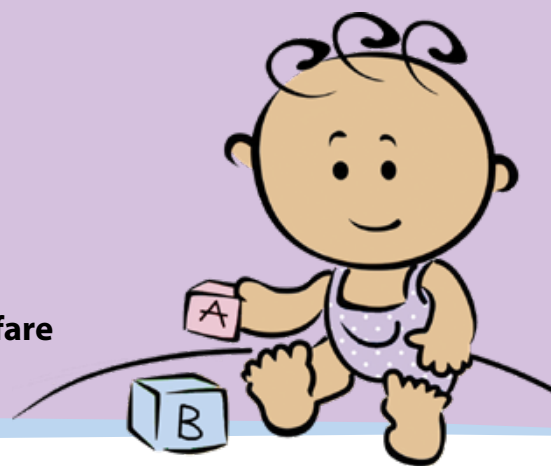


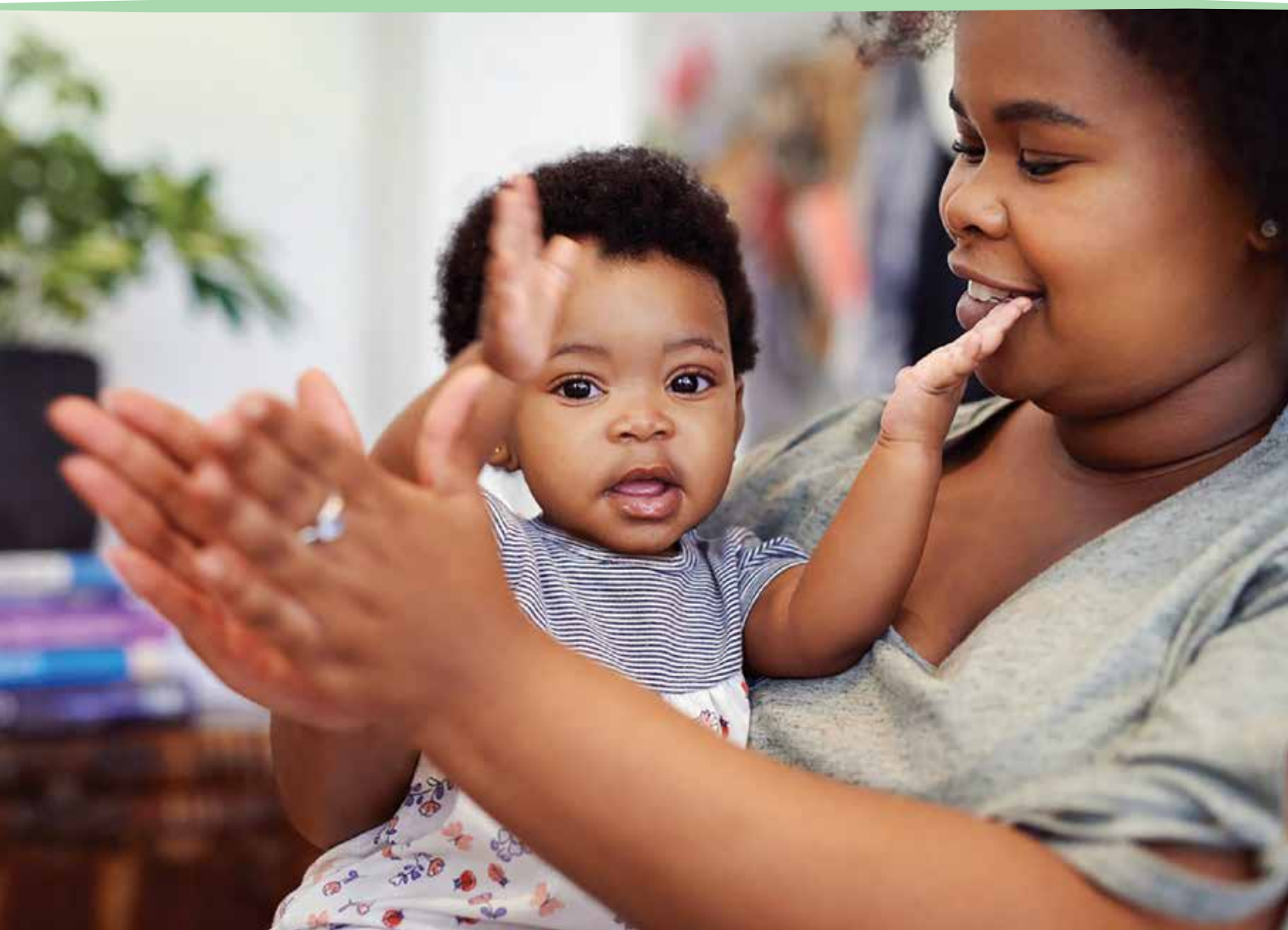


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
**Ministry of Gender Equality,
Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare**
2022



CURRICULUM

**for Children in Namibia Aged 0-2 Years
for Use in Homes and ECD Centres**





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the United Nations Children's Fund and the European Union.

2022



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FOREWORD



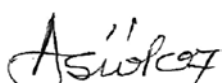
The Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, in partnership with the European Union and the United Nation's Children Fund (UNICEF), is delighted to have a *Curriculum for Children in Namibia Aged 0-2 Years*, for use in ECD centres and family homes. This curriculum is an expansion of the *Curriculum Framework for Children in Namibia Aged 3 and 4 Years* (2013). We hope that this curriculum will be used effectively by all parents, caregivers, educarers and others who provide care for children of ages 0-2 years. The curriculum is aimed at ensuring that children transition smoothly from one developmental milestone to the next.

The *Resource Guide* accompanying this curriculum is a manual for guiding educarers, parents and caregivers on how to apply the curriculum to ensure its effective delivery. The manual aims to ensure that children are stimulated holistically to reach their full potential. We are born with many capabilities. For these to develop, they must be stimulated. The manual focuses on what exactly parents, caregivers, educarers and others can do to help infants and toddlers to develop to their full potential. In early childhood, children learn best through their environment, reality, interests, and play-based and hands-on experiences, hence the curriculum is based on a child-centred approach, which entails placing the child at the centre of the whole educational process.

The environment around a child plays a crucial role in the child's development and learning. A calm and peaceful environment is required at school and at home for a well-balanced child. The users of the curriculum and manual are encouraged to combine their own experiences with the information given, and to add their own ideas and locally available resources – bearing in mind that those ideas and resources must be developmentally appropriate for the age group.

Families, caregivers and educarers have the responsibility to stimulate children by providing the appropriate care, protection, nutrition, love and support, and sufficient and appropriate opportunities for early learning. This, in turn, will help to break the cycle of poverty, reduce social inequality, increase economic activity and reduce unemployment.

Parents, educarers, caregivers and the community at large are role models for young children, and education starts at home. Let's work together – “it takes a village to raise a child” – to achieve the best for our young children, and to see to it that this curriculum serves its purpose.



Hon. Doreen Sioka (MP)

Minister of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare

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The Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare thanks the European Union and UNICEF for providing technical assistance for the development of the *Curriculum for Children in Namibia Aged 0-2 Years*, and the accompanying *Resource Guide*, for use in homes and Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres across the country.

The Ministry also acknowledges the many contributors of information for the development of these documents, and thanks them for their valuable inputs. They include:

- key line ministries such as the Ministry of Health and Social Services and the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture;
- the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED);
- various Regional Councils;
- the International University of Management (IUM);
- the University of Namibia (UNAM);
- the Namibia College for Open Learning (NAMCOL);
- various non-governmental organisations;
- a number of ECD educators;
- a few ECD parents' committees; and
- several individuals.

Lastly, commendation goes to the national and regional staff of the Ministry's Directorate of Community Development and Poverty Eradication, for the extra effort they made to ensure that this curriculum is well contextualised to meet the needs of children aged 0-2 in Namibia.



Esther Lusepani

Executive Director

Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare

INTRODUCTION

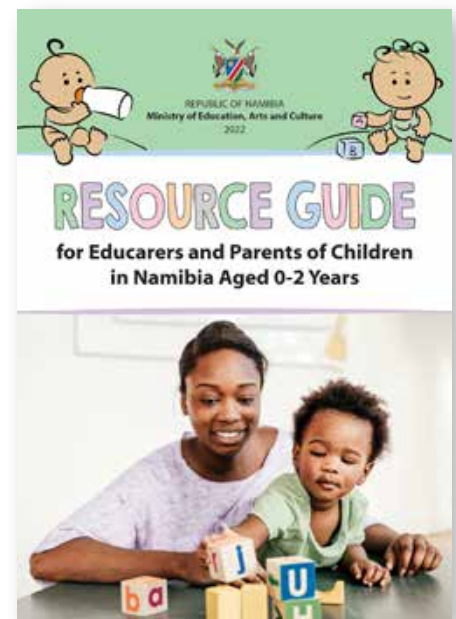
What is covered in this curriculum

This curriculum is divided into four parts, each focusing on a particular set of Early Childhood Development (ECD) resource topics. Each part corresponds with those in the accompanying *Resource Guide* (pictured on the right) for the educators, parents and caregivers who provide care for children in the age group 0-2 years.

PART 1

Part 1 provides for an understanding of ECD. Three main topics are discussed in this part:

- the importance of ECD in the first 1000 days;
- how children develop – i.e. the developmental domains, development stages and holistic development; and
- factors that affect the potential growth and development of children.



PART 2

Part 2 looks at play as an important element in child development. It further looks at the role of the educators and primary caregivers as important agents in early learning. This part covers important aspects of childhood education, and at Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) as an important decision-making tool within ECD. This part also offers guidance on aspects of behaviour management or positive discipline, and on classroom management, with the aim of providing a conducive environment for learning and development.

PART 3

Part 3 focuses on developmental guidelines, milestones, assessment opportunities, and possible signs of developmental delays which may occur in a child's development. It includes assessment tools to be used by educators and primary caregivers for assessing and analysing children's development and progress. These assessment tools are based on the developmental milestones and age groups. Families and communities in which children are raised play an important role in their development. This part discusses the links with families and communities and possible strategies to strengthen the relationship between ECD centres, families and communities.

PART 4

Part 4 looks at nutrition as fundamental for good health, growth and development during the early years of a child's life. Being active during their early years, children like to explore the environment around them, which puts them at risk of injuries, especially if their environment is not safe. Educators and caregivers should be equipped with practical guidance and know-how to manage health and safety risks when working with children. Therefore, this part discusses the importance of food and nutrition as well as general health and safety matters.

Goals and objectives

This curriculum is intended for use with children aged 0-2 years. It is tailored to the needs of ECD service providers, educators, parents and caregivers in Namibia, and aims to guide them to provide quality ECD care. The goals of this curriculum are:

- to promote children's education by way of responsive and sensitive caregivers who manage children's behaviour in a loving and caring way, and who observe children's development and progress regularly; and
- to ensure that children are growing up and learning in a holistic, safe, healthy, nutritious, inclusive, loving and stimulating environment, with sufficient opportunities for play, social interaction, creativity, exploration and sensory experiences.

The objectives of this curriculum are:

- to ensure that young children are provided with high-quality, consistent and safe relationships by their caregivers;
- to ensure that children are taken care of holistically by the caregivers, with attention to their health, nutrition, safety and protection; and
- to have children cared for in a culturally appropriate manner, with respect for their values, beliefs, experiences and language, and those of their families, communities and caregivers.

Principles

This curriculum is founded on a child-centred approach, meaning that the child is at the centre of the whole educational process. According to this key principle, the curriculum is designed so as to take into consideration each child's individual needs, characteristics, age, social and cultural environment, interests and potential. In other words, it acknowledges that children are not uniform, and adjusts to each child's needs. This child-centred curriculum is meant to empower children, by allowing them to be themselves, make choices, take responsibility for their choices, and have holistic experiences based on their individual interests and personality. Children are active, holistic beings and capable individuals, whose diverse competencies are supported by this curriculum.

Simultaneously, the curriculum implementation is planned within an open framework that acknowledges and addresses the diverse interests and needs of children in a holistic manner. Children's experiences and their active participatory role in the development and educational process are extremely valued. The importance of learning through play is well understood and supported, hence this aspect of ECD is integrated into this document.

National ECD policies and frameworks

This curriculum is guided by the national guiding policies and frameworks pictured below.



Inclusive education

Inclusive education is the right of every child. It promotes participation in, or access to, the full range of educational programmes and services offered by the education system. It is based on the principles of supporting and celebrating the diversity found among all children and removing all barriers to learning and development.

This curriculum is designed to promote inclusivity for every child in Namibia, where each child has the right to grow, develop and learn according to her/his own needs and characteristics. Kindly refer to the guidelines on planning for learning and teaching in an inclusive classroom found in the *Curriculum Framework for Inclusive Education: Supplement to the National Curriculum For Basic Education* (Ministry of Education, 2014).





PART I



In this part of the curriculum, the focus is to provide an understanding of, and background to, Early Childhood Development (ECD). This part discusses the importance of ECD in the first 1000 days of a child's life; how children develop; and how educarers and parents/guardians can support children to develop holistically.

1.1 The importance of Early Childhood Development in the first 1000 days

The first 1000 days of life – from conception to age 3 – is a very important period for child development. During this period, a child's brain can form 1000 neural connections every second, and recent research has shown that the speed could be up to one million connections per second! These connections are triggered by rich, loving, caring, safe and protected environments, in the context of responsive and playful caregiving that fosters bonding and secure attachment, contributing to positive holistic child development.



The brain of a 3-year-old is twice as active as that of an adult, and the connections made by the child's brain are the building blocks of the child's future.

The first 1000 days are a time of enormous potential as well as, simultaneously, vulnerability (thousanddays.org). What happens in those 1000 days defines to a large extent the course of a person's life, in terms of the ability to grow, develop, learn, interact with others, work, and succeed in life. This period determines, in return, the long-term health, stability and prosperity of the society in which the person lives.

The way that children are nourished, loved and cared for during this period has a huge impact on a child's ability to grow, develop, learn and thrive. This is because the first 1000 days are when a child's brain begins to grow and develop, and when the foundations for their lifelong health are built. During this period, the development of cognitive skills, emotional wellbeing, social competence and physical and mental health builds the foundation for success into the adult years. The environment, relationships, nutrition and stimulation in the first 1000 days are the pillars of a human being's development, and these pillars shape future outcomes in a child's life and his/her society at large.

Here are some examples of early stimulation and care, and their benefits:

- **Children must be stimulated** from the earliest possible moment. A child who is read to, talked to, sung to and played with is not only happier today, but will have a better cognitive capacity and a higher level of social and emotional intelligence, and consequently a better chance to succeed and live a fuller, more productive and happier life.
- **Children must receive adequate nutrition** according to their age-group needs, so that they grow with healthy bodies and healthy minds. A well-balanced diet is essential for brain development and physical wellbeing.
- **Children must be protected.** Violence, abuse, neglect and traumatic experiences produce high levels of cortisol – a hormone that triggers the ‘fight or flight’ response to danger. When cortisol levels remain high for too long, they produce toxic stress and anxiety, which limit brain connectivity in children and can result in aggression, violence and problematic social and emotional comportments.
- **Children must live in a caring and loving environment.** Families, schools, communities and society at large must provide healthy, caring and loving environments for children, so that they become more calm and peaceful adults, which leads to a well-functioning society.

Therefore, stimulation, nutrition, protection and a caring and loving environment together shape children’s futures, and affect the futures of their society, economy and country at large.

Families, caregivers and educarers have the responsibility to stimulate children by providing care, nutrition, protection, love and support, and sufficient and appropriate opportunities for early learning. These inputs will help to break the cycle of poverty, reduce social inequality, increase economic activity and reduce unemployment.

1.2 How children develop

Child development is a process that every child goes through. This process involves learning, developing and mastering skills such as sitting, walking, running, skipping, listening attentively, talking, waiting patiently, taking turns, or drawing. Children learn the skills called **developmental milestones**. These are physical, social, emotional and cognitive skills that children need to learn and accomplish as they develop. These milestones are discussed in more detail in Part 3.

Four **development domains** (or areas) shape educational programmes in the early years. They are interconnected, in that each influences the development of the others. The four domains are:

- **physical development** – encompassing gross motor skills (GM), fine motor skills (FM), balance (B), coordination (C), and health and nutrition (HN);
- **social development** – establishing and maintaining relationships with other people, and socialising with family members and people outside the home;
- **emotional development** – achieving positive self-esteem and handling emotions; and
- **cognitive development** – perceiving, thinking, reasoning, concentrating, remembering, developing language, solving problems, and gaining an understanding of the world.

To enable children to reach their full potential, parents/caregivers and families must support them in all four domains, through care, love, affection, patience and sufficient opportunities for learning through play. Children grow, develop and learn according to developmental stages (age groups), developmental domains (areas of development – physical, social, emotional and cognitive) and competencies/milestones per area of development.

The table below outlines the developmental milestones per stage (age group) and domain. More detailed information about the four domains is provided on the following pages.

