unique abilities and learning pathways and where diversity is celebrated[43].

Additionally, the rights of children with disability and from diverse backgrounds to access and participate in ELCC services are set out in in the documents below:

- Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Information about child care guidelines in Nova Scotia can be found on the *Department of Education and Early Childhood Development* website.

INCLUSION BARRIERS AND MYTHS

Despite significant changes in thinking around diversity and inclusion, potential barriers to successful inclusion still exist. Barriers may serve to reduce the opportunities educators are prepared to take to design and create inclusive environments. The barriers can emerge from a range of issues including personal, attitudinal and organisational. From a personal perspective educators may be unwilling to engage with inclusion because of a perceived increase in workload or lack of confidence in their own skills to work with children with diversity. Personal bias and attitudes may impact upon the educator's willingness to consider making adjustments to their program or to support children appropriately within their program. Organisational systems and structures can create barriers for educators through such things as lack of leadership supporting inclusive practices, professional development for staff or finances for resources. Early childhood is a unique period, which provides the blueprint for all future development and learning. Where barriers exist, opportunities for children's learning and development can be greatly reduced.

Myths associated with inclusion may also serve to dissuade the development of inclusive environments for all children. Dispelling myths associated with implementing inclusive practices through sound reflective practice, educator commitment and teamwork have been identified as starting points for successful inclusion. Livingston[19] summarised myths under the following headings; the view that inclusion is not about disability, the perceived effects of including a disabled child in a classroom and the differences between inclusion and early intervention. Following is a discussion around these myths.

Inclusion is Not Just About Disability

The *Early Learning and Child Care Act Regulations* state under Daily Programs[20] that a daily program for children enrolled at a facility or family child-care home must be developmentally appropriate and promote the participation of all children.

According to the Nova Scotia Framework, there is a consensus in the literature regarding the

19. Livingstone, R. (2018, April 30). Breaking down the inclusion barriers and myths. (We Hear You Blog). Retrieved from: https://wehearyou.acecqa.gov.au/2018/04/30/breaking-down-inclusion-barriers-and-myths/
20. 18(1)

benefits of inclusive practice in programs for children[21]. In addition to the benefits of early intervention for children with developmental challenges who may need additional support, there is general recognition that there are similar benefits for all children who participate in the program. Whitty (2008) noted that all children participating in inclusive programs have opportunities to, "…a) learn empathy and sympathy for self and others; b) develop an understanding of and respect for diversity and acquire a positive regard for each other; and c) raise questions and act to change unfair practices."[22]

As indicated above when discussing relevant policy and legal requirements, inclusion is a basic human right. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that all children have the right to an education (Article 28) that develops their ability to their fullest potential, prepares children for life and respects their family, cultural and other identities and languages (Article 29).

Including a child with additional needs

There has been a perception by some that inclusion of diverse children will be detrimental to other group or class members. There is now sufficient evidence to suggest that peers are not harmed or disadvantaged through inclusive classrooms; rather, they grow and develop as a result of the relationships they cultivate and sustain with their diverse counterparts[23]. Typically, developing children learn a great deal from their classmates in inclusive settings. The inclusion of children with disabilities prompts classmates to become more understanding of, and to develop positive attitudes toward, their diverse counterparts [24]. Inclusive environments are characterised by repeated and impromptu interactions, which support all children in social, emotional and behavioural development [25]. When children with disabilities or differing abilities attempt to engage their peers in social interaction, typically developing children with experience in inclusive environments respond to these initiations and progress relationships by initiating interactions, negotiating sharing and developing an understanding of other children[26]. Additionally, children with experience of inclusive environments have been found to approach play with a stronger focus on fairness and equity and utilise more targeted ways to include diverse counterparts in their play [27].

Research has found that children are most receptive to actions of inclusion at an early age. Evidence

21. Lero, D. (2010). *Assessing Inclusion Quality in Early Learning and Child Care in Canada with the Special Link Child Care Inclusion Practices Profile and Principles Scale: A Report Prepared for the Canadian Council on Learning.* Sydney, NS. www.specialinkcanada.org/about/pdf/SpeciaLink%20Research%20Report%20 on%20Inclusion%20Quality%20Rating%20Scale.pdf

22. Whitty, P. (2008). *Culture and Diversity in Early Learning and Care. Early Learning and Child Care Foundational Papers (p.12).* Fredericton, NB: University of New Brunswick

23. Odom, S., Vitztum, J., Wolery, R., Lieber, J., Sandall, S., Hanson, M., Beckman,P., Schwartz, I., & Horn, E. (2004). Preschool inclusion in the United States: A review of research from an ecological systems perspective. Journal of Research in Special Education Needs, 41, 17–49.

24. Odom, S., & Bailey, D. (2001). Inclusive preschool programs: Classroom ecology and child outcomes. In M. Guralnick (Ed.), Early childhood inclusion: Focus on change(pp. 253–276). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

25. Odom, S., Vitztum, J., Wolery, R., Lieber, J., Sandall, S., Hanson, M., Beckman,P., Schwartz, I., & Horn, E. (2004). Preschool inclusion in the United States: A review of research from an ecological systems perspective. Journal of Research in Special Education Needs, 41, 17–49.

26. Ibid.

27. Diamond, K., & Hong, S. (2010). Young children's decisions to include peers with physical disabilities in play. Journal of Early Intervention, 32, 163–177.

suggests that older children are less likely to be receptive of children with disabilities being included in academic settings[28]. Since inclusion is beneficial to all children, inclusion in early childhood settings is considered to be highly important [29].

Inclusion and early intervention are not the same

Inclusion and early intervention for children with diversity are interrelated concepts but are viewed differently and have separate outcomes. Early intervention relates to children who require additional support and involves the support of early childhood intervention specialists. The outcome of early intervention is to support children to develop the skills they need to take part in everyday activities and to be included in family and community life. This process is achieved in an inclusive environment where the important adults in the child's life provide the experiences and opportunities necessary to help children participate meaningfully in their everyday lives.

Reflection

- Critically reflect upon these three myths.
- What can you add to the discussion?
- Have you experienced a change in your thinking?

ATTRIBUTION

This chapter is adapted from Chapter 4 Opening eyes onto inclusion and diversity in early childhood education by Michelle Turner in Opening Eyes by Susan Carter; Professor Lindy-Anne Abawi; Professor Jill Lawrence; Associate Professor Charlotte Brownlow; Renee Desmarchelier; Melissa Fanshawe; Kathryn Gilbey; Michelle Turner; and Jillian Guy shared with a CC BY-NC license.

28. Siperstein, G., Parker, R., Bardon, J., & Widaman, K. (2007). A national study of youth attitudes toward the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities. Exceptional Children, 73(4), 435–455.

29. Gupta, S., Henninger, W., & Vinh, M. (2014). First steps to preschool inclusion: How to jumpstart your program wide plan.Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing.

INCLUSIVE PRACTICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

THE IMAGE OF THE CHILD

The starting point for successful inclusive practices is reflecting upon the image of the child. Loris Malaguzzi[1] suggests that the educators' image of the child directs them in how they talk, listen, observe and relate to children. The image of the child influences how the educator views the child and influences their expectations they have of them. Reflecting on the image of the child shifts the focus back to the child as they are, not just the way they are perceived or labelled.

The image of the child promoted by advocates of inclusive practices, presents the child as being so engaged in experiencing the world and developing a relationship with the world, that he or she develops a complex system of abilities, learning strategies and ways of organising relationships[2]. Children are the "bearer and constructors of their own intelligences", expressing their leanings in a variety of ways; a process Reggio educators refers to as 'the hundred languages'[3].

The NS framework views children's learning as dynamic, complex, and holistic. Physical, social, emotional, personal, spiritual, creative, cognitive, and linguistic aspects of learning are all interrelated. It allows children to actively construct their own understandings, act independently, and contribute to the learning of others. Children have a right to participate in making decisions that affect them and to have their ideas and opinions welcomed, respected, and valued. Respecting these rights encourages children to share their ideas with confidence and listen to and respect the ideas and opinions of others.[4]

Reflection

- What is your image of the child?

- Do you see the child's competencies and complexities?

- Is this a child who shares their thinking, theories and wonderings with you or do they censor themselves in adult child interactions?

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1. Malaguzzi, L. (1994). Your image of the child: where teaching begins.Child Care Information Exchange (96), 52-61.

2. Rinaldi, C. (2013). Re-imagining childhood. Adelaide, SA: Government of South Australia.

3. Ibid.

4. Enter your footnote content here.

It is important to get to know individual children so that the appropriate support can be offered to them. This is most successfully achieved through discussion with the family and the child and through observation and documentation. Discussions with the family will provide educators with vital information about the child. It is important to ask questions with sensitivity and understanding in talks with parents and to set a tone of welcome for the family that encourages communication and open discussion built on trust and respect.

Photograph of child with guinea pig (2018), Australia, USQ Photo Stock.

Conversing with the child about their abilities, needs, and interests empowers the child and increases their sense of agency. Conversations provide the opportunity for the child to verbalise their interests and needs. Observations are a vital tool for early childhood educators to build an understanding of children's interests, abilities, learning, development and wellbeing [5]. When observing an individual child, it is important to focus on the child's abilities. Looking beyond a textbook definition of their possible diversity and noting their strengths and what they can do is also helpful. Documenting observations of children professionally and regularly, without labels or diagnoses is also a useful step. Interpreting these observations and applying this information when making decisions about programming and planning that relate to individual children and groups of children is also effective in building an inclusive culture.

5. Colville, M. (2018). Observation-based planning. Chap 11 pg 319-354. In Estelle Irving & Carol Carter, The Child in focus: Learning and teaching in early childhood education pp. 319-354). South Melbourne, VIC: Oxford Press.

Photograph of a mother and a baby on Unsplash

Early childhood educators are key in knowing and understanding child development. Understanding that children learn skills in a particular order will help the early childhood educator set realistic expectations for the child's skill development. As an example a child needs to practice standing before practicing walking. A child with special needs may need to have a skill divided into smaller steps before the skill can be mastered.

INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

The importance of high quality early years education and care has been well documented [6][7][8][9][10]. Participation in inclusive high-quality early childhood settings is fundamental to supporting children to build positive identities, develop a sense of belonging and realise their full potential. Supporting children's positive individual and group identity development in ELCC is fundamental to realising children's rights. Inclusive environments provide the space for the recognition of gender, ability, culture, class, ethnicity, language, religion, sexuality and family structure as integral to society [11].

Carefully planned environments engage and enable children to co-construct learning and build deeper understandings [12]. The educator's image of a child and the environment they create are strongly connected. Creating an environment that supports the inclusion of every child means each

6. Dahlberg, G., Moss, P., & Pence, A. (2007). Beyond quality in early childhood education and care: Languages of evaluation (2nd ed.). London, England: Falmer Press

7. Dearing, E., McCartney, K., & Taylor, B. (2009). Does higher quality early child care promote low-income children's math and reading achievement in middle childhood? Child Development, 80(5), 1329-1349. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2009.01336.x

8. Peisner-Feinberg, E., Buysse, V., Fuligni, A., Burchinal, M., Espinosa, L., Halle, T., & Castro, D. (2014). Using early care and education quality measures with dual language learners: A review of the research. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 29, 786-803. doi: 10.1016/j.ecresq.2014.04.013

9. Sylva, K. (2010). Introduction: Why EPPE? In K. Sylva, E. Melhuish, P. Sammons, I. Siraj-Blatchford, & B. Taggart (Eds.), Early childhood matters: Evidence from the effective pre-school and primary education project (pp.1-7). Abingdon, England: Routledge.

10. Torii, K., Fox, S., & Cloney, D. (2017). Quality is key in Early Childhood Education in Australia. (Mitchell Institute Policy Paper No. 01/2017). Melbourne, Victoria: Mitchell Institute. Retrieved from:www.mitchellinstitute.org.au

11. Queensland Government Department of Education. (2018b). Respect for diversity. Retrieved from https://qed.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/about-us/transition-to-school/information-schools-ec-services/action-area-research/respect-for-diversity

12. Queensland Studies Authority. (2010). Queensland kindergarten learning guideline. Brisbane, QLD: Author

child can be supported to thrive and build a respect and valuing of diversity. High quality education and care is characterised by thoughtfully designed environments that support intentional, structured interactions to scaffold children's growth and learning. Quality child-care contributes to the emotional, social, and intellectual development of children.

A starting point in creating an inclusive environment is to pay close attention to the physical environment. Does the physical environment meet the needs of the children and support children to engage naturally with things that interest them? Physically inclusive spaces maximise each child's opportunity to:

- access and explore indoor and outdoor areas as independently as possible;
- make choices about the resources they access and the experiences they participate in;
- interact meaningfully with other children and adults;
- care for themselves as independently as possible;
- experience challenge and take managed risks;
- engage with images, books and resources that reflect people with disabilities as active participants in and contributors to communities in a variety of ways [13].

Photograph of child with cattle (n.d.). pxhere.

When adapting the physical environment to include a child with a disability, it is important to consider what needs to be altered or added to enable the child to manage daily routines and experiences as independently as possible. How accessible are the resources for the child? Do items need to be placed at a different height or level so that the child can reach them?

Considering issues of fairness and equity at the level of the individual child and the group and providing appropriate adaptations that allow diverse children to participate in the classroom curriculum is an effective strategy as well [14]. Attention to the physical demands of daily classroom

13. Owens, A. (2012). Curriculum decision making for inclusive practice. National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program, 38, 1-4. Retrieved from: http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/nqsplp/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/NQS_PLP_E-Newsletter_No38.pdf

14. Diamond, K., & Hong, S. (2010). Young children's decisions to include peers with physical disabilities in play. Journal of Early Intervention, 32, 163–177.

activities for example may support classroom wide intervention [15]. For example, moving a painting activity from an easel to a tabletop for all children may offer support for those who find it difficult to stand and paint for long periods [16]. Adaptations to the indoor and outdoor environments that increase children's access to activities might be effective in supporting peer interaction [17]. For example, a child with a communication difficulty may benefit from using visual resources such as pictorial flow charts to help them understand and participate in the day's routines and activities [18]. Inviting all children to become familiar with the visual resources and encouraging them to support those who are unsure is another useful strategy. A child who experiences high levels of anxiety or behavioural issues may need a safe, quiet area to go to when they feel overwhelmed or want time away from the group[19]. Such additions to the environment often benefit all children. It is beneficial to include strategies that support children's independence as they access the class resources to undertake their learning. Educators in classrooms make use of a large variety of ideas and strategies to enable learner's independence. Visit the resource below and make a note of the different ideas one teacher has used to create an inclusive prep classroom in a Queensland primary school. Use these ideas to begin your own collection of strategies and build upon the list as you continue to engage with ideas around creating inclusive classrooms.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

In creating an inclusive physical environment, a shared culture of inclusion can be modelled and supported. Children are naturally curious about the people around them as they attempt to develop a sense of their own identity. One way of achieving this is by defining what makes them different from everyone else. A child may ask questions about observable characteristics like skin colour, accent, or manner of dress. "Children are around two or three when they begin to notice physical differences among people" [20]. Questions about characteristics such as "Why is Kiah's skin brown?" are not motivated by any intention to offend or hurt. Educators can use these opportunities to send a fair and accurate message about each diversity, so that children learn that these differences make a person unique. The educator can utilise these encounters with diversity to enrich all children's learning.

Diversity, Equity, and Cultural Competence[21]

Cultural competence is a core component of high-quality early childhood education programs, and

15. Brown, W., Odom, S., McConnell, S., & Rathel, J. (2008). Peer interactions for preschool children with developmental difficulties. In W. B. Brown, S. L. Odom, & S. R. McConnell (Eds.), Social Competence of Young Children with Disabilities: Risk, Disability, and Intervention(pp. 141-164). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

16. Sandall, S., & Schwartz, I. (2008). Building blocks for teaching preschoolers with special needs. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

17. Diamond, K., & Hong, S. (2010). Young children's decisions to include peers with physical disabilities in play. Journal of Early Intervention, 32, 163–177.

18. (Owens, 2012)

19. Owens, A. (2012). Curriculum decision making for inclusive practice. National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program, 38, 1-4. Retrieved from: http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/nqsplp/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/NQS_PLP_E-Newsletter_No38.pdf

20. Kupetz, B. (2012). Do you see what is happening? Appreciating diversity in early childhood settings. (Online). Early Childhood News. Retrieved from http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=147

21. paragraph from NAYEC. (n.d.). Diversity, Equity, and Cultural Competence. https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/public-policy-advocacy/cultural-competence

it is incumbent upon us to ensure that they are attending to the critical questions and implications of diversity, equity, and cultural competence at every stage of the development and implementation from standards and curriculum, to outreach and engagement, to monitoring and evaluation.

INTENTIONAL TEACHING[22]

Early childhood pedagogy The term pedagogy is a fairly new term to educators across Nova Scotia. The term pedagogy stems from the Greek terms paĺs (child) and ágō (to lead, to guide). Pedagogy refers to the holistic nature of an educator's professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships. Early childhood pedagogy is different than a program plan, or defined activities intended to produce a defined outcome. It encourages educators to ask questions—about what they do, and why—and what impact their decisions have on how children learn. Pedagogy informs curriculum decision-making, and the facilitation of learning in a rich and inviting child-centered environment.

Early childhood pedagogy is not focused on merely providing experiences for children. It also encourages educators to observe children, engage in conversations, and guide children's activities based on what they learn. In this way, the curriculum is co-constructed by children and educators. At the same time, educators explore and learn from families and communities, which helps to inform the construction of curriculum. When educators view children as capable learners and establish respectful and caring relationships with them and their families, everyone works together to co-construct curriculum and learning experiences relevant to children in their local context. These experiences gradually expand children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Professional judgement is a key component of early childhood pedagogy, and central to facilitating children's learning. It requires educators to be reflective and intentional, to consider what they do, why they practice as they do, and how their actions impact children and their families. Professional judgement is driven by a vision of children's potential. In making professional judgements, educators weave together their • professional knowledge of child development, children's learning, and skills to guide children's learning in an intentionally planned play-based environment • knowledge of children, families and communities, and cultural traditions • awareness of how their beliefs, values, and Image of the Child impact children's learning Nova Scotia's early learning framework is a social pedagogical framework that emphasizes relationships and experiences.

It builds on developmental (Is this appropriate for a two-year old's stage of development? What activities would help to develop these skills for three-year olds?), and socio-cultural perspectives (What do I need to consider about this child's family and cultural background? Are the books in our library representative of the families and cultures of the children in the program?), and emphasizes the need for fairness, justice and equity for all children (Do all children have the same chance for success at this activity? Is the language we use free of bias about gender, race?).

Involving families

Families of children with diversity have the same needs for ELCC as do other families. Inclusive

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22. Province of Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2018). Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework. https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/ nselcurriculumframework.pdf

ELCC environments offer all families the opportunity to engage in regular life patterns [23]. Offering inclusive settings removes barriers and provides the opportunity for all children to engage in high quality ELCC that may enhance their learning and developmental success.

Be clear and transparent

At the outset inform all families about the setting's philosophy in regard to inclusion and diversity. When educators and families have different views regarding this, the educator may need to seek support from colleagues and draw on the centre policies for guidance.

Pay attention to settling-in

Every family can face challenges when settling into a new ELCC setting, as each child must adjust from their home culture to the culture of the service. Children from different backgrounds, minority groups or a child with a disability may face an extra challenge as they undergo this transition from their home to the setting. The cultural and educational approach of the setting, which is generally based on the values and perspectives of the majority population, may be new to families. It is essential that such families feel confident that the settling-in process will support, and be appropriate to, their child's needs.

Support families when asked

Educators play an important role in helping families support and guide their child's learning and development in positive and effective ways. When families are well-supported by educators they may be better equipped to nurture their child's learning and development [24]. Families may need support, and educators need to respond in non-judgemental ways. As with so many areas of communication and relationships, it helps if the educator can put themselves in the shoes of the family and think about how they (the educators) may feel in the same situation. Developing collaborative partnerships that involve respectful communication about all aspects of a child's learning and development helps both parties to adopt a holistic and consistent approach. Taking a professional approach supports educators in presenting a positive attitude to families, working collaboratively to identify options to solve problems.

Providing the family with professional advice about their child's learning and development, including their strengths and their psychological, social and emotional development is important. Families do not always know where to go to for assistance to act on the information provided. Recommending reliable sources of information and support for families in their local community and beyond is vital. The early childhood educator regularly serves as the conduit between families in need and agencies structured to assist. Educators with a sound knowledge of the variety of support systems available for the community group associated with the ELCC setting is best equipped to be of assistance here.

Communicate with families

It is important that educators identify children's learning needs and respond quickly to any concerns

23. Jansson, B., & Olsson, S. (2006). Outside the system: Life patterns of young adults with intellectual disabilities. Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research, 8(1), 22-37. doi:10.1080/15017410500301122

24. Hunter Institute of Mental Health. (2014). Connections: A resource for early childhood educators about children's wellbeing. Canberra, ACT: Australian Government Department of Education.

they may have. Communicating concerns about a child to the parents is often a difficult step. Success is more likely if this step is taken from an already-existing relationship that is built on trust and respect. Even when this relationship is in place, educators need to plan what they will say about concerns for the child. A discussion of this nature should take place in a private location, with adequate time allowed, and, if applicable, both parents in attendance.

The first step is to ask the family members how they see the child and then to share the positive qualities observed within the ELCC setting. At the outset, it is helpful for educators to let the family know that:

- They share concerns for the child.
- Their intent is to support the child's development.

Photograph of a staff member and a parent and child. (2018).
Australia, USQ Photo Stock.

In order to do this, educators need to get some ideas for how to best meet the child's needs. If family members differ in their view of the child, be open to their perspective, ask questions, gather information, and invite them to be your partner in meeting the needs of their child. When done respectfully, this communication can lead to a fruitful exchange of ideas and ultimately help for the child.

