

**early**  **years**  
DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK  
for Child Care Centres

“ *In all things the beginning is the most important.* ”  
- Plato



# early years

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK  
for Child Care Centres





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Republic of Singapore

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Published by  
**Early Childhood Development Agency**  
510 Thomson Road #13-00 SLF Building Singapore 298135  
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[www.ecda.gov.sg](http://www.ecda.gov.sg)

Design Production by  
**Words Worth Media** [www.wordsworth.com.sg](http://www.wordsworth.com.sg)



ISBN: 978-981-08-9995-0

Printed in Singapore



**“** *If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, the excitement, and the mystery of the world we live in.* **”**

*- Rachel Carlson*



## Message

Demands for centre-based care for children from birth to three years have been steadily growing. Parents today want quality centre-based programmes that provide more than just custodial care.

Our early childhood professionals play a critical role in providing quality care and development for infants, toddlers and preschool children. Competent, responsive and engaging caregivers are vital to hone the unique abilities and potential of every child.

This Early Years Development Framework will guide and set standards for quality care and developmental practices. Its emphasis on partnerships with family and community will further nurture strong and healthy relationships and interactions between each child and his or her community of caregivers, in the early years.

As a community, we aspire to nurture each child holistically, so that they are well prepared for lifelong learning, active and responsible citizenry, as well as success in their adult years. Let us continue to work together to ensure that they grow up in a safe environment, enjoy good health and nutrition, and develop confidence through positive learning experiences to achieve their full potential.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chan Chun Sing'.

Chan Chun Sing  
**Acting Minister**  
**Ministry of Social and Family Development**



## Foreword

The Early Years Development Framework embraces a vision of quality for the learning, development and well-being of children from two months to three years in centre-based child care settings. The framework articulates key pillars, guiding principles, pedagogical practices and desired outcomes, as well as sets standards to address the care and learning needs of infants, toddlers and nursery-aged children.

This document is designed to help educators plan and deliver culturally and developmentally appropriate experiences, create safe and enriching learning environments, enhance professional development and foster strong partnerships with families and the community. Educators will find the guiding principles and desired outcomes a useful compass in setting targets and learning goals for young children.

The framework was developed after a research study, conducted in collaboration with the National Institute of Education, on current practices in the care and education of children below four years of age in child care centres. Extensive consultation with key stakeholders including early childhood experts, community partners, child care operators, supervisors, practitioners and parents helped ensure that the framework was founded on well-documented international research, while being relevant to early childhood settings in Singapore.

The Early Years Development Framework complements the Kindergarten Curriculum Framework recently refreshed by the Ministry of Education in 2012 to guide the teaching and learning in pre-schools for children aged four to six. Together, the frameworks provide continuity in standards and quality in the care, development and learning experiences of children from infancy through to the kindergarten years.

This document and a training programme are now available in English and Chinese. These resources, along with a companion 'Learner's Guide', will help support educators to implement the framework effectively in their centres.

I hope that the Early Years Development Framework will be a useful reference for all early childhood professionals who have an interest in the holistic development and well-being of young children aged 3 and below.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Lee Tung Jean'.

Dr Lee Tung Jean  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Early Childhood Development Agency**

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# introduction





**“** *There are no seven  
wonders of the world  
in the eyes of a child.  
There are seven million.* **”**

*- Walt Streightiff*



**The Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) licences child care centres for children from 2 months to 6 years. Over the years, standards have been raised and the quality of child care centres has improved through higher level teacher training and a higher requirement for the academic qualification of early childhood educators.**

In 2002, the Ministry of Education (MOE) launched Nurturing Early Learners<sup>1</sup> (NEL): A Framework for a Kindergarten Curriculum. The Kindergarten Framework provides a broad set of principles and practices to guide early childhood educators<sup>2</sup> to plan and implement developmentally appropriate activities for children aged 4 to 6 years old in kindergartens and child care centres.



In 2010, the then Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS), now known as the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) initiated the Early Years Development Framework (EYDF) to provide a strong and holistic foundation for children aged 3 years and below. Together with the NEL, the two frameworks provide educators with continuity for the care and development of children from infancy through the kindergarten years until they enter primary school.



**“ Each time one prematurely teaches a child something he could have discovered for himself, that child is kept from inventing it and consequently from understanding it completely. ”**



**- Jean Piaget**

The EYDF sets the standard for quality of care and learning practices that are specific to the developmental needs of infants, toddlers and nursery children. It describes desired outcomes, key principles and practices for young children's holistic development and learning. The Framework provides educators with broad guidelines to plan and deliver culturally and developmentally appropriate experiences, strengthen home-centre partnerships, enhance professional development and foster community networking.

## **The Development of EYDF**

The EYDF was developed with reference to different sources of information. A comprehensive review of the research and literature from neuroscience, child development theories, early childhood education, programmes for infant and toddlers and good practices was undertaken.

The review reinforced the importance of optimising children's development in the first three years of life. During this period, the intensity in which neural connections are formed in the brain is unparalleled. What young children experience and acquire at this stage serves as the foundation for future learning and development.





Second, reference was made to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>3</sup> (UNCRC), which articulates children’s rights to holistic development and having their best interests at the heart of all decision-making process. Several countries<sup>4</sup> have embarked on a journey to clearly define what is in the best interests of young children in centre-based settings. Frameworks from these countries served as useful references for the EYDF.


Third, the development of the EYDF involved considerable input from the local academia and various stakeholders. Research findings from the then MCYS/ NIE<sup>5</sup> study using the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) contributed to some of the contents in the EYDF. Feedback also came from extensive consultative sessions with the early childhood community, including operators, supervisors, educators, training agencies, as well as parents. Other inputs came from observation visits to infant/toddler settings and conferences in Singapore and abroad.



# envisioning quality for the early years



The EYDF builds on the foundation laid by the child care centre licensing standards and teacher-training requirements. It weaves a developmental theme into the routine care practices and serves as a professional compass for educators in infant and child care centres working with young children from 2 months to 3 years. It describes the desired outcomes, guiding principles and practices to better support children's learning, physical, socio-emotional and cognitive development as well as educators' care and learning practices.



Early years educators can use the Framework as a tool to make informed decisions and plan developmentally appropriate experiences and environments for infants, toddlers and nursery children. Strategies outlined in the Framework will guide educators to focus on developing warm and nurturing relationships with the children in their care by responding appropriately to their physical, linguistic, cognitive, social and emotional needs.

The Framework articulates the indispensable role families play in the care and development of their children and therefore the need to strengthen home-centre partnerships. Linkages and collaborations within the community are included to support both families and children's development and learning. In pursuing quality care practices, key elements such as critical inquiry and reflection by educators are emphasised to ensure that young children's experiences are wholesome as well as developmentally and culturally appropriate. The Framework advocates a strong sense of professionalism and accountability among those caring for the young.





# framing a vision for quality in the early years




This Framework embraces a broad vision of centre-based quality in the following aspects:

## Children being Secure, Confident, Safe and Healthy

Children who are physically and emotionally secure are more likely to explore their environment and are better able to relate to other adults and children. Secure children are more confident and more willing to try new things and participate in activities that will further their development. A safe and healthy environment contributes to children's sense of security.


## Children being Involved, Engaged and Enquiring

Children are naturally curious. Discovery and learning are joyful experiences when children are presented with an inviting environment to explore, exciting activities to participate in, and a warm and friendly educator to mediate their learning. With learning and mastery, the child develops a sense of achievement and self-confidence.



## Centre, Families and the Community Connecting and Relating

Children develop in the context of their everyday living. It begins with the immediate family, then the centre with the educators. As they grow, other contexts are included, ranging from supermarkets, baby clinics, libraries, parks, bakeries, and other social and health service providers as well as community agencies. Interactions in these various contexts contribute to the quality of children's development. These relationships provide consistency, continuity and support in the children's lives.



The five key pillars upholding this broad vision of centre-based quality are focused on:

-  The Developing Child
-  The Intentional Programme
-  The Professional Educators
-  An Involved Family
-  An Engaged Community



## The Developing Child

Growth is often associated with changes in size, while development refers to changes in function and complexity. Myers (1992) describes child development as “a process of change in which the child learns to handle ever more complex levels of moving, thinking, feeling, and relating to others.” Development, therefore, takes place across different dimensions – physical, social, emotional and cognitive – but they do not necessarily all develop at the same pace. For instance, a 2 year old may be functioning physically like an 18 month old while his language ability could be nearer to a 3 year old’s.

These dimensions are also inter-related so that when something happens in one dimension, it triggers development in the other areas. For instance, when a toddler starts to walk, this physical development enables him to explore a wider environment. He discovers new things to interact with. Encouraged by a sensitive educator, he becomes more confident and independent. He comes across an obstacle and tries to go around it or he may decide to investigate it. So what started as a physical development (toddling), leads to exploring and engaging with new things (cognitive and fine motor skills), feeling secure and confident (emotional) and becoming more independent.

Nurturing adults who are responsive, respectful and reciprocal in approach contribute considerably to the development of young children’s sense of security, emotional stability, confidence and independence. While development follows a certain pattern, the pace and manifestation of that development differs from child to child. Every child is therefore unique. The child develops in context - in the home with his family members, in the centre with his peers and educators and in the larger social-cultural environment that he interacts with in his daily life. The young child needs good nutrition, a safe, culturally sensitive and stimulating environment, as well as responsive, nurturing adults to promote his holistic development.



## The Intentional Programme

The programme, environment and curriculum are flexible to meet the needs of young children. It is intentionally developmental and focuses on positive interactions and building warm and nurturing relationships. The environment is created to facilitate play and exploratory behaviours for learning and development. Crawling babies and toddlers who have discovered the joys of walking need their own customised environments. The purposeful environment, both indoors and outdoors, provides opportunities for movements and varied activities. The environment is well-stocked with a variety of appropriate materials and resources, both natural and man-made. These are safe, available and easily accessible to the children.



## The Professional Educator

The educator is attuned and responsive to the needs of young children. She is keenly aware of the different developmental stages and milestones, especially the distinct needs for infants and toddlers to develop secure attachments and relationships. She is also aware of individual temperaments, differences and needs of children in her care. With this knowledge, the educator creates a nurturing environment to facilitate play, exploration and learning. The educator is patient, warm and friendly as she interacts with each child or group of children. As a professionally qualified educator, she reflects on her practices and seeks to continually develop her skills and knowledge in working with young children, their families and the community.





## The Involved Family

The family is an integral part of young children's development. It is recognised that parents are the child's first teachers. A shared and sustained partnership between the centre and the home draws on their respective strengths and ensures that children's growth and developmental needs are addressed optimally. The partnership contributes to the consistency and continuity of children's care and development. The educator understands that parents and other family members are individuals with their own set of concerns and issues, which may at times affect parent-child and home-centre relationships. The educator also seeks to understand and be supportive of the family. When families need assistance with other matters beyond child care, she should refer them to her supervisor for advice. Her supervisor addresses the families' concerns and, if necessary, refers them to the relevant health or social service agency for assistance.

Educators need to be mindful that we are a culturally diverse society, and as such, we need to be sensitive in working with families from different cultures. An open, respectful and friendly relationship with families is essential in building a strong home-centre partnership that benefits the children, families and educators in many ways.

## The Engaged Community

A child's development is, first, affected by the quality of the home environment and the relationship with his main caregiver(s). Second, he is affected by the quality of the centre's environment, especially the interaction between him and the educator. A strong partnership between home and centre further enhances his development and well-being. Finally, the larger community also impacts on him, either directly (for instance, access to community play spaces, parks, medical care, children's services) or indirectly (for instance, financial assistance for families, family-friendly workplaces, marital counselling agencies.) The educator, therefore, needs to understand the different systems - family, centre, the community - and how they interact with one another to affect the child.

Educators can access a range of community resources for young children's learning and recreation. These include children's libraries, playgrounds, parks, post-offices, fire-stations, neighbourhood shops and markets. Community resources can also be invited to the centre to enhance children's health and learning, for instance, the friendly police-officer speaking on road safety, the dental nurse teaching good oral hygiene and officers from Health Promotion Board conducting eye screening for older children.