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES AND DOMAINS, AND MILESTONES PER STAGE AND DOMAIN	
NEWBORN (0-3 MONTHS)	
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starts to hold head up Begins to push up while on belly Arm and leg motions becoming smoother
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begins to smile at people around him/her Attempts to look at people around him/her
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can briefly calm him/herself (possibly bringing hands to mouth and sucking on hand)
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starts to pay attention to people and objects Begins to follow and recognise people and objects with his/her eyes Responds to sounds
INFANT (3-12 MONTHS)	
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At 3-6 months: controls head movements and bring hands together At 6-9 months: sits without support, babbles and responds to his/her name At 9-12 months: picks up objects; passes an object from one hand to the other; crawls and possibly stands with support; and rocks back and forth
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copies movements and facial expressions (e.g. a smile or frown) Likes to play with others, and may get upset or cry when playing stops
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to love and affection (e.g. smiles back, cuddles or hugs) Can briefly calm him/herself (possibly bringing hands to mouth and sucking on hand) Makes eye contact with those around him/her Bonds Cries when hungry or uncomfortable and usually stops when held
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises familiar people and things at a distance Crying sounds start to differ according to whether hungry, in pain or tired Copies sounds he/she hears
TODDLER (12-36 MONTHS)	
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Becomes more curious, active and expressive Likes to move through the environment, and to stand up and hold on to something Gets into a sitting position, and sits without support Pulls up to stand, using furniture for support Moves things from one hand to the other, and likes to put objects in his/her mouth Imitates hand clapping
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Might be afraid of strangers
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has favourite toys and other objects that he/she likes have close and play with
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looks for objects or toys hidden by adults Tracks objects as they fall Makes gestures to communicate (e.g. points to something he/she wants) Understands the word "no" Makes lots of different sounds as a way to interact and communicate with the people around

Physical development

Physical development refers to the growth and development of motor skills. Physical activities are crucial in children's all-round development, health and wellbeing. The learning of gross and fine motor skills enables children to develop sensory skills, strength, coordination, balance and body awareness through tummy time, crawling, and playing with people, toys or other objects suitable for the age group.

Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing a healthy body and achieving social and emotional wellbeing, while fine motor skills develop eye-hand coordination which is later extremely beneficial for early literacy (early reading and preparatory writing). It is important to provide plenty of opportunities for children to explore the world around them through sensory experiences such as touch, feel, smell, taste and hearing. Other playthings and activities such as building blocks, puzzles, arts (drawing, painting and moulding with dough) and crafts, and the use of small tools such as spoons or paper scissors, enable children to develop proficiency, control, imagination and creativity, and simultaneously to become more autonomous and independent.

Fine motor skills enable children to use small muscles, specifically their hands and fingers, to pick up small objects, hold a spoon, turn pages in a book, or use a crayon to draw, whereas gross motor skills enable one to use large muscles. For example: a 6-month-old baby learns how to sit up with some support; a 12-month-old baby learns how to pull up to stand, holding onto furniture; and a 5-year-old learns how to skip.

To develop this domain, parents and caregivers must provide opportunities for children to play freely both indoors and outdoors. It is our responsibility as adults and primary caregivers to create play-based activities (e.g. games) to promote physical development.

Social development

As human beings, we are social beings, and we begin to develop social skills at an early age. By social development, we mean the development of skills to establish and maintain relationships with other people. Social development refers to the process by which a child learns to interact with family members and people outside the home. Under this domain, children develop skills to socialise, and to establish and maintain healthy relationships with other people.

As children develop and gain a better understanding of their individuality within their community, they also gain skills to communicate with other people and to process their own attitudes and actions. Social development refers to how a child develops friendships and other relationships with peers, family members and other people around her/him. Social development impacts many other forms of development that a child experiences. During the first two years of life, social development takes place rapidly.

A child's ability to interact healthily with the people around her/him can influence everything from learning a new word as a toddler to being able to resist peer pressure as a high school student, to successfully navigating the challenges of adulthood. Healthy social skills help children to become strong adults.

To develop this domain, parents and caregivers must provide opportunities for children to interact with other people, play with others and have conversations with those around them.

Emotional development

Emotional development means the ability to recognise and manage inner feelings and emotions. This form of development begins with learning to identify and express our feelings. When we can acknowledge and accept our feelings, we can learn to manage them and to recognise what other people might be feeling. This is the foundation of self-control, empathy and emotional intelligence. These skills are extremely important to the successful functioning of our society. Children express emotions through actions such as crying, laughing and screaming. A child who feels loved will smile more often than one who feels sad or insecure, and will treat other people nicely.

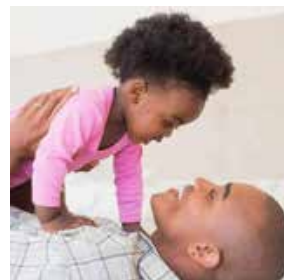
Parents and caregivers can support children's emotional development by speaking to them about their feelings, teaching them the words to describe their feelings, asking them how they are feeling today and why, and providing opportunities to promote positive self-esteem, self-awareness, acceptance and empathy. Positive self-esteem reduces the risk of dropping out of school, depression, suicide and the like. Children need our help to identify their feelings and emotions, and to understand and manage them. Emotional development is an important pillar of child development.

Cognitive development

Cognitive development – also referred to as intellectual development or development of the mind – pertains to how a child perceives, thinks, reasons, concentrates, remembers, develops language, solves problems and gains an understanding of the world. It involves how children explore and figure things out. Cognitive development is linked to memory and the ability to learn new information. This domain includes the development of knowledge and skills such as those employed in mathematics, science, social studies, language and creative arts.

Much research has shown that even at a very young age, children have analytical skills, meaning that they can observe, learn, explore and discover the world around them. These skills can be stimulated as from birth. For example, giving newborns, infants and toddlers opportunities for exploratory and sensory play fosters their natural curiosity and engagement with their environment, which in turn lay the foundation for science, environmental learning, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity and imagination.

Parents and caregivers can support children's cognitive development by providing opportunities for playing with objects such as building blocks, doing puzzles, exploring different materials through their senses (touching, hearing, smelling, seeing and tasting), conversing with the child, asking the child questions about how something works or why they drew a particular picture, and so on.



1.3 Holistic child development

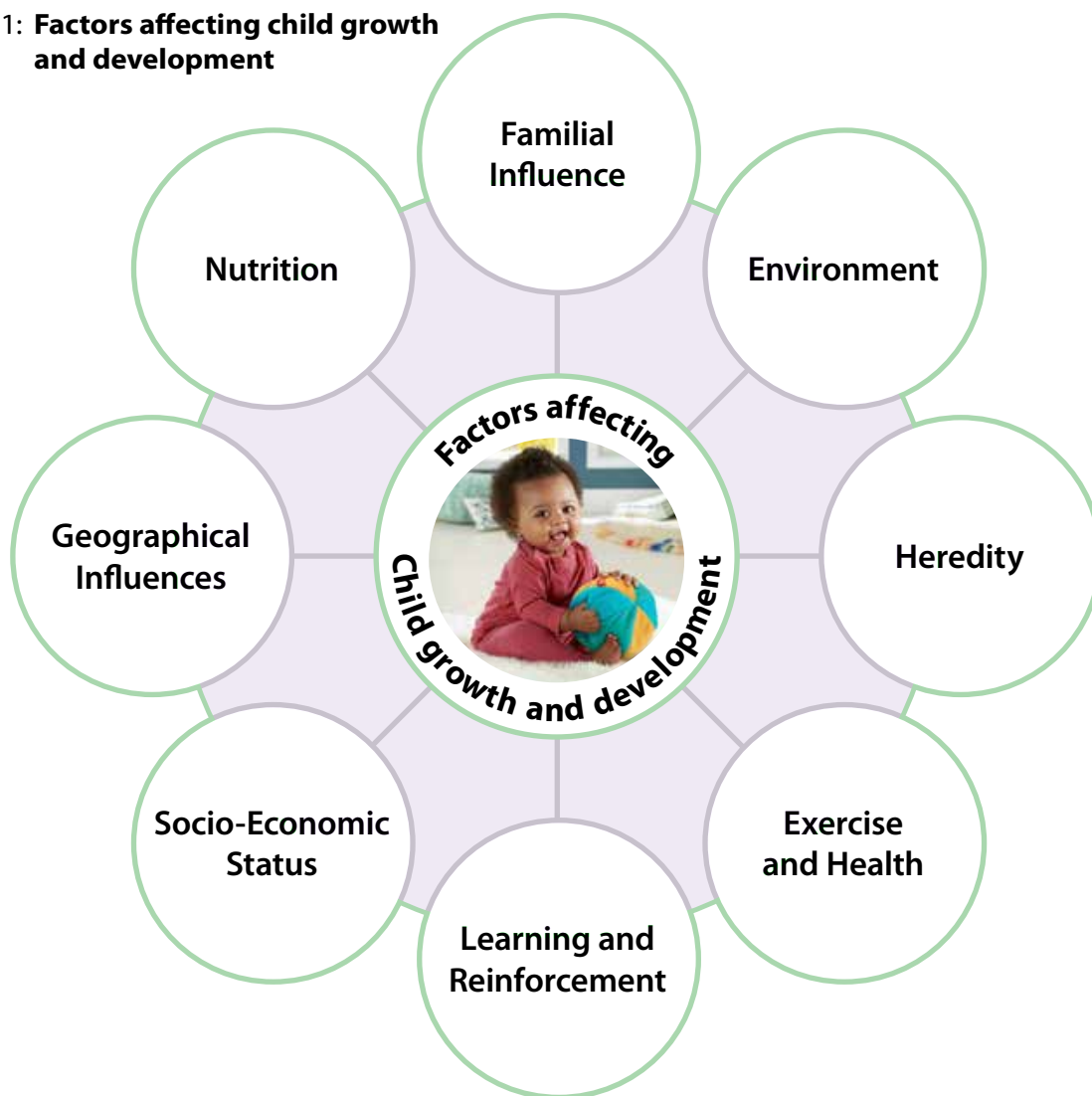
In Early Childhood Education, supporting a child's development in all four developmental domains (physical, social, emotional and cognitive) is crucial for school readiness life success. Child development begins in the womb, and learning starts at birth. A child's development is a joyous journey of discovery, adventure, and trial and error.

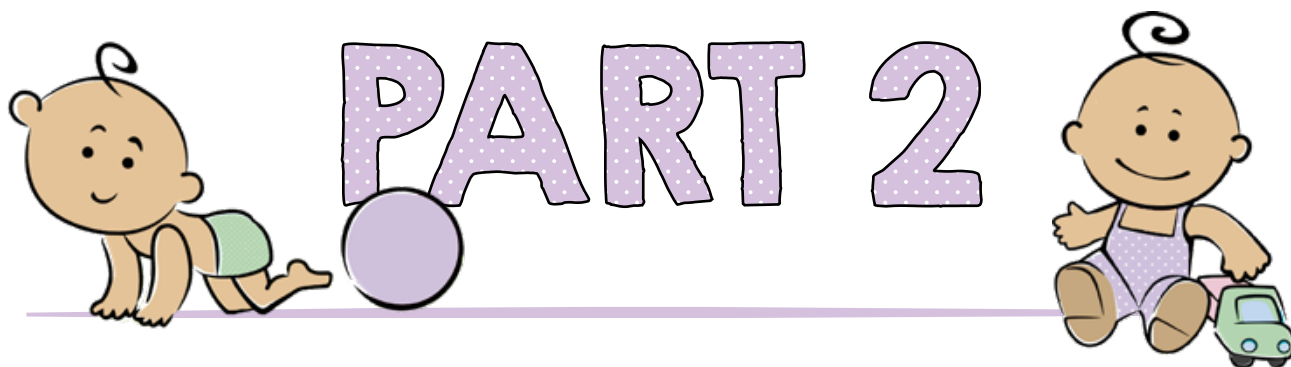
Holistic child development refers to the growth and development of the child as a whole. A holistic view of the child helps us to understand why the child acts in a certain way and does the things he/she does. Holistic child development consists of several interrelated dimensions, which include physical, social, emotional and cognitive development.

1.4 Factors that affect the child's potential growth and development

Now that we have an understanding of how children develop, we look at factors that affect their growth and development. Figure 1 below shows some of the many factors.

Figure 1: **Factors affecting child growth and development**





2.1 Learning through play

“Play and learning are like the two wings of a butterfly. One cannot exist without another.”

– Carla Rinaldi

The first 1000 days of life (birth through 3 years of age) are extremely significant in shaping the child’s brain. ‘Hands-on’ and playful experiences increase the number of brain synapses (connections) that shape and pattern the growing brain. Play is key to promoting child development, and has been recognised by the United Nations as a basic right of every child.

Play, in the context of secure attachments to adults, gives children the enrichment, stimulation and physical activity that they need to develop their brains for future learning (Shore, 1997).

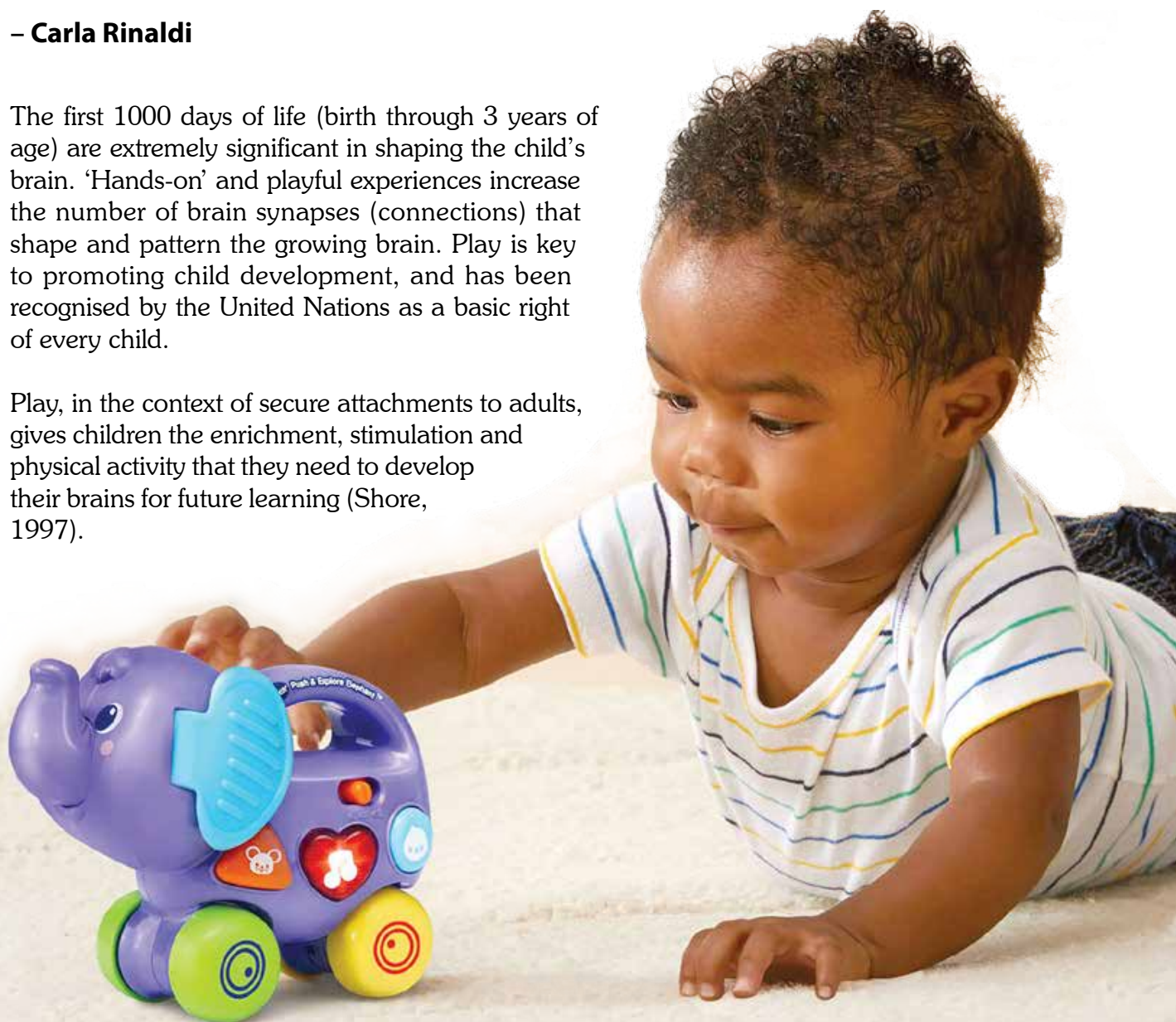
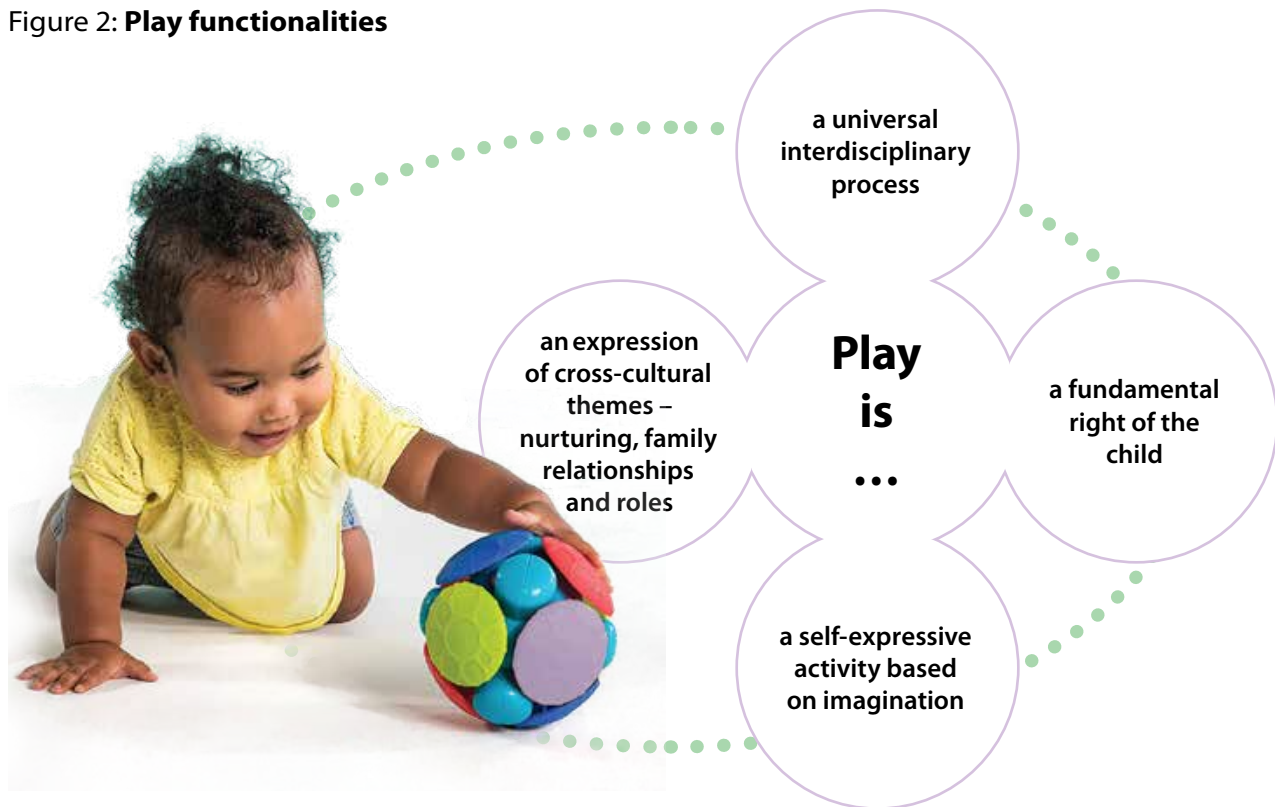


Figure 2: **Play functionalities**



2.2 The importance of play

In recent years, the benefits of play, particularly its critical role for early brain development, have been increasingly discussed, emphasised and included in early education policy (UNICEF, 2018).

Play is one of the most important ways in which young children gain knowledge and skills, and it contributes to children's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development. Play is an extremely important component of child development, for these reasons:

- It promotes healthy brain development.
- It enhances children's social, emotional and cognitive development.
- It allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination.
- It promotes children's learning readiness, learning behaviours, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- It allows children to create and explore a world that they can master, conquering their fears while practising adult roles.
- It provides opportunities for children to learn how to work in groups, share, negotiate, solve conflicts and acquire self-advocacy skills.
- It gives children a way to practise decision-making skills, move at their own pace, discover their areas of interest and ultimately engage fully in pursuing their passions.
- It helps children to develop new competencies such as confidence, positive self-esteem and resiliency.
- It builds active and healthy bodies.

Play is crucial to every child's healthy growth and development. And, as highlighted above, it is through play that young children learn best. Children learn and develop through different types of play, as discussed in the next section.

2.3 Types of play

There are different types of play, and play takes place in different contexts. Each type and context of play affects each area of development – physical, cognitive, creative, social-emotional and linguistic (Pellegrini, 2011). All types of play are equally important.

Figure 3: **Types of play**



Free play: This is unstructured play, with children choosing what they want to play, outdoors or indoors. During free play, children use their imagination or enjoy physical activity rather than being guided or coached. Free play should be part of the daily routine in Early Childhood Education. This type of play is a very important component of an ECD daily programme or schedule, because it offers a good opportunity for educators to observe the individual child.

Manipulative play (or construction play): This involves manipulating and exploring objects, parts and materials such as beads, puzzles, building blocks and construction sets. Children will construct something new or manipulate objects and materials to explore how they fit together. It includes building or creating something using natural or manufactured materials (e.g. building houses in the sand or doing puzzles).

Role play (or dramatic play): Children take on roles in familiar situations such as a family celebration or a daily routine. The child recreates everyday activities or situations that she/he has observed. For example, a young child gently rock a doll while feeding it a bottle.

Fantasy play: This type of play is non-literal, meaning it is not realistic. It invokes a child's imaginative capacity. Children perform activities without the materials and the social context necessary for such activities in reality. For example, they imagine they are a prince and princess living in a castle.

Exploratory or messy play: Children explore the properties and functions of objects, materials and equipment. Exploratory play involves using physical skills and sensations to learn about materials and their properties, what they feel like and what can be done with them. It involves using all their senses. Children will explore objects by looking at, touching, biting, tasting, smelling, listening to and moving them from one place to another. They usually do this repeatedly until the learning process is completed.

Symbolic play: This involves converting an object at hand into the toy or prop that is needed through a build process of fantasy or imagination (Miller & Almon, 2009, p. 54). For example, a child may use a piece of wood to symbolise a person or an object – such as a stick being used as a sword.

Guided play: This involves play with rules and criteria. The play is structured, meaning there are rules to follow such as games.

In addition to the above, play takes many forms, in the sense that a child can play alone, with another child or in a group, and in different ways. Here are some examples of how children play:

- **Solitary/Individual play:** The child is completely engrossed in playing and does not seem to notice other kids. The child plays alone.
- **Onlooker behaviour play:** The child takes an interest in other children's play, but does not join in. She/he may ask questions or talk to other children, but the main activity is simply to watch.
- **Parallel play:** The child mimics other children's play. For example, she/he uses the same toy as others, but does not actively engage with them.
- **Associative play:** The child is more interested in other children than in the toys that others are using. This form of play involves strong social interaction between the children while they play.
- **Cooperative play:** Some organisation and planning enter into the play. For example, each child adopts a role and all act as a group.

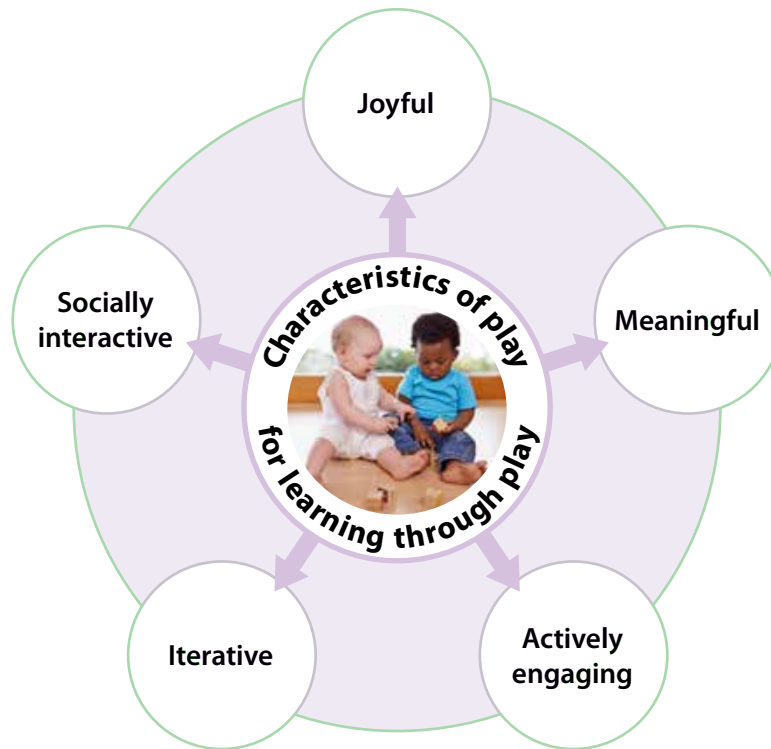
2.4 Learning through play happens when the activity is ...

"... (1) experienced as joyful; (2) helps children find meaning in what they are doing or learning; (3) involves active, engaged, minds-on thinking; (4) involves iterative thinking (experimentation, hypothesis testing, etc.); and (5) involves social interaction. ... These five characteristics ebb and flow as children are engaged in learning through play activities and all five are not necessary all the time. But over time, children should experience moments of joy and surprise, a meaningful connection, be active and absorbed, iterate and engage with others." (LEGO Foundation, 2017)

These five characteristics are drawn from research on how children learn best and how to foster a playful mindset. Let us look at them individually:

- **Joyful:** Joy is at the heart of play. The more joyful the activity, the more the child will engage in it and learn from it. Research has shown how curiosity and positive experiences are linked to learning. For example, it is evident that infants learn more from a surprising event than from an event that they expected.
- **Actively engaging:** When children are actively involved and focused in the play activity, they learn from it.
- **Meaningful:** When the child can relate a new experience to something already known, the experience becomes more meaningful. In play, children often explore what they have seen and done, or have noticed others doing, as a way of grasping what it means. By doing so, they can express and expand their understanding through a variety of skills.
- **Iterative:** To iterate means to do or say something again and again. From a toddler trying different ways to build a high tower with blocks, to a young child discovering the angles of geometric shapes, iteration – trying out possibilities, revising hypotheses and discovering the next question – increases learning.
- **Socially interactive:** Social interaction is a powerful tool for learning. By communicating their thoughts, and by understanding the thoughts of others through direct interaction and sharing ideas, children are able not only to enjoy being with others, but also to gain a deeper understanding of others and build more powerful relationships.

Figure 4: **Five characteristics of play that induce learning through play**





2.5 Playing with infants and toddlers

Children love to play. When you tickle their face or play with their fingers and toes, for example, they really enjoy it. Most babies love playing peek-a-boo over and over again. When they are very little, they love just wriggling around on the floor, which for them is both baby exercise and world exploration – and this is great for their gross muscle development. There are many ways to play with, stimulate and interact with the children. Here are some examples:

- **Singing:** Sing a known song or nursery rhyme, or freestyle and make up your own.
- **Speaking to the child:** Describe the things around the child; recite a nursery rhyme or poem; or read from a book. This helps to develop their speaking and communication skills.
- **Clapping games:** There are many hand-clapping games. For a very small child, you can simply take turns clapping hands. Clapping develops many skills at the same time, such as muscle control, fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination and sound awareness.
- **Dancing:** Play music and dance with the child in your arms. Most children love the gentle rocking motion and being close. This is a great activity for bonding with the child, and for developing the child's social and emotional skills.
- **Play with toys or other safe objects:** This type of play is a simple way to stimulate baby curiosity and develop many skills, such as coordination and balance. Encourage the child to reach for and do things with the toy/object, such as pushing, pulling, lifting and passing it from one hand to the other.
- **Tummy time:** This time is an excellent opportunity to build the child's upper body strength. You can introduce tummy time as from birth, by laying the child on your chest (but only when you are wide awake and unlikely to fall asleep), and gradually increasing the amount of time you do this day by day. Then, when the child is ready, try tummy time on the floor. Tummy time strengthens the child's back, neck and shoulders, and gives them a different view of their environment.

- **Crawling:** The child will probably start crawling (although not all children crawl – some shuffle around on their bottoms) at around 8-10 months. This is an exciting time for children and people around, because the ability to move around gives them a bit of independence and a chance to explore their environment. Caregivers and educators must create space in the house or classroom for the child to explore the surroundings safely. Never forget to close the door of the room in which the child is moving around. Children should be supervised all the time. Keep your eyes on the child constantly. If you're worried that the child isn't showing any signs of moving by 12 months, ask a doctor or nurse for advice.

The table below presents some options for play and toys that you can use to promote a child's growth, development and learning.

OPTIONS FOR PLAY AND TOYS THAT PROMOTE GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING – FOR NEWBORNS, INFANTS AND TODDLERS (0-36 MONTHS)		
Skills	Play	Toys that Support
Physical Health and Motor Development	<p>Activities that promote motor development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Crawling; playing with balls or stuffed old stockings; playing with pulling and riding toys and small slides; dancing; reaching, grasping, pulling and pushing; play that moves the head, limbs and whole body ○ Pretend and fantasy play ○ Arts and crafts – painting, drawing, and moulding with clay and play-dough ○ From 3 months, encourage tummy time by laying the baby on his/her tummy – often but not for long to start with – which helps to develop the muscles needed for sitting and crawling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Toys ○ Balls ○ Musical instruments 
Social and Emotional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Playing games involving facial expressions (i.e. expressing emotions) ○ Reading stories, poems and rhymes ○ Pretend and fantasy play ○ Arts and crafts – painting, drawing, and moulding with clay and play-dough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Soft fabric toys ○ Picture books ○ Wood or plastic blocks (15-30 pieces, preferably of different colours sizes and shapes) ○ Puzzles (4-6 pieces)
Cognitive Development Logic and Reasoning Language Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reading stories, singing and dancing ○ Doing puzzles ○ Playing with building blocks ○ Performing puppet shows ○ Playing musical instruments ○ Playing with water and sand ○ Pretend and fantasy play ○ Arts and crafts – painting, drawing, and moulding with clay and play-dough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pictures/photos – of familiar people (e.g. family members), pets and other animals ○ Cloth books – make by sewing pieces of fabric together and drawing simple pictures using a non-toxic marker ○ Puppets – e.g. sock puppets, made by stuffing socks and sewing on buttons for eyes, wool for hair, etc. ○ Shakers with different sounds ○ Stacking toys ○ Matching games ○ Sorting games ○ Puzzles with large pieces ○ Sand and water play

2.6 Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) is an approach to teaching young children that is grounded in research on how young children develop and learn. It involves implementing intentional practices for the benefit of child development. In Early Childhood Education, DAP functions as both a perspective and a decision-making tool, whereby the caregiver or educator nurtures the child's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development by basing all practices and decisions on:

- a) theories of child development;
- b) the individually identified strengths and needs of each child, uncovered through authentic assessment (qualitative, informal and continuous); and
- c) the child's cultural and social background as defined by his/her community, family history (background) and family structure.

Educators are decision-makers who have to make decisions daily about each child's progress and development. These decisions will define their programmes, daily schedules, activities and assessments. To take conscious educational decisions to stimulate and promote learning and development, educators need to know each child under their care and supervision. It is extremely important that educators and caregivers have information and knowledge about each child. They must know who each child is, what he/she likes, and what his/her favourite toy, play activity, colour and food are. Each child is unique and must be treated and respected as such. Child development principles combined with effective early learning practices and knowledge of children's characteristics and personality are vital for development and learning to take place.

2.6.1 Four core considerations of DAP

- a) **Age appropriateness:** Child development follows general, sequential patterns, which are interrelated across the developmental domains (physical, social, emotional and cognitive). Knowledge and understanding of the milestones and sequences of child development helps in planning for promoting growth, development and learning, and for identifying activities, environments, experiences and strategies that will best serve this purpose.
- b) **Individual appropriateness:** Each child is an individual who develops in his/her own unique way. Knowledge of each child's strengths, abilities, needs, challenges, interests and temperament will help the educator to define each child's learning needs and approach. Knowledge of the children's individual skills, ideas, interests and joys will guide the educator on implementing activities that are interesting for each child. To get to know each child, the educator must gather information by conversing with each child at different times – during playtime, mealtime, story time, art time, etc. Another way to gather information about each child is through observation and continuous assessment, work samples such as paintings, and documentation and information from families and previous educators or ECD centres.
- c) **Social and cultural appropriateness:** Children come from different social and cultural backgrounds. Knowledge of each child's cultural and family background, and the unique values, language, lifestyle and beliefs of each child's family, helps to ensure that the educator provides experiences that respect each child's culture and are suited to each child and family. Educators must align and integrate the children's social backgrounds and cultures into child development and learning programme.

- d) **Meaningfulness to the child:** In early childhood, children learn best through play-based and hands-on experiences linked to their own environment, reality and interests. Child-centred programmes and activities foster children's confidence, independence, creativity and concentration skills.

2.6.2 Five key areas of DAP

- a) **Creating a caring community for children:** Build positive and responsive relationships between children, staff members, families and community members, within the community at large and within the programme. This link between groups is vital to create a community that supports all children as they develop and learn to their capacity in all domains. A caring and appreciative environment supports the learning process and learning success of a child.
- b) **Teaching to enhance development and learning:** Provide a balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Plan activities and experiences that will meet individual needs, interests and developmental milestones.
- c) **Planning activities to achieve important goals:** Develop a daily programme that reflects developmental milestones and appropriate early learning activities, and which supports individualised learning.
- d) **Assessing children's development and learning:** Link assessment to the developmental milestones, and use authentic assessment methods to measure each child's progress. The assessment tools must be qualitative, informal and continuous. Kindly refer to the tools in the section on "Assessment" in Part 3 of this Curriculum.
- e) **Establishing reciprocal relationships with families:** Working in partnership with the children's families is fundamental. Since children spend most of their time with their family, good collaboration with their families is essential. The more the educator and family share information, the better both can support the child's development. It is important to engage each family in their child's educational life, and to learn about each child's characteristics and family, and the parents' expectations. Educators must establish and maintain two-way communication and supportive relationships with all families. The relationship between the families and the ECD centre is crucial for child development and success.