Negotiate multiple agency involvement

While in an early childhood program, children with special needs may receive additional therapy from specialists. Early childhood professionals are key in partnering with the family and other professionals in the provision of support services for the child. Communication with those providing specialist support helps to coordinate the activities of the child. Educators play an important role in working with parents to support their children. Successful engagement between educators, families, professionals, agencies and community members enable the sharing of information that ultimately support children's learning and development. Strong partnerships between these sites also help vulnerable children feel more secure [25]. By working with families, professionals and agencies, educators may have access to helpful information and strategies to manage or guide children's learning and development.

25. Hunter Institute of Mental Health. (2014). Connections: A resource for early childhood educators about children's wellbeing. Canberra, ACT: Australian Government Department of Education.

Empowering Children

Educators who enact thoughtful and informed curriculum decisions and work in partnership with families and other professionals provide children with the greatest opportunity for success. Enabling child agency through considered curriculum and program design empowers children to engage confidently with their own learning and development. By purposefully planning experiences and engaging in nurturing, non-directive interactions with children, staff can optimise children's learning. Supporting children's agency enables them to make choices and decisions, and influence events and their world. Appropriate choices provide children with an opportunity to implement their emerging skills and develop a strong sense of identity. A practical strategy is to implement strategies, practice and programs that support every child to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities.

It is important to acknowledge children as individuals with a range of skills, emotions and experiences, both at home and at the setting, that may impact on how they cope being part of a group setting on any given day. Children's learning is most effective when staff members are responsive and make the most of the spontaneous skill learning opportunities that arise in children's everyday experiences. For children to learn to guide their own behaviour they need help to understand expectations and what is acceptable. For example, they may not understand why they have to wait to use the new equipment; why they cannot draw on the walls; why it is not appropriate to pull someone's hair to get them to move. The answers to these questions are not always obvious to children. Empower children by acknowledging their understandings and supporting them as they develop new knowledge.

Play-based Pedagogy as a Tool for Inclusive Education and Diversity

ELCC settings serve a wide range of children with various needs, backgrounds, abilities, genders, cultures, languages, and interests. Play based learning experiences are at the heart of early education [26]. Children make sense of their world through their play and engage in the social world of their peers when they are playing. They benefit from the opportunities play offers to make decisions, predictions and solve problems. Where children are supported in play, they actively interact with others to create experiences to develop the skills and rewarding relationships that are fundamental to their personal growth and development across physical, social, emotional and cognitive domains [27]). They create valuable learning opportunities for themselves through their interactions with their world and the people in it [28]. Children learn to transfer their social and emotional skills and understandings to new situations through play and interactions with their peers.

Shipley[29] suggests the following principles relating to learning through play. Children learn:
- when given plenty of opportunities for sensory involvement.
- through exploration and experimentation where they are free to move and pursue self-paced

26. Booth, T., Ainscow, M., & Kingston, D. (2006). Index for inclusion: Developing play, learning and participation in early years and childcare. Bristol: Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education.

27. KidsMatter. (n.d.). Early Childhood: A framework for improving children's mental health and wellbeing.Retrieved from https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/early-childhood/kidsmatter-early-childhood-practice/framework-improving-childrens-mental-health-and

28. Siraj-Blatchford, I. & Sylva, K. (2004). Researching pedagogy in English pre-schools. British Educational Research Journal, 30(5), 713-730.

29. Shipley, D. (2013). Empowering children: Play-based curriculum for lifelong learning. Toronto, ON: Nelson Education.

activities at their individual developmental level.

• by doing and interacting with real objects in a playful learning environment.

• most effectively if they are interested in what they are learning and free to choose to play in their own way.

• in an environment where they experience psychologically safety, a place where risk taking and mistake making are acceptable and where encouragement is offered in a timely manner that supports a learning moment.

• by uncovering concepts through open-ended exploratory play.

• most effectively when they progress from concrete to abstract concepts involving simple to more complex levels of knowledge, skill, and understanding, and where they can make sense of general concepts through to specific concepts.

• by revisiting prior knowledge, previously acquired skills, and concepts in manner that reinforces the transference of knowledge from a known context to application in a new context.

• most effectively when their experiences of play build on what they already know, and can take one step further, what is known as a zone of proximal development at a pace that is scaffolded to suit the individual.

Photograph of child with spiral book. (2018). Australia, by USQ Photo Stock.

Play-based pedagogy is well suited to supporting diversity and inclusive education, as it incorporates the interests, insights and backgrounds of all the children [30]. Educators who embrace a play-based pedagogy are responsive to the individual strengths and needs of children, which lead to a naturally inclusive environment [31]. Within a play-based learning environment, educators have the opportunity to adapt the environment and resources routinely to promote optimal learning experiences for all students based on individual development, interests, strengths and needs. Educators are key in encouraging children to be independent. Children like to do things on their own and it is better for the development of children, to encourage them to do whatever they can for themselves. A play-based setting supports this approach.The role of the educator is integral to supporting children's learning and development. Educators provide support (i.e., scaffold) to extend the duration and complexity of children's play as well as encourage children to incorporate language, literacy, and numeracy within

30. Siraj-Blatchford, I. & Sylva, K. (2004). Researching pedagogy in English pre-schools. British Educational Research Journal, 30(5), 713-730.

31. (McLean, 2016)

their play [32]. When teachers consider individual children's abilities, interests and preferences, they create an environment that is engaging for all.

To support all children to learn and develop through play, Wood[33] suggests educators:

• plan, resource and create challenging learning environments;
• support each child's learning via intended play activity;
• extend and support play that is spontaneous;
• develop and extend each child's communication in play;
• assess each child's learning through play promoting continuity and facilitating progression;
• combine child-initiated play with adult-directed activities;
• accentuate well-planned, purposeful play in both outdoor and indoor settings;
• plan for connection between work and play activities;
• provide time for children to engage deeply in work activities; and
• scaffold opportunities for engagement connecting children and adults.

When enacting play-based pedagogies educators are able to recognise the discoveries being made by children as they construct their own knowledge, in their own ways [34]. Curriculum objectives will be met in an integrated program, allowing for depth as well as breadth as children make meaning from the world around them. Play-based approaches open a setting to all learning possibilities in a way that inclusion happens as part of every-day life and diversity is welcomed and celebrated.

CONCLUSION

It is the right of every child to be provided with the opportunity to learn and develop to the best of their ability. Early childhood educators are required to facilitate effective, inclusive pedagogies and programs in the both childcare and school settings to cater for the diverse children and families who may attend their site. Strategies and ideas for developing diverse classrooms have been suggested in this chapter.

> ### Conclusion Activity
>
> Managing inclusivity within your classroom will require flexible and creative approaches. Reflecting upon the information provided above prioritise 5 approaches you will utilise to create a more inclusive environment. Use resources such as those provided via the websites below to begin your list.

RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

• Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework

32. McLean, C. (2016). Full–day kindergarten play-based learning: Promoting a common understanding.Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Retrieved from: https://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/pdf/FDK_Common_Understandings_%20Document_Eng_2016.pdf

33. Wood, E. (2007). New directions in play: Consensus or collision? Education 3-13, 35(4), pp.309-320. doi: 10.1080/03004270701602426

34. McLean, C. (2016). Full–day kindergarten play-based learning: Promoting a common understanding.Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Retrieved from: https://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/pdf/FDK_Common_Understandings_%20Document_Eng_2016.pdf

- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development website.

ATTRIBUTION

This chapter is adapted from Chapter 4 Opening eyes onto inclusion and diversity in early childhood education by Michelle Turner in Opening Eyes by Susan Carter; Professor Lindy-Anne Abawi; Professor Jill Lawrence; Associate Professor Charlotte Brownlow; Renee Desmarchelier; Melissa Fanshawe; Kathryn Gilbey; Michelle Turner; and Jillian Guy shared with a CC BY-NC license.

CHAPTER 16.

CURRICULUM MODELS

Curriculum Models provide a framework to organize planning experiences for children. In previous chapters, the planning cycle has been introduced and in accordance with best practices, the models identified in this chapter represent a variety of ways to use the planning cycle within these models.

BANK STREET MODEL

Lucy Sprague Mitchell founded Bank Street, an Integrated Approach also referred to as the Developmental-Interactionist Approach.

In this model, the environment is arranged into learning centers and planning is organized by the use of materials within the learning areas (centers).

- Art
- Science
- Sensory/Cooking
- Dramatic Play
- Language/Literacy
- Math/Manipulative/Blocks
- Technology
- Outdoors: Water and Sand Play

The Bank Street Model of curriculum represents the ideology of Freud, Erikson, Dewey, Vygotsky, and Piaget. This model draws upon the relationship between psychology and education. By understanding developmental domains and creating interest centers with materials that promote specific areas of development, children's individual preferences and paces of learning are the focus.

"A teacher's knowledge and understanding of child development is crucial to this approach. Educational goals are set in terms of developmental processes and include the development of competence, a sense of autonomy and individuality, social relatedness and connectedness, creativity and integration of different ways of experiencing the world".[1]

CREATIVE CURRICULUM MODEL (DIANE TRISTER DODGE)

In the Creative Curriculum model, the focus is primarily on children's play and self-selected activities. The Environment is arranged into learning areas and large blocks of time are given for self-selected

1. Gordon, A. M. & Browne, K. W. (2001) Beginnings and Beyond, 8th edition. Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. (pg. 364)

play. This model focuses on project-based investigations as a means for children to apply skills and addresses four areas of development: social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language.

The curriculum is designed to foster development of the whole child through teacher-led, small and large group activities centered around 11 interest areas:

- blocks

- dramatic play

- toys and games

- art

- library

- discovery

- sand and water

- music and movement

- cooking

- computers

- outdoors.

The commercial curriculum provides teachers with details on child development, classroom organization, teaching strategies, and engaging families in the learning process. Child assessments are an important part of the curriculum, but must be purchased separately. Online record-keeping tools assist teachers with the maintenance and organization of child portfolios, individualized planning, and report production.[2]

HIGH SCOPE MODEL (DAVID WEIKERT)

The High Scope Model focuses on developing learning centers similar to the Bank Street Model and emphasizes key experiences for tracking development. The key experiences are assessed using a Child Observation Record for tracking development and include areas of:

- Creative Representation

- Initiative

- Social Relations

- Language and Literacy

- Math (Classification, Seriation, Number, Space, Time)

- Music and Movement

The High Scope Model also includes a "Plan-Do-Review" Sequence in which children begin their day planning for activities they will participate in, followed by participation in the activities and engaging in a review session at the end of the day. Teachers can use this sequence format to help children learn

2. The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Fourth Edition by the U.S. Department of Education. Public domain.

how to organize choices of activities and to reflect upon what they liked or would do different at the end of the day. The High Scope Model reflects the theories of Piaget, Vygotsky and Reggio Emilia by way of emphasis on construction of knowledge through hands-on experiences with reflection techniques.

MONTESSORI APPROACH (DR. MARIA MONTESSORI)

The Montessori Approach refers to children's activity as work (not play); children are given long periods of time to work and a strong emphasis on individual learning and individual pace is valued. Central to Montessori's method of education is the dynamic triad of child, teacher and environment. One of the teacher's roles is to guide the child through what Montessori termed the 'prepared environment, i.e., a classroom and a way of learning that are designed to support the child's intellectual, physical, emotional and social development through active exploration, choice and independent learning.

The educational materials have a self-correcting focus and areas of the curriculum consist of art, music, movement, practical life (example; pouring, dressing, cleaning). In the Montessori method, the goal of education is to allow the child's optimal development (intellectual, physical, emotional and social) to unfold.

A typical Montessori program will have mixed-age grouping. Children are given the freedom to choose what they work on, where they work, with whom they work, and for how long they work on any particular activity, all within the limits of the class rules. No competition is set up between children, and there is no system of extrinsic rewards or punishments.[3]

WALDORF APPROACH (RUDOLF STEINER)

The Waldorf Approach, founded by Rudolf Steiner, features connections to nature, sensory learning, and imagination. The understanding of the child's soul, of his or her development and individual needs, stands at the center of Steiner's educational world view.

The Waldorf approach is child centered.[4] It emerges from a deep understanding of child development and seeks to support the particular developmental tasks (physical, emotional and intellectual) children face at any given stage. Children aged 3–5, for example, are developing a keen interest in the world, supported to a large extent by freedom of movement and must be supported to follow and deepen their curiosity through the encouragement of their sometimes endless asking of questions (Van Alphen & Van Alphen 1997). This approach to supporting children's naturally blossoming curiosity, rather than answering the teachers' questions. At this stage, children's play becomes increasingly complex, with children spontaneously engaging in role plays, as they construct and act upon imaginative situations based on their own experiences and stories they have heard. Thus, in Waldorf schools, ample time is given for free imaginative play as a cornerstone of children's early learning.[5]

The environment should protect children from negative influences and curriculum should include

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4. On the Unique Place of Art in Waldorf Education by Gilad Goldshmidt is licensed under CC BY 4.0

5. Imagination, Waldorf, and critical literacies: Possibilities for transformative education in mainstream schools by Monica Shank is licensed under CC BY 2.0

exploring nature through gardening, but also developing in practical skills, such as cooking, sewing, cleaning, etc. Relationships are important so groupings last for several years, by way of looping.

REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH (LORIS MALAGUZZI)

The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education is based on over forty years of experience in the Reggio Emilia Municipal Infant/toddler and Preschool Centers in Italy. Central to this approach is the view that children are competent and capable.

It places emphasis on children's symbolic languages in the context of a project-oriented curriculum. Learning is viewed as a journey and education as building relationships with people (both children and adults) and creating connections between ideas and the environment. Through this approach, adults help children understand the meaning of their experience more completely through documentation of children's work, observations, and continuous teacher-child dialogue. The Reggio approach guides children's ideas with provocations—not predetermined curricula. There is collaboration on many levels: parent participation, teacher discussions, and community.

Within the Reggio Emilia schools, great attention is given to the look and feel of the classroom. Environment is considered the "third teacher." Teachers carefully organize space for small and large group projects and small intimate spaces for one, two, or three children. Documentation of children's work, plants, and collections that children have made from former outings are displayed both at the children's and adult's eye level. Common space available to all children in the school includes dramatic play areas and worktables.

There is a center for gathering called the atelier (art studio) where children and children from different classrooms can come together. The intent of the atelier in these schools is to provide children with the opportunity to explore and connect with a variety of media and materials. The studios are designed to give children time, information, inspiration, and materials so that they can effectively express their understanding through the "inborn inheritance of our universal language, the language that speaks with the sounds of the lips and of the heart, the children's learning with their actions, their signs, and their eyes: those "hundred languages" that we know to be universal. There is an atelierista (artist) to support this process and instruct children in arts.[6]

6. Reggio Emilia Theory and Application by One Community is licensed under CC BY 3.0
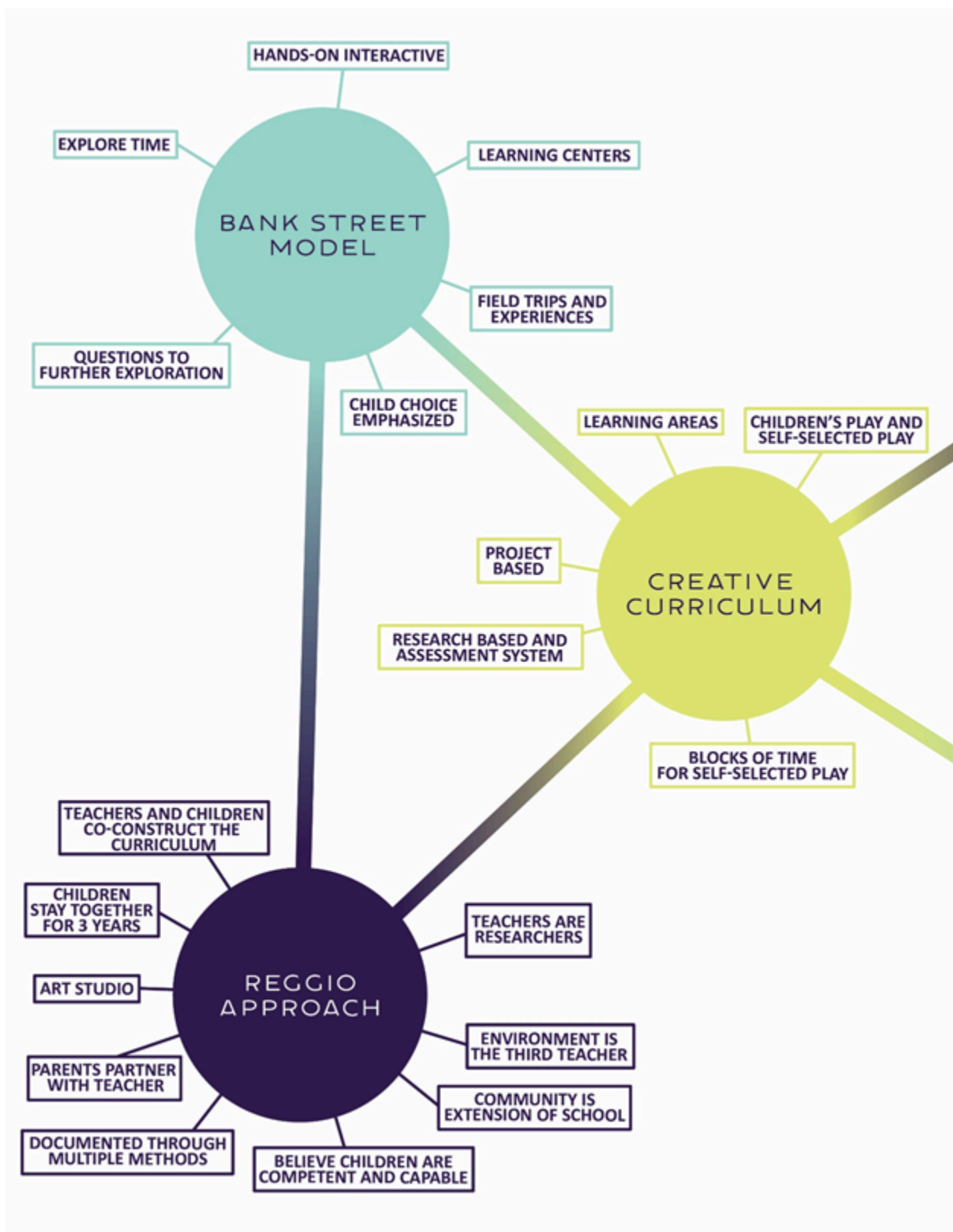
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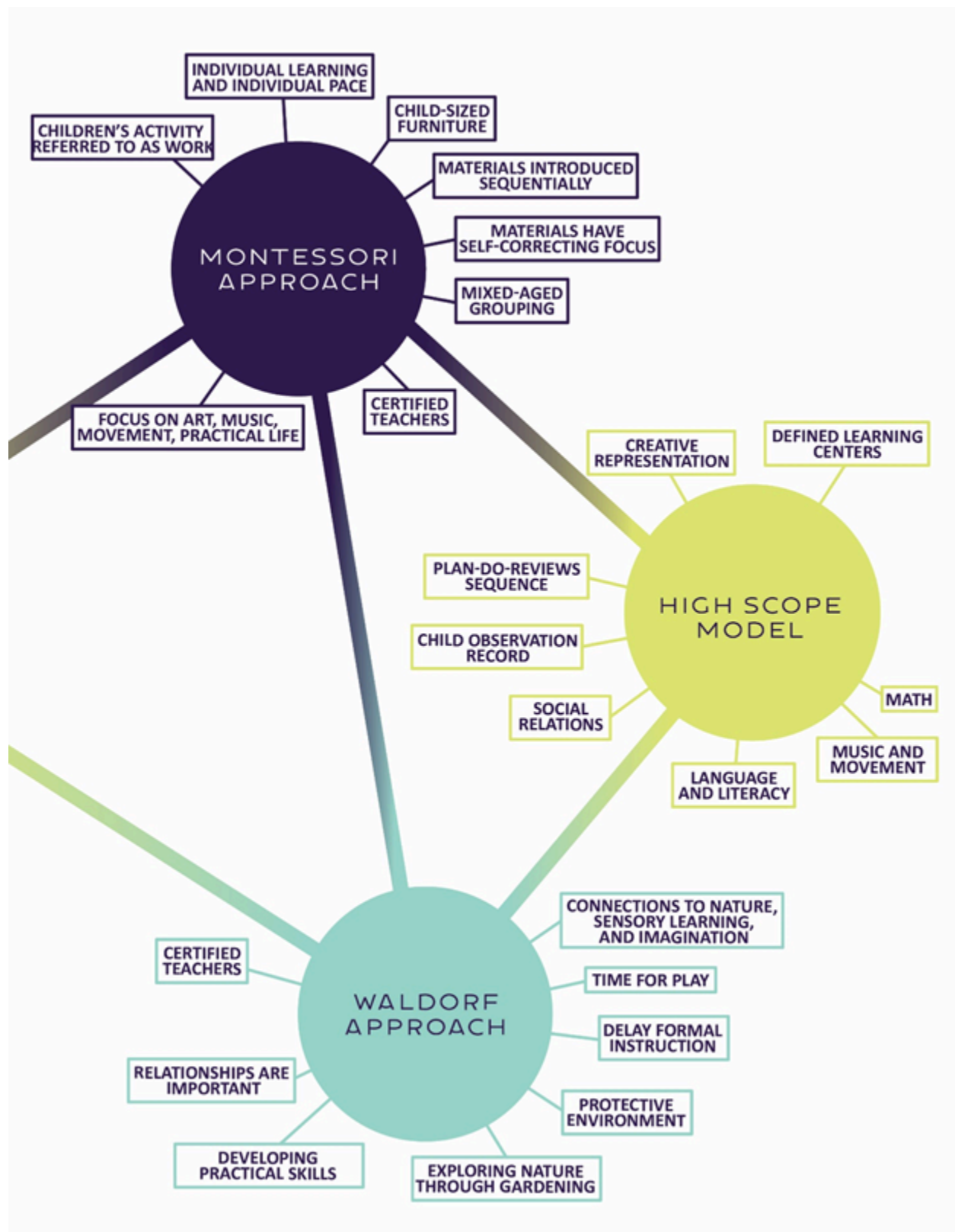
Curriculum Models. Image by Ian Joslin is licensed under CC BY 4.0

WEBBING

The Reggio Emilia Approach is an emergent curriculum. One method that many Early Childhood

Educators use when planning emergent curriculum is curriculum webbing based on observed skills or interests. This method uses brainstorming to create ideas and connections from children's interests to enhance developmental skills. Webbing can look like a "Spider's Web" or it can be organized in list format.
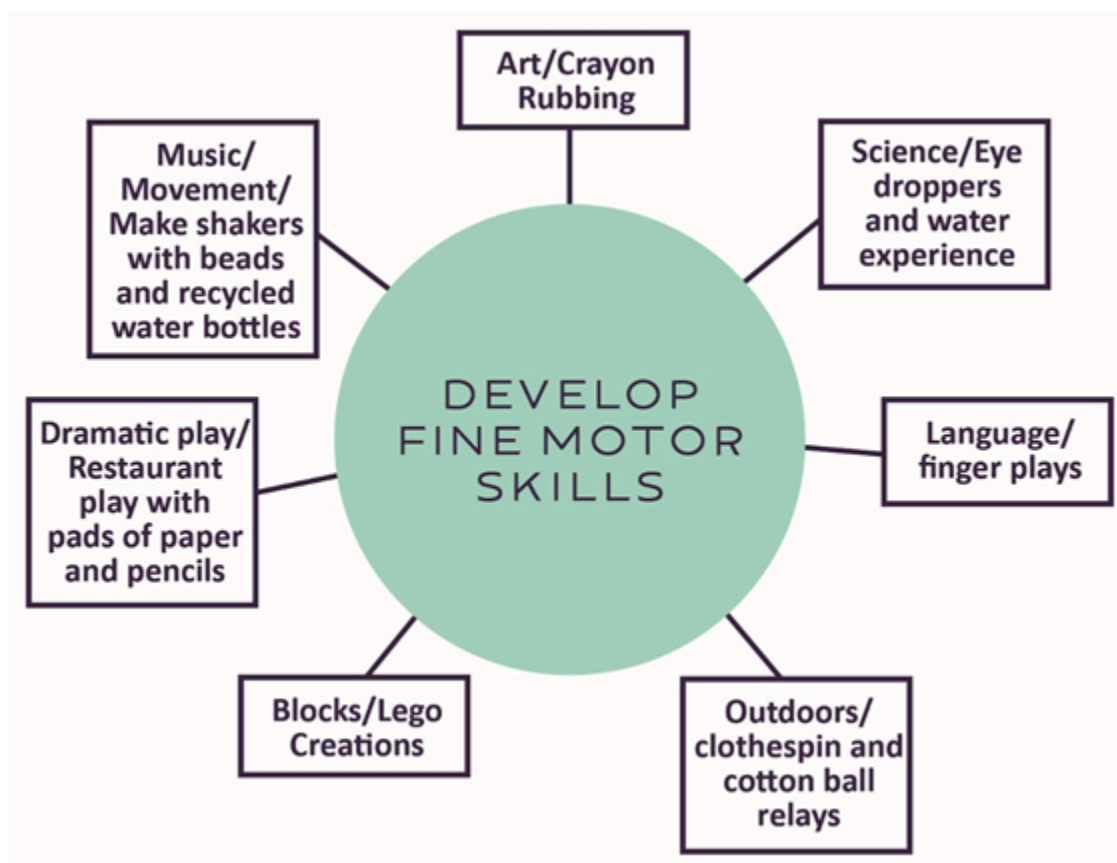
An example of webbings. credit: Image by Ian Joslin is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Webbing can be completed by:

- An individual teacher
- A team of teachers
- Teachers and Children
- Teachers, Children and Families

Webbing provides endless planning opportunities as extensions continue from observing the activities and following the skills and interests exhibited. As example demonstrates a web can begin from a skill to develop, but it can also be used in a Theme/Unit Approach such as transportation; friendships; animals, nature, etc.

PROJECT APPROACH

The project approach is an in-depth exploration of a topic that may be child-or teacher-initiated and involve an individual, a group of children, or the whole class. A project may be short-term or long-term depending on the level of children's interests. What differentiates the project approach

from an inquiry one is that within the project approach there is an emphasis on the creation of a specific outcome that might take the form of a spoken report, a multimedia presentation, a poster, a demonstration or a display. The project approach provides opportunities for children to take agency of their own learning and represent this learning through the construction of personally meaningful artefacts. If utilized effectively, possible characteristics may include: active, agentic, collaborative, explicit, learner-focused, responsive, scaffolded, playful, language-rich and dialogic.[7]

In the project approach, adults and children investigate topics of discovery using six steps: Observation, Planning, Research, Exploration, Documentation, Evaluation.

1. Observation: A teacher observes children engaging with each other or with materials and highlights ideas from the observations to further explore.

2. Planning: Teachers talk with children about the observation and brainstorm ideas about the topic and what to explore

3. Research: Teachers find resources related to the topic

4. Explore: Children engage with experiences set around the topic to create hypotheses and make predictions and formulate questions

5. Documentation: Teachers write notes, create charts and children draw observations and fill in charts as they explore topics/questions

6. Evaluate: Teachers and children can reflect on the hypotheses originally developed and compare their experiences to predictions. Evaluation is key in determining skills enhanced and what worked or what didn't work and why.

The benefits of a project approach are that young learners are directly involved in making decisions about the topic focus and research questions, the processes of investigation and in the selection of the culminating activities. When young learners take an active role in decision making, agency and engagement is promoted.

As young learners take ownership of their learning they, 'feel increasingly competent and sense their own potential for learning so they develop feelings of confidence and self-esteem' (Chard, 2001).[8]

CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE APPROACH[9]

The Cultural Appropriate Approach has evolved over the years and the practice of valuing children's culture is imperative for children to feel a sense of belonging in ECE programs. Sensitivity to the variety of cultures within a community can create a welcoming atmosphere and teach children about differences and similarities among their peers. Consider meeting with families prior to starting the program to share about cultural beliefs, languages and or traditions. Classroom areas can reflect the cultures in many ways:

- Library Area: Select books that represent cultures in the classroom

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7. Age Appropriate Pedagogies Project by Hanstweb is licensed under CC BY

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9. Child Growth and Development by Jennifer Paris, Antoinette Ricardo, and Dawn Rymond is licensed under CC BY 4.0

- Dramatic Area: Ask families to donate empty boxes of foods they commonly use, bring costumes or clothes representative of culture

- Language: In writing center include a variety of language dictionaries;

- Science: Encourage families to come and share a traditional meal

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CHAPTER 17.

THE DIVERSITY OF BELIEFS ABOUT AND PRACTICES OF PLAY

In an extensive and thorough review of international research on adults' beliefs about play, children's play with parents, and children's own play[1] conceptualizes play as "both culturally framed and unframed activities that are subsumed under the umbrella of 'playfulness'" . This conception is elaborated thus:

> As distinguished from conventional definitions of play, playfulness is a more universal phenomenon and includes childhood and parent-child unframed play activities that co-occur during caregiving and in children's encounters with different individuals and objects within specific developmental niches. [2]

This notion of playfulness appears in line with how we approach play in the present study. However, while Roopnarine includes what she refers to as 'framed and unframed activities', that is, both activities initiated as play and playfulness that enters other kind of activities, we would argue that when children (or adults) introduce playfulness into what has been initiated as activities other than play, they in fact, at least temporarily, reframes the activity as play(ful). Still, the openness to identifying and analyzing playfulness beyond activates clearly initiated in terms of play is necessary, we adhere to, when investigating what we refer to as play-responsive teaching.

An important finding of Roopnarine's review is that parents differ in their view of the merits of play. Parents from what is referred to as European or European- heritage cultures, and particularly among higher-educated middle-class backgrounds, differ in being positive to "'concerted cultivation' during socialization (constantly coaching, creating opportunities) compared to low-income families who believe that children naturally acquire certain skills", including play support. Regarding the latter, here was a positive relationship between play support and parental education, and an inverse relationship between parental education and academic focus, suggesting that parents with higher levels of educational attainment were more likely to endorse play as a means for learning early cognitive and social skills than those with lower levels of educational attainment.

That is, higher-educated parents are more positive to play as a means of facilitating children's development – and children's development more generally than promoting particular learning outcomes – than lower-educated parents. Among the latter group, "economic and social pressures may lead parents to choose didactic approaches over play in early education in order to minimize the

1. Roopnarine, J. L. (2011). Cultural variations in beliefs about play, parent-child play, and children's play: Meaning for childhood development. In A. D. Pellegrini (Ed.), The Oxford handbook of the development of play (pp. 19–37). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

2. Ibid.

risk of attendant to school failure later on" [3]. It is important to realize that what is here referred to as 'didactic approaches' denote practices based on traditional school instruction, and therefore practices markedly different from what we, in the present study, refer to as (play-responsive) *didaktik*.

Not surprisingly, but importantly, variation in parental beliefs concerning the value of play corresponds with the frequency, nature and quality of parent-child play [4], with parents in European and European-heritage communities engaging, for example, in playful activities with children and objects in ways that involve labelling more than parents with other cultural backgrounds.

The role – if any – of play in education is, of course, controversial[56]Burghardt[7] renders experience that "it is often necessary to avoid the label 'play' when seeking to integrate playful activities into school curricula. The lay view that play is not serious, and thus not important to 'real' education, is still all too common" (see the discussion of Vaihinger [8] in the present volume for a powerful refutation of such objections)..1 In their extensive review of studies on play in education, Fisher, Hirsch-Pasek, Golinkoff, Singer, and Berk[9] deduce this controversy to a more long-standing debate on how children learn. They argue that historically there are two traditions to this question, what they refer to as "the 'empty vessel' approach" and "the whole-child perspective", respectively. The former is presented thus:

> Arising from the essentialist and behaviorist philosophies, some believe that there is a core set of basic skills that children must learn and a carefully planned, scripted pedagogy is the ideal teaching practice. In this 'direct instruction' perspective, teachers become agents of transmission, identifying and communicating need-to-know facts that define academic success. Learning is compartmentalized into domain-specific lessons (mathematics, reading, language) to ensure the appropriate knowledge is being conveyed. Worksheets, memorization, and assessment often characterize this approach – with little academic value associated with play, even in preschool.

In terms of Swedish preschool, we argue, such an approach is not feasible; in Swedish preschool there are no worksheets or assessment of children's knowledge (this is not allowed according to law), neither is knowledge compartmentalized into the instruction of particular subjects as such (themes rather than lessons constitute the form of facilitating children's experience and learning). In addition,

3. Ibid

4. Ibid.

5. Pellegrini, A. D. (2011a). Conclusion. In A. D. Pellegrini (Ed.), The Oxford handbook of the development of play (pp. 363–366). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press

6. Pellegrini, A. D. (2011b). Introduction. In A. D. Pellegrini (Ed.), The Oxford handbook of the development of play (pp. 3–6). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

7. Burghardt, G. M. (2011). Defining and recognizing play. In A. D. Pellegrini (Ed.), The Oxford handbook of the development of play (pp. 9–18). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

8. Vaihinger, H. (2001). The philosophy of "as if": A system of the theoretical, practical, and religious fictions of mankind (6th rev. ed., C. K. Ogden, Trans.). London, UK: Routledge. (Original work published 1924).

9. Fisher, K., Hirsch-Pasek, K., Golinkoff, R. M., Singer, D. G., & Berk, L. (2011). Playing around in school: Implications for learning and educational policy. In A. D. Pellegrini (Ed.), The Oxford handbook of the development of play (pp. 341–360). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

the notions of direct instruction and transmission of knowledge are unproductive to understand how teachers and others facilitate children's development and learning).

In contrast to the 'empty vessel' approach, described by Fisher et al. [10] above, they present what they refer to as 'the whole-child approach', in which children themselves are ascribed an active role in their learning, where meaningfulness is critical, and "play, in particular, represents a predominant method for children to acquire information, practice skills, and engage in activities that expand their repertoire". A recurring concept in discussions and theorizing emphasizing children's active participation is agency. [11]

While our present position is aligned with the latter conception (i.e., what is above referred to as 'the whole-child approach', as distinct to an 'empty vessel' approach), it is important to remember that dichotomies like the above distinction are simplifications necessary for some analytical purpose. In actual practice – as necessarily investigated empirically – one would not expect to find clear-cut examples of either one. While sympathetic with the latter, rather than the former perspective, something that is under-communicated in the latter is the important roles of more experienced peers and in particular teachers in children's learning and development. Hence, rather than arguing for one or the other position (perspective), it is critical to theorize teaching in play-based activities in more nuanced ways than what dichotomies allow.

Reviewing studies on play and learning, Fisher et al. [12] conclude that "the findings show that play can be gently scaffolded by a teacher/adult to promote curricular goals while still maintaining critical aspects of play" . What they refer to as 'playful learning' consists of two parts: free play and guided play. The latter has two aspects: adults enriching children's environment with toys and other objects relevant to a curricular domain (e.g., literacy), and adults playing along with children, including critically, asking questions and "the teacher may model ways to expand the child's repertoire (e.g., make sounds, talk to other animals, use it to 'pull' a wagon)" Hence, while children's play provides the basis for this form of pedagogy, "teacher guidance will be essential". Teacher guidance, as Fisher et al. point out, "falls on a continuum", that is, the question is not whether or not the teacher participates (or should participate) but the extent to – and more critically, how – she does so.

The example of developing preschool children's shape concepts can illustrate the merits of this form of pedagogy. In the study, children were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: guided play, direct instruction or control condition. In the guided play condition, children were encouraged to "discover the 'secret of the shapes'" and adults asked what the researchers refer to as 'leading questions', such as how many sides there are to a shape. In the instruction condition, in contrast, the adult verbally described the shape properties to children. In the control condition children listened to a story instead of engaging with shapes. Afterwards the children were asked to draw and sort shapes.

10. Ibid.

11. Clarke, S. N., Howley, I., Resnick, L., & Rosé, C. P. (2016). Student agency to participate in dialogic science discussions. Learning, Culture and Social Interaction, 10, 27–39.

12. Fisher, K., Hirsh-Pasek, K., Golinkoff, R. M., Singer, D. G., & Berk, L. (2011). Playing around in school: Implications for learning and educational policy. In A. D. Pellegrini (Ed.), The Oxford handbook of the development of play (pp. 341–360). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Results from a shape-sorting task revealed that guided play and direct instruction appear equal in learning outcomes for simple, familiar shapes (e.g., circles). However, children in the guided play condition showed significantly superior geometric knowledge for the novel, highly complex shape (pentagon) than the other conditions. For the complex shapes, the direct instruction and control conditions performed similarly. The findings suggest discovery through engagement and teacher commentary (dialogic inquiry) are key elements that foster shape learning in guided play.

Hence, there is no difference in learning outcomes between guided play and direct instruction when it comes to relatively simple content, but when it comes to more complex content, guided play outperforms direct instruction; in fact, as found, when it comes to complex content, direct instruction was no better than what the control group performed (i.e., in this case, direct instruction made no difference to learning outcomes, on a group level). As clarified by Fisher et al.'s reasoning, teacher participation is critical to the success of guided play, not least to engage children in talking about the matters at hand and how these may be understood.

In their extensive review of research on play and learning, Fisher et al. [13] show how correlational, interventional, and comparative research all show the benefits of learning on the basis of play. They give examples from domains such as language and literacy, and mathematics, as well as social and self-regulative skills.

Particularly dramatic play is emphasized as developing children's language and literacy skills, requiring play partners to make known to others their intentions and play scenarios, and for participants to synthesize their ideas and suggestions into a shared narrative.

While there are many commonalities between the explanatory framework of Fisher et al. [14] and our present study, differences in research traditions also emerge. This is evident when Fisher et al. ask, "What are the optimal combinations for literacy development (e.g., the number of literacy learning activities, length of time per activity, time devoted to free vs. guided play)?". These are all quantitative matters, that is how much of X and Y are optimal to support children's development. In contrast, from our theoretical point of view, what we need to ask is qualitative questions, for instance, what qualities of teacher-child interaction, and children's interaction, are critical to scaffold children's development in various domains of knowing; what modes of participation by more experienced participants such as teachers promote children's play, and through play, learning beyond play; in what way can conceptual resources necessary for the development of play be planted within the framing of ongoing play, and how may these conceptual resources be planted in establishing a mutual play frame for children to play in and beyond? These are all questions that require a different kind of analysis and, in part, different kind of empirical data, to the questions posed by Fisher et al. Asking the kinds of questions we pursue in the present study requires detailed interactional data from everyday activities in preschool.

Analyzing and discussing discourses on play and learning in early childhood education, Hedges [15] argues that "reluctance to incorporate content in children's learning arises from non-empirical

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Hedges, H. (2014). Children's content learning in play provision: Competing tensions and future possibilities. In L.

traditions and ideologies". A historical precursor to what is today often voiced as objecting to ambitions to support children's learning in early childhood education, is Rousseau:

In the eighteenth century, Rousseau promoted play as a natural form of children's healthy development as playful, innocent and optimistic human beings. The role of education was to let these instinctive abilities unfold without adult interference. The type and extent of con- tent knowledge learning developed in this apparently effortless way remained unspecified and Rousseau's ideas were developed without any empirical basis [16]. Yet these ideas have been the origins of a long-held child-centered ideology related to play as a spontaneous activity that ought not to be interfered with.

In terms of a common set of metaphors, children's abilities have thus come to be seen as 'unfolding' (as if prewritten on a piece of paper that, when unfolded ('de-veloped'), reveals what is already there waiting to be recognized. Accordingly, teachers and other adults should not 'intervene' in the allegedly natural scheme of things. As Hedges[17] points out, such a stance risks making content knowledge invisible and unattended. In contrast, and recognizing the importance of allowing children to develop insights into many domains of knowing, Hedges argues that some critical questions to such approaches are "when adults might provide input into children's spontaneous play, what the substance of that input might be and the pedagogical framing for such contributions". The questions are well aligned with the interest of the present project. Building her reasoning on research by Fleer[18] and others, Hedges[19] concludes that "playful and integrated pedagogical models depend on teachers' ability to recognize and act on possible links between play and content in a genuine way. This is in contrast to trying to slip content disingenuously into children's play, emphasizing content as if it were the only end- goal of play or teaching content didactically" . (As we have already clarified what we refer to as *didaktik* in the original German/ continental tradition is markedly different to what in the English-speaking world is referred to as didactics.) In our study, we intend to analyze such 'links' between, primarily playing and teaching, and thus in extension with learning.

Attribution

Brooker, M. Blaise, & S. Edwards (Eds.), The Sage handbook of play and learning in early childhood (pp. 192–203). London, UK: Sage.

16. Grieshaber, S., & McArdle, F. (2010). The trouble with play. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

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18. Fleer, M. (2010). Early learning and development: A cultural-historical view of concepts in play. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press

19. Hedges, H. (2014). Children's content learning in play provision: Competing tensions and future possibilities. In L. Brooker, M. Blaise, & S. Edwards (Eds.), The Sage handbook of play and learning in early childhood (pp. 192–203). London, UK: Sage.

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CHAPTER 18.

THE FREEDOM OF PLAY AND OPEN-ENDEDNESS

One of the hallmarks of early childhood education is what is typically referred to as 'free play'. This concept is often employed as a rhetorical strategy in public debate about the nature, tradition, and future of preschool, and how it allegedly differs from school. Hence, 'free play' is generally used as a normative concept, that is, it provides an ideal for how stakeholders want preschool to be, rather than necessarily building on analytical work of empirical data as indicative of what actually characterizes this institution for promoting children's development and well-being. While matters of how we organize for and promote children's development in an institution such as preschool is a 'hot topic' to which it may be difficult to remain distant, to conduct research, and on this basis provide knowledge about how to design developmental activities in this setting, it is critical to take an analytical stance and ground claims in empirical data generated in this setting (rather than, for example, in laboratory settings).

In his theoretical elaboration of play, van Oers[1] differentiates the notion of 'free play' into two concepts: freedom from and freedom to. As he emphasizes, in normative discussions about 'free play', children's right to play free of adult 'interference', as it is often labelled – clearly indicating the negative connotations of teacher participation in these kinds of activities – is emphasized, that is, what he refers to as freedom from. However, he further argues, the freedom of play may be differently understood; as the freedom to pursue activities in unforeseeable directions, that is, being responsive to the inherent open-endedness of activities we call play. This latter conceptualization of the freedom of play is what he refers to as freedom to. That children are free to explore and pursue what they engage in without needing to know beforehand where it will lead them, that is, where their play may end up, does not, van Oers emphasizes, preclude teacher participation in these activities. Rather, it remains an open and empirical question whether teachers do so and, if so, what this means to the trajectories of these activities and children's participation and engagement in them. The latter lies at the very heart of what we intend to study in the present project. The distinction between the freedom to and freedom from of play thus provides a useful heuristic tool for analysis. This issue is further complicated in the present case with the ambition to study teaching in this context, since the latter implies outlining some form of trajectory (i.e., having an intention to make children discern, make sense of and appropriate some form of knowing, take part in some domain of cultural experience), while the former by its very nature is premised to be open-ended.

