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Ministry of
Gender Equality
and Child
Welfare

2013

Curriculum Framework

for Children in Namibia
Aged 3 and 4 Years



"HAVE FUN!
Play is learning!"



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Cover photo: Children at the Oponganda ECD Centre, Katutura, Windhoek.

Curriculum Framework for Children in Namibia Aged 3 and 4 Years



**Directorate of Community and
Early Childhood Development**

MINISTRY OF GENDER EQUALITY AND CHILD WELFARE

Windhoek
Namibia
2013

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Message from the Minister



The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare intends this Curriculum Framework to be read and used by all those providing care and education to children aged 3 and 4 in Namibia. We must not lose the window of opportunity that the early years of a child's life provide. Children cannot wait until tomorrow. We as parents and adults, educators and policymakers, need to act now to ensure bright prospects for our children and our country.

Research has revealed the economic and social benefits that accrue from a focus on early childhood development (ECD) interventions. Children who participate in a quality ECD programme stay in school longer (i.e. reduced dropout rates), perform better in school (i.e. reduced repetition rates), have less delinquency, and later have higher earnings. These are significant impacts.

I would like to call on Educators to maintain a professional approach to their work, keeping in mind the best interests of the children. Work together with the parents and the community to provide a safe and stimulating environment for the children in accordance with the Namibian Standards for ECD Centres. Plan together with your colleagues to implement the different aspects of this Curriculum Framework.

I call upon the community leaders and the private sector to engage with their local ECD Centres and be ready to support them where possible. I call upon our ministry officials to familiarise themselves with this document and to advise the ECD service providers accordingly.

Finally, I call upon our mothers and fathers to act as role models for their young children, and to be the first educators of their children. Read to the children, play with them, comfort them and guide them.

Hon. Rosalia Nghidinwa, MP

Minister of Gender Equality and Child Welfare



*"Children need the freedom and time to play.
Play is not a luxury. Play is a necessity."*

Kay Renfield Jamison

Introduction to this Curriculum Framework

A curriculum framework includes the principles underpinning work with young children, the aims for those children and the main areas of early childhood development. This Curriculum Framework has been designed for use in Namibia. It provides guidance on how and where children learn, what they learn, and who supports them as they grow and develop.

WORDS



Early childhood means the years before children start formal school. This is when children develop more rapidly than at any other time in their lives.

Children aged 3 and 4 grow and develop very rapidly. They have already learnt a lot from their families and any crèche or childcare facility which they have attended. Since parents are their first teachers, the Educarer using this Curriculum Framework will build on this knowledge and experience by providing a safe, loving and stimulating place for children to learn through play, routines and organised activities.

WORDS



Free play is when the child chooses what she wants to do and plays in a way that she chooses.



Aims

It is widely accepted that what is experienced in the early years has a great influence on how individuals learn to think and behave. This is also the time when children find out more about themselves, their surroundings and other children and adults as they are exploring and satisfying their sense of curiosity. We want children in Namibia to be self-motivated and confident, and to grow up respecting themselves and others and appreciating differences.

The aim of this Curriculum Framework is to respond to the needs, rights and interests of the children of Namibia aged 3 and 4. This Curriculum Framework establishes guidelines for Educators to help develop healthy, well-balanced children who are able to communicate, explore and investigate their world.

Children in Namibia say:

*We are young children
living in Namibia.*

*We are curious and
want to explore our
world. Let us play and
be active as we learn.*

*We want to communicate
with others. Help us to speak
or sign with confidence,
and to listen and observe
with interest and respect.*

*We belong in
families and
communities.
Help us to become
citizens who care
about others and
the environment.*

*We are
individuals.
Love us so we
can love others
and appreciate
that everyone
is valuable
and unique.*

*We want to be safe
and healthy. Protect us
and guide us in making
good choices in life.*

*We deserve to be happy.
Help us feel good about
ourselves and have
fun as we play.*

*We want to learn how to
solve problems. Help us
to find out more about
the world around us.*



Principles

The principles that underpin the thinking behind the development of the curriculum, and which should inform what takes place in the ECD Centre, and which guide the Educarer are as follows.

The rights of children

All children have rights and it is the duty of adults to protect, uphold and implement these rights. The rights of young children in Namibia are established in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Namibian Constitution. All these rights must be protected. (The rights relevant to children aged 3 and 4 are listed in Appendix A.)

Holistic and child-centered development

Children develop in a holistic way, with equal value given to their social, emotional, intellectual, creative and physical development. Every child is unique, and each child's abilities, characteristics and heritage must be acknowledged, accepted and respected. The observation, recording and assessment of young children ensure that all areas of their development are supported, and that any growth or learning delays are identified early.

Centrality of play for learning

Children learn from everything around them. They learn best when they are relaxed and having fun playing. They develop at their own pace and in their own way, and they benefit from being supported by caring adults who help them to explore their surroundings and make connections between what they know and what they discover.

Positive and secure relationships

Children are members of families and communities, and they benefit from responsive relationships with all adults. Children play an important role in their families, and their contributions and value must be appreciated. Parents are the first educators and the main carers of young children, and ECD Centre staff work together with parents to ensure that children feel safe and loved at all times.

Health and wellbeing

Children need adequate nutrition, health care and protection from neglect and abuse in order to reach their full potential. It is the role of the family, childcare workers and the government to ensure that all these are provided.

Safe and caring environment

Children deserve to live, play and learn in safe spaces where adults support, protect and love them, and where they are not abused, humiliated, neglected or exposed to any danger. Children who are orphaned or vulnerable may require special attention, so their individual needs and circumstances must be assessed and addressed.

What is covered in this Curriculum Framework





PART A

In Part A, the areas of development for children aged 3 and 4 are outlined. What children can do in a supportive environment is highlighted. The framework is *not prescriptive*; it is meant as a *guide* to help Educarers plan activities to promote development in these key areas:

Identity and Belonging	Physical Development and Wellbeing	Communication	Creativity and Exploration
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Children of this age develop *holistically*, therefore learning cannot be divided neatly into subjects. Rather, learning is an *integration of skills, knowledge and attitudes*. Children learn and develop very widely and at different rates. The areas covered and the competencies provided in Part A are among the most obvious and most important areas of a child's development.

This time in the life of a child is important in itself. It is not only a time of preparation for pre-school and then formal education. It is also a time for children –

- to play and have fun;
- to discover the joy of learning about themselves and the world in which they live; and
- to learn how to get on with others, to respect differences, and to be proudly rooted in the country in which they live.

PART B

Part B provides ideas and guidance on the areas shown on the right.

Children learn best through play and actively exploring and investigating. They thrive in an environment that is designed to cater for their needs and interests. The time they spend in an ECD Centre is important.

Therefore:

- the space must be attractive and inviting;
- the adults there should be caring and interested in children; and
- the equipment and toys should be developmentally appropriate.

A Child-Centred Approach
The Importance of Play
The Role of the Educarer
Managing Behaviour
A Positive Learning Environment
A Developmentally Appropriate Programme
Safe and Stimulating Resources
Observation, Recording, Assessment and Support
Links with Family and Community
Transitions

Children must be free to play in a space that is safe and protects them from harm.

Children learn values and attitudes from the adults around them. The Educarer has an important role to play as she models respect for and interest in all the children.

The Educarer must develop good relationships with families and make links with the local community. Children have experiences at home, in families and in the wider community. They gain knowledge from those experiences, and they bring that knowledge with them to the ECD Centre. This learning must be valued and appreciated.

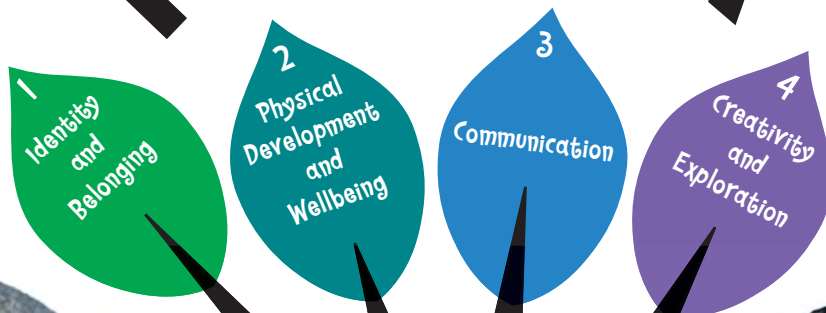
Many children in Namibia do not live with their parents. Many children come from homes where there may not be enough food or resources. Children may experience violence, neglect or hunger. It is important that the Educarer is aware of each child's situation, and that she takes special action to address any negative circumstances.

PLEASE NOTE:

- **"Parents"** refers to the main caregivers of the young child.
- **"Families"** refers to the group of people who live together with the child and care for one another.
- **"She"** or **"he"** are used rather than **"he/she"**. Everything written about children refers to *both boys and girls*: **"He"** means *boys and girls*, and **"she"** means *girls and boys*.
- **"Children"** refers to *all* children, whatever their abilities, economic situation, gender, religion, language or culture.
- **"Educarer"** refers to adults working with children in ECD Centres.



PART A



The following development areas are considered in this part of the Framework:

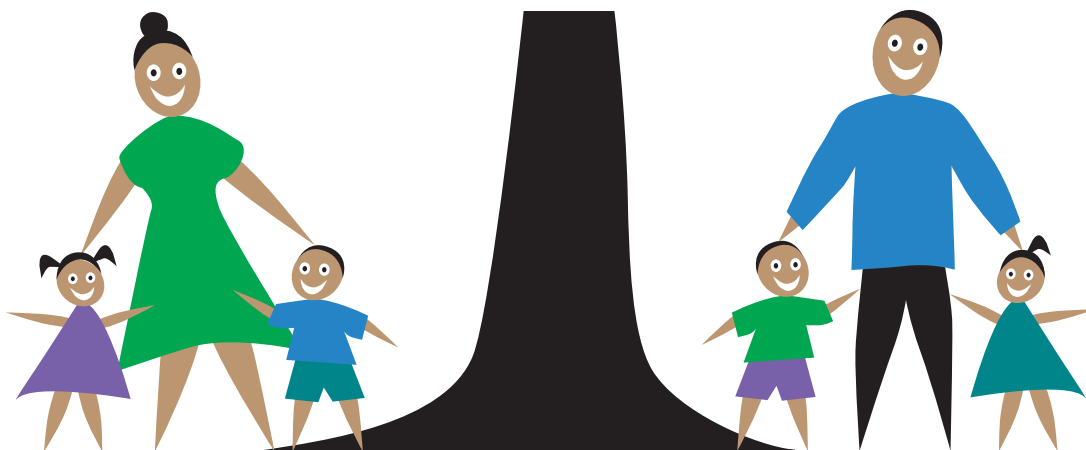
Identity and Belonging
Physical Development and Wellbeing
Communication
Creativity and Exploration



In each section there is a short explanation, followed by a table showing some of the key competencies that children aged 3 and 4 acquire, and ideas for how adults can support them in each of these areas.

A link is made between the curriculum for 3-and-4-year-old children and the pre-primary syllabus for 5-year-olds.

An example of an activity is given, along with ideas for how to extend the activity. Also, suggestions are made for appropriate assessment during the activity. More information on Assessment can be found in Part B, Section 6.



Section 1

Identity and Belonging

1.1 Overview

Identity and belonging is about children becoming self-confident as they recognise and value their feelings, interests and abilities. They discover who they are and what they can do as they relate to other people in different settings such as homes, neighbourhoods and ECD Centres. They learn that each person is unique, and that it is important to respect people so as to live together in harmony.