In short, using DAP as a tool means using the knowledge of child development to implement a programme that is suitable for the stage of development (age) of the group of children. ECD programmes should incorporate DAP, which means considering and including the following principles when creating a programme or planning activities:

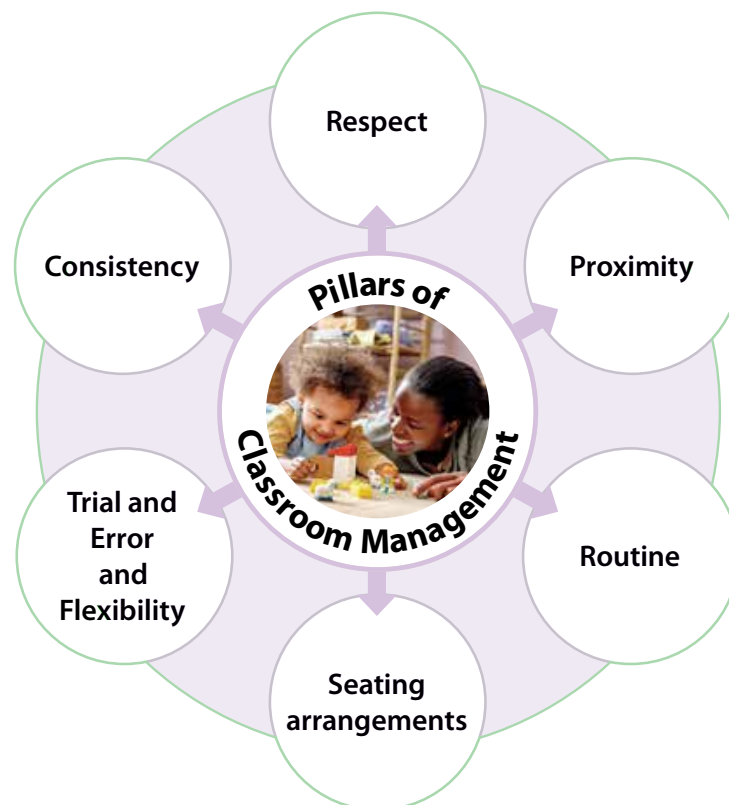
- a) **Age appropriateness:** Use the information about typical development within a specific age span to plan and organise the learning environment, activities and learning experiences.
- b) **Individual appropriateness:** Each child is unique in terms of the pattern and timing of development. Educators must plan activities to respond to individual differences and needs.
- c) **Child-guided and teacher-guided experiences:** Allocate time for the children to select from the many activities/experiences you've prepared. Plan playful, interactive small-group, large-group and individual activities.
- d) **Cultural and social responsiveness:** Respect the social and cultural contexts in which the children live.
- e) **Play:** Support the children's play as a way for them to learn and develop.

In synthesis, DAP refers to teaching decisions that educarers and teachers adopt. These vary and adapt to the age, experience, interests and abilities of individual children within a given age range.

2.7 Classroom management

Classroom management is defined as methods and strategies that educarers use to maintain a classroom environment that is conducive for children's learning and success. Although there are many pedagogical strategies involved in managing a classroom, a common denominator is making sure that the children are in an environment that allows them to develop holistically. Classroom management has six fundamental pillars, shown in Figure 4 and discussed below.

Figure 4: **The pillars of classroom management**



Respect: This is an important factor in classroom management. Before any instruction begins, mutual respect between the children and the educarers must be established. The children need to understand that there are certain rules that they must follow to ensure their learning progress. Similarly, the educarers need to understand that children are not necessarily willing to show respect to an adult without feeling that they have a reason for doing so. An adequate classroom seating arrangement will help to develop the respect needed for holistic child development.

Consistency: Organisation makes a classroom run smoothly. A consistent set of procedures and routines that the children are familiar with will help the classroom to run smoothly. Many educational specialists emphasise the importance of having procedures that are practised and revisited from day one. The less off-task time the children have, the more likely the educarer will be able to maintain quality classroom management.

Proximity: This helps educarers to supervise and manage what is going on in the classroom. Walking around the room and standing next to children who may be causing a problem will usually eliminate the problem quickly. It is important to understand that educarers standing in one place in the classroom, such as at their desk, will make children feel as if they are allowed to do whatever they like, since the educarers are not together with them.

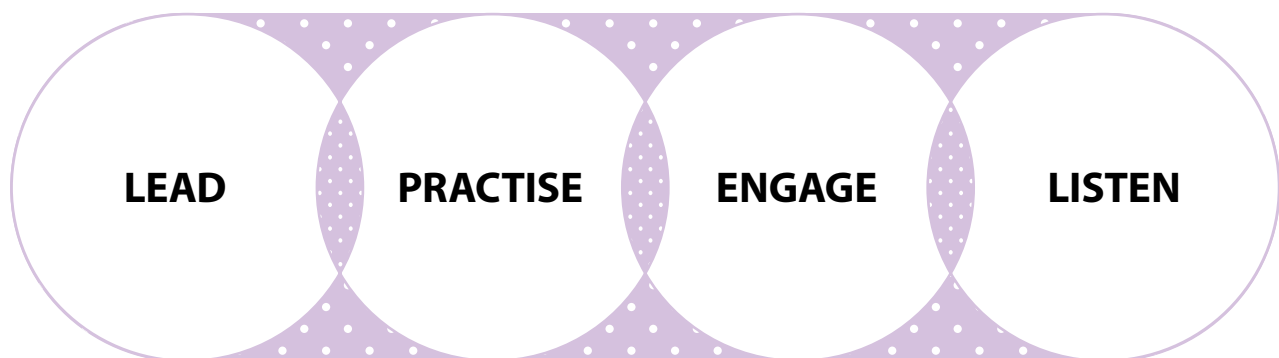
Seating arrangement: Classroom management can be affected by how the seats are arranged in the classroom. The seating arrangement is intimately linked with the children's behaviour. The seating has to be organised in such a way that the educarer can easily move around the room to monitor and support children during activities.

Routines: Clear, reliable routines and procedures help children to organise themselves in time and space. When children know exactly what is expected of them daily, they feel safe and secure. It is the educarer's responsibility to create a space that is safe, predictable, reliable and productive. Create daily routines that make it easy for children to understand and cope in the learning environment.

Trial and error, and flexibility: Trial and error are part of a child's journey. Educarers must allow children to try, make mistakes and learn from those mistakes. Another important aspect is flexibility. Educarers should be flexible and allow children to make mistakes without being hard on them. Use each mistake as a learning opportunity for growth and development.

In general, to manage a classroom efficiently, you must:

- lead by example;
- practise what you say;
- engage children in the classroom dynamic; and
- listen to children's opinions, wishes and desires



Kindly refer to the *Resource Guide* for examples of class management tools.

2.8 Managing behaviour / positive discipline

Children need boundaries and consistency to feel safe and secure, and at the same time to know what others expect from them. Parents and caregivers should be equipped with the necessary skills to manage children's behaviour and respond appropriately. Clear rules, boundaries and open communication help children to understand that their behaviour always has consequences, and those consequences are carried out in a predictable, caring and loving atmosphere.

Clear rules and boundaries help parents and caregivers to educate young children. Parents and caregivers must set clear ground rules and have a conversation with their children to explain what they (adults) expect from them (children). The conversation should be focused on what the child can do and not on what not to do. Rules should be articulated in a positive rather than negative way. For example, say “be kind” rather than “don’t beat”. This way, we promote good behaviour and kindness and not the opposite. How rules are articulated and applied defines how children will react to them. Give children clear, calm instructions, and be consistent from day one. If a rule is broken, parents and caregivers must act immediately while staying calm and talking to the child politely. Give the child a chance to express his/her opinions and feelings, so that you understand the reasons behind the behaviour. Once this conversation has taken place, ask the child to tell you what he/she thinks should be the consequences of his/her actions. Give the child time to think about this and give you an honest answer.

This approach develops the child’s sense of responsibility, self-introspection, self-evaluation and emotional intelligence. These are very important skills for children’s social and emotional development. Make sure to speak politely to children all the time, even when they have done something wrong. Instead of being angry or upset, be understanding and accommodate the child’s needs.

2.9 The role of educarers and primary caregivers

Caring for a child is the primary goal of all parents and caregivers. To grow optimally, children need to feel safe, secure, loved, stimulated, happy and healthy at all times. In addition to care, children need constant positive stimulation, which is also critical to children’s learning and development. Since caregivers are the first teachers of infants and toddlers, they must provide plenty of learning opportunities to promote holistic child development. These opportunities should be provided through play. Every routine is an opportunity to stimulate children. For example, during caregiving routines, caregivers must speak, sing and play with the child. These moments are ideal for fostering the child’s development, including the development of the brain.

In using caregiving routines as opportunities to promote development and learning, caregivers create the foundation for lifelong learning, and at the same time teach infants and toddlers a variety of developmental and life skills. Caregivers must supervise children at all times, and must play with the children and listen and speak to them gently and with respect. During mealtimes, caregivers should be present the whole time, to ensure an atmosphere of peace so that the children can eat undisturbed at their own pace, and to assist if any need arises.

Overall, the role of the educarer and primary caregiver is to provide a positive, healthy, loving, caring, joyful and playful environment that allows for children to develop, learn and grow. This includes providing:

- physical support;
- emotional support;
- psychological support; and
- protection.

The “Caregiving Routine Schedule / Daily Programme” on the next page exemplifies a half-day and full-day daily schedule/programme that best promotes holistic child development and early learning.

Caregiving Routine Schedule / Daily Programme

HALF-DAY DAILY PROGRAMME			
Time	0-1 Year Class	Time	1-2 Years Class
07:00 – 08:30	Arrival; Free Play	07:00 – 08:30	Arrival; Free Play
08:30 – 09:00	Toilet Routine / Nappies Time	08:30 – 09:00	Toilet Routine / Potty Training
09:00 – 09:30	Circle Time – Songs, Rhymes, Dance, Games and Arts	09:00 – 09:30	Circle Time – Songs, Rhymes, Dance, Games and Arts
09:30 – 10:00	Toilet Routine / Nappies Time	09:30 – 10:00	Toilet Routine / Potty Training
10:00 – 10:30	Snack Time	10:00 – 10:30	Snack Time
10:30 – 11:00	Toilet Routine / Nappies Time	10:30 – 11:00	Toilet Routine / Potty Training
11:00 – 12:00	Nap Time	11:00 – 11:30	Outdoor Play /Nap Time
12:00 – 12:30	Toilet Routine / Nappies Time	11:30 – 12:00	Toilet Routine / Potty Training
12:30 – 13:00	Story Time	12:00 – 13:00	Story Time
13:00 – 14:00	Home Time	13:00 – 14:00	Home Time
FULL-DAY DAILY PROGRAMME			
Time	0-1 Year Class	Time	1-2 Years Class
07:00 – 08:30	Arrival; Free Play	07:00 – 08:30	Arrival; Free Play
08:30 – 09:00	Toilet Routine / Nappies Time	08:30 – 09:00	Toilet Routine / Potty Training
09:00 – 09:30	Circle Time – Songs, Rhymes, Dance, Games and Arts	09:00 – 09:30	Circle Time – Songs, Rhymes, Dance, Games and Arts
09:30 – 10:00	Toilet Routine / Nappies Time	09:30 – 10:00	Toilet Routine / Potty Training
10:00 – 10:30	Snack Time	10:00 – 10:30	Snack Time
10:30 – 11:00	Toilet Routine / Nappies Time	10:30 – 11:00	Toilet Routine / Potty Training
11:00 – 11:30	Story Time	11:00 – 11:30	Story time
11:30 – 12:00	Toilet Routine / Nappies Time	11:30 – 12:00	Toilet Routine / Nappies Time
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch	12:00 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30 – 13:00	Toilet Routine / Nappies Time	12:30 – 13:00	Toilet Routine / Potty Training
13:00 – 14:00	Nap Time	13:00 – 14:00	Nap Time
14:00 – 14:30	Toilet Routine / Nappies Time	14:00 – 14:30	Toilet Routine / Potty Training
14:30 – 15:00	Snack Time	14:30 – 15:00	Snack Time
15:00 – 15:30	Toilet Routine / Nappies Time	15:00 – 15:30	Toilet Routine / Potty Training
15:30 – 16:00	Music Time	15:30 – 16:00	Music Time
16:00 – 17:00	Free Play	16:00 – 17:00	Free Play (indoor or outdoor)
17:00 – 17:30	Home Time	16:00 – 17:00	Home Time



PART 3



In this part of the Curriculum, we discuss developmental guidelines, milestones, assessment opportunities, and signs of possible delays that may occur in a child's development. This part also includes assessment tools developed for the educators and caregivers to use for assessing and analysing the development and progress of the children in their care.



3.1 Developmental guidelines

Child development stages are the theoretical milestones of child development. Learning about child development involves studying patterns of growth and development, from which guidelines for ‘normal’ development are construed. Developmental norms are referred to as “milestones”, and these define the recognised pattern of development that children are expected to follow. Development begins in the womb, and learning starts at birth. There is wide variation in what is considered ‘normal’, due to variation in genetic, cognitive, physical, family, cultural, nutritional, educational and environmental factors.

Each child develops uniquely; however, using norms helps one to understand these general patterns of development while recognising the wide variation between individual children. A child’s development is a joyous journey of discovery, adventure, trials and errors – until one fine day when, skill by skill, it all comes together and the child gets it right. These developmental guidelines will guide you as an educator or parent/caregiver on how to stimulate children based on age, developmental domains, needs, and most importantly their interests. Children should be developed holistically. Holistic development means seeing the child as a whole person, physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively. It is important to remember that the different types of development occur at the same time, and that one domain of development will influence the development of the other domains. For example, a child’s ability to crawl or walk (physical development) will influence the child’s ability to explore the environment and learn from it (cognitive development).

The environment around the child plays a crucial role in his/her development and learning. A calm and peaceful environment is required at school and home for a well-balanced child. Another aspect of child development is the importance of speaking and communicating with the child frequently. This can take many forms, such as talking, singing, reciting rhymes and storytelling (reading books and orally telling stories). Such activities help to develop language, listening and responding skills, speaking and communication skills, and awareness of sound. While talking to the child, it is very important to always address her/him by their name, because this will develop the child’s sense of self-identity and belonging.

The guidelines on the following pages will guide educators, parents and caregivers along the child’s journey from birth to 2 years of age. These guidelines will also support these two agents (educators and parents/caregivers) in stimulating children according to their age, evaluating their development and learning progress, and simultaneously identifying possible developmental delays or areas in which improvement may be needed. The way that children play, speak, interact with others, act, move and express their emotions and opinions tells us a lot about their development and progress. Every routine, activity and behaviour is an opportunity to assess a child’s development and learning based on the developmental milestones. Developmental milestones are things that most children can do by a certain age. We use the developmental milestones as a guiding tool to stimulate children and help them to reach their full potential by giving them the best start in life.

Although children develop differently/uniquely, if you as a parent or caregiver notice any sign of a possible developmental delay within the age range specified in these guidelines, speak to your child’s doctor, paediatrician or nurse and ask for a developmental screening based on the indicators in these guidelines.

NEWBORN (0-3 MONTHS)

At this age the baby is wide-eyed and curious, smiles at faces and likes to engage with everything around her/him, and likes to sleep and be fed.

Developmental Domains	Developmental Milestones (competencies)	Learning Strategies/Activities (ways to stimulate the child)	Assessment Opportunities	Possible Signs of Developmental Delays
PHYSICAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gross motor skills (GM) Fine motor skills (FM) Balance Coordination Health and Nutrition (HN) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can hold head up and begin to push up while on belly Arm and leg motions smoother Turns head toward sounds Easily sucks and swallows during feeding Tongue moves back and forth to suck Sees things best when they are 20-30 cm away Latches onto mother's nipple or a bottle Drinks up to 180 ml (6 oz.) of liquid per feeding, six times per day 	<p>Play with the baby by encouraging her to move her head, arms and legs by making sounds and movements with her head or hands (left and right). You can also use toys or musical instruments if available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the baby's ability to hold his head up while on his belly. Observe the baby's ability to turn her head toward sounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to hold his head up while lying on his belly Doesn't watch things as they move Doesn't track people and objects as they move While feeding, loses a lot of breast milk or formula out of the side of her mouth
SOCIAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain relationships with other people. Socialise with family members and people outside the home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begins to smile at people Attempts to look at people around her Makes eye contact when held about 20 cm away from a face May sleep most of the time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak, sing and play with the baby by making different facial expressions and sounds while he lies on his belly in front of you. Talk to and smile at the baby when you wash and feed her or change her diaper. 	<p>Observe the baby's ability to react to your stimulus. For example, when you smile at him, he smiles back.</p>	<p>Doesn't smile at people</p>

NEWBORN (0-3 MONTHS) continued				
Developmental Domains	Developmental Milestones	Learning Strategies/Activities	Assessment Opportunities	Possible Signs of Developmental Delays
EMOTIONAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive self-esteem Handle emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can briefly calm himself (may bring hands to mouth and suck on hand) Makes eye contact with those around her Bonding Cries when hungry or uncomfortable and usually stops when held 	Play with the baby one on one by making eye contact. This will help him to develop empathy, confidence and bonding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the baby's ability to calm herself. While playing with the baby, observe his ability to create eye contact with those around him. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doesn't bring hands to mouth to calm herself Doesn't make eye contact with those around him
COGNITIVE				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceive information Think Reason Concentrate Remember Develop language Gain understanding of the world Solve problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coos and makes squealing and gurgling sounds Starts to pay attention to the people and objects around her Begins to follow and recognise people and objects with his eyes Responds to sounds Moves head to sound of voices Looks in the direction of a sound Learns through sensory experiences Expresses needs such as for feeding or a nappy change 	Speak to and have 'conversations' with the baby when she makes cooing noises by speaking back to her. This back and forth is important for helping the baby to develop language and communication skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the baby's ability to coo and make gurgling sounds. Observe the baby's ability to respond to sounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doesn't watch people and objects as they move Doesn't respond to loud sounds

INFANT: 3-6 MONTHS

The baby is growing and becoming more social. Babies in this age range begin to babble, coo, play and mimic the sounds they hear and movements they see around them. You'll notice that your infant's cries start to sound different as she/he learns how to communicate feelings such as hunger, frustration, discomfort and sleepiness.

Developmental Domains	Developmental Milestones (competencies)	Learning Strategies/Activities (ways to stimulate the child)	Assessment Opportunities	Possible Signs of Developmental Delays
PHYSICAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gross motor skills (GM) ○ Fine motor skills (FM) ○ Balance ○ Coordination ○ Health and Nutrition (HN) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Brings hands to mouth ○ When lying on the belly, pushes up to elbows ○ Can hold the head up without support ○ Might be able to roll over onto his back ○ Can hold and shake a toy and swing at dangling toys ○ Pushes down on legs when feet are on a hard surface ○ Reaches for toys with one hand ○ Uses hands and eyes together, such as seeing a toy and reaching for it ○ Follows moving things with eyes from side to side ○ Begin to signal that she is hungry by putting her hands near her mouth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Place toys nearby so that the infant can reach for and play with them. This stimulates and develops hand-eye coordination and simultaneously the infant's independence and autonomy. ○ Play with the infant by making gestures with your hands and face. You can also use toys or musical instruments, if available. ○ Play with the infant by placing him on a hard surface and encouraging him to roll over. Soft surfaces will be difficult for playing and rolling on at this stage. ○ When the infant signals to you that she is hungry, respond straight away by giving her breast milk or formula. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Observe the infant's ability to bring hands to mouth. ○ Observe the infant's ability to hold his head up without support. ○ Observe the infant's ability to hold a toy. ○ Observe the infant's ability to push down with her legs when her feet are on a hard surface. ○ Observe the infant's ability to follow moving things with his eyes from side to side. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Doesn't bring hands to mouth ○ Can't hold head up without support ○ Can't hold a toy ○ Won't push down on legs when placed on a hard surface ○ Can't move one or both eyes in any direction, or has difficulty doing so

INFANT: 3-6 MONTHS continued

Developmental Domains	Developmental Milestones	Learning Strategies/Activities	Assessment Opportunities	Possible Signs of Developmental Delays
SOCIAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain relationships with other people. Socialise with family members and people outside the home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smiles spontaneously, especially at people Copies movements and facial expressions like a smile or frown Likes to play with others and may get upset or cry when playing stops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the infant smiles at you, smile back. Sing and speak to, lay with and smile at the infant in a kind voice/manner. Speak to her in a respectful way, and explain what you are about to do when you change, feed or bathe her. 	<p>Observe the infant's ability to react to the stimulus. For example, when you smile at him, he smiles back.</p>	Doesn't smile at people
EMOTIONAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive self-esteem Handle emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to love and affection (e.g. smiling, cuddling or hugging) Watches faces closely by establishing eye contact Lets you know if she's happy or sad by expressing the emotions by crying, smiling or laughing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share the infant's interest by looking and pointing. Speak to the infant in a kind voice and smile at him. Sing and speak to the infant during your everyday routines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the infant's ability to respond to love and affection. Observe the infant's ability to watch faces closely by establishing eye contact. 	Doesn't make eye contact with those around her
COGNITIVE				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceive information Think Reason Concentrate Remember Develop language Gain understanding of the world Solve problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises familiar people and things at a distance Cry sounds start to differ if hungry, in pain or tired Starts babbling, repeating vowel/consonant sounds Copies sounds he hears Turns head when she hears sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the infant cries, respond immediately. Try to understand the meaning of each cry signal. Play with the infant by repeating sounds he makes back to him. Sing to the infant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the infant's ability to recognise familiar people. Observe the infant's ability to copy sounds she hears. 	Doesn't make noises or cooing sounds

INFANT: 6-9 MONTHS

The infant at this age is very curious and likes to explore the world around him/her by touching and putting in the mouth everything that he/she can grab or reach. All the knowledge and experiences of the infant happen through sensory experiences – through the senses of touch, taste, smell, hearing and seeing. The infant expresses her/his needs and emotions by starting to use sounds as a way to interact/communicate with others. The infant may make sounds she/he hears, such as “ma”, “da”, “ah”, “oh” and even “no!”. The infant starts to recognise familiar faces, and starts reaching for and grasping objects around him/her. Very soon the infant will be crawling. The physical environment around the infant should be prepared for that. The classroom environment or the room in the household environment must be ready for the crawling phase, meaning it should be safe and have enough open space for the child to crawl around to explore the environment. Remove any sharp, breakable or electric objects from the child’s reach, and keep dangerous liquids or supplies in a safe place far out of the child’s reach. Doors and windows should be kept closed to ensure the infant’s safety.

Developmental Domains	Developmental Milestones (competencies)	Learning Strategies/Activities (ways to stimulate the child)	Assessment Opportunities	Possible Signs of Developmental Delays
PHYSICAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gross motor skills (GM) ○ Fine motor skills (FM) ○ Balance ○ Coordination ○ Health and Nutrition (HN) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rolls over in both directions (front to back, back to front) ○ Tries to grab objects nearby ○ Begins to sit without support ○ When standing, supports weight on legs and might bounce ○ Rocks back and forth ○ Pushes down on legs when feet are on a hard surface ○ Plays with feet and toes ○ Passes things from one hand to the other ○ Brings hands to mouth ○ Brings things to mouth ○ Shows interest in food and opens mouth when spoon-fed ○ Moves food from front to back of mouth when chewing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Play with the infant by clapping and singing to him while he is sitting. ○ Place objects/toys nearby the infant so she can reach them by rolling over. ○ Play games with him by placing objects nearby for him to grab. Show the object to him and let him feel it (texture, shape, size). Once he has explored it, place it nearby so he can grab it. Once he has grabbed it, praise him by smiling, clapping, singing and saying “Well done, you did it!” Re-place the object and repeat the game. ○ Play games such as peek-a-boo. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Observe the infant’s ability to roll over in both directions (front to back, back to front). ○ Observe the infant’s ability to sit without support. ○ Observe the infant’s ability to grab objects nearby. ○ Observe the infant’s ability to bring his hands to his mouth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can’t roll over in either direction ○ Doesn’t try to grab objects nearby ○ Seems very stiff, with tight muscles ○ Seems very floppy, like a rag doll ○ Can’t get things into her mouth

PHYSICAL continues ►

INFANT: 6-9 MONTHS continued				
Developmental Domains	Developmental Milestones	Learning Strategies/Activities	Assessment Opportunities	Possible Signs of Developmental Delays
PHYSICAL continued				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops food preferences Starts to eat cereals and single-ingredient puréed foods like carrots, sweet potato, banana and soft porridge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At 6 months, the infant needs more than breast milk alone. Start giving her just two or three spoonfuls of soft food four times a day. 		
SOCIAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain relationships with other people. Socialise with family members and people outside the home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows affection to parents or caregivers Starts differentiating between familiar faces and strangers Enjoys playing with others, especially those he is used to Likes interacting with the people around her Laughs, especially in social interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play games with the infant, such as peek-a-boo. Sing rhymes and songs to the infant in different tones, using different facial expressions simultaneously. Speak to the infant about what is going on around him, in a kind tone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the infant's ability to show affection to parents or caregivers. Observe the infant's ability to differentiate between familiar faces and strangers. 	Doesn't show affection to parents or caregiver
EMOTIONAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive self-esteem Handle emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to other people's emotions Makes sounds to show positive and negative emotions Is usually happy Likes to look at self in a mirror Becomes bored if left alone for long periods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play mime games. Play with him by putting a mirror in front of him and saying, "Look at the mirror. That is you!" Let him look, and watch his movements at his own pace. The mirror must be child-friendly or a plastic mirror. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the infant's ability to respond to other people's emotions. Observe the infant's ability to make sounds to show positive and negative emotions. 	Doesn't laugh or make squealing sounds

COGNITIVE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Perceive information ● Think ● Reason ● Concentrate ● Remember ● Develop language ● Gain understanding of the world ● Solve problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is curious ● Becoming more settled in eating and sleeping patterns ● Looks at objects that are nearby ● Tries to get things that are out of reach ● Explores objects by looking at and mouthing them ● Enjoys games such as peek-a-boo or pat-a-cake ● Responds to noises by making sounds ● Babbles and repeats sounds ● Strings vowels together when babbling ("ah", "eh" and "oh") ● Recognises and responds to her own name ● Accidental repetition of sounds/words ● Makes sounds to show joy and displeasure ● Begins to say consonant sounds (jabbering with "m" and "b") ● Likes to have 'conversations' with familiar people, using vowel sounds, possibly together with consonant sounds ("ma", "ba") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide objects/toys that are easy for the infant to pick up with one hand. ● Address the infant by his own name. ● Have 'conversations' with the infant about different objects she is putting into her mouth, and name the objects. ● Play games like a serve-and-return interaction by repeating back to the infant the sounds he makes. ● Play games such as peek-a-boo or pat-a-cake. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observe the infant's ability to respond to sounds around her. ● Observe the infant's ability to be curious. ● Observe the infant's ability to recognise and respond to his own name. ● Observe the infant's ability to make vowel sounds ("ah", "eh" and "oh"). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Doesn't respond to sounds around him ● Doesn't babble and doesn't make sounds ● Doesn't make vowel sounds ("ah", "eh" and "oh")
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INFANT: 9-12 MONTHS

At this age the infant is much more active and mobile. She/he likes to explore, and to move around and connect with the people around. At this stage the infant is crawling and can raise himself/herself to stand. Curiosity continues growing, and the infant likes to touch and explore everything around her/him. Safety in the ECD centre and the home is important to keep the infant protected from danger. At this age, infants are adventurous and have no notion of danger, so they must be supervised all the time. The infant now responds to his/her name, loves to interact and play with family members, and starts to express her/his needs by verbalising, pointing and making facial expressions. Some infants in this phase may start to show shyness or fear of strangers, depending on their personality. They like to play games that require social interaction, such as peek-a-boo.

Developmental Domains	Developmental Milestones (competencies)	Learning Strategies/Activities (ways to stimulate the child)	Assessment Opportunities	Possible Signs of Developmental Delays
PHYSICAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gross motor skills (GM) Fine motor skills (FM) Balance Coordination Health and Nutrition (HN) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likes to move through her environment Stands, holding on Can get into a sitting position Sits without support Pulls up (using furniture for support) to stand Crawls Moves things from one hand to the other, and likes to put objects in his mouth Imitates hand clapping Enjoys finger rhymes Picks up small objects with her thumb and index finger Enjoys teething Beginning to eat thicker pureed foods and stays full for a longer after eating Reacts strongly to new smells and tastes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place the infant close to furniture so she can try to raise herself up. Play with the infant by giving him objects to pick up while under your supervision. Play sound games with the infant by making different sounds and rhythms with shakers. Allow the infant to play with the shakers and move it from one hand to the other one. This can be done with a plastic cup or plate and a spoon. Play clapping games with the infant. Recite finger rhymes with the infant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the infant's ability to roll over in both directions (front to back, back to front). Observe the infant's ability to sit without support. Observe the infant's ability to grab objects nearby. Observe the infant's ability to bring her hands to her mouth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can't sit without assistance Doesn't put weight on his legs Can't transfer toys or objects from one hand to the other

SOCIAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain relationships with other people. Socialise with family members and people outside the home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is clingy with the people she's familiar with Might be afraid of strangers Has favourite toys/objects that he likes to have close and play with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play games with the infant, such as peek-a-boo. Sing rhymes and songs to the infant, in different tones and using different facial expressions. Speak to the infant about what is going on around her, in a kind tone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the infant's ability to show affection to parents or caregivers. Observe the infant's ability to differentiate between familiar faces and strangers. 	The infant doesn't recognise adults he knows.
EMOTIONAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive self-esteem Handle emotions 	Has favourite toys/objects that he likes have close and play with.	Play with the infant, using mime games or playing with her favourite toys/objects.	Observe the infant's ability to respond to play with favourite toys/objects.	The infant doesn't seem to recognise familiar people.
COGNITIVE				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceive information Think Reason Concentrate Remember Develop language Gain understanding of the world Solve problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likes to play peek-a-boo Looks for things/objects or toys hidden by adults Tracks objects as they fall Makes gestures to communicate, e.g. points to something he wants Understands the word "no" Makes lots of different sounds as a way to interact and communicate with the people around Starts to copy movements she sees Starts to imitate sounds he hears Waves goodbye Imitates actions and sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and encourage her to play. Hide an object and have her look for it. Read storybooks with pictures Cut out pictures from magazines and create your own storybook about the objects, animals or people in the picture. Talk to him about the environment around him, and point to and name objects there. This promotes memory recall and linguistic and communication development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the infant's ability to respond to sounds around her. Observe the infant's ability to be curious. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doesn't babble Won't respond to his own name Doesn't play any games involving back-and-forth play Doesn't look where someone points

TODDLER: 1 YEAR (12-18 MONTHS)

When a baby turns 1 year old, she/he is officially a toddler. Toddlers are more curious, active and expressive. They like to move through their environment, and to interact with people around them by talking and playing. They begin to use words, and may be able to stand on their own and take a few steps. Parents and caregivers can support the toddler's growth and learning by encouraging active play and by reading stories. Fantasy and imagination should be promoted by various means, such as role-plays, storytelling and puppet shows. Toddlers in this age range express their needs by shaking, banging, throwing and biting, and they use basic gestures like waving and basic words like "mama" and "dada". Their babbles sound more like speech, and they repeat words that adults around them use. They also respond to simple requests.

Developmental Domains	Developmental Milestones (competencies)	Learning Strategies/Activities (ways to stimulate the child)	Assessment Opportunities	Possible Signs of Developmental Delays
PHYSICAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gross motor skills (GM) Fine motor skills (FM) Balance Coordination Health and Nutrition (HN) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likes to move through his environment Can take a few steps without support Gets into a sitting position without support Pulls up to stand, and walks while holding onto furniture Stands alone Dances to music Climbs onto a chair Eats a greater variety of foods, such as soft-cooked vegetables and soft fruits Starts to learn how to eat on her own Can thoroughly chew food Begins to be able to use an open cup Drinks from a cup and uses other eating utensils correctly, such as a spoon Puts out an arm or a leg to help with dressing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place the toddler on flat surfaces to help him to develop his GM skills like crawling and moving his arms and legs. Play music, allow her to dance freely, and dance with her. Give him half a cup of food four to five times a day, along with two healthy snacks. Continue to breastfeed if the toddler wants to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the toddler's ability to walk a few steps without support. Observe the toddler's ability to get into a sitting position without support. Observe the toddler's ability to pull up to stand and to walk while holding onto furniture. Observe the toddler's ability to stand alone. Observe the toddler's ability to put out an arm or a leg to help with dressing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doesn't crawl Can't stand when supported Can't sit without support Can't put out an arm or a leg to help with dressing

SOCIAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain relationships with other people. Socialise with family members and people outside the home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hands you a book when she wants to hear a story Has favourite toys, objects or other things Puts out an arm or a leg to help with getting dressed Repeats sounds or actions to get an adult's attention Likes to play games such as peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read stories from storybooks with pictures. When it is storytelling time, ask the toddler to pick a storybook and to give it to you to read to him. Play social games with the toddler, such as hiding something and coaxing her to find it. While dressing the toddler, speak to him about what you are doing ("now let's put on your shirt"), and ask him to put out his arm or leg, or to stand up, etc. Play games with the toddler by asking her to point to her favourite toys or objects or to get them herself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the toddler's ability to identify his favourite toys or objects. Observe the toddler's ability to put out an arm or a leg to help with getting dressed. 	Doesn't put out an arm or a leg to help with getting dressed
EMOTIONAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive self-esteem Handle emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cries when her parents or caregiver leave Is shy, nervous or stressed around strangers Shows fear in some situations Uses simple gestures like shaking his head to say "no" or waving "bye-bye". 	Have regular conversations with the toddler about her emotions. How is she feeling?	Observe the toddler's ability to recognise and respond to familiar people.	Doesn't or seems not to recognise familiar people

TODDLER: 1 YEAR (12-18 MONTHS) continued				
Developmental Domains	Developmental Milestones	Learning Strategies/Activities	Assessment Opportunities	Possible Signs of Developmental Delays
COGNITIVE				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Perceive information ○ Think ○ Reason ○ Concentrate ○ Remember ○ Develop language ○ Gain understanding of the world ○ Solve problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explores things in different ways, like shaking, banging, throwing and biting them ○ Looks at the right picture or object when it is named ○ Copies movements and gestures ○ Bangs objects together ○ Puts objects into a container and can take them out ○ Pokes with index (pointer) finger ○ Points to things he wants ○ Finds things that are hidden ○ Follows simple directions ○ Lets go of objects without help ○ Starts to use things correctly (e.g. drinks from a cup and brushes hair) ○ Uses basic gestures like waving, and basic words like "mama" and "dada" ○ Babbles sound more like speech ○ Responds to simple spoken requests like "pick up the toy." ○ Tries and repeats words that a parent or caregiver says ○ Deliberately repeats sounds and words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have conversations with the toddler. For example, say "hello" and "goodbye", and make the physical gestures while saying these words, because nonverbal communication is an important tool for promoting the toddler's development and learning. ○ Play games such as putting lids onto containers and taking them off. ○ Praise the toddler when she does something or achieves something, and when she repeats words or tries to speak with others. This helps the toddler to develop positive self-esteem and self-confidence. ○ Prompt the toddler to point to characters and objects when you're reading to him. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Observe the toddler's ability to explore things in different ways. ○ Observe the toddler's ability to look at the right picture or object when it's named. ○ Observe the toddler's ability to put objects into a container and take them out. ○ Observe the toddler's ability to follow simple directions. ○ Observe the toddler's ability to respond to simple spoken requests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Doesn't search for things that she sees you hide ○ Doesn't say single words like "mama" or "dada" ○ Doesn't learn gestures like waving or shaking his head ○ Doesn't point to things ○ Loses skills she once had.