Rather than singling out play as a particular kind of activity, van Oers[2] argues that "in essence, all activities can be accomplished in playful versions or in more strictly proceduralised versions". That is, any activity can be, what we above referred to as, communicatively framed and engaged in as if or as is, more or less strictly separated or with 'permeable dividers' (for empirical illustrations

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1. van Oers, B. (2014). Cultural-historical perspectives on play: Central ideas. In L. Brooker, M. Blaise, & S. Edwards (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of play and learning in early childhood* (pp. 56–66). London, UK: Sage.

2. Ibid.

of such differences in early childhood education, see Johansson & Pramling Samuelsson[3]. Whether framing activities as make-believe (as if) or not (as is), teachers may or may not participate in these. As van Oers[4] concludes, mirroring our reasoning above, "all sociocultural activities are essentially seen as basically interpersonal endeavours in which more people actually or virtually participate. Hence there is in principle no objection to adult participation in play as long as the play format for the children themselves is not destroyed" . How participants – children (and at times, teachers) – communicatively frame, engage in, and negotiate the nature of mutual activities, and what this means to the continuation of these activities and what children are supported in appropriating are therefore important to analyze from these theoretical premises.

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3. Johansson, E., & Pramling Samuelsson, I. (2009). To weave together: Play and learning in early childhood education. Journal of Australian Research in Early Childhood Education, 16(1), 33–48.

4. van Oers, B. (2014). Cultural-historical perspectives on play: Central ideas. In L. Brooker,M. Blaise, & S. Edwards (Eds.), The Sage handbook of play and learning in early childhood(pp. 56–66). London, UK: Sage.

CHAPTER 19.

THE LION AND THE MOUSE

HOW AND WHY TEACHERS SUCCEED IN BECOMING PARTICIPANTS IN CHILDREN'S ONGOING PLAY

This chapter deals with preschool teachers' attempts to participate when children are already engaged in playing, alone or with playmates, and we will focus on when and why teachers seem to succeed (or not) in their attempts to enter ongoing play. In order for a teacher to succeed in becoming a participant in children's ongoing play, the moment of entrance is critical. Communication and play live in the dynamic tension between intersubjectivity and alterity with participants explicitly or implicitly negotiating how to understand what they are doing, or are going to do – for example, what and how to play. How teachers do to enter children's play and how they, if becoming a play partner, participate throughout the activity are critical to whether the play will (or will not) continue.

Hence, critical to teachers' participation in play is not only how they attempt to enter but also how they participate once becoming a participant in the activity. Below we will discuss two tensions found regarding why teachers succeed or fail with becoming and maintaining the role of a participant in children's ongoing play. These two are:

- Responding to alterity
- Coordinating *as if* and *as is*

Responding to Alterity

A first matter found regarding why teachers succeed or fail in their attempts to enter and participate in children's ongoing play is how they (and the children) deal with the potential tension between allowing the participants to go on with the negotiated play and the acceptance of expanding the play in a new direction (in theoretical terms, alterity). This tension can regard different parts of the play, for example negotiation about possible roles and the direction of the play. This tension is a natural part of expanding and developing ongoing play. However, to expand and maintain play, this tension needs to be managed and below we give examples of such negotiations with different outcomes.

Negotiating Possible Roles

Below are two examples of the same teacher trying to enter ongoing narrative play at two different times. The focus of these examples is the tension regarding possible roles within play. In the first example, the children have decided to play "The Lion and the Mouse", a for them well-known story. Before the play starts, they negotiate if they are to 'play or talk' (turn 9) and then about the roles of this play (turns 13–22). The teacher takes an active part in these negotiations.

Excerpt 1

9	CIA:	Mm, but how are we, what shall we do? How will we do it? Shall we see if we can play or should we talk about it, or should we tell, just tell?
10	Sara	Play, play
11	CIA:	Shall we just tell the story?
12	Ted	No, play!
13	Max	I think they should be hunters
14	Kalle	No you get to decide by yourself what to be
15	Max	I wanna be… the mouse
16	CIA:	Okay
17	Child	I wanna be the lion
18	CIA:	Aha
19	Child	I too wanna be the mouse
20	CIA:	There can be two mice, right?
21	Child	I too wanna be the mouse
22	Max	No, not three

Although Max says that there cannot be three mice (turn 22), the teacher decides that it can be so, and the division of roles in the play thus changes on her decision. The teacher is then given the role of the lion. When her role is to enter the narrative, she cannot (*as is*) enter the house of the mice (she is too big), prompting her to try to change the original storyline by changing the character of her role in the play:

Excerpt 2

80	CIA	Aha, so I cannot enter the mouse house, *oh no!*
81	Kalle	It's really small
82	Max	*But we were out... of the nest*
83	CIA:	But I'm one of those lions who love to write. So maybe I do like this, I write a note to the mice to *COME*. Look here, I play that I write *COME TO THE PINE A SURPRISE AWAITS* (Kalle several times tries to interrupt her without succeeding) and I put this note here so perhaps the mice see it (the mice creep away and beep). Has the mice seen the note?
84	Max	Yes
85	CIA:	Look here, here, here, here is the pine (the mice creep to the pine) *Raow. I got two mice at least. Now I'm gonna eat the mice* (the mice creep away)

The actual (*as is*) obstacle faced by the teacher in the play (turn 80) is first con- firmed and explicated by a child (turn 81), before another child, through shifting tempi (turn 82; see Björk-Willén[1] for an analysis of temporal shifts when going in and out of play) indicates a recontextualization in terms of *as if* that in effect solves the problem. In turn 83, the teacher suggests that she is "one of those lions who love to write". She says "Look here, I play that I write" (turn 80), which indicates that she tries

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1. Björk-Willén, P. (2012). "Being doggy": Disputes embedded in preschooler's family role-play. In S. Danby & M. Theobald (Eds.), Disputes in everyday life: Social and moral orders of children and young people (pp. 119–140). Bingley, UK: Emerald.

to implement this changed role-character into the original storyline within the actions of the play. This is an example of a tension between temporarily sufficient intersubjectivity (mutually playing out a storyline) and dealing with alterity (changing the role character in relation to the storyline). Writing/text is thus introduced into and contextualized in the play in a way that develops the narrative of the play. The children accept the changed role-character and the play continues with this addition to the storyline. Thus, the teacher is *free to* take the play in an unforeseeable direction. The play develops in a new direction, in what can be understood as a potentially tense 'space' between temporarily sufficient intersubjectivity (i.e., what is temporarily, implicitly or explicitly, sufficiently shared to go on with a joint activity) and alterity (i.e., suggestions on how to reframe the premises of the activity, or expand it in other ways than previously, implicitly or explicitly, agreed upon). The teacher meta-communicates her reframing, including explicating that she plays (turn 83).

Excerpt 6.3 contains another example from when the same teacher tries to intro- duce a character from another for the children well-known story into the current one.

Excerpt 3

107	CIA:	But think… do you know the troll Ludenben [Eng., Hairy-Legs]? What if the troll Ludenben were to jump into the Billy Goats Gruff story. Do you know who Ludenben is?
108	Lisa	Me! (raises his hand)
109	CIA:	But do you remember… what story is Lundenben in?
110	Kalle	Gruff, Gruff [Swedish, *Brusarna, brusarna*]
111	CIA:	Petter and his Four Goats, right? In his hood, no in his stone lived the troll Ludenben. He was always ANGRY and hungry like a…
112	Child	You can be, you can be Ludenben (to CIA)
113	Child	Well, we can play that play
114	Lisa	But then I wanna be the cat

The children have been playing Bill Goats Gruff for a while when the teacher suggests that maybe Ludenben could jump into the play (turn 107). After talking about who this troll is (turns 109–111) one child says, "well, we can play that play then" (turn 113). If they are going to do so, another child wants to be the cat (turn 114), which is a role within the story of the troll Ludenben. The emphasis on "that" (turn 113) and the discussion of new roles connected to the narrative of Ludenben indicate that mixing characters from the two stories does not seem to be a possibility, according to the children; rather, you play *either* Billy Goats Gruff *or* the troll Ludenben.

Through the processes of dealing with alterity, there is the possibility that also an original storyline 'within' which the play is played will come up for re-negotiation and transformation. How come that the teacher succeeds with adding a changed character into the Lion and the Mouse play but not into the Billy Goats Gruff? It is the same teacher and several of the children are also the same, and both excerpts are examples of a teacher *taking a role in the play – acting as if.* One explanation could be that the children know the second story better, and for this reason, they are less willing to break the original storyline. Another explanation could be that a previous negotiation in Billy Goats Gruff has made clear that the play is to be played in line with the original storyline. In the negotiation before the Lion and the Mouse play, in contrast, the teacher decides that there can be three mice. Thus, the

original storyline was changed (reframed) even before the play started. The teacher deciding about the three mice also showed that she – maybe based on her being the teacher – is *free to*, without negotiation take the play in a new direction; in her role as teacher, one task she has is to make sure all children who want to are included, and this may necessitate expanding roles that can be played.

The negotiation regards the tension between continuing the joint play project (the Lion and the Mouse) or accepting the suggestion from the teacher on how to somewhat reframe the premises of the play (alterity). That the character of the lion likes to write is perhaps sufficiently harmonious with the original storyline for the children to be able to continue the play with this addition.

Negotiating Possible Directions

Dealing with alterity is also visible when possible directions are negotiated within ongoing play. Below are two examples of such tensions and how they are dealt with, through further re-negotiation. In the first example, the teacher has been invited by the children to participate in a role-play. The teacher has been assigned the role of the grandmother, and two girls are acting as older sisters. Almost as soon as the play starts, one of the children introduces the activity of reading a book:

Excerpt 4

1.	Vera:	Read this! (hands a book to the child who is inside the hut)
2.	Sofia:	You mean the songs?
3.	Vera:	(turns around and puts the book on the floor)
4.	CIA:	But how are you gonna read… how… *can you read big sisters?* (on all four creeping to the hut)
5.	Vera:	*Yes*
6.	CIA:	Let's see… come, let's read (picks up the book from the floor)
7.	Vera:	We play (inaudible)

The two children talk about which book to read for the babies (turns 1–2). Then the teacher questions their ability to read the book (turn 4). It is not clear if she initially does this as a teacher (outside the play) or as a grandmother (inside the play); thus, her question can be understood as both *as if* and *as is.* However, she quickly adds "older sisters" as in her role as grandmother (making the question one raised within the play form, *as if*). Then the teacher invites the two girls to read together with her (turn 6). By responding, "we play" (turn 7), the child signals that reading is to be understood *as if* (pretend-playing to read) and not *as is* (actually being able to read); alternatively (we do not hear the end of her utterance) suggesting that they play something else (than reading).

Excerpt 5

8.	CIA:	*Can't you read for me big sisters?* (starts browsing the book)
9.	Vera:	Nooo
10.	CIA:	I'm grandma who loves to hear a story (continues browsing the book)
11.	Sofia:	*Oh that's right, that's right, we were going to a party today and we're already late*
12.	CIA:	Oh… but…
13.	Sofia:	At school we were going to a party, *oh we're late, we have to go!* (the girls put blankets over their shoulders as if they were capes, and exit the room)

Once again, the teacher tries to invite the "older sisters" to read while she turns the pages of the book (turn 8). She combines *as if* with *as is* by calling the girls "older sisters" at the same time as she invites them to read. In responding "No", the child explicitly expresses a different opinion, which can be understood as her having agency and being *free to resist taking the play in a particular direction*. The teacher continues by saying that she is a grandmother who loves to listen to a story (turn 10), again implying that she wants the girls to read. The children deal with this suggestion by taking the play into another direction: leaving for a party (turn 11). This turn is made as if imagining going to a party. The teacher is not invited to join the girls to the party; instead, the two girls, in tacit agreement, leave the room (turn 13). Using her play skills, the girl combines experience of going to a party and the importance of being on time, and amends the narrative without losing the thread through employing narrative chains and time markers. The suggestion made by the teacher that the girls read does not manage to expand or maintain the play. Instead, the two children agree to take the play in a new direction, where the teacher is not included. Teacher and children do not at this point establish temporarily sufficient intersubjectivity to go on with a joint play. Instead, the children take the play in a direction that excludes the teacher.

A second example of dealing with alterity in ongoing play is a continuation of the hairdresser's play, previous presented as an example of a teacher entering children's ongoing play by taking a role in the play (see Excerpt 5.6). When this episode continues, as seen in Excerpt 6.6, the teacher is still acting as the customer and the children (Ruth and Klara) are acting as the hairdressers.

Excerpt 6

12.	ANNA:	*And then I think I wanna cut my hair a bit* (Klara silently combs ANNA's hair) *Have you had many costumers today, Klara?*
13.	Klara:	*Aaaa* (continues silently combing ANNA's hair)
14.	ANNA:	So what do you do now? (Klara takes a book and puts it under ANNA's long hair)
15.	Klara:	I take, I take up the hair and then I take it down
16.	ANNA:	Ahaa
17.	Klara:	Oh, that's right! (stops combing, gets up from the couch, puts the book and comb away and goes to get a yellow blanket)
18.	ANNA:	*Do you get a hair wash and so here also before?*
19.	Klara:	Mmm
20.	ANNA:	*Aaaa perfect* (Klara puts the yellow blanket around ANNA's shoulders, it falls off)
21.	Klara:	Shucks! (tries again, ANNA helps her)
22.	ANNA:	*Ah, I'm gonna be so nice in my hair now* (Klara attaches the blanket, lifts ANNA's hair and starts combing it again. Stops after a while, gets up, takes a plastic plate and brush and stands in front of ANNA)
23.	Klara:	*Do you wanna have a makeup?*
24.	ANNA:	*Oh, can you have a makeup here too?*
25.	Klara:	*Yes, you can be a witch and such*
26.	ANNA:	*Ahhhhh*
27.	Klara:	*Do you want a makeup like a princess or a witch* (inaudible)
28.	ANNA:	*Eeeh, I wanna be... a witch*
29.	Klara:	*Mmm* (Klara stirs the brush on the plate as if there was paint, then does something with some other plates)
30.	ANNA:	What a place, you can cut your hair and get a makeup here!
31.	Klara:	*So* (Klara returns to ANNA and starts pretending to put makeup on her face with the brush)

Both the teacher and the children act *as if* (see turns 12–13), and, for example, by putting the blanket on the teacher's shoulders (turns 20–21) the girls show that they have experience of being at the hairdresser's. The teacher acts *as if* by asking questions about possible treatments (turn 18). Thus, within the frame of the play, *as is* (what actually happens to a costumer at the hairdresser's) is interweaved with *as if*. There is no obvious goal or narrative in the play. Rather, it is open ended and continuously negotiated through the actions of the teacher and the children; actions that are in line with being hairdresser and customer. However, in turn 23, one of the girls introduces a different perspective (alterity) into the play by asking if the customer wants some make up. The teacher answers with some surprise in her voice, but still in her role as customer (turn 24). Her answer shows that it is not obvious that you can get a make-up at the hairdresser's, but she aligns and hands over to the girl to decide if this can be incorporated and, thus, the direction of the play. Through this response, the child is *free to* take the play in new directions and she continues the extension by introducing the opportunity to get a make-up as a princess or a witch (turns 25 and 27). The teacher confirms the new direction, partly by saying that she wants to be a witch and partly by emphasising the quality of the place where you can get both a haircut and a make-up (turns 28 and 30). Thus, negotiating the new frame of the play is made within the frame of the play *as if*, rather than through stepping outside it. By dealing with alterity in this way, the teacher helps the children to combine two different

previous experience (being at the hairdresser's and getting a make-up as a witch or princess) into something new within the frame of the play. Combining previous experience into a new form is an important feature of creativity, as conceptualised from a Vygotskian point of view [2]. In response to this expansion of the play, the teacher a little while later leaves the hairdresser's as a flying witch.

Coordinating *as If* and *as Is*

A second reason why teachers seem to succeed or fail in their attempts to enter and participate in children's ongoing play is how they and the children coordinate *as if* and *as is.* As seen in previous excerpts in this chapter, the participants consistently shift between these modes of talking; the line between these being highly permeable. However, this permeability sometimes makes it unclear for the participants if an utterance is to be understood *as if* or *as is*, that is whether or not it is to be taken as an action in the play. Uncertainty regarding *as is* and *as if* becomes particularly visible in narrative play. Playing as such implies *as if,* but when playing a canonical story in line with the original storyline, the storyline gains standing *as is.* The previously presented example of Billy Goats Gruff (Excerpt 6.3) is an example of how adhering to a well-known narrative frame hinders the children from being *free to* take the play in unforeseeable directions.

In the following, the delicate issue of coordinating *as if* and *as is* is illustrated with excerpts from two other play activities. In the first example, a teacher is trying to initiate a play with trains with a boy (approximately 2 years old). She does this by asking meta-questions to the child:

Excerpt 7

1.	KAREN:	Then who wants to drive that ambulance?
2.	Martin:	My dad/*my dad*
3.	KAREN:	Who's driving grandma and grandpa's car? Shall I drive it?
4.	Martin:	*Grandma and grandpa are gonna drive it*

When the teacher asks, "then who wants to drive that ambulance" (turn 1), the child answers "my dad" (turn 2). In real life, the father of this child is an ambulance driver, why both the question from the teacher and the answer from the child can be understood *as is.* Then the teacher asks who is driving the grandparents' car (turn 3). Again, this question is about who of them that should move the car physically in the play. The teacher offers to do this (she has no role in the play, thus the "I" [turn 3] in the utterance refers to her as teacher, *as is*). However, the child's answer indicates that he is talking *as if.* If connecting this second answer to the answer to the first question, both answers could be *as if* within the play (hence, the two different writings in the excerpt, one in plain writing and one in italics). Thus, it is possible that the teacher talks *as is* while the child answers *as if.* At this point, there is no indicator that the two participants have established some intersubjectivity, allowing them to go on with a shared activity; they may, in effect, be engaged in parallel ones, talking past each other.

Sometimes this doubtfulness regarding whether actions are to be taken as *as if* or *as is* becomes a matter for meta-communication. In Excerpt 6.8, three children (Linn, My and Sam) sit under a table. There is a blanket over the table giving the impression of a hut.

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2. Vygotsky, L. S. (2004). Imagination and creativity in childhood. *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*, 42(1), 7–97. (Original work published 1930).

Excerpt 8

1	Linn	I found that one before (looks at CIA and points at the imaginary phone My holds to her ear), the one that My has
2	CIA:	*What are they saying, what are they saying, My?* (looking at My who is "on the phone")
3	My	*The thieves are gone but they cannot lock. So they have to come here while the builders rebuild it. It takes thirty-seven months*
4	CIA:	Oh, so the neighbors say that in thirty-seven months they cannot live in their house?
5	My	Yes, as they must, so we need to share our house
6	CIA:	Aha
7	My	We have to be nice
8	CIA:	Shall I sit here? Can I do that? (creeps in under the table)
9	My	*We have to be nice to the neighbours so they... we need to be nice to the neighbours so they, so they can be, be in our house.*
10	Sam	Even the castle fell on their house
11	CIA:	Aha, noo
12	My	Yes, like this pfff (shows with her hands how the castle fell)
13	Linn	But…
14	My	And it was on their cabin. Not good, right?
15	Linn	Wait… it came on our house but it, it's extra stone
16	CIA:	In the play or for real?
17	Linn	In the play
18	CIA:	Okay

When the recording starts, one child is trying to get the teacher's attention by saying that she had it first, referring to a pretend telephone (turn 1). However, the teacher neglects this *as is* talk and instead starts to communicate *as if* with another child (turn 2). Thus, she clearly shows that she is now taking part in the children's play, *as if.* However, later, in turn 16, the teacher is no longer sure if one of the children is talking within the play or not. Something in what the child says makes the teacher unsure about whether the child is talking *as if* or *as is*. To re-establish mutual ground (temporarily sufficient intersubjectivity), the teacher asks, "In the play or for real" (turn 16), which the child answers, "in the play". Through this meta-communication, mutual ground is re-established.

DISCUSSION

In this chapter we have focused on when and why teachers seem to succeed (or not) in their attempts to enter ongoing play. In this analysis, the theoretical notions of *intersubjectivity* and *alterity* have been important. To become a participant in children's ongoing play means to balance the tension between intersubjectivity and alterity, that is, sufficient mutual ground for engaging in a shared activity and being open to unforeseeable development, respectively, as well as coordinating *as if* and *as is*. This is of substantial importance in the moment of entering in order for the teacher to get access to a play, but as mentioned, our analysis shows that it is not only the teacher's first attempt to enter ongoing play that is critical. When the teacher has become a participant in ongoing play, the balancing and coordinating continues and then the ability to latch on to what the children enact and say becomes critical to the development of the play. To become and remain a participant in children's ongoing play

the teacher needs to be sensitive to children's initiatives and be able to balance between these and their own contributions within the activity. This is a matter of contributing to and maintaining play, and thus an important play skill required by teachers.

Attribution

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CHAPTER 20.

GOLDILOCKS AND HER MOTORCYCLE: ESTABLISHING NARRATIVE FRAMES

In this chapter, we give empirical examples of how teachers establish narrative frames for children to play in and from, and what this means to how activities continue. The position of the teacher is highlighted and we analyze the consequences for children's actions, and the development of the actual play, of different positions taken.

NARRATIVES IN CHILDREN'S PLAY

There is a growing body of research on children's narratives in play, which from a theoretical point of view argue for the importance of adults positioning themselves inside of play. According to Fleer[1], the seminal work in this regard is the work of Lindqvist[2] in Sweden, who introduced the concept of 'playworlds' into the literature: "The focus of playworlds is the teacher and the children collectively role-playing together complex themes with problem situations from stories, fairy tales, and other narratives", Fleer[3] explains. The specific pedagogical characteristics of playworlds for developing children's play have been studied by Hakkarainen[4], who illustrates how play- worlds work and the active role this requires of the adult in children's play. The reason for emphasising the importance of adults contributing to children's plays, Hakkarainen, Brėdikytė, Jakkula, and Munter[5] argue, is that imaginative play is "disappearing from the lives of children throughout the world", allegedly often replaced by media use. Consequently, according to this reasoning, preschool teachers are critical to supporting children in finding out how imaginary plays are played out. Adjacent to this reasoning is a more overarching concern about teach- ers' play willingness and skills, and to what extent such skills are adequate parts of preschool teacher education. The pedagogy of playworlds is primarily communicatively framed through the telling or reading of a story, after which the children and the teacher collaborate on creating the play by joint imagination, agreeing on a basic plot and enacting specific roles. Hakkarainen et al. in their study of adult participa- tion in children's play development, understood in terms of Vygotsky's concept of play, argue that narrative mode is an essential prerequisite for gaining access to children's playworlds. They claim that adults have to become sincere partners in children's play and they have to use appropriate narrative strategy for joint interac- tion to, in play, create a zone of proximal development (ZPD) for children. Hakkarainen et

1. Fleer, M. (2015). Pedagogical positioning in play – Teachers being inside and outside of children's imaginary play. Early Child Development and Care, 185(11–12), 1801–1814.

2. Lindqvist, G. (1995). The aesthetics of play: A didactic study of play and culture in preschools

3. Fleer, M. (2015). Pedagogical positioning in play – Teachers being inside and outside of children's imaginary play. Early Child Development and Care, 185(11–12), 1801–1814.

4. Hakkarainen, P. (2010). Cultural-historical methodology of the study of human development in transitions. Cultural-Historical Psychology, 4, 75–89.

5. Hakkarainen, P., Brėdikytė, M., Jakkula, K., & Munter, H. (2013). Adult play guidance and children's play development in a narrative play-world. European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 21(2), 213–225.

al. use six criteria to define developed narrative role play, that it: (1) has a social/collective character; (2) is imaginative; (3) is creative; (4) is developed over time; (5) is challenging; and (6) has a narrative structure.

The central play interventions used in Hakkarainen et al.'s[6] study was story presentation, carried out in different forms, such as dramatization or puppet show:

> It is important to understand play as a child's narrative about the world and how they use their narrative and imagination to join the play. Dramatising stories and taking roles moti- vates adults to step in a joint playworld and take a role, which in turn wakes up the adult's own imagination, helps emotional involvement, and perezhivanie. It changes the adult– child relationship and 'switches' adult thinking from rational to narrative.[7]

The study shows how teachers in playworlds collectively create imaginary situations with children.

Another intervention project in a preschool setting is reported by Lindqvist[8]. She documents a pedagogical process in staging a story among toddlers in a preschool in Sweden. The study focuses on the cultural aspects of play and its aim is to investigate how young children create meaning in their play in dialogue with adults. The result shows that the children's imagination is captured by the story, which gives the object and the actions meaning. She further argues that: "When adults play roles and dramatize a chain of events, they open a door to a playworld which the children can enter".

A more recent study on what role teachers take to imaginary play situations in play-based settings is reported in Fleer[9]. She presents findings of a study were play pedagogy in early childhood has been analysed. The concept of subject position has been used in analysing the teachers' response to children's play activities, and it was found that most teachers position themselves outside of children's play, but Fleer also identifies a typology of how teachers relate to children's play: (1) teacher proximity to children's play; (2) teacher intent is in parallel with children's intent; (3) teacher is following the children's play; (4) teacher is engaged in sustained collective play; and (5) teacher is inside the children's imaginary play. Against the background of these empirical studies, as well as our theoretical premises in the present study, it is of analytical interest to investigate what roles teachers take and how they approach children when they introduce and establish narrative frames for play. Importantly, we will also analyse how the children are responding to the teachers' actions.

EMPIRICAL EXAMPLES OF NARRATIVE FOLKTALE FRAMES

There is a wide variation in how these play activities, filmed at different preschools, evolve; with different teachers and the ages of the children also differing. In this chapter, we focus on what teachers' establishing of narrative frames mean for the continuation of play-responsive activities in preschool. We use examples from eight different films with a specific focus on playing/dramatizing a folktale that is well known to the children. From the analysis, we have identified a pattern made up by four different ways that teachers involve themselves in children's narrative play. These identified patterns are here referred to as: The teacher directing; The teacher taking a role; The teacher triggering play through engaging children in a playful dialogue; and The teacher engaging in play as a

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Lindqvist, G. (1995). The aesthetics of play: A didactic study of play and culture in preschools

9. Fleer, M. (2015). Pedagogical positioning in play – Teachers being inside and outside of children's imaginary play. Early Child Development and Care, 185(11–12), 1801–1814.

guiding participant. We will illustrate the teachers' different approaches, and how activities in which these are taken continue.

The Teacher Directing

One of the most popular folktales the teachers use in the filmed play activities is Goldilocks and the Three Bears (for another study of the use of this story in pre- school, analysed in terms of teachers' positions to children's play, see Fleer[10]). At some preschools, this folktale sets the frame for longer thematic work. At one of the preschools, the teacher had worked with Goldilocks and the Three Bears for a long time in a group of children around 5 years old within thematic work on bears. The teacher has documented the process, describing how after role-playing the story many times, the children negotiated a new plot. Together with the children, the teachers wrote a continuation of the folktale, with the children one at a time giving suggestions. The film analysed in the next section is of the participants playing, that is enacting, the new story in front of a videorecorder. One teacher (SIV) is filming and the other one (SARA) takes the part of Mummy-Bear, but is mostly engaged as the storyteller or director of the play. The three participating children take the characters of Goldilocks (Polly), Baby-Bear (Per) and Daddy-Bear (Ola), respectively; Daddy-Bear is on the scene but has no lines in the presented excerpts.

Excerpt 7.1: Setting the Scene

1.	SIV:	Now the film is rolling
2.	SARA:	Now it was Little-Bear who was gonna come to me, as I'm Mummy Bear (sits on a chair, points at herself)
3.	Per:	(approaches SARA) *Where is Goldilocks?*
4.	SARA:	(turns towards Per)
5.	SARA:	*Yes, Goldilocks, she has gone out in the forest and picked blackberries* [in Swedish: *björnbär* – literally bear-berries]
6.	Per:	(Per turns around)
7.	SARA:	*Shall we go and look?*
8.	Per:	(turns around jumping, sits down on the chair next to SARA)
9.	SARA:	(reaches for the boy and takes his hand) *Yes, let's go and see if we find Goldilocks*
10.	Per:	*Mm*
11.	SARA & Per:	(they get up and walk hand in hand)
12.	SARA:	*Yes, let's do so. Shall we look here* (they see Goldilocks (Polly) putting something in a basket)
13.	SARA:	*And she has picket blackberries, yes!*
14.	SARA:	So you sit here and watch

In the introduction of the play activity, the teacher SARA meta-communicates that she has taken the role of Mummy-Bear (turn 2). Per acts in line with the new script when asking SARA where to find Goldilocks (turn 3) and SARA responds in the role of Mummy-Bear, telling Baby-Bear that Goldilocks is out in the forest picking blackberries. She then asks him if they should go and look for her together (turn 9). However, in turn 13, SARA changes her participation from being one of the characters to

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10. Ibid.

becoming the director of the play. She meta-communicates about how the activity should evolve in line with the manuscript previous developed by the participants.

SARA continues telling the written story as a kind of director, while still alternating with being in the role of Mummy-Bear: She tells Per to sit and wait while she looks up what Goldilocks is up to. SARA meta-communicates about Polly's actions as she, in the role of Goldilocks, goes to the house and tries to open the door, but finds that the bears have locked it. SARA then asks Polly what will happen next:

Excerpt 7.2: The Unexpected Turn

23.	SARA:	And then, what was Goldilocks to do then?
24.	Polly:	Ride a motorcycle
25.	SARA:	Ride a motorcycle, that's right
26.	GL/Polly:	(Goldilocks walks across the room)
27.	SARA:	Shall we see if there is any motorcycle here then?
28.	Per:	Yes
29.	SARA:	There is
30.	GL/Polly:	Over there (puts on a cap)
31.	SARA:	Yes, how nice
32.	GL/Polly:	(GL sits down backwards on a chair and holds the basket)
33.	SARA:	And now you sit down on the motorcycle and then you ride home
34.	GL/Polly:	I ride to mum and dad (pretends to ride a motorcycle)
35.	SARA:	Mm now you ride there
36.	SARA:	And then what happens, she's at home maybe

In turn 23, the teacher asks what Goldilocks/Polly is about to do "and then what was Goldilocks to do?" Polly replies that she is going to ride a motorcycle. The teacher then confirms that Polly remembers the story they wrote together (turn 25). It becomes clear that the story has taken a new direction and is not following the traditional narrative; it is not part of the traditional Goldilocks story for her to drive a motorcycle. This development, and its contrast to the traditional story also potentially challenges stereotypical gender norms. According to the teacher's documentation, when the new story was made, the teacher was responsive to the children's ideas and she supported new ideas in line with experience from the children's every- day lives.

The excerpt shows that the teacher leads the action on, that is, makes sure the story evolves. In turn 27, the teacher asks if there is any motorcycle, which triggers – triggers in the meaning of challenging – Polly to find a prop that might be an imagined motorbike and as she takes on a hat, as if it were a helmet, shows the make-believe aspects of the play, encouraged by the teacher (turn 31). The children have few lines since the teacher is telling the participants how to act. Even if she has taken on the role of Mummy-Bear (turn 2) there are few play actions made in this role during the play; rather, she focuses on directing the play. The activity evolves more in terms of meta-communicating about what is happening (going to happen) in the play than actually enacting the play. In a sense, the play evolves

as a more traditional instructive question-answer activity, where the children are supposed to provide answers to queries with set answers (a prewritten script).

This pedagogical positioning is described by Fleer (2015) as the teacher *being parallel* with the child as a narrator or promotor. Even if the teacher is supporting the play she is "generally not engaged in sustained collective play inside of the imaginary situation" (p. 1811). There are few opportunities for the children to explore and to make new suggestions about how to develop the play in new directions. The play is not *open-ended* and the participants have *no freedom to* pursue the activity in an unforeseeable direction (cf. van Oers, 2014); they already know where the activity will lead them according to the manuscript.

The activity of enacting the play might be described as a theater play rather than as an imaginary play, even if the participants take roles and pretend to, for example, ride on a motorcycle (turns 32 and 34). That the teacher comments that she finds the child's initiative to use a chair (as a motorcycle) and a hat (as a helmet) as props amusing (turn 31) could be interpreted as indicating a playful atmosphere. However, the activity is to a large amount planned and organized forehand by the participants, leaving little space for novel development (alterity) while playing. However, it should be remembered that writing the script together was an open-ended activity and the resulting story constitutes an altered story, not evaluated against the traditional, well-known one. Hence, features of play such as open-endedness may come and go during related – and within particular – activities.

The Teacher Taking a Role

In another example of dramatizing Goldilocks and the Three Bears, the teacher has taken a leading role as the character of Goldilocks. In the activity, we can see how the teacher dramatizes through different actions, using gestures and her voice. The play plays out in a playroom at the preschool and the props used are pillows in different sizes, colours and shapes and also plastic toys, serving as the bears' dishes. In the sequences, the teacher (ALICE) enters the imaginary house of the three little bears, through trying the chairs (pillows) and tasting the porridge from the dishes. When she has eaten the little bears' porridge, she acts tired and finds the beds. After a while, the three bears, Daddy-Bear (Anton), Mummy-Bear (Ahmed) and Baby- Bear (Aisa) enter the scene.

Excerpt 7.3: Children Become Co-constructors

17.	ALICE:	*No, I'll try this little bed, it looks comfortable* (creeps to a smaller mattress, lies down and pretends to fall asleep)
18.	ALICE:	*Oh, it was really comfortable. Here I lie* (pretends to sleep, makes snoring noices)
19.		(three children enters, playing Big-Bear, Middle-Bear and Little-Bear)
20.	Anton:	*Someone has sat my chair* (sits, jumps a bit on his chair)
21.	Ahmed:	*Someone has sat in my chair too*
22.	Aisa:	(inaudible) *my chair broken* (creeps) (beeps; inaudible)
23.	Anton:	(leans down and says something inaudible to Little-Bear, puffs her a little)
24.	Anton:	(gets up and goes to the table)
25.	Ahmed & Aisa	(follow Anton)
26.	Ahmed:	*Someone has tasted my porridge!*
27.	Anton:	(with a rough voice) Someone has tasted my porridge also
28.	Aisa:	(with a squeaky voice) *eaten my porridge* (throws herself over the plate)
29.	Aisa:	(pretends to eat, licking the plate)
30.	Anton:	*my porridge*
31.	Ahmed:	(turns the plates around)
32.	Anton:	(looks around) What should we do now?
33.	Ahmed:	(points at the large bed) *Someone has tried my bed!*
34.	Anton:	No, this is your bed (said to Ahmed)
35.	Ahmed:	(moves to the middle bed) *Someone has tried my bed!*
36.	Anton:	*Someone has tried my bed also* (said with a squeaky voice)
37.	Aisa:	*Someone lies in my bed* (pretends to cry) *Ohhhh*
38.	Anton:	It's just ALICE

In turns 17–18, ALICE acts out her role as Goldilocks. She pretends to sleep by making snoring sounds. When the three children enter the stage (turn 19), it is evident how familiar they are with the story and what roles they enact as the three bears. They use playing voices and they know what their lines are. As the teacher has proved to be a role model in her acting, she opens up for the children to also act out the story. As she continues to lie down, in character pretending to sleep, she seems confident in the children being competent in playing out the story. This can be seen in contrast to the example of the teacher acting as a director. Here, Anton choreographs the other participants in how to act (turns 23, 32 and 34) and it is evident that all the participants are engaged in the play and are co-constructors of how it develops. Similarly to the examples in Excerpts 7.1 and 7.2, this play can be characterized as a theatre play rather than an open-ended make-believe play. But in contrast to the teacher's role in Excerpt 7.2, the teacher in this activity lets the children play out their roles without directing them, allowing them space to participate as more involved agents in the activity (i.e., with increased

agency). This could be seen as an example of how the participants are sharing a playworld (cf. Lindqvist, 1995) and how the teacher is inside the framework of the children's imaginary play (cf. Fleer, 2015). The way the teacher acts in a dramatized way also proves to be modelling (she being a role model) for how the children verbally can shape their roles in play. Anton's response (in turn 38) to the evolving play (*as if*), suggesting that "it's just" the teacher (*as is*) who has laid in the bed is a potential play-breaker (Huizinga, 1938/1955; cf. Excerpt 35, where we discuss this matter).

The Teacher Triggering Play through Engaging Children in a Playful Dialogue

In the data, there are also examples of more spontaneous activities when teachers contribute to establishing narrative frames for play activities. The next example plays out in an outdoor activity in a sandbox on the preschool's playground. Two children, 2–3 years old (Sam and Siri), sit in front of a teacher (EDITH) and after a little while, one more child (Sofie) joins them. Another child (Saga) takes part but is not visible on the film, as it is recorded (by a computer tablet placed on the edge of the sandbox). The teacher tells the folktale of Three Little Pigs as a puppet show, using as props things she finds in the sandbox. She uses expansive language (Pramling, Doverborg, & Pramling Samuelsson, 2017) and is dramatizing by using a play-voice:

		Excerpt 7.4: The Frame Triggers the Play
1.	EDITH:	Who lived at home with mum and dad
2.	EDITH:	But one day the mum and dad said, you'll have to leave home, you'll have to build your own house!
3.	EDITH:	And the first pig, it built its house of straw (makes a room out of straw for the pig). This is grass but we pretend it's straw (puts the pig in the house), moved in
4.	Sofie:	(comes and sits down)
5.	EDITH:	And the second pig built its house out of sticks (makes a room/house of sticks)
6.	EDITH:	And the third pit built its house out of (inaudible)
7.	Sofie:	Then the wolf comes.
8.	EDITH:	Does the wolf come then (appears to be looking for something)?
9.	Sofie:	(takes a stone and and hands it to EDITH) Here!
10.	EDITH:	(gets closer) Here, here was a stone (takes it) Thank you (returns to her place)
11.	EDITH:	And this is the house of stones
12.	EDITH:	But then the wolf comes, oh to the first pig's house
13.	EDITH:	And then these two pigs went to the third pig
14.	Child:	(inaudible)
15.	EDITH:	Yes what will the wolf say now?
16.	Child:	Now I was gonna tell, the wolf
17.	EDITH:	Do you want to tell what happens now?
18.	Child:	Yes, eh, blow and fart [in Swedish: *prutta* (fart), which has some sound similar to *pusta* (blow)]
19.	EDITH:	Blow and fart?

This excerpt illustrates how the teacher initiates a play by telling the story of the Three Little Pigs.

The activity starts as a 'puppet show' with the teacher as narrator, illustrating the story with props and by using expansive (i.e., non-deictic or beyond- the-present-situation form of) language; the children participating as audience. The teacher meta-communicates (in turn 3) when she clarifies that she uses grass as straw. She thus verbalizes the activity with the grass *as is* into *as if* it was straw. That another child approaches the sandbox at this point may indicate that it is a situation that engages the children and makes them curious about what is going on. In turn 7, Sofie suggests the wolf is coming, which indicates that this is a story well-known to the child. The activity develops to become a joint play, where the teacher is responsive for including the other participants' initiatives. In turn 15, she invites the children to participate, through asking them about what the wolf says, and a child takes on the role of the wolf. The play continues and gradually the children take more and more initiatives. The play then unfolds in a new direction, and new props, such as a dinosaur, are introduced. The children also build a large sand house where they all (the characters of the play) can live, which indicates that the ordinary narrative of the three pigs has been left or fundamentally developed.

Excerpt 7.5: The Play Opens Up for New Initiatives from the Children

103.	EDITH:	Then you have to try to agree, if you are building a house, what to do with the house
104.	Sam:	(kneels by the house) *Can I come in?*
105.	EDITH:	Mm, the pig wants to go in
106.	Sofie:	*I want to open the door*
107.	EDITH:	Yes, okay
108.	Sofie:	*It open*

The Teacher Engaging as a Guiding Participant

In this example, the teacher thus enters into a dialogue with the children and acts as a co-creator of the play. The children develop the play and the teacher scaffolds this development through contributing material that can be used as props. In turn 103, when the teacher says that you have to come to an agreement, "If you are building a house, what to do with the house", she scaffolds the children in how to approach the construction of the house. Sam replies to her suggestion by taking the role of a pig, who asks: "*Can I come in?*" (turn 104). The teacher then makes clear to the other participants, through a meta-comment, that it is the pig who wants to enter the house they have built together (turn 105). Sofie takes on the role of a pig inside the house (turn 106); an initiative the teacher encourages. Even if the children are in the midst of developing their language, they are acting as engaged participants, taking roles on their own terms, such as when Siri verbalizes, in the role of the pig, "*It('s) open*" (turn 108). By framing the activity as a folktale (a familiar story), the teacher scaffolds the children in their make-believe play and makes them engaged in a joint activity, instead of arguing about how the activity should be performed (to fit the original story). In this way the teacher guides the children to enter into a shared playworld where they have agency to develop the evolving story/play.

The Teacher Engaging as a Guiding Participant

Another narrative frame for many of the play activities filmed in the project is the folktale of The Three Billy Goats Gruff. There is a tradition in Swedish preschools to dramatize this story, especially with the youngest children. The story is about the three goats named "Gruff", who are to go up to the

hillside to make themselves fat. On the way up the hill, they have to cross a bridge over a cascading stream; and under the bridge lives a great ugly troll.

In the next example, a teacher working with the youngest children (1 to 3 years old) has organised a mutual play activity by placing a shelf on the floor in a play- room at the preschool to serve as a make-believe bridge. They have also produced props, such as toilet rolls in different sizes placed on their foreheads symbolising Billy Goat's horns. Two girls (Fia and Lea) have taken the roles of trolls, the teacher (KAREN) the role of little goat and two boys the roles of middle goat (Dan) and biggest goat (Kaj). The teacher crawls over the bridge and tells the trolls to not eat her but instead to wait for her brother, the middle goat:

Excerpt 7.6: Guiding the Narrative Action

8.	Dan:	*Come I* [Swedish: *Tommer jaa!* (*Kommer jag*)]
9.	Lea:	(pretends to eat on KAREN's leg)
10.	KAREN:	Do you come now?
11.	Lea:	(creeps up on the bridge and continues to pretend eating on KAREN's leg)
12.	KAREN:	Oh oh oh, now comes the next one… (takes Lea's arm and points to Dan, whispering): Look, look, now comes the next goat. COME! (to Dan)
13.	Dan:	(creeps over the bridge)

The example illustrates how the teacher supports the children through responsive listening (turn 10) to Dan's announcement that he is about to crawl over the bridge. She guides the narrative action (turn 12) when making the two trolls aware that another bigger goat is coming on their bridge, and she supports Dan to walk along. Since these are young children, they are in the midst of developing their speech, but they still participate actively in the activity. When Dan has succeeded to crawl over the bridge without being eaten by the trolls, it is the more silent boy, Kaj's turn. He has not spoken at all so far in the activity:

Excerpt 7.7: The Teacher Giving Voice as a Coordinator

24.	KAREN:	NOW COMES, now you'll have to be prepared troll
25.	Kaj:	(drags himself on his stomach across the bridge)
26.	KAREN:	(knocks hard): bom bom bom
27.	Fia:	Bom bom bom (mimics KAREN)
28.	Lea:	*Who tramps on my bridge now?*
29.	KAREN:	(sits down next to Kaj): *It's the BIG goat Gruff*

The teacher positions herself close to Kaj, looks at him and guides him as she knocks on the bridge (turn 26). Lea clearly knows the story, as indicated by her ask- ing in a troll-sounding voice who is tapping on the bridge this time (turn 28). When Kaj does not answer, the teacher scaffolds the continuation of the play through giving voice to the lines of the child's character (turn 29) When doing this, the teacher leans towards Kaj, looks at him and, as she speaks the biggest goat's response, she metaphorically speaking becomes an extended arm to the child.