We want to:

- *be loved;*
- *be glad that we are unique;*
- *become more independent and do more things for ourselves;*
- *learn to recognise our feelings;*
- *learn ways to manage our behaviour;*
- *play together happily and fairly with others;*
- *respect people of all social and ethnic backgrounds;*
- *appreciate the good in our culture and country;*
- *help at home and at our centre; and*
- *care for the environment.*



1.2 Link to Namibia's pre-primary syllabus


This section on Identity and Belonging links to the following subjects in Namibia's pre-primary syllabus:

- Emotional Development
- Religious and Moral Education
- Environmental Learning

1.3 Key competencies



WHAT A CHILD CAN DO	WHAT AN ADULT CAN DO TO HELP
IDENTITY	
Knows own name, age, gender and home language.	Address each child by name.
	Greet children in their home language. Make up a song using greetings from all the languages spoken by children in the group.
	Play games where the children hold up the correct number of fingers to show their age, or ask children of the same age or gender to stand together.
	Provide paper and drawing materials for the children to draw pictures of themselves. Write the name of the child in the top left-hand corner of the paper. Use the same lettering for all the children, beginning each name with a capital letter followed by small letters.
Describes self.	Provide crayons in a range of colours for the children to draw themselves.
	Sing action songs naming parts of the body, e.g. "Head and Shoulders".
Notices and talks about differences between self and others.	Provide dress-up or pretend-play materials from more than one cultural background.
	Display pictures of dress, food, people, homes (examples of both rural and urban homes) etc. from different surroundings and more than one cultural background. Talk positively about these.
	If more than one language is spoken in the group, teach the whole group how to greet and how to say "please" and "thank you" in each language.
	When a child asks a question about a difference between herself and someone else, give her as much information as she can understand. For example, if a child asks why another child is wearing glasses, explain that the glasses are precious and help her to see because her eyes don't work in the same way as some other children's eyes.

Recognises and names own feelings.	Tell or read stories and talk about the feelings of the characters, e.g. <i>"This person seems sad"</i> or <i>"This made the little boy happy."</i>
	Name your own feelings, e.g. <i>"I feel happy when I hear you singing"</i> or <i>"I feel sad when I see you have hurt yourself."</i>
	Identify and name feelings in the child, e.g. <i>"I can see you are upset because you fell down,"</i> or <i>"I can see you are happy because we are going to read a story."</i> Encourage children to name their own feelings.
	Use puppets to act out feelings. Encourage the children to use puppets to name feelings. This means that they do not have to say what <i>they</i> are feeling; they can pretend that the puppet has the feeling. When you show that it is okay for the puppet to feel that way, the child will learn that all feelings can be named and are understood.
Starts to find ways to calm self if upset.	Listen carefully and respond gently to a child who is upset. Remind the children that you are always willing to listen to them.
	If a child is upset, talk to him and then suggest ways of coping, such as going to sit in the quiet area, having a drink of water or finding another activity.
	Praise a child who calms down by herself or comforts another child who is upset.
Develops confidence in own abilities.	Encourage the children to find their own ways of taking part in the activities at the ECD Centre.
	Model ways of doing things and provide opportunities for the children to practise new skills.
	Ask the children to share their feelings when they complete an activity, e.g. <i>"How did this make you feel?"</i> or <i>"What do you think they are feeling?"</i> or <i>"What do you think they are thinking about?"</i>
	Show your delight when a child tries a new activity or learns how to do something. Rather than saying just <i>"Good job"</i> , say, <i>"I am so proud that you were able to paint a face of a lion."</i> In other words, while praising the child, also acknowledge the work accomplished.
	Adapt activities so that children with disabilities or difficulties can take part easily. Always differentiate activities according to the abilities of the children in the ECD Centre.
<div> <div>WORDS</div> <div></div> </div> <div>Adapting: In the ECD Centre, this means making changes to an activity, equipment or the environment to meet the needs of the children.</div>	

Develops own interests.	Provide opportunities for the children to make choices, e.g. “ <i>Would you like to paint a picture or build with the blocks?</i> ”
	If a child shows a special interest in something, e.g. animals, then find a book on the topic to look at together.
	“Show and Tell”: Invite the children to bring something for the Interest/Discovery/Nature Table, and ask each child to tell you what to write on the label.
BELONGING	
Begins to see self as part of a group (e.g. my family, my ECD centre, our town).	Ask the children about what happened at home, and talk about what they share with you.
	Provide materials for the children to draw pictures of their families. Ask each child for the names of the family members and write these under each figure pictured.
	Display the name of the ECD Centre where the children can see it.
	Sing songs with the children about belonging to the ECD Centre.
	Use a Helpful Hands Chart (see page 54) so that the children know when they can help with routine tasks such as getting the snacks ready, putting out the cups for drinking water, helping to mix paint or tidying the book area.
Is able to separate from family and is happy to come to the ECD Centre.	Use the appropriate home language to greet and welcome each child to the ECD Centre each day.
	Prepare the ECD Centre before the children arrive.
	Change activities or materials regularly, e.g. weekly, so that there is always something new to interest the children.
Sometimes plays together with other children.	Suggest games or activities where two or three children play together.
	Ask a small group of children to work together to help you do something, e.g. mixing paint, putting out the puzzles or pouring water at snack time.
	Tell or read stories in which the characters share, take turns and co-operate.
	Be sensitive with a child who may have a learning difficulty or an emotional difficulty, and find ways to include her in activities.
	Organise times when the children do things together, e.g. circle time or story time.
	Encourage the children to play together rather than compete with each other. Help them to appreciate their own abilities and the abilities of other children.

Starts to find ways of behaving that are acceptable to others.	Help children to tell the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Set clear limits and stick to these in a gentle but firm way.
	Be a role model of good behaviour and demonstrate ways of dealing with unacceptable behaviour, e.g. talk gently to all children involved, and never shout at, pinch, hit or in any way hurt a child who has done something unacceptable.
	Notice and appreciate when a child shows care and love for others.
	Have toys available (dolls or stuffed animals) that the children can pretend to care for.
	Notice if children are having difficulty sharing or playing together, and suggest ways of working things out, e.g. taking turns or getting more materials.
	Discuss upsets when they are over and the children have calmed down. Suggest ways of avoiding these upsets in future, e.g. taking turns, joining another group or requesting time to share.
Knows what to do at routine times (e.g. toilet or snack time).	Ensure that the sanitation facilities (toilets and place for handwashing) are accessible and clean.
	Display a “Daily Programme” with pictures showing the routine activities (see page 50).
	Sing songs that remind the children of how to behave, e.g. <i>“This is the way we wash our hands ...”</i>
Begins to show an interest in keeping the neighbourhood pleasant.	Take the children on a neighbourhood walk and point out things that are interesting or attractive.
	Encourage the children not to litter. Make sure that all of them know where to throw things away while at the ECD Centre.
	Ask the children to help you tidy up the ECD Centre at the end of the day. Sing a song about “tidy-up time”.
	Make a small indoor or outdoor garden with the children.



1.4 Suggested activity



“This is me!”

This is an activity that you can do with the whole group of children. If you have a large number of children in your group, divide them into groups of five and present this activity to one group at a time during the day, or to one group per day over the week.

In this activity children focus on themselves, which helps to build their self-confidence. This is an opportunity to model ways of talking respectfully about differences and similarities between children.

HOW TO CONDUCT THE ACTIVITY	ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES
<p>Provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A sheet of plain A4 paper for each child. ● Pencils, crayons or paint. ● A flat surface on which children can place the paper. 	<p>(See explanation in section 1.6 on page 16.)</p>
<p>Step 1: Building confidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Call the children <i>by name</i> to join you in a circle – call them so that each child hears the names of the others.) ● Ask the children to join you in clapping out a simple rhythm. Continue clapping as each child steps forward and says their name, until all children who want to do this have had their turn. ● This will give children confidence to take part in group activities. 	<p>Identity and Belonging:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Knows own name. ● Begins to see self as part of a group <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can follow simple directions. <p>Creativity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Makes music by singing, clapping and experimenting with sounds and rhythm.
<p>Step 2: Drawing and writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invite the children to draw a picture of themselves. ● Write the name of each child at the top of the page, using a capital for the first letter and lower case for the rest of the name (e.g. <i>Anna</i>). The child may try to copy what you have written. At this age this might still be a scribble, but praise them for their attempt. Never make them practise writing their name – this must always be something that children choose to try for themselves. ● Praise them for what they have drawn. If a child has left out features (eyes, ears, nose, mouth, arm etc.), then prompt him, e.g. “Would you like to draw your eyes?” or “I think you are going to draw your hands now.” ● If a child has poor eyesight, then tack/prestick the paper to the flat surface and guide her hands to show her the edges of the paper so that she knows where to draw. 	<p>Identity and Belonging:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describes self. <p>Physical Development and Wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Names parts of the body. ● Develops fine motor control. <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understands that words can be written down and read. ● Scribbles, pretends to write, copies own name. <p>Creativity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Represents people, places and things in drawing, movement and objects/models.

<p>Step 3: Talking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Give the children time to finish their drawings and to talk to you about them. ● Children must always be given enough time to finish an activity. ● Most children want to tell someone about what they have done. ● Listen and acknowledge their work and stories. 	<p>Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Takes part in conversations. ● Asks and answers questions.
<p>Step 4: Presenting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invite the children to show their pictures to each other so that they learn to notice what other children are doing. Model ways of appreciating what the children have done, e.g. “I like the way you have drawn your hair.” This will develop their confidence in their own abilities. ● Display the pictures in the centre of the circle/table/room. 	<p>Identity and Belonging:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develops confidence in own abilities.
<p>Step 5: Developing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide more paper, and invite the children to draw a picture of something they like. 	<p>Identity and Belonging:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develops own interests.



Move from the known to the unknown.


1.5 Extending the activity

When all children have drawn their pictures, collect the pictures and display them as a group on the wall. Write the name of the ECD Centre on a sheet of paper or cardboard, and place it on the wall above the drawings. Talk to the children about this to help them see themselves as part of a group.

Invite the children's family members to look at this display when they come to the centre.

1.6 Assessment opportunities

The opportunities for play-based assessment are listed in the table in section 1.4 (pages 14-15) alongside each step in the activity called "This is me!". It can be seen that such activities help to develop a child *holistically* because they cover most areas of a child's development at ages 3-4.



Holistic development: At this age, children are developing all their skills and adding to their knowledge using all their senses. We talk about different aspects of development, but we know that they are all connected to one another and work together as a whole.

During the activity called "This is me!", the adult can observe, record and assess a range of skills. If any child is not able to do any of the steps in the activity, the adult must provide more opportunities for the children to practise and enjoy developing the skills.

For example, if a child has difficulty following directions, then ask her at different times to fetch something for you, and if she cannot do this, take her gently by the hand and say, "Let's go together to fetch the red block," so that you model what you want her to do.

1.7 Reflection questions

Since the central point of identity and belonging is about children developing a positive sense of who they are, and feeling that they are valued and respected as part of a family and community, ask yourself the following reflection questions:

- Did I support the children in their thinking about themselves (i.e. who they are and their strengths, interests and abilities)?
- Did I create opportunities for the children to talk, listen and be heard by their peers and by adults?
- Did I create various opportunities for the children to be involved in different types of play?
- Did I notice a child who was left out or hurt?
- Did I notice a child who showed empathy and care?



Section 2

Physical Development and Wellbeing

2.1 Overview

Physical development and wellbeing is about children being healthy and developing their physical co-ordination. *Physical development* refers mainly to the way that children learn how to use their bodies as they play, and in routine tasks such as feeding and dressing themselves. The focus of *wellbeing* is on how children grow in weight and height, and what they need to keep safe and healthy and have the energy they need to play and develop.

(For more detailed information on nutrition guidelines, refer to *Namibian Standards for Early Childhood Development Centres 2012*, pages 31-34.)

We want to:

- have healthy habits and make good choices;
- be as strong and fit and co-ordinated as possible; and
- know how to recognise dangers and trust those who will keep us safe.



Play is the work of a child.



2.2 Link to Namibia's pre-primary syllabus


This section on Physical Development and Wellbeing links to the following subject in Namibia's pre-primary syllabus: **Physical Development**.