TODDLER: 18-24 MONTHS

The toddler is now walking and using basic words. At this stage, toddlers love to interact with people, play and explore their environment. They become more independent and autonomous. They walk alone and like to move through the environment. They like to explore, feel and touch everything around them. They also start to understand what things are for, such as a cup, spoon or hairbrush. At this age the toddler's personality emerges. They start to verbalise their desires, may have temper tantrums, and they love to challenge the adults. At this stage the adults should define the limits and the child's boundaries for his/her own safety and development.

Developmental Domains	Developmental Milestones (competencies)	Learning Strategies/Activities (ways to stimulate the child)	Assessment Opportunities	Possible Signs of Developmental Delays
PHYSICAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gross motor skills (GM) Fine motor skills (FM) Balance Coordination Health and Nutrition (HN) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walks alone Start walking up steps Runs Can help to dress/undress herself Holds and uses utensils correctly when feeding, e.g. eats with a spoon and drinks from a cup independently Pulls toys while walking Scribbles on his own Tries more chopped solid foods like chicken or squash Is able to eat most of the same foods that adults eat, and can use utensils more easily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage your toddler to participate in everyday routine activities, such as getting dressed and undressed. Play with the toddler, pushing and pulling toys or objects Pour maize or sand from one plastic cup to another as a way to develop the toddler's FM skills. Implement a daily routine activity such as drawing. Give plain paper (A3 size preferably), thick crayons or thick colour pencils, and allow the toddler to scribble on her own for as long as she is able to. Give the toddler plenty of time to eat. Encourage the toddler to eat independently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the toddler's ability to walk alone. Observe the toddler's ability to eat and drink independently. Observe the toddler's ability to put out an arm or a leg to help with dressing and undressing. Observe the toddler's ability to scribble on his own. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doesn't walk Can't stand when supported Can't sit without support Can't put out an arm or a leg to help with dressing.

TODDLER: 18-24 MONTHS continued				
Developmental Domains	Developmental Milestones	Learning Strategies/Activities	Assessment Opportunities	Possible Signs of Developmental Delays
SOCIAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain relationships with other people. Socialise with family members and people outside the home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likes to play by handing things to people Plays simple pretend games, such as feeding a doll May cling to parents or caregiver in new situations Points to show interest in something Likes to explore the environment/surroundings alone but with parents or caregiver close by 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play with the toddler by asking her to bring objects or toys. Praise the toddler when he shows empathy by sharing his toy, taking care of toys or making a caring gesture to others. This praise supports his social and emotional development. Role/fantasy play with her. Draw/paint with him. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the toddler's ability to play by handing things to people. Observe the toddler's ability to play simple pretend games, such as feeding a doll. Observe the toddler's ability to point to show interest in something. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doesn't point to show things to others Doesn't try to copy others
EMOTIONAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive self-esteem Handle emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May have temper tantrums Shows affection to familiar people May be afraid of strangers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the toddler has a temper tantrum, speak to her to understand why she is crying, and help her to calm down by telling/reading her a story or singing her favourite song. Play facial expression/emotions games with the toddler. Use a sad face, happy face and crying face, for example, and have him make the same facial expressions. This will help him to understand his own emotions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the toddler's ability to show affection to familiar people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doesn't or seems not to recognise familiar people Doesn't notice or mind when a caregiver leaves or returns

COGNITIVE				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Perceive information ● Think ● Reason ● Concentrate ● Remember ● Develop language ● Gain understanding of the world ● Solve problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognises what everyday objects are for (e.g. a plate, spoon, cup and hairbrush) ● Points to things when she wants to get the attention of others ● Points to show someone what he wants ● Pretends to feed her stuffed animal or doll ● Can point to one body part ● Enjoys rhymes and songs ● Can follow one-step verbal commands without any gestures (e.g. sits when you say "sit down") ● Says several single words ● Says "no" and shakes head 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide the toddler with toys/objects for pretend/fantasy play (e.g. a plastic plate, plastic spoon and plastic cup). ● Play games with the toddler by pointing to a specific body part. ● Sing the song "head and shoulders" and point to the corresponding body parts while singing. ● Sing and recite poems and rhymes to the toddler. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observe the toddler's ability to recognise what everyday objects are for (e.g. plates, spoons, cups and hairbrushes). ● Observe the toddler's ability to point to show someone what he wants. ● Observe the toddler's ability to point to one body part. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Doesn't know what familiar objects are for ● Isn't learning new words ● Can't say at least six words ● Doesn't notice when a parent leaves or returns ● Loses skills she once had

<p>TODDLER: 2 YEARS (24 MONTHS)</p> <p>At 2 years of age, toddlers are walking, climbing, jumping, running, talking and moving all over the place. They like to interact with the world and people around them. All the knowledge they acquire comes from the outside world and what they experience through their five senses (touch, taste, smell, hearing and seeing). At this stage, children are focused on their own needs and desires. They are learning new words and increasing their vocabulary daily, and they can express their desires by saying what they want and what they like or don't like. The words the child learns and is able to use are determined by the environment and the child's relationship with it. In general children at this age ask a lot of questions and are very curious. They can sort according to shape, colour and size. Some may even show an interest in potty training. As they become more independent, they like to challenge the people around them by pushing boundaries and limits. During this period, the adults around the toddler need to be very patient, and consistent with the toddler's norms and routines. In this phase children are discovering their own emotions and own body, and what their body can do. This is a phase of establishing boundaries and limits.</p>				
Developmental Domains	Developmental Milestones (competencies)	Learning Strategies/Activities (ways to stimulate the child)	Assessment Opportunities	Possible Signs of Developmental Delays
PHYSICAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gross motor skills (GM) Fine motor skills (FM) Balance Coordination Health and Nutrition (HN) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can run Stands on tiptoe Kicks a ball Throws a ball overhead Climbs up and down from furniture without assistance Walks up and down stairs holding on Holds crayon with fingers Draw straight lines and circles May start to develop a dominant hand Avoids obstacles Able to open doors Chews with full jaw movements Uses utensils with some spills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run together with the toddler, slow and fast. Place plastic bottles filled with sand in a row and encourage the child to kick a ball towards the bottles. The goal is to topple as many bottles as possible with one attempt. Play with a ball: throw it overhead, kick it and roll it back and forth. This will develop the child's GM skills, balance, and eye-hand and eye-foot coordination. Draw/paint with the child. Play hopscotch and beanbag catch. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the toddler's ability to run. Observe the toddler's ability to stand on tiptoe. Observe the toddler's ability to kick a ball. Observe the toddler's ability to throw a ball overhead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can't walk steadily. Can't walk or kick a ball. Loses skills he once had.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While reading a book, ask the child to assist to turn the pages. This helps to develop the FM skills. During mealtimes, be calm and patient. Give the child positive attention while he eats, and don't make it a problem when he doesn't eat. Rather, respect his decision by taking the food away, covering it and offering it to him again a bit later. 		
SOCIAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain relationships with other people. Socialise with family members and people outside the home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copies/imitates others, especially adults and older children such as siblings Plays mainly beside other children, but is beginning to include other children, such as in chase games Gets excited when she is with other children Recognises familiar people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak to the child and engage him in the house chores or activities. Play different games, such as having the toddler hand his toys to a parent/caregiver, or having him help with safe chores like folding clothes, with adult supervision. Children like to do or help with adult chores. These types of activities are also a way to learn social norms. They develop children's pro-social behaviours by fostering a sense of identity, belonging and collaboration with the people around them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the toddler's ability to copy/imitate others, especially adults and older children such as siblings. Observe the toddler's ability to play mainly beside other children. Observe the toddler's ability to recognise familiar people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doesn't point to show things to others Doesn't try to copy/imitate others

TODDLER: 2 YEARS (24 MONTHS) continued				
Developmental Domains	Developmental Milestones	Learning Strategies/Activities	Assessment Opportunities	Possible Signs of Developmental Delays
EMOTIONAL				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive self-esteem Handle emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows defiant behaviour (doing what she has been told not to) Gets excited when he is with other children Is more independent and more defiant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage the child in the daily activities at home and school. This will lead her to take responsibility and ownership and avoid defiant behaviour. Give clear instructions as to what you expect from the child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the toddler's ability to follow routines. Observe the toddler's ability to be independent. 	Doesn't recognise familiar people.
COGNITIVE				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceive information Think Reason Concentrate Remember Develop language Gain understanding of the world Solve problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starts to sort according to shape (circle, square, rectangle and triangle), size (big and small) and colours (primary colours – red, blue and yellow) Can find things hidden under multiple layers Plays simple make-believe/fantasy games Builds towers with four or more blocks Follows simple instructions Recognises and identifies common objects and pictures by pointing Enjoys playing with sand, water and dough, and explores what these materials can do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play games by sorting objects by shape, colour and size, such as plastic cups, plastic plates, plastic spoons, empty plastic bottles and empty yogurt containers. You can also use maize, beans, leaves, sticks, sand or any other local materials available. Play games with the child by looking around the room for objects you hide and give her hints. Role-play with the child. Read a storybook and discuss the pictures as you read. Afterwards, ask the child about the sequence and characters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the toddler's ability to sort according to shape, size and colours. Observe the toddler's ability to find things hidden under multiple layers. Observe the toddler's ability to follow simple instructions. Observe the toddler's ability to point to objects when they are named. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doesn't know how to use common objects such as a hairbrush, phone, fork, cup, plate and spoon Doesn't use two-word phrases Doesn't respond to questions Doesn't ask questions Doesn't copy actions or repeat words Doesn't follow basic directions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies picture as a boy or girl Recognises similarities and differences Imitates rhythms and animal movements Repeats words overheard in conversation Points to things in a book Completes sentences in familiar books Knows familiar body parts Repeats words he has overheard Forms short sentences with 2-4 words (e.g. "go potty now") Refers to self by name and often says "mine" Asks lots of questions Sings and dances Likes listening to stories (made up or read from storybooks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play games with water. For example: fill a bucket or an empty 5-litre plastic container with water; gather one sponge or a plastic cup and empty plastic bottles; and ask the child to play with these objects. This allows him to explore eye-hand coordination and concepts such as full, empty, sink, float, wet, dry, cold and warm. This is an excellent activity for cognitive as well as physical development – and children enjoy water. Play games such as peek-a-boo and follow the leader. Sing songs such as "Head, shoulders, knees and toes" or any other traditional song about body parts. Play the game "Simon says". Recite poems and rhymes. Read a storybook and discuss the picture in the 	
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3.2 Parental involvement and early learning opportunities – see Annex 1

3.3 Assessment

Assessment is a process of systematically collecting and analysing information in order to plan ahead and make improvements if necessary. In the context of this Curriculum, assessment is a tool that educarers, parents/caregivers and families use to gather critical information about a child's development, learning and growth, so that they can plan the way forward accordingly.

In this 'childhood assessment', information about a child is collected, reviewed and then used for planning activities which are at a level that the child can understand, would be interested in, and would learn and develop from. This assessment provides information about what a child knows and can do. Through observation and documenting a child's performance over time, educarers can accumulate a record of the child's growth, progress and development.

With this information, educarers can plan appropriate, integrative and holistic activities for the children. The same assessment information enables educarers to plan effective individualised instruction for each child and the group at large. The assessment records must be shared with parents/caregivers so that they are part of their child's journey, follow their child's development and progress, understand their child's strengths and challenges, and can determine how they can help to extend the child's learning into their home. Assessment provides educarers, parents/caregivers and families with essential information about a child's progress, development, growth and learning.

Assessment is a very important tool in Early Childhood Education because it:

- provides a record of growth in all developmental domains: physical, social, emotional and cognitive, and simultaneously in approaches to learning;
- identifies children who may need additional support, and determines whether there is a need for intervention or support services;
- helps educators to plan individualised instruction for a particular child as well as for a group in which the children are at the same stage or different stages of development;
- identifies the strengths and weaknesses of an educational programme; and
- provides for a common understanding among educators, parents/caregivers and families as to how they can work together strategically to support their children.

For a childhood assessment, the assessment methods should be *qualitative*, *informal* (natural observations of children's performance for portfolios such as drawing and painting), *formal* (using assessment tools such as questionnaires and standardised checklists – refer to Annex 2, containing a "Developmental Milestones Report" for each age range) and *continuous* (applied regularly). A "portfolio" is a precious record of data gathered from children's activities over a period of time. The collection clearly shows the progress in a child's development. Portfolios can be an important tool for facilitating cooperation between the educarer, parents/caregiver and family. The focus is on regularly observing and recording each child's status (formally or informally), and using the data to make decisions that yield positive outcomes for each child and family.

In sum, assessment is about finding out what the child can do within his/her range of abilities, using the developmental milestones to guide us. Assessment helps educarers to see individual and group patterns of play, for example, and to use this insight for planning new activities and supporting individual children's growth.

The diagram below shows some aspects that could be considered in assessing children's play, learning and development.

Figure 5: **Aspects to consider in assessing children's play, learning and development**



Please note: Assessments of children's play can be done at home and in a group setting, by keeping checklists, anecdotal records and a weekly diary.

3.4 Links with family and community

It is extremely important to maintain a positive relationship with the families of the children attending our ECD centres. ECD centres and educarers should ensure that parents/caregivers are part of their children's school life. Educarers must engage parents/caregivers in all phases of their child's learning journey, and invite them to participate in initiatives at the ECD centre.

For example, invite them to celebrations at the centre, or to speak at the centre about different topics, such as professions, or to be involved in practical activities at the centre, such as cleaning activities and repairing furniture.

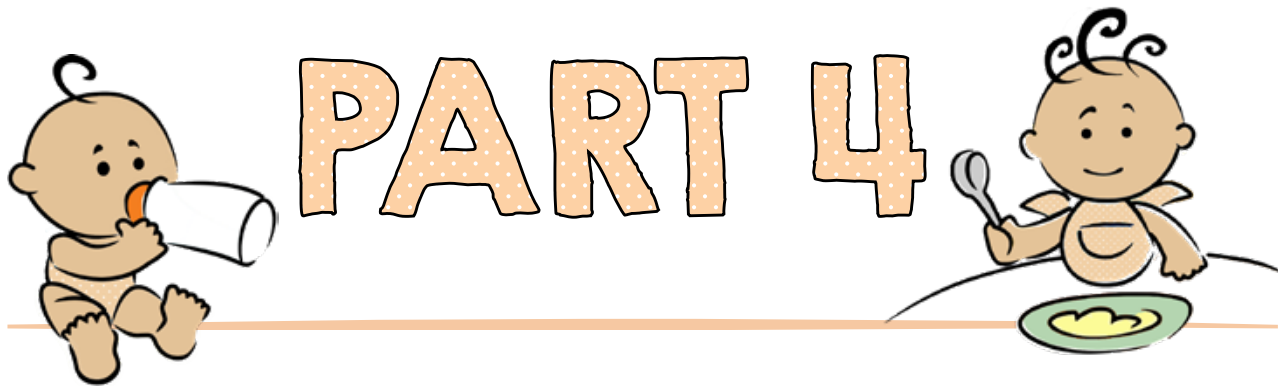
Most parents/caregivers need guidance, information, support and knowledge to provide a safe, nurturing and positive environment that facilitates child development and growth. Educarers must support parents/caregivers in this journey. Parents/caregivers, families and ECD centres must work together as a team for the children's benefit. School is the extension of home, and home is the continuation of school. ECD centre or kindergarten programmes must implement initiatives that inspire and support close cooperation with families and the community at large, such as:

- providing a service that is welcoming to all families and community members in an inviting and encouraging setting for family and community participation; and
- having regular meetings with parents/caregivers to give feedback on their children's learning journey, development and progress.

The dialogue with families must consider the families' concerns, insecurities, values and beliefs, and their views on child upbringing. Here are some ideas for involving parents:

Figure 6: **Ideas for involving parents/caregivers in their children's learning journey**





FOOD AND NUTRITION

Nutrition (i.e. eating a healthy and balanced diet) is fundamental for good health, growth and development in the early years of a child's life. Lack of proper nutrition causes children to have less energy and less interest in learning, which negatively affects their cognitive development, and delays developmental milestones in all developmental domains. In general, poor nutrition affects physical growth, wellbeing, learning and maturity.

A child who does not receive the nutrition that he/she needs is at a higher risk of being stunted physically, cognitively, emotionally and socially. Foods, snacks and beverages (drinks other than water) should meet the nutritional needs of children. Children younger than 1 year are fed when they are hungry – on demand, for example.