Even if it is a folktale that is dramatized, and thus builds on a well-established set of events, it allows the children to contribute to developing the play in unforeseen directions. In turn 11, Lea as a troll gets up on the bridge and takes a bite out of little goat's leg, which is not a part of the

traditional story. The fact that there are two trolls is also a new contribution to the original narrative. The participants know the story well; they are engaged in the same playworld even if there are improvisational initiatives made by the children, that is, the activity is opened up for alterity (there being two trolls is accepted rather than corrected against a set formula).

The teacher acts as a guiding participant when she coordinates the children's perspectives and she helps the narrative to continue, in a playful manner, verbalizing the children's intentions for each other. For example, in turn 12, she point towards Dan to make Lea aware that the middle goat is coming over the bridge. She meta- communicates about what is happening and she uses an *as-if* clarification (turn 12) about the role that Dan takes in the play. She also acts as the director when she encourages Dan to crawl over the bridge.

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, we have given empirical examples of how teachers use different folktales for establishing narrative frames for children to play within and/or to develop the play from. We have analysed different positions the teachers have taken as participants in the play activities and what their approaches have meant for how the activities continue. The examples are in line with those described by Hakkarainen et al. (2013), in the sense that they are framed by a story where the teachers and children have jointly agreed to the imagined plot and then enact their specific roles. In other words, the participants (teacher and children) establish a mutual playworld (cf. Lindqvist, 1995). Most of the examples given have also characteristics of role- play, as described by Hakkarainen et al.: they have a social and collective character; they are imaginative and have a narrative structure.

As the stories seem to be well known to the children, one can assume these plays have been developed over time, especially the examples illustrated in Excerpts 7.1 and 7.2, where the children have been engaged in developed the plot more in line with their everyday experiences than the traditional story departed from; for exam- ple, allowing Goldilocks to ride a motorcycle. The narrative framework could hence be understood as a creative sense-making process rather than simply a reproductive one. To some extent, the dramatized plays have been challenging for the children; at least the example illustrated in Excerpts 7.4 and 7.5, where the children participate in contributing to how the play should evolve. This is also the only example, of the ones we have here presented and analysed, where the play can be described as open- ended with all of the other examples being more in the nature of what we have referred to as theatre performance, with a set manuscript to follow (play out).

Even if folktales set the frames in all examples we have here given, our analysis also makes visible consequences of different *didaktikal* approaches for what abilities come into play and in the end the development of the play. The analysis shows that the children involved in the different examples get different possibilities for their play actions. The frames set for the plays can be described as a way to scaffold children into narrative engagement, and, as Hakkarainen et al. (2013) argue, "[t]he main feature of mature narrative play is the ability of the players to develop shared ideas and to construct a plot (storyline) together" (p. 215). According to the findings of the present study, it can be noted that the playworlds that the respective teachers establishes create conditions for children's development of play abilities – although most of the situations here studied can be characterized as playful rather than as open-ended play.

When reading field notes from the video session (see Chap. 4), when the play of The Three Billy Goats Gruff (Excerpts 7.6 and 7.7) was analysed, the teacher told us that she had in mind to teach

the children about the concepts 'over' and 'under'. The teacher reflected that when she entered the playworld with the children, she was so focused on scaffolding the children in how to play she forgot to introduce these concepts. The activity developed in another direction. In other examples we have presented here, it is not clear whether the teacher intended to support the learning of any particular or general 'content' in these play activities. From the excerpts it has been visible that different abilities are in play, for example, being imaginative in taking a role or using some props or being creative in acting and participating in story development. These are all abilities that have bearing outside (particular) play activities.

Arguably, the analysis here conducted on teachers' involvement in narrative play also shows how the concept 'subject position' in relation to adult-child interaction can be related to a *didaktikal* approach to supporting play in preschool (cf. Fleer, 2015). By shifting their role from acting from a position outside the play – for example as a storyteller – and acting out a role (a character in the play), the teacher can support in children not only the development of a specific play but also the development of children's play ability. Learning how to play includes developing the ability of taking a role but it is also about the ability to establish plays with others through various means including meta-communication; to both be inside a framed playworld and, when necessary, to step outside it for engaging in discussions about the development of the playworld. In the excerpts here analyzed (especially in Excerpt 7.3), it has been visible that the teachers act as role models by shifting positions over time and in response to the continuation of evolving or played-out narrative. When adults are co-constructing early narratives with children, Bruner (2003) argues, children get familiarised with temporal sequences and with a basic structure of the beginning, the conflict (what is happening in the story) and the resolution of the event, constituting the end of the story. By taking account of the children's initiative, but also through challenging the children to take initiative, as in the example in Excerpt 7.4, turn 15, when the teacher asks, "What will the wolf say now?", the teacher engages the children in the play at the same time as the development of the story (the storyline) becomes visible to them. What the participants orient toward is the plot and how they collectively can role-play the themes of the folktale.

In the present chapter, we have shown how different forms of teachers' role tak- ing in playful activities together with children set the frame for children's actions and for their possibilities to contribute to the development of the play. Accordingly, children's different abilities are in focus for development. On the one hand, abilities about keeping in mind and to do/say/remember the expected line (in line with the folktale), and on the other hand, abilities that relate to imagination and creativity. There are examples of how the teacher exposes the children to expansive language by naming props with their conventional names as opposed to merely using a local, deictic language (Pramling et al., 2017). In their discussion of teachers' roles in play, Hakkarainen et al. (2013) suggest that teachers have to keep three different zones of development simultaneously in mind: proximal, distant and self-development:

> *Individual development is accomplished in the space between distant and potential devel- opment. Child development in joint play proceeds from co-development to self- development. (Hakkarainen et al., 2013, p. 216)*

Hakkarainen et al. (2013) report that the teacher students participating in their project found the play interventions to be a difficult task. They needed some time to practice before they became accepted play partners, but in the end the students reached "a better

understanding of the children's position and point of view" (p. 224). They also learned "to use play as the source, context and medium for a child's learning and development" (p. 224). In the examples in this chapter, it is evident that the teachers combine elements of *as if* (i.e., imagination) and *as is* (in taking a meta-perspective on the play and how to play), and elements of storytelling as well as considering children's perspectives.

Attribution

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CHAPTER 21.

WHAT IS SCAFFOLDING

SCAFFOLDING

Scaffolding—also known as scaffold learning, scaffold method, scaffold teaching, and instructional scaffolding—is a popular teaching method in early childhood education. It works well when applied alongside other strategies.

In construction, scaffolding is a temporary structure used to support a work crew and provide access to the materials necessary for building, maintenance, and repair. The philosophy is similar in educational scaffolding and works almost the same way. The difference is that the goal is to build independence in children.[1]

The idea is that children can more readily understand new lessons and concepts if they have support as they're learning. Scaffolding also can involve teaching a child something new by building on what they already know or can do.

By definition, scaffolding provides a temporary support, is sensitive to students' strengths and weaknesses, and aligns with the learning objectives and the assigned task. Additionally, scaffolding is standards-based, provides students with necessary supports to accomplish a task, and demonstrates respect for all learners.[2]

HOW IT WORKS

Scaffolding involves breaking learning into chunks to make the material or skill easier for kids to master. For example, if you were to use scaffolding with learning to read or a reading assignment, you might talk about some of the vocabulary words first, then read a passage of text, and then discuss what is happening in the story. The key is that you're breaking things down so that kids are better able to learn something new. [3]

1. Enter your footnote conJung J, Recchia S. Scaffolding infants' play through empowering and individualizing teaching practices. Early Educ Dev. 2013;24(6):829-850. doi:10.1080/10409289.2013.744683tent here.

2. El Education. Helping all learners: Scaffolding

3. Gillespie LG, Greenberg JD. Rocking and rolling: Empowering infants' and toddlers' learning through scaffolding. *Young Child*. 2017;72(2).

If a child gives the wrong answer to a question, a teacher using a scaffolding method can use that incorrect response coupled with a previously learned skill to help the child come to the correct conclusion. Scaffolding helps kids reach a learning goal or objective that they do not yet have the skills or ability to do on their own. [5]

Scaffolding is useful because it helps young children who are new to a school environment build confidence while learning. [4]

In early childhood education, scaffolding can be implemented in many ways. For example, once a child recognizes a specific letter, you can teach the sound that it makes, Next, you can move on to words that start with that sound. Or, if a child can use safety scissors already, they can try using a hole punch, since it is a similar fine motor skill.

BENEFITS OF SCAFFOLDING

Using scaffolding with young learners has a number of benefits. Aside from learning critical thinking skills, students develop an ability to learn independently. Additionally, scaffolding teaches kids how to learn something new without relying on memorization. [6]There are many reasons to use scaffolding with young children.

Facilitates Engagement and Motivation

Because scaffolding involves kids directly into the learning process, it helps keep them engaged in learning and focused on developing the skills they are trying to master. Plus, the process can be adjusted to meet the specific needs of each child;[7] this is one reason why teachers use scaffolding not just with young children, but with kids who have learning differences and other special needs.

Reduces Anxiety and Uncertainty

Learning something new can be stressful and confusing, but scaffolding makes the process more manageable. Asking a student to do something outside of their capabilities can create anxiety and hinder the learning process. Scaffolding can help students see how they might be able to accomplish the task, which builds confidence. [8]

Builds Momentum

Because scaffolding often involves moving through the learning process slowly and gradually, there is ample time to address issues and questions. This allows lessons to build upon one another and keeps the learning process moving forward instead of stalling when a child gets confused or doesn't understand something. [9]

4. Gillespie LG, Greenberg JD. Rocking and rolling: Empowering infants' and toddlers' learning through scaffolding. Young Child. 2017;72(2).

5. El Education. Helping all learners: Scaffolding

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Gillespie LG, Greenberg JD. Rocking and rolling: Empowering infants' and toddlers' learning through scaffolding. *Young Child*. 2017;72(2).

9. Ibid.

Helps Identify Learning Gaps

Using scaffolding, parents and teachers can identify what students already know and what they still need to learn. This assessment component helps adults develop more effective learning opportunities.[10]

HOW TO USE SCAFFOLDING

When using scaffolding with young children, a teacher provides students with support and guidance while the students are learning something new and age-appropriate, or just slightly above what they can do themselves. [11]

As children learn the skill, the teacher can reduce the support, then remove it once kids have mastered the skill. Scaffolding works best when educators employ the method in different ways to accommodate the needs of each learner. [12] They may use many techniques to provide the support each child needs.

Ask Probing Questions

Asking open-ended, curious, thought-provoking questions encourages a child to come up with an answer independently. [13]For example, if a child is building a tower with blocks, a teacher could ask, "What do you think would happen if we built a tower super tall?"

Make Suggestions

If a child is having trouble completing a project, offering hints or partial solutions can help without giving away the answer. [14]For example, "That block tower keeps falling down. One way we could fix it is by putting all the bigger blocks on the bottom. What other ways do you think we could help it stay up?"

Introduce a Prop

Encourage the child to use different resources to solve their problem. This helps to promote thinking outside of the box to come up with a creative solution. [15]This might sound like, "What do you see in our classroom that would help support our block tower? Maybe if we turn that pencil holder upside down, that could help. Can you think of anything else?"

Offer Encouragement

Praising a child for attempting or completing a task, with even a simple "Good job!" increases a child's

10. El Education. Helping all learners: Scaffolding

11. Ibid.

12. Zurek A, Torquati J, Acar I. Scaffolding as a tool for environmental education in early childhood. *Int J Early Child Environ Educ.* 2014;2(1):27-57.

13. Mount Sinai Parenting Center. What is scaffolding?.

14. Jung J, Recchia S. Scaffolding infants' play through empowering and individualizing teaching practices. Early Educ Dev. 2013;24(6):829-850. doi:10.1080/10409289.2013.744683

15. Zurek A, Torquati J, Acar I. Scaffolding as a tool for environmental education in early childhood. *Int J Early Child Environ Educ.* 2014;2(1):27-57.

confidence and sense of self-competence. [16] Better yet, praise them for their efforts: "I see you are trying lots of ways to build your tower. You are really sticking with it."

Pose Limited-Answer Questions

If a child is having trouble coming up with an answer to a question on their own, a teacher who's scaffolding can provide multiple answers to choose from: "Do you think we should put this small block on top, or this bigger one?" This approach helps the child by challenging them to evaluate the choices and come up with a correct response independently.

Provide Support

When a task is proving tough, the teacher can help a child think through alternatives: "How about if you put wide blocks here instead of skinny ones? Do you think that would work?" Or, they could get a child off on the right foot by discussing the steps needed to complete a task, such as by saying, "After you make the bottom floor of your building, you can add smaller blocks on top."

Use Demonstrations

In the block tower example, an educator who is scaffolding could make their own smaller version of a block tower to demonstrate how the blocks work best.

HOW TO USE SCAFFOLDING AT HOME

Parents can use scaffolding to empower kids to do things on their own by breaking down the skill they are trying to master. The key is that you don't hover or do things for your child, but rather use patience and guidance to allow them to master skills on their own.

Allow your child to experiment with something new on their own before intervening. Observe what your child is doing by watching, waiting, and listening. Offer to help if your child appears frustrated or particularly stumped. Make a specific suggestion or comment about the next step, such as "You might want to try a smaller puzzle piece."

Model new skills when needed, but allow your child to try on their own. Offer support if needed. Fix mistakes only when necessary and without pointing them out. Refrain from finishing a task for your child. Give lots of praise for your child's hard work and effort. Help your child feel proud of what they accomplished. [17]

Help your child accomplish a task by showing them how to break it down into smaller, more manageable steps.

Scaffolding is a particularly effective technique for teaching new skills to young children. Whether they are learning to read, ride a bike, or draw a picture, breaking down the task into more manageable chunks and expanding on what they already know makes the process more accessible. You not only help build their confidence and but also provide them a more effective way to master a new skill.

Look for ways that you can incorporate scaffolding into your child's learning. You may find that it not only reduces their stress, anxiety, and frustration, but that it also is extremely effective.

Attribution

16. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Praise, imitation, and description.
17. Mount Sinai Parenting Center. What is scaffolding?.

CHAPTER 22.

NS ELCF CURRICULUM GOALS

LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Free the child's potential, and you will transform him into the world
—Maria Montessori

Learning goals provide a structure for early learning practice, guide educators' reflections and critical thinking, and form the basis for the assessment of children's learning and holistic development.

The four learning goals are

- well-being

- discovery and invention

- language and communication

- personal and social responsibility

These goals are consistent with the framework's image and vision of children as confident and capable learners. Each goal is supported by several Learning Objectives that provide educators with specific reference points. These reference points are there to identify, document and communicate children's progress to families, other early childhood professionals, and educators in schools. Over time, educators can reflect on how children have developed, how they have engaged with increasingly complex ideas, and how they have participated in increasingly sophisticated learning experiences.

Educators understand that children take different pathways to achieve these goals. Early learning does not focus exclusively on the endpoints of children's learning; educators give equal consideration to improvements made by individual children and recognize and celebrate not only the giant leaps that children take in their learning but the small steps as well.

WELL-BEING

Receive the children in reverence, educate them in love, and send them forth in freedom.
—Rudolf Steiner

Well-being is a holistic concept that focuses on children being happy, confident, and healthy in all aspects of their development. For children, well-being implies that they are loved, respected, protected, and supported by their families and communities.

> *Dispositions to learn develop when children are immersed in an environment that is characterised by well-*

Children's well-being is affected by all their experiences within and outside of their early childhood education programs. Educators know that when they attend to children's well-being by providing warm and trusting relationships, they are supporting children's learning and development. Educators understand that it is essential to ensure predictable and safe environments for children, that provide affirmation and respect for all aspects of their physical, emotional, social, cognitive, linguistic, creative, and spiritual needs. By acknowledging each child's cultural and social identity, and responding sensitively to their emotional states, educators give children confidence, a sense of well-being, and a willingness to engage in learning. As children experience being cared for by educators and others, they become aware of the importance of living and learning together with others.

Children develop their own well-being and confidence as they learn more about healthy lifestyles, emotional well-being, and healthy social relationships. As children become more independent they can take greater responsibility for their health, hygiene, and personal care, and become mindful of their own and others' safety. Routines provide opportunities for children to learn about health and safety. Educators understand tha good nutrition is essential to healthy living and enables children to be active participants in play, and they are responsible for providing many opportunities for children to experience a range of healthy foods.

The state of children's well-being influences the way they interact in their environments. A strong sense of well-being provides children with confidence and optimism to develop new friendships, interact with groups of other children, participate in new types of activities, and measure and calculate reasonable risks. It also influences children's readiness to persevere when faced with unfamiliar and challenging learning situations and creates opportunities for success and achievement.

Learning Objectives supporting the goal of well-being include:

- children feel safe, secure, and supported

- children become strong in their social and emotional well-being

- children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical well-being

- children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities

DISCOVERY AND INVENTION

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.
—Unknown

Children use a variety of processes such as exploration, collaboration and problem-solving to develop curiosity, persistence, and creativity. Children who are effective learners are transfer and

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1. New Zealand Ministry of Education. 1996. Te Whāriki. Early Childhood Curriculum. Wellington, NZ. Learning Media. p.45

adapt what they have learned from one context to another, and are able to locate and use resources for learning.

> *Through play, children invent symbols to explore relations of power, truth, and beauty as they move between the world as it is and the worlds they create. In these possible worlds, children have the liberty to push the boundaries and explore who they are as members of communities engaged with age-old issues such as good and evil. Learning to be imaginative and creative requires open and flexible environments, rich in materials and role models that reflect the cultural life of their communities—the songs, crafts, languages and artifacts—and opportunities for children to invent their own cultural forms and symbols; to explore unique and innovative approaches to understanding their worlds.[2]*

Educators recognize children as competent learners, and understand that they are capable of interacting with their indoor and outdoor environments to discover new concepts, problem solve, and create new ways of learning and playing. Children use their representational knowledge to invent new play—a rock may become a truck, a tree may become a house, and a line of chairs may become a train. Creativity allows children to create their learning environments over and over and in different ways. This type of active learning environment supports children's confidence to be involved learners who are increasingly able to take responsibility for their own learning, personal regulation, and contributions to the social environment. Connections and continuity between learning experiences in different settings make learning more meaningful, and contribute to the integrated nature of children's learning and development.

Children develop an understanding of themselves and their world through active, hands-on investigation. A supportive, active learning environment encourages children's engagement in learning which can be recognized as deep concentration and complete focus on what captures their interests. Children bring their own sense of self and their previous experiences to their learning. They have many ways of seeing the world, different processes of learning, and their own preferred learning styles.

> *An example of a learning disposition is the disposition to be curious. It may be characterized by: an inclination to enjoy puzzling over events; the skills to ask questions about them in different ways; and an understanding of when is the most appropriate time to ask questions.[3]*

Active involvement in learning builds children's understandings of concepts, as well as the creative thinking and inquiry processes that are necessary for lifelong learning. They challenge and extend their own thinking, and that of others, and create new knowledge in collaborative interactions

2. Makovichuk, L., Hewes, J., Lirette, P., and N. Thomas. 2014. Play, Participation, and Possibilities: An Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework for Alberta. Edmonton, AB: Government of Alberta. www.childcareframework.com p. 99

3. (New Zealand Ministry of Education. 1996. Te Whāriki. Early Childhood Curriculum. Wellington, NZ. Learning Media. p.44

and negotiations. Children's active involvement changes what they know, can do, and value, and transforms their learning.

Educators' knowledge of individual children is crucial to providing environments and experiences that optimize children's learning.

Learning Objectives intended to support discovery and invention include:

- children develop curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, and imagination
- children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem-solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesizing, researching, and investigating

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Language is the tool of the tools.
—Lev S. Vygotsky

From birth, children communicate with others using gestures, facial expressions, sounds, language(s), and assisted communications. Responsive adults support the development of language throughout early childhood

- by giving language to a baby's gestures (Oh, you want the teddy bear!) and expressions (Ah, you like this applesauce!)
- by repeating toddlers' expressions into full sentences (You want to read the book again?)
- by probing and extending possibilities for language development when engaging in conversations
- by providing opportunities for children to express their ideas, ask questions, and share stories

Educators appreciate that children are social beings who are intrinsically motivated to exchange ideas, thoughts, questions, and feelings, and who use a range of tools and media, including music, dance and drama, to express themselves, connect with others and extend their learning.

> *Early Childhood Educators provide opportunities for children to be able to communicate their feelings, thoughts, and ideas through careful and thoughtful design of the environment, and the educators' own use of language and expression. Educators are skilled at maintaining a special balance in their exchanges with children—to respond to children's expressions in ways that inspire children to continue their communication, rather than replacing children's language with their own.*[4]

Children's use of their first language underpins their sense of identity and their conceptual development. They feel a sense of belonging when their language, interaction styles, and ways of communicating are valued. Children who hear, not only their own first language but the languages of

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4. Flanagan, K. 2012. PEI Early Learning Framework—Relationships, Environments, Experiences. Charlottetown: PEI: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/eecd_eyfrwrk_full.pdf p.69

other children in their program and community, begin to learn about the rhythms and sounds of all languages, and cultivate a sense of personal attachment to their own language, which contributes to their sense of personal identity.

Educators understand that children communicate with more than their words. Their constructions with blocks, art work, playdough figures, and pretend play scenarios all provide information about various stages of childhood development, interests and abilities, and how children interact both with the learning environment and other children. Educators encourage children to ask questions, and by analyzing those questions, educators assess children's learning concepts, use of language, and pursue the types of things that children wonder about. When children are encouraged to re-tell an event, describe a painting, or explain what's happening in the dress up corner, they have the opportunity to practice sequential thinking and reasoning. This expression and communication helps both educators and parents learn about children's thinking, their ideas, and who they are.