2.3 Key competencies

WHAT A CHILD CAN DO	WHAT AN ADULT CAN DO TO HELP
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	
Names parts of the body.	Play action games such as "Simon Says" or "Follow the Leader" where children have to raise their hands, hop, touch their noses, clap their hands etc.
	Give each child a chance to be the leader, but never force any child to do this.
	Provide materials for the children to draw themselves. Write down what each child says about the different parts of her body, e.g. "This is my hand, this is my foot ..."
Develops eye-hand co-ordination.	Provide creative activities such as drawing and painting, modelling with clay or mud, drawing in the sand, and cutting out and pasting pictures.
Develops eye-foot co-ordination.	Provide equipment to climb on, balls to throw and kick, and tricycles and scooters to ride on.
Develops fine motor control.	Provide crayons, coloured pencils or sticks for the children to make marks on paper or in the sand.
	Provide 6-piece or 8-piece puzzles, plastic bottles with screw tops and threading toys for the children to play with.
	Model how to hold and use a pair of scissors to cut paper – making sure that the pair of scissors has round tips and is the right size for the children to hold.
	Give the children paper to tear into smaller pieces. These can be glued together to make a collage.
	Model how to turn the pages of a book using the thumb and first finger.



Develops gross motor control.	Make the outdoor area safe, and encourage the children to run, jump, skip, hop, roll and balance there.	
	Involve the children in ring games, local dances and other physical activities such as hop-scotch.	
	Clear a space inside and play action games where you call out the name of an animal and the children move appropriately.	
	Play music, drums or clap your hands so that the children listen to the rhythm and walk in time either slowly or quickly.	
	Play games where the children stop and go according to sounds or instructions.	
Demonstrates spatial awareness and how to move around objects and other people.	Play action games that encourage the children to move in different directions without bumping into each other or the furniture.	
	Take any child with poor eyesight on a walk around the indoor and outdoor areas. Point out large items of furniture or equipment so that she can learn to make her way around these.	
	 WORDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fine motor control and eye-hand co-ordination: When the child uses her eyes and hands together to do something. ● Spatial awareness: When the child knows how near or how far away things are from him.
WELLBEING		
Knows that movement helps to keep him strong.	Encourage the children to play outside when it is not too hot.	
	Make obstacle courses for the children to crawl through or run around (see page 54).	
Recognises nutritious foods.	 WORDS	Nutritious food and snacks are those that help a child to grow and develop in a healthy way. Fruits and vegetables are nutritious. Sweets, cooldrinks and chips are not.
	Make a poster of nutritious foods. Include examples of locally grown fruits and vegetables.	
	Give the children advertisements from supermarkets and let them make their own posters grouping foods that are most healthy and those which we should not eat too much of.	
	Encourage parents to send nutritious snacks and locally available fruits, and talk to the children about how these will help them to grow well.	
	Provide clean drinking water for the children to help themselves during the day.	

Practises self-help skills (e.g. eating, drinking, toileting, washing, dressing).	Show the children how and when to wash their hands and then let them practise. Sing an action song while they do this, e.g. “This is the way we wash our hands ...”. Extend this by singing about how you brush your hair, clean your teeth etc.
	During snack or meal time, model how to sit still and chew food well. Help children during toilet time and then encourage them to manage by themselves.
	Provide tissues or toilet paper for children to use when blowing their noses. Show them where to throw away the used tissue.
	Model how to cover nose and mouth with arms when sneezing or coughing. 
Knows basic safety drills (e.g. fire, flood, accidents).	Practise safety routines, e.g. “Stop, drop and roll” if their clothes catch fire, and where to go if there is a flash flood.
	Remind the children to call an adult if there is an accident. Remind them never to touch blood or vomit, and to wash their hands if they come into contact with these.
	Teach the children about traffic lights and how to cross the road safely.
Knows who to talk to about anyone who hurts her or makes her feel unsafe.	Be willing to listen if children talk about someone who has hurt or upset them. Do not make them feel responsible for what has happened.
	Have a list of people to contact if you suspect that a child is being abused.
Knows that his body is precious and no one should hurt him.	Give each body part its proper name, and talk about each part in a respectful way. Allow the children to talk about their bodies freely, i.e. don't make them feel that they are being rude or silly.
	Show respect for a child's feelings and identify good/appropriate touch and bad/inappropriate touch.



2.4 Suggested activity

"The Shop"



HOW TO CONDUCT THE ACTIVITY		ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES
<p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Draw or cut out pictures of four common fruits or vegetables found in your area.● Make a small poster (A4) of each fruit or vegetable, i.e. write the name of each fruit or vegetable under each picture.● Divide the children into groups of four and work with one group at a time.		
<p>Step 1: Introduce the fruits and vegetables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Show the children the posters you have made.● Talk about the way each fruit and vegetable looks, tastes, smells and feels.● Talk about when the children eat each fruit and vegetables – breakfast, lunch or supper, or as a snack.		<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Communicates ideas and feelings in a variety of ways.
<p>Step 2: Play the “Shopping Basket” game</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Sit in a circle with the children.● 1st child says, “<i>I went to the shop and bought ...</i>” (holds up one of the pictures and then places it on the floor where the others can see it).● 2nd child says, “<i>I went to the shop and bought ...</i> (points to the first picture) <i>and ...</i>” (holds up the next picture).● 3rd child says, “<i>I went to the shop and bought ...</i> (points to the first picture) <i>and ...</i> (points to the second picture) <i>and ...</i>” (holds up the third picture).● 4th child says, “<i>I went to the shop and bought ...</i> (points to the first picture) <i>and ...</i> (points to the second picture) <i>and ...</i> (points to the third picture) <i>and ...</i> (holds up the fourth picture).● All the children together: “<i>We went to the shop and bought ... and ... and ... and ... , and now our basket is full.</i>”		<p>Physical Development and Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Recognises nutritious foods.● Develops eye-hand co-ordination. <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Can follow simple directions.

Step 3: Play an action game

Play this game with the whole group:

- “Eating fruit and vegetables keeps us healthy, healthy, healthy so we can play, play, play.” (The children act out playing – with a ball, or with blocks or puzzles.)
- “Eating fruit and vegetables keeps us healthy so we can hug our friends, hug our friends, hug our friends.” (Each child turns and hugs the child next to her.)
- “Eating fruit and vegetables keeps us healthy so we can run around, run around, run around.” (The children run around and come back to the circle.)
- “Eating fruit and vegetables keeps us healthy so we can jump and jump and jump.” (The children jump.)
- Keep adding to this song until the children are tired.
- “We must also rest a bit, rest a bit, all lie down.”

Physical Development and Wellbeing

- Recognises nutritious foods.
- Knows that movement helps to keep her strong.

Creativity and Exploration

- Is able to match, sort group and count.

2.5 Extending the activity

Talk about where fruit and vegetables grow and what they need to grow, e.g. water and sunlight. Let the children pretend to be a growing plant or animal.

Discuss with the children what they need to stay healthy, e.g. clean water, nutritious food, exercise and rest.

Talk about going to the shop to buy fruit and vegetables. Teach the children an action rhyme about traffic lights:

Traffic light, traffic light, up so high (point upwards)

Tells the cars what to do

Green means go, go, go (walk on the spot)

Orange means wait, wait, wait (stand still)

Red means stop and do not go (stand still and hold up one hand)

2.6 Assessment opportunities

The opportunities for play-based assessment are listed in the second column of the table above, alongside each step in the activity called “The Shop”. It can be seen that such activities help to develop a child *holistically* because they cover most areas of a child’s development at ages 3-4.

WORDS



Play-based assessment: We observe (carefully watch) children while they play and assess (find out) what they know and what they can do. We do not set them tests.

During the activity called “The Shop”, the adult can observe, record and assess a range of skills. If any child is not able to do any of the steps in the activity, the adult must provide more opportunities for the children to practise and enjoy developing the skills.

For example it is quite difficult for children of this age to make choices about what food is more nutritious. When reading a book, look at a picture and be happy to see fruit or vegetables, and get the children to pretend to hold the fruit and act out eating it and rubbing their tummy to show that they enjoyed it, or saying “mmm” or however children in your area show that something is delicious.

2.7 Reflection questions

The physical growth and development of young children is linked to their emotional and intellectual development. Children grow bigger, stronger and more co-ordinated in their movements. As an Educarer, ask yourself the following reflection questions:

- Did I provide appropriate activities and equipment that supported large-motor skills development?
- Did I provide appropriate activities and equipment that supported small-motor skills development?
- Did I provide opportunities for the children to engage in creative movements?
- Did I notice and take action if any child showed signs of distress – crying, sitting alone or being very quiet?
- Was the food provided in our centre or brought from home nutritious and sufficient for a growing child?



Be gentle.



"The most effective kind of education is that a child should play amongst lovely things."

Plato



Section 3

Communication

3.1 Overview

Communication is about sharing ideas, experiences and feelings with others. Development of language skills is essential for children to be able to learn, interact with others, and find out about and understand their world. Children communicate in many ways apart from speaking, such as through play, dance, song, drawings and body language. In this section the focus is on expressing thoughts and feelings through spoken and written language.

Although children of this age cannot read, they begin to understand the link between a written word and the object. This understanding is essential for their emerging literacy. Children use language for numeracy too as they learn to count and describe objects (shape, size etc.).

Children improve their language ability through exposure to different media and events, such as books, magazines, posters, radio, television, performances and parties.

We want to:

- talk so that others understand us;
- listen to and respond to others;
- ask and answer questions;
- understand others;
- listen to and tell stories and start to understand that words can be written; and
- look at books ourselves.



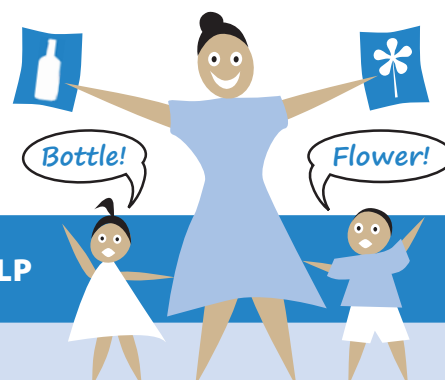
Bath a child in language.

3.2 Link to Namibia's pre-primary syllabus


This section on Communication links to the following subjects in Namibia's pre-primary syllabus:



- Language
- Preparatory Mathematics

3.3 Key competencies



WHAT A CHILD CAN DO	WHAT AN ADULT CAN DO TO HELP
COMMUNICATION	
Is confident and proud to use own home language.	Talk to each child in her home language as much as possible.
	If children in the group speak different languages at home, make sure that you learn some words in each language.
Learns new words and enjoys playing with sounds and sounding out words.	Use new words in conversations with the children. Let them try new words. Never laugh at them or correct them if they don't say the new word correctly; rather use the word again in a sentence so that they can hear the correct way to say the word.
	Link new words to actions, or use the new words in action rhymes so that the children can see or act out the meaning of the new words, e.g. "Here we go under the table" or "Ndeshie is sitting next to Lukas."
	Learn rhymes and songs in the children's different languages, and sing these together with the children. Help them by repeating sounds and words in a playful way.
	Play games with sounds and words, e.g. "Mmmm, whose name begins like that?"
Takes part in conversations, and asks and answers questions.	Model these skills by speaking and listening to the children. If a child cannot hear well, make sure that he can see your face when you are speaking to the whole group.
	Ask open-ended questions, encourage the children to ask questions and always try to answer their questions. Using open-ended questions, you are inviting the children to examine, critique, evaluate and develop their own communication preferences.
	<div> <div>WORDS</div> <div> <p>Open-ended questions are questions that can be answered by more than just a "Yes" or "No". These questions encourage children to think about the answer and to converse.</p> </div> </div> <p>Give the children a chance to talk, e.g. ask what they did at home or how they feel about the weather, or talk about what they are playing with.</p>

	Be patient with a child who has difficulty speaking, and learn some sign language to communicate with a child who has a hearing problem. In this way all of the children will be included in conversations.
Learns to listen to others to understand how they are feeling.	Help the children to understand how others are feeling, e.g. <i>"I think he was upset when you took away the block he was playing with. How can you make him feel better?"</i>
	Tell stories that describe children caring about how others feel.
Uses language when solving problems, describing, guessing and planning.	Talk to the children about what they are doing. Ask questions such as <i>"What do you think will happen next?"</i> or <i>"What do you think about this picture?"</i> or <i>"What would you like to play with now?"</i> Always allow children time to think of their answer – don't rush them.
	Ask questions only for as long as the children want to answer them. Stop asking when they seem to be tired of answering, or if they show that they want to get on with their game or drawing, in which case let them do so.
	Play games where you give directions, e.g. <i>"Pass the ball"</i> or <i>"Throw the beanbag"</i> or <i>"Hold hands."</i>
	Make a sequence puzzle or story cards with each piece/card showing, for example, the different stages of a plant growing, or a house on fire, or a child getting dressed. Let the children use this to tell a story.
Enjoys listening to stories, telling stories and looking at books and other printed material on her own.	
	Tell or read and stories to the children every day, and encourage the children to talk about each story.
	Tell or read the same story more than once and let the children remember parts of it, e.g. <i>"Who can tell me what happens next?"</i> or <i>"What does the little pig say?"</i>
	Give the children a chance to make up and tell their own stories.
	Find out about storytelling times on the local radio or television, and tune in to listen with the children. Afterwards, talk about the story.
	Invite parents, older learners and community members to come in and tell traditional and local stories.
	If there is a library near the ECD Centre, go there and borrow books yourself, or take the children there and show them a few books, and let them say which ones they would like you to read to them.