4.1 When, what and how to feed the child

The table below presents feeding recommendations contained in various documents published by Namibia's Ministry of Health and Social Services.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FEEDING CHILDREN AGED 0-2 YEARS	
Age Range	When, What and How to Feed
0-6 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exclusive breastfeeding from birth to 6 months. Exclusive breastfeeding means that the child is fed only breast milk and no additional/other foods or water – unless the child is taking vitamins and medicines prescribed by a health professional, in which case clear instructions will be provided by that professional. ○ Ensure that the baby is correctly positioned and attached to the breast. ○ Breastfeed as often as the baby wants, day and night, 8-12 times in 24 hours, to help your breast milk to come in, and to ensure plenty of breast milk.
HIV-infected mothers and HIV-exposed infants	Exclusive breastfeeding from birth to 6 months, with antiretroviral drugs (ARVs).
During illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offer the breast more often. ○ If the child cannot suck, express breast milk and feed from a cup using a spoon.
6-12 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Breastfeed as often as the baby wants. ○ Introduce appropriate complementary foods at 6 months. Examples of complementary foods are provided below in this table and discussed in more detail on the following pages. ○ You may introduce solid foods gradually. ○ Introduce one food at a time to prevent confusion and to identify allergies. ○ Food should be mashed for easy chewing and swallowing. ○ Between meals, feed a nutritious snack such as yoghurt or milk.
During illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the child is ill, give frequent meals. ○ Avoid forcing the child to eat. ○ Feed slowly.
12-24 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Breastfeed as often as the baby wants. ○ By the age of 12 months, complementary foods are the main source of energy, but breastfeeding still provides 30% of what the baby needs. ○ Feed stiff maize or millet porridge/pap and/or potatoes mixed with relish cooked in meat, fish and beans. ○ Try to balance the diet by adding vitamins and minerals through adding to the meal <i>mahangu</i>, <i>omboga</i>, pumpkin and other locally available food supplements.
HIV-infected mothers and HIV-exposed infants	Breastfeeding should not stop until such time as a nutritionally adequate and safe diet without breast milk can be provided.
During illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the child is ill, give smaller meals more frequently during the day. ○ Fermented porridge is good for diarrhoea and other illnesses.

4.2 Food and fluid during illness

It is important to note that infants and toddlers should be fed more during and after an illness:

- Breastfeed frequently and longer at each feeding if the child is breastfeeding.
- Offer as much extra fluid as the child will take: Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS); food-based fluids such as soup and yoghurt drinks; and clean drinking water.

4.3 Nutritious food

Good nutrition establishes the foundation for healthy eating habits and nutritional knowledge that children can apply throughout life. It can be a challenge to get an infant or young child to eat nutritious foods such as vegetables. Explain to a child who is old enough to understand that these foods are healthy and will make him/her stronger. Once the child is able to chew food, consider the following nutrition guidelines developed by the Ministry of Health and Social Services:

Feed vegetables and fruit every day.

Micronutrient deficiencies can result in health conditions such as anaemia (lack of healthy red blood cells which carry oxygen to the body's tissues), pellagra (a systemic disease that results from severe deficiency of vitamin B3, i.e. Niacin) and night blindness (which indicates a deficiency of vitamin A). These are common conditions in Namibia. Vegetables and fruits can help to prevent micronutrient deficiencies, because these foods are rich in vitamins (especially A and C) and minerals. They also contain substantial amounts of fibre, and are low in fat. Eating vegetables and fruits daily is recommended because of the beneficial role that these foods play in reducing the risk of chronic diseases.

Feed more fish.

Fish is well known to be one of the healthiest sources of protein, because it has a high concentration of good-quality protein. Therefore, regular consumption of fish can help to prevent malnutrition. The fat content of fish is variable, but in general, fish contains less fat than meat. Fish is also a good source of vitamins, particularly A and D, as well as minerals such as iron and iodine, all of which are very important in a child's diet.

Feed meat and beans in balanced amounts.

Meat and beans are good sources of protein, iron and B vitamins. By 'meat', we mean all types of meat – beef, pork, game, poultry and fish. By 'beans', we mean all types of beans as well as groundnuts, lentils and peas of all types. There is a high rate of undernutrition among children, and it is advisable to include beans and/or meat in their diets regularly. All meats and beans are good sources of protein and food energy (meaning the energy released from carbohydrates, fats, proteins and other organic compounds), which are important for children's diet and health.

Use WHOLE-GRAIN PRODUCTS.

Grains such as millet, maize, sorghum and wheat are the most important sources of energy in the Namibian diet. Whole grains and foods made of whole-grain flour contain protein, fat and fibre, and useful amounts of calcium, iron and B vitamins. These types of products are very nutritious for child growth and health.

Consume clean and safe water.

Water is essential for life. A high proportion of the human body is composed of water – up to 60% of an adult human body is water. The quality of the water one consumes is important for good nutrition and health. Water that comes from dams, open wells and rivers is unsafe (dirty or contaminated) and a major health risk unless it is treated or boiled. Unsafe water is one of the main causes of the high incidence of diarrhoea in Namibia, and it can also lead to other food- and water-borne diseases. For all these reasons it is important to ensure that children consume clean and safe water.

Do not give alcohol to children.

Alcohol abuse is the cause of many health problems, and also social and economic problems in families and society. Regular alcohol consumption can easily lead to addiction. Parents and caregivers should not give alcohol to children, because it can damage their brain development and compromise their growth and learning.

4.4 Immunizations

As from birth, it is important to protect every child against various childhood illnesses – some of which can cause death – by way of immunizing them with vaccines that fight off or prevent these diseases. Children must be immunized based on their age group. The table below presents a schedule of immunizations per age group from 0 to 10 years of age. It is important that every child is immunized and completes the full immunization schedule.

CHILDHOOD IMMUNIZATIONS SCHEDULE (0-10 YEARS OF AGE)	
Age	Vaccine
Newborn	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Polio 0Hep B 0BCG
6 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Polio 1Pentavalent 1 (DPT, HepB, Hib)RotavirusPneumococcal 1
10 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Polio 2Pentavalent 2 (DPT, HepB, Hib)Rotavirus 2Pneumococcal 2
14 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Polio 3Pentavalent 3 (DPT, HepB, Hib)Pneumococcal 2
9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">MeaslesMeasles, Rubella (MR)
15 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Measles, Rubella (MR)
5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">DTPolio
10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">DTPolio



HEALTH AND SAFETY

This section aims to guide educarers and parents/caregivers to meet the needs of children and families in areas of health and safety. The ECD centre and the home environment should be safe and clean for the children's exploration and play. This means that the facilities must be checked and cleaned throughout the day to prevent the spread of diseases. Broken equipment should be removed to protect children from danger. Maintaining good hygiene is essential, especially when dealing with young children.

4.5 Strategies for maintaining good hygiene at home and in ECD centres

There are many strategies that you can adopt to maintain good hygiene. Here are examples:

Handwashing routines

It is important to teach children how to wash their hands properly with soap and dry them. Children sometimes are in a rush because they want to go and play with their friends, and they don't wash their hands properly. To address this, you can create a handwashing routine with a song or a rhyme. This way children will enjoy washing their hands and will do it properly and regularly. If you don't have running water, use a tippy-tap. This is a simple device that requires very little water for washing hands. It allows the user to rub his/her hands together while water runs over them. It is made of materials that are available at no cost in most places, and it can be placed wherever people need to wash their hands, e.g. at the entrance to the toilet or the classroom. Educarers and parents/caregivers must teach children how to swing the tippy-tap to wash their hands while singing.

Please refer to the *Resource Guide* for guidance on how to wash hands properly, and for practical guidance on making your own tippy-tap.



Toilet/latrine/potty routines

Toilet time is a very important routine for children. Educarers and parents/caregivers must teach children how to use the toilet, latrine or potty hygienically. After using the toilet, latrine or potty, children must wash their hands with soap properly. Young children must always be supervised when they use the toilet, to ensure that they follow the hygiene procedures. Toilets, latrines and potties must be cleaned with disinfectant mixed with water to kill germs and prevent diseases.

Keeping food safe

When food is not prepared, cooked or stored properly, germs grow in the food and it goes bad. Always ensure that the food has been well prepared before it is fed to the child. Food brought from home should be properly covered and stored correctly.

4.6 Helping young children who are hurt

It is common for children to fall and get hurt. If a child is seriously hurt or injured, you must apply first aid immediately – whether or not you also have to call for professional help. Refer to the section in the *Resource Guide* on “Dealing with emergencies and accidents”, which spells out basic first-aid measures to apply in cases of serious injury from a fall or other incident, burns, choking, poisoning and diarrhoea. The *Resource Guide* also provides a list of items that a first-aid kit should contain.

Remember! Make sure to always have local emergency contact information at hand, such as the phone numbers of the local (or nearest) health clinic, ambulance service, hospital and child protection service.



ANNEX I

Parental Involvement and Early Learning Opportunities

What parents can do to stimulate their child at home

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1.1 Parental Involvement and Early Learning Opportunities: 0-3 Months

What you can do to stimulate your child at home: 0-3 months
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
Cuddle, talk to and play with your baby during feeding, dressing and bathing.
Begin to help your baby to get into a routine, such as sleeping at night more than in the day, and have regular schedules.
Lay your baby on his/her tummy when he/she is awake and put toys near him/her.
Encourage your baby to lift her/his head by holding toys at eye level in front of her/him.
Hold a toy, a rattle or a shaker above your baby's head and encourage him/her to reach for it.
Hold your baby upright with her/his feet on the floor.
Sing or talk to your baby while you are holding him/her upright.
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Pay attention to your baby's different cries so that you learn to know what he/she wants.
Play peek-a-boo, and help your baby to play peek-a-boo too.
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Help your baby to learn how to calm herself/himself. It is okay for babies to suck on their fingers.
Getting in tune with your baby's likes and dislikes can help you to feel more comfortable and confident.
COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT
Act excited and smile when your baby makes sounds.
Copy your baby's sounds sometimes, but also use clear language.
Talk, read and sing to your baby.
Place a baby-safe mirror in your baby's crib so that he/she can look at herself.
Look at pictures with your baby and talk about them.

ANNEX 1: Parental Involvement and Early Learning Opportunities – 0-3 Months

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1.2 Parental Involvement and Early Learning Opportunities: 3-6 Months

What you can do to stimulate your child at home: 3-6 months
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
Set steady routines for sleeping and feeding.
Provide safe opportunities for your baby to reach for toys or objects and explore the surroundings.
Put toys, rattles or shakers in your baby's hand and help him/her to hold them.
Hold your baby upright with her/his feet on the floor.
Sing or talk to your baby as she/he 'stands' with support.
Place toys or objects near to your baby so that he/she can reach for them or kick them.
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Hold and talk to your baby, and smile and be cheerful while doing so.
Have quiet play times when you read or sing to your baby.
Copy your baby's sounds.
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Pay close attention to what your baby likes and doesn't like. This will help you to know how best to meet your baby's needs and what you can do to make her/him happy.
Have quiet play times when you read or sing to your baby.
COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT
Act excited and smile when your baby makes sounds.
Give your baby age-appropriate toys and objects to play with, such as rattles, shakers and colourful pictures.
Play games with your baby, such as peek-a-boo.

ANNEX 1: Parental Involvement and Early Learning Opportunities – 3-6 Months 57

1.3 Parental Involvement and Early Learning Opportunities: 6-9 Months

What you can do to stimulate your child at home: 6-9 months

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Lay your baby on his/her tummy or back, and place toys just out of reach. Encourage him/her to roll over to reach the toys.

Hold your baby up while she/he sits, or support her/him with pillows. Let her/him look around, and then give her/him toys to look at while balancing in the sitting position.

Play on the floor with your baby every day.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Use reciprocal play – when he/she smiles, you smile; when he/she makes sounds, you copy them.

When your baby looks at something, point to it and talk about it.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Read your baby's moods. If she/he is happy, keep doing what you are doing, and if upset, take a break and comfort her/him.

Show your baby how to comfort himself/herself when upset. Babies may suck on their fingers to self-soothe.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Read books or tell stories to your baby every day. Praise your baby when she/he babbles, 'reads' or 'answers'.

When your baby drops a toy or an object on the floor, pick it up and give it back. This game will help your baby to learn about cause and effect.

Repeat your baby's sounds, and say simple words with those sounds. For example, if your baby says "bah," say "bottle" or "book".

Read to your baby from storybooks which have colourful pictures.

Point out new things to your baby and name them.

Show your baby bright/colourful pictures in a magazine or newspaper, and name the things shown in each picture.

ANNEX 1: Parental Involvement and Early Learning Opportunities – 6-9 Months

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1.4 Parental Involvement and Early Learning Opportunities: 9-12 Months

What you can do to stimulate your child at home: 9-12 months
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
Provide lots of room for your baby to move and explore in a safe area.
Put your baby close to things that she/he can pull up on safely.
Play peek-a-boo and hide-and-seek.
Continue with routines – they are especially important now.
As your baby moves around more, stay close so he/she knows that you are near.
Allow your baby to explore the environment safely.
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Play games with “my turn, your turn”.
Ask for behaviours that you want. For example, instead of saying “Don’t stand,” say “Time to sit.”
Read and talk to your baby.
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Say what you think your baby is feeling. For example, say, “You are so sad. Let’s see if we can make you feel better.”
Pay attention to the way your baby reacts to new situations and people, and try to continue doing things that make her/him happy and comfortable.
COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT
Describe what your baby is looking at. For example, “red, round ball”.
Talk about what your baby wants when he/she points at something.
Copy your baby’s sounds and words.
Teach your baby cause and effect by rolling balls back and forth, pushing toy cars and trucks, and putting things into a container and taking them out.

ANNEX 1: Parental Involvement and Early Learning Opportunities – 9-12 Months 61

1.5 Parental Involvement and Early Learning Opportunities: 1 Year

What you can do to stimulate your child at home: 1 Year
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
Give your child crayons and paper, and let him/her draw freely. Show your child how to draw lines up and down and across the page. Praise your child.
Play with blocks, shape sorters and other toys that encourage your child to use her/his hands. Hide small toys and other things and have your child find them.
Give your child a plastic kitchen set (e.g. bowls, plates and cups) or a small musical instrument like a drum or cymbals. Encourage your child to make noise.
Provide lots of safe places for your child to explore. (Toddler-proof your home. Lock away products you use for cleaning, laundry, lawn care and car care. Use a safety gate and lock doors to the outside and the basement if you have one, and use a safety gate or barrier at the top or bottom of a staircase.)
Give your child toys to push, like a wagon or 'kiddie push car'.
Sing songs with actions, like "Itsy Bitsy Spider" and "The Wheels on the Bus". Help your child to do the actions with you.
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
In response to unwanted behaviours, say "No" firmly. Do not yell, spank or give long explanations. A time-out for 30 seconds to 1 minute might help to redirect your child.
Spend a lot more time encouraging wanted behaviours than punishing unwanted behaviours (i.e. 4 times as much encouragement for wanted behaviours than for redirecting unwanted behaviours).
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
When your child cries, try to understand the cause, and speak to her/him. Don't say "Stop crying" or "Keep quiet." Instead, speak to and comfort your child.
Play facial expressions games with your child, e.g. make a smiling face and laugh, then make a sad face and cry. Ask your child to copy/imitate your expressions. Take turns and have fun.
Give your child lots of hugs, kisses and praise for good behaviour.
COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT
Ask your child to point to body parts or objects in the house and to name them.
Talk to your child about what you're doing, e.g. "Mommy is washing your hands with a washcloth."
Read with your child every day. Allow your child to choose/pick the storybook, and have him/her turn the pages.
Build on what your child says or tries to say, or what the child points to. If she/he points to a plate and says "p" or "plate", say "Yes, that's a red plastic plate."

ANNEX 1: Parental Involvement and Early Learning Opportunities – 1 Year 63

1.6 Parental Involvement and Early Learning Opportunities: 18 Months

What you can do to stimulate your child at home: 18 months
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
Provide safe areas for your child to walk and move around independently and safely.
Provide toys that your child can push or pull safely.
Provide balls for your child to kick, roll and throw.
Encourage your child to drink from his/her cup and use a spoon independently, no matter how messy.
Blow bubbles and let your child pop them.
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Provide a safe, loving environment.
Be consistent with your attitude and behaviour towards your child.
Encourage fantasy/role play.
Praise good behaviours more than you punish bad behaviours (and use only very brief time-outs).
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Describe your child's emotions. For example, say, "You are happy when we read this book."
Encourage empathy. For example, when your child sees a sad child, encourage your child to hug or pat the other child.
Use words that describe feelings and emotions.
COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT
Read books and talk about the pictures, using simple words.
Copy your child's words.
Use simple, clear phrases.
Ask your child simple questions.
Name pictures in books and body parts.
Provide toys that encourage pretend play, e.g. dolls and play telephones. Hide things under blankets and pillows and encourage your child to find them.
Play with blocks, balls, puzzles, books and toys that teach cause and effect and problem-solving.

ANNEX 1: Parental Involvement and Early Learning Opportunities – 18 Months 65

1.7 Parental Involvement and Early Learning Opportunities: 2 Years

What you can do to stimulate your child at home: 2 years	
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	
Hide your child's toys or any other objects around the room and let him/her find them.	
Do puzzles with shapes, colours or farm animals with your child, if available. You can use plastic cups in different sizes and colours instead.	
Encourage your child to play with blocks. Take turns building towers and knocking them down. You can use plastic objects (e.g. cups) instead of blocks.	
Do art projects with your child using crayons, paint and paper. Describe what your child makes and hang it on the wall.	
Ask your child to help you to open doors and drawers and turn pages in a book, magazine or newspaper.	
Take your child for a walk (e.g. on a nature trail), and run and climb on equipment – but supervise closely.	
Once your child walks well, ask her/him to carry small things for you.	
Kick a ball back and forth. When your child is good at doing that, encourage him/her to run and kick.	
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	
Give your child attention and praise when she/he follows instructions.	
Encourage your child to help with simple chores at home, like sweeping and making dinner.	
Praise your child for being a good helper.	
At this age, children still play next to (not with) each other, and they don't share well. Encourage your child to share when they are with other people.	
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	
Limit attention for defiant behaviour.	Careful though to not withdraw from your child emotionally, as they still need to learn how to handle various emotions by themselves, but with your support!
Spend a lot more time praising good behaviours than punishing bad ones. Punishments are not good for your child's development.	
If your child says words or a sentence incorrectly, do not correct him/her by saying "No, that is wrong." Rather just say it correctly, e.g. "That is a ball."	
COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Teach your child to identify and to say what body parts, animals and other common things in the home and surroundings are called.	
Encourage your child to say a word instead of pointing.	
If your child can't say the whole word (e.g. "milk"), give her/him the first sound ("m") to help.	
Over time, you can prompt your child to say the whole sentence – "I want milk."	

ANNEX 1: Parental Involvement and Early Learning Opportunities – 2 Years
67

ANNEX 2

Developmental Milestones Assessment Reports

A tool for assessing a child's developmental progress

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2.1

Developmental Milestones Report

Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centre / Pre-School / Kindergarten

0-3 Months Competencies

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

Name of Child: _____ Age: _____ Date of birth: ____/____/____

Region: _____ Constituency/Circuit: _____

Date of the Observation: ____/____/____

KEY	Y = Yes	S = Sometimes	N = Not yet	P = In Process
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0-3 MONTHS COMPETENCIES					
Physical Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Can hold head up and begins to push up while on belly					
Arm and leg motions smoother					
Easily sucks and swallows during feeding					
Social Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Beginning to smile at people					
Attempting to look at people around him/her					
Makes eye contact with the person holding him/her					
Emotional Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Can briefly calm self (may bring hands to mouth and suck on hand)					
Makes eye contact with those around him/her					
Bonding					
Cries when uncomfortable and usually stops when held or when nappy changed					

Cries when hungry and usually stops when given food					
Cognitive Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Coos, and makes squealing and gurgling sounds when communicated to					
Smiles or shows excitement on seeing familiar faces					
Starting to pay attention to people and objects around him/her					
Beginning to follow and recognise people and objects with her/his eyes					
Responds to sounds					
Moves head to the sound of voices					
Looks toward the direction of a sound					

General Comments/Observations/Recommendations:

Initiatives or actions to be taken for the development and stimulation of the child (if necessary):

1.

2.

3.

4.

Signature of the responsible Educarer: _____

2.2

Developmental Milestones Report

Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centre / Pre-School / Kindergarten

3-6 Months Competencies

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

Name of Child: _____ Age: _____ Date of birth: ____/____/____

Region: _____ Constituency/Circuit: _____

Date of the Observation: ____/____/____

KEY **Y** = Yes **S** = Sometimes **N** = Not yet **P** = In Process

3-6 MONTHS COMPETENCIES					
Physical Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Brings hands to mouth					
When lying on the belly, pushes up to elbows					
Can hold head up without support					
Can shake a toy she/he is holding					
Might be able to roll over onto his/her back					
Can hold a toy and shake it and swing at dangling toys					
Pushes down on legs when feet are on a hard surface					
Reaches for toys with one hand					
Uses hands and eyes together – such as seeing a toy and reaching for it					
Follows moving things with eyes from side to side					
Beginning to signal hunger by putting hands near mouth					

Social Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Smiles spontaneously, especially at people					
Copies movements and facial expressions, such as smiling or frowning					
Likes to play with others and may get upset or might cry when playing stops.					
Emotional Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Responds to love and affection – e.g. smiling back, cuddling or hugging					
Watches faces closely by establishing eye contact					
Expresses emotions by crying, smiling or laughing					
Cognitive Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Recognises familiar people and things at a distance					
Cries if hungry, in pain or tired					
Is babbling, with repetition of vowel/consonant sounds					
Copies sounds he/she hears					
Turns head on hearing sounds					

General Comments/Observations/Recommendations:

Initiatives or actions taken already (if any):

Initiatives or actions to be taken for the development and stimulation of the child (if necessary):

Signature of the responsible Educarer: _____

2.3

Developmental Milestones Report

Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centre / Pre-School / Kindergarten

6-9 Months Competencies

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

Name of Child: _____ Age: _____ Date of birth: ____ / ____ / ____

Region: _____ Constituency/Circuit: _____

Date of the Observation: ____ / ____ / ____

KEY **Y** = Yes **S** = Sometimes **N** = Not yet **P** = In Process

6-9 MONTHS COMPETENCIES					
Physical Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Rolls over in both directions (front to back, back to front)					
Tries to grab nearby objects					
Beginning to sit without support					
When standing, supports weight on legs and may bounce					
Rocks back and forth					
Pushes down on legs when feet on hard surface					
Plays with feet and toes					
Passes things from one hand to the other					
Brings hands to mouth					
Brings things to mouth					
Shows interest in food and opens mouth when spoon-fed					
Moves food from front to the back of mouth when chewing					

Developing preferences for foods					
Starting to eat cereals and single-ingredient puréed foods like carrots, sweet potato, banana and soft porridge					
Social Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Shows affection to parents or caregivers					
Starting to differentiate between familiar faces and strangers					
Enjoys playing with others, especially those he/she is used to					
Likes to interact with the people around him/her					
Laughs, especially in social interactions					
Emotional Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Responds to other people's emotions					
Makes sounds to show positive and negative emotions					
Is usually happy					
Likes to look at self in a mirror					
Becomes bored if left alone for long periods					
Cognitive Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Is curious					
Becoming more settled in eating and sleeping patterns					
Looks at objects nearby					
Tries to get things that are out of reach					
Explores objects by looking at and mouthing them					
Enjoys games such as peek-a-boo or pat-a-cake					
Responds to noises by making sounds					

Cognitive Development continued	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Babbles and repeat sounds					
Strings vowels together when babbling ("ah,""eh,""oh")					
Accidental repetition of sounds / words					
Makes sounds to show joy and displeasure					
Begins to say consonant sounds (jabbering with "m,""b")					
Puts vowel sounds together and likes to have "conversations" with familiar people					

General Comments/Observations/Recommendations:

Initiatives or actions taken already (if any):

Initiatives or actions to be taken for the development and stimulation of the child (if necessary):

Signature of the responsible Educarer: _____

2.4

Developmental Milestones Report

Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centre / Pre-School / Kindergarten

9-12 Months Competencies

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

Name of Child: _____ Age: _____ Date of birth: ____/____/____

Region: _____ Constituency/Circuit: _____

Date of the Observation: ____/____/____

KEY	Y = Yes	S = Sometimes	N = Not yet	P = In Process
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9-12 MONTHS COMPETENCIES					
Physical Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Likes to moves through his/her environment					
Stands, holding on					
Can get into sitting position					
Pulls up (using furniture for support) to stand					
Crawls					
Moves things from one hand to the other, and likes to put objects in mouth					
Imitates hand clapping					
Enjoys finger rhymes					
Picks up small objects with thumb and index finger					
Enjoys teethers					
Beginning to eat thicker puréed foods, and stays full for a longer period after eating					

Reacts strongly to new smells and tastes					
Social Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Is clingy with the people with whom he/she is familiar					
Might be afraid of strangers					
Emotional Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Has favourite toys/objects and keeps them close to play with					
Cognitive Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Likes to play peek-a-boo					
Looks for things/objects or toys hidden by adults					
Tracks objects as they fall					
Makes gestures to communicate – e.g. points to something he/she wants					
Understands the word “no”					
Makes lots of different sounds to interact and communicate with the people around					
Starting to copy movements he/she sees					
Starting to imitate sounds he/she hears					
Waves goodbye					
Imitates actions and sounds					

General Comments/Observations/Recommendations:

Initiatives or actions taken already (if any):

Initiatives or actions to be taken for the development and stimulation of the child (if necessary):

Signature of the responsible Educarer: _____

2.5

Developmental Milestones Report

Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centre / Pre-School / Kindergarten

1 Year Competencies

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

Name of Child: _____ Age: _____ Date of birth: ____ / ____ / ____

Region: _____ Constituency/Circuit: _____

Date of the Observation: ____ / ____ / ____

KEY **Y** = Yes **S** = Sometimes **N** = Not yet **P** = In Process

1 YEAR COMPETENCIES					
Physical Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Likes to move around her/his environment					
Stands alone without any support					
Walks alone without support or with one hand held					
Gets into a sitting position without support					
Pulls up to stand and walks while holding onto furniture					
Dances to the music noise					
Climbs onto objects					
Eats a greater variety of foods, such as soft-cooked vegetables and soft fruits					
Can eat on his/her own					
Can chew food					
Beginning to be able to use an open cup					

Drinks from a cup and uses other eating utensils correctly – e.g. a spoon					
Puts out an arm or a leg to help with dressing					
Social Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Hands a book when he/she wants to hear a story					
Has favourite toys or objects					
Repeats sounds or actions to get the adult's attention					
Likes to play games such as peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake					
Emotional Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Cries when his/her parents or caregiver leave					
Is shy, nervous or stressed around strangers					
Shows fear in some situations					
Uses simple gestures such as shaking head to say "no" or waving "bye-bye"					
Cognitive Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Explores things in different ways, such as shaking, banging, throwing and biting					
Copies movements and gestures					
Bangs objects together					
Puts objects into a container and can take them out					
Pokes with index (pointer) finger					
Point to things she/he wants					
Finds things that are hidden					
Follows simple directions and lets go of objects without help					

Cognitive Development continued	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Starts to use things correctly – e.g. drinks from a cup and brushes/combs hair.					
Uses basic gestures such as waving, and says basic words like “mama” and “dada”					
Babbles sound more like speech					
Responds to simple spoken requests like “come”, “no” and “pick up the toy”					
Tries and repeats words the caregiver or parents say					
Deliberate repetition of sounds and words					

General Comments/Observations/Recommendations:

Initiatives or actions taken already (if any):

Initiatives or actions to be taken for the development and stimulation of the child (if necessary):

Signature of the responsible Educarer: _____

2.6

Developmental Milestones Report

Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centre / Pre-School / Kindergarten

18 Months Competencies

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

Name of Child: _____ Age: _____ Date of birth: ____/____/____

Region: _____ Constituency/Circuit: _____

Date of the Observation: ____/____/____

KEY	Y = Yes	S = Sometimes	N = Not yet	P = In Process
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18 MONTHS COMPETENCIES					
Physical Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Walks alone					
Walk up steps and runs					
May start walking up stairs					
Can help to dress and undress himself/herself					
Uses/holds utensils correctly when feeding – e.g. eating with a spoon and drinking from a cup independently					
Pulls toys while walking					
Scribbles on his/her own					
Tries more chopped solid foods like chicken or squash					
Eats most of the same foods that adults eat					
Social Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Likes to play by handing things to people					
Plays simple pretend – e.g. feeding a doll					

May cling to parent/caregiver in new situations					
Points to show interest in something					
Likes to explore the environment/surroundings alone but with parent/caregiver close by					
Emotional Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
May have temper tantrums					
Shows affection to familiar people					
May be afraid of strangers					
Cognitive Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Recognises what everyday objects are for – e.g. a spoon, plate, cup and hairbrush					
Points to things when he/she wants to get the attention of others					
Points to show someone what he/she wants					
Pretends to feed her favourite stuffed animals or a doll					
Can point to one body part					
Enjoys rhymes and songs					
Can follow 1-step verbal commands without any gestures – e.g. sits when you say “sit down”					
Says several single words					
Says and shakes head “no”					

General Comments/Observations/Recommendations:

Initiatives or actions taken already (if any):

Initiatives or actions to be taken for the development and stimulation of the child (if necessary):

Signature of the responsible Educarer: _____

2.7

Developmental Milestones Report

Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centre / Pre-School / Kindergarten

2 Years Competencies

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

Name of Child: _____ Age: _____ Date of birth: ____ / ____ / ____

Region: _____ Constituency/Circuit: _____

Date of the Observation: ____ / ____ / ____

KEY **Y** = Yes **S** = Sometimes **N** = Not yet **P** = In Process

2 YEARS COMPETENCIES					
Physical Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Can run					
Stands on tiptoe					
Kicks a ball					
Climbs up and down furniture without assistance					
Walks up and down stairs holding on					
Holds pencil/crayon to draw					
Draws lines and circles					
May start to develop a dominant hand					
Avoids obstacles					
Able to open doors					
Can place 1-3 objects on top of each other					
Chews with full jaw movements					

Uses utensils (e.g. spoon, fork) with some spills					
Social Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Copies/imitates others, especially adults and older children, such as siblings					
Plays mainly beside other children, but starting to include other children, such as in chase games					
Gets excited when with other children					
Waves "bye bye"					
Emotional Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Shows defiant behaviour (doing what told not to do)					
Gets excited when playing with other children					
Is more independent and more defiant					
Cognitive Development	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Starts to sort by shape (circle, square, rectangle, triangle), size (big, small) and colours (primary – red, blue, yellow)					
Can find things hidden under multiple layers					
Plays simple make-believe/fantasy games					
Builds towers with four or more blocks					
Follows simple instructions					
Recognises and identifies common objects and pictures by pointing					
Enjoys playing with sand, water and dough, and explores what these materials can do					
Identifies pictures of people, animals and objects					
Recognises similarities and differences					
Imitates rhythms and animal movements					
Repeats words overheard – e.g. in conversation					
Points to things in a book					

Cognitive Development continued	Y	S	N	P	Observation
Completes sentences in familiar books					
Knows familiar body parts					
Says short sentences with 2-4 words – e.g. “go potty now”					
Refers to self by name and often says “mine”					
Asks lots of questions					
Sings and dances to music					
Likes listening to stories (made up and from storybooks)					

General Comments/Observations/Recommendations:

Initiatives or actions taken already (if any):

Initiatives or actions to be taken for the development and stimulation of the child (if necessary):

Signature of the responsible Educarer: _____

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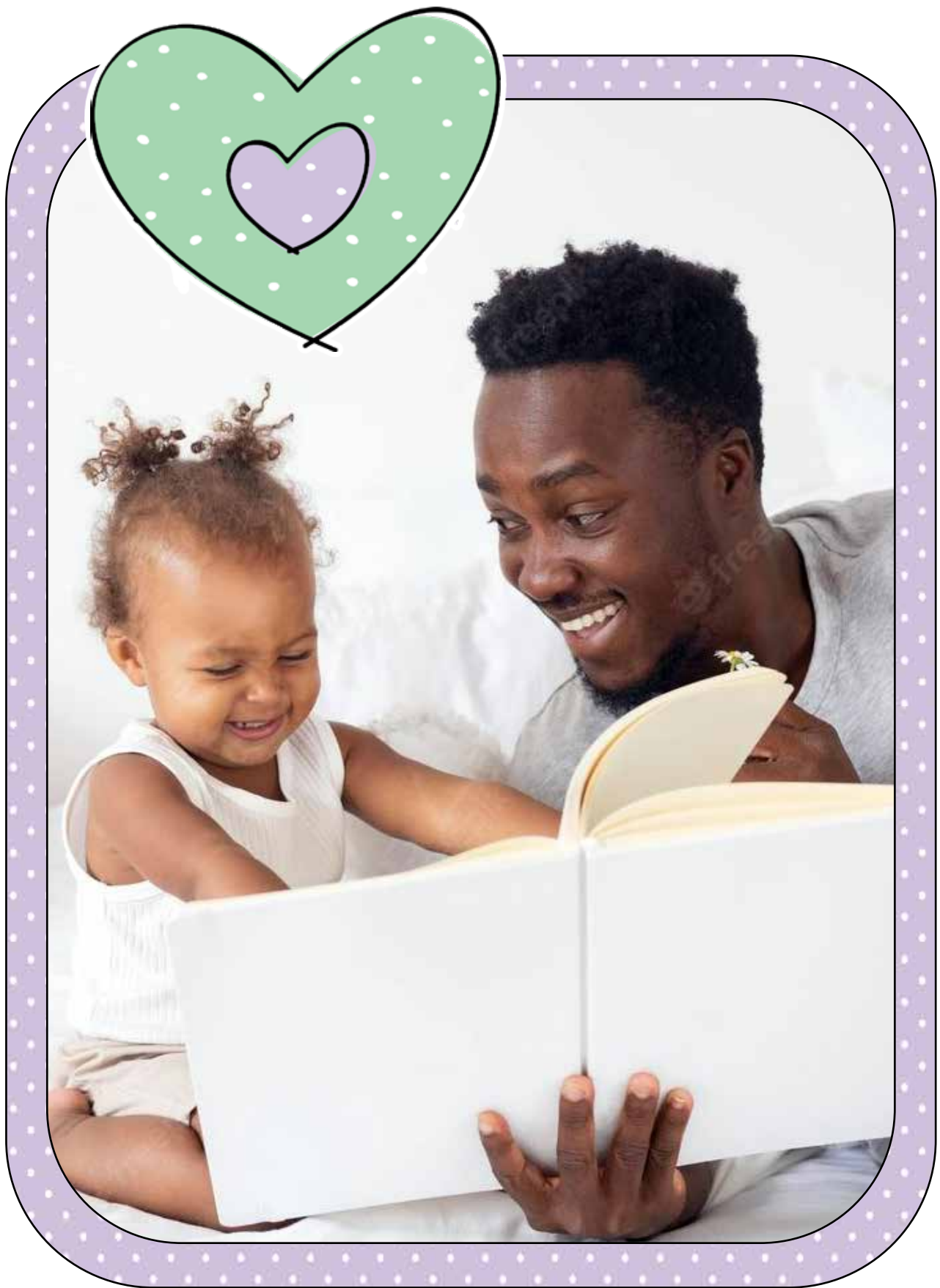
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*"Children need the freedom and time to play.
Play is not a luxury. Play is a necessity."*

Kay Renfield Jamison



Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
2022