Experiences in early childhood education programs build on children's range of experiences with language, literacy, and numeracy within their families and communities. Positive attitudes towards, and competencies in literacy and numeracy are essential for successful learning. The foundations for these are built in early childhood.

Learning Objectives supporting language and communication:

- children interact verbally and nonverbally with others

- children engage with a variety of texts and gain meaning from them

- children express ideas and make meaning with a variety of media

- children begin to understand how symbols and patterns work

- children use technology to access information, investigate ideas, and express their thoughts

- Acadian and Francophone children in French minority language communities develop strong foundations in French

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

What children learn does not follow as an automatic result from what is taught, rather, it is in large part due to the children's own doing, as a consequence of their activities and our resources.
—*Loris Malaguzzi (Edwardo et al. 2011)*

From infancy, a child's relationships and experiences begin to influence the development of a uniquely personal sense of identity. Identity is not fixed at birth, but is shaped by a child's family and community, interactions with others, culture, language, and experiences. Children who grow and develop in safe, secure, responsive, and consistent environments are more likely to develop the confidence to explore their environment and seek out new experiences. Children who are respected for their ideas, competencies, talents, and aptitudes develop a sense of themselves as competent and capable individuals.

Membership in communities involves interdependency. It is as simple and as complicated as this: we need to take

> *care of each other, and we need to take care of the natural and constructed world around us. When children engage in respectful, responsive, and reciprocal relationships guided by sensitive and knowledgeable adults, they grow in their understanding of interdependency.*[5]

Throughout the early years, children develop their own identities, and understand how they relate to others. Participation in high-quality, play-based early childhood education programs gives children the opportunity to test out different roles, such as taking turns being the doctor, patient, store clerk, and airplane pilot, and understand and appreciate other perspectives.

Interactions with other children and adults provide opportunities to learn how to listen to other opinions, promote one's ideas, and resolve conflicts. Outdoor play cultivates a respect for the environment, and allows children to experience their natural environments in a first-hand and concrete way, and to understand their roles and responsibilities in taking care of our world.

Infants and toddlers begin to develop a sense of personal responsibility when they learn to feed themselves and recognize their belongings. Toddlers take greater responsibility for themselves when they accomplish self-care tasks, such as toileting and washing their hands.

Helping children develop strong personal identities, awareness, and sense of responsibility means educators spend time developing skills and strategies to help children regulate their emotions, problem solve, and communicate with others. Educators understand their own responsibility to model respect for children, families, and each other as professionals. They also understand the importance of creating inclusive environments that respect diversity and support all children to participate in activities regardless of their skill level or development.

> *In school age care settings, children's sense of responsibility for their learning is co-determined and skills and attitudes towards life-long learning are consolidated. Children actively involved in community building develop common interests and learn about citizenship.*[6]

By the time children are in their early school years, they are able to create rules for fair play, and modify and re-shape those rules in consideration of fairness to the group, or to ensure that all children have a chance to be included. Participation in games with teams encourages a sense of fair play for all and a sense of responsibility to the team.

Learning Objectives supporting personal and social responsibility
• children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy, and respect

5. University of New Brunswick Early Childhood Research and Development Team. 2008. New Brunswick Curriculum Framework for Early Learning and Child Care—English. Fredericton, NB: Department of Social Development, Government of New Brunswick. www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/education/elcc/content/curriculum/curriculum_framework.html p. 34

6. Australian Government Department of Education and Training. 2011. My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Child Care in Australia. Canberra, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia. www.docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/my_time_our_place_framework_for_school_age_care_in_australia_v4_1.pdf p.7

• children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities, and how they can actively participate in them
• children respond to diversity with respect
• children become aware of fairness
• children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

Attribution

Learning Goals and Objectives (pages 47-54) from *Capable, Confident, and Curious*: *Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework.*

Province of Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2018). *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework.* https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/nselcurriculumframework.pdf

PART IV.

LEARNING SUPPORTS

CHAPTER 23.

ECE PYRAMID MODEL IN NOVA SCOTIA

WHAT IS THE PYRAMID MODEL?

The Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children. Credit: NCPMI. (n.d.) Pyramid model overview. https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Pyramid/overview/index.html

The Pyramid Model is a conceptual framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children's healthy social and emotional development.[1] The Pyramid Model program uses a coaching model to provide guidance to families, Early Childhood Educators and other professionals and builds upon a tiered approach to providing universal supports to all children to promote wellness, targeted services to those who need more support, and intensive services to those who need them.[2]

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1. NCPMI. (n.d.) Pyramid model overview: The basics. https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Pyramid/overview/index.html

2. Ibid

Effective Workforce[3]

The foundation of the Pyramid Model is a trained, effective workforce. This ensures that systems and policies are in place to support those working with young children by providing ongoing training and support to implement the Pyramid Model practices.

1.High Quality Supportive Environments Nurturing & Responsive Relationships

This tier supports all children by providing nurturing and responsive relationships in safe and supportive environments.

2.Targeted Social and Emotional Supports

This tier supports some children who are at risk of challenging behaviours by teaching them targeted social and emotional supports such as how to identify and express emotions, develop problem-solving skills, and playing cooperatively with other children.

3. Intensive Intervention

This tier supports the few children who may require individualized and intensive supports which include planning with families to meet their needs and develop skills for understanding and responding to challenging behaviours.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PYRAMID MODEL PRACTICES?

Benefits for Children

Enhances their social skill an emotional skills which include their ability to:

- Develop and maintain friendships
- Identify and manage emotions
- Use problem-solving skills
- Follow directions
- Share and take turns
- Understand routines and transitions
- Develop self control strategies

Benefits for Educators

- Creates positive, supportive relationships with children
- Coaching and support for learning and implementing new strategies
- Provides training to support families
- Provides them with resources to share with families

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3. NCPMI. (n.d.) Pyramid model overview: Tiers of the pyramid model. https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Pyramid/overview/index.html

Benefits for Families

- Creates positive, supportive relationships with children

- Provides resources and tips to promote social and emotional skills at home

- Helps build partnerships between families an educators to support capacity in preventing and addressing challenging behaviours

PYRAMID MODEL IN NOVA SCOTIA[4]

Vision

All Nova Scotia (NS) ECEs and their programs have the capacity to support the social emotional well-being of children and their families in collaboration with a caring network of community partners.

Mission

To lead the development of a sustainable infrastructure to implement the Pyramid Model, a system of professional development practices for ECEs, that address the social emotional needs of NS children and their families.

Why implement Pyramid Model in Nova Scotia?

In a 2017 report (using data from 2012-13 & 2014-15), children in NS were reported to be amongst the most vulnerable nation-wide in at least one area of their development, including their social competence domain and emotional domain.[5] In response to this data, the province decided to implement the Pyramid Model in Regulated Childcare Centres (RCCs) and Pre-primary Programs (PPPs) to support educators working with young children and their families to develop and enhance their social and emotional development.

How is Pyramid Model implemented in Nova Scotia?

Who is involved in the Pyramid Model implementation in Nova Scotia?

The foundation of the Pyramid Model is data-based decision making, which means using practical information and experiences to inform decision making and future implementation. The Pyramid Model uses a coaching approach to professional development where Inclusion Coaches directly support ECEs in their implementation of Pyramid Model practices.

The program is implemented by Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development Intervention Services (NSECDIS) through 28 service locations. NSECDIS is a province-wide provincially funded program which provides specialized services and supports to families of young children from birth to school entry who are experiencing delays or difficulties in their development.

4. NSECDIS and Early Childhood Collaborative Research Centre. (2021, June). The pyramid model in Nova Scotia. MSVU. https://www.msvu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Pyramid-Model-Introduction-Infographic-Final-English.pdf

5. Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2018). Accountability Report 2017–2018. https://novascotia.ca/government/accountability/2017-2018/2017-2018-Department-of-Education-and-Early-Childhood-Developmen-Accountability-Report.pdf

Who is involved in the Pyramid Model implementation in Nova Scotia?

There are key persons and various roles involved in the Pyramid Model implementation. Collaboration and positive relationship building are key for the implementation's success.

Attribution

This unit is adapted from 2 resources:

The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI). (n.d.) Pyramid model overview. https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Pyramid/overview/index.html

NSECDIS and Early Childhood Collaborative Research Centre. (2021, June). *The pyramid model in Nova Scotia*. MSVU. https://www.msvu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Pyramid-Model-Introduction-Infographic-Final-English.pdf

CHAPTER 24.

CCCF CODE OF ETHICS

This Code of Ethics reflects our commitment to conduct ourselves in accordance with the ethical standards expected in our sector. It's our roadmap to making sure that early childhood educators, parents, and children across the nation can trust the work undertaken by the CCCF.

The Canadian Child Care Federation and its affiliate organizations recognize their responsibility to promote ethical practices and attitudes on the part of child care practitioners. The following principles, explanations and standards of practice are designed to help child care practitioners monitor their professional practice and guide their decision-making. These ethical principles are based on the Code of Ethics of the Early Childhood Educators of B.C. They have been adapted for use by adults who work with children and families in a variety of child care and related settings. They are intended both to guide practitioners and to protect the children and families with whom they work. Professionalism creates additional ethical obligations to colleagues and to the profession.

Child care practitioners work with one of society's most vulnerable groups – young children. The quality of the interactions between young children and the adults who care for them has a significant, enduring impact on children's lives. The intimacy of the relationship and the potential to do harm call for a commitment on the part of child care practitioners to the highest standards of ethical practice.

Principles of our Code of Ethics:

1. Childcare practitioners enable children to participate to their fullest potential in environments carefully planned to serve individual needs and to facilitate the child's progress in the social, emotional, physical and cognitive areas of development.

2. Childcare practitioners work in partnerships with parents, recognizing that parents have primary responsibility for the care of their children, valuing their commitment to the children and supporting them in meeting their responsibilities to their children.

3. Childcare practitioners promote the health and wellbeing of all children.

4. Childcare practitioners demonstrate caring for all children in all aspects of their practice.

5. Childcare practitioners work in partnership with colleagues and other service providers in the community to support the wellbeing of children and their families.

6. Childcare practitioners work in ways that enhance human dignity in trusting, caring and cooperative relationships, that respect the worth and uniqueness of the individual.

7. Childcare practitioners pursue, on an ongoing basis, the knowledge, skills and self-awareness needed to be professionally competent.

8. Childcare practitioners demonstrate integrity in all of their professional relationships.

Child care practitioners accept the ethical obligation to understand and work effectively with children in the context of family, culture and community. Child care practitioners care for and educate young

children. However, ethical practice extends beyond the child and practitioner relationship. Child care practitioners also support parents as primary caregivers of their children and liaise with other professionals and community resources on behalf of children and families.

Eight ethical principles of practice are presented. These principles are intended to guide child care practitioners in deciding what conduct is most appropriate when they encounter ethical problems in the course of their work. Each principle is followed by an explanation and a list of standards of practice that represent an application of the principle in a child care or related setting.

1. This code uses the term childcare practitioner to refer to adults who work in the field of child care including: early childhood educators; family child care providers; family resource program personnel; resource and referral program personnel; and instructors in early childhood care and education programs in post-secondary institutions.

2. This code uses the term "parent" to refer the parent or legal guardian or the adult who assumes the parental role in the care of the child.

Attribution

Canadian Child Care Federation. (n.d.). *Our code of ethics*. Retrieved April 4, 2022, from https://cccf-fcsge.ca/about-canadian-child-care-federation/values/code-ethics/

CHAPTER 25.

AECENS CODE OF ETHICS

GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR IN CHILD CARE PRACTICE

Association of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia (AECENS)

A code of ethics is our group beliefs about… "what is right rather than expedient… what is good rather than practical… and what acts a member must never engage in or condone"[1]

CHILDREN

To provide individualized and sensitive child care and accept professional responsibility for the children in ourcare

- To help each individual child learn:
    - To trust themselves and others
    - To trust in their abilities, and in those of others
    - To have respect for themselves and for others
    - To be honest with themselves and with others
    - To have self confidence
- To set up and maintain learning environments appropriate to the children's interests, needs, and abilities.
- To accept the right of children to ask questions about unknowns that exist and to also accept the responsibility to encourage and provide different views and opinions, free from bias.
- To regard as our primary obligation the welfare of young children and the quality of services to them.
- To protect and extend each child's sensory, physical, emotional, intellectual and social well being
- To familiarize oneself with laws and regulations regarding children, their care and child abuse, and to work to abide by them.
- To refrain from physical punishment, verbal abuse (ex. sarcasm, ridicule) and psychological abuse (ex. Threats, encouraging fear) of children in interactions with them
- To act responsibly when reporting abuse to the appropriate authorities
- To act promptly and decisively in situations where the well being of children is compromised,

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1. Katz, L. (1978). Ethical issues in working with young children (p.3). In L. Katz and E. Ward. Ethical Behavior in Early Childhood Education. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children

ensuring that the best interests of children supercede all other considerations.

PARENTS

- To maintain open communication with children's families.

- To respect different family values and beliefs

- To recognize the importance of the family and the professional working together as a team, in the best interests of the child.

- To recognize the practitioner's role as one which is supportive of the family and the child.

- To Cooperate with other persons, professionals, and organizations to promote programs that will enhance the quality of family life

- To share with parents, our knowledge and understanding of their children's learning and developmental progress

- To provide quality child care services to all families using the program.

- To recognize that a privileged relationship exists between oneself, the children placed in one's care, and their parents.

- To respect the rights of parents.

- To respect the confidential nature of information obtained about children and their families and to treat it in a responsible manner.

- To cooperate with professionals and organizations involved in a professional manner with the family.

COLLEAGUES

- To support a climate of trust and forthrightness in the work place that will ensure that colleagues are able to speak and act in the best interests of children without far of recrimination

- To communicate with integrity, support on another and adopt professional attitudes and behaviours in their work with children.

- To receive suggestions or criticisms that will improve job performance

- To exercise care in expressing views on the disposition and professional conduct of colleagues.

- To share our knowledge and to support the development of our colleagues

- To increase one's own professional competence and to be willing to review and assess one's own practices.

- To improve professionally by actively pursuing knowledge about developments in early childhood education

- To respect confidentiality of views expressed in private by colleagues.

- To exercise utmost discretion

- To support a climate of trust and forthrightness in the work place that will ensure that colleagues are able to speak and act in the best interests of children without fear of recrimination.

COMMUNITY

- To make information about services of the program openly and accurately available while maintaining essential safeguards for the privacy of individuals

- To advocate on a personal, professional and organizational level for appropriate early childhood services, resources and recognition

- To contribute to the extension of public information

- To model performance and attitudes

- To promote quality child care in our programs and practices

- To participate with colleagues and others in action to effect change consistent with the values, goals and objectives of our profession.

- To be knowledgeable about and practice licensing standards as outlined in the Nova Scotia Child Care Act and Regulations

- To be prepared to accept and abide by this code of ethics.

HOW TO USE THIS CODE OF ETHICS

Ask Yourself

Is this decision that has to be made related to building relationships, stimulation or protection?

Refer to

Depending on the answer, refer to the section of the code of ethics that relates to:

- Building relationships – With trusting, caring and cooperative relationships that respect the worth and uniqueness of the individual

- Stimulation – With stimulation that encourages growth in the whole person

- Protection – With healthy and safe environments

Ask Yourself

Who are the persons to consider in this decision?

Refer to

The statement under the related heading– Children, parents, colleagues, community

Proceed with the Ethical Decision–Making Process

Should a situation arise that would compromise our ethical code, we are committed to the following decision–making process:

1. Identify the actual issue or practice that is causing a problem.

2. Indicate which individuals and/or groups are to be considered in the solution of the dilemma. (Consider the code of ethics, legislation, personalities etc.)

3. Explain what considerations each person/group is owed and why, particularly in terms of rights and considerations. Indicate the values that relate to the issue/practice and persons/group.

4. Develop alternative courses of action. Choose reasonable alternatives that seem to meet the considerations in 1–3. Evaluate the consequences of taking each alternative– short/long term effects, psychological, social and economical.

5. Apply values and principles conscientiously.

6. Choose a course of action and act with a commitment to that action. Assume responsibility for the course of action.

7. After a period of time, evaluate the action and assume responsibility for the consequences of the action.

Attribution

Association of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia (ACENS). (n.d.). *AECENS Code of Ethics guidelines for responsible behaviour in child care practice.* https://aecens.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Code-of-ethics-AECENS.pdf

UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/preschoolers/?p=106

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an important agreement by countries who have promised to protect children's rights.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child explains who children are, all their rights, and the responsibilities of governments. All the rights are connected, they are all equally important and they cannot be taken away from children.

CRC Icons Poster

1. Definition of a child

A child is any person under the age of 18.

2. No discrimination

All children have all these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what they think, what they look like, if they are a boy or girl, if they have a disability, if they are rich or poor, and no matter who their parents or families are or what their parents or families believe or do. No child should be treated unfairly for any reason.

3. Best interests of the child

When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children. Governments should make sure children are protected and looked after by their parents, or by other people when this is needed. Governments should make sure that people and places responsible for looking after children are doing a good job.

4. Making rights real

Governments must do all they can to make sure that every child in their countries can enjoy all the rights in this Convention.

5. Family guidance as children develop

Governments should let families and communities guide their children so that, as they grow up, they learn to use their rights in the best way. The more children grow, the less guidance they will need.

6. Life survival and development

Every child has the right to be alive. Governments must make sure that children survive and develop in the best possible way.

7. Name and nationality

Children must be registered when they are born and given a name which is officially recognized by the government. Children must have a nationality (belong to a country). Whenever possible, children should know their parents and be looked after by them.

8. Identity

Children have the right to their own identity – an official record of who they are which includes their name, nationality and family relations. No one should take this away from them, but if this happens, governments must help children to quickly get their identity back.

9. Keeping families together

Children should not be separated from their parents unless they are not being properly looked after – for example, if a parent hurts or does not take care of a child. Children whose parents don't live together should stay in contact with both parents unless this might harm the child.

10. Contact with parents across countries

If a child lives in a different country than their parents, governments must let the child and parents travel so that they can stay in contact and be together.

11. Protection from kidnapping

Governments must stop children being taken out of the country when this is against the law – for example, being kidnapped by someone or held abroad by a parent when the other parent does not agree.

12. Respect for children's views

Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children seriously.

13. Sharing thoughts freely

Children have the right to share freely with others what they learn, think and feel, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms other people.

14. Freedom of thought and religion

Children can choose their own thoughts, opinions and religion, but this should not stop other people from enjoying their rights. Parents can guide children so that as they grow up, they learn to properly use this right.

15. Setting up or joining groups

Children can join or set up groups or organisations, and they can meet with others, as long as this does not harm other people.

16. Protection of privacy

Every child has the right to privacy. The law must protect children's privacy, family, home, communications and reputation (or good name) from any attack.

17. Access to information

Children have the right to get information from the Internet, radio, television, newspapers, books and other sources. Adults should make sure the information they are getting is not harmful. Governments should encourage the media to share information from lots of different sources, in languages that all children can understand.

18. Responsibility of parents

Parents are the main people responsible for bringing up a child. When the child does not have any parents, another adult will have this responsibility and they are called a "guardian". Parents and guardians should always consider what is best for that child. Governments should help them. Where a child has both parents, both of them should be responsible for bringing up the child.

19. Protection from violence

Governments must protect children from violence, abuse and being neglected by anyone who looks after them.

20. Children without families

Every child who cannot be looked after by their own family has the right to be looked after properly by people who respect the child's religion, culture, language and other aspects of their life.

21. Children who are adopted

When children are adopted, the most important thing is to do what is best for them. If a child cannot be properly looked after in their own country – for example by living with another family – then they might be adopted in another country.

22. Refugee children

Children who move from their home country to another country as refugees (because it was not safe for them to stay there) should get help and protection and have the same rights as children born in that country.

23. Children with disabilities

Every child with a disability should enjoy the best possible life in society. Governments should remove all obstacles for children with disabilities to become independent and to participate actively in the community.

24. Health, water, food, environment

Children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and

a clean and safe environment to live in. All adults and children should have information about how to stay safe and healthy.

25. Review of a child's placement

Every child who has been placed somewhere away from home – for their care, protection or health – should have their situation checked regularly to see if everything is going well and if this is still the best place for the child to be.

26. Social and economic help

Governments should provide money or other support to help children from poor families.

27. Food, clothing, a safe home

Children have the right to food, clothing and a safe place to live so they can develop in the best possible way. The government should help families and children who cannot afford this.

28. Access to education

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education should be free. Secondary and higher education should be available to every child. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible. Discipline in schools should respect children's rights and never use violence.

29. Aims of education

Children's education should help them fully develop their personalities, talents and abilities. It should teach them to understand their own rights, and to respect other people's rights, cultures and differences. It should help them to live peacefully and protect the environment.

30. Minority culture, language and religion

Children have the right to use their own language, culture and religion – even if these are not shared by most people in the country where they live.

31. Rest, play, culture, arts

Every child has the right to rest, relax, play and to take part in cultural and creative activities.

32. Protection from harmful work

Children have the right to be protected from doing work that is dangerous or bad for their education, health or development. If children work, they have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

33. Protection from harmful drugs

Governments must protect children from taking, making, carrying or selling harmful drugs.

34. Protection from sexual abuse

The government should protect children from sexual exploitation (being taken advantage of) and sexual abuse, including by people forcing children to have sex for money, or making sexual pictures or films of them.

35. Prevention of sale and trafficking

Governments must make sure that children are not kidnapped or sold, or taken to other countries or places to be exploited (taken advantage of).

36. Protection from exploitation

Children have the right to be protected from all other kinds of exploitation (being taken advantage of), even if these are not specifically mentioned in this Convention.

37. Children in detention

Children who are accused of breaking the law should not be killed, tortured, treated cruelly, put in prison forever, or put in prison with adults. Prison should always be the last choice and

only for the shortest possible time. Children in prison should have legal help and be able to stay in contact with their family.