Educators could invite resource persons to the centre for parenting talks, for instance, staff from the Dads for Life movement, family service centres and professionals from the private sector. The community can also support parents who require various health, social and educational services, counselling, financial aid, special needs services and others. Knowledgeable educators and supervisors could advise and refer families to an appropriate agency or a professional for appropriate assistance.



# the early years development framework



The EYDF is targeted at young children 3 years and below. In child care centres they would come under the following age groups:

-  **Infants: 2 to 12 months**
-  **Toddlers: 13 to 30 months**
-  **Nursery: 31 to 36 months**

Our professional knowledge and research, past experiences and values shape the way we work with children. These factors interact with children's need to develop secure attachments, stable and positive relationships as well as their strong interest in exploring their environment.

Children grow and develop as they learn to construct and expand their sense of self, confidence, capabilities, and understanding of who they are in relation to the surrounding environments and the world beyond. The rich fabric of interactions and relationships is the foundation upon which all other developments take place.



The Framework recognises that there is a wide developmental variation within the age range of 2 months to 3 years. This is the period when children's development is most rapid. The Framework also recognises the valuable role played by families, educators and the partnerships with families and the community.

The EYDF comprises three parts: Guiding Principles, Desired Outcomes and Suggested Practices.

## Guiding Principles

Five guiding principles constitute the foundation of the EYDF to support the best interests of children in infant and child care centres. These principles are anchored on research evidence, neuroscience, child development literature, good practices and the UNCRC. While the principles are relevant to all age groups, some of the suggested practices may differ, especially for the infants. The guiding principles state the role of educators, families and the community in promoting children's holistic development. Figure 1 below presents the five guiding principles.

**Figure 1: Guiding Principles**

<b>Guiding Principle 1</b>	Developing secure attachments and confidence in children with nurturing adults.
<b>Guiding Principle 2</b>	Generating culturally and developmentally appropriate opportunities for children’s holistic development and learning in a safe and healthy environment.
<b>Guiding Principle 3</b>	Committing to professional standards and ethics in working with children, families and educators’ own professional development.
<b>Guiding Principle 4</b>	Involving families as partners in the care, development and education of children.
<b>Guiding Principle 5</b>	Engaging the community as support and resources for home and centre.



### Desired Outcomes

The desired outcomes serve to guide decisions on care and learning practices, programmes and environments, as well as partnerships with families and the community. The desired outcomes help define expectations for children’s well-being, learning and development and provide clear targets and common goals for educators in their planning, implementing and reviewing of environments and experiences for young children. Figure 2 presents the desired outcomes.


**Figure 2: Desired Outcomes**

<b>Desired Outcome 1</b>	Children are secure and confident.
<b>Desired Outcome 2</b>	Programmes are holistic and provide optimal support and experiences for growth development and learning in a safe and healthy environment.
<b>Desired Outcome 3</b>	Educators are professional and engage in reflective practices.
<b>Desired Outcome 4</b>	Educators develop strong partnership and relationship with families.
<b>Desired Outcome 5</b>	Community provides a network of resources and support for home and centre.



### Suggested Practices

Processes are just as important as outcomes. The practices described in this Framework are suggestions of processes to achieve the desired outcomes for young children. The practices are intended to facilitate children’s growth, development and learning, create purposeful environments, foster quality partnerships and promote professional accountability. The suggested practices are not exhaustive and educators may add other creative and appropriate ideas.

Each child is unique with developmental and cultural variations. Educators need to exercise flexibility and sensitivity in using different strategies for the children in their care. Figure 3 presents the conceptual overview of the EYDF.

Figure 3:

# Conceptual overview of the EYDF

## ENVISIONING QUALITY FOR EARLY YEARS

Children being Secure, Confident, Safe and Healthy

Children being Involved, Engaged and Enquiring

Centre, Families and the Community Connecting and Relating

## PILLARS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### The Developing Child

Developing secure attachments and confidence in children with nurturing adults

### The Intentional Programme

Generating culturally and developmentally appropriate opportunities for children's holistic development and learning in a safe and healthy environment

### The Professional Educarer

Committing to professional standards and ethics in working with children, families and educarers' own professional development

### The Involved Family

Involving families as partners in the care, development and education of children

### The Engaged Community

Engaging the community as support and resources for home and centre

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

Children are secure and confident

Programmes are holistic and provide optimal support and experiences for growth, development and learning

Educarers are professional and engage in reflective practices

Educarers develop strong partnership and relationship with families

Community provides a network of resources and support for home and centre

## SUB-OUTCOMES

- 1.1** Children are secure and emotionally connected
- 1.2** Children demonstrate increasing confidence and autonomy
- 1.3** Staff-child interactions are respectful, responsive and reciprocal

- 2.1** Educarers use routine care for learning and development
- 2.2** Educarers foster a disposition for learning
- 2.3** Curriculum offers holistic experiences for learning
- 2.4** Educarers provide access to a variety of spaces with natural and man-made materials
- 2.5** The environment is safe and healthy

- 3.1** Educarers adhere to professional standards and ethics
- 3.2** Educarers engage in reflective practices
- 3.3** Educarers are committed to continuing professional development

- 4.1** Families and educarers engage in regular communication and feedback
- 4.2** Families are involved in various ways in the centre

- 5.1** Centres have updated information and access to community resources
- 5.2** Community serves as resources to enrich children's learning and provides support for families



**Guiding Principle 1**

# the developing child



**Developing secure  
attachments and confidence in  
children with nurturing adults**





**Outcome:**

## **Children are secure and confident**

- 1.1 Children are secure and emotionally connected**
  - 1.2 Children demonstrate increasing confidence and autonomy**
  - 1.3 Staff-child interactions are respectful, responsive and reciprocal**
- 
- 



**Early relationships and attachments are important to the young infant. Young children thrive on interactions that are respectful, responsive and reciprocal with nurturing adults. When carried out in a consistent, reliable and predictable manner, these interactions create warm and nurturing experiences for young children. Under such circumstances, infants and toddlers will feel more secure with these adults.**

In the child care centre, children who are securely attached are more confident to explore new environments and form new attachments, first to their class teacher and eventually other educators and children as well. They tend to display social skills, and adapt to different situations and people better than children who are insecurely attached.

### **Easing Transition from Home to Centre**

Infants and young toddlers may display varying degrees of anxiety during the transition from home to the centre. It may range from minimal to high, depending on the children's past experiences with other children, their temperament and whether they are securely or insecurely attached to the main home caregiver. Insecurely attached children tend to cling and have a hard time separating from familiar adults.

**“** *Child development is ‘...a process of change in which a child learns to handle even more complex levels of moving, thinking, feeling and relating to others.’* **”**

- Myers



Stranger anxiety together with separation anxiety, the fear of being abandoned, can be terrifying for the new child when her parents leave the centre. New infants and toddlers feel more secure when the main educator remains constant, and is consistent and quick to respond to their distress while remaining patient and calm at all times.

To ease the transition, educators can help parents understand what may happen during the transition and how to prepare themselves and child for it. Brief visits to the centre before the actual admission helps the child to be acquainted with the people and environment. On admission, encourage a familiar adult from home to be with the young child for a few days to allow for familiarisation with the main educator and environment.

Toddlers use familiar adults as a secure base to explore the immediate environment, often returning physically or visually for re-assurance. The frequency to touch base decreases progressively as the toddler becomes more secure, autonomous and confident. The child can be allowed to bring a familiar item from home, which would serve to comfort the child when the parent or caregiver finally leaves the centre.

Sights, sounds, touch and even smells hold valuable information. When such sensory experiences are associated with familiar people and places, they help to comfort and soothe infants and young children in unfamiliar environments. Thus, a favourite teddy bear to clutch, an old baby blanket to touch and smell or a bolster to hug, offers a sense of security to the anxious child.





### **Transition within the Centre**

As infants progress to the toddler class they face many changes – a new class, perhaps a new teacher, new routines and possibly more children with the increase in child-staff ratio. The only constant is the core of infants who progress to the next level with them. For a smooth transition, slowly introduce the infants to the next level to play and familiarise themselves to the new educator and environment. She could also visit the toddler class and engage them in some activities to develop beginning rapport with them. The same process applies to toddlers progressing to Nursery level.

During the transition phase, educators from both levels should minimise any drastic changes in routine, especially for the younger group. If the same educator follows the class to the next level, the transition will be easier.

It is also important to remember that very young children need time to ‘do nothing’ or retreat to a quiet space or area where they can just be by themselves with their favourite item. For young infants who are not crawlers, educators could place them away from other infants, or noisy spaces. Children may also feel over-stimulated and overwhelmed when there are too many children or when there are loud noises.



Educators with a good understanding of the different developmental milestones would be attuned and responsive to the children’s needs during transitions. They would be in a better position to undertake focused observations, assess and plan appropriate experiences for these children.

**Figure 4: Sub-outcome 1.1**

## **Children are secure and emotionally connected**

### **When children demonstrate, for instance, the following:**

- ✦ recognise primary caregiver and educator when they see or hear them
- ✦ display pleasure when interacting with a familiar adult
- ✦ cease fussing when their needs are met
- ✦ accept and respond to being comforted
- ✦ alert educators of their needs for assistance or to be consoled
- ✦ express emotions
- ✦ show empathy to feelings of others
- ✦ show interest in things around them
- ✦ initiate interactions and conversations with trusted caregivers
- ✦ express and communicate their needs, interests, and ideas verbally and non-verbally
- ✦ explore and interact with the surrounding social and physical environments confidently through relationships and play
- ✦ increasingly able to self-regulate and manage their emotions with guidance and support from educator



### **Educators facilitate this, for instance, when they undertake the following:**

- ✦ understand that every child is different and respond accordingly
- ✦ support children's development of secure attachment relationships through warm, consistent and nurturing care-giving
- ✦ create a predictable and dependable environment for infants and young children
- ✦ create daily opportunities for intimate, one-to-one interactions during personal care routines
- ✦ respond immediately and consistently when infants cry and when children in distress need care and comfort
- ✦ maintain regular routines and programmes that are flexible to accommodate the children's moods and interests
- ✦ respond sensitively to children's cues and attempts to initiate interactions
- ✦ understand and accept that children experience intense emotions as part of their normal and healthy development
- ✦ support children in expressing and resolving a range of emotions through different strategies
- ✦ provide sufficient time for a smooth transition for children from one activity to the next
- ✦ observe culturally appropriate practices that are sensitive to the children's home language and culture



**Figure 5: Sub-outcome 1.2**

## **Children demonstrate increasing confidence and autonomy**

### **When children demonstrate, for instance, the following:**

- ✦ show interest in new toys and will try to reach for them
- ✦ begin to show interest and interact with others beside the main educator
- ✦ begin to go beyond usual play area to explore new and unfamiliar physical environment with increasing confidence
- ✦ persevere and remain positive towards new challenges and discoveries - for example, when a baby encounters an obstacle and is able to crawl around or over it to reach the other side
- ✦ confidently explore and engage with the social environment through relationships and play
- ✦ display increasing awareness of personal needs (I am tired, I want an apple)
- ✦ demonstrate increasing self-help skills (putting on shoes, feeding self)
- ✦ recognise their individual accomplishments (smile, clap hands on building 5-block tower)
- ✦ assert their abilities and independence (insist on climbing play structure without help)
- ✦ look for desired items or request for items and activities
- ✦ experiment with materials for art and craft or construction
- ✦ demonstrate understanding of rules and limitations set by adults
- ✦ repeat challenging tasks to gain mastery and confidence
- ✦ make decisions and problem-solve to meet their needs in specific situations



### **Educators facilitate this, for instance, when they undertake the following:**

- ✦ comment and show delight when infants demonstrate new skills like reaching, shaking rattle, holding milk bottle
- ✦ introduce new materials, activities gradually within the comfort of familiar routines and people
- ✦ ensure appropriate books, toys and resources are easily accessible by children
- ✦ patiently facilitate, encourage and show delight at children's efforts and products
- ✦ provide opportunities and support for children to actively explore their environment
- ✦ provide opportunities for children to make choices
- ✦ provide opportunities for children to engage in individual, paired and small group activities
- ✦ motivate and encourage children to persevere when faced with challenges
- ✦ recognise children's need for independence but be readily available to support and assist when requested or required
- ✦ allow children to make mistakes
- ✦ enforce basic rules using reminders and redirection
- ✦ facilitate children's acquisition of self-help skills

**Figure 6: Sub-outcome 1.3**

## **Staff-child interactions are respectful, responsive and reciprocal**

### **When children demonstrate, for instance, the following:**

- 👉 respond to adult-initiated conversations - in the case of infants, by cooing, smiling and body movements
- 👉 maintain eye contact during interactions
- 👉 display delight when being held, played with and read or spoken to by an educator
- 👉 repeat and imitate educator's actions
- 👉 increasingly initiate and sustain interactions
- 👉 show liking for educator
- 👉 respond when educator or another child initiates an activity with them
- 👉 make requests instead of demands
- 👉 display trust and confidence
- 👉 display empathy on seeing another child in distress
- 👉 able to share, wait, take turns



### **Educators facilitate this, for instance, when they undertake the following:**

- 👉 are role models for respectful, responsive and reciprocal behaviours
- 👉 are sensitive to children's needs, responses and cues
- 👉 are familiar with each child's likes, dislikes, routines, rituals and schedules
- 👉 are patient, friendly and warm in their tone and language
- 👉 maintain eye contact, nod or smile encouragingly when interacting with children
- 👉 create opportunities for one to one interactions
- 👉 describe and explain their actions during care-giving routines so that infants and toddlers know what to expect
- 👉 allow infants and young children to engage in other activities quietly if they do not want to join the group session
- 👉 engage in dialogue with children
- 👉 refrain from rushing through a care-giving activity
- 👉 respond positively and immediately to child's signals of distress
- 👉 pay attention to children's exploratory behaviours and express interest and enthusiasm verbally and non-verbally
- 👉 demonstrate caring, sharing behaviours

**Guiding Principle 2**



# the intentional programme

2


**Generating culturally and developmentally appropriate opportunities for children's holistic development and learning in a safe and healthy environment**





**Outcome:**

**Programmes are holistic and provide optimal support and experiences for growth, development and learning**

- 2.1 Educarers use routine care for learning and development**
  - 2.2 Educarers foster a disposition for learning**
  - 2.3 Curriculum offers holistic experiences for learning**
  - 2.4 Educarers provide access to a variety of spaces with natural and man-made materials**
  - 2.5 The environment is safe and healthy**
- 



**Learning begins from birth. Learning takes place in daily routines, through play and interactions with people, materials and the physical environment. When educarers understand the propensity of infants and young children for learning, they will be better able to provide nurturing interaction, activities and environment to support them. Infants and young children also need good nutrition and a safe environment for their healthy growth and development.**

As Singapore is a cosmopolitan society, cultural diversity should be respected and celebrated. Appropriate cultural elements add an interesting and meaningful dimension to the child care programme. Living in a multicultural and multi-religious context also means that educarers have to be aware and sensitive to different cultural practices. Educarers need to work closely with parents when certain cultural practices compromise safety or come into conflict with medical advice.

### **Putting in Place Practices that are Developmentally Appropriate and Culturally Responsive**

Central to the developmentally appropriate practices approach is the principle that children construct their own knowledge through interacting with the social and physical environment. As children are viewed as intrinsically motivated and self-directed, an effective programme capitalises on their motivation to explore, experiment, and to make sense of their experiences. The main focus of this approach is to make learning meaningful for the individual child, using practices which reflect both the developmental age and individual needs of the child.

**“** *Learning starts in infancy, long before formal education begins, and continues throughout life...* **”**  
- Magda Gerber













There may be differences in expectations between home and centre. Educators need to exercise sensitivity and patience when explaining and rationalising centre-based practices, to address these differences in an open and amicable manner. A family-centred approach to child care accepts cultural diversity, promotes understanding of children's culture and home environment and the way parents raise their children. Child care centres should try to accommodate parents' cultural requirements as much as possible.

### **An Intentional Programme for Early Care, Development and Learning**

The Programme for infants, toddlers and nursery children is defined by care-giving, play and other daily routines for physical care, building relationships, learning and developmental experiences. It is everything that happens from the time the child is greeted on arrival to the goodbyes at departure.

The intentional programme includes:

-  **Care-giving routines**
-  **Communication and language development**
-  **Cognitive development: early numeracy and problem solving**
-  **Play as learning**
-  **Aesthetic experiences**
-  **Indoor and outdoor experiences**
-  **Access to resources and materials**
-  **Safety and health**



**Figure 7: Sub-outcome 2.1**

## **Educarers use routine care for learning and development**

**When children are engaged in, for instance, the following:**

- ♥ Bathing
- ♥ Feeding
- ♥ Diapering
- ♥ Toileting
- ♥ Dressing
- ♥ Napping



**Educarers facilitate learning and development, for instance, when they undertake the following:**

- ♥ are gentle, relaxed and unhurried
- ♥ maintain a pleasant and soothing tone
- ♥ engage in conversations
- ♥ recite rhymes and sing to the children
- ♥ describe and explain what you are doing
- ♥ respond and reciprocate to children's cues and questions
- ♥ allow and encourage toddlers and nursery children to feed themselves
- ♥ are patient when toileting accidents occur
- ♥ encourage older toddlers and nursery children to participate in dressing (pull up shorts, take off socks)
- ♥ play soft music when children are taking their naps





### Care-giving Routines

Care-giving routines, like diapering, bathing and feeding, are the staples of an infant/toddler programme. Routine procedures need to be of a good standard to ensure children's safety, health and hygiene at all times. For instance, during infants' feeding routine, educators should hold the infant in her arms when feeding from the bottle. During nap time, infants should not be put to bed on their stomachs as this has been found to be related to Sudden Infant Death (SID) syndrome.

The care routine carries with it developmental opportunities. Greetings, feeding, diapering, toileting, hand-washing, bathing, dressing and nap time offer daily opportunities to build relationships and foster children's learning and development of their sense of self and autonomy.

The number of care-giving cycles children undergo on a daily basis is frequent. When these are multiplied over the course of infancy and toddlerhood, it scales up the developmental potential in these routines. Therefore, it is important that educators make routine care-giving moments not only pleasant and enjoyable but also a time to foster language, cognitive as well as socio-emotional development. While stimulation is intended to foster development in these areas, educators need to be mindful of over-stimulating the children. Some signs to look out for include distressed behaviours, irritation, strained facial expressions or even turning or moving away during a lengthened interaction with an educator.



**Figure 8: Sub-outcome 2.2**

## **Educarers foster a disposition for learning**

### **When children demonstrate, for instance, the following:**

- ✦ exhibit a sense of curiosity
- ✦ infants, explore an object using the senses – looking, hitting, pulling, shaking, mouthing and tasting it
- ✦ experiment with objects and observe cause and effect
- ✦ show an interest in various stimuli in the environment
- ✦ are engaged in the materials provided
- ✦ use play to discover, examine and try out new ideas
- ✦ pursue and extend their own interests with enthusiasm and concentration
- ✦ manipulate resources to investigate, take apart, bring together, create and build
- ✦ seek information verbally and non-verbally
- ✦ show interest in new activities or materials introduced
- ✦ persist in the face of challenges
- ✦ display satisfaction on completion of tasks



### **Educarers facilitate this, for instance, when they undertake the following:**

- ✦ make time for unstructured free play daily
- ✦ describe and explain what they are doing even during routine care
- ✦ expose children to different genres of books
- ✦ plan learning environments that are flexible and open-ended
- ✦ provide a wide variety of materials that reflect children's developing skills and abilities
- ✦ encourage children to use five senses to explore and observe
- ✦ supply tools for children to observe (magnifying glass) and measure (string, rope)
- ✦ allow children time and flexibility to be engaged in specific activities
- ✦ ask open-ended questions about objects, people and activities
- ✦ play with children, explain what is happening and encourage children to think about what comes next
- ✦ present materials with a variety of properties such as shape, colour, size and texture
- ✦ provide opportunities for children to both build and take apart resources and materials
- ✦ provide children with plenty of opportunities to explore the natural environment
- ✦ provide experiences that engage children in the wider community and environment beyond the early childhood setting (parks, neighbourhoods, beaches, supermarkets)
- ✦ show enthusiasm in children's discovery and learning





## Communication and Language Development

Infants and pre-speech young children communicate through facial expressions, gestures, crying and other sounds to convey needs, feelings and distress. Educators need to be observant to respond to all these cues. With experience and keen observation, the educator will be able to respond more appropriately and accurately. Infants and young children are sensitive and react positively or negatively to the tones and loudness of voice as well as facial expressions of adults. They pay attention when spoken to and learn to take turns in 'conversation', even if they are just vocalising cooing sounds.

The first three years are critical years during which speech and language are developed. However, understanding of the spoken language begins way before the child is able to speak. When young children are physiologically ready, they learn to speak a language through listening, observing and interacting with others. Good language models are necessary when children's speech and language patterns are being developed. Being immersed in a good language environment, both spoken and written, help children tremendously in their language development.

**“** *Everything they see, they hear, they feel, they touch is new.... A very young baby is busy being a very young baby.* **”**

*- Magda Gerber*

Talking and singing to children during the various daily activities expose children to a vocabulary specific to the context. Bath-time interaction may include words like 'water', 'soap', 'slippery', 'bubbles', 'wet', 'dry', 'warm', 'float', 'clean'. Mealtimes would include names of the different food served, textures of food, words pertaining to good eating habits and table manners for the older children.

Young children also hear how language is used: to describe ('I am going to change your diaper'), explain ('So you will feel dry and comfortable'), question ('Would you like to have an apple?'), soothe ('It's alright, you're fine'), predict ('Look at the dark clouds, it's going to rain soon'), narrate a story and sing. Daily reading of books and picture talk further facilitate language development.



## Cognitive Development, Early Numeracy and Problem Solving

Children's care-giving routines, play and other daily experiences offer opportunities for cognitive development, including the introduction to early numeracy and problem solving. This includes developing a number sense for example, counting different parts of the body, learning attributes of objects ('See, this yellow ball is floating on the water'), classification ('Let's put all the bears here, and all the blocks there'), and concepts of quantity ('Here is one more cookie').

Interactions with the environment and having specially selected materials made available and accessible, will allow children to build on and strengthen this foundation. Educators can provide ample opportunities daily for children to count, sort and match using different objects - coloured blocks, small balls, animals, toys, crayons and other natural materials. For older children, this can be extended to activities that look at patterns, sizes, shapes, lengths, height, speeds in relation to the surrounding environment.

Some action songs teach numbers and counting, like, 'Five little monkeys jumping on the bed'. For 3 year olds, educators can also pose questions and set up environments and activities that encourage discovery and problem solving. Water play provides interesting lessons on what floats and what sinks and observing how many cups of water are needed to fill a bottle. Sand play can be set up for children to learn about textures and sizes, using a sieve and different sizes of pebbles and stones.

## Aesthetic Experiences

Creative and aesthetic experiences offer invaluable opportunities to enhance young children's physical, intellectual and socio-emotional development. Experiences like music, movement and art activities are fun and encourage children to express their feelings, thoughts and ideas. These experiences also foster creativity and promote self-confidence and esteem in children.

### Music and Movement Experiences

Music and movement experiences can be provided in a variety of ways - dancing, singing, listening to CDs and music played on musical instruments. Allow children to experiment with different percussion instruments, both store-bought or made from boxes, tins, pots and pans. Expose children to different genres of music - lullabies, classical, jazz, folk music, children's songs and songs from other cultures and languages.





Sing, dance and move with your children in a wide variety of ways daily. The use of scarves, ribbons and balls add interest and variety. Even infants can enjoy music and dance when they are carried by the educator moving to the music.

Music and movement is also a means to learning mathematical concepts like speed (fast and slow) and weight. It also enhances language development through songs and develops confidence in children when they participate actively.

### ♥ Art Experiences

Art provides an enjoyable sensorial learning experience for young children using a variety of materials, tools, colours and textures. The process also helps to develop fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination.

Art for children is focused more on the processes than on the final product. Except for infants and toddlers who need assistance, children should be given the freedom to express themselves without too much adult intervention. For instance, a child should be allowed to paint an elephant purple if she chooses to do so. Educarers should not pass judgement. Young children do not have to give a reason for not using realistic colours for objects, although they may insist that the elephant is purple because 'This is a magic elephant' or simply 'I like purple'. Art can be a good entry point for helping young children express feelings of anger, frustration, sadness or happiness and helping them articulate their thoughts.

When planning art activities, educarers may choose from an assortment of materials - crayons, markers, paints, brushes, sponges, toothbrushes, and recycled materials as well as items from nature. The developmental appropriateness of each material has to be considered. For example, thicker crayons and markers would be easier for toddlers to manipulate, rather than paintbrushes. Materials such as clay,



“ *It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.* ”

- Albert Einstein





play dough, finger paints and coloured sand are also ideal materials as they promote sensory development. All art materials used by children should be safe and non-toxic.

Children's artwork (including doodles) should have the name of the child on it. Educarers may write their comments on the artwork which can be sent home, kept in the child's portfolio or displayed. The displayed art pieces can be pointed out to children to affirm their efforts.

Educarers could set up an aesthetically pleasing environment comprising mobiles, pictures, photographs and other art forms from different cultures to foster an appreciation of the arts. Artworks need to be displayed where children can view them easily.

## **Play as Learning**

Children grow and develop through play. Young children, especially infants and toddlers explore the world with their five senses. They use their sight, smell, touch, hearing and taste to make sense of their physical environment, objects and the people around them. Different types of play foster different types of development in young children - physical, linguistic, cognitive, social and emotional.

Playtime is more than toy time. Playing involves people, objects, or movement. Everything, from shaking rattles, pushing a cart to blowing bubbles, singing songs, splashing in the tub, chasing each other around the room, and pretending to be different characters, qualify as 'play'. Through play, young children learn to make friends, cooperate, communicate, solve problems and demonstrate a host of other intellectual, emotional and social behaviours. They become avid explorers, discoverers and meaning-makers.

The influence play has over the development of children is holistic and all-encompassing. Types of play include object play, sensory motor play, social play and dramatic play.





Play progresses from solitary to parallel to social play. During solitary play, infants play directly with the objects and not with other children. This involves hitting, pushing, pulling, grasping and shaking objects. They also enjoy playing with adults – peek-a-boo, finger play and puppet-play. They then progress to parallel play, where they play side by side with another child, but there is limited playing together. They may observe the other child's toys and activities and may sometimes take their toys. When children are isolated and parallel play, there should be sufficient toys to serve the children as sharing is hard for them at this stage. Nevertheless, children at this stage can begin to slowly learn to share and take turns. Eventually, young children enter social play, when they work together to build a structure, play in the home corner, and learn to share and take turns more easily.



#### ♥ **Sensorial and Object Play**

Young children are naturally curious about their environments. They want to find out what is in it and how everything works or just observe the effect of their action on an object. Infants who are not yet mobile need toys and objects to be brought to them or they have to be taken to the activity area where the toys and equipment are.

Small, fine motor skills related to finger and hand movements advance rapidly during the first 18 months. Educarers can provide objects and materials that will allow young children to reach for, grasp, release and even pick up. Opportunities to take things apart and put them together are also one of many ways for developing and strengthening fine motor skills. Water and sand play can be enjoyed by children of all ages.



“ *What we want is to see the child in pursuit of knowledge, and not knowledge in pursuit of the child.* ”



- *George Bernard Shaw*

“ *Perhaps imagination  
is only intelligence  
having fun.* ”

- George Scialabba

Young children need the freedom and space to play, move and practise their emerging skills through various activities. They could be engaged in different types of activities, which call for varying movements - walking, tumbling, bouncing, crawling, climbing, jumping, balancing and even manoeuvring bends. These movement activities could also include toys, materials and equipment. Large lightweight blocks allow toddlers to practise gross motor skills as they carry them around and build structures, while balls are versatile for kicking, throwing, catching and rolling.



#### ♥ Social and Dramatic Play

Dramatic play helps children to understand themselves in relation to the world around them. When children engage in dramatic or imaginative play, they learn to negotiate different situations and roles, express their feelings and ideas, develop friendships, think creatively, solve problems, develop gross and fine motor skills and practise oral communication.

In early dramatic play, toddlers typically focus their play on experiences that are familiar and meaningful to them. They frequently imitate adult behaviours and may use real or realistic objects as props for dressing up, cooking and rocking the ‘baby’. However, as children develop and begin to acquire the capacity to think symbolically, they become more adept at substituting real objects with words and action. Older children may take on different social roles as Mummy, Daddy, baby, doctor, teacher and so on.

Educators can create opportunities for dramatic play that are child-initiated and spontaneous by equipping play areas with a variety of props. Some of these are stuffed toys, dolls, vehicles, telephones, dress-up clothes, mirror, stoves, pots and pans, and furniture. Rotate props periodically to maintain and stimulate children’s interest.



**Figure 9: Sub-outcome 2.3**

## **Curriculum offers holistic experiences for learning**

### **When children demonstrate, for instance, the following:**

- ♥ listen to different music and respond with simple movements or dance
- ♥ begin to respond appropriately towards others' expression of emotions
- ♥ try out new situations, roles and responsibilities through dramatic and pretend play
- ♥ use play to investigate and explore ideas
- ♥ begin to make age appropriate representations of objects or concepts through art and craft
- ♥ demonstrate increasing competence in gross and fine motor movements, balance and physical coordination
- ♥ display an increasing understanding of basic mathematical concepts
- ♥ manipulate resources with increasing competence and skills
- ♥ actively participate in the process of play, exploration and reflection
- ♥ transfer knowledge from one setting to another
- ♥ listen to stories, comment and ask questions and show interest in books



### **Educators facilitate this, for instance, when they undertake the following:**

- ♥ provide a range of appropriate materials to support different aspects of holistic development and a sense of enjoyment
- ♥ provide opportunities to support children to accomplish increasingly complex activities including dance, creative movement and drama
- ♥ provide opportunities for manipulative and exploratory activities
- ♥ expose children to different genres and elements of music and instruments from other cultures and languages
- ♥ provide time and resources for imaginative and pretend play
- ♥ supply a variety of art tools and materials, both natural and man-made
- ♥ provide a rich language experience daily through stories, rhymes, chants, songs, finger and puppet plays, picture talk and conversations
- ♥ use the different care-giving settings to introduce specific vocabulary
- ♥ provide variety of settings, opportunities and materials for children, at their own pace, to develop a better understanding of mathematical concepts
- ♥ provide environment and opportunities for different types of gross motor activities



## Indoor and Outdoor Experiences

A well-designed environment has a purposeful intent. It facilitates young children's growth and development and allows them to engage in a range of behaviours and experiences. The indoor and outdoor experiences invite and encourage young children to:

-  **explore**
-  **question**
-  **discover**
-  **think**
-  **reflect**
-  **problem solve**
-  **make decisions**
-  **communicate**
-  **imagine**
-  **create**



### **Thinking about Spaces**

Infants and toddlers learn by experiencing and interacting with their environments. Through their senses, they taste, touch, look, listen and smell. These infants need environments that expand beyond the confines of their cots but away from children who are crawlers and walkers.

As older infants begin to crawl between 6 and 12 months of age, their explorations become increasingly complex. They need spaces that facilitate their physical development as well as equipments and materials befitting their increasing abilities and skills.

In Singapore, there is a premium on space and accessibility to the natural outdoors. When young children spend a sizeable portion of their day indoors, it is even more important to create spaces that are safe, clean and hygienic. These spaces need to be physically, educationally and aesthetically enriching.



“ *Childhood is the most important of all life’s seasons.* ”

- Unknown

The outdoors give young children wonderful opportunities to explore the world with their senses, from variations in light and temperatures, to tactile stimulations, to different sounds, to access to the flora and fauna in nature. Outdoor play helps to foster motor development, as well as cognitive, language and social skills.



Young children including infants should have daily access to outdoor experiences. Centres in HDB heartlands have easy access to playgrounds, green areas and neighbourhood parks for children to climb, run, balance, and throw, kick and bounce balls. Outdoor experiences also include travelling through pathways and sidewalks on carts and wagons, looking at trees, flowers, clouds and observing birds and other creatures. Children can lie or sit on mats listening to stories, singing or having a picnic. Bring nature into the early years classroom too. Plants or a corner with natural artefacts provide young children with opportunities for talk and discovery. Nature also has a calming effect.

### ♥ **Thinking about Provisions for Learning and Development**

Materials play an integral part in engaging and sustaining young children’s interest. These foster autonomy and self-direction, attention, on-task behaviours and independence. By using materials that are natural, educators can imbue a sense of caring for the environment through messages like ‘reuse, reduce and recycle’ in older toddlers and those 3 years old and above. The key considerations are to have a sufficient amount of materials that are developmentally appropriate, accessible to children and varied.

It is important for the educator to arrange and display the materials in a manner that enables children to explore, discover and learn. Materials should be displayed in a manner that makes it clear to the children how they could be used, either on their own (e.g. building blocks) or together with other materials next to them (e.g. people, trees, vehicles, houses).

Visual clarity and physical access are two elements that help children to find, use and return the materials. It encourages children to take initiative and be independent.



**Figure 10: Sub-outcome 2.4**

## **Educарers provide access to a variety of spaces with natural and man-made materials**

### **When children demonstrate, for instance, the following:**

- ♥ express wonder and interest in their environments
- ♥ confidently explore the environment
- ♥ go beyond their designated area to experience and enjoy different environments and activities (e.g. the nature area, quiet library area for stories and books, outdoor playground)
- ♥ have access to different spaces to crawl, toddle, climb, jump, slide, ride, run, dance and engage in various gross motor as well as fine motor activities
- ♥ are able to easily access materials that are changed on a rotational basis
- ♥ engage with varied materials
- ♥ use their senses to discover natural and created environments
- ♥ display an increasing knowledge of and care for natural and created environments



### **Educарers promote this learning, for example, when they...**

- ♥ demarcate indoor and outdoor spaces tailored to young children's physical abilities and well-being
- ♥ allocate appropriate spaces for gross motor and small group activities
- ♥ plan pockets of private spaces like a tent or a corner for children to get away and be by themselves
- ♥ have portable borders to create functional spaces for different usage
- ♥ provide regular outdoor experiences
- ♥ conduct some of the usual indoor activities outdoors routinely
- ♥ make available suitable play structures and material for gross motor and balancing activities
- ♥ provide stationary rails or well-built low furniture for standing or cruising
- ♥ add cushions and low platforms to provide a range of levels for children to explore safely
- ♥ provide nesting and manipulative toys, books, containers, soft toys and balls
- ♥ organise and store materials to facilitate easy access by children for a good part of the day
- ♥ make available and rotate sufficient materials and toys as young children are still in the process of developing social skills like sharing and turn taking
- ♥ model respect, care and appreciation for the natural environment and centre resources





## Safe and Healthy Environments

### Thinking about Safe and Healthy Environments

Children's safety in centres is crucial. A safe environment offers young children the freedom and space to actively explore, discover and learn without fear of harm. It offers vast learning opportunities. The physical environment should be thoroughly screened for, and be free from potential hazards and harmful objects.<sup>6</sup>

Health, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) is "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Healthy development is central and underpins young children's capacity to learn. Some of the factors that promote healthy outcomes include following a healthy diet, taking part in regular physical activities, getting enough rest and living in a clean and safe environment.



### Safety

Educators should be vigilant in supervising children's activities. Educators trained in first aid could administer CPR and other life-saving measures in emergencies like choking. They should also, as a preventive measure, create teachable moments to inform children of potential choking hazards that they might come across daily, such as small loose toy parts or beads. During art and craft activities, educators could point out to the children that paints and glue are non-consumable liquids.

The establishment of clear safety rules contribute greatly to a safe environment. Young children may need to be reminded regularly before they engage in certain activities. For instance, before going outdoors, the educator may review with them the rules for outdoor play. Children need to learn the consequences, such as the occurrence of injuries, should they not follow safety rules.

Set simple rules – about three to five – which can be easily understood and applied by children. These rules could include all routines, such as keeping hands off the table when hot food is being served, not playing in the toilet and walking instead of running in the centre. By raising their awareness of basic safety practices and injury prevention, we can empower young children to look out for themselves as well as their peers.





Educators play an essential role in promoting appropriate interaction and play among children. This includes protecting children from harming one another through, for instance, biting, hitting, pushing and encouraging them to protect themselves and others from harm. They could be taught to move away, say 'No', 'Stop it' or alert the educator. While educators need to be vigilant, they do not necessarily have to intervene at the slightest sign of struggle between the children. Often, children are able to resolve the situation on their own or with some prompting from the educator.

### **Physical and Mental Health and Hygiene**

Generally, children need good nutrition, exercise and good hygiene to be physically healthy. Going outdoors to the playground or even for a walk is a good change of environment from being kept indoors or in an air-conditioned environment. Physical activities through play, exercises, dance and movement can be carried out both indoors and outdoors.

Educators need to adhere to good hygiene practices to decrease chances of children getting ill. According to the WHO, hygiene intervention including hygiene education and promotion of hand-washing can lead to a substantial reduction of infectious diseases. Educators therefore need to emphasise both proper and frequent hand-washing for the children as well as for themselves. When the centre and home adhere to good hygiene practices, we can be more assured of children staying healthy.

A possible way to encourage hand-washing is to appoint hand-washing monitors among the nursery children. This would allow peer-checking and mutual reminding of the need to wash hands. When changing diapers, educators could take time to explain to toddlers on ways of keeping clean.



Children's mental health is just as important as their physical health. It is part of their social-emotional development. Children who have good mental health are generally positive, confident, happy, contented and able to relate to familiar adults and peers. Educators contribute to a child's mental health by being nurturing, responsive, positive and unconditionally accepting of him as a person, although not necessarily of his behaviour. This means that while the educator may disapprove of the child's aggressive behaviour, she does not reject the child and still cares for him. The educator observes, listens and pays attention to each child and responds appropriately to comfort, help, guide, set boundaries, explain, acknowledge, encourage and rejoice with the child.

### ♥ Food and Nutrition

Meals should be balanced and appropriate for each developmental stage. Healthy eating habits are best inculcated from young. Food preferences developed during these early years often remain with the children well into their adult years. Thus, introduce children to a variety of food suitable for them. Use meal times to explain the benefits of eating certain types of food like rice, meat, vegetables and fruits. Educators should be aware of any allergies to certain types of food and ensure that these are not served to them. Food allergies or intolerance are common for young children. It is also important for adults not to use food as 'rewards', 'comfort food' or even 'punishment' as this affects children's development of healthy eating habits.


Proper nutrition is critical in the early years of life to support healthy brain development as well as physical and socio-emotional development. Nutritional needs are met when all food groups are represented. It is good to introduce new food progressively and in small amounts. Colours fascinate children and introducing brightly coloured fruits and vegetables can help to meet some of the required vitamins and minerals.





**“** *Beginning nutrition education in early childhood is an important part of helping to ensure that children will achieve healthful lifestyles.* **”**

*- Robert Earl*



Allow the children a few days to get used to the new food before introducing another. This is important as it would help educators detect signs of any allergies in particular children previously undetected by their parents. When feeding children, encourage but do not pressurise children to eat or eat more than they want to. Feeding should be paced and children should not be hurried to finish their food. Mealtimes should be pleasant and enjoyable.

The centres can support young children’s nutrition and eating habits by:

- 
- ♥ **encouraging and supporting exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life**
  - ♥ **encouraging the young to consume and enjoy a variety of nutritious foods**
  - ♥ **establishing healthy eating habits and encouraging regular physical activity from young**
  - ♥ **limiting saturated fat and moderating total fat intake for children aged 2 years and older**
  - ♥ **encouraging daily fruit and vegetable consumption**
  - ♥ **encouraging consumption of whole-grain foods**
  - ♥ **encouraging daily consumption of calcium-rich foods (e.g. milk and low-fat dairy products)**
  - ♥ **reducing salt intake**
  - ♥ **limiting consumption of beverages and foods with added sugars**

**Figure 11: Sub-outcome 2.5**

## **The environment is safe and healthy**

### **When children demonstrate, for instance, the following:**

- ♥ are increasingly aware of basic safety practices and know how to keep themselves from harm
- ♥ are confident and actively explore the environment without fear of harm
- ♥ demonstrate an awareness of hygiene practices and self-care habits such as hand-washing before and after meals, after using the toilet and outdoor play
- ♥ display positive eating habits
- ♥ willing to try new types of healthy food

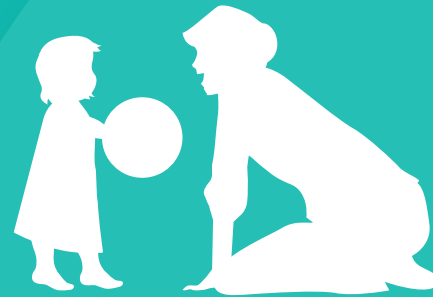


### **Educарers facilitate this, for instance, when they undertake the following:**

- ♥ supervise children at all times and keep children within view and access of adults
- ♥ keep various activity areas clean and well ventilated
- ♥ provide a balance of natural and man-made lighting
- ♥ are alert to potential hazards or harmful objects in the environment
- ♥ take precautions to prevent accidents
- ♥ provide frequent and regular access to the outdoors
- ♥ give children clear directions on indoor and outdoor safety rules and potential consequences when rules are not followed
- ♥ protect children from harming one another and encourage children to protect themselves and others from harm
- ♥ are observant of changes in a child's temperature, health or behaviour or symptoms of any illnesses
- ♥ give children opportunities to develop self-help and self-care skills during play and daily routines
- ♥ maintain current knowledge of health-related, emergency and first-aid procedures
- ♥ provide meals that are balanced, nutritious and varied
- ♥ make mealtimes enjoyable and stress-free
- ♥ talk to children about different types of food varying in taste, texture and cooking style
- ♥ model good safety, hygiene practices and eating habits
- ♥ provide an emotionally secure environment for the well-being of children
- ♥ are caring and responsive to children



**Guiding Principle 3**



# the professional educator

**Committing to professional standards and ethics in working with children, families and educators' own professional development.**





**Outcome:**

**Educarers are professional and engage in reflective practices**

- 3.1 Educarers adhere to professional standards and ethics**
  - 3.2 Educarers engage in reflective practices**
  - 3.3 Educarers are committed to continuing professional development**
- 



**Educарers are important adults in the lives of young children. The influence they have over young children’s growth, development and learning is considerable as the early years mark dramatic changes in children’s physical, cognitive, language and socio-emotional development. Young children’s secure and trusting attachments are dependent on the quality of relationships fostered by educарers.**

The environments and experiences they create influence young children’s motivation to explore, discover and learn. Educарers’ networking and collaborations involving the community enrich programmes for young children and support for families. Observations, reflections and documentations embraced by educарers enrich programmes and practices. Finally, the quality of provisions for young children is embodied in educарers’ continuing upgrading of knowledge, skills and competencies.

As educарers play multiple roles in the care and development of young children, they need to:

- ♥ **Understand how children learn and develop**
- ♥ **Create environments that foster learning and development**
- ♥ **Plan experiences and activities, and adapt activities to the individual child’s needs**
- ♥ **Facilitate and mediate children’s learning**
- ♥ **Observe, reflect, evaluate and document children’s learning, development and progress**
- ♥ **Foster good partnerships with families and the community**
- ♥ **Commit to continuing professional growth and development**

“ *To teach is to learn twice.* ”

- Joseph Joubert





“ *A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.*

- Henry Adams



## Observation, Reflection and Documentation

Observing, documenting and engaging in reflective practices offer educators valuable insights and a deeper understanding of young children. They guide and enable educators to make informed curriculum decisions that are sensitive and responsive to children’s developmental needs, temperaments, preferences and interests. Educators will also be better able to provide objective feedback and engage parents in their child’s development.





As young children become accustomed to the educator’s routine of taking notes and photographs, the educator is able to capture and document the children’s behaviours as it unfolds naturally. As educators become more reflective and engage in critical inquiry, they become more attuned and sensitive to children’s development and learning.

Over time, good documentation reveals patterns in individual developmental pathways. It helps educators to support and extend learning, and identify particular issues that may require the family’s attention or referrals to specialists. In the process of documentation, educators need to be responsive and give their full attention to the child, while remaining mindful of the other children in the setting.

## Documentation Methods

A number of methods may be employed to observe and record observations. Educators use a combination of methods to build a more comprehensive profile of each child. These are often reflected in the child’s portfolio.

Observation and documentation are also useful in understanding specific behaviours, for instance, aggression. They may help the educator plan more effective ways in working with the child in question. Some of the observation and documentation methods include:

-  **Anecdotal and Running Records**
-  **Time and Event Sampling**
-  **Checklists**
-  **Photographs and Videotaping**






## Understanding Developmental Variations

Educарers need to know that some developmental variances<sup>7</sup> among children are to be expected. However, there may be concerns when children seem to have fallen away from the trajectory of normal development or behaviours. Examples of developmental variations are maturational speech delay, inattentive and hyperactive children and children with difficult temperament.

Development in young children is a dynamic process involving various factors including genetics, environmental factors and also child readiness. Not all children who demonstrate difficulties in the toddler years will persist with significant difficulties in later years.

However, developmental and behavioural concerns do need to be addressed, as increasing evidence indicates that milder developmental variations have good prognosis when these are recognised for early intervention. The intent of early childhood intervention is to lay a foundation, in conjunction with the family, to support infants as they grow and mature into healthy individuals.

The educарers are also guided by the 3 “A”s:

-  **Awareness of developmental variations and difficulties**
-  **Alertness in providing surveillance of developmental variations and difficulties**
-  **Advocacy in referring for early intervention and help**

The educарers are usually the main adults with whom the children spend most time. They are in a unique position to be on the alert for children demonstrating developmental difficulties. They can help parents understand their child’s development and the need for referral to an appropriate agency or specialists for professional help.

They can then be referred to the paediatricians for screening. The paediatrician and team of allied health professionals (eg. speech therapists, occupational therapists and psychologists) can work with the educарers and parents to provide adequate home and centre support. Sometimes, children can be referred directly to specialists. Additionally, children who need early intervention programmes can be referred to appropriate agencies.



**Figure 12: Sub-outcome 3.1**

## **Educарers adhere to professional standards and ethics**

### **When educators:**

- ✔ are aware of and uphold their responsibilities towards children and their families, the community and their colleagues
- ✔ maintain high standards of professional conduct
- ✔ commit to supporting and promoting the best interests of children
- ✔ commit to supporting families
- ✔ promote a working environment that fosters mutual respect, trust, cooperation and well-being among co-workers
- ✔ advocate for young children in the wider community



### **Children benefit when educators:**

- ✔ make decisions and act in the best interests of children with respect for their fundamental rights
- ✔ meet children's basic needs and develop opportunities to help them reach their full potential
- ✔ facilitate and mediate children's learning
- ✔ avoid practices which are physically and emotionally harmful, discriminatory, exploitative and disrespectful to children
- ✔ involve, exchange and share information with families to support them in nurturing their children
- ✔ maintain confidentiality and respect families' rights to privacy
- ✔ share professional knowledge and resources with colleagues to ensure that children benefit from the best possible early childhood programme
- ✔ inform parents and the relevant authorities of practices or situations which violate the safety and well-being of children



**Figure 13: Sub-outcome 3.2**

## Educators engage in reflective practices

### When educators:

- are sensitive and responsive to children's needs
- engage in personal and collaborative reflections on issues of concern with peers and management
- engage in practitioner research and projects
- develop children's portfolios
- engage parents to better understand the child



### Children benefit when educators:

- use allocated time to reflect and improve on care and learning practices
- create environments that support children's evolving learning and development needs, in keeping with current research and good practices
- reflect and evaluate children's learning, development and progress to guide practices
- observe and listen to children in different settings and times of the day using different instruments
- use various methods of documenting including running records, photographs, videos and children's work samples
- discuss with parents on areas of concern



**Figure 14: Sub-outcome 3.3**

## **Educators are committed to continuing professional development**

### **When educators:**

- attend workshops, seminars and courses
- visit other centres, watch videos and check out relevant websites on the internet
- commit to continuing professional growth and development
- read journals, books, articles, on early childhood research, practices, policies and development
- are given time and opportunities to engage in shared thinking, collaborative learning and problem solving
- engage in professional discussions with peers, and other early childhood and related professionals to support reflective practices and self development
- use different media and strategies for professional development



### **Children and educators benefit when educators:**

- acquire knowledge and understanding of children's development from latest research and good practices
- use more effective strategies for children's holistic development and learning
- use resources and skillfully design environments
- acquire further understanding on how to effectively engage families and the community



**Guiding Principle 4**



# the involved family

**Involving families as partners in the care,  
development and education of children**





**Outcome:**

**Educators develop strong partnership and relationship with families**

- 4.1 Families and educators engage in regular communication and feedback
- 4.2 Families are involved in various ways in the centre



**Parents are the key significant people in children's lives. They have invaluable insights into their children's temperaments and dispositions and continue to support them long after they leave the centre.**

Both centre and home can reap considerable benefits when the alliance between the two is intentionally nurtured. A strong home-centre partnership is one of the cornerstones of quality care, development and education of young children.

### **Advocating Strong Home-Centre Partnerships**

Positive adult relationships promote continuity and consistency of care for children and support the transition between the home and centre. Stable and secure environments are necessary for children's healthy socio-emotional development and well-being.

The foundation of a good family-centre partnership is established when educators and families have a sense of shared responsibility towards the child, and work together to ensure that the best care is provided for the child in the first years of life. Families and educators need to appreciate that their roles are mutually supportive.



**“ Even when young children spend most of their waking hours in child care, parents remain the most influential adults in their lives. ”**

*- Amy Laura Dombro*














**“ All families are valuable; none is expendable. ”**  
- Montemayor and Romero



The sharing of information between centre and families enables both parents and educators to provide continuity of care for the infant or toddler. It also aids the educator in providing responsive and individualised care.



There are different modes of communication that facilitate effective partnerships. These include:

-  **Programme handbook**
-  **Orientation and parent-teacher meetings**
-  **Bulletin boards and newsletters**
-  **Social events, forums and parent education programmes**
-  **Daily communication book/journal**
-  **Videotaping, photographs, e-portfolios**
-  **Home visits**
-  **Greetings and informal chats**
-  **Emails, SMSes, phone calls**





## **Developing Strategic Partnerships**

The parent-child relationship is the most significant influence on early years development. Centres can help to promote an environment in which family members are valued as active partners in the care and development of their child. As families have different commitments and obligations, centres should have diverse strategies to meet different needs and interests. A well-organised and sustainable partnership programme can take the following forms:

### **👉 Attending centre events**

This is the minimum level of participation, where families attend centres' year-end concerts or other celebrations.

### **👉 Parent education and parent support**

Centres conduct talks and workshops on children's development, especially in areas of interest to parents. Be aware and sensitive to possible cultural variations in parenting. Be a source of information and referral for parents when help is requested. Facilitate parent support groups in areas of concern, for instance, toilet training.

### **👉 Volunteering**

Involve parents as volunteers in the classroom to share their areas of expertise – for instance baking or teaching 3 year olds traditional songs and dances. Parents can also volunteer to read, tell stories or accompany children to parks and excursions.

### **👉 Learning at home**

Involve families with their children in take-home projects. Offer ideas to parents to support children's learning through daily routines. This includes reading to their children.





### ♥ Decision-making

Centres may want to include parents in the process of decision-making, through parent-teacher committees, focus group discussions, surveys and informal feedback.

### ♥ Create a Warm and Inviting Environment

Make parents feel welcomed in your centre. Provide a cosy corner or room where parents can spend some time with their infants or toddlers. Notice boards display useful information on centre activities, children's menu, parents' feedback and parenting articles. Parenting and health magazines can also be made available. A nursing room or a private corner makes it comfortable for mothers to breastfeed.

### ♥ Create a Climate of Respect and Trust

Creating a climate of mutual respect and trust requires open and sensitive communication. Educarers need to regularly update parents on children's development and on any incidents that took place – for instance, if the child had hurt himself or herself, helped another child or enjoyed the outdoor art session. Frequent exchange of information and dialogues allow parents to feel that their views are valued and respected. Use techniques such as reframing, paraphrasing and reflecting to bridge barriers and foster trust and shared understanding. The foundation for a trusting relationship is further strengthened when parents observe that their children are treated with respect in addition to being safe and healthy.

### ♥ Respond Sensitive

Sensitive communication promotes an open partnership. When addressing concerns relating to children, educarers need to exercise empathy through their words and actions. Recognise that parents may be disappointed at missing out on their children's first words or first steps or may be having some personal, work or family issues. Through reflection, educarers can show their understanding of the situation and respond in a sensitive and reassuring manner. In a multicultural society, educarers need to be mindful and respectful of the different cultural practices of different families.

When there is a good relationship between educarers and families, children feel more supported, secure and confident as they move easily between home and centre.



**Figure 15: Sub-outcome 4.1**

## **Families and educarers engage in regular communication and feedback**

**This is demonstrated, for instance, when the following happens:**

- ✎ educarers and families share school and home experiences
- ✎ children experience more responsive and sensitive care-giving
- ✎ families and staff are observed to be friendly and readily greet each other
- ✎ families contribute ideas and feedback on the programme and services
- ✎ centre has regular parent-teacher conferencing
- ✎ centre provides information and referral services to families



**Educarers facilitate this, for instance, when they undertake the following:**

- ✎ initiate small talk with families
- ✎ are friendly, show interest in family members as individuals without being intrusive
- ✎ seek to learn about families and their cultural beliefs and practices
- ✎ are sensitive to variations in families' cultural background and expectations
- ✎ are always respectful, diplomatic and clear in their communication
- ✎ request for information on children's temperament, interests and health issues and care-giving preferences
- ✎ encourage parents to update information of any event that may affect the child, including the arrival of a new baby, loss of a pet or an illness
- ✎ listen, reflect and respond when family members communicate concerns about their child
- ✎ share with parents the highlights of their child's day and keep them informed of issues or incidents that may have arisen in the course of the day
- ✎ provide periodic information and articles on parenting and child development
- ✎ use a variety of communication strategies (e.g. meetings, email, telephone calls, informal chats, notes, SMSes ) to connect with families
- ✎ accept and respect each family and maintain family confidentiality



**Figure 16: Sub-outcome 4.2**

## **Families are involved in various ways in the centre**

**This is demonstrated, for instance, when the following happens:**



- ♥ children show pride and pleasure when their families support and are involved in the centre
- ♥ children receive greater continuity and consistency of care between home and centre
- ♥ families are invited to be involved in the centre in various ways, including as a resource for the centre
- ♥ families volunteer assistance
- ♥ families develop greater trust and confidence in the centre

**Educators facilitate this, for instance, when they undertake the following:**

- ♥ conduct surveys to evaluate the centre and to address needs and expectations of families
- ♥ invite parents to attend centre events
- ♥ encourage parents to volunteer based on their strengths and interests (reading to children, manning libraries, newsletters)
- ♥ encourage parents to provide curriculum support by sharing their knowledge and professional experiences (police-officer, doctor, architect, writer)
- ♥ organise social and educational events with parent volunteers for families (concerts, field trips)
- ♥ encourage parents to be involved in parent-teacher committees
- ♥ allow parents to participate in decision making (menu, outings, celebrations)
- ♥ encourage parents to provide resources to support programme and curriculum (books, scrap or recycled materials)
- ♥ involve parents in take-home family projects (working on “My Family”)





## **Guiding Principle 5**

# **the engaged community**

**Engaging the community as support and resources for home and centre**





**Outcome:**

**Community provides a network of resources and support for home and centre**

- 5.1 Centres have updated information and access to community resources**
- 5.2 Community serves as resources to enrich children's learning and provides support for families**





**Families of today are growing in diversity as we become a more cosmopolitan society. We see an increase in inter-racial marriages, divorces, reconstituted families and single parent households. Traditional support for young families has changed with the decline in extended family living and with grandparents retiring later and having their own social life and interests.**



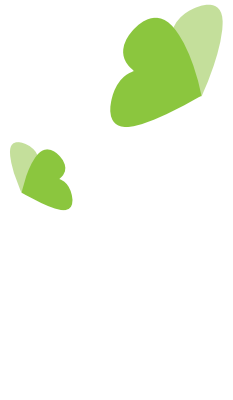
The community has much to offer children and families in child care centres. Centres can refer families to community agencies for relevant services and also bring community resources to the centre to enhance children's learning and development.

The centre thus manages to serve not only families but also agencies in reaching their target population.

### **Engaging Community Resources for Families**

Social services are available to families in need of help. These range from financial, medical, marital and mental health problems to preventive and educational services on breastfeeding, nutrition, parenting and psychological assessments. However, families may

**“ It takes a village  
to raise a child. ”**  
- African Proverb





**“ What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children.**

*- John Dewey*



not be aware of these services or know how to access them. Child care centres are in a vantage position to offer assistance by providing information and referring parents to the relevant services - government, non-government or the private sectors.

Family service centres provide a combination of services - marital and individual counselling, parent education, the Healthy Start Programme, youth, elder care, student care and independent living programmes among others. Sometimes, parents may need the services of specialists such as when children are suspected of some special needs issues which require evaluation or early intervention. Examples of other support services are the Breastfeeding Mothers' Support Group, the Centre for Fathering, and Help Every Single Parent (HELP). Community services are also available for family recreation - the museums, libraries and the community centres offer a variety of programmes such as exercises, cooking, dance, art and other affordable activities for the whole family.







### **Engaging Community Resources for the Centre**

Resources could be accessed to support the curriculum and parents in the centre. Speakers from various community services can be invited to speak to parents on children's health, eye care, dental care, and early childhood illnesses. A neighbourhood police officer, fire officer, librarian or nurse could also be invited to engage the older children in some of the curriculum topics .



The centre can also extend learning by bringing the older children to various community agencies such as the library, the fire station, the post-office and the zoo. A list of resources and links are found in the Annex.

## **Six Steps to Successful Collaboration and Community Networking**

-  **Identify all services available to young children and their families**
-  **Find out more and visit these services**
-  **Identify your programme needs as well as those of your children and their families**
-  **List out possible collaborations with services and initiate contacts with service agency to discuss collaborations**
-  **Develop a plan (state the purpose/aim, list the goals, outline a plan of action)**
-  **Evaluate the goals, outcomes and the success of the collaboration**



**Figure 17: Sub-outcome 5.1**

## **Centres have updated information and access to community resources**

**This is demonstrated, for instance, when the following happens:**

- ✔ centres have a directory of community and professional services available in Singapore
- ✔ centres make referrals to relevant agencies when needed by families
- ✔ centres provide families with information of available community services
- ✔ centres facilitate access to a variety of online resources from local and international communities (CDN newsletter, Zero to Three, ChildCare Exchange)
- ✔ centres use selected community resources to extend children's interests and learning

**Educators facilitate this, for instance, when they undertake the following:**

- ✔ identify and update relevant information on agencies providing health, psychological, educational, financial and social services
- ✔ promote awareness of upcoming public events ( public parenting talks and forums, celebration of festivals, story-telling in National Libraries, nature walks, family events)
- ✔ invite professionals from selected agencies to conduct talks and workshops for families in the centre
- ✔ provide relevant local and international online information or websites (parenting, health, research findings)

**Figure 18: Sub-outcome 5.2**

## **Community serves as resources to enrich children's learning and provides support for families**

**This is demonstrated, for instance, when the following happens:**

- ✔ children have enriched learning experiences beyond the centre
- ✔ children learn about people and places in the community (fire-station and fire-officers, post-office and post-workers, police-station and police-officers)
- ✔ families receive individualised support because of external professional intervention (learning support, behavioural management)
- ✔ families receive assistance from health, social, financial and other relevant services

**Educators facilitate this, for instance, when they undertake the following:**

- ✔ organise field trips to selected community agencies, parks, beaches, fire-stations, supermarkets and museums
- ✔ encourage parents to participate in community events and field trips together with their children
- ✔ invite selected representatives from community agencies to conduct activities or services for children, (Health Promotion Board)
- ✔ seek advice from specialists such as a speech or behavioural therapist and incorporate these into the classroom

# conclusion

**The Early Years Development Framework lays a strong foundation for children's holistic development. It begins with infants as young as 2 months to children 3 years and below in child care centres. The guiding principles, desired outcomes and recommended practices aim to enhance the professionalism of the early years educators. It raises their level of awareness and skills in their relationship with children, helps them plan appropriate learning environments and activities and guide them in working more collaboratively and effectively with parents and the community.**

Although the EYDF is targeted at infants and young children, the principles, desired outcomes and many of the practices apply to children from 4 to 6 as well. When the Nursery children advance to the next level, the EYDF overlaps with the Nurturing Early Learners' (NEL) Framework for 4 to 6 year olds. The NEL Framework describes principles and practices to foster development in the areas of aesthetics and creative expression, environmental awareness, language and literacy, motor skills development, numeracy and self and social awareness. The two Frameworks – the EYDF and NEL – provide continuity to support children's learning and development from 2 months to 6 years.

Educators need to understand that development in the early years go beyond preparing children for school; neither is it only about preparing children for the life ahead. Development is not about outcomes alone, but the day-to-day experiences of children that matters. Professional educators can make a difference in each child's experience, one day at a time, and as days lead to months and months to years, the desired outcomes will take form eventually.

**“** *To focus only on the education of children beginning with kindergarten is to ignore the science of early development and deny the importance of early experiences.* **”**



# Endnotes

1. **(pg 9)** The Nurturing Early Learners (NEL): A Framework for a Kindergarten Curriculum was developed by the Ministry of Education in 2003. This framework is adopted by child care centres for its kindergarten programmes as part of its licensing requirements in 2009. The NEL comprises of six booklets and encompasses the following: Integration of learning activities in the areas of aesthetics and creative expression, environmental awareness, language and literacy development, motor skills development, numeracy, and self and social awareness, in order to lay a firm foundation for every kindergarten child and engage each individual in life-long learning.
2. **(pg 9)** The term educator, which Magda Gerber coined, refers to either a parent or other caregiver, and emphasises the role that they play in both caring and educating. Magda Gerber was an early childhood educator and co-founder of the Resources for Infant Educators (RIE) Centre. RIE is a non-profit membership organisation aimed at raising the standards of infant care and education through parent and caregiver education.
3. **(pg 11)** Article 3 states that all adult decisions made should place children's best interests as the primary consideration. Article 6 stresses on the role of Governments in ensuring that all children live and develop healthily. Article 12 emphasises adults' inclusion of children's views and opinions in all decision making matters, taking into account each individual child's level of maturity.
4. **(pg 11)** Countries like Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, New Zealand, the UK and the US have articulated frameworks which reflect how children learn and develop, the mediating importance of relationships, developmental experiences (strategies and activities), accountability in terms of goals and outcomes, and partnerships with families and the community.
5. **(pg 11)** MCYS-NIE Environment Scan of Centre-based Provisions for Infants and Toddlers was undertaken between the period September 2010 and February 2011. A sample size of 151 settings was assessed using the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R).
6. **(pg 40)** Refer to Dimension Two: Safety/Health/Hygiene/Nutrition in the Assessment of Licensing Standards in Child Care Centres, Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports.
7. **(pg 47)** The term "developmental variation" describes children who demonstrate differences in developmental maturities, skills, or styles of learning, behaviours and temperaments - which may explain their developmental difficulties.



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# Acknowledgements

The Early Childhood Development Agency wishes to express its sincere appreciation to **Dr Khoo Kim Choo**, Consultant for the Early Years Development Framework (EYDF) for her advice and guidance in the development of the document.

We would like to acknowledge the following professionals from the EYDF Advisory Committee and Working Group for their important contributions and insights during the consultative process on the EYDF document:

- **Dr Bervyn Lee**, Singapore Sports Council
- **Dr Chan Lin Ho**, formerly from SIM University
- **Dr Chong Shang Chee**, National University Hospital
- **Dr Christine Chen**, Association for Early Childhood Educators (Singapore)
- **Mrs Cheong-Lim Lee Yee**, Health Promotion Board
- **Professor Goh Lee Gan**, National First Aid Council
- **Professor Ho Lai Yun**, KK Women's & Children's Hospital
- **Ms Ho Yin Fong**, SEED Institute
- **Dr Jane Ching-Kwan**, KLC School of Education
- **Dr Lee Khai Pin**, KK Women's & Children's Hospital
- **Dr Lily Wong**, Singapore Committee of OMEP
- **Ms Maureen Teo**, PAP Community Foundation
- **Dr Melinda Eng**, NTUC My First Skool
- **Dr Nirmala Karuppiah**, National Institute of Education
- **Dr Pamela Sharpe**, formerly from National Institute of Education
- **Mrs Puspa Sivan**, Consultant Early Childhood Care and Education
- **Dr Sam Yap**, Cherie Hearts Group International Pte Ltd
- **Dr Sirene Lim**, National Institute of Education
- **Dr Tan Chee Lay**, Singapore Centre for Chinese Language

Our grateful thanks to the following Institutes of Higher Learning and Training Agencies as well as the teachers, supervisors, operators and parents from the various child care organisations and centres. They have contributed by participating in focus group discussions, offering their centres for the ITERS-R training, allowing observation visits or participating in the Environment Scan of Centre-based Provisions for Infants and Toddlers:

## Institutes of Higher Learning and Training Agencies

- Advent Links-SAUC Pte Ltd
- Association for Early Childhood Educators (Singapore)
- First Learning & Training Centre
- KLC School of Education
- MMI Academy Pte Ltd
- Nanyang Institute of Management
- National Institute of Education
- Saint Andrew's Centre for Early Childhood
- SEED Institute
- SIM University

We would like to express our appreciation to the following child care organisations and centres as well as the staff, parents and children for taking time for participating in the photography and video sessions:

- Healthy Start Child Development Centre
- NTUC My First Skool
- PAP Community Foundation
- Pat's Schoolhouse
- Preschool for Multiple Intelligence
- The Caterpillar's Cove Pte Ltd
- The Little Skool-House International Pte Ltd



## Child Care Organisations and Centres

- Acekidz Creative Educare
- Agape Little Uni
- Amazing Star Montessori (GreenRidge)
- Ang Mo Kio Social Service Child Development Centre
- Babies Resort Pte Ltd
- Baby Planet Montessori Pte Ltd
- Blossom Edugroup
- Bright Kids School House Pte Ltd
- Cambridge CDC @ Tanglin Pte Ltd
- Cherie Hearts Group International Pte Ltd
- Chiltern House
- Ci You Child Care Centre
- Citikids Edventure
- Creative O Preschoolers' Bay
- Creative Star Kids Campus
- Educa-Zion Group Pte Ltd
- Elfa Children's Place
- Etonhouse Pre-School Pte Ltd
- Gloryland Learning Centre Pte Ltd
- Gracefields Childcare
- Greenery Childcare Centre
- Greenfield Montessori
- Happy Family Edu-HUB Pte Ltd
- Healthy Start Child Development Centre
- Joewe Pre-school & Infant Centre
- Just Kids Learning Place
- Kiddy Academy
- Kidz Meadow Childcare and Development Centre
- Kidzmonte Child Development Centre
- Kinderland Educare Services Pte Ltd
- Learning Vision Group
- Little Empire Pte Ltd
- Modern Montessori International Group
- Moriah Child Care & Development Centre
- My First Classroom
- NTUC My First Skool
- Pat's Schoolhouse
- PAP Community Foundation (PCF)
- Pebble Place Development Centre
- Presbyterian Community Services (PCS)
- Preschool for Multiple Intelligences (PMI)
- Rosy Hearts
- SGM Murni
- SmartGro Tiny Tots
- Smiling Kids Pte Ltd
- Sunflower Childcare Group
- The Caterpillar's Cove Pte Ltd
- The Kidz Zone Pte Ltd (MMI Pinnacle)
- The Little Skool-House International Pte Ltd
- The Moral Child Care & Development Centre
- The Salvation Army Childcare Centre
- Tots United Schoolhouse Pte Ltd
- Yasmine @ Frankel Early Learning Centre
- Young Talents Childcare
- YWCA Outram Child Development Centre

We would like to acknowledge the work of the EYDF team from the Policy & Development Branch as well as contributions from the Planning & Operations Branch from the Child Care Division (now known as The Early Childhood Development Agency):

- Dr Chan Lin Ho, Deputy Director, Policy & Development
- Ms Angela Anthony, Assistant Director, Child Development Section
- Ms Tiffany Lim Seok Hoon, Assistant Manager
- Ms Nurlijea Onnawaty Mas'at, Child Care Officer
- Ms Michelle Inami, Child Care Officer
- Ms Daphne Lim Mei Hui, Child Care Officer
- Ms Angelyn Seah, Child Care Officer
- Ms Evonne Chua, Child Care Officer
- Ms Monica Lim, Child Care Officer
- Ms Yvonne Kong, Child Care Officer
- Ms Stella Loy, Child Care Officer
- Mr Kayne Kwa, Child Care Officer

Finally, the Early Childhood Development Agency would like to thank and acknowledge KLC School of Education and the following members of the Working Group for their contributions to translating the EYDF:

- Dr Sin Joo Ee, SIM University
- Dr Connie Lum May Lin, Singapore Centre for Chinese Language
- Ms Nancy Lee-Wong, Asian International College
- Ms Elizabeth Chong, SEED Institute





# **Annex**

## **Resources and Links**



# Annex

# Resources and Links

## Resources (Local)

### **Association for Childhood Education Singapore**

[www.aeces.org](http://www.aeces.org)

Since its inception, the Association has worked towards advocating quality courses for the professional development of early childhood educators for the benefit of young children and families. Its website provides information on upcoming local and regional events, community projects, the code of ethics, professional development programmes as well as invaluable resources for educators via its online journals and library catalogue.



### **Health Promotion Board**

[www.hpb.gov.sg](http://www.hpb.gov.sg)

As a statutory board, the Health Promotion Board promotes national health and disease prevention programmes. This website contains various downloadable HPB publications that provide information on home safety, health and nutrition of young children. Various e-resources such as recipe analysers and analysis of the nutrition composition of foods are available to help centres plan more nutritious meals for children.



### **Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA)**

[www.ida.gov.sg](http://www.ida.gov.sg)

Centres may access information about developments in the local info-communications sector here. There are also updates on the various info-communications infrastructure established in Singapore which centres can tap on. Centres with the intention to implement e-learning may find the website useful.



### **Ministry of Social and Family Development**

[www.msf.gov.sg](http://www.msf.gov.sg)

For updates on all the Ministry's latest initiatives, centres may wish to refer to the website. Information on financial assistance provided by MSF can also be found – a resource that centres can use to assist families in need.

*fcd.ecitizen.gov.sg*

The Family and Community Development@ecitizen (fcd) website primarily targets parents and families. It contains links to sites that provide parents with information on parenthood. Centres can use information on this website to assist parents.

*www.childcarelink.gov.sg*

The ECDA Child Care Link is an essential database that all child care centres operators have to log in to update their staff's particulars, medical records, academic and professional qualifications. It also provides important information to all centres on operating and licensing procedures.

*www.cdn.gov.sg*

The Child Development Network (CDN) is an online portal focusing on quality child care standards, professional development and research in early childhood. Articles on developmentally appropriate practices and child development issues, a monthly e-newsletter and Early Childhood Digest as well as information on the Early Childhood Research Fund can be found on the website.



📌 **Ministry of Health**

*www.moh.gov.sg*

The Ministry of Health aims to encourage a healthy nation and does this by providing information to keep users updated on recent healthcare and disease issues in Singapore. Updates on this website can help centres take necessary precautions upon knowledge of any disease outbreaks. Centres can also get information about all healthcare services available in Singapore.

📌 **National Arts Council, Singapore**

*www.nac.gov.sg*

Centres can visit this website to get performance details on upcoming concerts, theatre and exhibitions suitable for young children. There is also a link to NAC-organised Arts education programmes that centres can sign up for.



📌 **National Council of Social Services**

*http://www.ncss.org.sg/home/index.asp*

Information on various social service programmes is available at the NCSS website. NCSS works with Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs) to improve on existing social service programmes, pilot new initiatives and lay down service standards. Centres may wish to find out more about the available services for children and families.

📌 **National Environment Agency**

*www.nea.gov.sg*

To promote a clean and green environment in Singapore, NEA's website contains education resources to raise young children's awareness of environmental issues in Singapore and around the world. There are downloadable posters and guide books to help young children to be environmentally pro-active. Updates on local and international environmental issues are also available.

### **National Heritage Board**

[www.nhb.gov.sg](http://www.nhb.gov.sg)

Centres can visit this website to learn about the latest exhibits available in the various museums around Singapore. They can also learn more about the activities planned by NHB for the Children's Season when it is available. Users can also access links to browse past museum exhibitions.

### **National Library Board**

[www.nlb.gov.sg](http://www.nlb.gov.sg)

NLB has many online resources to help centres promote early literacy in young children. Available on the website are links to an e-book database, updates on upcoming NLB events, an online portal for Kids to ask questions, reviews and recommendations on book titles, as well as information on school outreach programmes such as Drop Everything And Read (DEAR@school).

### **National Parks Board**

[www.nparks.gov.sg](http://www.nparks.gov.sg)

The NParks website has several online resources to educate preschoolers on horticulture, conservation and biodiversity. Information about the various local nature parks and guided tours is also available. The website provides regular updates on workshops and talks suitable for young children. Worksheets and factsheets may also be downloaded to assist centres in planning related activities.

### **People's Association**

[www.pa.gov.sg](http://www.pa.gov.sg)

Child care centres can obtain the addresses and contact numbers of their nearest community centres to facilitate the planning of any external activities. Centres can also find out about upcoming community events organised by PA and learn how they can be involved.

### **PUB, Singapore's National Water Agency**

[www.pub.gov.sg](http://www.pub.gov.sg)

Information on talks, events and activities organised by PUB to raise children's awareness on the importance of conserving water resources and NEWater production is available in this website. There is even a Teachers Forum that educators can attend to learn more about school outreach programmes. A downloadable e-Magazine that focuses on lifestyle and water as well as various information brochures on used water and reclamation are also available.

### **Sing Singapore**

[www.singsingapore.org.sg](http://www.singsingapore.org.sg)

Set up by the National Arts Council to promote home-grown music, educators can play age-appropriate local music during activities and even download lyrics for children to sing along at this website. The playlist includes National Day songs – a good resource for National Education.





- 📌 **Singapore Symphony Orchestra Community Outreach Newsletter**

[www.sso.org.sg/outreach/communityoutreachnewsletter.html](http://www.sso.org.sg/outreach/communityoutreachnewsletter.html)

Available on this website are links to downloadable newsletters that are targeted at young children. The newsletters include information on upcoming concerts, events and activities, some of which are specially organised for young children. There are also articles and factsheets on great composers and famous orchestral members – information which educators could use when planning music-related activities.

## Resources (International)

- 📌 **Association for Childhood Education International**

[acei.org](http://acei.org)

ACEI is a site that allows educators and advocates from all over the world to share knowledge, experience, and perspectives so as to generate creative ideas and speak for the children's needs. An interesting link under 'Engaging Worldwide' provides global insights on the education systems of other countries. There are even in-depth analyses for selected countries.

- 📌 **Brain Awareness Information and Resources - The Dana Foundation**

[www.dana.org/brainweek/resources](http://www.dana.org/brainweek/resources)

The Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives is a non-profit organisation which aims to increase understanding of brain research and development for the masses in an interactive way. The Brain Awareness Week is one such worldwide effort. The Brain Awareness Week (BAW) Resources section provides an array of educational resources about the brain and brain research for scientists, teachers, parents, and children.

- 📌 **Childcare Resource and Research Unit**

[www.childcarecanada.org](http://www.childcarecanada.org)

This website allows users to access an online document database which features numerous publications on Early Childhood policies and practices. Email subscription is available for weekly e-news and links. It also promotes and supports various research efforts and publishes results. The online publications may be downloaded.

- 📌 **Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education**

<http://ceep.crc.illinois.edu/>

In collaboration with the University of Illinois, the Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education provides free articles for the global early childhood community. Its online publications have links to other relevant reads and showcase many popular concerns. It also shares developments and findings of several projects.

- 📌 **Creative Curriculum - Teaching Strategies for early Childhood**

[www.teachingstrategies.com](http://www.teachingstrategies.com)

An educational publishing company, Teaching Strategies provides various resources on early childhood. One such resource is Creative Curriculum, a five-volume set derived from a research-based system to help early childhood educators plan quality lessons for children. While most of the resources are purchasable online, Teaching Strategies offers many useful excerpts in its website.

### **Developmentally Appropriate Practices**

[users.stargate.net/~cokids/teacher.html](http://users.stargate.net/~cokids/teacher.html)

With over 50 categories related to early childhood, this website offers links and publications from all over the world. There are also links for new educators and aspiring operators embarking on an early childhood career and managing expectations and stress. Amongst the categories include the various early childhood approaches and theories, lesson plan ideas and information on recommended practices.

### **Early Childhood Australia**

[www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)

Early Childhood Australia is a national non-profit and non-government organisation which advocates for the well-being of young children by sharing quality early childhood knowledge and publications. The website features current news and articles on the early childhood sector. It also supports and evaluates the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics and assembles the National Children's Services Forum.

### **Early Childhood Research and Practice**

[ecrp.uiuc.edu](http://ecrp.uiuc.edu)

An exclusively online journal, Early Childhood Research and Practice shares information on diverse early childhood issues especially on practice and development. Peer-reviewed, users may access past articles and perform searches for specific topics. An option to sign up for an email newsletter is also available. The website is also accessible in Chinese.

### **Excellence Learning Cooperation**

[www.earlychildhood.com](http://www.earlychildhood.com)

This website offers an online resource on early childhood via its Early Childhood News link. Here, readers may gain access to articles on curriculum, activities as well as guides on administrative matters. There is also an option to subscribe to the free Earlychildhood NEWSlink. The Teacher Quick Source gives short and practical tips to educators and operators on recommended ways to engage with the children.

### **Facts in Action, Associated Early Care and Education**

[www.factsinaction.org](http://www.factsinaction.org)

This website is part of New England's Associated Early Care and Education, Inc. website. It places focus on incorporating research findings in Early Childhood Field and Policy into everyday classroom practices. It includes links to suggested preschool activities, as well as guides to help Child Care supervisors select appropriate developmental programmes for their centres. References are made to published research journal articles.

### **National Association for the Education of Young Children**

[www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

NAEYC is one of the world's largest organisation working towards better education of young children. The website provides various e-resources to help centres in activities planning. NAEYC also has an in-house journal, Young Children, comprising of articles contributed by early childcare professionals. There is also an online radio channel focusing on the latest updates in early childhood education.

📌 **Special Needs Opportunity Windows (SNOW)**

[www.snow.utoronto.ca](http://www.snow.utoronto.ca)

This website provides a variety of online courses and chats for special educators, educational assistants, parents, people with disabilities and others interested in inclusive education and accessible technologies. Users can access current discussion topics, workshops, articles, and a collection of video and audio clips on the e-learning web portal.

📌 **Teachers.Net - Lesson Bank**

[www.teachers.net/lessons](http://www.teachers.net/lessons)

Thousands of free lesson plans and classroom ideas submitted by educators are featured on this website. Users can browse lesson plans by category, grade level, or search by keyword. Another interesting feature is the Teachers Chatboard which aims to bring educators together in an environment specially designed to foster peer support and development.

📌 **The Family Conservancy**

[www.thefamilyconservancy.org](http://www.thefamilyconservancy.org)

This website is part of Kansas and Missouri's outreach to parents and the early childhood sector. It offers an array of parenting resources such as general parenting tips, articles on common behavioural, social and emotional wellness, safety and health issues, special educations as well as suggested books and toys for children from birth to teens.

📌 **World Organization for Early Childhood Education**

[www.omep-sgp.org](http://www.omep-sgp.org)

OMEP's aim is to promote the optimum conditions for all children, in order to ensure their well-being, development and happiness, both within their family unit and the wider communities in which they live. Users can gain access to upcoming events, articles of interest and local action research from this website.

📌 **Zero to Three: National Centre for Infants, Toddlers and Families**

[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

ZTT is a non-profit organization that aims to inform, train, and support professionals, policymakers, and parents in their efforts to improve the lives of infants and toddlers. Its website contains information, interactive tools, parent handouts, charts, tip sheets, articles and slide presentations to support educators in nurturing the health and development of babies and toddlers.





A young child with dark hair is sitting in a red plastic chair, focused on playing with colorful toys. The child is holding a blue star-shaped toy and a yellow stick. The background is a brightly lit play area with various toys and colorful structures.

**Developing secure attachments and confidence in children with nurturing adults**



**Generating culturally and developmentally appropriate opportunities for children's holistic development and learning in a safe and healthy environment**

**Committing to professional standards and ethics in working with children, families and educarers' own professional development**





**Engaging families and the community as partners in the care, development and education of children**

## Envisioning Quality for Early Years

- Children being Secure, Confident, Safe and Healthy
- Children being Involved, Engaged and Enquiring
- Centre, Families and the Community Connecting and Relating

### The Developing Child

*Developing secure attachments and confidence in children with nurturing adults*

**Desired Outcome:**  
Children are secure and confident

- 1.1 Children are secure and emotionally connected
- 1.2 Children demonstrate increasing confidence and autonomy
- 1.3 Staff-child interactions are respectful, responsive and reciprocal

### The Intentional Programme



*Generating culturally and developmentally appropriate opportunities for children's holistic development and learning in a safe and healthy environment*

**Desired Outcome:**  
Programmes are holistic and provide optimal support and experiences for growth, development and learning

- 2.1 Educators use routine care for learning and development
- 2.2 Educators foster a disposition for learning
- 2.3 Curriculum offers holistic experiences for learning
- 2.4 Educators provide access to a variety of spaces with natural and man-made materials
- 2.5 The environment is safe and healthy

### The Professional Educator

*Committing to professional standards and ethics in working with children, families and educators' own professional development*

**Desired Outcome:**  
Educators are professional and engage in reflective practices

- 3.1 Educators adhere to professional standards and ethics
- 3.2 Educators engage in reflective practices
- 3.3 Educators are committed to continuing professional development

### The Involved Family



*Involving families as partners in the care, development and education of children*

**Desired Outcome:**  
Educators develop strong partnership and relationship with families

- 4.1 Families and educators engage in regular communication and feedback
- 4.2 Families are involved in various ways in the centre

### The Engaged Community

*Engaging the community as support and resources for home and centre*

**Desired Outcome:**  
Community provides a network of resources and support for home and centre

- 5.1 Centres have updated information and access to community resources
- 5.2 Community serves as a resource to enrich children's learning and provides support for families







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