Understands that words can be written down and read.	<p>Make a 'print-rich' and 'language-rich' environment – with lots of posters and children's drawings in the play area. Point out signs, notices, words on the posters etc. to the children.</p>	
	<p>Invite the children tell you what they have drawn and then write down what they say about their pictures. Then read the words to them to show the link between ideas and spoken and written words.</p>	
	<p>Extend conversations by asking questions about what the children have drawn. Stop asking questions when children show that they are no longer interested in answering.</p>	
	<p>Write the child's name in the place where she keeps her bag, and on the pictures she draws.</p>	
Enjoys books, knows how to handle books, and can tell the difference between printed words and pictures.	<p>Make a book area and make it attractive so that the children want to go there by themselves to look at books.</p>	
	<p>Make books for your centre from posters or cardboard. Ask parents and older learners to make books for your centre. Talk to the principal of your local school about helping with this.</p>	
	<p>When you read to the children, model ways of holding a book and turning the pages carefully. Show them words as well as illustrations.</p>	
	<p>Bring in different kinds of printed material for the children to see that printed words and pictures are used not only in books but also on signs and in newspapers, magazines, leaflets, advertisement sheets etc.</p>	
	<p>Show and talk to the children about the illustrations in books, e.g. <i>"What do you think is happening in this picture?"</i></p>	
Scribbles, pretends to write and copies his name.	<p>Provide drawing materials such as crayons, pencils, chalk or sticks, and let the children make marks on the paper.</p>	
	<p>Write the child's name on each of his drawings, and let him copy this writing if he wants to.</p>	
	<p>Never force children to copy or practise writing at this age.</p>	
Uses words to describe understanding of concepts of numeracy (e.g. size, length, names of numbers).	<p>Use everyday items and toys to encourage the children to learn words to describe and understand numeracy concepts, e.g. <i>"I have three sticks. Which one is the longest?"</i> or <i>"Is my hand bigger than your hand?"</i> or <i>"Let's count the number of blocks in this box."</i></p>	
	<p>Have toys available that the children can sort and manipulate.</p>	
	<p>Sing fun songs about numbers.</p>	

Can follow simple directions.	Always speak clearly to the children. Pause for a while before repeating instructions or directions. This gives a child time to think about what you said before she hears it again.
	Sometimes give directions that have two parts, e.g. <i>“Please bring me a block and a car”</i> or <i>“Please put the crayon back in the box and then bring the box to me.”</i>
Can greet, ask and thank in an acceptable way.	Always speak respectfully to children. Model ways of greeting, asking and thanking that are acceptable in your community.

3.4 Suggested activity

“Special Days”



HOW TO CONDUCT THE ACTIVITY	
<p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a Birthday Chart and a Weather Chart (see page 53) • If you have a morning ring (see page 48), this activity will fit in with it. If you do not have a morning ring, this activity can be done at the start of the day. 	<p>ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>(See explanation in section 3.6 on page 31.)</p>
<p>Step 1: Reporting on the weather</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each day, choose four or five children to be the weather watchers. • Ask them to go to the window or door and look outside. When they come back to the group, ask them to tell you what they saw. • Encourage the children to take turns to talk rather than all talking at once. Listen carefully to each child, even if she repeats what another child has said. • With the whole group, decide what illustrations to place on the particular day of the week – wind, sun, rain etc. 	<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can follow simple directions. • Takes part in conversations, and asks and answers questions. <p>Identity and Belonging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins to see self as part of a group (e.g. my family, my ECD centre, our town).



Step 2: Talking about and reacting to the weather

Lead the whole group in an activity song about the day's weather. For example:

- **If it is sunny:**
 - “*What is the weather like today* (look towards the window)?”
 - “*The sun* (make a circle with your arms) *is shining in the sky* (point up to the sky), *in the sky, in the sky. The sun is shining in the sky, up so high.*”
 - “*It makes us hot* (fan your face with your hands), *it makes us hot and thirsty.*”
 - “*Give us water please* (pretend to pour water into a glass and drink it).”
- **If it is raining:**
 - “*What is the weather like today* (look towards the window)?”
 - “*The rain is coming down, pitter patter, pitter patter* (move fingers as though they are raindrops).”
 - “*The rain is coming down and I’m wet through* (pat your body all over with your hands). *Splash splash through the puddles, splish splash* (pretend to walk through puddles).”
 - “*Bring my boots* (pretend to put on boots) *and my umbrella* (pretend to open an umbrella) *to keep me dry.*” (Replace the words “boots” and “umbrella” with local alternatives.)
- Encourage the children to make up their own words, and matching actions to show the different kinds of weather.

Communication

- Learns new words and enjoys playing with sounds.

Physical Development and Wellbeing

- Develops gross motor control.

Creativity and Exploration

- Communicates ideas and feelings in a variety of ways.
- Recognises the link between cause and effect.

WORDS

Cause and effect:

When one action causes something else to happen, e.g. when water is poured onto sand, the sand turns into mud.

Step 3: Saying “Happy birthday!”

- Each day, choose a small group of children to be the birthday greeters.
- Bring out the Birthday Chart and ask the whole group to sing out the names of the months.
- Point to the written words on the Birthday Chart as they name each month. Do this once for the whole year. Then start again at January but stop at the current month.
- Ask the children who have a birthday on that day to step forward.
- Have the birthday greeters of the day come up and greet the birthday children by shaking their hands and saying “*Happy birthday*”. Then have the whole group sing the “Happy Birthday” song.
- If no child has a birthday that day, the birthday greeters shake hands with each other and say “*Good morning*”. The whole group then sings “Happy Birthday”, and when they come to the place for the name, they sing “dear no one”.

Identity and Belonging

- Begins to see self as part of a group (e.g. my family, my ECD centre, our town).

Communication

- Is able to greet, ask and thank in a socially acceptable way.

Physical Development and Wellbeing

- Develops gross motor control.

Creativity and Exploration

- Understands more about time.

Step 4: Presenting a special day

Provide paper and crayons for the children to draw their idea of a special day, e.g. a day of rain after a drought, a birthday, a wedding day, the day of an outing, a day when a goat was born etc. Let them draw whatever they like, and then tell you the story so that you can write down the words for them.



Communication

- Understands that words can be written down and read.

Physical Development and Wellbeing

- Develops fine motor control.

Creativity and Exploration

- Represents people, places and things in drawing, movement and objects/models.

3.5 Extending the activity

Provide paper and crayons and ask the children to draw their favourite kind of weather. Ask them to help you group the different pictures, e.g. all the rainy days, all the sunny days etc. Make a collage of all the pictures and make headings for each group.

Once a month you could have a little celebration for the children who had a birthday in that month. Make paper crowns for them to wear during snack time and sing “Happy Birthday” to all of them together.

You could make a Holiday Chart and remind the children of the public holidays celebrated or observed in Namibia. If appropriate, you could organise a small celebration close to the date of the holiday.



3.6 Assessment opportunities

The opportunities for play-based assessment are listed in the table in section 3.4 (pages 29-31) alongside each step in the activity called “Special Days”. It can be seen that such activities help to develop a child *holistically* because they cover most areas of a child’s development at ages 3-4.

During the activity called “Special Days”, the adult can observe, record and assess a range of skills. If any child is not able to do any of the steps in the activity, the adult must provide more opportunities for the children to practise and enjoy developing the skills.

For example, some children might not be used to answering questions. Always model how to listen and answer questions. If a child asks you a question, face her and give an answer that she will understand. If you ask a question that the child cannot answer, gently give her the answer and try asking her the same question later. Never turn the question-and-answer activity into a test or exam-type activity, and never make the children feel embarrassed if they can’t answer a question!

3.7 Reflection questions

Communication is a lifelong learning process beginning at birth. Communication skills – the ability to speak, listen, gesture, read and write – are important skills for children to learn as they develop in their early years. Communication helps children to form social relationships and express their feelings, and more importantly it helps them to participate in everyday activities with others. Since the central point of communication is *expression*, ask yourself the following reflection questions:

- Did I talk with each child to encourage speaking and listening?
- Did I use books and stories to encourage listening, speaking and developing the curiosity for reading?
- Did I provide various materials and activities to support the development of reading and writing skills?



Talk to and listen to children.

Section 4

Creativity and Exploration

4.1 Overview

Creativity and Exploration is about children finding out about their world and being curious about their surroundings. Children learn a lot before they first start at the ECD Centre, and their learning continues during the time they spend at home each day. Build on the knowledge and experience that the children already have.

We want to:

- *have fun investigating and experimenting;*
- *imagine and make and do different things;*
- *have time to dream and be curious;*
- *be free to express ourselves in different ways;*
- *understand more and more about the world around us;*
- *find out how different things work and fit together;*
- *make connections between what we know and what we discover; and*
- *practise solving small problems ourselves.*

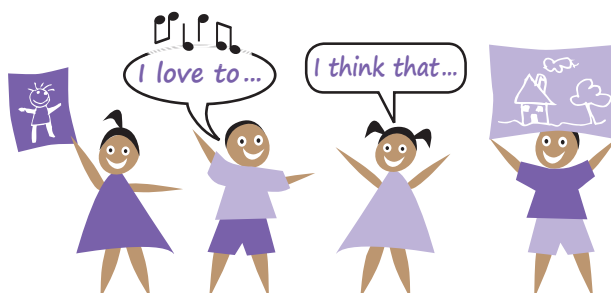


Move from the known to the unknown.

4.2 Link to Namibia's pre-primary syllabus

This section on Creativity and Exploration links to the following subjects in Namibia's pre-primary syllabus:

- Preparatory Mathematics
- Environmental Learning
- Arts



4.3 Key competencies

WHAT A CHILD CAN DO	WHAT AN ADULT CAN DO TO HELP
CREATIVITY	
Represents people, places and things in drawing, movement and objects/models.	Provide a range of materials for drawing, painting, modelling and making collages.
	Encourage the children to use their imagination to make their own creations as well as copying your examples.
Communicates ideas and feelings in a variety of ways.	Provide materials for the children to create and to act out roles and fantasies.
	Invite the children to act out their own versions of stories, rhymes and songs that you have read to them or sung with them.
	Make up songs about real events in the ECD Centre. Encourage the children to make up their own words or act out what they have heard.
Makes music by singing, clapping and experimenting with sounds and rhythm.	Play clapping games where children move in time to the different rhythms – fast, slow or a mixture of both. Children who have a physical disability may find clapping an easy way to be part of a movement activity.
	Sing songs loudly and then very quietly, or a mixture of both, and encourage children to take turns to lead the group.
Joins in local versions of dance and song.	Help the children to learn about and value local musical traditions. Arrange visits by musicians using traditional instruments so that the children can hear and talk about the instruments.
	Invite parents to come and sing with the children, especially if they know the local songs well.

EXPLORATION	
Asks questions, experiments and tries to solve problems.	Give the children time to find things out for themselves, and encourage them to talk about what they are doing.
	Play guessing games, e.g. <i>“I’m thinking of something green that grows in the ground”</i> or <i>“I’m thinking of something red that you can eat.”</i>
Uses her body and senses to explore and discover more about things and how they work.	Place toys, natural objects and books where children can reach them easily. Encourage them to handle and talk about these so that they discover for themselves how they feel, look, taste, smell and sound.
	Suggest that they close their eyes and feel an object. This will help them to develop a sense of touch. It will also help those with good eyesight to think about how a child with poor eyesight learns about the world.
	Adapt activities to support any child with a disability, e.g. help a child with poor eyesight to touch objects to find out how they feel and how they can be used. This will help her to recognise items as well as discover how they work.
Recognises and names some colours and shapes.	Make patterns with the children, e.g. thread red, yellow and blue beads in a pattern, and let the children copy the pattern.
	Talk about colours and shapes in conversation, e.g. <i>“I like your red shirt”</i> or <i>“Please bring me the round ball”</i> or <i>“Are you going to play with the red car or the blue car?”</i>
Is able to match, sort group and count.	Play a game of finding things that are the same, e.g. <i>“Let’s point to all the things that are red”</i> or <i>“Let’s put all the blue blocks in one pile”</i> or <i>“Who can find a leaf that looks the same as this one?”</i>
	Ask the children to stand alone, then in twos and then in threes. Count aloud and help children who have difficulty with this.
	Sing number rhymes using fingers, e.g. <i>“One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive. Six, seven, eight, nine, ten, then I let him go again.”</i>
Understands more about time.	Use time-related words, e.g. <i>“After lunch we will have a rest”</i> or <i>“Before we eat we wash our hands”</i> or <i>“Yesterday we painted and today we are playing with clay.”</i>
	Encourage the children to tell stories about what they did during the day.
	Use the Weather Chart and Birthday Chart (page 53) to introduce words such as “today”, “tomorrow”, “next week”, “next month” and days of the week and months of the year.
Recognises the link between cause and effect.	Plan activities where the children can see for themselves how and why change happens, e.g. put an ice block in the sun and watch it melt, and talk about sponges getting heavier when soaked in water, and about how paints change colour when mixed together.

4.4 Suggested activity



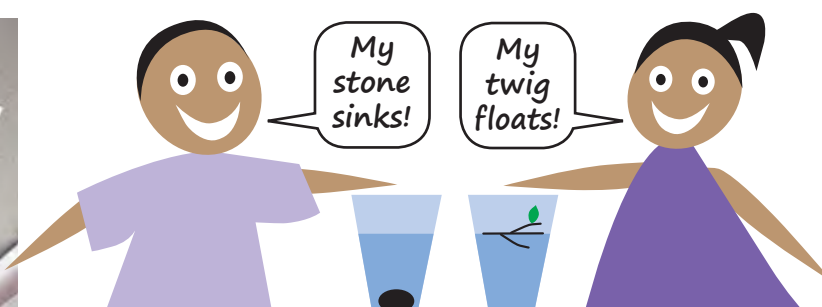
“My World”

This activity can be done with the whole group of children. If you have a large group, then divide the children into five small groups and present this activity to one group at a time on a single day, or one group per day over the week.

This activity provides an opportunity for the children to use all five of their senses to notice and appreciate the local environment. Ask questions in a playful way so that the children enjoy trying to answer, guess, match etc.

HOW TO CONDUCT THE ACTIVITY	ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES
Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set up an Interest/Discovery/Nature Table. 	(See explanation in section 4.6 on page 38.)
Step 1: Discovering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take the children outside for a discovery walk where you will encourage them to look, listen and touch objects. ● Point out the colours and shapes of the plants. ● Talk about the different smells, sights, sounds and textures. ● Ask them to be quiet for one minute. Ask them what they heard e.g. insects, birds, dogs, people 	Creativity and Exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Uses his body and senses to explore and discover more about things and how they work.
Step 2: Collecting and labelling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Together with the children, collect natural objects such as leaves, twigs and small stones. ● Place these on the Interest/Discovery/Nature Table and ask the children to suggest how to label each object. ● Talk about the shape, colour and feel of each object. 	Creativity and Exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognises and names some colours and shapes.
Step 3: Describing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask a child to choose an item. Show it to the group and ask questions such as “<i>What can you see that is the same colour as this?</i>” or “<i>What does this feel like?</i>” or “<i>Can you think of something else that feels the same as this?</i>” This will help the children to make connections and see similarities and differences between objects. ● Help the children to recognise and name colours. 	Creativity and Exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is able to match, sort, group and count. Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Uses language when solving problems, describing, guessing and planning.

<p>Step 4: Differentiating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Choose two items of different weights, e.g. a leaf and a small stone. ● Fill a small bowl with water. ● Ask the children to guess which item will float and which will sink. ● Let them place the items in the water themselves to check their answers. 	<p>Creativity and Exploration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Asks questions, experiments and tries to solve problems. <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Uses language when solving problems, describing, guessing and planning.
<p>Step 5: Representing by drawing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide paper for the children to draw pictures of things that they saw on their discovery walk. ● Make leaf rubbings. ● Make a collage with the leaves. 	<p>Creativity and Exploration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Represents people, places and things in drawing, movement and objects/models.
<p>Step 6: Representing by moving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask the children to make a circle. ● Then ask them to “Move like a leaf blowing in the wind”, “Stretch up tall like a tree”, “Crouch down like a small bush” and “Fly like a bird.” 	<p>Creativity and Exploration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Represents people, places and things in drawing, movement and objects/models. <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is able to follow simple directions.



4.5 Extending the activity

Tell a story using some of the objects on the Interest/Discovery/Nature Table as props. Then invite children to tell their own stories.

Ask the children to bring in objects to add to the table. Each object should be shown to the group for all the children to talk about the object's shape, colour and feel.

Read or tell a story about keeping our environment clean. Encourage the children not to litter, and provide bins in the ECD Centre.

4.6 Assessment opportunities

The opportunities for play-based assessment are listed in the table in section 4.4 alongside each step in the activity called "My World". It can be seen that such activities help to develop a child *holistically* because they cover most areas of a child's development at ages 3-4.

During this activity the adult can observe, record and assess a range of skills. If any child is not able to do any of these, the adult must provide more opportunities for them to practise and enjoy developing these skills.

For example, if a child finds it difficult to see how to match something, listen to her reason for doing what she did. Perhaps she has seen something that is different between the two objects that you did not see. In conversation, talk about matching, e.g. you could say, *"Oh, I see he has a red shirt – the same colour as the red car. They match! Let's see what else we can find that matches."* Turn such conversation into a game, and the child will soon begin to try to match things on her own.

4.7 Reflection questions

Creativity and exploration are linked. Creativity is a special human trait that should be encouraged. It includes forming original ideas through exploration and discovery. Creativity is not about getting things 'right'; rather it is about touching, thinking, exploring, discovering and imagining. Ask yourself the following reflection questions:

- Did I provide opportunities for the children to draw with crayons on blank paper?
- Did I allow the children to choose their own drawing materials?
- Did I provide opportunities for the children to make noise and music, such as by banging pots with spoons?
- Did I create place for the children to play with natural things like water, sticks, sand and stones?
- Did I notice the special strengths of different children?



PART B



This part of the Framework focuses on the key aspects of ECD, the development of the *Educarer's* competencies and the management of an ECD Centre. Each section provides ideas and guidance on a different aspect, with links made to the children's competencies described in Part A. These are the key aspects covered:

A Child-Centered Approach

The Importance of Play

The Role of the Educarer

Managing Behaviour

A Positive Learning Environment

A Developmentally Appropriate Programme

Safe and Stimulating Resources

Observation, Recording, Assessment and Support

Links with Family and Community

Transitions



Section 1

A Child-Centred Approach

The focus of all activities that take place in the ECD Centre must be on the children and the way that they learn through play. A child's development is stimulated, guided and mediated through both structured and unstructured play activities rather than being 'taught' in lessons.



Child-centered approach: Allowing, encouraging and helping the child to learn through being active and by playing.

The Educarer gets to know the children and their interests and needs. She uses this information to arrange the centre, and to plan the programme and the activities so that the children grow and develop in a play-based and caring environment.

Children want to play. This is the way they find out about their world and how to make choices. Watching children play, the Educarer can see what new activity will help the children to develop new skills.

Children learn best when they are relaxed and having fun playing by themselves, with other children or with a supportive adult.



Section 2

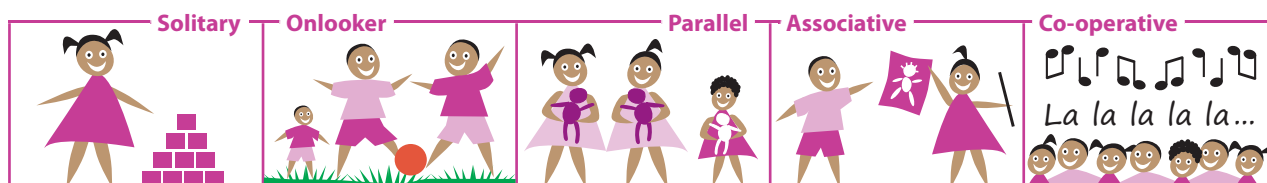
The Importance of Play

Play is central to the healthy development of every child. It is through play that young children learn. For example:

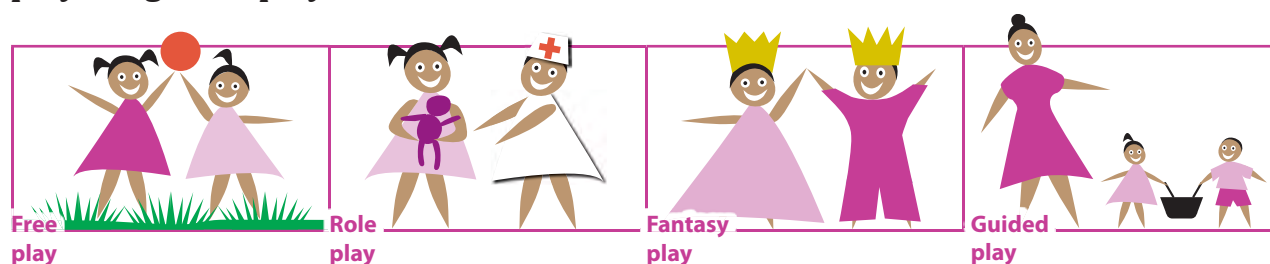
- Play supports emotional development by providing a way to express and cope with feelings.
- Children practise both verbal and non-verbal communication skills by playing.
- Children experiment with roles of the people in their homes, schools and communities by means of imaginative play.

A child can play alone, or with another child, or in a group.

- **Solitary/individual play:** The child is completely engrossed in playing and does not seem to notice other children.
- **Onlooker behaviour play:** The child takes an interest in other children's play, but does not join in. He may ask questions or just talk to other children, but the main activity is simply to watch.
- **Parallel play:** The child mimics other children's play (e.g. she may use the same toy as the others), but does not actively engage with them.
- **Associative play:** The child is now more interested in other children than in the toys that others are using. This is the first category of play involving strong social interaction between the children while they play.
- **Co-operative play:** Some organisation and planning enters into children's play, e.g. the playing has some goal and the children often adopt roles and act as a group.



There are different kinds of play and all of them are important: **free play**, **role play**, **fantasy play** and **guided play**.



The role of the Educarer in play is discussed in the next section.

Section 3

The Role of the Educarer



It is widely recognised that parents are the first and most important influence on children's learning. For children who attend ECD Centres, Educарers are probably the next most important influence. As both parents and Educарers have an influence on the child's development, they should regularly talk to one another about how to support the child to ensure her progress.

The Educарer is a guide, a facilitator and a provider of appropriate play experiences in a child-friendly environment.

These are the Educарer's key strengths and roles:

- Understanding how children develop and that they learn through play.
- Using this understanding to plan a developmentally appropriate daily programme.
- Organising and maintaining indoor and outdoor spaces and all resources to support the development of all children in the group.
- Knowing how to relate to each child to help him develop self-confidence.
- Modelling ways of behaving with respect towards adults and children.
- Helping children to play and have fun as they learn.
- Observing, recording and assessing information on children's competencies to make sure that each child receives the support she needs.

Every Educарer has her own style of working with young children. However, there are effective strategies that all Educарers can use:

- Provide plenty of toys and equipment (both bought and made from locally available materials), and plenty of opportunities for children to play.
- Create a play environment that is stimulating and supportive of different aspects of a child's development, e.g. social, physical, cognitive and emotional development.
- Allow children a lot of time to work and play with toys and equipment individually, in pairs or in small groups.
- Allow children to play in mixed age groups at the ECD Centre. Children learn from each other, and it is good for older and younger children to play together.
- Move around and spend time with children – observing them, listening to them, asking them questions and offering suggestions.
- Recognise that children learn from doing and experimenting.
- Encourage children to move around as they play, and never make them sit still for a long period of time.
- Do not make children repeat numbers, letters and songs for long periods of time. Rather include these in action rhymes and games so that learning becomes fun.

Section 4

Managing Behaviour

Educators help children to manage their behaviour, and to recognise acceptable ways of behaving. At times children forget how to behave towards others. The Educator can help them by creating an environment that encourages the children to manage their own behaviour.

Key points to bear in mind:

- Adults are role models and must always behave with respect and gentleness towards everyone.
- No adult in the centre may ever physically, verbally or emotionally abuse or threaten a child.
- A daily routine helps children to feel secure.
- A few simple rules must be made clear to the children, e.g. no hitting or throwing stones, share with others, and never hurt another child.
- Have a positive attitude towards managing behaviour, e.g. say, *“Please be kind to your friend; hitting can hurt”* or *“What you have done is called bullying. We don’t want to bully others.”*



Bullying has a bad effect on both the child who bullies and the child who is bullied. Educators and families must talk about how to deal with bullying in a positive way.

- Reward good behaviour by means of praise, encouragement and recognition.
- Be consistent in handling inappropriate behaviour such as screaming.
- Give children a chance to explain their behaviour.
- Reason with children and give them explanations that they can understand.
- Have a “Peace Space” or “Time-Out Space” or “Quiet Area” where children who have behaved inappropriately can sit and calm down before rejoining the group.

A simple poster of “Things to Remember” will remind the children of how to behave. Make this together with the children and explain each point as you write it up. Display it where the children and their parents can see it. It is best to make this poster to suit your own ECD Centre, but an example is shown on the right.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

In the (Name) ECD Centre

- We play nicely with each other.
- We share the toys with each other.
- We do not hurt each other.
- We look after the toys and books.
- When we play inside we speak softly (using inside voice).
- We go to the Peace Space if we feel upset.



Section 5

A Positive Learning Environment

The layout of both the indoor and outdoor areas will affect the way that the children develop. The ECD Centre must always look attractive and interesting so that the children want to come to it.

The way that the space is arranged sends a message to the children. If the space is brightly decorated with posters and children's artwork, and if it has interesting things to touch and play with, and is clean and airy, then the message is positive: *"Come in, have fun and enjoy discovering new things."*

A negative message will be sent if the space has desks in rows and posters above the children's eye level: *"You will not learn much here because you will have to sit still and not move around and explore."*



clean, bright, spacious, colourful...
a positive message to "Come in!"

Key points to remember:

- There should be space for children to move around freely.
- The children should be able to reach all toys and equipment so that they can choose for themselves what to play with.
- The work of the children should be put up on the walls or on the shelves.
- The environment should be print-rich, e.g. books on display, posters and children's artwork on the walls, and clear labels that help the children to identify different play areas and places where they can store their belongings.
- The indoor area should be bright, cheerful, airy and clean.
 - Cleanliness is important. Although children sometimes make a mess when they play, you can ask them to help you clean up when they have finished with the messy activity.
- The outdoor area should be fenced, clean and safe, with appropriately sized equipment.
- Use items that the children recognise as well as items that are new to them.
- Use items that are locally made and easily available.

For more information on space and equipment, refer to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare's publication entitled *Namibian Standards for Early Childhood Development Centres*.

There should be space for the following:

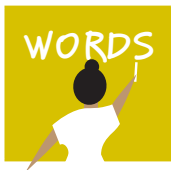
- **Quiet play**, e.g. doing puzzles, threading beads and reading books.
- **Fantasy play**, e.g. dressing-up (clothing) games, and pretend shop, hospital or post office games. This space is also called a “Make-Believe Area”.
- **Block play**, e.g. with blocks, Lego, small cars and toy animals.
- **Creative play**, e.g. with paper, crayons, paint, clay, play dough, collage materials and scissors.
- **Water and sand play**, e.g. with trays of sand and water, containers, objects that float or sink, spades, rakes and brooms.
- **Outside play**, e.g. with equipment for climbing on, over and through, and tyres for swinging on, and balls, hula hoops, skipping ropes and bean bags.



Play is the most important work of a child.

Section 6

A Developmentally Appropriate Programme



Developmentally appropriate: The right activity, toy, language or expectation for the stage of development that the child has reached.

The Educarer designs a “Daily Programme” for the children in her group. She thinks about their needs and interests. There is a balance between rest, routine, group activities and free and individual play. At least two new activities are introduced to the children each day, e.g. a new song, a different creative activity or a rearrangement of the fantasy area.



Individual play: Children of this age often play on their own. Sometimes they play next to another child, and this is called parallel play.

The Educarer should have a Daily Programme to guide her through the day. However, she must be flexible, e.g. if all the children are enjoying free play time, then she can extend this rather than stopping it just because she wants to stick to the time that she has allocated in the programme.

6.1 Daily Programme for a half-day session

A Daily Programme for a half-day session usually provides time for the following:

- Preparation of activities and organisation of the space before the children arrive.
- Staff and children’s breakfast, lunch and snack breaks.
- Outdoor play, e.g. running, jumping, balancing and games with simple rules.
- Toilet and hygiene routines.
- Rest/breaks.
- Free-choice activities, i.e. where children choose where and with whom to play – children need long periods of free play where they can explore and experiment.
- Group activities, e.g. greetings and reporting news, birthdays and weather; discussing the Interest/Discovery/Nature Table; and saying/singing action rhymes and songs.
- Story time, including role plays based on stories.
- Creative activities, e.g. drawing, modelling with clay, cutting and pasting.
- Tidy-up time.

6.2 Suggested types of activities

The following activities cover all of the key aspects of development presented in Part A of this Curriculum Framework – activities that enable the children to develop *holistically* every day:

- **Communication activities:** conversations, storytelling, reading stories, learning short poems and rhymes, and handling books. The home language of each child is encouraged. Any additional language should be introduced through songs and rhymes and NOT through rote learning and meaningless recitations.
- **Activities which encourage the child to think and learn:** outings, construction work with blocks, sand play, puzzles, modelling clay etc.
- **Creative activities:** drawing, cutting, tearing, folding paper, painting etc.
- **Group activities** such as nature walks, singing, group games, storytelling.
- **Guided play and games:** developing children's memories, listening to different sounds, feeling different objects, looking at picture books, music, rhythmic exercise.
- **Free play:** the child chooses what she wants to do and plays in a way that she chooses.
- **Role play** and **fantasy play**.

6.3 Example of a Daily Programme for a half-day session

ACTIVITY	SUGGESTIONS FOR EACH ACTIVITY
Arrival (30 minutes)	Welcome each child. Let the children put their bags, jackets etc. away. Let them play freely with anything in the ECD Centre.
Morning Ring (30 minutes)	Call the children together to sit in a circle around you. This can be a time for greetings and sharing news. Use the Weather Chart and the Birthday Chart (see page 53), and take time to discuss the Interest/Discovery/Nature Table. You can also do a health check at this time.
Play Time (1 hour)	Play time is a mixture of free play and guided activities. The children decide what they want to play with. Make sure that everyone has something that they want to do, and then call a small group together for a special activity.
Tidy-up Time (15 minutes)	Encourage all the children to help tidy up. Sing a song that lets them know that it's time to tidy up.
Toilet Time (15 minutes)	Children must be allowed to go to the toilet whenever they like, but it is also good to have a routine toilet time. Children learn to wait their turn for the toilet, how to use the toilet and how to wash their hands after <i>every</i> use of the toilet.
Snack Time (30 minutes)	All the children eat what they have brought from home or what the ECD Centre provides for them. The children must be allowed to drink clean water at any time during the day as well as at snack time.
Outdoor Play (1 hour)	If it is not too hot or raining, encourage the children to play outside, either in an organised way (e.g. standing in a circle and throwing a bean bag to each other, or playing skittles) or using the space and equipment to move around and play as they want to.

Music Time (30 minutes)	Sing songs or action rhymes. The children can dance or move as they like to clapping, drumming or music.
Story Time (30 minutes)	Tell or read a story to the whole group. You can use puppets or other props. Encourage the children to ask questions or to act out parts of the story.
Home Time (30 minutes)	Say goodbye to each child. Make sure that each one is collected by the person chosen by the family and not by anyone else – unless you have checked with the parent about an arrangement for someone else to collect the child. If time allows, share with individual parents what their children did during the day.

Below and on the next page are samples of a Daily Programme as written for your own purposes and for the purpose of showing the children how they will spend their morning.

(Name) ECD Centre
Daily Programme for 1 January 2014

TIME	ACTIVITY	NOTES
08h00–08h30	Arrival	Special greeting for Anna on her birthday.
08h30–09h00	Morning Ring	Wish Anna a happy birthday.
09h00–10h00	Play Time	Call Group C for nature table activity.
10h00–10h15	Tidy-up Time	Show them how to use the small broom.
10h15–10h30	Toilet Time	Put out the new handwashing soap.
10h30–11h00	Snack Time	Put out the cake that Anna's mother sent.
11h00–12h00	Outdoor Play	Introduce them to the new tyre-swing.
12h00–12h30	Music Time	Sing "Happy Birthday" to Anna.
12h30–13h00	Story Time	Read the story about the birthday cake.
13h00–13h30	Home Time	Anna is being collected by her aunt.

You could make a poster of the Daily Programme to place on the wall for the whole month/year, with both words and simple pictures that show the children what they will be doing.

OUR DAY AT (Name) ECD Centre

	Arrival
	Morning Ring
	Play Time
	Tidy-up Time
	Toilet Time
	Snack Time
	Outdoor Play
	Music Time
	Story Time
	Home Time

Section 7

Safe and Stimulating Resources



Stimulation means encouragement and motivation. In a **stimulating environment** there are many interesting and exciting things for the child to do, see, touch, hear and taste, and even smell.

7.1 Equipment, creative materials, toys and books

Equipment includes the following:

- Child-size tables and chairs.
- Mats, mattresses or blankets for sleeping on.
- Bowls, cups and spoons for each child.
- Low shelves so that children can reach the toys and books.
- Containers for paint, water and sand.
- Outdoor equipment, e.g. balls, bean bags, skittles, wheeled toys, slides, tyres and climbing frames.



How to make skittles

- Collect empty plastic bottles with lids.
- Half fill these with sand.
- Put them in a row and let children take turns to knock them down by rolling a ball from a set distance away.
- Paint the lids different colours so that the children notice the colour of the skittle that they knocked down or left standing.

Creative materials include the following:

- Paper of different sizes – A4 for drawing, and smaller pieces for making collages.
- Crayons, pencils, chalk, paint, mud etc. for drawing.
- Paint brushes.
- Glue for making collages with sand, feathers, leaves, paper etc.
- Magazines to cut up for displays and for making books and collages.
- Clean boxes, yogurt pots, egg cartons etc.
- Play dough, mud or clay for modelling.
- Old clothes, hats, shoes etc. to wear for fantasy play.

IDEA!



How to help children who have poor eyesight

Pin or prestick the paper to the table and let the child feel the edges with her fingers before she starts drawing.

IDEA!



How to help children who have poor fine motor control

Wrap masking tape or cloth around the pencil or the handle of the paint brush to make them easier to hold.

Toys include puzzles, cars, blocks, plastic or wooden animals, threading and lacing toys, and shape boxes. Toys can be bought or made from locally and naturally available materials.

Books include the following:

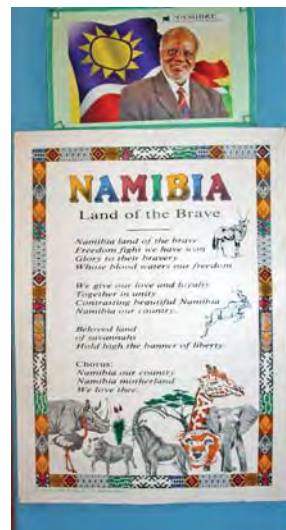
- Story books, and books showing the alphabet, shapes and colour.
- Books about animals, cars, clothes etc.
- Books made by the Educarer, or books made by the children.
- Magazines and pages of advertisements from local shops.
- Library books – borrowed from the local library and exchanged each month or term.



7.2 Other resources

Interest/discovery/nature/theme tables:

- These are tables or mats with interesting things on them.
- Once you have chosen the theme of your display, make a poster to go behind the table or mat. You can draw or glue pictures cut from magazines or advertisement sheets. You can encourage the children to help you to make this poster. There should only be a few words written on it, and the words must be written clearly.
- Items placed on the table or mat must be safe enough for children to handle themselves.
- The items should also be interesting enough for the children to want to look and touch them.
- Make labels for each item. Involve the children in deciding what to write on the labels.
- The displays must be changed regularly – at least once a month.



Posters and charts:

- All these should be placed on the walls at the children's level so they can look at them easily.
- The children can help you to make posters about all sorts of things, e.g. sizes, shapes and colours.
- Examples of charts are:
 - Weather Chart
 - Birthday Chart
 - Helping Hands Chart

OUR WEATHER CHART

Today



There are many ways to make a Weather Chart. The simple example above is made by drawing the different kinds of weather, cutting out the drawings into separate pieces, and presticking the pieces onto the chart, so that each day a child can pick the right drawing and stick it in the "Today" box. They can pick more than one drawing per day, e.g. it might be "Partly Cloudy" as well as "Rainy". You could also add accompanying items such as an umbrella for "Rainy" and gloves for "Cold".

OUR BIRTHDAY CHART



January	February	March	April	May	June
Anna	John	Mary	Joseph	Sara	Petrus
	Kasiku	Uibasen		Haufiku	

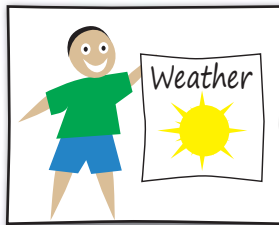


July	August	September	October	November	December
Lina	Klaus	Nangula	Dantago	Juliet	Johannes
	Martha		Khaege	Nahas	

In this simple Birthday Chart, you could also stick little photos of the children in the right place.

OUR HELPING HANDS CHART

Today's Helpers



Who gives the weather report?



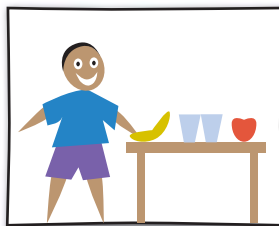
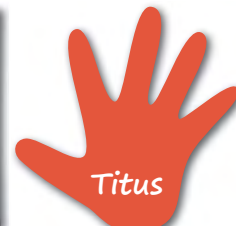
Who chooses a song?



Who chooses a story?



Who chooses a game?



Who helps to put out the snacks?



Who helps to tidy up?



There are many ways to make a Helping Hands Chart. It depends also on what help is needed in your own ECD Centre. You can use little stick-on cards and stick-on hands with drawings or even photographs of the children, and you can use different colours for the paper backgrounds or just white paper.

Outdoor equipment includes bean bags, balls, hula hoops, water containers, tyres, swings, slides, climbing frames, obstacle courses, or any safe and stimulating items that you are able to provide.



Section 8

Observation, Recording Assessment and Support

8.1 Observation

An Educarer observes children all day. She notices if they are well, interested and active. The Educarer who observes the children will find that she is able to plan activities and programmes that suit the needs and interests of the children. She will notice if a child needs more support because the child has not understood something, or has a disability, or is bored and wants to learn something new and different.



Observing the children in your care will help you to do the following:

- Find out what children know, and what their strengths and interests are.
- Plan exciting and stimulating programmes and activities to meet the needs and interests of the children.
- Identify concerns regarding a child who may be in need of specialised services because of a disability or delay.
- Evaluate how well the ECD programme meets its goals and how effective it is.
- Work out ways to handle difficult situations.
- Keep up-to-date records (portfolios) of children's achievements, interests and difficulties.
- Keep track of children's development over a period of time by keeping daily notes of what you have chosen to observe.
- Think about how well you are doing as an Educarer.
- Give the right support at the right time so that both you and the children feel successful and happy.

8.2 Recording

Educarers need to write down what they observe. They can do this throughout the day or they can do it at the end of the day when the children have left the centre. The Educarer will write short notes so that she can have a record of where each child has difficulty or where each child has achieved a particular competency and needs to have something new to try. At the end of each term, the Educarer might choose to give the parents a report of what their child is able to do. An example of a simplified report form is provided on the next page. The competency categories can be found in Appendix 2.

Early Childhood Development Centre / Pre-School / Kindergarten

TERM REPORT ON COMPETENCIES

Name of ECD Centre / Pre-School / Kindergarten: _____

Name of child: _____ Date: _____



I arrive at school happily.



I play well with others.



I listen to my teacher.



I am happy to share toys.



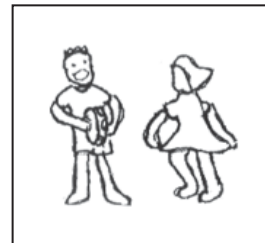
I participate in activities.



I remember my manners.



I express myself clearly.



I join in at music and song.



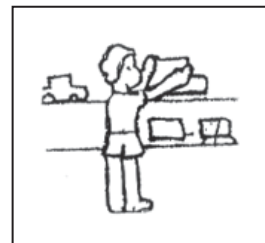
I use the toilet on my own.



I enjoy snack time.



I take care of my belongings.



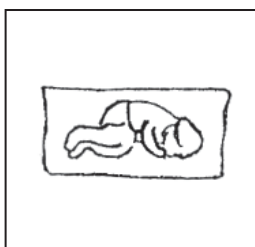
I look after the toys and equipment.



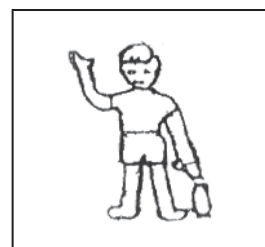
I can dress myself.



I enjoy story time.



I rest quietly.



I am ready to go home.

KEY:

Y = Yes

S = Sometimes

N = Not yet

B = Is beginning to

COMMENTS:

8.3 Assessment

Assessment is when an Educarer thinks about what she has observed and decides what needs to be done for individual children. She might decide that a child needs more practise in a particular skill, and will therefore plan an activity where the child can practise in a playful and entertaining way but with added support.

Children are never tested; all assessment is done by observing children and noticing what they do as they take part in activities at the ECD Centre. Assessment is always play-based. Always remember that assessment is not a single action or an end in itself, but rather it is about gathering information that can be used to help children develop holistically.

Assessment helps an Educarer to talk to parents/families about what their child needs or has achieved. Parents/families can also talk to the Educarer about what they have noticed about their child at home. Putting all available information together helps both the family and the Educarer to make the best plans for the child.

There are different ways for an Educarer to assess children. She can record behaviours based on when it happens (time) and how often it happens (frequency). The best option for assessing children is through play. This is because:

- play is a natural way of expression for most children;
- play provides a natural and appealing environment for children;
- through play, children are able to experience a wide array of emotions;
- play is child-initiated and child-maintained; and
- play is a wonderful tool for learning.

Before you engage or start any assessment, ask yourself these questions:

- What do I want to find out?
- How will I do it?
- What activities will give me the information that I want?

8.4 Support

When a child has been observed and particular skills or knowledge have been assessed, the Educarer can decide what support the child needs. The child might need support for practising a skill that she has not yet managed to execute very well. A child might need support to try something different or new.

The support that the Educarer provides is always given without making the child feel that she has failed. Support is always given in a way that makes the child feel good about himself and helps him to do something better, or something new and different.

8.5 Self-Reflection

Things don't always go as planned in pre-school. Most teachers have experienced this in one way or another. So what do you do? You simply try to do it better next time. As a professional working with children, you need to engage in the process of self-reflection. Self-reflection should be an integral part of your work with children.

At the end of the day or activity, ask yourself the following questions:

- How did the activity go?
- How am I facilitating the children's play when they are engaged in interest-centered choices for play?
- Did I allow enough time for the children to get involved and engaged in the activities?
- Did all the children enjoy the activities? Was any child struggling or left out?
- Is there any follow-up that I need to do with a family?
- Did I give the children opportunities to feel important and needed as members of the ECD Centre community?
- If I do this activity again, what aspects will I maintain and what will I change?
- What can I do better next time?



Section 9

Links with Family and Community

A family can be described as a group of people who live together and care for one another. A community is the wider group of people whom the young child lives amongst – such as neighbours, shopkeepers, local leaders, school teachers and healthcare workers.

Families are generally regarded as *the first educators of young children*, because children learn values, attitudes and skills from their elders and siblings.

When ECD Centre staff members build a trusting relationship between their centre, the families, the wider community and the government facilities in the particular community, everyone can work together to achieve the best for the community's young children.



One way for the ECD Centre to work together with families and the wider community is to hold workshops or short courses. There are many topics to cover, the following being a few key examples:

- How young children learn best, i.e. active involvement, playing, experimenting, exploring and imagining.
- How to support children at home so that they develop to their full potential, e.g. by having conversations, telling stories, encouraging questions, providing toys, or providing natural, safe resources such as clay, seeds and leaves for children to play with.
- The importance of reading to the child.
- The importance of being a role model, especially in demonstrating attitudes towards others.
- Helping children to be safe in their environment as well as around other people.
- Helping children to develop habits of personal hygiene.
- Nutritional guidelines, including growing foods in home gardens.
- Ways to help the ECD Centre.

For more ideas, refer to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare's publication entitled *Namibian Standards for Early Childhood Development Centres 2012* (pages 37-38).

Section 10

Transitions

Transitions means times of moving from one place to another, e.g. children move from being at home or with a day-mother to attending an ECD Centre.

Every morning children move from home to the ECD Centre, and at the end of every session they move from the ECD Centre to their home.

Another time of transition is when children move from one kind of group care to another – from an ECD Centre to a pre-school.

There are ways to handle these times so that the children enjoy them and do not feel anxious:

- Explain to the child what is going to be different. Make change sound exciting, but at the same time accept that some children might feel worried.
- The transition from home to the ECD Centre in the morning can be handled by always being prepared for the children in the morning, and by greeting each child as he arrives.
- The transition from the ECD Centre to home at the end of each session can be handled by calming the children with a story or any other quiet activity, and getting their bags and other belongings ready for them to pick up on their way out. Do not get them ready too early as they will get bored and restless if they have to sit and wait for the end of the session.
- The transition from ECD Centre to pre-school can be handled by taking the children to visit the pre-school and showing them around. Close to the time of their leaving the ECD Centre, you can talk to them about all the exciting things that they will do at pre-school.
- Never threaten a child by saying that something bad will happen when they change from one place to another.



Glossary of Key ECD Terminology

- **Adapting:** In the ECD Centre, adapting means making changes to an activity, equipment or the environment to meet the needs of the children.
- **Bullying:** When one or more children are deliberately mean to another child. Bullying can be verbal (name-calling, teasing, threatening etc.) or physical (hitting, pushing, kicking etc.). It can also be indirect (e.g. excluding someone from a social group). It has a bad effect on both the child who bullies and the child who is bullied. Educators and families must talk about how to deal with bullying in an effective and positive way.
- **Cause and effect:** When an action causes something else to happen, e.g. when water is poured onto sand, the sand turns into mud.
- **Child-centred approach:** Allowing, encouraging and helping the child to learn through being active and by playing.
- **Competencies:** What a child knows or can do.
- **Developmentally appropriate:** The right activity, toy, language or expectation for the stage of development that the child has reached.
- **Early childhood development:** The years before children start formal school. This is when children develop more rapidly than at any other time in their lives.
- **Fine motor control or eye-hand co-ordination:** When a child uses her eyes and hands together to do something, e.g. scribbling, turning pages, threading beads and picking up small objects.
- **Free play:** When the child chooses what she wants to do and plays in a way that she chooses.
- **Guided activity:** When the Educator guides the child or children on how to do something. She may show the children how to start an activity, or stay close to them to show them how to do each step in the activity.
- **Holistic development:** At this age children are developing all their skills and adding to their knowledge using all their senses. We talk about different aspects of development, but we know that they are all connected to one another and work together as a whole.
- **Individual play:** Children of this age often play on their own. Sometimes they play next to another child, and this is called parallel play.
- **Large muscle development:** When a child runs, kicks a ball, climbs, hops, rolls etc., using the large muscles in their legs, arms, stomach and chest.
- **Nutritious:** Food and snacks that help a child to grow and develop in a healthy way. Fruits and vegetables are nutritious. Sweets, cooldrinks and chips are not.
- **Needs:** The next stage in a child's development, i.e. what she needs to do to learn a new skill or to learn more about a skill that she already has.
- **Open-ended questions:** Questions that can be answered by more than just a "Yes" or "No". These questions encourage children to think about the answer.
- **Play:** This is essential to healthy development. It is the most important work of childhood. Play is a spontaneous, voluntary, pleasurable and flexible free-choice activity that is non-literal, self-motivated, enjoyable and process-oriented.
- **Play-based assessment:** We observe (carefully watch) children while they play, and assess (find out) what they know and can do. We do not assess children using testing materials; we do not set tests for children.
- **Spatial awareness:** When a child knows how near or how far away things are from him. He understands that if he walks towards a chair, he will be getting nearer to the chair. He learns to move around a space without bumping into things. He learns the positioning of things, e.g. that something is behind or inside or under something else.
- **Stimulation:** This means encouragement and motivation. In a stimulating environment there are many interesting and exciting things for the child to do, see, touch, hear, smell and taste.

Appendix 1

The Rights of Young Children

The information below is taken from *The State of the World's Children 2001*, UNICEF (Section 28).

Very young children have the right to the following:

- Protection from physical danger.
- Adequate nutrition and health care.
- Appropriate immunisations.
- An adult with whom to form an attachment.
- An adult who can understand and respond to their signals.
- Things to look at, touch, hear, smell and taste.
- Opportunities to explore their world.
- Appropriate language stimulation.
- Support in acquiring new motor, language and thinking skills.
- A chance to develop some independence.
- Help in learning how to control their own behaviour.
- Opportunities to begin to learn to care for themselves.
- Daily opportunities to play with a variety of objects.
- Opportunities to develop fine motor skills.
- Encouragement of language through talking, being read to and singing.
- Activities that will develop a sense of mastery.
- Experimentation with pre-writing and pre-reading skills.
- Hands-on exploration for learning through action.
- Opportunities for taking responsibility and making choices.
- Encouragement to develop self-control, co-operation and persistence in completing projects.
- Support for their sense of self-worth.
- Opportunities for self-expression.
- Encouragement of creativity.

Appendix 2

Competencies of Young Children

The competencies listed below are the skills, knowledge and attitudes that we expect most children aged 3 and 4 to have. Some children may achieve some competencies before they are 4 years old, and others may achieve them at the end of their fourth year.

If an Educarer notices that a child is having difficulty achieving any of the competencies, she can take one or more of the following steps:

- Offer more opportunities for the child to practise the competency. This must be done in a playful way; it must be fun. It must never be seen as a punishment, and the child must not be made to feel that he is a failure.
- Talk to the child's parents to determine what they can do at home to help the child to achieve a competency. This must not be seen as a punishment, and the family must not think that their child is a failure. The Educarer must help the family to think of fun and playful ways to practise the competency.
- Advise the parents to seek specialist help if it seems that there is a developmental delay due to a physical or intellectual problem, e.g. poor hearing, poor eyesight or general ill-health.

WHAT A CHILD CAN DO

Identity

- Knows own name, age, gender and home language.
- Describes self.
- Notices and talks about differences between self and others.
- Recognises and names own feelings.
- Starts to find ways to calm self if upset.
- Develops confidence in own abilities.
- Develops own interests.

Belonging

- Begins to see self as part of a group, e.g. my family, my ECD Centre, our town.
- Is able to separate from family and is happy to come to the ECD Centre.
- Sometimes plays together with other children.
- Starts to find ways of behaving that are acceptable to others.
- Knows what to do at routine times such as toilet time or snack time.
- Begins to show an interest in keeping the neighbourhood pleasant.

Physical Development

- Names parts of the body.
- Develops eye-hand co-ordination.
- Develops eye-foot co-ordination.
- Develops fine motor control.
- Develops gross motor control.
- Demonstrates spatial awareness and how to move around objects and other people.

Wellbeing

- Knows that movement helps to keep her strong.
- Understands more about healthy eating habits.
- Practises self-help skills, e.g. eating, drinking, toileting, washing and dressing.
- Knows basic safety drills, e.g. for fire, flood and accidents.
- Knows who to talk to if anyone hurts him or makes him feel unsafe.

Communication

- Is confident and proud to use own home language
- Learns new words and enjoys playing with sounds and sounding out words
- Takes part in conversations and asks and answers questions
- Learns to listen to others to understand how they are feeling.
- Uses language when solving problems, describing, guessing and planning.
- Enjoys listening to stories, telling stories, and looking at books and other printed material on her own.
- Understands that words can be written down and read.
- Knows how to handle books, and can tell the difference between printed words and pictures.
- Scribbles, pretends to write and copies her name.
- Uses words to describe understanding of concepts of numeracy, e.g. size, length and names of numbers.
- Is able to follow simple directions.
- Is able to greet, ask and thank in an acceptable way.

Creativity

- Represents people, places and things in drawing, movement and objects/models.
- Communicates ideas and feelings in a variety of ways.
- Makes music by singing, clapping and experimenting with sounds and rhythm.
- Joins in local versions of dance and song.

Exploration

- Asks questions, experiments and tries to solve problems.
- Uses his body and senses to explore and discover more about things and how they work.
- Recognises and names some colours and shapes.
- Is able to match, sort, group and count.
- Understands more about time.
- Recognises the link between cause and effect.

Appendix 3

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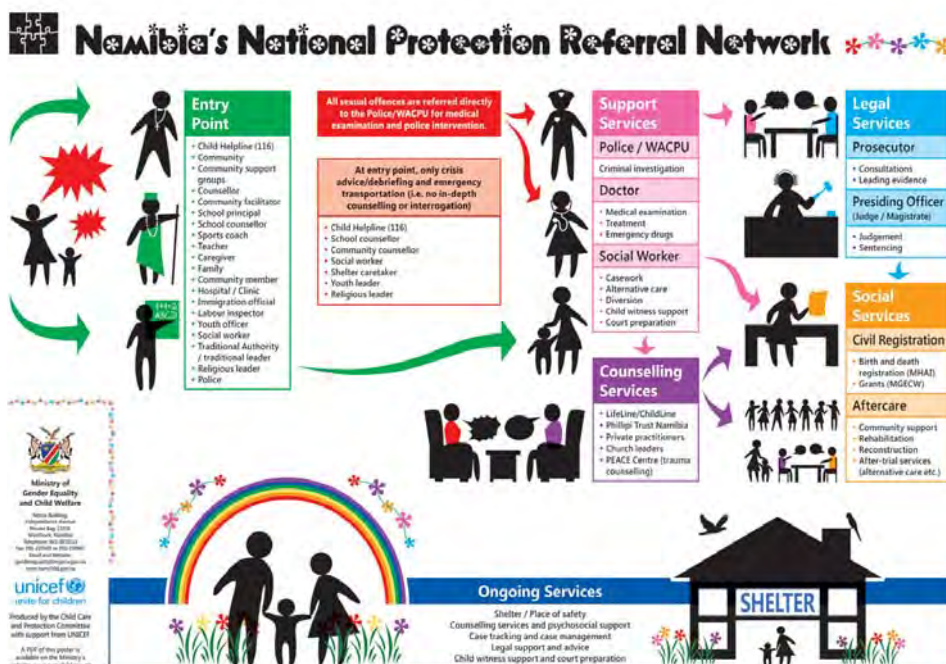
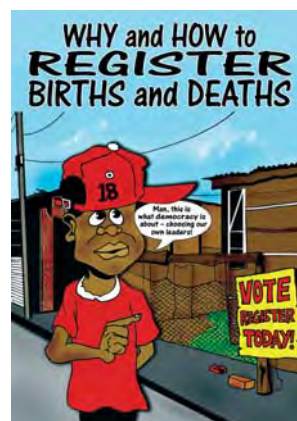
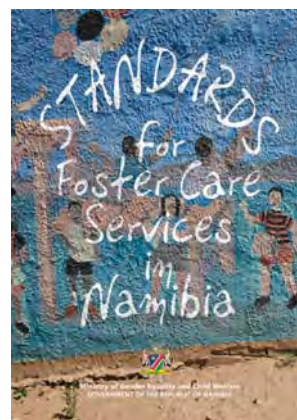
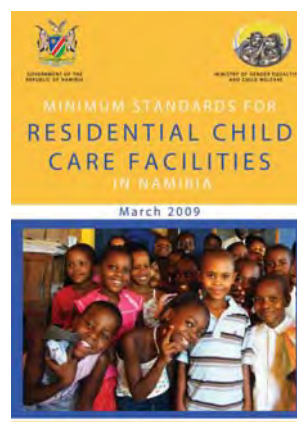
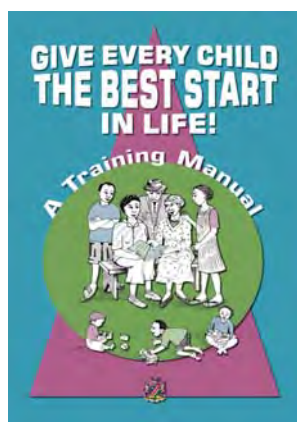
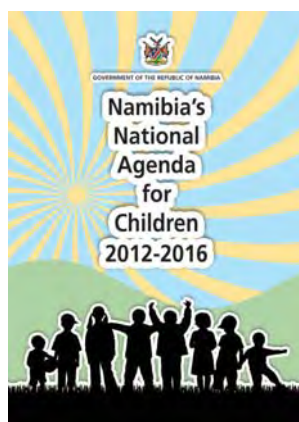
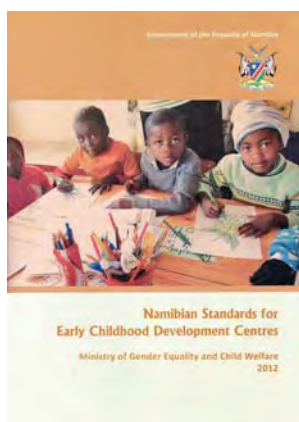
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These and many other publications are available on the website of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare: www.namchild.gov.na





REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

Directorate of Community and Early Childhood Development
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