38. Protection in war

Children have the right to be protected during war. No child under 15 can join the army or take part in war.

39. Recovery and reintegration

Children have the right to get help if they have been hurt, neglected, treated badly or affected by war, so they can get back their health and dignity.

40. Children who break the law

Children accused of breaking the law have the right to legal help and fair treatment. There should be lots of solutions to help these children become good members of their communities. Prison should only be the last choice.

41. Best law for children applies

If the laws of a country protect children's rights better than this Convention, then those laws should be used.

42. Everyone must know children's rights

Governments should actively tell children and adults about this Convention so that everyone knows about children's rights.

43 to 54. How the Convention works

These articles explain how governments, the United Nations – including the Committee on the Rights of Child and UNICEF – and other organisations work to make sure all children enjoy all their rights.

Attribution

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CHAPTER 27.

CIRCLE OF LEARNING

TEACHINGS FROM THE FOUR DIRECTIONS

The concept "Circle of Learning" is adopted as a framework for organizing learning experiences designed to promote traditional Wolastoqey/Mi'kmaq knowledge, worldviews, traditions, ceremonies, histories, and teachings. It is a concept that embraces holistic learning whereby the four aspects of personal development (social, emotional, physical and spiritual) are addressed. The concept also instills within individuals the desire to be engaged in life-long learning. In addition, the *Circle of Learning* promotes the principles of respect, sharing, harmony, balance, equality and interdependence. Finally, learning experiences and the teaching of cultural topics are highly integrated which is consistent with the belief that all of creation is connected and therefore interdependent.
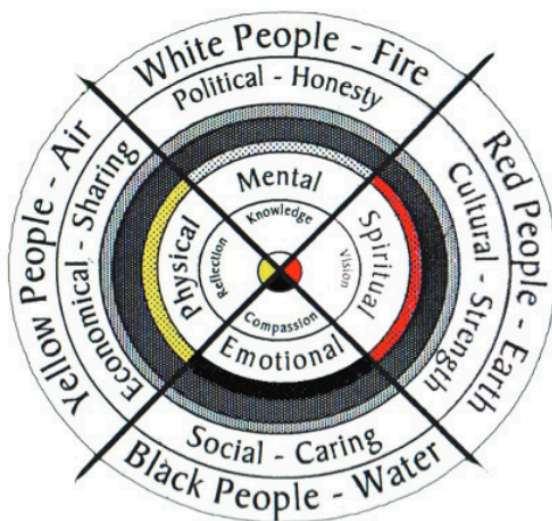
Circle of Learning Framework by Natalie Sappier

The primary purpose of the *Circle of Learning* framework is to help learners connect with all of creation. Learning experiences are designed to help students connect with the social, physical and spiritual realms. As they connect with the three realms, positive relationships are established and nurtured within the Circle. These relationships are based on the principles of respect and harmony. Learners embrace the principle of respect for all of Creation including their interactions with others in our social environments. This creates a web of harmonious relationships as the students continue their journey along the *Circle of Learning* paradigm.

The *Circle of Learning* establishes a safe and respectful learning environment that helps each student to develop a healthy self-concept and a positive self-esteem. This is accomplished by promoting ancestral languages, worldviews, traditions, and teachings. Traditional Wolastoqey and Mi'kmaq knowledge systems are recognized and promoted within the classrooms.

All learning experiences derive from ancestral worldviews, traditions, values and teachings. Within this framework, it is recognized that Wolastoqey and Mi'kmaq languages reflect the worldviews and value systems of each community. The ultimate aim is to establish a strong cultural foundation within each individual learner.

Learning experiences emanating from the *Circle of Learning* instills within individuals a sense of pride, self-worth, self-esteem, and belonging. Learners are culturally grounded and this leads to enhanced academic performance. Through Wolastoqey and Mi'kmaq cultures, students acquire academic skills in all subject areas. Wolastoqey and Mi'kmaq cultures provide the foundation for learning experiences designed to assist students acquire the skills targeted in all subject areas of the public school curriculum. Thus, it is important to incorporate Wolastoqey and Mi'kmaq perspectives, knowledge systems, worldviews, and traditions into the provincial curriculum at all levels of the education system. The *Circle of Learning* ensures that Wolastoqey and Mi'kmaq content are indeed incorporated into the public school system.

The *Circle of Learning* is a culturally-based educational framework. It is based on both Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqey knowledge systems, languages, cultures, worldviews, traditions and teachings. It is a framework that benefits all students of the public school system. It helps Wolastoqey and Mi'kmaq students to be culturally grounded while at the same time it helps non-Native students to be well informed about Wolastoqey and Mi'kmaq cultures, languages, histories, traditions, and conditions. It establishes a learning environment based on mutual respect, understanding, and appreciation among students. Our Elder scholars agree that the *Circle of Learning* will enhance the provincial education system.

SACRED FIRE AND SACRED PIPE

Long ago, Koluskap held a council with the Wabanakis. He asked everyone to sit in a circle so that he may share his teachings. Koluskap began the council by lighting a Sacred Fire and smoking his Sacred Pipe.

Koluskap began his teachings:

> "Brothers and sisters, I always begin my Sacred Council Teachings by lighting a Sacred Fire and smoking a Sacred Pipe. Our Sacred Fire invites ancestors to the gathering so they can guide us in our journey of life. Like our Grandfather Sun, the Sacred Fire provides us with warmth, affection, kindness and generosity. The Sacred Fire warms our hearts so that we may feel compassion and love for others and for all of Creation. The Sacred Fire ignites truth, honesty, and wisdom within us and removes feelings of anger, resentment, and hatred from our councils and gatherings. Offerings are made to the Sacred Fire to give gratitude for each day of our Earth Walk.
>
> Brothers and sisters, I smoke my Sacred Pipe to honor all of Creation. I smoke my Sacred Pipe to honor everyone within the circle and to remind everyone that we should always speak with truth and honesty. The Sacred Pipe will give us an open mind and a good heart. Your words will come from a compassionate and caring heart. The words that we use in council will be respectful and our discussions will lead to unity and harmony. The Sacred Pipe reminds us that we are one with all of Creation. Let us carry these teachings as long as the sun shines, the grass grow, the trees stand, and rivers flow.
>
> My brothers and sisters of Wolastoqey and Mi'kmaq nations, thank you for listening. Remember these teachings and pass them on to your children and grandchildren. Instruct them to pass on these teachings to their children and grandchildren as well. These teachings will remain with you forever. I must leave for now but I will be back to share more teachings with you. We will have another council when I return from the Sacred Lodge. All My Relations!"

Once again, Koluskap ended the council by asking everyone in the circle to offer red willow tobacco to the Sacred Fire. He reminded the people that the offering was made to give thanks for Koluskap's teachings. By now, all Wabanakis knew that the smoke from the Sacred Fire sends a message to our Creator that the teachings will always guide their actions.

Psiw Ntulnapemok
(All My Relations)
Dave Perley and Imelda Perley

EASTERN TEACHINGS

Eastern teachings come during the spring or child stage of life. The lesson of the child is to bridge the recent spiritual dimension with the new physical dimension. This is time to give thanks for all of Creation, for the four elements (water, air, fire and earth).

SOUTHERN TEACHINGS

Southern teachings come during the summer or youth stage of life. The lesson of youth is to find balance and calm in the midst of change. Southern teachings also centre on the heart through kindness and compassion for others and all of Creation.

WESTERN TEACHINGS

Western teachings come during the autumn or adult stage of life. The gifts of maturity and self-

reflection are nurtured during this time. The gift of maturity allows one to strive for balance in mind, body, and spirit.

NORTHERN TEACHINGS

Northern teachings come during the winter or Elder stage of life. The knowledge gained through a lifetime of experience form a body of wisdom to be shared with those in earlier stages of life. We honor our Elders because of their wisdom and deep understanding of ceremonies and teachings from the four winds.

Attribution

CHAPTER 28.

KINDEZI MODEL

KINDEZI: A DISTINCTIVELY AFRICENTRIC PERSPECTIVE ON CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

by Francis Y. Lowden / March 2000. [1]

Dr. Frances Y. Lowden is an Associate Professor in the Education Department at Medgar Evers College/City University of New York. Her specialty areas are: Early Childhood Education, Early Literacy, Multicultural Education, Africentric Education, Urban Education, Teacher Education and Parent Education.

The impetus for this paper is to contribute to and advance the research on viable global approaches to culturally and developmentally appropriate early childhood education. According to Bredekamp[2] in Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth to Age 8, "The concept of developmentally appropriateness has two dimensions: age appropriateness and individual appropriateness. Although the content of the curriculum is determined by many factors such as tradition, …social or cultural values, and parent desires, for the content and teaching strategies to be developmentally appropriate they must be age appropriate and individually appropriate".

According to their social and cultural values, each child in each cultural context must be valued on the basis of where they come from, where they hope to go, and the process by which they reach their destination. In order to accommodate these diverse cultural challenges, we as educators must take our own personal journeys to uncover who we are, where we are, and how we arrived here. Then we need to do our homework and prepare ourselves for the greatest challenge of the century which is to genuinely educate all children. One way to accomplish this is to examine, conceptualize and employ the philosophy of Kindezi.

Kindezian philosophy expresses the sentiment of many African peoples including the Bantu people of Kongo, Africa, and rests on the idea that children are highly valued; they are a 'gift of God'. Bantu means human beings, cultured people, or beings who embody values associated with good behavior and civility. [3]

According to Bunseki Fu-Fiau and Lukondo-Wambo [4] Kindezi,….is basically the art of touching, caring for, and protecting the child's life and the environment in which the child's multidimensional

1. Article reproduced from: Lowden, F. Y. (2000). *Kindezi: A distinctively Africentric perspective on childhood education*. In ERIC. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED445791

2. Bredekamp, S. (ed.) (1987). Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth Through Age 8. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

3. Gethaiga, W. 1998. Language, Culture and Human Factor Development. In The Human Factor Approach to Development in Africa.Chivaura, V.G. & Mararike, C.G. (eds.) Zimbabwe: University of Zimbabwe.

4. Fu-Kiau, K.K.B. & Lukondo-Wamba, A.M. (1996). Kindezi: The Kongo Art of Babysitting. New York, New York: Vantage Press, Inc

development takes place. The word "Kindezi", a kikongo language term means to enjoy taking and giving special care. Baby-sitting is an experience required of all members in the African world, no matter what their physical state may be. Understanding the process of child development is one of the basic and most important principles in the understanding of the value and respect of life.[5]

Kindezi, as a philosophy, affords children the possibility to develop and grow into their full potential; to fulfill their God-given destiny. In a Kindezian model, children learn through modeling, intentionality, and nurturing. Children's knowing, cosmologically, is derived from being at one with their world view.

Children are valued thus they value. Within a Kindezian framework, reality and spirituality are, metaphysically, one and the same. There are no separations between body and soul, science and nature, the sacred and the academic. The communal art of Kindezi dissolves artificial "ism" boundaries, engaging children in life and learning at optimal levels.

One of the main tenets of the philosophy is the responsibility of the community to see that children are raised appropriately, thus, it is expected that as they grow into adulthood they will provide for the older members of the community.

The basic understanding that childhood is the foundation which determines the quality of a society is the main reason that prompted African communities to make Kindezi an art….to be learned by all their members. Thus, Kindezi is required in societies that want to prepare their members to become not only good fathers and mothers, but, above all, people who care about life and who understand, both humanely and spiritually, the highly unshakable value of the human being that we all are.[6]

Children perpetuate the family; elders transmit the culture and abandonment of one or the other is anathema to the collective ideology. Families are the center of the universe, and mothers who generally are the center of the family, play a major role in developing, nurturing, and enabling young children. The reality of physically liberating women is paramount in understanding the role Kindezi plays in Bantu societies in Africa.

When one practices the art of Kindezi one is an ndezi. Though the young ndezi and the old ndezi are separated from the productive workforce, their responsibilities and contributions to the community are interwoven into the cultural fabric of the society as in the weaving of fine kinte cloth. By providing for the young,- the ndezi afford the women the opportunity to meet many challenges: to work the fields, to serve in the military and, with the men, to assure the security of the family and the community. Ndezi are the moral and spiritual weavers who provide the youngest children role models for cultural transmission and replication. The community is governed by all and elders are valued, respected, and honored. Politically, socially, and economically Kindezi provides society with a glimpse of communal living whose attributes benefit all.

THE CURRICULUM

Kindezian curriculum pervades the continent of Africa and predates Western attempts at curriculum development, including the highly touted Reggio Emilia system of education in northern Italy, and Froebel's German children's garden (kindergarten) by hundreds of years. The rationale for theories and practices attributed to major 18th, 19th and 20th century shapers of child development such as Pestalozzi, Montessori, Locke, Rousseau, Dewey, Piaget and Vygotsky is derived directly from ancient Africa where education was and is wholistic, practical, concrete, natural, experiential, social, inquiry-

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

based, authentic, and spiritual. Though no credit has been given to Africa as the birthplace of the rudiments of present day early childhood education, the freedom to move and to learn, to engage and to express in naturalistic, child-centered, and mentor facilitated environments, reflected in European and African philosophies, evolved from childrearing affirming patterns of life modeled by Kindezi.

Editors Carolyn Edwards, Lelia Gandini and George Forman, with reference to Reggio Emilio, in The Hundred Languages of Children [7] propound, "Nowhere in the world is there such a seamless and symbiotic relationship between a school's progressive philosophy and its practices". [8] Perhaps this is true if "school" is construed as centers and school areas rather than the Kindezian sadulu (practical place of learning) which encompasses the world of the child, unconstrained by physical walls. And though the editors discuss what they call "schoolhouses without walls" that have allowed them to observe various educational practices globally, there is no mention of the accomplishments of the vast continent of Africa. But in order to get a proper feel for developmental practice one must investigate it within the continent of Africa, the source of traditions of child rearing that date to antiquity.

The sadulu, (practical place of learning), provides practical and oral teaching for children two years of age and older where field trips, nature walks, and biological experiments encourage and expand language development. Children make handicrafts, run, play healer/doctor and more. They learn the nuances and social and cultural codes of their community, such as the signals parents/ndezi give them both verbally and nonverbally. The ndezi tells stories and sings songs of substance that encourage sharing and a sense of community, political responsibilities, and praise of the women of the community. Moral teaching places a high value on togetherness, the spiritual nature of life and respect for wellness and is directly transmitted to the child by the old ndezi.

Play is an important part of a child's life. A common saying in the West is that play is the work of children. This is also the belief of the Bambara in Mali. Children's play is extremely important among the Bambara. During the early childhood period, the kinds of games and toys available to children are supportive of their cognitive and socioemotional development. In Zambia, the games that children engage in include hide-and-seek, ball games and singing and dancing. Many traditional games, tales, and riddles which necessitate recalling, memorizing, sequencing and logical thinking promote and develop cognitive development and intellectual capacity. [9]

In ancient Africa (other than in Egypt), a primary difference in curriculum components was the value of oral literacy versus the elevation of written literacy in other parts of the world. In more recent years, when proven necessary this has been easily redressed through inclusion of print and print related skills and masteries into the existing curriculum. Dewey's learning by doing-project approach, Skinner's direct transmission of information-behavior modification approach, Piaget's prepared environment- constructivist approach and Vygotsky's zone of
proximal development-social contextual approach find their impetus on the continent of Africa where in ancient Kemet (Egypt) all major disciplines were developed. This ancient civilization viewed education as the structuring of an environment to educe (bring out) the higher potential of that person through experimentation.. In naturalistic environments, children were led from simple to complex

7. Edwards, C., Gandini, L. & Forman, G. (1998). The Hundred Languages of Children, The Reggio Emilia Approach-Advanced Reflections. Connecticut: Greenwich: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

8. Ibid.

9. Dembele, U. & Poulton, M, (1993). Research Work on Early childhood Attitudes, Practices and Beliefs in Kolondeba, Southern Mali. Paper presented at the Workshop on Childrearing Practices and Beliefs. Windhoek, Namibia. 26-29 October 1993.

concepts where nature was complemented with nurture and were led through culturally based higher order thinking processes e.g. how to categorize and classify, prepare, and use flora, fauna, and herbs for medicinal and other purposes and how to trace the path and pattern of the stars to indicate natural phenomenon.

Many aspects of early literacy learning in the West can be compared to language development in Africa. These can be subsumed in three superordinate categories as cited by Metsala [10]: "literacy as a source of entertainment-storytelling" e.g. ndezi use storytelling as a prominent means of transmitting cultural mores, "literacy as a set of skills to be deliberately cultivated-singing" e.g ndezi model skills of cultural survival, and "literacy as an integral part of everyday life-mealtime conversation" e.g. ndezi support the young child's development consistently through the oral tradition [11].

In many African countries and in the United States, "language development is promoted through the use of language with children. Adults talk to children from the moment they are born. As the child grows older (ages 3- 6), there is a conscious teaching of language skills through story telling, proverb-telling, questioning and songs".

In discussing learning domains in curriculum one must naturally include the affective domain. Current research in this area by Daniel Goleman in Emotional Intelligence [12] summarized seven key emotional intelligences needed by children as:

1. Confidence. A sense of control and master of one's body, behavior, and world….

2. Curiosity. The sense that finding out about things is positive and leads to pleasure.

3. Intentionality. The wish and capacity to have an impact, and to act upon that with persistence….

4. Self-control. The ability to modulate and control one's own actions in age-appropriate ways….

5. Relatedness. The ability to engage with others based on the sense of being understood by and understanding others.

6. Capacity to communicate. The wish and ability to verbally exchange ideas, feelings, and concepts with others. This is related to a sense of trust in others and of pleasure in engaging with others, including adults.

7. Cooperativeness. The ability to balance one's own needs with those of others in group activity.

A child who cannot focus his attention, who is suspicious rather than trusting, who is angry rather than optimistic destructive rather than respectful and one who is overcome with anxiety, preoccupied with frightening fantasy and who feels generally unhappy about himself, such a child has little opportunity at all, let alone equal opportunity, to claim the possibilities of the world as his own".[13]

Kindezian philosophy has always provided children with the seven key emotional intelligences

10. Metsala, J. L. ed. (1996) Early Literacy at home: Children's experiences and parents' perspectives. The Reading Teacher,Vol. 50, No 1, September.

11. Ibid.

12. Edwards, C., Gandini, L. & Forman, G. (1998). The Hundred Languages of Children, The Reggio Emilia Approach-Advanced Reflections. Connecticut: Greenwich: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

13. Ibid.

Goleman states are needed for this crucial capacity. Its' matrilineal-reciprocal respect for gender expresses the concept of collective and cooperative learning at its highest level. Sociologically, politically, and economically children are inculcated into the means of knowing and being that purposefully challenges them to be thoroughly humane while building on and respecting their heritage. Everything and everyone are parts of a viable, productive whole and thus valued an such.

This brief overview of the Kindezian philosophy of early childhood education represents an historical developmentally appropriate Afrocentric worldview that provides a framework and a forum on which to globally begin to respond to the 21st century education of African children and the descendants of the African disapor.

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VERSIONING HISTORY

Resources used to create Preschool Methods
Child Growth and Development Canadian Ed by Tanya Pye; Susan Scoffin; Janice Quade; and Jane Krieg published by eCampus Ontario sha[...] BY-NC-SA license.
Fundamentals of Early Childhood Education in Nova Scotia by Mathew Sampson and Moashella Shortte. NSCC. CC BY
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Province of Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2018). *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's [...] Curriculum Framework*. Crown Copyright.
Opening Eyes by Susan Carter; Professor Lindy-Anne Abawi; Professor Jill Lawrence; Associate Professor Charlotte Brownlow; Renee Des[...] Fanshawe; Kathryn Gilbey; Michelle Turner; and Jillian Guy . CC BY-NC

NSCC Version	Resource Used
Planning	
1	Intro to Planning from Introduction to Curriculum for Early Childhood Education & A Vision for Children's Lea *Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework*
2	NS's Families, Communities, and Cultures in *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculu*
3	Principles in Early Learning in *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework.*
4	Practice of Early Learning in *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework.*
Development	
5	Chapter 5 from Observation and Assessment in Early Childhood Education
6	Unit 9 from Child Growth and Development Canadian Ed
7	Unit 10 from Child Growth and Development Canadian Ed
8	Unit 11 from Child Growth and Development Canadian Ed
9	Unit 12 from Child Growth and Development Canadian Ed
10	Unit 13 from Child Growth and Development Canadian Ed
11	Developmental Milestones (Appendix c) from Introduction to Curriculum for Early Childhood Education
Curriculum	
12	Chapter 4 from Opening Eyes
13	Unit 4.1 from Introduction to Curriculum for Early Childhood Education
14	The Diversity of Beliefs about and Practices of Play from Play response teaching in Early Childhood
15	The Freedom of Play and Open-Endedness from Play response teaching in Early Childhood
16	The Lion and the Mouse: How and Why Teachers Succeed in Becoming Participants from Children's Ongoing Pla teaching in Early Childhood
17	Goldilocks and Her Motorcycle: Establishing Narrative Frames from Play response teaching in Early Childhood
18	What is Scaffolding from Very Well Family
19	Unit #9 NS ELCF Curriculum goals from Fundamentals of Early Childhood Education in Nova Scotia
Learning Supports	
20	Unit #11 from Fundamentals of Early Childhood Education in Nova Scotia
21	Unit #7 from Fundamentals of Early Childhood Education in Nova Scotia
22	Unit #8 from Fundamentals of Early Childhood Education in Nova Scotia
23	Unit #10 from Fundamentals of Early Childhood Education in Nova Scotia
24	Unit #13 Circle of Learning from Fundamentals of Early Childhood Education in Nova Scotia
25	Unit #14 from Fundamentals of Early Childhood Education in Nova Scotia