

Standards
for
Early Childhood Programs
in
Centre-Based Child Care



Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Department of Health and Community Services

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Children and Youth Services

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Standards

Reflect on one's own knowledge, attitudes and skills and take appropriate action

Warm, caring and responsive relationships with each child and group of children must be developed

Children's behaviour is guided in an effective and appropriate manner

Open, cooperative relationships with each child's family are established and maintained

Supportive, collaborative relationships with others working in the child care setting are established and maintained.

Collaborative relationships with other community service providers working with the child are established and maintained

Warm, caring and responsive relationships must be developed and maintained with each group of children.

Children's skills, abilities, interests and needs are assessed using observations

Signs and symptoms of emotional or developmental delays or challenges are recognized and appropriate action is taken.

Daily experiences that support and promote each child's physical, emotional, social, communication, cognitive, ethical and creative development are planned for and provided

Each child's emotional well-being and growth will be supported and promoted

Each child's social and ethical understanding and development will be promoted and supported

Each child's communication skill development will be promoted and supported

Each child's physical development will be promoted and supported

Each child's cognitive skill development and creativity will be promoted and supported.

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INTRODUCTION

This document provides the standards and guidelines to be followed when developing and implementing centre-based child care programs for children (ages 2-school entry) in Newfoundland and Labrador. It provides information that will assist early childhood educators with their program planning and, when combined with the knowledge, skills and experience of the staff of child care centres, it will be a useful tool in the development of high quality child care programs.

The underlying foundation for all of the standards found in this document is developmentally appropriate practice. Developmentally appropriate practice provides a framework for early childhood program development. It incorporates what is known about children's development, what is known about the strengths, needs and interests of each individual child in a particular group or child care setting and what is known about the social and cultural contexts in which the children live. Applying the principles of developmentally appropriate practice ensures that the child care program is well suited to meet the needs of the children and families being served by the child care setting.

Early childhood educators play a critical role in ensuring that children in their care are provided with an environment and an atmosphere that allows each of them to thrive and grow in the way that best suits each individual. It is well documented that good quality child care enhances children's development. Therefore, it is the responsibility of all those concerned to ensure that the care every child receives is the best possible.

Research into centre-based child care has shown that there are key indicators in centres that provide the best support to a child's development. It is important that during the on-going process of developing, reviewing, evaluating and revising the program in a centre, the following indicators are followed. These indicators of quality include:

- trained staff who access professional development opportunities regularly.
- a program based upon:
 - the strengths and needs of the children.
 - current knowledge of child development.
 - an understanding of how children learn.
- group size and adult-child ratio based upon the ages and needs of the children.
- positive relationships between staff and the parents of the children.
- good health, safety and nutrition practices in place.

In 2003 the Canadian Child Care Federation published *Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners*, which describes what a person in the field of child care must know and be able to do in order to be considered competent. These occupational standards are included in this document and are used to define the skills and abilities necessary to provide high quality care in a centre-based child care setting.

SECTION I: DEVELOPING A PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

STANDARD:

Reflect on one's own knowledge, attitudes and skills and take appropriate action.

The philosophy of an early childhood program is a set of basic principles that provide the basis for the program that will be delivered to children and families. A philosophy is developed based on beliefs regarding children and child care programming. These beliefs are generally a result of one's knowledge, training, and life experiences. They represent basic values and understandings as they relate to children, families, child development and quality child care. These beliefs are also influenced by current research regarding how children learn and develop.

Developmentally appropriate practice provides the foundation and forms the basis for high quality early childhood programs. Developmentally appropriate practice is defined as practice that is based on what is known about child development and learning; what is known about the strengths, interests and needs of each individual child in the group; and what is known about the social and cultural contexts in which the children live (NAEYC, 1997). Programs that are based on developmentally appropriate practice would develop a statement of philosophy that reflects such basic beliefs as:

- each child is seen as an individual with individual strengths, needs and interests.
- programming is based on the children's developmental levels; their strengths, needs, interests and with consideration paid to the social and cultural context in which the children live.
- learning experiences are meaningful, relevant and respectful and are based on an understanding of how children learn.
- all areas of a child's development are supported.
- the child is seen as part of a family and community.
- all forms of family are respected.
- the child's developing sense of independence, self concept and self esteem are supported.
- creativity in art, in thinking and in problem solving is encouraged.
- an understanding that children are to be actively involved in the learning process rather than passive recipients of information.

The philosophy is the most important part of a program. It clearly describes the principles upon which the program is based. All other components of the program flow from the philosophy. It provides consistency in all the program elements, makes for a smooth flow of the program and guides decisions in all program areas. The philosophy influences everyday interactions and decisions and will be used at any time changes in the program are being

considered. For example, if the philosophy states that the children's independence is supported, then, when the room is being re-arranged, care will always be taken to ensure that children have independent access to play materials.

The philosophy is developed in consultation with the staff, and, if applicable, the board of directors of the program. When developing a statement of philosophy, it is helpful to ask the following questions:

1. What do we believe about how children learn and develop?
2. What do we believe about the needs of individual children?
3. What do we believe about the child's family and culture?
4. What role does high quality child care play in the lives of children, families and the community?

The answers to these questions will guide the practice, decision-making and actions of all of the child care practitioners as they abide by their statement of philosophy.

SECTION II: DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

Good relationships between and among children, child care providers, families and the community are the core of any quality child care setting. This section will examine some of the *Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners* as well as standards developed by this province relating to guiding children's behaviour, communicating with families, and collaborating with other child care colleagues and community service providers.

Establishing Relationships with Children

STANDARD:

Warm, caring and responsive relationships with each child and group of children must be developed.

Note: (When referring to children, child care staff and parents, the terms "he" and "she" are used interchangeably throughout this document.)

The quality of the relationships between the children and the child care providers sets the tone for the entire program. The building of trust between the children and adults is essential and builds the foundation for a healthy, nurturing relationship. According to *Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners*, (Doherty, Canadian Child Care Federation, 2003) child care providers must be able to do the following in their work with young children:

- respond appropriately and sensitively to children's verbal and non-verbal expressions of need and their attempts to communicate;
- acknowledge and respond to each child's and to the group's behaviour, interests and ideas attentively, sensitively, respectfully and consistently;
- demonstrate respect for children's unique personalities, temperaments and their individual needs, cultures and family contexts; and
- support, comfort and encourage children who are experiencing difficulties and help them to understand and handle their feelings.

The emotional climate of a child care setting has a significant effect on the relationship between the child and the child care provider. Children who feel secure, who feel listened to and respected, and who have meaningful, responsive interactions with others are most likely to exhibit appropriate behaviours and build meaningful relationships with others.

When a child care provider responds to each child and to the group's interests, ideas and behaviour, the program will reflect this. Providing activities, materials and areas that meet children's developmental and individual needs will have a significant effect on children's behaviour. Planning a program that reflects the developmental and individual needs of the children will go a long way towards the prevention of inappropriate behaviour, which is much preferable to intervention.

Guiding Children's Behaviour

STANDARD:

Children's behaviour is guided in an effective and appropriate manner.

Guiding children's behaviour refers to how the child is supported in understanding how caring, respectful relationships with others can be developed and maintained. Important elements that can affect a child's behaviour include the physical environment, the age of the child, the quality of interactions between the child and others, the child's sense of herself and the child's past experiences with others, especially how these experiences relate to the ways in which she has learned to have her needs met.

The main goals in guiding children's behaviour are:

- to strengthen the child's self concept and self esteem;
- to help children develop caring, respectful relationships with others; and
- to help children achieve self control.

Good guidance techniques focus on building relationships and anticipating (and eliminating) whatever may cause children to behave inappropriately, rather than waiting until inappropriate behaviour is displayed and then trying to "fix it." Children's physical, social and emotional environment has a significant effect on their behaviour. Children who feel secure, who are self confident, who have a stimulating daily program, who are well nourished, who have consistency in their routine, and who have meaningful, responsive interactions with others are most likely to exhibit appropriate behaviour and will be able to fully participate in the program.

If a child's behaviour seems to be inappropriate the first question to be asked is, "Why is this behaviour occurring?" Once that is determined, the ECE can help the child learn how to have his needs met in an appropriate way or can revise the program to meet these needs. For example, if a child has attended the child care setting for a year, and the materials and activities have pretty much stayed the same during that time, that child may well have learned all that he can from the materials and activities provided. Therefore, the child has become bored and may use the materials in inappropriate ways, e.g., throwing them or destroying them. In this case, the ECE must respond by providing a more stimulating environment, rather than focusing on the child's misbehaviour and not fixing the root cause of this behaviour. A responsive program would have prevented this inappropriate behaviour from occurring by planning activities and providing materials that stimulate and challenge all of the children, based on observations which determined the children's individual needs and interests. Prevention is always preferable to intervention.

Persistent Behavioural Challenges

If a child's behaviour indicates that the child is having great difficulty dealing emotionally and socially with other children and the behaviour continuously interferes with the rights of the other children, then the child's parents need to be consulted. Consistency in dealing with the behaviour at home and at the centre is essential. The discussion with the parents would include questions about:

- What are the possible causes of this behaviour?
- Does this same behaviour occur at home?
- How does the parent handle this behaviour at home?
- Does the parent understand or have questions about the way the behaviour is handled at the centre?
- How can the centre staff and the parents work together to help the child develop positive ways to have his needs met?

The behaviour may be due to changes in family circumstances such as a new baby or parental separation. Helping the child deal with these circumstances through the use of books, dramatic play, conversation, extra attention and so on may alleviate the severity of the behaviour being displayed.

Prior to meeting with parents, it is necessary to observe the child systematically, document your findings and then determine if there is a pattern to the behaviour. In some instances, this can provide valuable information on ways to resolve the issue. For example, if the inappropriate behaviour occurs during transition times when there is some confusion and the child finds it hard to cope, a staff member can help the child move through the transition. If the observation indicates that the child does not become involved in any activity during free play but constantly interrupts the play of others, special efforts may be made to help the child become involved with an activity that is of particular interest to him. The observation may reveal that a child is having difficulty figuring out how to get involved with a group of children who are already playing. The child might interrupt the children or push them in order to get attention. In this case, the ECE can help the child find an appropriate way of being a part of a play situation, for example, inviting another child to play with her in the block area.

Young children need to be helped to understand that they have rights in a social setting and that others have rights as well. Children need to be helped to develop appropriate ways to have their needs met, for example, asking, explaining, negotiating or compromising. This is not always easy for children and they need the support of caring, understanding adults as they continue to develop their social skills.

Behaviours that a few children exhibit are so severe and persistent that specialist help may be needed. The early childhood educator, while recognizing that this is the realm of the child's family to initiate, may nevertheless provide parents with resources and support if appropriate.

Communication

Good communication is the basis of the most effective guidance techniques. When the adult communicates well with the children, the children learn how to communicate well with others.

Early childhood educators need to be aware of the profound effect they can have on the behaviour of the children in their care without necessarily using words. Body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions all have more effect on the communication than the actual words being used. When speaking with or listening to children, adults should always:

- approach the child (rather than calling out from across the room);
- crouch down to a child's eye level;
- focus on the child;
- use a respectful tone of voice

Such basic techniques indicate to the children that the early childhood educator feels they are important as people. This promotes the child's self confidence and self-esteem.

Punishment vs. Consequences

In contrast, punishment does not promote the goals of guiding children's behaviour and should never be used with children. Punishment can be described as providing arbitrary consequences to the child's behaviour, for example, having to sit on a particular chair for a specific length of time because the child poured sand on the floor. This consequence has no relationship to the behaviour of pouring sand on the floor. It does not teach the child what to do instead; it does not promote self confidence or self-esteem; it humiliates and confuses the child and does not promote the development of self control. Punishment does not help the child develop socially or emotionally and, in fact, can hinder development. (*Note: The use of corporal punishment and the use of isolation such as a specific time out place or chair is not permitted in licensed child care settings in this province.*)

Children do need to understand that there are consequences to some behaviours. These flow from the child's behaviour and are stated in a matter of fact voice to the child. Some consequences are logical, meaning they are directly related to the behaviour. An example of a logical consequence when a child pours sand on the floor would be that the child is expected to clean it up. Some consequences are natural ones, meaning that they flow naturally from the behaviour. For example, if you do not wear your mittens outside, then your hands will be cold. Neither logical nor natural consequences involve punishment and in both cases the ECE is not passing judgement on the child or the child's behaviour. If a child experiences the consequences of her actions, whether they are logical or natural, that child is encouraged to become more responsible for her behaviour and will eventually develop a sense of self control (or intrinsic control).

Role of the Early Childhood Educator

Guiding children's behaviour takes skill and ability. It involves understanding each child's developmental stage, knowledge of each child's personality, knowledge of each child's individual situation, a thorough understanding of the range of guiding children's techniques and a knowledge of when to use these techniques with particular children. There is no one right answer or one best technique to use for any given situation or child. Choices need to be made from a repertoire of possible guiding children's techniques. Skills at guiding children's behaviour increase with experience and with a greater understanding of the children.

According to *Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners*, (Doherty, Canadian Child Care Federation, 2003) child care providers must be able to do the following in order to guide children's behaviour in an effective and appropriate manner:

- establish realistic expectations and clear, developmentally appropriate limits and boundaries for children's behaviour;
- use developmentally appropriate ways to involve children in establishing guidelines and setting limits;
- promptly acknowledge children who are behaving in a positive fashion and clearly identify for them the specific behaviour that they should continue or repeat;
- help children to develop appropriate strategies for self-control and self-direction;
- recognize and respond when tiredness, boredom, hunger or feeling unwell might be contributing to a child's inappropriate or challenging behaviour;
- use their assessment of factors that may be contributing to a child's inappropriate or challenging behaviour and their knowledge of the child to implement positive, developmentally appropriate ways of addressing the behaviour; and
- identify when they need advice or additional information in order to respond sensitively and effectively to a child's inappropriate or challenging behaviour.

In addition to these skills, the ECE must also maintain an attitude of acceptance and encouragement, realizing that young children are in the process of learning appropriate behaviour. As with any new skill, it takes time to learn how to act appropriately with and among other children and adults and mistakes will be made. Adults don't expect young children to be able to print their own name immediately - they know that there will be many new attempts and lots of errors made before a child is able to achieve this particular ability and so it is with learning appropriate behaviours. Time is needed and mistakes are made as children learn to take turns, wait for snack and share the new ball. Often the mistakes are signs of growth and opportunities for learning.

Basic Principles of Effective Guidance

The basic principles of effective guidance for preschool aged children are as follows:

- ▶ ECES ARE CONSISTENT IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS OF THE CHILDREN.

Example: Children are expected to wash their hands before lunch. If a child does not wash his hands, he will be reminded to do so. It would be very frustrating for children and difficult for them to understand what is expected of them if they had to wash their hands sometimes and other times it was not required.

- ▶ ECES PROVIDE A DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE ENVIRONMENT.

Example: If there is a lot of running and chasing happening in a homeroom, then the children are indicating a need for gross motor activity. The ECE can respond by making gross motor activities and equipment available to the children. Children who do not have activities available to them that allow them to satisfy their needs in appropriate ways may find inappropriate ways to satisfy these needs.

- ▶ ECES PROVIDE LEGITIMATE CHOICES TO CHILDREN WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

Example: If the adult says to a child, "It is time to go outdoors to play. Do you want to put on your mittens?" then the child should have the option to refuse. If it is so cold that the child must wear mittens, the adult may say, "It is time to go outdoors. Do you want to put on your hat or your mittens first?" This provides a real choice. Questions like "Would you like to brush your teeth now?" must be avoided if the adult does not intend to give the child a choice. Statements or questions such as these sound as if the children have the option of not brushing their teeth, when in fact, this option does not exist.

- ▶ ECES ACCEPT AND UNDERSTAND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN BEHAVIOUR.

Example: The ECE understands that the use of eye contact to show respect varies from culture to culture.

- ▶ ECES DEMONSTRATE APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR.

Example: ECEs always wash their hands before handling food. They speak respectfully to the children and to each other. They use "please", "thank you" and "I'm sorry."

- ▶ ECES ACCEPT THAT CHILDREN ARE EGOCENTRIC. THEY UNDERSTAND THAT CHILDREN OFTEN FIND IT DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE HOW OTHERS MAY FEEL.

Example: ECEs help children express their feelings and wishes to others. They provide language if necessary and support children in their efforts to communicate. For example, “I don’t know if Emily knew that you were still playing with that puzzle. Tell her that you are playing with it and that you will let her know when you are finished.”

- ▶ ECES PROMOTE THE YOUNG CHILD'S SELF CONFIDENCE AND SELF ESTEEM.

Example: ECEs notice and acknowledge when they see a child behaving in a positive way. They clearly identify the specific behaviour in their remarks to the child. This type of specific praise is very encouraging for children. For example: “I think you really made Jack feel better when you helped him with his block structure. That was very helpful.”

- ▶ ECES HELP CHILDREN UNDERSTAND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR BEHAVIOUR.

Example: Some children do not see the connection between their actions and the responses of others. ECEs need to help them make this link. This can help them to change their behaviour in the future. For example, “When you ripped Sam’s picture it made him really angry. That is why he said he didn’t want to be your friend anymore. If you want to paint a picture with Sam, you can ask him if you can paint with him.”

- ▶ ECES ACCEPT AND RESPECT CHILDREN'S FEELINGS. ECES PROMOTE APPROPRIATE WAYS FOR THE CHILDREN TO EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS.

Examples: The ECE may say to a child who is about to hit another child, “I know that you are angry but I can’t let you hit Daniel. You can tell Daniel that you are really angry.” The ECE may say to a child who is hiding in the book corner, “You look like you are feeling sad. Would you like for me to sit with you for awhile?”

- ▶ ECES PROMOTE LANGUAGE TO IDENTIFY AND EXPRESS FEELINGS.

According to Carol Gestwicki in *Developmentally Appropriate Practice: Curriculum and Development in Early Education, 2nd. ed* (1999), “Not only do children need acceptance of their feelings and support for expressing them, they also need direct instruction on ways of expressing them to others. An overused cliché in classrooms for young children is “Use your words!” Although the intention is commendable, it is not so simple for young children to use language unless an adult has helped them learn the kinds of words that can be effective.”

(Gestwicki, 1999) The ECE needs to take on the role of an interpreter, describing the actions of other children and helping children to identify their own feelings and the feelings of others.

Examples: Here are some statements that can help children identify and express their feelings:

“You are very upset with Erica. How could you tell her that?”

“I can tell by your face that you are very sad to see Mom go to work. Would you like to sit with me in the rocking chair for awhile?”

“You seemed to be very frustrated with that puzzle earlier. How do you feel now that you have it all finished?”

There are certain things that adults should not do when dealing with a child’s emotions. According to Gestwicki (1999) an adult should never:

- ignore, distract, mock, shame or “cheer children up” . (These responses diminish the strength and power of a child’s emotions.)
- show anger with children’s lack of emotional control.
- force children to express feelings they do not feel, as in a very unintended “I’m sorry.” When children are made to say “I’m sorry” the words lose their meaning and/or the children perceive an apology as a way of “getting away with” misbehaviour. Adults can encourage the practice of apologizing by being a model for this behaviour, i.e., genuinely apologizing when appropriate to children or co-workers.

► ECES SUPPORT CHILDREN WITH THEIR SOCIAL INTERACTIONS.

Example: ECEs recognize that young children are just learning how to socialize and how to be a friend. They also recognize that preschool friendships can be intense and short-lived. Children can feel frustration, anger and sadness as they hear those dreaded words “You’re not my friend anymore.” ECEs can play an important role in helping children deal with these social frustrations. For example, an ECE may say to a child who has just had a falling out with a friend, “It made you sad when Madeline didn’t want to be your friend. She might feel differently later on.” In this way, the ECE again acts as an interpreter, describing the actions of others so that the children are more able to understand why other children do what they do. There are certain things that ECEs should not do when helping nurture friendships among preschoolers. The following list is from *Developmentally Appropriate Practice: Curriculum and Development in Early Education, 2nd. ed.* (1999) by Carol Gestwicki:

Things Caregivers Should Not Do:

Adults are not helpful in nurturing beginning friendships for preschool children when they:

- insist that everyone in the group are “friends,” rather than helping children learn to distinguish friendly behaviours.
- insist that everyone in the class like one another, rather than accepting children’s preferences in playmates.
- dictate children’s play partners constantly.
- require children to do activities together or share toys.
- intervene too quickly or too constantly to manage social situations, preventing children from getting direct experience in managing interaction with peers.

▶ ECES SET LIMITS ON BEHAVIOUR

Limits let children know that certain behaviours are not permitted. When children are aware of this, they are less likely to test the boundaries of what is acceptable and what isn’t. When setting limits, there are certain guidelines that must be followed. These guidelines include:

- the limits must be reasonable and must consider the children’s developmental levels. An example of a developmentally appropriate limit would be that all children must sit down at the table when they are eating snack or lunch. An example of an developmentally inappropriate limit would be expecting all the children to stay at the snack table until all of the children are finished eating.
- children must understand the reasons for the limits. For example, children can easily understand, if they are told, that they must sit when sliding down the slide because it is dangerous and they could hurt themselves if they stand while they are sliding. Basically, there are three main reasons behind any limits that are found in an early childhood setting. These reasons are to keep children safe, to protect the rights of others and to stop destructive behaviour.
- Limits must be few enough for the children to remember.
- Once limits are established, they must be followed consistently. For example, children who use the woodworking materials must always wear safety glasses.

Specific Techniques

The following are some specific techniques that may be used to guide children's behaviour:

▶ **REDIRECTION**

Example: The ECE may say to a child who is getting ready to pour water from the water table onto the floor, "I wonder how you could sink those boats in the water table?" Redirection is most effective when it is directly related to the child's interests or current activity.

▶ **ENCOURAGING THE USE OF LANGUAGE**

Example: The ECE may say to a child who is about to push another child for interfering with her puzzle, "If you don't want him to play with your puzzle, tell him that. You could say 'I am not finished with the puzzle'."

▶ **SETTING AN EXAMPLE OF APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR**

Example: If a child is using the markers and the ECE wants to use the black one, the ECE may say, "May I borrow the black marker to write a notice for the Parent Board?" The ECE then abides by the child's decision.

▶ **STATING DIRECTIONS POSITIVELY**

Example: Positive directions tell the child what to do instead of what not to do. Positive directions focus the child on the desired behaviour rather than the undesired one.

- "Keep the sand in the sand box." rather than "Don't get the sand on the floor."
- "Try to keep one paint brush for each colour." rather than "Don't get the paint brushes messy."
- "Walk please." rather than "Don't run."

▶ **REINFORCING POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS**

Example:

- "It was helpful of you to wash the paint brushes."
- "You made Devon feel a lot better when you gave him some of your playdough."
- "You were very careful with the dishes when you put them in the pan."

▶ **BEING CLEAR ABOUT EXPECTATIONS**

Examples:

- "You can divide the playdough into two piles." rather than "Share the playdough."
- "It's time to put the blocks back on the shelves." rather than "Tidy up."
- to a child who is bothering another child during story time... "Move a little bit further away from Maria." rather than "Stop that."

- **GIVING CHILDREN ENOUGH TIME TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS OR SOLVE PROBLEMS**

Examples:

- If the ECE notices the children's voices beginning to be raised in the block corner, before s/he intervenes, s/he waits to see if it escalates or if the children can deal with the issue by themselves.
- If the ECE notices one child starting to get frustrated while trying very hard to build a bridge with the blocks, s/he waits to see if the child can solve the problem herself before offering assistance.

- ▶ **ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO RESOLVE THEIR OWN INTERPERSONAL ISSUES**

Examples: If an adult has sensed that the children in a particular conflict situation are not able to handle it themselves (and most young children, depending on their age, their experience and their developmental level, need some level of support from adults when trying to resolve conflicts) then the adult can help the children negotiate a solution to their problem. The adult might say, "There seems to be a problem here, Anna. It looks like both you and Madison want to use the balance board. How are you going to solve this?" The children may be able to take it from there. If necessary, the adult can provide support such as ensuring that the children each get the opportunity to speak and be listened to. The adult may also have to offer some suggested solutions if the children cannot think of any way of solving the conflict.

- ▶ **REMOVING THE CHILD FROM THE SITUATION**

Example:

A child may be over-stimulated and need time and space away from the other children or from a situation. In this case, the child would spend some time with a sympathetic adult in another part of the homeroom in order to regain self-control. This is done calmly and with understanding. It is not punishment but is intended to help the child regain self-control in order to be ready to rejoin the group.

- ▶ **IGNORING INAPPROPRIATE ATTENTION-GETTING BEHAVIOUR**

Example: The ECE ignores a child while he is making faces at her. Later, when the child is settled in the puzzle area and has stopped the behaviour, the ECE approaches the child and spends some one-on-one time with him. Inappropriate behaviour used to gain attention can only be ignored if it is not interfering with the rights of the children to play safely. A child who is trying to get the attention of an adult needs the attention of the adult, therefore it is extremely important that focused attention is given to the child when appropriate behaviour is being displayed.

▶ INVOLVING THE CHILDREN IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Children are included in determining what the limits/options on behaviour will be. This technique can be used with both younger and older preschoolers or school age children, however, the process will look different depending on the age, experience and developmental level of the children involved.

With older children the process may look like this.... During gross motor play in the gymnasium, the bigger children tend to dominate the space. The ECE may then bring the children together to discuss the matter and ask them to help come up with a solution that satisfies everyone. The solution can be tried and, if it does not work, a further meeting can be held to amend the earlier decision. In this situation, the decision is reached democratically and not imposed by the adult.

With younger children, the decision making process for setting limits could be discussed during circle time or whole group time. It would involve the adult clearly stating the problem, e.g., "The block area is getting so messy and crowded that I am afraid someone is going to get hurt while they are in there." and then the group generating some ideas for solutions, e.g. "We need to make the space bigger." or "There needs to be fewer children in there." or "Let's make signs for the shelves to everyone knows where to put the blocks.". The adult can help the group decide which solution or solutions to put into place, follow through and then check back with the group later to see how everything is working.

Establishing Relationships with Families

STANDARD:

Open, cooperative relationships with each child's family are established and maintained.

Note: For the purposes of this document, the term "parent" refers to the parent or legal guardian or the adult who assumes the parental role in the care of the child.

Parents are the child's first teachers and are the most knowledgeable about their individual child or children. ECEs, through education and experience, have a wide knowledge of children in general. With both these sources of information working together, the child, the family and the staff will all benefit.

Good parent-staff communication must be established and maintained for the sake of the child. Children's self concept and self-esteem are closely linked to how they feel their parents are perceived. Children who feel that the staff and their parents have a close, friendly relationship tend to feel more valued and more emotionally secure. It is well worth the effort for ECEs to establish and maintain good working relationships with parents. This is generally done through mutual appreciation of each other's expertise; through a friendly, accepting attitude on the part of ECEs to all parents; and through open lines of communication.

According to *Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners* published by the Canadian Child Care Federation (2003), there are certain skills and abilities that child care practitioners must have in order to establish an open, cooperative relationship with each child's family. These skills and abilities include:

- providing families with information about the child care setting's philosophy, policies, approaches and procedures in a way that answers their questions;
- conveying to families respect for their position as the child's primary caregiver;
- creating an environment where families feel comfortable asking questions, sharing information, and expressing their needs and preferences;
- conveying to families respect and consideration for differences in child-rearing values and practices and individual, cultural, religious, and community traditions and practices;
- working cooperatively with families in defining their needs and wishes and their goals for their child;
- reassuring families that family enquiries, conversations with families, and children's records will be kept confidential unless a parent gives explicit permission to share information or such sharing is required by law or by court order; and help family members to feel welcome in the child care setting.

Home Visits

Conducting home visits is one way of establishing an open relationship with parents. Home visits can be done when parents are open to this and the centre can support it. Home visits foster relationships with parents and children as the child has a concrete link between home and the centre, parents understand that the ECEs are interested in them and the ECE gains insight into the family dynamics. Where home visits are done, they may occur prior to the child being enrolled in the centre or they may be done annually.

Orientation for Parents and Children

The orientation visits to a child care centre also allow ECEs, parents and children the opportunity to establish positive relationships. The first practical contact between the parents and the centre staff ensures that the fees, hours of opening and philosophy of the centre meet the family's needs. The issue of both parents and children becoming familiar with the operation of the centre can be addressed during this initial visit.

Orientation to a centre allows parents to:

- become familiar with the staff who will care for their child.
- understand the program as it is delivered.
- meet some of the other parents and children.
- understand the policies that the operator has in place.

Children need time and support to make the transition to a new situation. Orientation to the centre helps the child to:

- develop a trusting relationship with a consistent staff member at the centre.
- become familiar with the flow of the day and the week at the centre.
- become familiar with the other children at the centre.

Children need to be introduced gradually to the new situation. The length of time this takes will vary a great deal - it may be hours, it may be days or even longer. A parent or other trusted adult should arrange to stay with the child until the child is comfortable being left with the staff. The child's initial visit should be brief. On successive days the duration will increase until the child is attending the full session. The parent may leave the child for a brief period to begin with and lengthen the time as the child becomes more trusting of the new arrangement. Generally speaking, the younger the child, the longer the orientation process takes, however, there is no standard for the amount of time that this transition will take. The length of time for the transition involves parental input and will take into account the needs of the child and the parent. Time spent ensuring that the child makes a smooth transition from home to child care has a long term beneficial effect on the child and ultimately on the family and centre staff.

Ongoing Communication With Parents

Once a family has become settled in to the routine of the centre, it is important to maintain good communication. According to *Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners* (Doherty, Canadian Child Care Federation, 2003), the following skills and abilities are necessary in order for child care practitioners to maintain open and cooperative relationships with the child's family:

- the ability to use a variety of methods to encourage each family to share information regularly, including information about the child's likes and dislikes and the family's preferences regarding child rearing practices, diet and dress;
- the ability to use a variety of approaches to communicate on a regular basis with families about the child's daily experiences, progress, and development in such a way that assists families to set goals for the child and provide feedback on the child care program;
- the ability to listen and respond to each family's views in a manner that supports and respects the individual family and encourages families to express their needs, desires and preferences;
- the ability to use a variety of approaches to help families to express their opinions about the experiences their child is having or has had in the child care program, and the experiences they would like their child to have;
- the ability to approach a family to discuss a problem that their child has or a problem with the child in the child care setting; and
- the ability to effectively address differences of approach or opinion.

Some of the ways that ECEs can maintain open communication with parents on an ongoing basis are:

- ▶ by ensuring that a staff member is free to talk briefly with the parent when the parent drops off and/or picks up the child.
- ▶ by developing a Parent Handbook so parents have relevant information about the centre in written form. This can avoid misunderstandings regarding policies and procedures. Keep in mind that parents have various levels of literacy. It is important to provide information verbally as well as in the handbook.
- ▶ by regularly contacting all parents through telephone calls, letters or email. This is particularly important if the child is transported to the centre by someone other than the parent and there is no daily contact between the centre and the parent.

- ▶ by providing regular newsletters with general information to all families.
- ▶ by having a Parent Bulletin Board with information such as the Child Care Services Act and Regulations, the menu, daily schedule and notification about special events such as field trips or guest speakers. Developing a website for the centre that also provides this information would also be helpful, as long as it is regularly updated and maintained.
- ▶ by inviting parents to social events such as Valentine's snack, a Saturday family picnic or a parent potluck social.
- ▶ by holding regular meetings with parents of each child to share information and discuss the child's development. This type of meeting can also be used by parents or staff to raise certain concerns or issues affecting a child and to discuss ways to address these concerns.
- ▶ by holding Parent Information evenings where topics of current interest to parents are addressed. Examples of topics might be: toy safety, nutrition for young children, guiding children's behaviour, or children's literature. It is important to include a social time at these events for parents to talk informally with each other. Valuable connections are often made among parents during these times.
- ▶ by leaving notes to parents in the child's cubbie. It is very important that these notes relate to something positive, for example, something interesting that the child did that day or something positive that you want to share with the parent. If there is a concern or issue that the ECE needs to discuss with the parent, then this should be done in person or over the telephone.
- ▶ by having a log for each child that is updated daily. The parent can have a look at the log (if there is time) at the end of each day to get an idea of what significant things happened with their child that day.
- ▶ by allowing for two way communication, meaning that the parent can also have a means to initiate communication with the centre. This can come in the form of having an open door policy where parents can come by to visit their child; having a "comments box" where parents can leave notes regarding any suggestions, questions, or comments they have regarding their child or the operation of the centre; having an "open-phone" policy where parents can call during the day to see how their child is doing (and leave a voice mail message if necessary); responding to email messages that a parent may send, answering their questions or providing them with information.

Parental Involvement

Parents generally lead extremely busy lives and some have more time and energy than others to become involved in the activities that the centre provides. There should be a variety of options for parental involvement offered by the centre and parents should be encouraged to become involved in whatever way is possible for them.

Some of the ways that parents can become involved in the program include:

- encouraging parents to come to the centre at any time to join the program activities or to eat lunch or snack with the children.
- inviting parents or other family members to accompany the group on a field trip.
- inviting parents or other family members to provide an activity for children.
- inviting parents or other family members to share their talents with the children, e.g., playing the guitar, storytelling, making bread and so on.
- inviting parents to sit on an advisory board to the centre.
- having parent representatives on the Board of Directors that is responsible for running the centre.

Parental involvement is a major factor in providing quality child care services to families. The increased number and quality of interactions between parents and ECEs promotes greater trust between the two parties. This, in turn, tends to lead to more information sharing and better understanding of the child by parents and Early Childhood Educators.

Establishing Relationships among the Child Care Team

STANDARD:

Supportive, collaborative relationships with others working in the child care setting are established and maintained.

Working in a child care centre means working as a part of a team. Good communication among all of the team players, from the operator to the lead staff person in each homeroom to all of the early childhood educators and all of the support staff is essential. When a team works well together there is a collaborative atmosphere where all members of the team feel that they make a valuable contribution to the operation of the centre. Colleagues share ideas and support each other through the inevitable challenges that working with children and families can present. ECEs feel listened to and respected by each other and by their employer. Confidentiality is maintained and trust is developed so that all members of the team know that they can safely communicate their concerns, ideas and issues.

Misunderstandings or miscommunication on the part of any of the team members can lead to frustration, decreased job performance, decreased job satisfaction and can even endanger the health and safety of the children. According to *Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners*, (Doherty, Canadian Child Care Federation, 2003), child care practitioners must have the following skills and abilities in order to establish and maintain supportive, collaborative relationships with others working in the child care setting:

- the ability to clearly define their own role and responsibilities and those of others working in the setting;
- the ability to communicate information to others clearly and concisely;
- the ability to share relevant information about children and families with colleagues working in the childcare setting in a way that respects the child's and family's dignity and privacy;
- work as part of a team and share responsibility with others for program planning, implementation and assessment; and
- discuss issues arising from diverse perspectives and experiences or differences of opinion in an open, frank and respectful manner.

Early childhood educators who successfully demonstrate these abilities see themselves as part of team. They seek out ideas from their colleagues and supervisors and they also don't hesitate to provide ideas and support to these same people. When issues of conflict arise, they act in a calm and respectful manner, understanding that differences of opinion can often

result in an opportunity to learn about varying viewpoints and approaches. The skills and abilities related to this particular standard come with time and experience as well as a willingness to grow and develop as a professional early childhood educator.

Establishing Relationships within the Community

STANDARD:

Collaborative relationships with other community service providers working with the children are established and maintained

Working in a child care setting entails interacting with other community service providers. These other professionals are often people who work directly with a child or children enrolled at the centre, providing them with services that help to meet a particular need. The early childhood educator is an important member of any team of service providers working with a particular child and must be able to do their part in establishing and maintaining collaborative relationships among the team of professionals. According to *Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners* (Doherty, Canadian Child Care Federation, 2003), there are certain skills and abilities that are essential if an early childhood educator is to be able to do this. These include:

- the ability to explore respective roles and responsibilities with other service providers involved with the child while adhering to the parameters of the family's informed consent;
- the ability to seek information from other service providers that might help meet the child's needs within the child care setting while adhering to the parameters of the family's informed consent;
- the ability to share relevant information about a child with other service providers that might assist them in working with the child while adhering to the parameters of the family's informed consent and in keeping with the law or with court requirements;
- function with other community service providers as part of a service-provision team, i.e., an ISSP team; and
- provide accurate information about the child care setting to other community service providers.

SECTION III: DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM

Child Development

As children grow and develop, the program and activities must change to reflect the emerging needs of the children. It is one of the duties of the ECEs working with children to become knowledgeable about their development.

While age may provide a very rough guide, it is essential to observe the children to determine each child's particular needs, strengths and interests. There are, however, common stages of development that children move through. Programs need to be consistent enough to cater to these common elements and flexible enough within that framework to allow for each child's individual growth.

Two Year Old Children

Characteristics of Two Year Olds	Implications for Program Planning
<p>They are very curious about their surroundings and enjoy exploring the physical environment.</p>	<p>Provide a safe, child-proof play space where the children can explore the environment safely.</p>
<p>They learn through their senses; by touching, smelling, tasting, listening to and observing their surroundings.</p>	<p>Provide a variety of age appropriate play materials and enough time for the children to explore.</p>
<p>They are interested in being with other children and are just beginning to be able to play cooperatively with them on occasion.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for children to play alone, or with one or two others.</p>
<p>Sharing on a consistent basis is beyond most two year olds.</p>	<p>Provide duplications of the most popular toys so sharing is not an on-going issue.</p>
<p>They are beginning to be able to take into account the feelings of others. This is not consistent, particularly if they are focused on their own needs at the time.</p>	<p>Be involved with the children and provide encouragement and reassurance when necessary.</p>

Characteristics of Two Year Olds	Implications for Program Planning
<p>They are beginning to develop a sense of self (self-concept)</p>	<p>Be continually aware of the profound effect of labeling children according to your perception of the child's qualities, e.g., as "smart" or "bossy" or "pretty."</p> <p>Recognize that children hear and understand what adults say to each other. Never discuss children in their presence or in the presence of other children.</p>
<p>They strive to establish their independence without necessarily understanding what the consequences might be.</p>	<p>Whenever possible, provide real and meaningful choices that allow the child to make an independent decision rather than having to "obey" an adult.</p> <p>Provide enough time for transitions, e.g., dressing for outdoors or bathroom routines to allow the children to complete the routines as independently as they can.</p>
<p>They may become very frustrated as they try to master skills that are almost beyond their abilities.</p>	<p>Provide play materials at several levels of complexity. Children can then use more challenging materials while still having the comfort of those they know they have already mastered.</p>
<p>They find waiting very difficult.</p>	<p>Minimize or eliminate waiting periods. When it is unavoidable, provide activities such as finger plays.</p>

Standards for Early Childhood Programs in Centre-Based Child Care

Characteristics of Two Year Olds	Implications for Program Planning
<p>If they become very interested in an activity they may stay involved for quite a lengthy time. They are also easily distracted from an activity and often find it difficult to settle and focus for any length of time.</p>	<p>Provide many opportunities for free play (child-initiated play) throughout the day.</p> <p>Give children the choice not to participate in group activities.</p> <p>Ensure that during group times the group size is small and the time frames short.</p>
<p>Their oral language is developing rapidly and they strive to communicate with others.</p>	<p>Talk to children throughout the day. Listen to them when they speak and use eye contact.</p> <p>Use songs/rhymes and story reading/telling often.</p>
<p>They understand they are vulnerable and dependent on adults to have their physical and emotional needs met. This generally makes sudden and/or major changes in caregivers and environment very stressful and difficult for them to deal with.</p> <p>Separation anxiety is an issue for many two year olds.</p>	<p>Provide small group size.</p> <p>Provide consistency in homeroom, group and caregivers.</p> <p>Understand and respect the importance of security items from home (e.g. blanket, teddy)</p> <p>Provide physical affection and reassurance throughout the day to these very young children.</p>

Preschool Children

Characteristics of Preschool Children	Implications for Program Planning
<p>They continue to be curious about their surroundings and to explore the environment.</p> <p>They learn by experimenting with concrete materials rather than by being instructed.</p> <p>They recognize likeness and differences and are able to match and sort according to more and more complex criteria.</p>	<p>Build on children's interests when planning activities. Provide a variety of interesting play materials and long enough time frames for their play to be able to develop fully.</p>
<p>Language develops at a rapid pace.</p>	<p>Provide many opportunities during the day for children to talk and to listen to each other and to ECEs.</p> <p>Encourage conversations and show a genuine interest in what they have to say.</p>
<p>They begin to develop interest in, and understanding of print and numerals.</p>	<p>Talk with children about letters and numbers as they come up naturally in the children's play. Display many print materials in the homeroom.</p> <p>Read to children often.</p> <p>Make a variety of drawing/writing materials available in several activity areas.</p>
<p>They enjoy practicing their fine motor skills and these skills continue to be refined.</p>	<p>Provide a variety of materials that promote fine motor skills and time for these to be developed.</p>
<p>They have a need to be physically active.</p> <p>They begin to develop competence in a variety of physical skills such as throwing, balancing, hopping.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for physical activity every day, outdoors whenever possible and preferably more than once.</p>

Characteristics of Preschool Children	Implications for Program Planning
They have a more developed self concept.	<p>Let children know through your attitudes and actions they and their families are valued and respected.</p> <p>Continue to be aware of the effects of labeling children.</p>
The drive towards independence continues.	<p>Organize materials so children can access them independently.</p> <p>Provide encouragement, opportunity and time for children to deal with daily routines and personal care with the minimum of adult assistance.</p>
Because they are not yet able to fully understand a situation from the point of view of another, preschool children still find it difficult to share and to take turns.	Do not expect or require children to share materials. They need to know they have ownership of materials while they are using them before they can share willingly. Give positive reinforcement when it occurs.
Self control is developing but children still tend to not deal well with frustrations.	<p>Provide a variety of age appropriate interesting play materials in sufficient quantities.</p> <p>Provide long enough time frames for play to reach its natural end.</p> <p>Organize the program, space and materials so waiting times are kept to a minimum.</p>
They become increasingly interested in and competent at interacting with other children. Friendships begin.	Provide space and opportunities for children to choose to play alone with others.

School-Age Children

Characteristics of School-Age Children	Implications for Program Planning
<p>Children continue striving towards independence in all areas of their lives. This is related to their need to continue developing positive self esteem and self worth.</p>	<p>Program planning should relate directly and emerge from the particular needs and interests of the children in the group.</p> <p>Involve the children actively in determining rights/responsibilities of members in the school-age program and the consequences when necessary.</p>
<p>Children move away from total involvement with family members and towards greater involvement with their peers. Acceptance by children of the same age is a major factor in the healthy development of children in this age group.</p>	<p>Provide spaces where the children can be private; either alone or with a few friends.</p> <p>Provide encouragement, space, resources for the formation of clubs that the children want to establish.</p>
<p>Oral language continues to develop and be refined. Mastery of written language usually becomes established in this age range.</p>	<p>Make available books of different types and a variety of writing materials to the children.</p> <p>Read, tell stories and sing with the children. Encourage them to document their experiences in a variety of ways.</p>
<p>Their curiosity about the world and how it works continues. Many school-age children are literate to some degree and can access books and computers to enhance their knowledge and satisfy their curiosity.</p>	<p>Provide a variety of resource materials that allow the children to pursue their interests. Encourage children to become involved in projects related to their interests, using their research and literacy skills.</p>
<p>They are developing even greater control over their bodies which results in mastery of a wider range of physical skills such as playing a musical instrument, skating, etc.</p>	<p>Provide good opportunities for the children to be physically active in ways of their choosing (preferably outdoors).</p> <p>Provide for activities that meet the developing skills and interests of the children.</p>
<p>They are increasingly able to deal with complex ideas and to think logically.</p>	<p>Provide a variety of choices of types of activity for the children.</p>

Characteristics of School-Age Children	Implications for Program Planning
In after-school programs, children will already have spent several hours in a school setting.	Provide activities that complement rather than duplicate school-type activities.
They are interested in more complex projects that may be developed over several days.	Provide access to materials and resources that the children will need to complete their projects. Provide storage space for the children's long term projects.
They are aware of, and interested in, the social context beyond their immediate families	Provide opportunities for community involvement whenever possible.

Grouping

STANDARD:

Warm, caring and responsive relationships must be developed and maintained with each group of children.

Group Size

Group size refers to the number of children being cared for together by one or more ECEs in each defined, fully equipped homeroom.

Research has shown that group size is an important indicator of quality care for children. Small group size has been found to:

- promote the quality of interactions between adults and children.
- promote the frequency of interactions between adults and children.
- allow children more freedom within the program.
- provide a suitable level of stimulation for the children.
- promote positive emotional, social and intellectual development in children.

Each group is to have a consistent, fully equipped, exclusive homeroom in which they spend the major part of the day. Ideally, this provides space for the children's belongings, for eating and for sleeping in addition to the basic activity areas.

Multi-Age Grouping

When the group size is small there are positive aspects to mixed age or multi-age groupings. By allowing children of different ages to interact:

- it permits care of siblings in the same grouping,
- it is a more natural, family-type of grouping (only in small group sizes),
- the older children provide role models for the younger children, and
- the self esteem of the older children is fostered as they interact with the younger children.

Because of their stages of development, the needs of children in different age groups are often in conflict. This presents particular issues for groupings containing children from more than one age group. For example,

- Two year olds need a safe play environment with no play materials that present choking hazards. Older children need access to play materials that often contain small pieces.
- Older children need the freedom to be physically active. The younger children can be intimidated by this active play.

- Two year olds enjoy dumping materials off tables and out of containers. This can be very frustrating for older children using these materials.
- When school-age children arrive in after-school care they have immediate needs. They often have a great deal of energy at this time of day and need to be physically active and to talk about their day. Preschool children whose day is beginning to wind down are less able to cope with such stimulation.

Consideration must be given to these issues. Depending on the individual children and the age span of the children, it may not be possible to have a multi-aged grouping that involves children as young as two or as old as school-age. As a general rule, the bigger the age differences and the younger the children, the smaller the group size needs to be in order to provide appropriate programming for all of the children. There are very specific Provincial requirements for ratios and group size as they relate to multi-age groupings. Refer to the Centre-based Child Care Policy Document for more information on multi-age grouping. When multi-age grouping is done well, there are many benefits. According to Carol Gestwicki (1999), some of these benefits include:

- Family and neighbourhood settings have always offered mixed-age environments for children's socialization and education. In times when children now spend little time in either family or neighbourhood settings, they do not benefit from those kinds of inter-age contact..... Creation of mixed-age groupings allows children to experience the natural variations that occur in life.
- In mixed-age groupings, social development is enhanced as leadership and prosocial behaviours increase. Mixed-age groupings give all children the chance to be the oldest and most mature at some point in their school experiences.

Gestwicki (1999) also offers some helpful strategies to assist in working with a multi-aged group. These are:

- Suggesting that older children assist younger children and that younger children request help from older ones such as, "I think you might be able to help Sarah and Felicia figure out how to share the trike." Children of all ages can be encouraged to give and accept emotional comfort from one another.
- Encouraging older children to assume responsibility for younger ones such as by helping them feel at home in a new room.
- Discouraging stereotyping or setting expectations strictly by age. A statement like "He can't do that, he's not old enough" should be challenged.
- Helping children understand and accept their current limitations. ("I think you'll be able to climb that ladder too when you're bigger.") and helping older children appreciate their own progress, as in, "Wow, I can remember when that ladder was hard for you too."
- Helping children focus on their peer's needs, feelings and interests: "Jamie would like to play with you. What do you think you two could enjoy doing together?"
- Encouraging older children to read to younger ones, and all children to contribute their skills to appropriate projects: "Maybe Jamie could hold the dinosaur steady for you while you outline his head."

Observation

STANDARD:

Children's skills, abilities, interests and needs are assessed using observations.

Observation of the children, combined with a knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice, provides the foundation of any child centred program. Observations of children are done for many other reasons as well, including the identification of reasons for behaviours displayed by children, to measure the children's growth and development or to provide information for parents, however, one of the primary reasons for conducting observations in an early childhood setting is to provide information on the children's strengths, needs and interests for the purposes of program planning. Early childhood educators must be skilled observers of children. In order to effectively observe children, ECEs must possess certain skills and abilities, according to *Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners*, (Doherty, Canadian Child Care Federation, 2003). According to these occupational standards, ECEs must be able to:

- use observation in an objective, non-judgmental way to assess children's skills, abilities and interests;
- use observation to evaluate if the environment is appropriate, comfortable for, and accepted by the children;
- use observations to plan developmentally appropriate experiences that are respectful of the children's culture; communicate the results of their observations to others in a factual way that also helps to identify goals and/or jointly plan program experiences; and
- use observation to determine whether program experiences are appropriate, useful and accepted by the children, and to modify them if necessary to better meet the children's interests, abilities and developmental needs.

Observation of children must be done on an on-going basis in order to identify their current interests and developmental levels for the purposes of program planning. The curriculum of a developmentally appropriate program should be an "emergent curriculum" meaning that it emerges from the children themselves as well as from the children's environment, rather than coming from a pre-set curriculum that does not vary from year to year. Programs using an emergent curriculum approach explore what is "socially relevant, intellectually engaging, and personally meaningful to children." (Gestwicki, 1999). ECEs develop their program plans in response to the children's actions and interests, using their observational skills to develop activities that will deepen the children's interests and encourage them to explore further the world around them. (Strategies for planning for emergent curriculum will be covered in later in this section.)

Determining children's strengths, needs and interests can only be done through careful observation. Information must be recorded in a systematic way, which may sometimes be informal and brief, but should always be done on a regular basis. ECEs must keep all observations confidential and only share them with parents or with colleagues who require the information for professional purposes, e.g., planning. If there is a particular issue that needs to be addressed, then more detailed observations can be made that will help to provide more insight into the circumstances surrounding the issue.

Specific Observation Techniques

There are two basic components to observing children's behaviour - recording the information and then interpreting the information. The following three techniques are simple, easy to use and are most commonly seen in early childhood programs.

- **Anecdotal Records** - Anecdotal records are brief descriptions of a specific event or behaviour recorded after the fact. These need to be objective, accurate and recorded promptly. They provide detailed descriptions of examples of the child's behaviour.
Examples:
 - Jennifer's behaviour on the climber may be recorded to provide information on her development of physical skills.
 - Erin repeatedly experiments with the concept of symmetry in her block structures. This information is recorded so that it can be discussed in a planning meeting and perhaps used as the basis for further activities incorporating the concept of symmetry, i.e., Tangrams and other patterning materials and activities,
- **Running Records** - Running records provide a brief, continuous description of a child's behaviours or the behaviour of a group. The observations may be repeated several times throughout one day or on successive days. Everything that happens in a specific period of time, usually about twenty to thirty minutes, is recorded as it occurs and in the order that it occurs.
Examples:
 - Jennifer is observed again on the climber. In the running record, her behaviour on the climber will include all aspects of the her behaviour, not only the physical skills. The observation will include any interactions with other children, her reaction if unable to perform a skill she is in the process of mastering and all other happenings during the observation. The information from this observation will go in her file and will help to guide the ECE in making decisions about what Jennifer's skills, needs and interests are.
 - The Tangrams are set out in the manipulative area. A thirty minute running record is conducted, noting all of the activity that occurs with these particular materials. The information from this running record will help with planning further activities to build on the concept of symmetry.

- Samples of the children's work - A portfolio of each child's work, including art work, (either photos or the real thing) and samples of developing writing abilities is a useful and concrete record of the child's progress. Photos of the child's work in the block area, dramatic play area or accomplishments in other areas of the room are also useful.

These next three methods of observation are used when the ECE needs to find out more specific information about a particular behaviour or requires more detail regarding the development of a particular child. These techniques are also used when there is a persistent issue or challenge being faced in the environment, e.g., children are almost never using a particular area of the room, or a particular behaviour such as extremely aggressive play behaviour is of concern to staff and/or parents.

- Time Sampling - In this method of evaluation, the number of times a behaviour occurs is recorded. This method is only used when a behaviour appears to occur quite frequently.
For example, if staff are concerned because a child seems to be displaying a large number of aggressive behaviours, and they wish to get a more accurate picture of the behaviour, the number of times she or he hits, pushes, kicks or bites in five minute intervals between 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. is recorded.
- Event Sampling - In this method of recording information, the circumstances before and after a behaviour occurs, in addition to the behaviour itself, are recorded. This type of observation is useful when trying to determine the causes and effects of a particular behaviour.
For example, A child has been pinching other children. Event sampling reveals that the circumstances immediately preceding the pinching seem to involve the child requesting to play with a certain toy. If her request is denied she pinches the child who has the toy. The circumstances that occur after the behaviour include an adult intervening to determine what the problem is and what can be done about it. Therefore, it can be concluded that the child's pinching behaviour is instrumental in either gaining a toy or in gaining the assistance of an adult.
- Checklists - When behaviours are clearly defined and easily identified, checklists can be useful tools to gather information. A checklist would contain a list of behaviours and, as each behaviour is observed a check mark is placed beside it to record that it has occurred.
For example: A checklist might contain observable behaviours related to the child's use of art materials and contain items such as: "makes random marks on paper," "scribbles", "forms basic shapes," and so on.

Interpretation

Once observational data is collected and recorded it needs to be used. In order to do this it must be evaluated and interpreted. The possible meaning and reasons for the observed behaviours needs to be identified. This is difficult and can be influenced by the opinions and preconceived notions of the evaluator. Therefore, it must always be borne in mind that, when conclusions are drawn from observations, they are not facts and they should not be represented as such.

The description and the interpretation should be physically separate on the report.

For example: A four year old boy is in a preschool program three mornings a week. The staff have noticed that he rarely plays with the art materials and spends a great deal of the time rough-housing with the other boys in his group. It may seem reasonable to conclude that the child does not enjoy art activities.

The *fact* is that the child, over the three days of observation, never used the art materials. The *interpretation* is that, in the opinion of the observer, the child does not seem to enjoy art activities.

In this case, a statement such as “Jeremy does not like art.” is inaccurate and misleading. He may have many art materials that he uses at home but there may be no other children his age to play with at home or in his neighbourhood. When he is in the centre, he prefers to play with other boys of his own age.

There are some ways in which personal opinion can be minimized. Here are a few pointers to keep in mind.

- Be aware of what is observed and what you are concluding from the information gathered during the observation. Keep the two separate both on paper and in your mind.
- Always support conclusions with examples.
- Try to find other sources of support for the conclusions you draw. Other sources can include observation by others or theories of child development.
- Avoid assumptions. For example, Susan never makes a fuss so she must have settled well into the group. Some children who are not adjusting to a group setting withdraw rather than act out.
- When writing the interpretation of the child's behaviour, do not state the interpretation as fact. Use qualifying language such as “It appears...” or “In my opinion..” or “It seems...”

Information that is gained from observations can be used for:

- determining each child's interests, abilities and needs and then planning a program that responds to each of these;
- determining what changes need to be made to activities or the physical environment;
- identifying concerns about individual children or the group;
- determining how to handle problems that arise;
- providing information to staff and parents about children's development.

Recognizing Signs and Symptoms of Possible Developmental Delays

STANDARD:

Signs and symptoms of emotional or developmental delays or challenges are recognized and appropriate action is taken.

According to Doherty, (Canadian Child Care Federation, 2003) Child Care Practitioners must be able to:

- observe children's behaviours and abilities and assess whether they are within the range of what is considered to be typical for the child's developmental stage;
- identify signs of possible developmental delay in the physical, emotional, social, communication, or cognitive spheres;
- clearly and concisely describe indications and examples of possible delays;
- seek out and obtain informed opinions from other professionals or sources in a way that respects privacy of the child and family; and
- bring their concern about a possible delay or problem to the attention of the child's family in a way that seeks the family's opinion and indicates the possible need for further investigation but does not unduly alarm the family.

It is important for early childhood educators to remember that it is not their role to make a diagnosis regarding any particular child, however, they do play an important role in possibly being one of the first professionals who may notice an area of concern. If, after observing a child, an ECE suspects that he or she is having difficulty with any particular area of development then they must talk with the operator of the centre regarding the procedure that is to be followed. Parents will need to be consulted and any follow up action will need to be in consultation with the parents. If an ISSP (Individual Support Services Plan) is put into place, the ECE may be asked to be a part of the ISSP team. For more information about the ISSP process and about the role of the ECE in this process, contact Regional Child Care Services Staff.

Program Planning

STANDARD:

Daily experiences that support and promote each child's physical, emotional, social, communication, cognitive, ethical and creative development are planned for and provided.

According to the *Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners*, the following skills and abilities are required in order to develop and maintain an overall environment that supports and promotes the development of all children:

- ▶ the ability to plan and provide a developmentally appropriate mix of child-initiated and adult-initiated play-based experiences;
- ▶ the ability to plan and provide active and quiet experiences, solitary and group experiences, and indoor and outdoor experiences;
- ▶ the ability to promote the active participation of all children by (1) ensuring that materials and equipment are accessible to each child, and (2) by providing direct or indirect assistance in a variety of verbal and non-verbal ways;
- ▶ the ability to interpret and respond appropriately to group dynamics;
- ▶ the ability to recognize and use everyday routines and activities as learning opportunities;
- ▶ the ability to provide each child with some individual attention every day;
- ▶ the ability to arrange movement from one experience to another during the day so that transitions occur smoothly;
- ▶ the ability to create an environment that reflects and affirms the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity within the surrounding community;
- ▶ the ability to obtain and incorporate children's ideas into program planning in a way that is appropriate to their developmental level; and
- ▶ the ability to identify, access and use family and community resources to broaden children's experiences.

This section of the document will look at ways that these skills and abilities can be used when planning a program for a child care setting.

The daily program consists of the daily schedule, activities, play materials, meals, transitions, routines, and play spaces (inside and out) and how these all fit together to provide care which supports the child's development.

The following guidelines need to be followed when planning a program:

- the program is based on children's free exploration and discovery in a carefully planned environment.
- the foundation of the program is the interests and developmental levels of the children.
- plans are developed in advance and are reviewed regularly.
- the plans are sufficiently flexible to meet the changing needs and interests of the children.
- program planning is done for indoor and outdoor play.
- child-initiated and adult initiated activities are planned.
- written records of plans are kept in the centre.
- a team approach to planning is used.

Daily Schedule

Good early childhood programs encourage children to take initiative, be creative, follow through on plans and develop effective problem solving skills. This can only be done when children are provided with large blocks of time that allow them to choose their own activities and then become fully absorbed in their play. Children also need predictability and consistency to their day. The challenge for early childhood educators is one of combining these two elements, large blocks of time and a consistent routine, in such a way that the schedule meets the developmental needs of the children.

Daily schedules need to provide for:

- ▶ child-initiated and adult-initiated play based experiences,
- ▶ active and quiet experiences,
- ▶ solitary and group experiences,
- ▶ indoor and outdoor experiences,
- ▶ predictability and flexibility.

Predictable schedules help children to develop trust in the child care setting. Predictability means that events such as circle time, snack, lunch and quiet time occur in the same order each day. The time that the event occurs may vary, depending on how the day is going, but the fact that these events occur in the same order each day provides the children with a sense of security and comfort, knowing that they can count on a certain pattern to the day. Flexibility in the day means that the early childhood educator does not feel pressure to impose time constraints to the activities. For example, if a whole group experience such as circle time has captured the interest of the children to the point that their discussion and their interaction continues for a longer time than was first anticipated, the early childhood educator should feel free to keep the momentum going, even if that means that snack is delayed by fifteen minutes. According to Gestwicki, (1999) early childhood educators should think of their day as divided into “time blocks” rather than specific points on the clock, allowing ECEs to give the children the time they need to get deeply involved in their play, without the interruptions necessary to keep on a strict timetable. Early childhood educators can then decide when to shorten or lengthen a time block based on the children’s level of involvement. If they are absorbed in an activity then the time block designated for that activity may need to be lengthened. If they are restless and not involved, then the time block may need to be shortened.

Transitions and Routines

Transitions refer to those times when children move from one routine to the next. Routines refer to the events that happen in a predictable order each day. These include, arrival and departure times, snack and meal times, nap and quiet times, child-initiated play times (free play) and adult-initiated activity times such as small group activities and whole group/circle times. Routines and transitions must be carefully planned and thoughtfully implemented.

According to Doherty, (Canadian Child Care Federation, 2003) a child care practitioner must be able to:

- ▶ recognize and use everyday routines and activities as learning opportunities; and
- ▶ arrange movement from one experience to another during the day so that transitions occur smoothly.

Transitions

Transition times can be confusing, especially for the youngest or newest children in the child care setting. To lessen the confusion, transition times must have consistency. The children need to know what to expect so that they can be as independent as possible throughout the transitions that occur each day.

There should be minimal disruptions to the children's play time during the day so transitions should be made only when necessary, for example, when transitioning to lunch or to outdoor play. The role of the staff is to support, guide and encourage children as they move through transition times. According to Gestwicki (1999) developmentally appropriate transitions for preschoolers incorporate the following principles:

- ▶ Advance notice is given that change will be forthcoming. Interrupting children abruptly and arbitrarily from their play suggests that their play is unimportant and will only encourage resistance on the part of the children. Countdowns to transition, i.e., "Five more minutes, four more minutes, three more minutes...." can sometimes be used inappropriately and can lead to confusion. If the "five minutes" stretches out into ten or more minutes because the ECE gets sidetracked then they can become meaningless. If the remaining minutes are announced in such a way that they dominate the last few minutes of the child's play then it can be counterproductive as well. The most appropriate way to give children notice that a transition will occur in a few minutes is for the ECE to circulate among the group, telling individual children or small groups that they have five more minutes to finish up their activities and then, once the five minutes are up, the transition takes place.
- ▶ Familiar cues such as clean up songs, notes played on a piano, or a particular music tape emphasize the repetition of a familiar pattern, encouraging children to notice and behave according to habitual experience.
- ▶ Understanding what to do next is improved when ECEs are clear and specific in their directions. For example, "Time to put the toys back on the shelves." helps children more than "Time to clean up." Adults establish eye contact or touch children to be sure they have their attention. They use names to be sure that children realize the instructions are meant for them personally. Adults also limit the number of instructions given at one time in order to avoid confusion.

- ▶ Using another adult to begin the next activity avoids empty waiting time. While one ECE is helping children during the transition, e.g., also picking up toys or helping children use the washroom, another is having a conversation or leading a finger play at the table with the children who are already seated for their lunch. Another example - one ECE is helping children with clean up while the other is seated in the circle time area, beginning a conversation with the children who are already there. When the next activity does not need to wait until everyone is ready, it provides incentive to children to move on and does not penalize those children who were either quicker or slower paced in their abilities. Empty waiting time can be avoided during the transition to outdoor time as well by situating one ECE outside who can receive the children as they are ready to join the outdoor play.
- ▶ Chaos is minimized when everyone does not move at once and when they move purposefully because they all know where they are going. For example, when circle time is over, the ECE transitions two or three children at a time to go to the washroom to wash hands for snack.
- ▶ Encouraging children to help each other during transitions promotes prosocial behaviour and assists ECEs with transition times. For example, when getting ready to go outside, Emily quickly gets her coat and boots on and then turns to help Kathryn with her boots. ECEs should never encourage competition among the children during transition times, e.g. "Let's see who can get ready the fastest." as this does not promote cooperation and prosocial behaviour. What it does encourage is impatience with those who take a longer time to get ready, and an overemphasis on winning and losing.

Routines

Arrivals and Departures

The organization of arrival and departure times will vary depending on how many children arrive or leave at one time. In part-time programs, children may arrive and leave within a very short period of time. In full time programs, this may happen over a longer period of time.

It is important that every child and accompanying adult be greeted by a staff member. The accompanying adult should be given the opportunity to share any information regarding the child that may affect the child's day such as the amount of sleep (or lack of sleep) during the previous night or if a parent or family member is leaving or returning from a trip. Whenever possible, a staff member should remain with the child and adult while they are removing outdoor clothing as this can help the child make a smoother transition from home to child care. This is especially important for younger children and those new to the child care setting.

It is important that the child knows what to expect when entering the homeroom. Many child care centres provide free-play or child-initiated play as the children arrive. This allows the

child to determine which activity best meets her needs at this time. Some children need time to enter the group and prefer to engage in a quiet activity until they are ready to join a group. Other children enter the room full of energy and immediately join their friends in a physically active game. Child-initiated play allows the child time to re-establish contact with other children in their own way. It provides security for the children because they know what to expect and it allows them to get into the rhythm of the room at their own pace.

Smooth departure times are also important. Connecting with the adult who comes to pick up the child is essential as it provides an opportunity for the ECE to share information about the child's day. If a child is transported to and from the child care setting by taxi or centre van, it is important that the ECE find an alternative way to communicate with the parent, for example, through written or telephone communication.

The activities that are available during departure times will also vary according to the order in which the children leave. In full time programs, the children have had a lot of opportunity to participate in child-initiated play where plenty of options were available, therefore, the choices of play areas may be limited at the end of the day. Quieter activities are most appropriate at the end of the day because children are tired and will find these choices more soothing. Whenever possible, participation in more complex or involved activities, such as block play, painting or clay, should be avoided at the end of the day because parents may not have the time (or the energy) to wait for their child to finish their project and then get cleaned up before going home. Children should always have a variety of activities available to them at the end of the day, such as puzzles, books, dramatic play, sand play, manipulative toys, playdough. Each of these activities provides children with a peaceful way to unwind at the end of a busy day. Some programs find it useful to end the day with outdoor play so that parents can pick up their child who is already dressed to leave and can find it easier to say good-bye to the other children.

Snack and Meal Times

In addition to receiving nutritious food and learning about hygiene, nutrition and appropriate behaviour at the table, mealtimes and snack times provide more opportunities for adults and children to develop their relationships with each other. All of these are most easily done in an atmosphere that is relaxing and enjoyable.

Children should be called to the table when the food is ready. Children find it very difficult to wait, especially when they are hungry. The possibility that children may have come to the centre without eating breakfast also needs to be considered. A child who comes to the centre at 8:00 a.m. may have eaten as early as 7:00 a.m. and will probably need to eat before a scheduled 10:30 a.m. snack time. Discussion with parents is required and arrangements can be made to provide breakfast for those children who do not eat breakfast prior to coming to the centre.

General Principles Regarding a Good Nutrition Program

Plan healthy meals and snacks

Foods should promote normal and healthy growth and should meet the nutritional needs of the child. Care should be taken to provide the appropriate portions. Children should be encouraged to decide what they will eat from what is offered, and decide when they have had enough. For younger children, keep serving portions small, as some children can be overwhelmed by large amounts. They must, however, be able to have more of an item if still hungry.

Expose children to a wide variety of foods

During the preschool years a whole world of foods is opening up. It is difficult for adults to imagine what it must be like to be introduced to so many new shapes, colours, textures, smells, tastes....and to be expected to eat them! The more familiar children become with different foods, the more likely they will learn to accept them. It is normal for most young children to cling to what they know and try new foods cautiously. With a new food, the first few times the child may touch it and smell it and even try putting a bit of it in his or her mouth (and perhaps taking it out shortly after!). Keep offering the food on different occasions, with no pressure to eat it. (See *Mealtime - Emotional Atmosphere*) With this approach, most children learn to eat and enjoy a variety of foods. The challenge to ECEs is to provide children with the security of the familiar while gradually introducing them to the pleasure of new food experiences. Remember to offer children plenty of choices in a variety of ways.

Encourage Independence, Curiosity and Exploration

Young children are naturally curious and strive to be independent. They want to feed themselves but their hand-eye coordination is still developing and they often have difficulty handling certain utensils. Preschoolers love to explore, experiment and help to prepare foods.

Involving them in the preparation of food can influence their willingness to try new foods. It also provides them with a feeling of importance, independence and self-confidence as they participate in what they consider a “grown-up” activity - the preparation of food.

Encourage children to explore food. The more they understand where food comes from and how it is prepared, the more likely they are to try it. For example, when cracking an egg or making bread, the ECE should invite children to be an active participant in the process. Provide opportunities for the exploration of colour, smell, taste and texture of nutritious foods. Talk about where these foods grow and why they are important. Discussions around where food comes from may lead to further investigation through gardening and field trips to farms and grocery stores.

Mealtime Atmosphere

Mealtimes should be happy times. If they are, children will look forward to them and will be more likely to enjoy their food and try any new foods that are offered. Consider the physical and emotional atmosphere that is created during mealtimes.

Physical Atmosphere

- ▶ Make the surroundings cheerful. Children enjoy an attractive table as much as adults do. It makes the meal seem more special. Instead of serving the meal on a bare table (which fifteen minutes ago may have been covered with play dough, etc.) many child care settings like to cover the surface with a bright cloth. Another alternative is to invest in some inexpensive washable placements.
- ▶ Provide napkins for children to wipe their hands. Children often prefer fingers to spoons and forks. Even if they may not always be used for their intended purpose, napkins come in handy to wipe up the frequent spills.
- ▶ Provide comfortable seating arrangements. Tables and chairs of the appropriate size for the size and age of the children are best. The child's seat should be comfortable and placed at a proper height for the child. The table should be at the child's stomach level. The child's feet should be flat on the floor and well supported.
- ▶ Use age-appropriate, non-breakable and colourful dishes and glasses. Cups with wide bottoms tend not to tip as easily, and plastic mugs with easy to hold handles are good choices for younger children. Eating utensils with short, broad, solid handles, and forks with blunt tines are recommended.
- ▶ Serve foods that are easy to handle, such as meat, vegetables, bread and cheese in strips or finger sandwiches.
- ▶ Let children participate in the meal as much as possible. Suggestions include letting the children (or perhaps one or two each day) set the table, lay out napkins, pass around dessert, pour milk, clean up, etc. Accidents and spills will always happen! Accept them calmly and continue to involve the child. Active participation can improve attitudes toward food and can even help boost one's appetite.

Emotional Atmosphere

- ▶ To promote acceptable behaviour at the table, children should sit in groups of no larger than eight for children ages three to twelve and no larger than five for two year olds. Each group should have its own serving dishes to allow children to serve themselves.
- ▶ Call children to the table when the food is ready. Do not make children sit at the table for a long time before food is served. Children find it difficult to sit still for long periods without activity. Children should be able to excuse themselves from the table when they are finished, as opposed to having to sit and wait for the group to be done.
- ▶ Adults should sit and eat the same foods as children. Adults are very important models for children. They can influence positive attitudes towards food. The child is more likely to enjoy new foods if the adult is enjoying them. Be enthusiastic. Adults can also influence table manners. Children must have pleasant associations with table manners in order to recognize their value. Young children love to imitate adults and will easily pick up simple social skills (such as saying “please” and “thank you”) without being taught. Rather than ‘making’ children say please and thank you, set a good example for them to follow.
- ▶ Children should have the freedom to eat in their own way until they can handle eating utensils. In the meantime, make eating as easy as possible. Bite size pieces and finger foods are well liked by children and suitable for small hands. As well, give in to their whims, within reason. If they prefer ketchup on their bread rather than on their fish sticks.....why not?
- ▶ Do not force a child to try or to eat a food. Forcing includes spoon feeding a child who is able to feed himself; bribing a child to eat by promising dessert; coaxing a child to “try one bite”.
- ▶ Do not use games or songs as a method of persuading children to eat.
- ▶ Do not use food as a reward or withhold it as a punishment.

Cleaning tables, setting tables and hand washing prior to eating is an important part of the meal time routine. Adults act as role models by washing their hands prior to eating and after the meal as well. Children can help to set and clear the table with the help of the adults. After lunch teeth need to be brushed and hands and faces washed.

Snack can be offered in a variety of ways. One of these ways could be a “free-flow” snack time where all children in the homeroom do not eat snack at the same time. Children are not always ready to eat at the same time, for various reasons, and in situations where it can be accommodated, a free flow snack time can be an appropriate way to meet the nutritional needs of the children without interrupting their play. A free flow snack allows the children to determine when they will eat. In this arrangement, snack is set up for a limited period of time, e.g., 45 minutes, and for a few children at a time. It can be set up in one corner of the homeroom while child-initiated play (free play) is occurring throughout the room. This allows for a longer period of uninterrupted play time. Children go to the snack table when they are ready and when a space is available. Snack time would continue until all children who want snack have eaten. As snack time draws to a close, children who have not yet eaten will be reminded that there are only a few minutes left to have snack. An ECE would have the

responsibility for the snack table so that the area is always supervised and an adult is always involved with the children who are having snack. As with any type of snack or meal time situation, the children must be seated while eating and would follow the same types of health and safety procedures.

Common Mealtime Concerns

Refusal to eat, poor appetite

Some children are fussy eaters, particularly in the 18 months to five year age group. A food that was eaten readily as a young child may now be rejected. It is important for providers to take a calm, easy-going approach so that meal times are not stressful for child and provider.

- ▶ If a child is still eating a variety of foods from each food group, don't worry, it may just be the normal slowing of growth rate after a growth spurt.
- ▶ On any particular day, some children may refuse to eat or have a poor appetite. If a child refuses to eat or has a poor appetite, this information should be shared with the child's parent.
- ▶ A child should never be forced, coaxed, bribed or rewarded to eat. (See *Mealtime-Emotional Atmosphere*)
- ▶ Serve smaller portions. Put less food on the plate than you usually would. Large helpings can seem impossible to a child with a small appetite. Let the children know that second helpings are available.
- ▶ Remove the food without fuss after a reasonable length of time, (e.g., 20 minutes). Forcing a child leads to food dislikes and other behaviour problems. An occasional missed meal will not hurt a healthy child.
- ▶ If the meal you have served is not well received by a number of children, serve nutritious veggie snacks, cut up fruit and small pieces of cheese as an alternative.
- ▶ When planning menus, ensure that each meal has a food, such as bread, that you know children will eat. Never substitute non-nutritious foods for a meal.
- ▶ Drinking too much milk and juice may lead to a lack of interest in other foods. If a child is thirsty at times other than designated meal/snack times, offer water.
- ▶ It may be helpful to seat the 'reluctant eaters' next to the 'enthusiastic eaters' as appetites often improve when children see their friends enjoying food.

Dislike of New Foods

Children, like adults, have a right to a few dislikes. Unfamiliar foods are often rejected the first time they are offered to a young child. Acceptance increases with exposure.

- ▶ Treat dislikes casually; accept refusal (without fuss) and offer the food again at another time. A child may need to see the food many times before deciding to try it and may need to try the food several times before liking it.

- ▶ Try a different recipe, and serve a small amount of the new food together with one of the child's favourite foods, without pressure to eat the new food.
- ▶ Ensure that there are familiar foods on the menu each day and each week. Don't change the week's menu all at once.
- ▶ Let the child decide if he wants to try the food.

Fussing, dawdling or playing with foods

- ▶ Regular mealtimes and a quiet play, story, or rest period before meals may help. A calm child will be more interested in eating than an excited one.
- ▶ Remember, children do eat more slowly than most adults. They are often learning about the colour, texture, and shape of their food.
- ▶ Remove the plate of food once a child has finished eating, or after a reasonable length of time has passed.

Nap/Quiet Time

Many, but not all, young children require a nap in the early afternoon. The decision should be made in consultation with the child's parents, keeping in mind the best interests of the child. For those children who do nap, their naps should take place in a quiet, darkened area that is comfortable and soothing. Quiet music often helps to promote sleep as does rubbing backs and talking or singing quietly to the children.

Children must be supervised at all times and this includes when they are asleep. As they waken, they should have quiet play activities available to them to ease the transition from sleep to play before moving into the next part of the schedule. Suddenly waking children who are in a deep sleep by switching on bright lights or being very loud can be bewildering or frightening to the children. They need to be wakened gently.

All the children in a homeroom can be encouraged to nap, however, if a child is still not sleepy after ten to fifteen minutes he or she should not be required to stay on the mat or cot. Instead, quiet activities can be provided to the non-nappers so that they have some "down-time" or restful time during their day. This quiet time allows children to relax after their morning's play and prepare for the remainder of their day. It also demonstrates consideration for the children who are asleep. Quiet play can be promoted by closing activity areas that tend to be noisy and setting up materials that will attract children to activities that are more tranquil.

Towards the end of a quiet time, opening the closed activity areas one by one, quietly and unobtrusively, rather than opening all of them suddenly and at the same time, provides a smoother transition for children and staff.

Child-Initiated Play/Free Play

Effective early childhood educators understand the importance of play. They know that there are different types of play, different functions of play and varying developmental levels of play.

Children learn through play in all its forms and it is the role of the adult to design the program in such a way that play becomes the central focus of the child's day.

The Role of the Adult in Child Initiated Play/Free Play

Note: The terms "free play" and "child initiated play" will be used interchangeably throughout this document. The role of the adult in free play cannot be over-emphasized. According to Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners, (Doherty, Canadian Child Care Federation, 2003), there are certain skills and abilities that the child care practitioner must possess in order to promote children's development through play. These include:

- ▶ the ability to promote active participation of all children by (1) ensuring that materials and equipment are accessible to each child, and (2) by providing direct or indirect assistance in a variety of verbal and non-verbal ways;
- ▶ interpret and respond appropriately to group dynamics;
- ▶ plan and provide a developmentally appropriate mix of child-initiated and adult-initiated play based experiences; and
- ▶ obtain and incorporate children's ideas into program planning in a way that is appropriate to their developmental level.

In order for children to become fully involved in child-initiated play, the adult must:

- prepare the environment. This role is crucial and can only be done well if the early childhood educators know the developmental levels and interests of each child. This is discovered through observation and is the foundation of effective program planning. Participation by the adult in regularly scheduled, weekly planning meetings is essential in order to develop an effective program that provides constructive, developmentally appropriate child-initiated play.
- rotate materials on a regular basis. Familiar materials allow children to experience success and try alternative ways of playing with the same toys. New materials offer challenges and provide opportunities for problem solving. The homeroom should always have a mixture of familiar and new materials. This does not mean that new materials must be purchased or made each week. It means that the centre should store materials that are not in use and then, whenever something that has been stored is put into the room, a material that has been in use can be put back into storage. Rotating materials in this way ensures that children remain interested in what is offered.

- provide sufficient time for the children to be able to explore the materials, extend their play or move to other areas if they wish.
- allow children to repeat an activity as often as needed to consolidate and extend learning.
- observe children as they play in order to understand each child's developmental level and current interests. Both are necessary for effective program planning.
- supervise children as they play, recognizing that the safety of the children is always the primary concern. The ECE should choose the most strategic spot in the room from which to supervise. This would mean that whenever ECEs sit with a group of children, they choose a seat that would allow them to scan the room. If the ECEs are standing to observe the children, they would choose an area that gives them the best view of the homeroom. Conversation with other adults should be kept to a minimum.
- interact with the children by:
 - ▶ asking questions to extend play such as *"I wonder how you can build your bridge so that the cars can drive over to the other side?"*
 - ▶ being available to answer questions. A child may be intrigued by a certain discovery, such as finding out that paint does not cover an area that already has crayon markings on it, and may need to ask the ECE about it. The ECE can use this opportunity to encourage further discussion and discovery.
 - ▶ providing props and ideas to extend play. There are times when a well timed suggestion or idea from an adult will help to deepen and extend a child's play experience. For example, if a group of children are playing in the dramatic play area and are planning a performance for the other children, the adult might come over and ask where she can buy a ticket for the performance. This can lead to making tickets, making signs, setting up a ticket selling booth, etc. The ECE may then introduce a prop such as a cash register to further extend this play.
 - ▶ extending language through general conversation with the children.
 - ▶ modeling play behaviours. The early childhood educator's primary role during child-initiated play is that of facilitator. However, there are times when the ECE should directly intervene in order to help maintain or extend the play. It is through knowledge and experience that the ECE learns when to step into a play situation and when to step back. One of the ways that an adult may intervene in a child's play is to model play behaviours. Adults may model directly, by briefly becoming a play partner, or in a more indirect way such as playing parallel to a child.
 - ▶ initiating spontaneous small group activities whenever appropriate. There will be moments that arise that are ideally suited for small group activities, such as singing a song, doing a finger play, creating an obstacle course, and so on. ECEs need to be flexible, spontaneous and tuned into the children in such a way that they will know when to initiate these types of activities.

The Benefits of Child-Initiated Play

All aspects of a child's development are promoted when they are able to choose their activities in a well-planned environment staffed by people who are knowledgeable about children's learning and development. The following is a description of how play is enhanced in each area of a child's development during child-initiated play. Abilities and skills of effective early childhood educators that have been identified in the *Occupational Standards for Child Care Practitioners* (Doherty, Canadian Child Care Federation, 2003) are threaded throughout each section.

Emotional Development

STANDARD:

Each child's emotional well-being and growth will be supported and promoted.

Children develop feelings of competence and confidence in their abilities as they:

- master challenging materials and situations as well as practicing and developing competency and experiencing success with materials and situations that are familiar and understood.
- access materials independently, decide how to use them and how long.
- are encouraged to use their creativity. For example, when they are able to experiment with art materials without being expected to reproduce something, when they are able to develop their own play scenarios and when they can use construction toys in innovative ways.
- receive sincere, positive acknowledgment on their accomplishments from adults and other children.
- have their behaviour guided in appropriate ways.
- know that their identity and heritage is appreciated by noticing that their foods, language, songs, games, books, stories, dance and clothing are regularly incorporated into the everyday program.

Social Development

STANDARD:

Each child's social and ethical understanding and development will be promoted and supported.

Children's social and ethical understanding and development is promoted as they:

- interact with other children and adults during their activities.
- share their ideas and feelings with others.
- cooperate in joint activities.
- are given the opportunity to understand the needs and expectations of their peers.
- begin to see how other children might have different perspectives, feelings and rights.
- engage in activities and discussions that help them think about and reflect on ethical issues and dilemmas.
- observe ethical behaviour and decision making on the part of the adults in their lives.
- learn how to resolve conflicts or make plans using compromise and negotiation.
- learn which behaviours promote good social relationships with others.
- begin to understand their rights and the rights of others in a social setting.

Language Development

STANDARD:

Each child's communication skill development will be promoted and supported.

Children's language development is promoted when:

- they are able to talk about their activities.
- adults use effective strategies to communicate with them, using a pace and style that is appropriate to their developmental level.
- they are helped to express their needs, desires, thoughts and feelings both verbally and non-verbally.
- adults model good use of language.
- adults extend the child's vocabulary through conversation as the child plays.
- they listen to other children, to adults, to taped stories, to rhymes and to music.
- they use books alone, with other children and with adults, and they discuss the print that is found naturally in the environment, i.e., on posters, on signs that are found in the building or in the neighbourhood.
- drawing/writing materials are available for the children in several activity areas.
- the adult responds appropriately to the child's interest in writing.

Physical Development

STANDARD:

Each child's physical development will be promoted and supported.

The child's physical development is promoted when:

- they use fine motor skills and practice hand-eye coordination through play-based experiences.
- they are physically active throughout the day.
- good hygiene and nutrition practices are in place.
- they use play materials that develop their gross motor skills such as running, climbing, balancing and jumping.
- they have the opportunity to use their senses by noting colours, odors, tastes, sounds and textures through play-based experiences.

Cognitive Development

STANDARD:

Each child's cognitive skill development and creativity will be promoted and supported.

The child's cognitive development is promoted when:

- their curiosity in the world around them is valued.
- they are encouraged to explore, predict, describe, experiment and question.
- they develop and refine their decision making and problem solving skills.
- they begin to understand the purpose for print.
- they develop concepts of conservation, number, and measurement.
- they have opportunities for sorting, classifying and grouping materials.

- they begin to understand science concepts such as balance, colour mixing, magnetism, and simple machines.
- they are exposed to a variety of experiences that will build their knowledge base about the world around them.
- are encouraged to be creative through the provision of open-ended art activities, open-ended play materials, music, and dramatic play.

Adult-Initiated Experiences

Adult-initiated activities refer to activities that occur throughout the day that an adult has planned and implemented. These may be small group activities (4-7 children); whole group activities (8-16 children); or activities that are planned for one or two children at a time, e.g. math games, sorting activities.

Small Group Activities

Adult initiated small group activities are planned based on the children's interests, skills and needs. Small group activities are important because they provide the opportunity for children to be introduced to new materials and experiences. They provide adults with the opportunity to observe and interact with the young children in their groups on a regular basis. They also provide children with the chance to interact with each other, speaking, listening and learning from each other's discoveries.

Because small group activities are adult initiated does not mean they are adult dominated. Young children do not learn in situations where the adult simply describes and demonstrates a concept. Children must have the opportunity to have hands-on experiences with any activities or materials that are presented to them. Therefore, small group activities incorporate opportunities for children to explore the materials, ask questions, experiment and manipulate. The adult's role during the small group activity is to plan the activity, prepare the environment, present the materials (either by displaying them in an area where the children will discover them or by introducing them during a small or whole group time), allow children to explore the materials and then encourage children's exploration further through the use of effective questioning, and the provision of information when appropriate to do so. Participation in small group activities is a choice. It should be one of several choices available to children. If a larger number of children want to participate at once, the activity can be offered again to allow for another group of children to participate.

The following are some question ideas that could encourage children's exploration and discovery:

"What would happen if you.....?"

"I wonder what makes it....."

“Is there another way that you could put the materials together?”

“What should I do with this one?”

“How else could it....?”

“Tell me what you see....”

“Why do you think that happened?”

“What do you think will happen next?”

“How did you make that happen?”

“What have you noticed about....?”

“What is another way that these buttons are different from each other?”

“What do you think this could be used for?”

“Where else have you seen something like this?”

“What is another way that we could....?”

When planning small group experiences, the primary considerations are the needs and current interests of the children. During regularly scheduled planning meetings, early childhood educators discuss their ideas and observations regarding the children’s recent activities, what has captured their interest, what activities or areas need to be modified, what their needs appear to be - either the needs of individual children or the needs of the group. In addition to these observations there are other sources of ideas for planning these adult-initiated activities. Some of the sources of ideas for small group activities, according to Gestwicki (1999), include:

- Children’s play, comments and questions, for example, a child continues to talk about his baby brother’s lack of teeth.
- Adult interests, hobbies and passions, for example, a parent may want to introduce the children to the concept of composting or an early childhood educator found a bird’s nest on the weekend and wanted to bring it to the centre to show it to the children.
- Things, events and people in the environment, for example, the discovery of spider webs covered in rain drops in the outdoor play area.
- Developmental tasks, for example, providing lots of opportunities for cutting paper or classifying objects according to two or more attributes.

- Family and cultural influences, for example, a visiting grandmother visits and tells stories about the 'olden days.'
- Issues that arise in the course of living together day to day, example, finding ways to divide up chores in a fair way.

Each of these ideas represent a starting point for small group experiences. As adults follow up on these ideas, they may notice that a particular theme is emerging, e.g. a theme on babies may develop as a result of a child's question about his baby brother's lack of teeth; a theme on animal homes might arise from the discovery of a bird's nest. These emerging themes can set the stage for the ongoing development of an emergent curriculum.

Whole Group Activities/Circle Times

Whole Group Activities or Circle Times, which involve the whole group of children (8-16 children) are a time for children and adults to come together to enjoy the feelings that come with belonging to a group. This is the time when adults can introduce new topics, concepts and skills and it is also a time when children and adults can enjoy such activities as songs and simple movement games.

Circle Times should have a clear beginning, middle and end (for more ideas on how to begin and end group times - see "Transitions".) It is to be a well planned activity that has a specific purpose. Although some components of the circle time will remain similar each day, e.g., it may begin with the same song each day, there should be variety in the activities that are offered to the children. Here are some questions that an ECE might consider when planning the circle time.

- ▶ Which new concepts would I like to introduce during the next circle time?
- ▶ What are the current interests of the group and how can I build on these during circle time? Is there a new song I can introduce that is related to the current interest?
- ▶ Are there new materials in the room that I wanted to introduce and talk about during circle time?
- ▶ Is there an upcoming event that we can discuss during circle time?

Circle time should begin with an adult sitting in the circle time area, singing a familiar song that children recognize as signaling the start of the group. The children come to the area when they hear the song. They can continue to sing as they get seated. Once the song is finished, the adult should begin a conversation with those children who are seated, as they wait for everyone to join in. It is very difficult for children to sit and wait quietly for everyone to join the group until they can start, therefore, having a conversation with those who have arrived can keep the children focused and engaged and may serve as an incentive for the other children to join the circle. If there is a child who refuses to join the circle, that child should be able to play quietly in another area. If more than one child refuses to join the circle, the adult should re-examine the group times to see how they can better meet the needs and capture the

interest of the group. If one particular child repeatedly refuses to join the circle, it is the responsibility of the ECE to find the reason why and then see what can be done to encourage the child's participation.

The middle portion of the group time may involve an introduction of a new concept, or a telling of a story or a poem or some other type of listening activity such as a guessing game or a memory game. *(Please note that Whole Group Times are not suitable times for reading a book to the entire group. Sharing books should be done with only a few children at a time so that each of the participants can become fully involved in the experience.)* There might also be a finger play or action song during this time, which would provide a balance between quiet listening and active participation. This is also a good time to have a group discussion about new materials in the room, new activities that are available or any other pertinent topic that all of the children would be interested in. Circle times/group times should only be between fifteen and twenty minutes long, depending on the age of the children and the size of the group. They sometimes run longer if the children are actively engaged in the activities being offered. The adult would take a cue from the children in terms of how long to extend the whole group experience.

The end of the circle time would consist of a transitional cue that will help children transition from the whole group activity to another activity or routine, e.g., snack, child-initiated play. It might be a song that mentions children's names or some kind of identifying characteristic, e.g., "Anyone with a red shirt on today can go and wash their hands." It could be something that relates to the topic being discussed during circle time, e.g., "Let's pretend we are as light as snowflakes when we walk over to the snack table. Josh and Jordan, you can go first."

Circle times must be well planned and interesting for both the children and the ECE. If a circle time only consists of singing several songs (often the same songs each day) or repeating a routine of either "Show and tell" and/or "calendar time" then the full value of circle time will not be realized. These practices, in their traditional form, would not be considered developmentally appropriate.

There are ways of offering a form of "Show and Tell" so that it can meet the needs of children, as long as the ECE uses situations that arise naturally and spontaneously. A child may want to share news about an upcoming visit by a grandparent, or another child might have discovered an unusually shaped rock outside. Events such as these can be incorporated into the whole group experience as they occur, with the child telling the group about his or her exciting news or showing everyone the item of interest. Often the practice of conducting a traditional "Show and Tell" is justified by saying that it encourages children to both listen and speak in front of a group. Guessing games and memory games that can be held during group times can be a more pleasant and developmentally appropriate way to encourage both of these skills.

When "Show and Tell" involves children sitting for a considerable length of time, listening to all the other children talk about either their newest, shiniest possession, or describing a favourite old possession that the children have already heard about many times before, the supposed benefits of a show and tell time, e.g. listening to others or presenting in front of a

group, are typically outweighed by the unrealistic expectations of sitting for long periods of time waiting for your turn. In these cases, ECEs often find that they are spending most of their time telling the children to be still, be quiet and listen to the other children. The learning that takes place during these times is negligible.

Calendar times can also take up long periods of time during group or circle times and have become such a familiar part of the morning or afternoon routine that ECEs sometimes forget how this routine started. Calendar time frequently becomes a guessing game as children attempt to remember the rote order of the days of the week, the month or even the year. They are then often asked to speculate as to the weather outside on that particular day. These types of facts (day, month, year) usually hold very little meaning or interest for children and can therefore lead to inappropriate behaviour when children become bored, frustrated or uninterested in what is being asked of them. If a calendar is to be used at all, it should be used in such a way that is meaningful to the children. Looking to see who is having a birthday each month or counting down the days to a special event can hold some meaning to the group but spending time guessing the day and the weather is not developmentally appropriate practice. Leaving a feltboard calendar or weather chart posted beside a window and available for the children to play with throughout the day can hold more meaning for children as they manipulate the numbers and play with the feltboard materials.

Field Trips

Field trips are an excellent way to provide children with new experiences and an effective way to build on children's interests. Suggested destinations for field trips often come from the children themselves. Listening to and observing the children at play can often lead to ideas for trips that will expand upon the children's play experiences. If the children have been actively engaged in a restaurant theme in the dramatic play area, then a field trip to a real restaurant may be in order. If the children have been involved in planting a new garden then a field trip to a greenhouse or nursery will probably capture their interest and attention and may lead to even more exploration with plants and living things. Of course, this does not mean that field trips can't also be more spontaneous and occasionally unrelated to the current activities in the homeroom. Early childhood educators know to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. If a special exhibit is traveling through town, if a seal is spotted in the harbour, or if a local farmer's market has an excellent display of newly harvested fruits and vegetables then trips to these places can help to ignite new interests and play activities among the children.

The keys to successful field trips are planning, preparation and organization. Advance planning is necessary to ensure that the location for the field trip is appropriate (e.g. open, able to accept a group of children, affordable) and that appropriate transportation is available. For more information on transportation safety, refer to *Standards and Guidelines for Health in Child Care Settings*, published by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Planning in advance also allows the ECE to prepare the children in such a way that the trip is meaningful. Children can have time to discuss what they will see, hear stories or read books related to the field trip destination and develop play scenarios relevant to the proposed trip.

Parents are often invited to participate in field trips. When they are invited, their role should be clearly stated in advance. They would want to know if they are to be responsible for just their own child or will they be assigned to two or three children. Would they be able to bring any younger children with them or would they need to make child care arrangements? They should have an understanding of what types of behaviours are expected of the children (e.g. are the children expected to hold hands with a partner, hold onto a rope or walk independently?). An extra set of hands is always welcome but ECEs must also be sensitive to the fact that not all parents will be able to attend due to work constraints, study schedules or child care issues at home. ECEs must always remember that parent volunteers are not included in the adult:child ratio.

Prior to the trip, children will need to be made aware of what behaviour is expected of them. The importance of staying with the group and of only touching displays if they are given permission to touch are some examples of expected behaviours. There should only be a few rules to follow and these rules should be very clearly stated. With experience, the children will eventually become very familiar with the basic field trip ground rules.

Safety considerations for field trips include:

- ▶ ensuring that all provincial regulations are being followed as they pertain to the supervision of children during field trips and outings. For more information on the policies and regulations see the *Centre-Based Child Care Policy Document*, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- ▶ ensuring that any paid transportation arrangements adhere to the legal requirements of the *Highway Traffic Act*. When parent volunteers act as drivers and no payment is involved, the licensee has the responsibility of ensuring that written parental permission for the particular parent to transport the child has been received in writing and that all children will be appropriately restrained. Volunteer drivers should be made aware that their insurance company may require that they be informed.
- ▶ obtaining parental permission in writing prior to the field trip. Parents need to be informed about where the children are going, what they will do while they are there, how long they will be away from the centre, and how they will be traveling to and from the field trip destination, including who will be driving. Provide space on the permission form for parents to indicate if they will be accompanying the child on the field trip. Space should also be provided for parents to refuse permission for one or more trips. The policy of the centre would determine the arrangements for the children who are not participating.
- ▶ providing appropriate levels of supervision. Additional staff may be required during a field trip.
- ▶ bringing along:
 - ▶ a pocket first-aid kit including any epi-pens required by specific children.
 - ▶ information cards on each child including MCP numbers, contact information, any pertinent medical information, e.g. allergies .

- ▶ a cellular telephone if the field trip destination does not have an accessible telephone.
- ▶ sunscreen, extra clothes, tissues, change for payphone.
- ▶ drinking water if there is no water available at the destination.
- ▶ a camera to take pictures that can be used later for documentation of the experience. Remember that parents' permission is required whenever pictures are taken of children.
- ▶ providing each child with identifying vests or name tags that include the name of the child care centre (not the child's name), address and phone number.
- ▶ continually monitoring the children - counting them, positioning one adult at the head of the group, one adult in the middle of the group and one adult at the end of the procession.
- ▶ requiring each child to have a partner, either another child or an adult that they stay with during transitions from one place to another, e.g., the bus to the building.

Planning for the field trip involves more than handling safety and logistical issues. It also involves planning for the activity itself. Depending on why the field trip is taking place, the ECE will either introduce it as a new activity or will suggest it as a way to expand upon the play that is already occurring in the room. In order to prepare the children for the trip, the ECE may choose some stories to read during small group or whole group time that relate directly to the field trip destination, or may bring in materials similar to those that the children will see on the outing.

In the days after the field trip, the children and the ECEs will want to document the experience. Providing captions for the photographs that were taken, writing thank you notes, drawing pictures to accompany the photos and to include with the thank you notes are all ways to document what happened. The ECEs may also want to expand the experience by providing materials that relate to the outing in some of the areas of the room, e.g., the dramatic play area, the block area, the book area. Observing the children as they use these materials and talk about their experiences will provide the ECEs with information about what the children gained from the field trip and will provide them with ideas for further curriculum development.

Some ideas for outdoor field trip destinations include experimental farms and other agricultural settings, greenhouses and nurseries, wildlife parks, picnic parks, and beaches. Some ideas for community destinations for field trips include the firehall, police station, library, dentist's office, animal shelter, bus depot (and a bus tour), airport, restaurant/cooking school, and a hair salon/hair dressing school. Field trips related to the arts and culture of a community include such destinations as the local Arts and Culture Centre, Museums, dance schools, music classes, theatre productions, and backstage at the movie theatre.

Planning

A famous early childhood educator and philosopher once said “The world is the child’s curriculum.” In a developmentally appropriate child care setting, proper planning ensures that the children’s world does become the basis for the curriculum. The standard that was outlined at the beginning of this section stated: *Daily experiences that support and promote each child’s physical, emotional, social, communication, cognitive, ethical and creative development are planned for and provided.* One of the skills required in order to adhere to this standard is the ability to obtain and incorporate children’s ideas into program planning in a way that is appropriate to their developmental level. This section will provide guidelines on how to use this skill when planning for a developmentally appropriate early childhood program.

A team approach is the most effective and efficient method of program planning. The team includes all members of staff who work with the children and is led by either the lead staff person or the operator who would have the final responsibility to coordinate the activities and ensure that the activities are developmentally appropriate. Such an approach allows all staff members to contribute to the final program, to share their observations of the children, to share ideas for programming and to take responsibilities for the activities offered to the children.

The planning meetings should be held regularly (e.g. at least once a week) and would incorporate planning for both daily and longer term plans. Discussion about the children’s current interests and needs and suggesting possible activities to meet these interests and needs will be discussed during these planning sessions. At this time, individual staff members assume responsibility for specific activities and aspects of the program. In this way, all staff members are aware of their own program responsibilities and those of other staff members.

As was mentioned previously, observation plays a big role in determining what is of interest in the child’s world. During planning meetings, when the early childhood educators are analyzing the information that comes from their observations, they should ask themselves and each other questions such as... What is it in the children’s world that is intriguing to them? What is puzzling? What is frustrating? What is meaningful? What types of questions are the children asking? What do they want to know? What skills do the children need in order to fully experience the world around them right now? Once they determine the answers to these questions, ideas for activities and an emerging topic of interest will appear.

As the ideas begin to be generated in a planning session, the ECEs must put these ideas into a framework for planning purposes. One type of framework that can be used is a curriculum web. Webs allow ECEs to be creative in their planning, allowing for the free flow of ideas as they brainstorm on the concepts to be explored relating to a particular theme. Usually more ideas are generated that will actually be implemented and even more ideas may surface as the children begin exploring with the materials and activities that are presented to them. The web should be seen as a guideline for the program - not as a fixed or rigid schedule of events. Using a curriculum web means that plans can continue to evolve as new topics of interest

unfold. Early childhood educators are not locked into a pre-set program that does not allow for the flexibility and expansion that is essential in an early childhood setting. The following is a description of how a curriculum web might emerge as a result of children's interests and needs.

It is a few days after the first real snow fall of the year. It is still snowing outside and the children are very interested in looking out the windows and watching the snow fall. Children are overheard saying such comments as:

- "My mom says that all snowflakes are different."
- "I caught some snowflakes on my tongue."
- "The snowplough went up my street last night."
- "I helped shovel our driveway."
- "My dog's water dish froze because we left it outside. I turned it upside down and a big piece of ice fell out."

Some other observations that the ECEs have made in the room over the past week include:

- there has been a lot of interest in water play and sand play lately;
- there is a group of three children who really enjoy putting on music and dancing
- the children haven't been using the art area lately - perhaps the collage materials that have been available for the past week are starting to lose their appeal?
- some children have been showing an interest (and sometimes frustration with) sorting materials according to their size, shape, colour, etc.
- the children are developing fine motor skills as cutting and manipulating small objects.
- negotiating rules and turn-taking is a skill that is newly emerging with this particular group. Some children are still having difficulty with the concept of turn-taking while playing games either inside or outside.

During their regular planning session, the two ECEs share their observations with each other. They discuss some possible concepts that can be explored as the children interact with the materials and activities provided. Because the children are so interested in snow, some of the concepts that might emerge could be:

- freezing and thawing (ice cubes in water play, black paper and snowflakes; freezing activity),
- investigating shape and size of snowflakes (magnifying glasses and black paper) and shapes and sizes of crystals (salt crystal activity),
- properties of wet sand (using materials in sand table) and comparing this with snow (using same materials from sand table outside in the snow),
- dressing for the weather (dramatic play area - dress up clothes),
- the effect of temperature on people and things (water play, dramatic play, outside play),
- taking care of pets in cold weather (book area - books related to this concept).

Based on some of the developmental skills that the ECEs have noticed are starting to emerge with some of the children, the ECEs also discuss materials and activities that may assist with

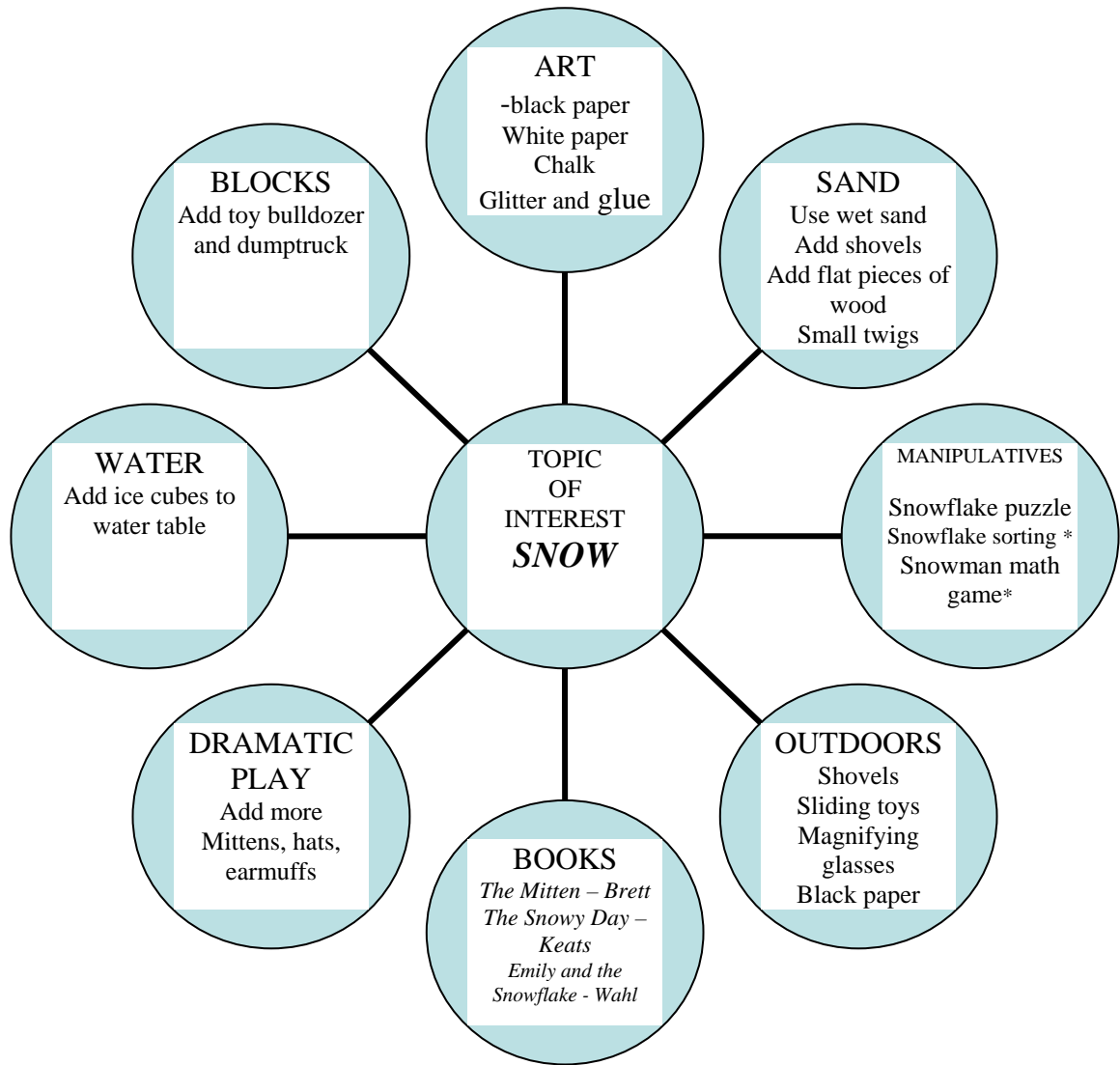
the development of these skills. These include:

- snowflake sorting activity (sorting/classification),
- snowman math game (sorting/classification; negotiating rules and turn-taking),
- snowflake puzzle (seriation),
- ribbons for dancing (gross motor development - coordinating movements to a rhythm and beat),
- using hole punch and scissors in art area (fine motor development).

Finally, the ECEs noted that the art area of the room was not being used as much as it usually is. This means that the children may be starting to lose interest in the materials that are available. The ECEs decide to change the area by providing some materials that are related to the exploration of snow in addition to the basic art materials that are always available (a variety of paper, paint, crayons, markers, brushes, glue, etc.)

Using the information from their observations as the basis for their planning, the ECEs design a curriculum web that builds on the children's interests, questions and comments and takes into account the children's current developmental levels. The following is an illustration of a curriculum web that might have emerged as a result of this planning session.

Those activities marked with (*) would require an additional activity planning sheet.



Here is another example:

It's late summer/early fall and some of the children have been berry picking with their families. You have also been berry picking and you notice that there is a particularly good crop this year of blueberries, partridge berries and even quite a few blackberries. You used some of your berries to make muffins with the children for snack and during this time you discussed berry picking with the children. Here is what they told you.

- "I picked berries with my Nan yesterday and I spilled my bucket."
- "My dog picked berries with us. He eats them right off the bushes."
- "I love berries. - they make my mouth blue."

Later that day, during outdoor play time, the children spotted some blueberry bushes near the back fence in the garden.

Some other observations (not directly related to berry picking) that the ECEs have made in the room over the past few days include:

- the children have been mixing colours and paints in the art area.
- some children are not yet comfortable talking with adults, sharing their ideas and observations (some children are new - just started program this fall.).
- a few children have been interested in sorting materials according to size and colour.
- your group of children really enjoys cooking and baking activities.
- children have been using varying sizes of containers in the water play area - filling and emptying.

During your regular planning session, you and your colleague share your observations with each other. You discuss some possible concepts that can be explored as the children interact with the materials and activities provided. Because the children are interested in berries and berry picking, some of the concepts that might emerge could be:

- experimenting with liquids and solids (berries turning into jam or jelly, wet and dry ingredients in cooking),
- "harvest" or what else is still growing outside or in gardens,
- properties of berries (the colour of berries, taste of berries, comparing frozen berries to fresh berries).

Based on some of the developmental skills that the ECEs have noticed are starting to emerge with some of the children, the ECEs also discuss materials and activities that may assist with the development of these skills. These include:

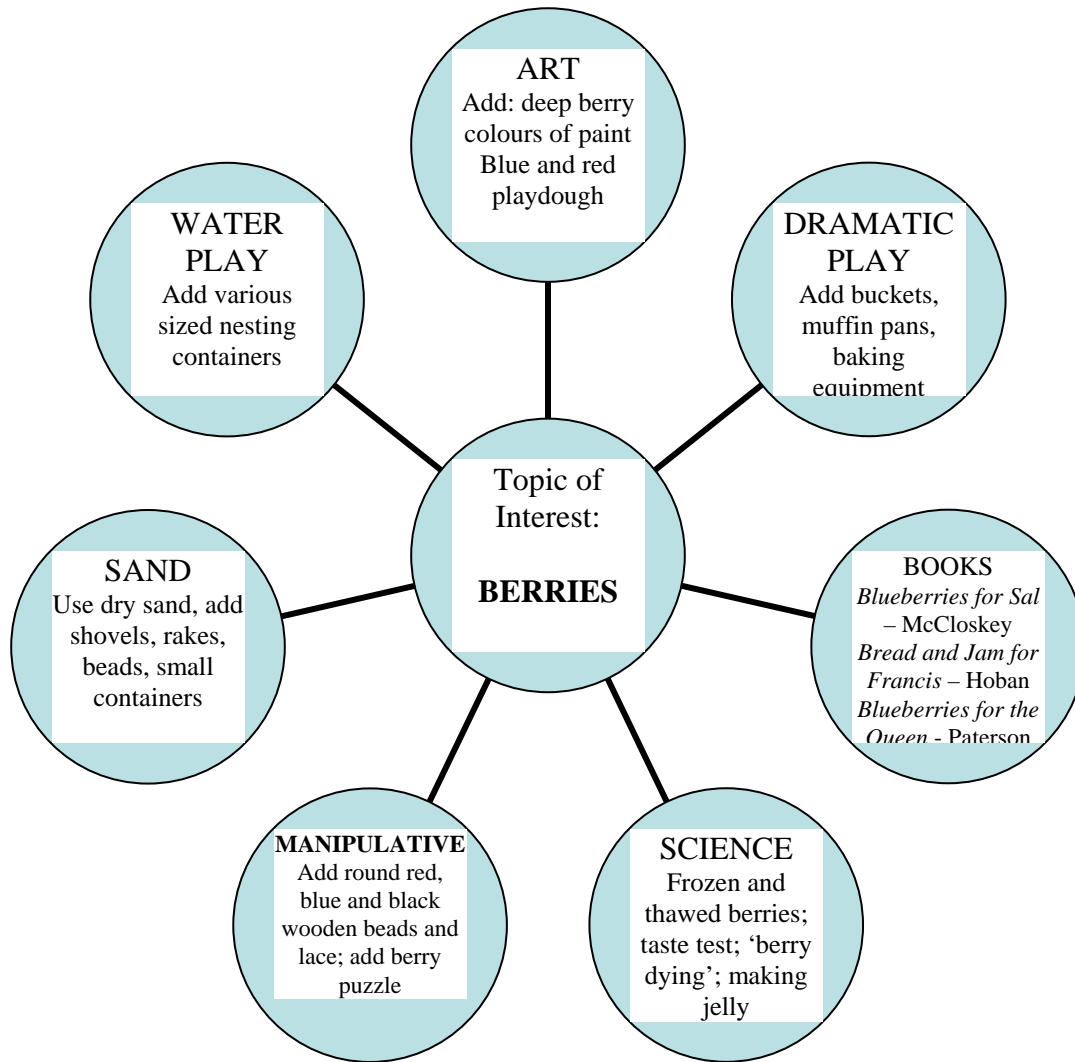
- placing blue, red and black beads in manipulative area (sorting/classification),
- nature walk to look for berries and to investigate what happens to plants in the fall (observation skills, language development, collecting berries for other activities),
- berry puzzle (seriation),
- buckets in the dramatic play area for pretend "berry picking" - can also be used for

seriation,

- using berries during a small group time as “dye” (squishing different types of berries (edible ones) on paper) - (colour mixing, matching - cause and effect),
- baking blueberry muffins as a small group activity (cause and effect; liquids and solids), and
- berry taste test.

Using the information from their observations as the basis for their planning, the ECEs design a curriculum web that builds on the children’s interests, questions and comments and takes into account the children’s current developmental levels. The following is an illustration of a curriculum web that might have emerged as a result of this planning session. Remember that this curriculum web is a beginning one. Once the children become involved in the various activities the ideas will grow. The topic of interest may change or may continue and become more in-depth. Also keep in mind that there are a variety of activities and materials available to the children that are not included on this web. The book area, for example, will have other books in addition to the ones mentioned on the web. The art area still has the standards materials such as glue, tape, staplers, variety of papers, crayons, markers, etc. The curriculum web provides some inspiration on what else to add to the various areas and what activities can be introduced to build on the topic of interest.

Those activities marked with (*) would require an additional activity planning sheet.



The Use of Planning Forms

The Curriculum Web provides the foundation for the planning in a particular homeroom. It provides for an overview or a “Plan at-a-Glance” that allows the ECEs to see what the overall plans are for the group over the next while. The major advantage of a web is that it is open-ended and can be added to regularly as the children and the adults generate more ideas as the days go by. For example, the Snow topic may turn to a Pet topic as a result of discussions and ideas that come from the book “Emily and the Snowflake” where Emily gets a puppy that she names “Snowflake”. After adding ice cubes to the water table for a few days, an ECE may decide to vary the activity by adding coloured ice cubes to the water. This may lead to experimentation with mixing colours, therefore adding a different dimension to the activities taking place. In this way, the program grows and changes and the “web” becomes more multi-layered and complex. The ECEs will be continually adding to the web and will create new webs as the program branches off in different directions, depending on the emerging ideas and interests of the children and the adults.

As these plans unfold, each staff person needs to know their exact responsibilities in terms of what materials to gather and how to prepare for and conduct the small and large group activities. When more detail regarding particular activities is necessary other planning forms would need to be used. The following are some sample forms that could be used for activity planning in addition to the curriculum web.

Small Group Activity Planning Form

Name of Activity: _____

Purpose for Activity: _____

Number of children that can participate: _____

Materials:

+ _____

Procedure:

(Provide a description of the activity, including how it will be introduced and how it will conclude.)

Follow-Up: (including ideas for how this experience can be documented)

Comments: (include feedback on whether or not this activity was successful as well as any changes that should be made before the activity is done again.)

Group Time/Circle Time Planning Form

Date: _____

Focus: _____

Materials required

Procedure:

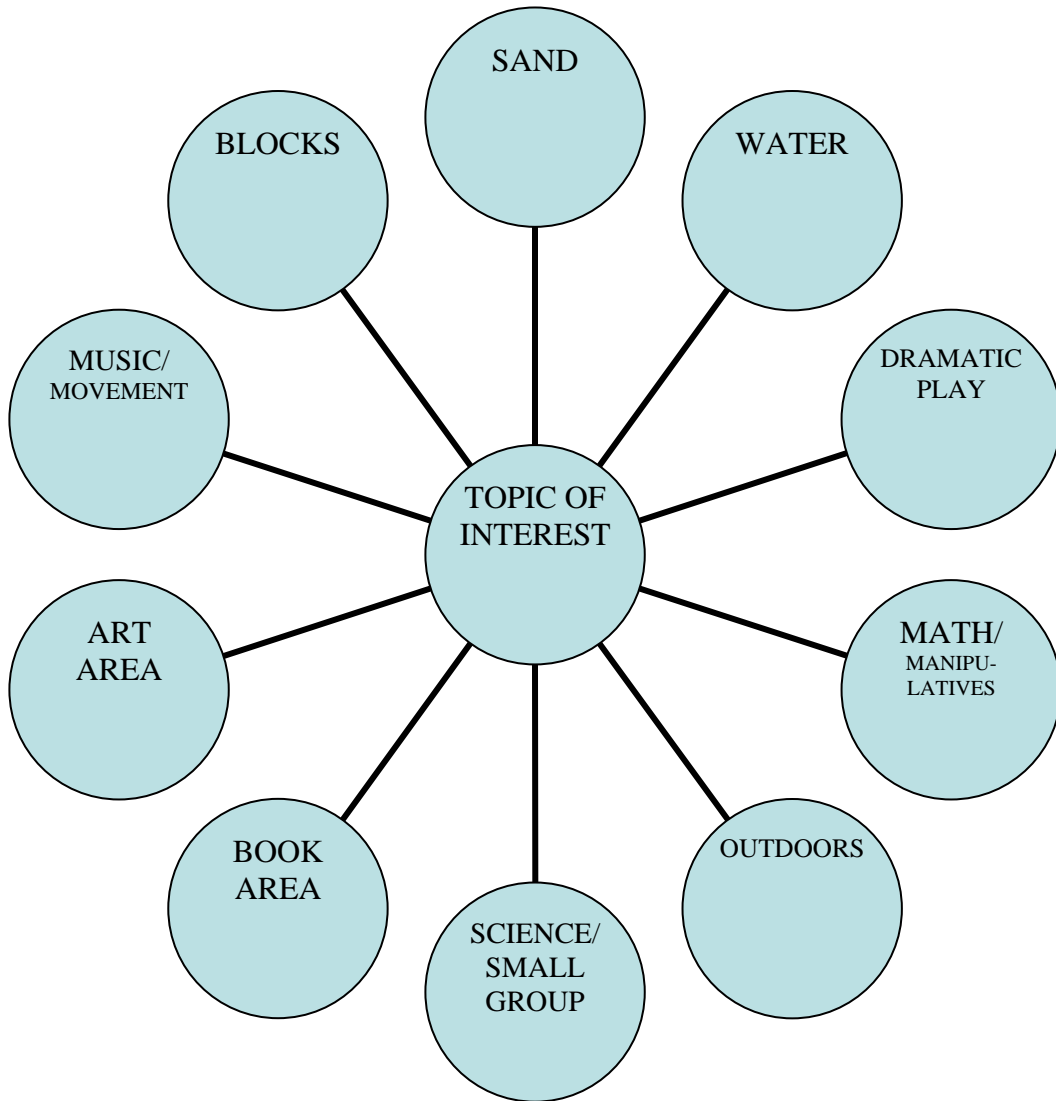
Beginning:

Middle:

End:

Follow Up: (including ideas for how this experience can be documented)

Comments: (Would you make any changes? What worked well? Any challenges?)



Documentation of Experiences

Documenting children's experiences means keeping a record of what the child or children experienced, using print, pictures, photographs, videotape or tape recording. It can happen after a field trip, after a guest speaker, after a small group activity or after a child-initiated project that involved either one or more children. The documentation is then placed somewhere for children and parents to view. It can take the form of an experience chart, a scrapbook or photo album, a poster on a bulletin board, posted on a website, or a videotape or tape recording that can be enjoyed over and over again.

Documenting children's experiences serves many purposes. It provides children with the opportunity to write about their experiences, supporting their emerging literacy. Whether this writing comes in the form of reflecting on the experience and then dictating this reflection to an adult, or whether it is the children themselves that attempt the writing, the children are seeing how print is used in a functional, meaningful manner.

Documentation helps children to reflect upon what has happened. It gives them time to ask even more questions about their experiences and helps to put their learning in context. It might spark further questions and investigation which will lead to more ideas for activities and projects (emergent curriculum). Documentation is also beneficial for early childhood educators. They can use the information from the documentation to plan even more activities that are based on the children's emerging interests. Documentation is useful for parents as well. It can provide them with information about what the children are doing at the child care centre. It can inform them about their child's interests and can give an overall picture of the skills and concepts that are being developed by the children through their play.

Room Arrangement

The way that a room in an early childhood setting is arranged sets the tone for the types and quality of interactions that will occur within that space. If a room is arranged in such a way that children's independence, exploration and participation is encouraged then children will learn to develop competence, curiosity and self control. When the general atmosphere is welcoming, warm and pleasant then children feel valued and secure. When the atmosphere is clean, well-maintained, comfortable and attractive, children feel respected.

In order for children to participate fully in the room and at the same time develop a sense of independence, room arrangement should:

- be divided into clear and distinct activity areas.
- allow for easy access to cubbies or lockers.
- allow for easy access to art supplies and play materials.
- clearly mark where materials and supplies belong so that children can return them when they are finished.
- arrange washrooms in such a way that children can be as independent as possible in their toileting routines.
- provide space to store and display art work (at a child's eye level).
- create an environment that reflects and affirms the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity within the surrounding community. (Doherty, Canadian Child Care Federation, 2003).

Room arrangement (and re-arrangement) is an ongoing part of program development. The ECEs in each homeroom should regularly re-evaluate the arrangement of the room based on their observations and interactions with the children. If the noise level in the room is too high, perhaps some of the noisier activity areas need to be changed or moved. If the block area seems to be too crowded or if too many children want to play in the area at one time, perhaps it needs to be enlarged. Whenever changes are going to be made to the arrangement of the room, children should be involved at some level in this process. It can be very disconcerting and upsetting for some children to come to the centre in the morning and find that the room is completely rearranged. Children can provide input into the arrangement and placement of the play equipment and furniture and should be, at the very least, informed of the changes before they are made. Change should always be the result of pre-planning and observation. The changes should relate specifically to the developmental needs of the children.

Some of the questions that each ECE could ask when evaluating their play space would include:

- Are there cozy, comfortable spaces available to the children?
- Are there opportunities for individual children to have some private time, alone and away from the group (but still within the view of the ECE)?
- Is there plenty of natural light?

- Is there enough space that children and adults can move about freely?
- Can adults supervise effectively, being able to see in all areas of the room using a variety of vantage points?
- Is adult- sized seating provided in each homeroom?
- Are there clear pathways from one activity area to another?
- Are materials stored on low shelves so that children can access them easily?
- Is there good ventilation?
- Is the space clean and well-maintained?
- Are materials in good repair?
- Is the flooring suitable, e.g., washable flooring in messier areas, carpeted flooring in cosy areas or areas where children will be playing on the floor?
- Are sound-absorbing materials such as carpeting, soft furnishings, and dividers being put to good use?
- Is the noise level reasonable? (Note: Background music (i.e. from a CD or tape player) only adds to the noise level. Children also tend to tune it out, as well, which decreases the value of the music. Recorded music can be played during transition times, naptimes or mealtimes as long as it is suitable for the time of day, e.g. soothing music during naptimes and mealtimes or in a quiet area outdoors.)
- Are areas accessible to all children?
- Is the space inviting to children and comfortable for adults?

Not only should room arrangement be regularly evaluated, but play materials must be rotated on a regular basis as well. Every child care centre needs an abundance of storage space so that play materials not currently in use can be stored. By regularly rotating materials and equipment, children can stay engaged, and interested in their surroundings and the selection of play materials can reflect their current interests. Too many materials being displayed at once can create a sense of chaos, clutter and confusion and is not conducive to constructive play.

The tone and atmosphere of the room can be set through the use of room arrangement and design. Children's own artwork make wonderful wall decorations and are far superior to the overly cute, commercially made wall decorations. When children's work is attractively displayed it sends a message of respect and appreciation to the children and to the parents. The artwork should be hung at a child's eye level and should be changed frequently. It is not necessary to clutter the walls with too many decorations. With the children, the materials, the equipment, the furniture, the parent information bulletin boards and bulletin boards used to display children's artwork, there is plenty of visual stimulation in every homeroom. Too much visual stimulation can be chaotic. Attractive views and natural light from windows, photographs documenting children's experiences, real-life photographs of children, animals and the natural world in addition to displays of children's art (two and three-dimensional) will usually be sufficient decoration in an early childhood setting.

Activity Areas

Activity Areas are clearly defined spaces that encourage a specific type of activity. They usually include the dramatic play area, art area, music area, book area, gross motor area, sensory area (water play/sand play), block area, science/math area, and manipulative or fine motor area (puzzles/small construction toys). These areas are positioned in such a way that similar and complementary areas are placed within close proximity with each other.

Children understand the organization of the room more easily when the location of each activity area is clear to them. This is done by the arrangement of furniture, equipment and play materials. Children can identify activity areas when the location of the play materials for each is grouped in one defined space. The space itself can be defined in a variety of ways such as by the use of dividers, furniture and carpeting.

Consideration needs to be given to which areas are adjacent to each other. Some interfere with the other, such as having the woodworking bench beside the book area. Some may enhance the play in each area, for example, having the block area next to the dramatic play area.

Each activity area has the potential to promote any or all aspects of the child's development to a greater or lesser degree. The discoveries that children make and the understanding they develop begin at a basic level and become more complex and refined as the child progresses through the preschool and school-age years. Some examples of developmental competencies that are promoted in all activity areas include:

- ▶ Independence. All activity areas are set up to allow the children independent access to the materials. It is clear through the design of the activity areas where all the materials belong as well, therefore encouraging children to return materials to their proper place.
- ▶ Self Esteem. All areas provide opportunities for the children to experience success as well as a sense of being challenged. This means that the ECEs are regularly evaluating the materials being offered and the design of each area, ensuring that there is the right mix of the familiar combined with the new. As children discover, explore and persevere, their accomplishments are acknowledged with sincere and honest appreciation.
- ▶ Fine Motor Skills/eye Hand Coordination. These skills permeate all activity areas as children manipulate materials in their own creative ways.
- ▶ Social Skills. As children participate in each activity area, they experience opportunities to negotiate with each other as they share materials, time and space. They learn how to enter play situations and how to resolve conflicts. In a well-designed space they learn to enjoy each other's company and learn social skills that will last a lifetime.

- ▶ **Literacy.** Each activity area can naturally incorporate literacy in ways that are meaningful to the children. Reference books, can be a part of each area of the room. Environmental print such as that found on posters, signs and labels are found throughout a “print rich” homeroom. Writing and drawing materials can be found in the art area, the writing area, the dramatic play area, and the math/science area. These materials should also be readily available to take into any area of the room whenever they are needed. ECEs should look for ways that they can incorporate literacy experiences into the children’s everyday interactions within each of the activity areas found in the room. They should model appropriate writing by forming letters correctly, writing in straight lines and using proper spelling whenever they write with the children or for the children, e.g., making signs or charts, writing notes to the children. In this way, children become familiar with the conventions of print in a meaningful way. Any attempt that children make at writing, in any area of the room should be recognized and acknowledged as being part of the emerging literacy process.

Documentation of children’s experiences is one way that children are exposed to print in a meaningful and useful way. Children are always interested in reading and writing about their own experiences. An adult who is tuned into the emerging reading and writing skills of the children in the child care setting will document children’s experiences in such a way that the children become excited want to become involved in telling their own stories through print and pictures. Care must be taken, however, to not overwhelm children with print and literacy experiences. Literacy activities can be used to extend and enrich the children’s play but should not dominate the experience.

- ▶ **Oral Language.** Conversation occurs in each of the activity areas in a room. Play also offers the opportunity for children to learn and use new vocabulary. ECEs can encourage discussion with and among the children in an effort to help children develop their communication skills.
- ▶ **Math Concepts and Skills.** Like literacy, math skills (or numeracy) emerge through children’s natural interactions within each of the activity areas. Throughout the day children sort, classify, compare, measure, estimate and count. They develop understandings of number in all activity areas as they consider if they have enough, too little, need one more, etc. They learn about concepts such as more than, less than, and the same as they interact with other children and the materials in each area. They explore time when they recall the events of yesterday and they explore space as they manipulate objects and shapes. Math occurs naturally in each area of the room and ECEs can effectively capitalize on many teachable moments throughout the day as they observe children’s play in each of the activity areas.
- ▶ **Science Concepts and Skills.** There are opportunities to develop science skills in each of the activity areas. As children interact with the materials they are learning about such concepts as balance, physics (the use of simple machines such as pulleys, wheels, levers), effects of temperature, and life cycles to name a few. They are also developing such science skills as predicting, hypothesizing, gathering information, controlling

variables, testing and experimenting. Adults can assist with this skill development with the thoughtful use of well-timed questions and suggestions as the children play in each of the activity areas.

- ▶ **Problem solving.** In each activity area, children are encouraged to explore, discover and experiment to find out for themselves. The role of the adult is to encourage this exploration, through their design of the environment as well as through their use of questioning such as “What would happen if...” As children interact with the materials and with each other they learn to solve problems on a practical level, e.g., how can I make this block construction sturdier? or on an interpersonal level, e.g., Joey and I both want to play with these blocks - what can we do?

- ▶ **Creativity.** Children will be creative in all areas of the homeroom. They will use materials in innovative ways to create new structures, new play situations, new artwork and new solutions to problems they encounter.

Individual Activity Areas

While many activity areas can promote many types of learning, each area lends itself to the development of some aspects of the child's development more than others. When the appropriate emotional environment has been created, the following are areas of learning and development that are most likely to be promoted in each activity area.

BASIC AREAS (*Areas that are required to be in every home room*)

Dramatic Play Area

Through their interactions with other children and their use of play materials in this area, children have the opportunities to:

- begin to understand the roles of a variety of people in our society by playing our various roles.
- work through episodes that may be puzzling or worrying to them. For example, a visit to the doctor, getting lost in a shop or being scared by a big dog.
- begin to come to terms with changing family circumstances such as a new baby in the family or moving to a different house.
- develop creativity as they improvise with props and develop increasingly complex play episodes.
- develop language skills as they discuss and negotiate play episodes.
- develop feelings of competence as they practice social skills needed in daily life.
- develop higher levels of social play as play moves from solitary, to parallel to cooperative dramatic play.

In the Dramatic Play Area provide:

- a variety of dress up clothes that reflect the roles, their own culture and heritage as well as the culture and heritage of people with whom children have direct contact. Remember to rotate materials on a regular basis, adding new ones, leaving some familiar materials and storing the rest.
- a housekeeping area that is equipped with materials that promote family play, for example, play materials for cooking, baking, cleaning, baby care.
- writing and written materials related to the theme of the dramatic play area, i.e, appointment pads, telephone message pads, menus, order pads, signs, tickets, notebooks, as well as a supply of pencils and markers for writing and making signs.
- variety by making prop boxes that contain materials for dramatic play scenarios that children are familiar with such as grocery store, post office, hairdressers, doctor's office, pet store, restaurant, car repair shop, school.
- models/layouts of scenes that are familiar to the children with enough props for the children to extend the play. For example, a road layout and cars, a doll house with dolls and furniture; a farm layout with farm animals, people and buildings.
- sufficient time for the children to extend and develop the play episodes.
- sufficient space so that several children can be involved in the play at one time.

- enough adult involvement to support and extend the children's play when necessary, with care being taken to not dominate or direct the children's play.

Music Area

Through their use of play materials in this area, children have the opportunities to:

- build a foundation for music appreciation through the enjoyment of music and singing.
- develop listening skills.
- develop understandings of rhythm through the use of rhythm instruments.
- communicate emotion through music and movement.
- express themselves through moving to music.
- enjoy moving to music.
- enjoy singing to music.

In the Music Area provide:

- a comfortable space where children can relax and listen to music.
- A tape/CD player, headphones and a variety of tapes and CDs that contain various sounds, music (e.g. classical, jazz, children's favourites, etc.), songs and rhymes. Children should be able to access the tapes, CDs, and the tape/CD player and headphones independently.
- Developmentally appropriate rhythm instruments of various types such as rhythm sticks, bells, shakers and sand blocks. Remember to rotate instruments on a regular basis, adding new ones, leaving some familiar ones and storing the rest.
- an adequate supply of instruments which allow children to explore tone such as tone bars and tuning forks.
- materials such as scarves and ribbons that promote creative movement.
- books that promote singing.
- Manipulative, interactive song charts.

Block Area

In a suitably equipped block area children:

- develop and refine math concepts such as number; comparisons of weight, area and volume; mathematical operations; measurement and symmetry. Learning about concepts such as shorter/longer, lighter/heavier, more/less and equal, eventually lead to an understanding of unit measurement (meters, grams, liters, etc.) in the school years.
- develop and refine science concepts such as balance, slopes, rollers, friction and gravity.
- develop dramatic play such as using blocks to make buildings, roads, etc. that support imaginary play, and using large hollow blocks to create play scenarios such as vehicles to sit in, forts, etc. Children also use blocks as props to support dramatic play in other activity areas.

In the Block Area provide:

- an area that is large enough for three or four children to build in comfort.
- a solid flat surface for building.
- storage that is easily accessible and allows for blocks to be arranged by type. Using signs, labels and/or silhouettes to indicate which type of block is stored on which shelf helps to keep the area organized.
- sufficient time for the children to be able to complete their projects.
- large enough set of blocks to enable children to complete constructions and to avoid too much competition over the available materials.
- blocks that are in multiple sizes of each other so they fit together in logical ways.
- plastic interlocking construction blocks that fit together.
- an adequate supply of wooden unit blocks of various sizes, including large wooden blocks
- large cardboard blocks.
- a variety of figures and models to promote dramatic play. Remember to rotate figures on a regular basis, adding new ones, leaving some familiar ones and storing the rest.
- pictures, photos and books relating to construction.

Water Play

In a suitably equipped water play area, children:

- develop math concepts such as: comparisons of measurement, e.g., full/empty, heavier/lighter, more than/less than. This experimentation provides a necessary foundation for children to develop a real understanding of unit measurement (meters, grams, liters, etc.) conservation of volume; number.
- develop science concepts such as temperature, wet/dry; float/sink; warm/cold; absorption; suction/syphons; hydro power (water wheel).
- develop dramatic play such as laundering dolls' clothes; small scale dramatic play dealing with ponds and oceans.
- satisfy their emotional needs such as experiencing the soothing effects of water play by a child who is becoming over-stimulated.

In the Water Play Area provide:

- a large enough water play table for two to four children to use at the same time.
- variety of materials, e.g., funnels, colanders, containers of various sizes, small figures, whisks, egg beaters, tongs to pick up figures, variety of cloths and sponges, flexible plastic tubing, corks, small plastic pipes and tubes, nets, etc. Remember to rotate materials on a regular basis, adding new ones, leaving some familiar materials and storing the rest.
- varying temperatures and colours of water (occasionally adding soap bubbles to the water).
- materials that will allow children to clean up spills independently, e.g., a child-sized

mop or towels.

- smocks for children who want to wear them to protect their clothing from getting wet.
- water play materials assembled in a series of sets, each focusing on a specific concept or theme (e.g. small plastic fish, plants, shells and sea creatures relating to an ocean theme).
- a container for water play materials to be stowed - accessible to the children in the water play area.

Sand Play Area

In a suitably equipped sand play area, children will:

- develop math concepts such as comparisons of measurement (big/small, more/less, full/empty) leading to an understanding of comparing attributes and an understanding of unit measurement.
- develop an understanding of conservation of volume and weight which leads to the development of logical reasoning.
- develop science concepts such as the properties of wet sand and dry sand.
- satisfy their emotional needs as they resolve personal issues through their role playing with situations relevant to their real lives.

In the Sand Play Area provide:

- a sand play area large enough to accommodate three or four children.
- a plentiful supply of sand (around 10-12 cm. or 4-5 inches deep).
- variety by alternating damp and dry sand.
- sand play materials, e.g., shovels, buckets, sieves, scoops, colanders, pieces of wood, funnels, plastic paint scrapers, grout spreaders with different edging, etc. Remember to rotate materials on a regular basis, adding new ones, leaving some familiar materials and storing the rest.
- variety in sets of sand play materials, each focusing on a specific theme or concept.
- a container for sand play materials to be stowed - accessible to the children in the sand play area.
- materials that allow and encourage children to clean up spilled sand (which is then discarded), e.g., a child-size brush and dustpan.

Book/Listening Area

In a suitably equipped book/listening area children will:

- develop listening and language skills.
- develop an understanding of books and the reading process.
- enjoy looking at and reading books in a comfortable, secure atmosphere.
- enjoy listening to stories being told or read in a comfortable, secure atmosphere.
- be able to retire from the stimulation of the room and spend some time alone in a restful spot in the homeroom.

- become familiar with a variety of types of books, for example, picture books, nursery rhymes, ABC books, counting books, folk tales and fantasy, concept books, wordless picture books.

In the Book/Listening Area provide:

- a cosy enclosed space large enough for two or three children. It should be carpeted, have comfortable seating, e.g., large floor pillows and a comfortable armchair for adults and children to use. Children should be able to sit or lie and read in comfort, alone or with others.
- a selection of quality children's literature. Books should be in good condition. Remember to rotate books on a regular basis, adding new ones, leaving some familiar ones and storing the rest. Here are some points to keep in mind when selecting good quality children's books:
 - ▶ high quality children's literature contains excellent illustrations or photographs that relate directly to the story.
 - ▶ books should contain stories or text that is age-appropriate, interesting and well written. Text with a predictable pattern is especially interesting for young children.
 - ▶ different books appeal to different ages - have a variety of books available
- books that reflect the culture of the children in the centre.
- books that reflect diversity in culture, gender, family structure and that promote inclusion.
- a slanted book shelf that allows books to be displayed in such a way that their covers are visible (not their spines). The book shelf should be one that allows children to select their own books and replace them when they are finished.
- other materials that promote language and literacy skills such as a flannel board and figures, puppets and soft toys, manipulative charts containing familiar poems, songs or chants with removable words that children can manipulate.

Characteristics of Good Books to Use When Reading with Young Children

When selecting books to read with young children, keep the following characteristics in mind:

- