

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

Role of Educators in the Early Years Settings

VOLUME

2



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EDUCATORS' GUIDE



The Early Years Development Framework (EYDF) and Educators' Guide (EG)

The Early Years Development Framework (EYDF) 2023 guides educators in their continuous effort to raise the quality of centre-based care and education for children from birth to 3 years in Singapore.

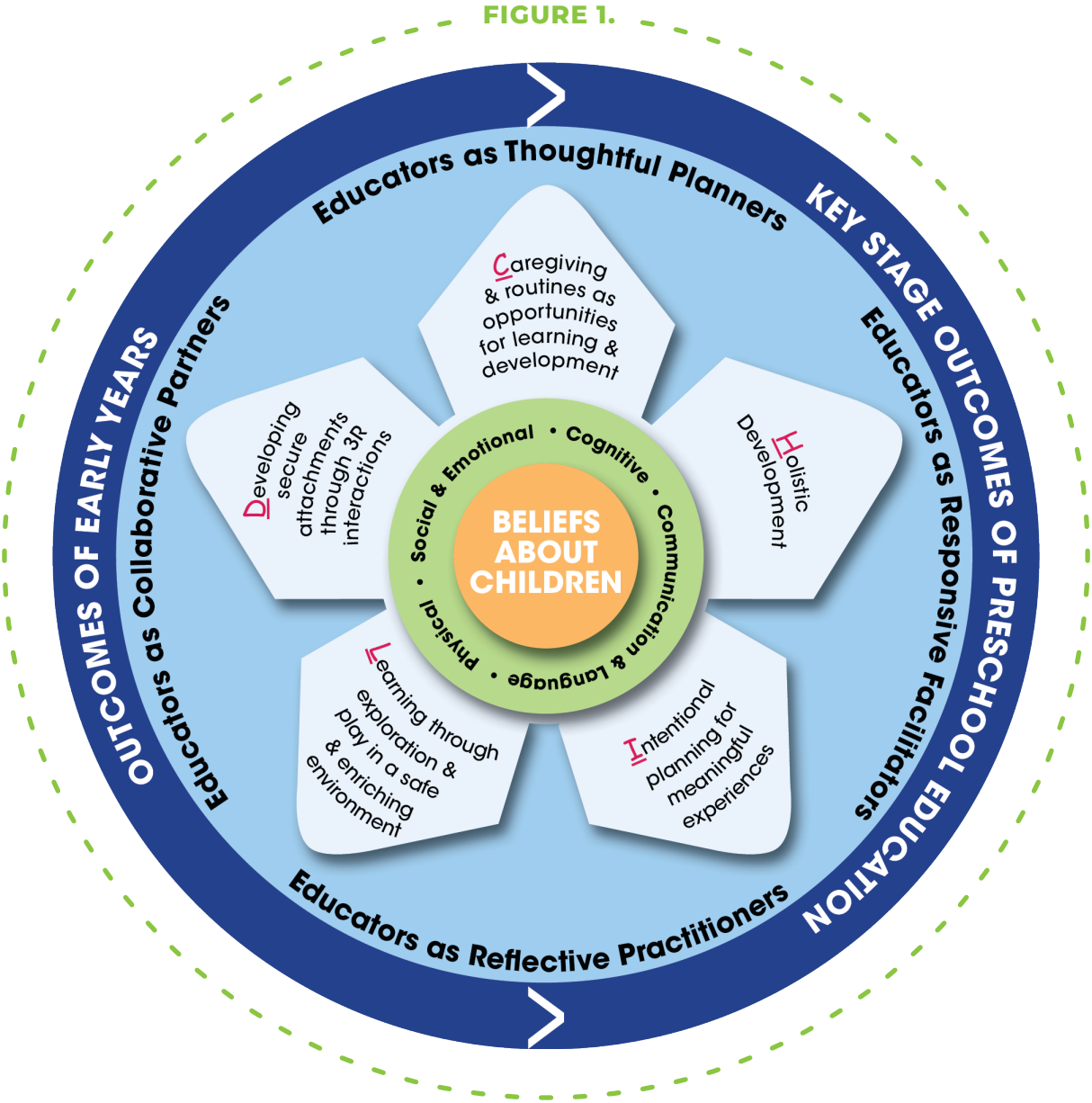
Key Concepts of
EYDF 2023

- Beliefs about Children
- Areas of Development
- C.H.I.L.D. Principles
- Role of Educators
- Outcomes of Early Years

Fundamental to the provision for children’s learning and development are the beliefs that **children are joyful, curious, active, and competent learners** and they **play, learn, and grow with others in a diverse and multi-cultural community**.

With this knowledge and guided by the **C.H.I.L.D.** principles, educators, including centre leaders and curriculum specialists, take on various roles as they design and provide meaningful experiences to promote children’s holistic development and facilitate their progress towards the Outcomes of Early Years. These outcomes, in turn, form the foundation for children in attaining the Key Stage Outcomes of Preschool Education and beyond.

The key concepts of EYDF 2023 are presented in Figure 1 on p.9.



Overview of the EYDF Educators' Guide (EG)

The EYDF Educators' Guide (EG) complements the EYDF 2023 and is designed to help educators translate the key concepts specified in the Framework into practice.

It consists of 3 volumes:

VOL. 1: THE C.H.I.L.D. PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE

Volume 1 illustrates and explains how educators can apply the **C.H.I.L.D.** principles to guide their decisions in areas such as centre-based practices, programme development, and pedagogies.



C. H. I. L. D.

Caregiving and routines as opportunities for learning and development

Holistic Development

Intentional planning for meaningful experiences

Learning through exploration and play in a safe and enriching environment

Developing secure attachments through respectful, responsive, and reciprocal (3R) interactions

VOL. 2: ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN THE EARLY YEARS SETTINGS

Volume 2 explains in detail, how educators can perform the 4 key roles in alignment with the **C.H.I.L.D.** principles, and recommends ideas and strategies that they can apply to support and scaffold children's learning and development.



Thoughtful Planners

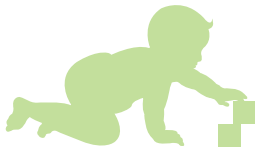
Responsive Facilitators

Reflective Practitioners

Collaborative Partners

VOL. 3: SUPPORTING CHILDREN IN THEIR AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT

Volume 3 suggests ways that educators can incorporate the ideas and strategies proposed in Volume 2 when planning and facilitating learning experiences that build on children's growing interests and competencies in the 4 Areas of Development.



Examples provided also illustrate how the **C.H.I.L.D.** principles are applied in planning experiences to guide children towards reaching the Developmental Goals (DGs).



Cognitive Development



Physical Development



Communication and Language Development



Social and Emotional Development

NOTE: These icons will be used to represent each Area of Development throughout the EG!

KEY FEATURES

Some key features of the EYDF EG that are embedded in each volume include:



EXAMPLES AND SCENARIOS

These examples, scenarios, and case studies are gleaned from the local context and illustrate how educators can apply the key concepts of EYDF 2023 in their daily practices and interactions with children.



THINK ABOUT

These reflective exercises aim to encourage educators to reflect and think about how they can improve their current practices. They can also serve as talking points during meetings and discussions among educators and centre leaders.



PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Each volume concludes with a story told from the perspective of either an educator or a child. These stories bring the concepts explored in the preceding chapters to life and aim to enhance educators' understanding through real-life contexts.

ROLE OF EDUCATORS

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Educators in the early years settings play multi-faceted roles as they nurture and guide children in their growth and development.

These roles extend beyond childminding and are instrumental in setting the foundation for children's well-being and lifelong learning.



Critical Roles of an Educator

To provide the care, support, and stimulation that children need, educators draw on their understanding of how children learn and develop and take on the following critical roles:

- Thoughtful Planners
- Collaborative Partners
- Reflective Practitioners
- Responsive Facilitators

UNDERSTANDING HOW CHILDREN LEARN AND DEVELOP

- *Through observation*
- *Through their senses*
- *Through social interactions*
- *At their own unique pace*
- *When they feel secure and respected*
- *Holistically*

EYDF 2023, P.60 – 61

Thoughtful Planners

Educators consider how children learn and develop as they intentionally plan experiences to engage children in quality interactions and support their holistic development.

Collaborative Partners

Educators establish positive relationships with fellow professionals, families, and the community to enhance children’s overall learning and development.

Reflective Practitioners

Educators reflect and improve their practices to be more responsive to children’s growing interests, needs, and competencies.

Responsive Facilitators

Educators observe and extend children’s exploration and play that complement their growing interests, needs, and competencies.



ROLE OF EDUCATORS

CHAPTER 2

Educators as Thoughtful Planners

As thoughtful planners, educators design environments and plan play experiences based on their observations of children's prior knowledge and growing interests and competencies.

Developmental goals and objectives are identified with a clear purpose in mind to support children's individual learning journey.



Planning and Providing Meaningful Experiences That Promote Quality Interactions and Holistic Development

With the understanding that children develop holistically¹, educators plan and provide children with opportunities for a range of experiences that are relevant to their daily lives and consider the following:



¹ Educators may refer to EYDF Educators' Guide Volume 1: Overview and the **C.H.I.L.D.** Principles in Practice for elaboration on children's holistic development.

FIGURE 2.



Figure 2 illustrates an approach that educators may consider when planning meaningful experiences that promote quality interactions and holistic development.



Example 1



Sensory Box Fun

Infants, 4 – 12 months

IDENTIFY

EDUCATOR'S OBSERVATION

Infants are curious about things around them and show excitement when introduced to new items (e.g., by giggling, squealing, smiling)

DG2.1

Explore the immediate environment with their senses

OBJECTIVE

To provide opportunities for infants to touch, hold, and play with various objects with focused attention (sensory awareness)

PLAN AND PROVIDE



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- A safe, quiet area with play mat
- Resources: A shallow, wide box containing a variety of safe and age-appropriate items of different textures, colours, and shapes (e.g., soft fabrics, medium-sized foam blocks, rubber balls, soft brushes)



EXPLORATION AND PLAY

- Place the box on the mat, within the infants' reach
- Encourage and allow them to explore in their own ways, as long as the play is safe; offer new items when necessary (e.g., to provide options or if they lose interest in an item)



INTERACTIONS AND RESPONSES

- Prompt and encourage infants to touch and hold the items; wait for their responses and engage in back-and-forth interactions with them. For example:

"Feel this cloth... Do you like how it feels? It's soft and smooth."

"Here's something I can press with my fingers. Come, would you like to press it too?", "What happens if we press a little harder?"

"Let's look for the ball!", "Which ball do you like to play with?", "Would you like to squeeze it to see if it makes any sound?" etc.

EVALUATE

- Are the infants focused when exploring a particular item?
- Do they reach out for different items each time? What types of materials do they show preference for?
- How do they respond to the different items? What are their positive / negative emotional responses (e.g., vocalisations, cooing sounds) when presented with new items?

THROUGH THIS EXPERIENCE, THE CHILDREN ALSO HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO



Hello

DG1.2

Engage in daily back-and-forth communication using non-verbal cues and simple words



DG4.1

Manipulate objects with increasing degree of control



DG1.3

Develop a sense of autonomy to make choices

PRINCIPLE 'H'





Example 2



Outdoor Water Play

Toddlers, 3 – below 4 years



EDUCATOR'S OBSERVATION

Children are asking “why” questions and enjoy playing with toys that demonstrate cause-and-effect relationships

DG2.1

Aware that their actions can cause things to happen in the environment (cause and effect)

OBJECTIVE

To provide opportunities for children to observe how their actions can cause different effects to the water (e.g., ripples, splashes, spills)



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- A safe, outdoor area with sufficient space
- Resources: A water trough, a pail with cups or bowls of different sizes, sieves or containers with holes, funnels and scoops for transferring water



EXPLORATION AND PLAY

- Fill the trough with water to a height of a few centimetres
- Place the pail containing the various items next to the trough, within the children's reach
- Encourage children to use their hands to create ripples on the water and use different items to transfer water from one container to another



INTERACTIONS AND RESPONSES

- Scaffold to extend learning by:
 - Demonstrating how to use the resources provided
 - Having back-and-forth conversations about what you / they are doing and what is happening (e.g., talking about the sounds they hear, the water droplets and splashes they see)



INTERACTIONS AND RESPONSES

- Responding to children's interests / queries; asking questions to have them predict and experiment etc. For example:

"What do you think about...?"

"How can we make small splashes?"

"What will happen if I pour the water into the colander?",
"What happens when you pour the water from up high?"



- Were the children able to relate what they do and what happened as a result of their actions? What gestures or verbal expressions were observed?
- How do the children test out different ways of creating splashes / ripples (e.g., splashing water with their hands, using their fingers to create little splashes or ripples)?
- How did the children respond after observing the effects of their actions? Did they prefer repeating the same actions? Were they keen to explore and test out new ways to pour and splash?

THROUGH THIS EXPERIENCE, THE CHILDREN ALSO HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO



DG2.2

Play to explore, test out ideas, and solve problems



DG2.1

Make known their ideas and needs through non-verbal and verbal cues / simple words



DG4.2

Develop eye-hand coordination



DG1.2

Develop confidence to explore (with caregiver as a secure base)

PRINCIPLE 'H'

To promote quality interactions, educators need to include strategies that can motivate children to engage in back-and-forth exchanges with them in their plans. These are evident in the earlier examples through the inclusion of:

Appropriate materials / resources to provoke children’s thinking, based on their needs and interests

Opportunities for children to make choices and explore in their own ways

Questions to facilitate further exploration and extend children’s learning based on their prior experiences and knowledge

Specific prompts to draw children’s attention to the resources introduced in the learning experiences

Examples of experiences that educators can consider when planning to promote quality interactions and holistic development for children include (but are not limited to):

INFANTS

2 – BELOW 18 MONTHS

- Aesthetic and creative experiences (e.g., art, rhymes and finger play, swaying and rocking to music)
- Block play (e.g., large blocks for stacking)
- Lap reading (e.g., pop-up books, books with flaps)
- Mirror play
- Outdoor stroller walks / Outdoor play
- Peek-a-boo
- Sensory play (e.g., sensory basket / bag, sound and texture walls, water play)
- Tummy time



TODDLERS

18 MONTHS – BELOW 4 YEARS

- Aesthetic and creative experiences (e.g., art, music and movement, rhymes and finger play)
- Block play (e.g., for building and constructing)
- Field trips / excursions
- Outdoor learning experiences
- Pretend play
- Puzzle play
- Sensory play (e.g., cookery experiences following simple 3- to 4-step recipes, water play)
- Storytelling and dramatisation (e.g., retelling familiar stories in their own words)



Designing a Safe and Enriching Environment That Encourages Learning Through Exploration and Play

Planning for a safe environment is of utmost importance to support children’s autonomy and freedom to engage in learning without constant external guidance or control. This encourages self-directed learning where children are allowed to take ownership of and make decisions about what, how, and when to learn based on their own needs, interests, and goals.

Besides physical safety, feeling emotionally and psychologically safe also has a significant impact on how children learn and develop. As such, in their provision of a safe and conducive environment for children’s exploration and play, educators need to consider three key aspects highlighted in the principle, “Learning through exploration and play in a safe and enriching environment”:

A PURPOSEFUL PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

A **purposeful** physical environment recognises the diverse needs, interests, preferences, and abilities of all children. When planning learning spaces, educators need to consider the placement, choice, and organisation of equipment and resources to ensure these are accessible to promote children’s participation.

EYDF 2023, P.64

A POSITIVE INTERACTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

A **positive** interactional environment welcomes children to form warm and trusting relationships with their educators and peers, promoting their sense of safety, security, and confidence to explore and take risks (Mistrett, 2017).

EYDF 2023, P.66

A PREDICTABLE TEMPORAL ENVIRONMENT

An environment that is **predictable** allows children to understand what is about to occur and provides them with a sense of security and control. Transitions from one activity to the next can present challenges for educators and children, especially when children’s preferences for activities differ within the group or when they have difficulty adapting to changes.

EYDF 2023, P.67



Example 1

Hello

Outdoor Sound Exploration

Infants, from 7 months

IDENTIFY

EDUCATOR'S OBSERVATION

Children have begun to imitate sounds that the educator makes when interacting with them (e.g., during mealtimes, diaper change).

DG1.1

Develop an interest in language experiences (e.g., listening to a variety of stories, rhymes, and songs)

OBJECTIVE

To provide opportunities for infants to listen and respond to different types of sounds (e.g., high / low, loud / soft, sounds produced by scratching / tapping an object)

PLAN AND PROVIDE



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- An outdoor sound / listening centre / corner
- Resources: A variety of clean and safe kitchenware and utensils hung on a fence / outdoor rack



EXPLORATION AND PLAY

- Demonstrate how to gently tap the kitchenware and utensils to create different sounds and rhythms; talk about the sounds / rhythms
- Gently guide infants' hands towards the hanging items and encourage them to touch, tap, or hit the items with their hands



INTERACTIONS AND RESPONSES

- Prompt the infants to imitate the sounds they hear in their own way
- Follow the infants' lead; use exaggerated facial expressions and talk about what they do, and the sounds and rhythms made when the items are tapped / hit. For example:

"Can you hear the clinking sound?"

"Can you hear that sound when I hit the ladle on the pot? It's a loud sound!"

"If we tap the pots together, what do you think will happen? Clank, clank, clank?"

EVALUATE

- Observe the infants' level of interest and involvement:
 - Do they attempt to play with sounds of different pitches and volumes?
 - How do the infants respond to the loud / soft, high-pitched / low-pitched sounds?
 - How do the infants attempt to imitate the sounds that they hear?

PREDICTABLE TEMPORAL ENVIRONMENT

When transiting from outdoors to indoors:

- Pre-empt infants of the remaining time for their outdoor play
- Inform them when it is time to return to the centre
- Sing a simple tune while heading back to the centre (e.g., using sounds they had heard / created during the outdoor experience)





Example 2



Manipulating Playdough

Toddlers, 18 months – 3 years

IDENTIFY

EDUCATOR'S OBSERVATION

Children enjoy sensory exploration and are beginning to show interest in putting on their own shoes, buttoning, zipping, drawing and scribbling

DG4.1

Manipulate objects with increasing degree of control

OBJECTIVE

To provide opportunities for children to strengthen their hands and finger muscles through dough play

PLAN AND PROVIDE



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- An indoor play area with child-sized tables and chairs
- Resources: Containers filled with homemade playdough in different colours, trays, child-safe plastic knives, forks, cookie cutters of different shapes, wooden mallets, and rolling pins placed next to the containers of dough within children's reach



EXPLORATION AND PLAY

- Invite each child to choose a ball of playdough
- Model and encourage them to explore the playdough with their hands and fingers (e.g., squeeze, press, knead, flatten, roll in their palms, stretch by pulling them)
- Introduce the tools and cookie cutters; let children experiment and create "cookies" of different shapes and sizes



INTERACTIONS AND RESPONSES

- Offer positive reinforcement and praise children for their efforts and individual creativity
- Demonstrate actions such as rolling, poking, pulling, and pinching the dough, and prompt them to do likewise. For example:

"I am using my fingers to poke and make little holes on the dough. Want to make some too?"

"See how I pat the dough and flatten it! Can you try flattening your dough with your hands too?"

"See how I use both palms to roll the dough and make a long snake!"

PLAN AND PROVIDE



INTERACTIONS AND RESPONSES

- Ask questions to encourage them to explore with the different tools. For example:

"Can you make some pancakes with different patterns on it with the fork?"

"What do you think happens when you cut the dough with this cookie cutter?"

"Would you like to try flattening the dough with this tool?"

EVALUATE

- How well can the children control the tools provided?
- What are some of the actions that they do to manipulate the dough to create their desired shapes / patterns?

PREDICTABLE TEMPORAL ENVIRONMENT

When transitioning to the next activity:

- Signal by announcing that it is almost time to clean up
- Sing the "Clean Up" song and have children assist to place the dough and tools back into their respective storage containers



Planning Daily Routines and Transitions to Promote Learning and Development

Routines and transitions are opportunities for educators to promote holistic development. They present many teachable moments for educators to encourage children to talk about their daily experiences and express their emotions.

Carefully planned routines and transitions that meet children’s needs and interests also provide a sense of stability and support behaviour management.

Planning Routines

Routines not only refer to activities that happen regularly but also include the series of actions and behaviours that are repeated during caregiving. Below are examples of routines which infants typically experience in the centre:

ARRIVAL

1

Health check

2

Morning hug

3

Say goodbye to caregiver

4

Acknowledge any comfort item that child brings

5

Sing a greeting or favourite song as child enters the play area

DIAPER CHANGING ROUTINE

1

Inform child of pending diaper change 3 – 5 minutes ahead

2

Maintain eye contact as you describe each step

3

Talk to child based on his cues / responses

4

Praise and affirm child (e.g., "Well done, Adam! You helped so much by lying still.", "Thank you for being so cooperative!")

PRE-NAP ROUTINE

1

Play a lullaby or slow piece of music

2

Dim the lights

3

Pull down the window shades or blinds

4

Offer the milk feed

5

Sing a lullaby (cuddle / rock young infants)

Daily routines that are thoughtfully planned give enough time for children to explore and play. When periods of play are longer, children can engage in more complex exploration and interactions.

Daily routines need to have a balance of learning experiences that are:

ACTIVE AND QUIET

- **Active:** Outdoor play, music and movement, large block play, indoor gym
- **Quiet:** Reading, storytelling, puzzle play, doodling, scribbling

INDIVIDUAL, AND SMALL AND LARGE GROUP

- **Individual, one-to-one time:** Parallel play, tummy time, “peek-a-boo” game, mirror play
- **Small group (2 – 4 children):** Sensory play, storytelling / reading, art activity
- **Large group (5 – 12 children, depending on age group):** Sing-along, music and movement, bubble play, sand / water play

CHILD-LED / EDUCATOR-LED GROUP

- **Child-led:** Free choice, exploration in indoor gym, block play, dress-up, pretend play
- **Child-led and Educator-led:** Movement activity, mirror play, ball play, sensory play, block play
- **Educator-led:** Art, nature exploration, circle time puppet play, cooking activity

Planning Transitions

Transitions between caregiving and play activities are authentic opportunities to promote learning and development. However, transitions can be challenging to newly enrolled children and for children experiencing approach-withdrawal on some days.

With smooth transitions from one activity to the next, children can look forward to the next part of their day’s routine and/or change of environment with a more positive attitude. As such, planning for each day’s transitions is as important as planning the experiences for children.

Educators can consider the following when planning daily routines and transitions:

ALLOW SUFFICIENT TIME

Examples:

- Children have enough time to adjust mentally and emotionally from home to centre or from one activity to the next
- Children take time to gather their personal belongings and bid goodbye to their friends and educators

USE MUSIC AND SONGS

Examples:

- Children are reminded that their activity is coming to an end upon hearing their favourite tune / music or a simple rhythm played on a percussion instrument
- Children sing a song about cleaning up in preparation for the next activity

USE GAMES AND MOVEMENTS

Examples:

- Children play simple games such as counting down, “I spy with my little eyes” or “Simple Simon Says”, or do animal walks as they move to another play area for a different activity

USE VISUALS

Examples:

- Children are informed of the sequence of activities for the day ahead of time and understand the routine e.g. schedule, time-table, calendar, cue cards
- Children are reminded of what the next part of the routine will be



Example 1

Transition From Bottle Feeding to Play Time

As 10-month-old Jaq was finishing his milk feed, Ms Izz started to hum a familiar tune. She gently removed the bottle from Jaq when it was empty and lifted him up onto her shoulder.

As she continued to hum, she took a few moments to burp him and calmly walked towards the play area. As she lowered Jaq onto the play mat, she said, in a soothing, sing-song voice, "Now it's time for Jaq to have some fun. Let's roll balls today." As she engaged in interactive play with Jaq, she talked about the colours and textures of the balls, and how the balls rolled in different directions.



LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Ms Izz's humming of the tune was a signal to Jaq that he was coming to the end of the milk feed. When done consistently, this helps Jaq to anticipate Ms Izz's next actions (to burp him) and foster a sense of security.
- When Ms Izz hummed the tunes and spoke to Jaq, she was introducing Jaq to different tones, pitches, and rhythms. This helped to develop his auditory skills, which are key for language development.
- As Ms Izz took time to burp Jaq before walking slowly towards the play area, she was sending subtle cues to Jaq that he was going to a different area of the room. This helped to establish a sense of safety for Jaq.
- When she informed Jaq that it was time to have fun and roll balls, she was letting him know that they were ready to play together. She also modelled the necessary vocabulary for describing the activity that they were about to engage in.



Example 2

Transition From Outdoor Learning to Indoor Settings

It was time for a group of 3-year-olds to end their outdoor play and return indoors. Ms Oh raised a blue card with the word 'in' written on it and informed the children that they needed to start gathering and get ready to move indoors.

With an appropriate tone of voice, Ms Oh slowly counted down from 10 to 1, observing the children at the same time, to ensure that she gave them enough time to end their play.

When the children were ready, Ms Oh sang, "We have feet, we can walk, walk, walk..." as she ushered them to the entrance of the centre. Ms Oh and her colleague supported the children as they removed their shoes and socks, guiding them to place these in their cubbies before accompanying them back to the toddler room.



LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Using the visual cue, Ms Oh signalled to the children that their outdoor time is ending and that they would need to go indoors soon.
- Counting down from 10 to 1 also allowed children time to wrap up their play and mentally prepare for the change of activity, providing them with a sense of security and autonomy.
- Throughout this transition, Ms Oh also promoted the following:
 - Print awareness (using the word 'in' to signal going indoors)
 - Understanding of how numbers can be used in their daily lives (counting down from 10 to 1)
 - Body awareness (through songs)
 - Self-help skills (children removed their socks and shoes and placed them back in the cubbies, with assistance from educators)

Planning Transitions From One Level to Another

Transitioning to the next age group can be a significant milestone in children’s development. As thoughtful planners, educators collaborate with one another to reduce the stress of transition for the children, allowing them to adapt comfortably to a new group of friends and form secure attachments with their new educators. It also serves to ensure that children’s learning experiences continue to be responsive to their individual needs and interests.



Educators working together to ensure Levi has positive experiences when he moves to the next group level



Exercising Flexibility When Planning to Meet Children’s Needs

Educators can create more child-centric experiences and flexible routines for a particular day to accommodate children’s change of needs, interests, or temperament.

Some examples of how educators can do so include:

Being Open to Flexible Transitions

Provide additional time for transitions between activities when children are functioning at a slower pace that day or need more time to explore and end their play or complete a task. Sometimes, a child may signal that he/she is tired and wishes to rest earlier than the usual naptime. A flexible transition would accommodate this need for the child while allowing other children to continue with their play.

Offering Free Choice Activities

Allow children the option to choose where and what they want to explore and play. Children who are emotionally overwhelmed can also have the option to play alone, be an onlooker, or relax at a designated quiet area.

Ensuring Accessibility to Resources

Rearrange the resources for exploration and play to make them more accessible to children. This will provide them with more options and allow them to progress at their own pace as they are able to decide when and how they want to use the resources.

Providing Visual Cues for Transitions

Use visuals to help children understand and anticipate the day’s routine. Visual cues can reduce anxiety and emotionally prepare children for change of activities.

The following scenarios illustrate how two educators adjusted their day’s routine and responded to the children’s specific needs, interests, and temperaments.



Scenario 1

Adjusting the daily routine for a 7-month-old who was feeling tired

Ms Nadia observed that 7-month-old Alva was sitting at the play area, but not showing much interest in the toys around her. Instead, she was holding her ears and frowning.

As Alva's mother had previously informed Ms Nadia that Alva would usually do this when she was tired, Ms Nadia recognised that Alva was probably overstimulated and needed her nap.

Ms Nadia approached Alva and started to slowly put away the toys around her. She spoke quietly and soothingly to calm her down. Although it was 15 minutes earlier than Alva's usual naptime, Ms Nadia started to sing a lullaby softly and held Alva close to her for comfort.

Then, she signalled to her colleague in the room to prepare Alva's milk while she sat close to Alva and supervised the other infants at the same time. Alva fell asleep after her milk feed and Ms Nadia carried her into the napping area.



EXERCISING FLEXIBILITY DURING PLAYTIME

Instead of distracting Alva with toys to keep her awake until her naptime, **Ms Nadia exercised flexibility when she prepared Alva for her nap earlier than usual.**



Scenario 2

Adjusting children's pre-nap routines for the day

The group of 30-month-old toddlers were more perky and energetic than usual that day. To Ms Jane's delight, they were very engaged and cooperative during the morning activities.

During lunch time, they finished their meals earlier than expected and gradually became more restless. On a typical day, the children would remain in the dining area while their room was being prepared for naptime.

However, sensing the children's restlessness, Ms Jane decided to adjust the children's pre-nap routines. She played a piece of slow instrumental music in the background while the children were still in the dining area to calm them down. Then, she led them to recite a few familiar nursery rhymes, following the tempo of the music.

When she saw that the toddlers' room was ready for naptime, she led them in and read the story that she had prepared for the pre-nap routine to get them ready for their nap.



EXERCISING FLEXIBILITY DURING CAREGIVING ROUTINES

Instead of conducting her pre-nap routines in the designated napping area, **Ms Jane exercised flexibility by initiating the routine earlier than usual.** She started playing the pre-nap music in the dining area to calm the toddlers down and extended the routine by involving the children in reciting nursery rhymes to the rhythm of the music. In doing so, she provided sufficient time for the energetic toddlers to wind down and get ready for their nap.



Think About

WHAT HAPPENED

You have observed the following about the 4 infants in your care:

- 2 of them are not able to sit up yet, but are able to push themselves up when on their tummy; they can reach and grab for items within their reach
- 2 of them are in the crawling stage; they enjoy putting things into containers, then emptying them

NOTE: Refer to the examples provided in this chapter to guide you in planning the experience below.

IN YOUR PRACTICE

Activity Title: _____

Infants, ____ - ____ months

IDENTIFY

Based on your observations of the children, identify a Developmental Goal and set 1 - 2 objectives to further support their learning and development

EDUCATOR'S OBSERVATION

DG

OBJECTIVE

PLAN AND PROVIDE

What outdoor learning experiences would you plan to encourage the infants' learning and development to progress towards achieving the objective set?



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

How would you set up the environment and ensure that the outdoor space is safe for the infants?

•



EXPLORATION AND PLAY

How can you promote children's exploration and play during the outdoor experience?

•



INTERACTIONS AND RESPONSES

What can you say / do to facilitate children's learning during the outdoor experience?

•

EVALUATE

What are some questions you would ask yourself as you observe the infants to understand their progress towards achieving the desired objective(s)?

•

PREDICTABLE TEMPORAL ENVIRONMENT

How would you transition the children from outdoor to indoor while ensuring that they have sufficient time to end their play?

ROLE OF EDUCATORS

CHAPTER 3

Educators as Responsive Facilitators

As responsive facilitators, educators plan, provide, and facilitate experiences that complement children's growing interests and competencies and allow them to play an active role in their own learning.

These include doing the following:

- **Observing, documenting, and assessing children** to understand their growing interests and competencies
- **Scaffolding children's play** to assist them to progress to more complex levels of learning and development
- **Using a wide range of learning strategies and resources** to engage children in quality interactions and experiences
- **Supporting children with developmental needs** to ensure they play and learn alongside their peers



Observing, Documenting, and Assessing Children

Observing, documenting, and assessing children’s development help educators understand how they learn and interact with their environment.

Through careful observation, documentation, and assessment, educators gain insights into children’s growing interests and competencies, from basic sensory and motor perceptions to complex decision-making and problem-solving skills.



Observations can be both planned and spontaneous:

Planned observations:

Educators are intentional about helping children to progress from where they are to the next level of learning or development.

This refers to the on-going process of documentation, interpretation, reflection, and planning new experiences based on information collected formally.

These observations are often scheduled in advance, with specific goals and objectives determined ahead of time.

Unplanned / Spontaneous observations:

These are informal observations that educators make during everyday interactions with children.

They occur in authentic contexts as part of children’s daily experiences and play and often provide valuable snapshots of children’s growing interests and competencies.

Educators are attentive to how children react and participate and, when needed, offer immediate guidance to support and direct their learning.

Observation and assessment for learning enable educators to:

- Gain a better understanding of each child’s interests and competencies to modify their strategies to meet children’s needs
- Reflect and make informed decisions about their practice to support children’s holistic development
- Provide more individualised care and better support each child’s development
- Keep families informed about their children’s development and support them in their children’s learning at home

FIGURE 3.

Steps for Observing, Documenting, and Assessing Children’s Learning and Development



EYDF 2023, P.70

Figure 3 proposes the steps for observing, documenting, and assessing children’s learning and development.

STEP 1.

Information about children can be collected through planned and unplanned observations. For planned observations, educators may do the following:

- A. ESTABLISH A ROUTINE FOR OBSERVATIONS TO TAKE PLACE
- B. DETERMINE THE PURPOSE FOR THE OBSERVATION
 - Why do I need the information?
 - What do I want to achieve with the information collected?
- C. DETERMINE THE AREA OF FOCUS (E.G., DEVELOPMENTAL GOAL (DG)²), CONTEXT / SETTING, AND DURATION OF THE OBSERVATION
 - What information should I collect to achieve the purpose?

² Refer to “Chapter 3: Areas of Development” of EYDF 2023 to select the relevant Developmental Goal(s).

STEP 1.

D. DECIDE ON THE APPROPRIATE OBSERVATION METHOD(S) BEST SUITED FOR THE SELECTED AREA OF FOCUS

- **How** can I accurately and efficiently collect this information?

E. DOCUMENT OBSERVATIONS OBJECTIVELY BY TAKING NOTES AND RECORDING SPECIFIC BEHAVIOURS OR DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS, OR ANY RELEVANT CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION THAT MIGHT INFLUENCE INTERPRETATION.

How can I accurately and efficiently document my observations?

- Some suggested ideas for collecting information and documenting observations:
 - Take **photographs** of children in action
 - **Gather information from families** to understand children better
 - **Ask questions** and **have conversations with children** to understand how they feel and what they think
 - Collect children's **work samples** to find out more about their thoughts and ideas
 - Write **anecdotal records** about children's behaviours, interactions, thoughts and ideas
 - Use **ICT resources** (e.g. videos and sound recordings) to document children's interactions, social behaviours, use of language etc.

While gathering written documentation and visual records are important, educators need to note that these should not occur at the expense of interrupting meaningful interactions or learning experiences.

STEP 2.

As all areas of development are interconnected, observation in one area may lead to insights about other areas. When sufficient information has been gathered, educators need to consider the child as a whole and make objective interpretation of the child's progress to determine if the child is on track in achieving developmental goals or need further support.

Educators engage in a process of critical reflection when making meaningful interpretations of their observations and ask themselves questions such as:

WHAT DID I OBSERVE?

- Is there a specific pattern of growth or development? If there is, how would I describe it?
- How is the child progressing? What difficulties is the child experiencing?
- How is the child's development different or the same as his/her peers?

WHAT INTERPRETATION AND ASSESSMENT CAN I MAKE?

- How does the information support my understanding of the child's progress in achieving the developmental goals?
- Is there sufficient information to make an accurate interpretation of the child's learning and development?
- What other information would I need to inform me about the child's progress and holistic development?

STEP 3.

When compiling the information, educators should keep in mind that written descriptions, photographs, and artefacts should systematically show the child's developmental progress and reflect holistic development:

Consolidates documentation to reflect on the child's on-going progress and holistic development

Summarises information gathered from various sources

Organises photographs and videos / sound recordings to showcase the child's progress

Compiles information onto Parent Communication App or other ICT platforms for sharing with the child's family and / or other stakeholders

COMMUNICATE AND SHARE INFORMATION WITH FAMILIES AND RELEVANT OTHERS

Educators can share the information gathered about the child's progress and celebrate the child's successes with families regularly. Sometimes, it may be necessary for educators to update families on areas where the child needs additional support from home and discuss strategies which can be implemented both at the centre and at home.

In some instances, educators may be required to share information with colleagues and paraprofessionals to support an individual child's needs. Having a summary report of the child's holistic development and highlighting strengths and areas of concern would make it easier to communicate how plans could be individualised to support the child.

STEP 4.

Reflection allows educators to think more deeply about what they have documented and their interpretation of children's learning and development.

Educators reflect³ on their own practices and act on their new insights by:

- Thinking about how they can be more sensitive and responsive to children when planning and designing play experiences
- Designing new experiences to extend children's growing interests and competencies
- Reorganising the environment and resources to invite more diverse types of exploration and play

³ Refer to "Chapter 4: Educators as Reflective Practitioners" for further details and examples on how educators can reflect on their own practices.



The example below illustrates how Ms Lily (an educator of a group of infants ranging from 12 – 17 months) enacts the steps to observe, document, and assess children and plan experiences based on their growing interests, needs, and competences:

STEP 1.

MS LILY PLANS FOR THE CHILDREN'S OBSERVATION AND DOCUMENTATION

"I will dedicate the next 3 weeks to observe 1 child each day on their fine motor skills development to see if they are ready to be more independent in feeding themselves."

"Tomorrow, I shall start with 17-month-old Elijah. I'll observe and make anecdotal records of his behaviours during lunch and gather more information from his parents."



THE NEXT DAY DURING LUNCH TIME

"Elijah tried using his spoon to feed himself but required some assistance as his eye-hand coordination is not fully developed."



After **gathering more details** from Elijah's mother and observing him in **other contexts of play**, Ms Lily noted her observations and information gathered from Elijah's mother on a piece of post-it.

STEP 2.

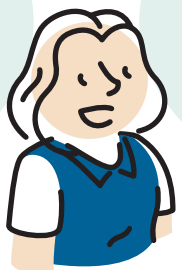
MS LILY INTERPRETS AND ASSESSES ELIJAH'S FINE MOTOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT USING THE INFORMATION COLLECTED.

Spontaneous / Unplanned Observation

"During playtime with blocks, Elijah could pick up the blocks one at a time and would attempt to *stack one block on top of another*, although *not always successfully*."

Planned Observation

"During mealtimes, Elijah was able to grasp his spoon, lift it from the bowl, and bring it to his mouth. However, he had *difficulty adjusting his control of the spoon* (in this case, to scoop the porridge) without an adult's assistance."



STEP 2.



"Elijah showed good progress in *fine motor skills development* and *eye-hand coordination* but requires more practice in *manipulating objects* with his hand."

Experiences aimed at improving his fine-motor skills and eye-hand coordination will help him perform tasks with accuracy."

STEP 3.

MS LILY ORGANISES AND SUMMARISES HER UNDERSTANDING AND ASSESSMENT OF ELIJAH'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT.



Consolidates the observations and interpretations to highlight Elijah's progress and showcase his growing competencies and holistic development



Writes a summary report of Elijah's progress based on anecdotal records and parents' feedback



Compiles and prepares all information gathered on Elijah's learning and development to communicate them to his parents via the Parent Communication App



COMMUNICATE AND SHARE INFORMATION WITH FAMILIES AND RELEVANT OTHERS

MS LILY SHARES THE INFORMATION WITH ELIJAH'S FAMILY AND OTHER RELEVANT EDUCATORS.

Ms Lily **shares her observation** and assessment with other educators in Elijah's class to ensure continuity of learning.



Ms Lily and Elijah's family **exchange information** about him with each other and **discuss** how they can continue to work together to promote his well-being, learning, and development.



STEP 4.

MS LILY REFLECTS AND PLANS OTHER EXPERIENCES TO FURTHER SUPPORT AND SCAFFOLD ELIJAH'S FINE MOTOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT.

REFLECT

"How can I further develop Elijah's *eye-hand coordination* so that he has better control when feeding himself?"

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, DG4.2

PLAN

"I can design experiences like sand play, water play, and table games that encourage Elijah to practise scooping, transferring, and pouring in a fun and playful way!"



Scaffolding Children's Play

Educators scaffold children's play and lead them into more independent and complex exploration to extend their learning and development.

By breaking down complex tasks into smaller, more manageable steps, offering prompts, providing options, and gradually reducing support as children become more proficient, educators help them acquire skills that were previously out of their ability range but within the zone of proximal development (ZPD).

ZPD refers to:

"...the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers"

VYGOTSKY, 1978, P.86

STRATEGIES



ASKING OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS



MODELLING AND DEMONSTRATING



PROVIDING OPTIONS



PLANNING ACCORDING TO CHILDREN'S NEEDS



PRESENTING NEW EXPERIENCES

The following scenarios demonstrate how the educators adopt the different strategies to scaffold children's play.



Scenario 1

1.

6-month-old Aria is able to lift her head and chest when lying on her tummy. She is learning to coordinate her arms and legs to move herself forward.



Ms Santhi planned and implemented play experiences based on her assessment that Aria is ready to enhance her gross motor control and coordination, particularly to support her ability to move independently.



2.

Ms Santhi positions Aria's favourite rattle just beyond her reach, to encourage Aria to move forward towards it.

"Look Aria! Here's your purple rattle! You almost have it!"



3.

Aria stretches towards for the rattle and using her arms and legs to propel herself in the direction of the toy.



4.

To further motivate Aria, Ms Santhi also places a new rattle a short distance away, shaking it to show that it makes a different sound.



Ms Santhi presented Aria with a new experience by shaking a rattle that made a different sound to get Aria's attention and spark her interest



Scenario 2

1.

20-month-old Alex pushes and pulls some playdough with his fingers.

Ms Nurul notices this and joins Alex in his play.



2.

Ms Nurul introduces some materials by putting them on the table. Alex picks up a rolling pin and plays with it but does not seem to use it with the playdough.



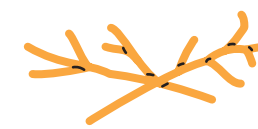
Ms Nurul presented Alex with a new experience when she introduced some new tools to motivate him to experiment with something that he had not tried before.



Ms Nurul provided a variety of materials for Alex to manipulate and use alongside the playdough.



SEASHELLS



TWIGS



VARIETY OF ROLLING PINS

3.

Ms Nurul picks up a rolling pin, places her palms on it, presses downward, and rolls it back and forth to flatten the dough.



Ms Nurul modelled and demonstrated how to use the rolling pin.



"Perhaps Alex may not be familiar with using the rolling pin. I've seen him only flattening playdough with his palms..."

4.

Alex observes Ms Nurul and decides to try using a rolling pin too.



"Tell me more about what you made, Alex. What else can we make using the rolling pin?"



Ms Nurul asked open-ended questions to encourage Alex to recall his actions and consider other possibilities.

With open-ended questions, Alex had opportunities to express himself and share his perspective. This helped his cognitive and language development and enhanced his memory and critical thinking skills.

Using a Wide Range of Learning Strategies and Resources

As responsive facilitators, educators select a variety of learning strategies and resources based on children’s growing needs, interests, and competencies to enrich their experiences.

Here are some strategies that educators can consider when planning and engaging children in quality interactions:



POWERFUL INTERACTIONS

BE PRESENT

Being alert and attentive to what the child is doing helps the educator to be in-tune with the child and consider what is the best thing to say and/or do with the child next.



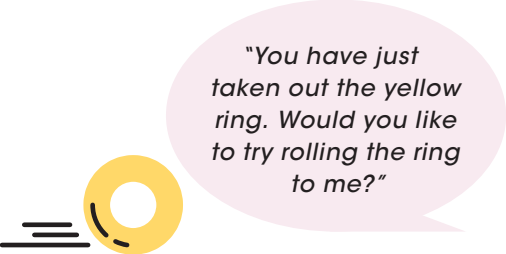
CONNECT

Educator acknowledges and lets the child know that the educator sees them, is interested in them, and wants to spend time with them (NAEYC, 2019).



EXTEND LEARNING

When a positive connection has been formed, the educator can extend the child’s learning by encouraging the child to try new things, introducing new vocabulary etc.



DOMBRO, JABLON, AND STETSON, 2020

3R INTERACTIONS

RESPECT

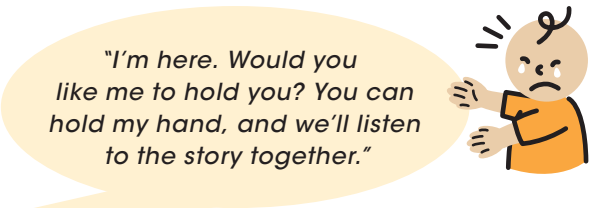
After mealtime, while children wait for their diaper changes, Educator A brings out a pair of new puppets to engage them in a story. Educator B notices that one child shows signs of apprehension towards the unfamiliar puppets.



- The educator models respect by:
- Using a warm, gentle tone
 - Maintaining eye contact with the child
 - Explaining to the child what is happening

RESPOND

The child starts to cry and reaches towards Educator B.



- The educator is responsive when she:
- Observes the child’s cues
 - Pays attention to his needs
 - Assures the child that she is there for him

RECIPROCATE

The child calms down while sitting with Educator B, holding her for comfort.

During the story, the child points to one of the puppets, gurgles, and reaches out to touch the blue puppet.

- The educator reciprocates as she:
- Acknowledges and returns the child’s gestures
 - Fosters back-and-forth interactions by providing options and pausing to observe the child’s responses before following up with another relevant reply



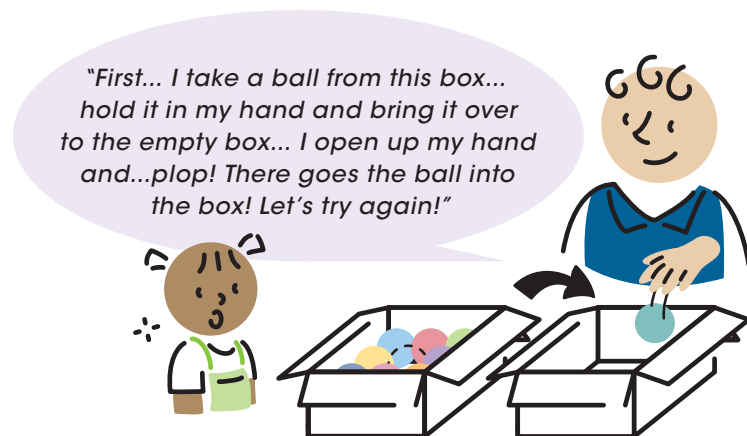
GRADUAL RELEASE OF RESPONSIBILITY

"I DO"

Educator demonstrates and role models an action / skill.

Educator shows child how to transfer the balls from one box to another while narrating the actions and talking to the child.

Educator repeats and ensures that the child is observing the actions.



"WE DO"

Educator guides the child in trying the previously demonstrated action.

Educator encourages child to pick up a ball and drop it into the other box. Noticing the child's difficulty with this task, educator provides support by:

- Moving the boxes closer together
- Placing a ball in the child's hand for dropping
- Offering to do it together / taking turns to sustain the child's focus



(balls on the floor from child's unsuccessful attempts)

"YOU DO"

Child carries out the action independently. Educator continues to facilitate and introduce new elements to support child's development

Educator claps and cheers the child on for each attempt. After days/weeks of practising the actions, educator observes that the child can now complete the actions independently and successfully.

Educator introduces new elements / tools (such as examples below) to further support the child's fine-motor skills and promote awareness of one-to-one correspondence.



New Elements:

Replacing the empty box with a muffin tray and introducing a variety of scooping tools for transferring of balls

VAN DE POL ET AL., 2010

3N STRATEGY

NOTICE

Saying out loud to the child that the educator has noticed his/her actions helps the child to know that the educator is present and attentive.



NUDGE

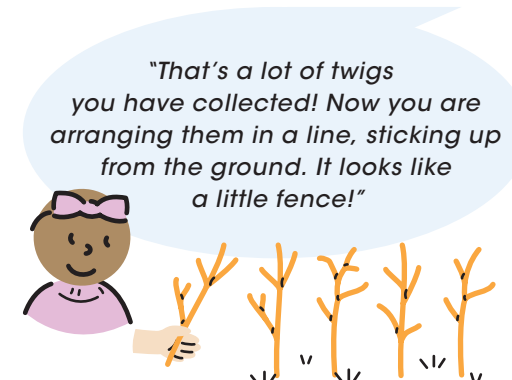
Educator makes a gentle suggestion and pauses, giving the child time to process and respond.



NARRATE

Through narrating the child's actions, educator helps the child to be more aware of his/her actions and the significance of these actions.

Educator can also include new information about what the child is doing and provide positive feedback.



ABECEDARIAN APPROACH, SPARLING, 2015

NOTE:

* The 3S refers to the three levels of child's responses during conversational reading*

* Conversational Reading is a way of interactive book reading that engages one or two children at a time. It involves back-and-forth conversation and spontaneous talk that are not limited to the text in the book and need not follow the sequential flow of the book (Sparling & Ramey, 2015).

3S STRATEGY

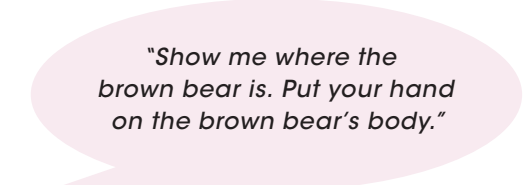
SEE

Educator follows the child's eye and hand movements on the book, then names and points to the picture(s) that the child is looking / pointing at in the book.



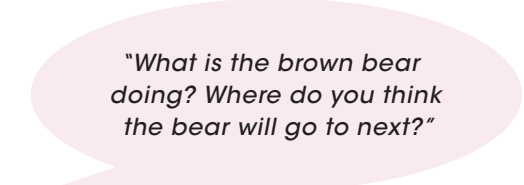
SHOW

Educator invites the child to respond to prompts / questions using body movements or language. This helps the educator to gauge the child's level of understanding.



SAY

When the child is ready, educator can ask questions to encourage the child to respond using words. The complexity of the questions can increase as the child becomes more advanced.





Below are some examples of resources that educators can consider when planning children's experiences to foster their holistic development:

BLOCKS

Developmentally appropriate blocks such as large foam and plastic blocks can be used to encourage and sustain children's exploration and play.

Children can use blocks to stack, build, and construct various familiar items, fostering skills such as balancing, spatial awareness, problem solving, etc.



FEELY BAGS / MYSTERY BOXES

Feely bags and mystery boxes arouse children's curiosity and encourage active exploration as they reach to discover hidden objects.

The elements of surprise and mystery associated with these resources capture children's attention and keep them engaged in the learning process. As they anticipate what they might find, they remain focused and motivated to explore.



SENSORY MATERIALS

Resources that encourage children's sensory exploration include materials that they can see, touch, smell, hear, and taste. Items such as water, sand, and textured fabrics / boards provide tactile experiences, while smelling cups and sound bottles offer olfactory and auditory stimulation.

When children explore these materials, they learn to observe differences, make comparisons, and understand cause-and-effect relationships.



MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AND SOUND-PRODUCING OBJECTS

When used in children's daily play experiences, these resources can enhance children's auditory discrimination skills and language development. They also provide them with opportunities to express their feelings and ideas.

Rhythmic sounds often encourage body movements, which in turn, promote the development of coordination, balance, and motor skills.



PUPPETS, PROPS, AND STORY BOXES

These resources can be used to sustain children's interest and attention during story reading and storytelling experiences.

Incorporating puppets and props into music and movement experiences can also ignite children's excitement and enthusiasm for dramatisation and creative body movements.



Choosing The Most Appropriate Learning Strategies and Resources

When selecting learning strategies and resources, educators evaluate how these choices will create learning experiences that are **enjoyable, active and engaging, multisensory, meaningful, and promote positive relationships**:

Criteria	Suggested guiding questions to consider when selecting learning strategies and resources
Enjoyable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are children excited and happy to participate in the experience?Will children have opportunities to initiate conversations with educators and/or peers?
Active and engaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Will children be actively involved in exploration, play, and discovery?Do the strategy and resources allow for hands-on experiences?Are children able to explore new ideas and talk about them with educators and/or peers?Will children have opportunities to engage in decision-making and problem-solving?Will children from diverse backgrounds and/or with differentiated needs be able to participate fully?
Multisensory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Will there be opportunities for children to use their senses for discovery?Do the provided resources stimulate children’s tactile, visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic experiences?
Meaningful	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Will children’s interests and interactions be sustained in meaningful ways?Will children be able to make connections with their prior knowledge and personal daily experiences?Are resources culturally appropriate to help children link their home experiences to what they are learning?Are there opportunities to raise new awareness and explore new experiences?
Promote positive relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are there opportunities for educators and children to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Engage in sustained conversations and play?Play and work together to complete a task?

EYDF 2023, P.72



The following scenario illustrates how Ms Chan considered the criteria on p.60 when planning and implementing an outdoor play experience for a group of toddlers (30 - 35 months):

MS CHAN’S OBSERVATION OF THE CHILDREN’S INTEREST

During outdoor play the week before, the children enjoyed picking up twigs to poke holes in the ground. Some attempted to dig holes of different sizes with the twigs. Several children became excited when they spotted ants crawling at the edges of the pavement.

PLANNING A NEW EXPERIENCE: OUTDOOR SAND PLAY

RESOURCES TO PROVIDE

- Large sand box / outdoor sand pit / trough
- A variety of plastic toy ants and other insects buried in the sand
- Spades, scoops, moulds, and containers of different sizes and shapes

LEARNING STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT

- Role model** how to use the spades and scoops to dig holes in the sand and how the moulds and containers can be used to create shapes and sand structures
- Be Present, Connect, Extend Learning**
 - Watch and be attentive to the way children play and explore with the resources provided; talk to them and encourage them to experiment with different tools to solve the problems they encounter
- “I Do-We Do-You Do”** and **3N** strategies to scaffold children’s thinking and promote language development
- Ask questions** to spark children’s curiosity and encourage problem-solving
- Provide positive reinforcement** to build children’s confidence and self-esteem

Ms Chan demonstrated how the tools and moulds could be used, such as to dig holes of varying sizes, create sand structures and patterns etc.

While the children were exploring, Ms Chan joined them in their play. She packed some sand into the container, flipped it over, then squeezed the sand out to make sand structures. She narrated and summarised her actions...

Ms Chan: *"Pack... Flip... then squeeze it out!"*

As she continued to dig into the sand, she uncovered a hidden toy bug...

Ms Chan: *"Look what I've found! A little grasshopper! Do you think you can find some more?"*

The children squealed with excitement, reached out for the spades and scoops, and started digging into the sand to look for the hidden toys. Some used the containers to make sand structures.

Ms Chan stood near the children and observed them as they explored the sand independently.

Reysha: *"I find a spider! Look!"*

Tianming: *"Come we dig some more! I want ant!"*

Danisha: *"Pack... flip... squeeze out! Yay! Look at my elephant, everyone!"*

Arjun: *"I make elephant also! Same!"*

Ms Chan: *"I see both of you like using the elephant mould, and you've made 4 elephants. Would you like to make more together and line them up in a row like soldier elephants?"*

Nearby, Ms Chan saw Asha and Amy working together to dig a deep hole.

Ms Chan: *"Wow, what a deep hole you girls have dug! I saw how hard you have been working together. Well done, Asha and Amy — you've shown such good teamwork"*

Criteria	How had Ms Chan considered the criteria in her planning and implementation of the learning experience?
Enjoyable	The experience was planned based on children’s interests in making holes and their curiosity about ants. This follow-up experience aimed to enhance their awareness of and interest in their immediate environment. Children also had opportunities to initiate conversations about their interests and wondering with their peers and educators.
Active and engaging	Children were excited and actively involved during the exploration. The elements of surprise and mystery while uncovering the toy ants and insects kept them fully engaged and focused. The anticipation of what they might find also motivated them to explore in different ways and promoted a higher level of interaction among them. Through simple verbal cues (<i>"Pack... Flip... then squeeze it out!"</i>), Ms Chan helped the children link words with actions and remember the sequence for creating sand structures. The provision of a variety of resources enabled the children to engage in hands-on discovery and explore new ways of playing with sand. The open-ended nature of sand play allowed all the children, regardless of their developmental skills, to participate actively and enjoy different levels of interaction, experimentation, and problem-solving.
Multisensory	Children were able to use their senses to explore textures, shapes, sizes, and patterns. The sights and sounds of the natural environment could stimulate the children’s tactile, visual, and auditory perceptions.
Meaningful ⁴	Children interacted and collaborated as they dug to uncover hidden toys and made sand structures. They practised skills such as sharing, working together, negotiating, and solving problems. In addition, as they scooped, poured, dug, and built, they mirrored actions / movements used in their daily lives to perform tasks for themselves. When Ms Chan noticed Danisha’s and Arjun’s individual interests in making the sand elephants, she nudged them by encouraging them to join efforts, collaborate, and create “soldier elephants”.
Promote positive relationships	Ms Chan gave the children time to explore and manipulate the sand on their own, fostering a safe and positive environment for them to make choices, take risks, and learn to appreciate one another’s ideas and views. By noticing and acknowledging Asha’s and Amy’s efforts in digging a deep hole together, she role modelled respect and trust.

⁴ Refer to Chapter 4 (Principle 3: Intentional planning for meaningful experiences) of “EYDF EG Volume 1: The C.H.I.L.D. Principles in Practice” for details on all the I.D.E.A.L elements of meaningful experiences.

Supporting Children with Developmental Needs⁵

As responsive facilitators, educators need to be sensitive to the diverse needs, interests, and competencies of children.

They play a crucial role in supporting all children, regardless of their abilities, to ensure that their individual needs are met.

Therefore, it is essential for educators to recognise that children develop at varying rates, and some may not conform to the typical trajectory of development or behaviours.



4'A's

Educators are guided by the **4'A's** in their efforts to **support children with developmental needs**:

- Awareness
- Alertness
- Accommodation
- Advocacy

⁵ Developmental Needs (DN) is a term used for children from birth to 6 years old who:

- ^A Display a level of developmental functioning that is below typically developing peers of the same age; and
- ^B Require low, medium, or high levels of Early Intervention support entailing different and/or additional resources beyond (Referenced from: The Professional Practice Guidelines: Developmental and Psycho-Educational Assessments and Provisions for Preschool-Aged Children)



AWARENESS	Being aware of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Developmental milestones that define the skills or abilities that children typically acquire within a specific age range and variations from the normA child's needs as an individual and as part of a group
ALERTNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Recognise the strengths, developmental trajectories, challenges, and needs of each child based on observations and interactions with childrenObserve, document, and assess to ascertain children's developmental variations, challenges, and need for support
ACCOMMODATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify appropriate strategies to include children with developmental needs and encourage them to play and learn alongside their peersAdjust routines and transitions to be responsive to differentiated needsVary interactions (e.g., change tone and pace of speech, offer choices, use prompts, and affirmations more frequently)Plan open-ended experiences to engage children at different developmental levelsAdapt environment by changing the layout and furnishing it with open-ended resources to encourage children to participate more actively in exploration and play
ADVOCACY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide and share information with families on the relevant experts and professionals to approach for further adviceBe respectful of diversity and implement engagement strategies that empower families, educators, and other stakeholders involved to advocate for the child; empathise with families and be patient in explaining information to facilitate their understanding and decision-makingWork closely with families, learning support educators, medical professionals, allied health professionals, social workers, and early intervention professionals for more targeted strategies to individualise support plans for children with developmental needs



Below is an example of how an educator uses the 4A's to guide her in supporting a 3-year-old child in her class:

MS ASLYN'S OBSERVATION OF ASHER'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

3-year-old Asher seems to face challenges with language development.

Ms Aslyn, his primary educator, has observed that Asher has difficulty in articulating his ideas and needs clearly. While his peers are starting to form 3-to-4-word sentences, Asher typically uses only 1 to 2 words to communicate.

Ms Zhang, Asher's Mother Tongue Language (MTL) educator, shares these concerns. Both Ms Aslyn and Ms Zhang have also noted that Asher becomes frustrated when unable to make himself understood.

AWARENESS	<p>Ms Aslyn is aware of Asher's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengths: He is cooperative in group settings, attentive during storytelling time, and keen to participate in movement activities.• Possible area(s) of concern: His language development appears delayed when compared with typically developing 3-year-olds.
ALERTNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms Aslyn recognises Asher's good progress in other areas of development (i.e., physical, cognitive, and social and emotional), and continues to observe and document his learning and development to ascertain his developmental variation(s).• She discusses her observations and concerns with Ms Zhang and other educators who know Asher to seek their thoughts and opinions, based on their respective observations.• She uses the information gathered to assess Asher's holistic development and decide on how he can be further supported.
ACCOMMODATION	<p>Together with her colleagues, Ms Aslyn co-plans open-ended group experiences and discusses possible ways to accommodate Asher's needs, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using language modelling to support and encourage Asher to use more than 2 words when describing his daily experiences• Utilising visual aids to guide Asher in associating images with words and provide him with the necessary vocabulary to express his needs clearly• Incorporating finger play and action songs and rhymes with repetitive lyrics and actions to help him in understanding the meaning of the words and to sustain his attention• Inviting Asher to respond to simple questions about familiar stories (e.g. "Where is the frog?") during storytelling time
ADVOCACY	<p>Ms Aslyn discusses her observations with Asher's family to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand their views and support them in acknowledging Asher's developmental variation(s)• Reassure them while developing targeted support strategies in collaboration with other professionals

Supposing that Ms Aslyn has inferred, based on all the information gathered, that 3-year-old Asher (described in the scenario on p.66) indeed has developmental needs that require further support, she may adopt the following strategies⁶ when communicating with Asher's family and other professionals:

ENGAGE IN OPEN COMMUNICATION

Share observation with families based on educator's assessment

- Begin the conversation with what the child can do well in and keep the conversation positive
- Describe observations based on evidence-based information and documentations

"Asher understands and follows simple instructions like, "Take your water bottle", "Put on your shoes"..."

"However, I have noticed that he has difficulties expressing his needs and ideas... Asher tends to resort to crying or whining... For instance, last week..."

Listen to their concerns; Be sensitive and empathetic

- Repeat the family's concern and acknowledge their views and feelings
- Provide reassurance that you will continue to work with them to support the child

"Thank you for sharing that... I hear that you are worried that Asher..."

"Let's observe and monitor for another 2 weeks and we can discuss further on how we can support Asher's development together..."

Suggest how and where they could seek a second opinion of concern(s) raised; Involve them in decision-making on follow-up actions

"Would you like to check out... (name of resource)... for more information that can help us better understand..."

"I believe... (name of contact)... may be better able to advise on how we can best support Asher..."

"You may want to contact... (name of agency/hospital)... to schedule an appointment to discuss Asher's development..."

66

Chapter 3: Educators as Responsive Facilitators 67

⁶ Extracted from Figure 07 on p.76 of EYDF 2023 on suggested approach for supporting families with developmental needs

COLLABORATE WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS

Discuss and co-plan with colleagues, early intervention professionals, social workers, and/or allied health professionals (where applicable) on appropriate strategies to support the child

- Recognise that every child is unique
- Tailor interventions to support the child's specific needs and strengths



(At the centre's weekly team meetings)

Follow-through with the child's development support or learning support programmes

- Respect each other's unique expertise and provide regular updates on the child's development
- Work collaboratively to track and evaluate the effectiveness of the recommended intervention or support strategies
- Analyse the child's development and progress to make decisions that not only address the specific need, but also inform about the child's holistic development



(At a meeting with the child's therapist)

Implement differentiated practices to suit the child's diverse abilities and embed individualised strategies in daily routines and caregiving



(Conversation between the child's educators)

PROVIDE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TO THE FAMILIES

Communicate regularly to update families on how the child is coping at the centre to assure them that you are:

- Tracking the child's progress
- Genuinely interested in the child's well-being, learning, and development

Exchange information with families regularly to be informed on how the child is coping at home

- Gain insights on why the child is progressing or not progressing
- Align the goals and priorities to increase the likelihood of interventions being effective and sustainable over time

Offer a listening ear and provide guidance and resources as and when necessary, to help them cope with the challenges

Examples of resources include:

- Online communities and forums
- Non-profit organisations
- Financial assistance programmes
- Support groups
- Educational resources and workshops

"Asher is doing much better at telling us what he needs. He can now use sentences like, 'I want more...' and 'No, thank you' during mealtimes."

"How is Asher coping at home? We are planning additional opportunities for him to practise..."

"How about you? How is your family managing? I can recommend some helpful resources with strategies that might support you through this period..."





Think About — — — — —

During the daily outdoor play, Ms Aslyn notices that the children, including Asher, are fascinated with the rough and jagged surfaces of twigs. They will also pick up twigs of different lengths and sizes and arrange them on the ground to make different patterns. Some of the children also enjoy the sounds of the twigs snapping while stepping on them.

- 1. What additional play experiences could Ms Aslyn plan to deepen and scaffold the children’s learning and guide them towards more complex levels of development based on what they currently know and are able to do?
- 2. How could Ms Aslyn adapt these play experiences to suit Asher’s needs? Use the following criteria to guide you in helping Ms Aslyn make decisions on the most appropriate learning strategies and resources for planning the play experiences:

Criteria	1. Play experiences for all children	2. Differentiation to cater for Asher’s needs
Enjoyable		
Active and engaging		
Multisensory		
Meaningful		
Promote positive relationships		

NOTE: This activity is linked to the scenario described on p.66 – 69 regarding Ms Aslyn’s concerns about Asher.



ROLE OF EDUCATORS

CHAPTER 4

Educators as Reflective Practitioners

Engaging in reflective practice and ongoing professional learning is essential for educators to continuously refine their pedagogy and enhance the learning experiences of children.

This process of continuous improvement enables them to critically analyse their strategies, interactions, and child outcomes to gain a deeper understanding of their daily practices. By acquiring new knowledge to improve and innovate, educators can become more effective in meeting the needs of the children.

This process also encourages a proactive approach to professional development. By actively seeking out opportunities for professional learning, such as attending workshops, collaborating with colleagues, and staying updated on educational research, educators can stay abreast of best practices and pedagogical advancements.

With greater insights into children's learning and development, educators can make a more significant difference to the lives of the children whom they meet each day.



Engage in
Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is about taking the time to examine one's beliefs, values, goals, assumptions, and practice.

It can be motivated by concerns that arise from daily encounters and interactions with fellow educators, families, and children. It is thinking about what happened, why, and how to do better.

It also helps educators gain a better understanding of themselves as practitioners and how they can grow professionally to better meet children's and families' interests and needs.

EYDF 2023, P.77



Awareness

The reflective process begins with educators becoming aware of their experience and actions.

They recognise successes and challenges in their practice and seek to improve and develop professionally.

Assessment

Educators assess, evaluate, and analyse their experiences and/or actions, considering both strengths and challenges.

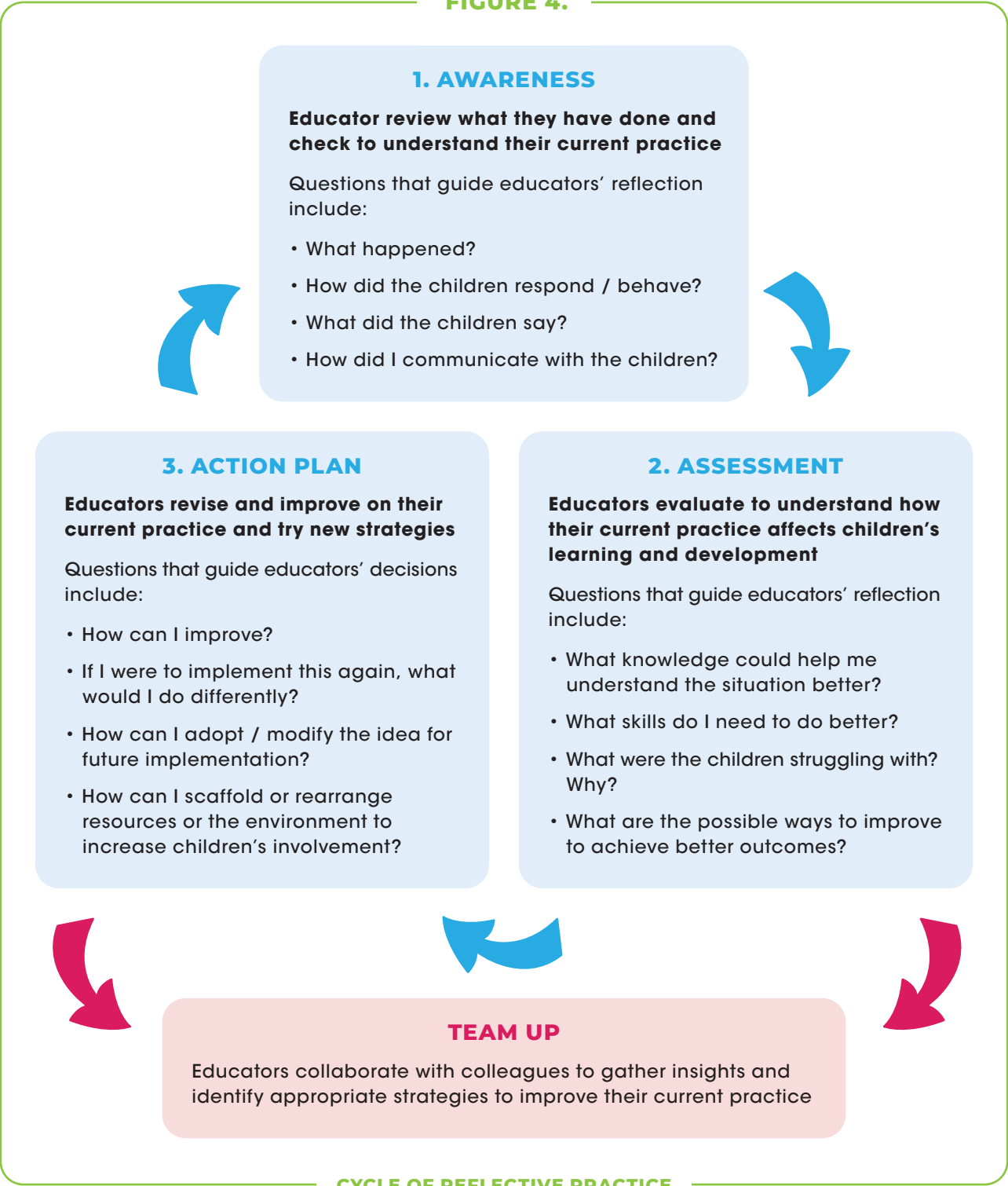
They identify what went well and what could be improved, as well as gain insights to help them be more effective when planning and promoting children's holistic development.

Action Plan

After assessing their experience and/or actions, educators work on developing an action plan based on the insights gained.

This plan outlines specific steps and strategies for improvement. It may include setting goals, acquiring new skills, changing behaviours, or seeking further support or resources.

FIGURE 4.





Scenario 1

Classroom management for toddlers (24 – 30 months)

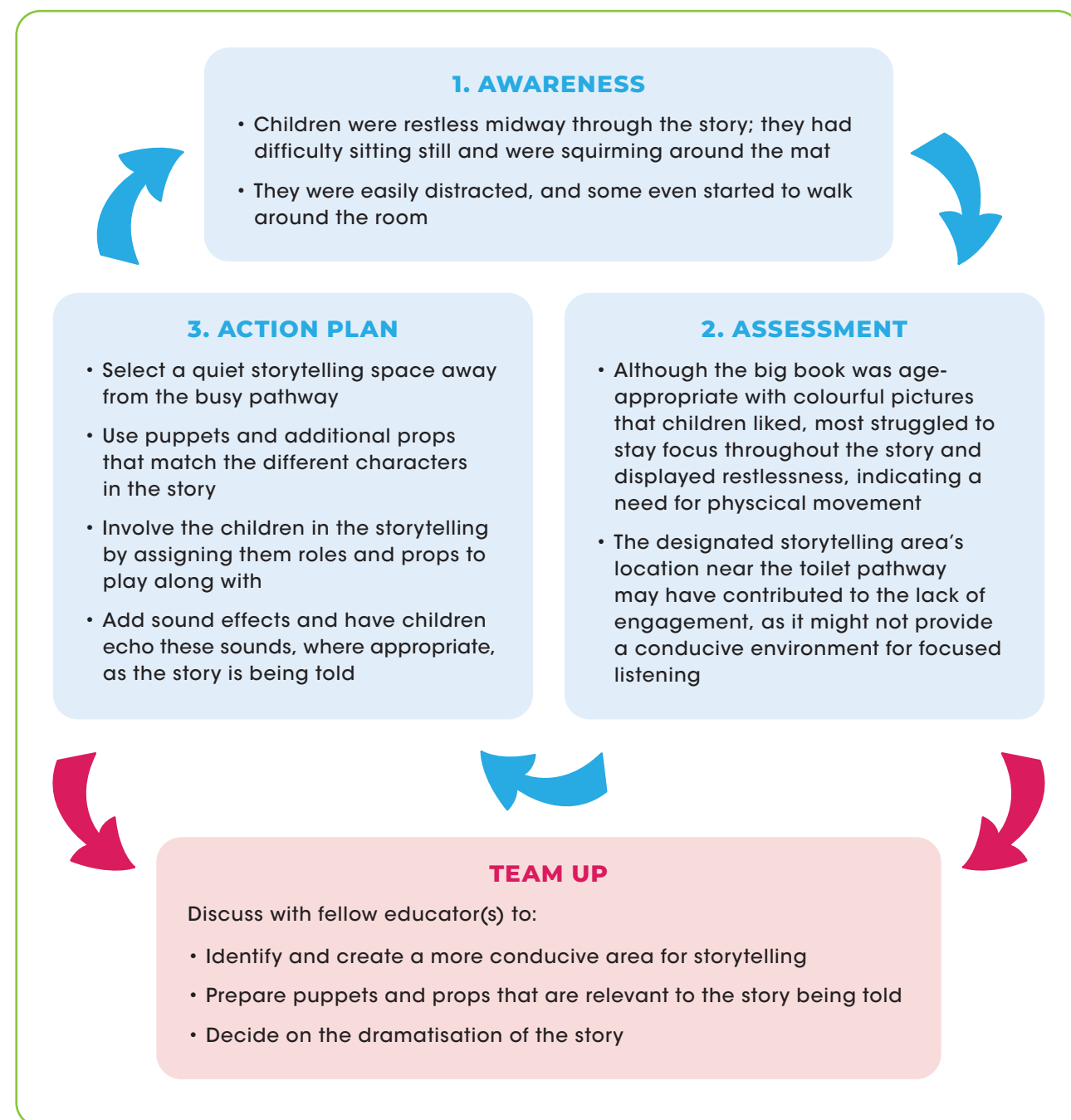
During storytelling time, Ms Rani read a big book with colourful pictures to a group of toddlers.

However, some of the toddlers were restless and a few of them started to move around the class midway through the story.

Ms Rani attempted to sustain their attention but found it challenging to do so.



The reflective practice cycle (below) demonstrates how Ms Rani and fellow educators can reflect upon and enhance their storytelling techniques to create more engaging sessions with children.



Scenario 2

Managing transitions for toddlers (18 – 30 months)

It is time for outdoor play. Some children are getting ready while others are loitering around the shoe cubby area.

Ms Loh, the assistant early years educator, takes a group of three children to the toilet while Ms Choo, the main early years educator, gathers the remaining nine children and hands out their caps and water bottles.

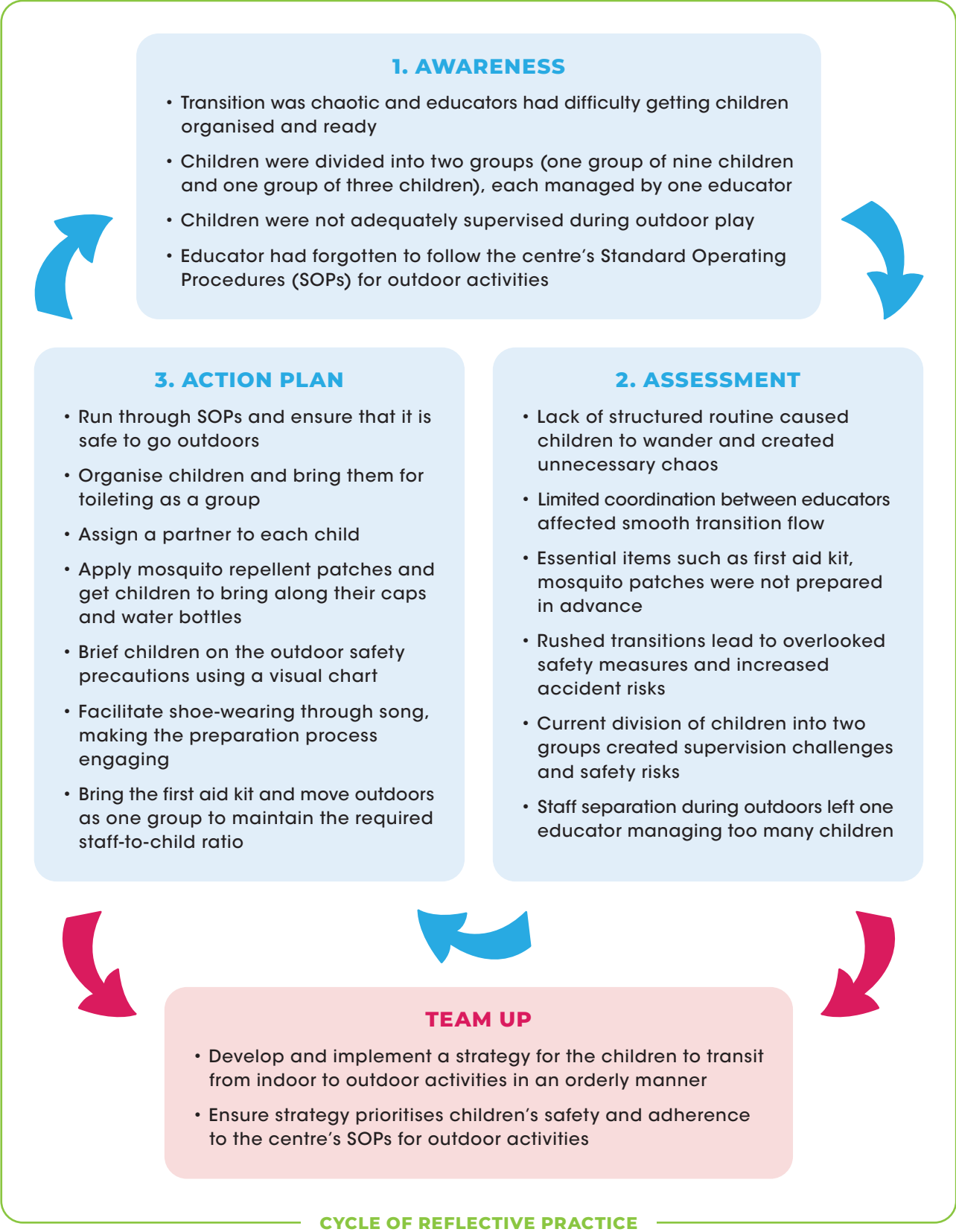
After applying the mosquito repellent patches on the children, Ms Choo calls out to Ms Loh, "I'll bring this group out first and you can join us later. Don't forget to bring along the first aid kit." Ms Choo proceeds to bring the first group of nine children out to the nearby playground.

Back at the centre, Ms Loh quickly gathers the three children and leads them to the playground to join Ms Choo and the rest of their peers. In her rush, she forgets both the first aid kit and to apply the mosquito repellent patches on the children. She then rushes back to the centre to get the first aid kit, leaving Ms Choo alone at the playground with the children.

While Ms Loh is away, Ms Choo continues to supervise the children. She notices a child who has tripped and fallen while trying to climb up the playground structure. She heads over to tend to the child, simultaneously trying to still ensure that the rest of the children are playing safely.



Using the reflective cycle (below), we can analyse scenario 2 on p.77 and determine how Ms Choo and Ms Loh could have enhanced their management of children during the outdoor routine and transition.



Supporting Reflective Practice

As educators think about their daily practices using the cycle of reflective practice, it is important for them to consider how they have enacted the **C.H.I.L.D.** principles spelt out in the EYDF. They may focus on key areas such as building positive relationships, caregiving routines and practices, and planning meaningful experiences to support children’s holistic development.

Throughout the cycle, educators may use the prompts in the table below to guide them in identifying the most appropriate practices to support their children’s well-being, learning, and development.

<p>PRINCIPLE ‘C’</p> <p>GUIDING POINTERS FOR REFLECTION</p> <p>Caregiving processes, routines, and transitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Were enjoyable and meaningful to children• Considered children’s diverse needs, as well as their preferred activities at home and at centre• Allowed ample time for children to explore their ideas through play• Enabled eye-to-eye contact during interactions• Allowed children and educators to talk about and respond to each other’s ideas and interests• Provided opportunities for children to talk about or discover new things• Involved children’s participation (e.g., feeding oneself, cleaning up, placing dirty diaper in bin, cooperating with educators or peers)• Gave children sufficient time to get ready and anticipate the next activity to minimise their anxiety• Had opportunities for educators to role model positive social behaviours and interactions	<p>PRINCIPLE ‘H’</p> <p>GUIDING POINTERS FOR REFLECTION</p> <p>The experiences provided opportunities for children to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive relationships with educators and peers• Love for learning• Healthy habits• Interests and competencies in the 4 areas of development (cognitive, communication and language, physical, and social and emotional), dispositions for learning, values, as well as executive function
	<p>PRINCIPLE ‘I’</p> <p>GUIDING POINTERS FOR REFLECTION</p> <p>The experiences considered / integrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observations of children’s diverse needs, growing interests and competencies, and prior knowledge• Opportunities for holistic development• A variety of strategies and resources to encourage children to manipulate, test out ideas through trial and error, try to do things in different ways, etc.• Opportunities to scaffold children’s learning and challenge them to the next level of learning / development, when ready• Role modelling of values and dispositions for learning

PRINCIPLE 'L'

GUIDING POINTERS FOR REFLECTION

The physical environment:

- Appealed to children's senses
- Had sufficient space for children to move around safely and engage in free play
- Supported and promoted children's curiosity
- Encouraged choice, decision-making, and risk-taking within familiar and safe contexts
- Encouraged children to play and explore independently without fear of getting hurt
- Had a balance of indoor and outdoor exploration and play to engage children in a range of sensorial experiences

The resources provided:

- Allowed for more independence and autonomy in the completion of simple tasks
- Encouraged children to observe and ask questions
- Actively involved children in applying their knowledge and skills through exploration, discovery, and expression of ideas
- Challenged children to more complex tasks that helped them connect their prior and new knowledge

PRINCIPLE 'D'

GUIDING POINTERS FOR REFLECTION

Educators and children had opportunities to:

- Engage in 3R interactions using a variety of strategies and resources
- Enjoy unhurried interactions with one another (i.e., educators talk and respond to children in a patient, friendly, and warm manner)
- Take turns to initiate and lead in conversations

Educators had opportunities to:

- Respond readily to children's needs and requests for assistance
- Engage in meaningful interactions based on children's needs, interests, and ideas
- Observe, watch for non-verbal cues, and listen attentively to children

Children had opportunities to:

- Participate in and enjoy activities together with educators and/or peers
- Communicate their feelings to educators through non-verbal cues / signals or verbally

Engage in Professional Learning

Educators participate in professional learning to collaborate with one another to learn, develop new strategies, and improve their practices.

Professional learning extends beyond attending courses and workshops and may include opportunities for educators to form a community of learners, where independent experiences are shared and contextualised and effective strategies are identified.

With professional learning, educators acquire new knowledge and skills to improve their practices to optimise children's learning and development.

EYDF 2023, P.78

The following scenario illustrates how educators can plan their professional learning using the [Skills Framework for Early Childhood](#) and [Early Childhood Continuing Professional Development \(CPD\) Roadmap](#):



Adrianne is a 32-year-old Lead Early Years Educator who has ten years of working experience in the sector and had previously graduated with a diploma in Early Childhood.

This is her first year taking on the role of a Lead Early Years Educator and she would like to understand how she could raise her level of expertise to support her fellow educators in implementing developmentally appropriate pedagogical practices to engage children meaningfully.

SKILLS FRAMEWORK FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

Adrianne referenced the Skills Framework for Early Childhood and identified the Technical Skills and Competencies (TSCs) which she would like to work on as a Lead Early Years Educator to help her support her fellow educators in raising the quality of the centre's practices.

These TSCs are:

- Early Childhood Curriculum Design
- Early Childhood Pedagogical Practice
- Early Childhood Programme Planning
- Learning Environment Design
- Staff Communication and Engagement

EARLY CHILDHOOD CPD ROADMAP

After gaining a better understanding about the required TSCs for her job role from the Skills Framework, Adrienne then referred to the Early Childhood CPD Roadmap to prioritise the TSCs that she could work on. As it was Adrienne's first year in her new role, her centre leader advised her to focus on Stage 1 TSCs, which are prioritised TSCs for educators like her.

Together with her centre leader, they decided that Adrienne would participate in professional learning that covered the following TSCs:

- Early Childhood Curriculum Design
- Early Childhood Pedagogical Practice
- Early Childhood Programme Planning

Adrienne then proceeded to identify relevant training courses that are available for these TSCs by referring to the CPD Prospectus on the ECDA website and further discussed with her centre leader regarding her plans to register for these courses.

Apart from attending CPD courses, her centre leader also encouraged and guided her to sign up for other available professional learning opportunities such as the Early Childhood Learning Communities (ECLC), Communities of Practice (CoPs), and relevant conferences.

The knowledge and skills attained from these training platforms could support Adrienne's professional development and enable her to apply her learnings into daily practice with the children as well as lead fellow educators at her centre, for example, through peer sharing sessions guided by her centre leader.

TECHNICAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Early Childhood Curriculum Design	Level 5	Evaluate the Centre's curriculum approaches to incorporate key theories, trends and good practices to ensure holistic learning experiences
Early Childhood Pedagogical Practice	Level 5	Develop Centre's pedagogical practices and lead educators to implement developmentally appropriate pedagogical practices to facilitate care and meaningful daily learning experiences
Early Childhood Programme Planning	Level 5	Formulate the Centre's programme objectives, structure and implementation to ensure that they cater to the development and wellbeing of children of various age groups and needs
Learning Environment Design	Level 5	Review the design of Centre's learning environment to ensure alignment to Centre's teaching philosophy, vision, mission, values, and programmes
Staff Communication and Engagement	Level 4	Develop staff communication plans and engagement programmes within the Centre

SKILLS FRAMEWORK 2022

STAGE 1 TSCs

Child Learning and Development

- Child Development Assessment
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Early Childhood Curriculum Design
- Early Childhood Pedagogical Practice
- Early Childhood Programme Planning

Family and Community Partnership

- Situation Management with Families and Community

Professional Practice and Development

- Coaching and Mentoring for Educators
- Practitioner Inquiry
- Reflective Practice for Educators

Staff Development and Engagement

- Staff Continuous Learning

Stage 1 TSCs are prioritised TSCs that you may want to focus on in the first few years of taking on a new job role.

CPD ROADMAP 2023



Think About

Caregiving Routines & Transitions

Read through the scenario below and complete the cycle of reflective practice template by referring to the guiding questions for each stage of the cycle on P.75.

Three infants (9 – 12 months old) were freely exploring the toys available on the play mat. As it was diaper changing time, Ms Tan walked towards Abby (9 months old) from behind her, carried her up, and brought her to the diapering area. As Abby was unaware of Ms Tan's approach and had not anticipated to be carried, she struggled momentarily and began to cry.

With Abby crying in her arms and facing away from her, Ms Tan adjusted her arm to turn Abby to face her and tried to comfort Abby by gently stroking her back. Abby eventually calmed down and stopped crying.

After a quick clean up, Ms Tan secured the clean diaper on Abby, lifted her up into her arms, and said, "You are all done! Now, you can go play with your friends!" She then hurried back to the play area and put Abby on the play mat.

She repeated this similar routine with the other two children. They did not struggle or cry like Abby did, however, one of them was a little startled when Ms Tan interrupted his play.

After she has completed the diaper changing routine for the three infants, Ms Wong, the Senior Infant Educator who had been observing Ms Tan throughout the routine, approached her and said, "You seem to be rushing, you need to calm down and not rush through the routine."



1. AWARENESS



3. ACTION PLAN

2. ASSESSMENT



TEAM UP



CYCLE OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

ROLE OF EDUCATORS

CHAPTER 5

Educators as Collaborative Partners

An “environment of relationships” is crucial for the development of children, especially in the early years.

As such, it is important for educators to take an active role in initiating collaborative partnerships with families and the community. They can do so by:

- Establishing positive and respectful relationships with families
- Maintaining regular and effective communication with families
- Fostering strong partnerships with families
- Establishing a collaborative partnership with the community



Establishing Positive and Respectful Relationships with Families

Families have direct influence in their children’s lives as they grow and develop. While educators possess expert knowledge about children’s learning and development, families can offer invaluable insights into their children’s needs, interests, temperaments, and dispositions.

Hence, fostering positive relationships with families will promote the sharing and exchange of relevant information between families and educators to collaboratively support children’s holistic development and help them achieve their potential.



Maintaining Regular and Effective Communication with Families

Regular communication with families about their children’s development and progress at the centre enables families to better support their children’s development at home.

With timely two-way communication, children’s accomplishments are acknowledged, concerns are recognised, and solutions are promptly identified. Educators can also provide more responsive and individualised opportunities to extend children’s learning and development when families inform educators about their children’s interests and experiences at home.

These exchanges of information can take place through different modes, including daily communication app, emails, telephone calls, parent-teacher meetings, and centre newsletters.



Scenario 1 — — — — —

Supporting a 3-year-old child to acquire a self-help skill

It has been 6 weeks since Anthony joined the Nursery 1 class.

During the first week, when Anthony’s mother accompanied him in the centre, Ms Norlida took time to talk to her about Anthony’s preferences and temperament. Whenever possible, these conversations took place in Anthony’s presence.

During this period, Ms Norlida observed that Anthony was hesitant to put on his shoes when getting ready for outdoor play and during departure time. He would wait for Ms Norlida or his parents to bring his shoes and put them on for him. Based on her previous observations of Anthony, Ms Norlida recognised that Anthony has developed the gross and fine motor skills needed to put on his shoes on his own. Thus, Ms Norlida decided to now focus on fostering his sense of independence in self-care, starting with putting on his own shoes.

She spoke with his parents and together, they developed a plan to help foster Anthony’s independence in self-care, which included:

- Reading books and singing songs that encourage independence and promote self-help skills
- Encouraging and guiding him to put on his shoes when going outdoors and when departing from centre or home

Ms Norlida maintained regular communication with Anthony’s parents via the daily communication app and shared photographs and video recordings of his experiences and progress.

Two weeks later, Ms Norlida observed that Anthony has begun to put on his shoes readily and independently. She informed the family and celebrated Anthony’s efforts and achievement by awarding him with a sticker that said, “*You did it!*”. She also gave 2 additional stickers for Anthony to award his parents too.



IN THIS SCENARIO

- Ms Norlida established positive and respectful relationships and maintained regular and effective communication with Anthony’s parents by doing the following:
- Being prompt in gathering information about Anthony’s interests and temperaments from his family during the first week of his attendance at the centre. Through the two-way communication with Anthony’s parents, concerns were addressed, and solutions were identified to support his development
 - Having conversations with Anthony’s mother in his presence to give him a sense of security, as he observed that his mother felt comfortable with her
 - Involving them in developing a plan to promote Anthony’s learning and development
 - Acknowledging Anthony’s efforts and accomplishments and celebrating with his family



Scenario 2

Aligning a 9-month-old infant's routines at home and in the centre

For the past month, Ms Rukiah had observed that Sathya was having difficulties following her individualised routines on Mondays and Tuesdays in the centre. It was particularly challenging during play, nap, and feeding time. She appeared lethargic during play time, restless during her usual nap time, and would wake up after a brief nap and cry for milk. However, from Wednesdays to Fridays, Sathya seemed more comfortable with the routines and was more engaged during play time.

One day during dismissal, Ms Rukiah shared her observations with Sathya's grandparents. She also contacted Sathya's parents to gain a deeper understanding of her behaviour at home. Through these conversations, Ms Rukiah discovered that Sathya's parents' recent work schedule changes had led to a new arrangement where Sathya stays at her grandparents' home from weekends through Tuesdays. During these stays, Sathya's bedtime routine had become inconsistent, with her going to bed significantly later than her usual schedule at her parents' home. The disruption to her sleep routine had impacted her attention span and ability to focus during centre activities. Concerned about these changes, Ms Rukiah collaborated with both her parents and grandparents to maintain consistent daily sleep routines to support Sathya's well-being.

Over the next few weeks, Ms Rukiah observed that Sathya has gradually adapted and settled into her usual routines and was displaying less discomfort and restlessness on Mondays and Tuesdays than before. She also seemed happier and more engaged during play time when interacting with her peers and educators.

Ms Rukiah and Sathya's family were glad that concerns were efficiently addressed, and positive outcomes were achieved both at home and in the centre.



IN THIS SCENARIO

Ms Rukiah established positive and respectful relationships and maintained regular and effective communication with Sathya's parents by doing the following:

- Being prompt and proactive in gathering information about Sathya's weekend routines from the family
- Sharing her concerns with Sathya's family and initiating discussions with them, Ms Rukiah assured the family that she valued Sathya's well-being
- Involving them in deciding how Sathya's routines at home and the centre could be adjusted to accommodate her needs
- Following up with a phone call to Sathya's parents in addition to speaking with her grandparents

Fostering Strong Partnerships with Families

Families are whom children first receive care and love from and have their needs met. They have direct influence on children's learning and development and continue to play a significant role as children grow and mature. Educators, families, and children benefit greatly when strong partnerships between educators and families are intentionally nurtured.

Strong connections between the centre and home environments provide children with a sense of familiarity, stability, and security, laying the foundation for children's overall well-being, learning, and development.

Fostering strong partnerships also build trust, respect, and mutual understanding of each other's roles. This, in turn, strengthens the overall quality of the centre's programme.

What educators can do to foster strong partnerships with families

Strong partnership should be one that is co-developed by educators and families, and not a one-way approach determined by educators and the centre.

Here are some examples of how educators can foster strong partnerships with families:



PARENTING SUPPORT

- Help families understand importance of the early years by sharing important concepts and research (e.g., serve & return, 3Rs, importance of play)
- Strengthen family relationships and provide opportunities for them to bond with their children through parent-child activities

VOLUNTEERING

- Invite families to centre to share a learning activity with children (e.g., baking, crafting, storytelling)
- Recruit families as volunteers for centre-based events (e.g., field trips, orientation, concerts) or to promote play (e.g., create an outdoor garden, set up a play corner)

LEARNING AT HOME

- Empower families to extend children's learning (e.g., take-home learning kits)
- Collaborate with families in establishing common approaches to caregiving, routines and children's learning to ensure continuity and smoother transitions

DECISION-MAKING

- Discuss insights and perspectives to create shared vision and co-plan centre's programme to support children's well-being, learning, and development
- Share centre's curriculum intent in advance so that families can plan and determine how they can be involved

Strong Partnerships for Smooth Transitions

Transition From Home to Centre

Transition from home to centre in the early years is one of the first transitions that children and their families experience. For infants and toddlers, it is likely their first time moving from a familiar home environment to a new centre environment.

As children progress from home to an infant or childcare setting, they bring along their unique sets of family and cultural backgrounds. It is therefore needful for educators to understand how these influence their caregiving needs, routines, and behaviours. Educators can consult with families to understand how they could incorporate culturally appropriate adaptations into caregiving practices for each child. Strong partnerships and positive relationships with families will ensure continuity and consistency of care for children as they transition between home and centre daily.

When partnering with families to support children’s transition from the home to centre settings, educators should consider the following:

PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN’S TRANSITION FROM HOME TO CENTRE SETTINGS

Preparing for the child’s first day at the centre

- Explain the purpose of the orientation period at the centre
- Share the centre’s daily schedule and approaches in supporting children’s development
- Advise families on what they can do to establish consistent drop-off routine



"We would like to share our centre’s schedule and let you know how we will be supporting your child’s development. Our daily schedule includes... We use a variety of strategies to promote..."

"To ensure a smooth start, we recommend that you talk to your child about... to help him become familiar with our environment, staff, and routines. This will help your child feel..."

Understanding the child’s caregiving needs and routines

- Observe how families interact with the child and take note of any adaptations required for the child’s caregiving needs
- Check with families to understand the child’s behaviours and what they do to soothe and bring comfort to the child



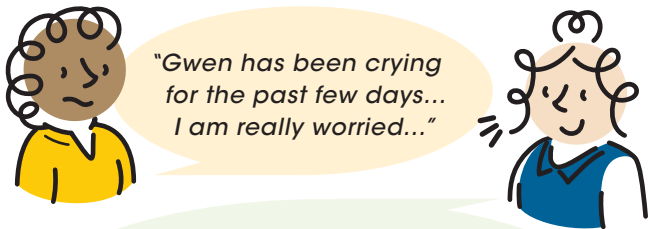
"You mentioned that Gwen has a specific nap routine that helps her settle down. Could you share with us so that we can understand what makes her feel secure and comfortable before her nap?"

"I noticed that Gwen enjoys hearing you sing while you changed her diapers... Is this what you usually do at home?"

PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN’S TRANSITION FROM HOME TO CENTRE SETTINGS

Managing separation anxieties

- Acknowledge the stresses and anxieties faced by both the children and families during the transition
- Build mutual trust by:
 - Assuring families that there are systems in place at the centre to support the child
 - Providing more frequent updates of the child’s progress during the initial period of adjustment at the centre



"Gwen has been crying for the past few days... I am really worried..."

"Thank you for sharing... I hear your concerns... It is common for children to experience separation anxiety during the transition period as... But rest assured that Gwen is in good hands... we will continue to provide updates..."

Aligning practices at both home and centre

- Understand the child’s behaviours at home and how families manage or support their development
- Share information about the activities that the child engages in at the centre and suggest similar activities for families to continue at home to reinforce learning and development
- Co-develop strategies to mirror practices between home and centre



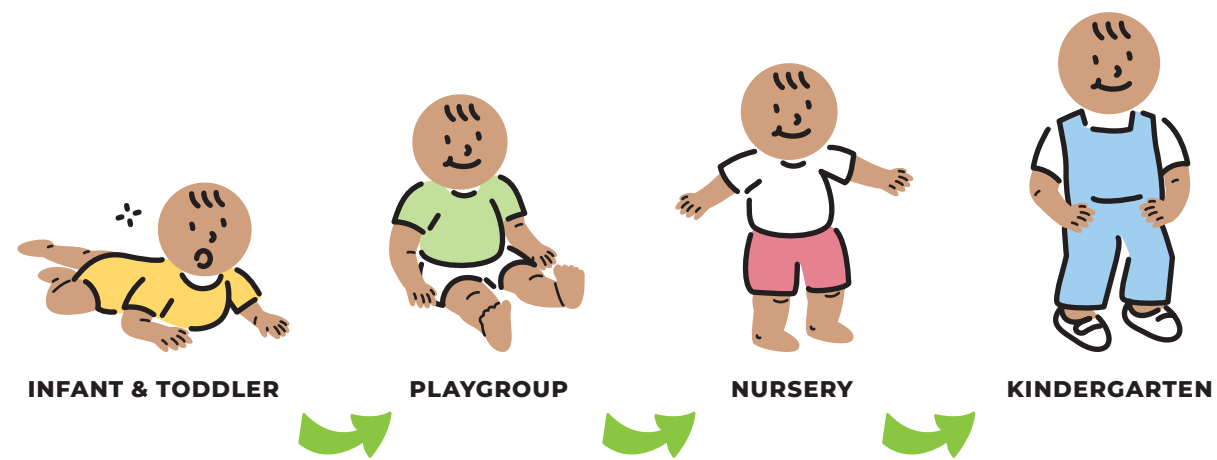
"We notice that she tends to get upset when...What do you usually do when she gets upset at home?"

"Since Gwen enjoys..., we can support her by providing ... and encourage her to... when she gets upset. What do you think?"

"What does Gwen enjoy doing at home? Perhaps she could bring some familiar items to the centre to add into her play here"

Transition From One Age Group to the Next Within the Centre

Transitions in the early years also include a child’s transition between the different age groups (e.g., from Infant & Toddler to Playgroup, Playgroup to Nursery and Nursery to Kindergarten).



For each transition, children will have to navigate through new changes in the physical environment, schedules, routines, and relationships. Partnerships with families and fellow educators are crucial in supporting children through the various transitions.

Besides working with fellow educators who will be supporting the children at the next level, educators can also partner with families to bridge the gaps and smoothen children’s transitions within the centre by considering the steps below:

Provide information of the new schedule and obtain feedback from families to address concerns (if any)	Introduce families to children’s new educators and learning environment
Guide families in communicating the new schedule and other areas of changes with their children	Inform families of the period of transition and how it will be implemented

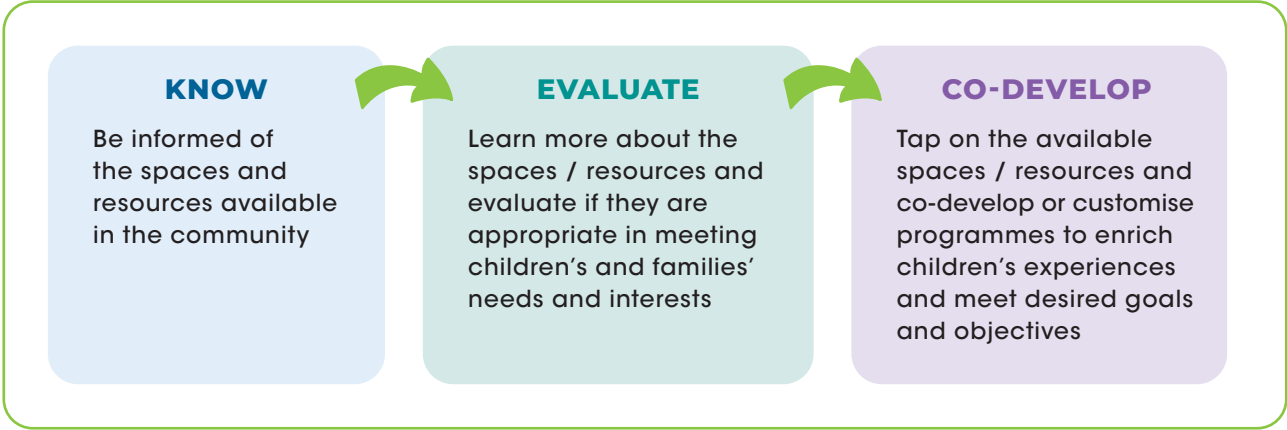
Establishing a Collaborative Partnership with the Community

We believe that children play, learn, and grow with others in a diverse and multi-cultural community.

Every community is different, and each offers valuable resources which can support educators in enriching the learning experiences for children and their families. It is important that educators collaborate with various stakeholders to create purposeful and meaningful learning opportunities.

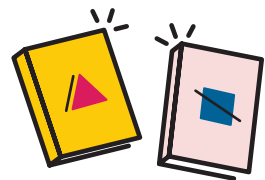


What educators can do to identify and plan meaningful collaborations with the community



How educators can collaborate with the community

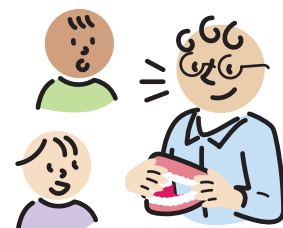
WITHIN CENTRE



LEARNING RESOURCES
FROM PARTNER AGENCIES



PARENTING
WORKSHOPS



DEMONSTRATION
BY PROFESSIONALS

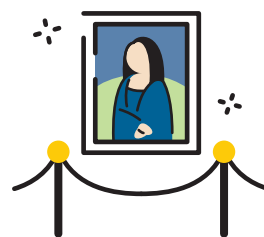
FIELD TRIPS / EXCURSIONS: BEYOND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD



NPARKS



SCIENCE CENTRE



MUSEUMS

FIELD TRIPS / EXCURSIONS: WITHIN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD



HERB GARDEN



CULTURAL EVENTS
WITH COMMUNITY
CENTRES



PET SHOP



ELDER CARE

Considerations when taking infants and toddlers on field trips / excursions

Taking a group of infants and toddlers on a field trip / excursion is quite different from accompanying a group of older preschoolers who have greater awareness of self and safety.

Infants and toddlers are in the early stages of development and have limited mobility, shorter attention spans, and greater reliance on educators for their basic needs such as feeding and toileting.

As such, educators need to assume additional responsibilities when planning and conducting such outings for infants and toddlers:

Thoughtful Planners

- Consider the safety precautions during planning; educators may apply BREAD⁷ (Benefits-Risks-Evaluation-Action-Decision) to conduct a benefit-risk assessment
- Gather information about families' interests and expertise so that field trips can be co-planned with their involvement in mind



Refer to p.25 – 32 of the Outdoor Learning: A National Guide for Early Childhood Educators for more details on planning and taking safety precautions for outdoor learning.

⁷ BREAD (Benefits-Risks-Evaluation-Action-Decision) is a benefit-risk assessment approach developed by the participants of the Outdoor Learning Training of Trainers Workshop in 2019 and featured in the [Outdoor Learning: A National Guide for Early Childhood Educators](#).

Responsive Facilitators

- Plan with children's need for diaper changes, feeding, and naps in mind
- Observe children's interests and note their questions in order to respond to them meaningfully and appropriately during the trips
- Document children's interactions using photographs and/or videos*; these can be reviewed upon return to the centre to encourage children to talk and reflect on their experiences
- Make use of teachable moments to promote values and dispositions for learning

* **Note: Seek prior approvals from parents and other relevant parties**

Collaborative Partners

- Involve parents in extensive ways — as planners and chaperones to provide direct care and support for the children throughout the trip
- Hold pre-trip meetings to discuss the itinerary, safety precautions, and their designated roles and responsibilities; maintain open communication with parents before, during, and after the outing to keep them engaged in the process
- Conduct parent-child interactive activities during the outing

Reflective Practitioners

- Observe children during the trip and note the successes and challenges
- Continuously adjust strategies to better manage risk and optimize children's learning and development

Facilitating Children’s Interactions / Activities with Others in the Community

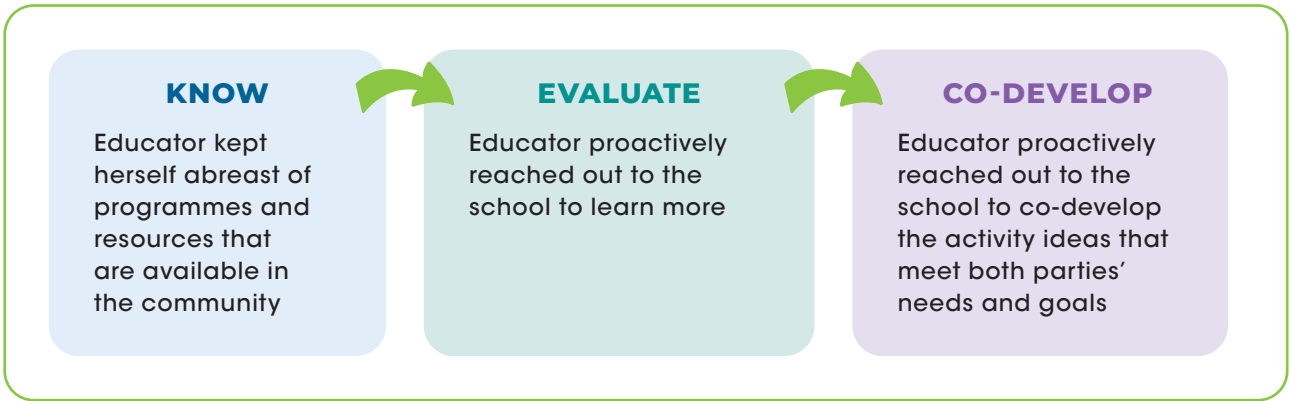
Ms Madelyn learned through the KidsREAD programme, initiated by the National Library Board, that secondary school students are actively participating in reading sessions for preschool children as part of their school’s “Values in Action (VIA)” programme.

With the intention of building the children’s (24 – 30 months old) social and emotional development, particularly social awareness and relationship building with people beyond their families and school, Ms Madelyn contacted the secondary school situated across the street from the centre. After discussing with the school’s VIA teacher-in-charge, Ms Madelyn thought it would be a great opportunity for the children to interact and participate in activities (e.g., reading, singing, and art) with the secondary school students, based on the children’s current theme of interest, “Fruits”.

During the two weeks of interactions / activities, Ms Madelyn observed that the children were emulating positive behaviours that the students had role modelled, such as taking turns, working together, and the values of care and respect. In addition, these interactions / activities also helped in their communication and language development.

Seeing these benefits and positive impact on the children’s development, Ms Madelyn and her educators believed that this could be a long-term collaboration between the centre and the secondary school.

Ms Madelyn identified and planned meaningful collaborations with the community by doing the following:



Field Trip / Excursion to a neighbourhood fruit stall

Pre-Field Trip

Following the children’s interests in learning more about “Fruits” and the series of activities co-developed with the secondary school students, Ms Madelyn decided to plan a field trip to a neighbourhood fruit stall to expand the toddlers’ interests and extend their learning.

Ms Madelyn took the initiative to connect with the fruit stallholder, Uncle Lim. Having grandchildren of his own, Uncle Lim was happy that he could support the children in their exploration and learning. Ms Madelyn shared her ideas (i.e., for the toddlers to identify and purchase specific fruits based on a grocery list) with Uncle Lim. Uncle Lim then proposed that he could first introduce the different types of fruits to the children before they start making their purchases.

Next, Ms Madelyn informed the toddlers’ parents about the trip to the fruit stall and invited them to participate as parent volunteers. Alongside two other educators, Ms Madelyn conducted a thorough benefit-risk assessment, addressed safety measures, and finalised the plan. A pre-trip discussion was also held to ensure that parents were familiar with the itinerary, safety precautions, children’s interests and needs, and their roles and responsibilities pre-, during, and post-trip.

During The Field Trip

During the fieldtrip, Ms Madelyn observed the children and when needed, facilitated by asking questions to assist them in identifying the fruit that they wished to purchase. She adjusted her approach when the children had questions for Uncle Lim and patiently explained the children’s inquiries to ensure that both the children and Uncle Lim understood each other. She also encouraged the parent volunteers to assist the children when they wanted to hold and smell the different types of fruits.



Post-Field Trip

Upon returning from the trip, Ms Madelyn showed the videos and photographs taken during the trip to the children and encouraged them to share about their experiences. They also cut and enjoyed the fruits purchased together.

As a post-activity, Ms Madelyn supported the children in making a “Thank you” card for Uncle Lim as a token of their appreciation.

When planning and conducting the field trip, Ms Madelyn and the educators play the following roles:

Thoughtful Planners

Ms Madelyn considered the children’s safety, interests, and needs when planning the collaboration with the neighbourhood fruit stallholder and the children’s parents.

Reflective Practitioners

Ms Madelyn took on the role of an observer and facilitator. She was responsive to children’s immediate needs and adjusted her strategies to ensure that the toddlers, parents, and stallholder benefited from the experience.

Responsive Facilitators

- Ms Madelyn and the educators ensured that:
- Individual children’s needs were met
 - Children’s safety was prioritised
 - Information of the outing was collected for post-trip activities and documentation of children’s learning were prepared

Collaborative Partners

- Ms Madelyn:
- Initiated the collaboration with the fruit stallholder, Uncle Lim
 - Co-developed the activity with Uncle Lim
 - Engaged Uncle Lim and parent volunteers pre-, during- and post-trip



Think About

Ms Sasha is a passionate early years educator. She believes that for her to promote and enhance her children’s learning and development, she needs to work closely with their families. As she reflects on her current practices, she is happy with the positive relationships that she has formed with the children’s parents and caregivers. However, she notices that parents display hesitancy when it comes to field trips, often choosing to keep their child at home due to age-related safety concerns, despite the strong relationships built.

What else could Ms Sasha do to assure families and encourage them to allow their children to participate in field trips?

Find words in the puzzle below using the given clues to identify strategies that could help Ms Sasha increase her children’s participation rate for field trips.

FIND THE 10 MISSING WORDS

F R P G X B X B V Q L J Y O U
C S W T R V R E G U L A R P Q
H U R E S P E C T F U L J E U
A R E O H V Z S D C X D E N E
P V Q W O R K S H O P Z U P S
E E D E N O C L X Q D D C L T
R Y S X K O D B A K N T P A I
O C O M M U N I C A T I O N O
N Q I R H G K H H W R Q M N N
E N E W S L E T T E R I N E N
R B F M A X K B H A F G N R A
C C O N V E R S A T I O N X I
Y I Z E I D O Y B K Q W F B R
Y R N F G N C G X P D G Y M E

CLUES

1. **C** _____
What is required to ensure that the families of children under your care are aware of the centre’s programmes, children’s development, and the purpose of the field trips?
2. **R** _____ / **O** _____ / **R** _____
What types of communication should Ms Sasha establish with the children’s families to enhance mutual trust and understanding between them so that parents would be more willing for their child to participate in field trips?
3. **Conversation** / **S** _____ / **Q** _____
What are some ways through which educators can gather information about families’ interests and expertise so that field trips can be co-planned with their involvement in mind?
4. **W** _____ / **N** _____
What can Ms Sasha organise / provide for families to help them understand the benefits of field trips and centre’s procedure in ensuring children’s safety?
5. **P** _____ / **C** _____
What roles can family members take on to support educators and children during field trips?

ANSWERS

1. Communication
2. Regular / Open / Respectful
3. Conversation / Survey / Questionnaire
4. Workshop / Newsletter
5. Planner / Chaperone

ROLE OF EDUCATORS

CHAPTER 6

Putting it Together: An Educator's Story

As one of the infant educators for a group of 9 infants (5 – 10 months old), I'm constantly observing and thinking about how best to support them as they explore the world around them.

Each day is a reminder of the incredible responsibility and significant roles that my colleagues and I undertake in nurturing their growth and development.



Start of the week

While supervising the infants during nap time, I **reflected** and **evaluated** on what happened that day — how the infants responded to me and the resources I used when **facilitating** their learning and development, how they interacted with their peers when they were playing.

I noted my observations of their behaviours and progress onto a notebook, including new strategies that I thought of on the spot.

THOUGHTFUL PLANNER REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

Observed and reflected to understand and meet the infants' needs better

Across the week

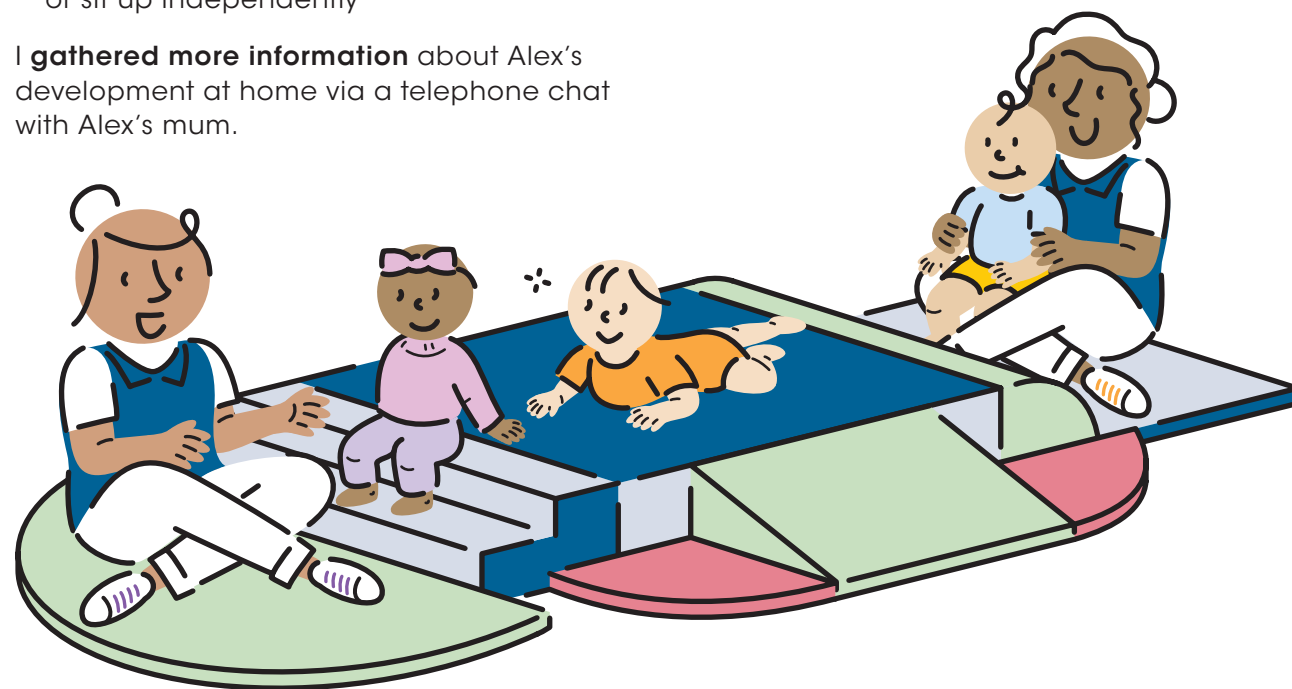
Throughout the week, I **collaborated** with my fellow colleague and requested for her inputs and observations. From our collaborative observations, we **assessed** that:

- Most infants were progressing as expected
- Older infants were crawling up and down the foam blocks with little support; some enjoyed pushing and rolling balls; one infant who was able to sit up, attempted to throw the balls and watched them bounce
- However, 9-month-old Alex seemed to have limited babbling compared to his peers and was not making attempts to roll over or sit up independently

COLLABORATIVE PARTNER RESPONSIVE FACILITATOR

Gathered more information about child from parent and collaborated with colleague to make more accurate assessment of the children

I **gathered more information** about Alex's development at home via a telephone chat with Alex's mum.



Across the week

Based on our assessment of the children's growing needs and competencies, my colleague and I **identified** some developmental goals to further support the children's learning and development in the next 2 – 3 weeks, including the following:



DG3.2

Develop awareness of space

DG4.1

Manipulate objects with increasing degree of control



DG1.2

Engage infants in back-and-forth communication using non-verbal cues and simple words

THOUGHTFUL PLANNER

Identified developmental goals to support infants' learning and development based on observations and assessment; and to meet specific needs

Following the chat with Alex's mum, we also **intentionally planned** specific goals for Alex:



DG3.1

Develop body awareness and skills



DG1.1

Develop an interest in language experiences



In response to the children's needs, we **planned** to **provide** the following experiences:

- Have infants participate in physical activities that motivate them to pull themselves up to stand
- Reorganise the gross motor corner using foam mats and child-safe structures with soft surfaces as support for infants to pull themselves up to a standing position
- Use songs and positive reinforcement to motivate infants to engage in back-and-forth communication
- **Experiences for Alex:**
 - Participate in physical activities to strengthen his arm, body, and neck muscles
 - Listen to a variety of vocal sounds and encourage him to mimic / imitate the sounds

RESPONSIVE FACILITATOR

Planned experiences based on needs and interests to promote holistic development



- Cruise along, crawl through and move around large foam structures of different heights strategically arranged at different parts of the “cushioned” play area
- Attempt to stand up and reach for their favourite toys placed on top of the foam structures to increase their curiosity
- Listen and sing songs that encouraged large body movements such as clapping, swinging arms, stamping / walking feet, etc.
- Imitate sound effects for familiar rhymes and songs e.g., “Old MacDonald Had a Farm”, “The Wheels on the Bus”, and “Baa, Baa, Black Sheep”

- **Experiences with Alex:**

- Had one-to-one tummy / play times and face-to-face interactions with Alex
- Used sound-producing objects to entice him to reach out; vary the distance / direction of these objects to encourage him to turn his head and lift himself
- Acknowledged, repeated, and added variations to the sounds that Alex made

We also **evaluated** on their progress towards achieving the Developmental Goals and **reflected** on how we should continue to support the children further.

RESPONSIVE FACILITATOR

Provided and facilitated experiences based on needs and interests to promote holistic development

REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

Evaluated and reflected on the children's progress to plan forward



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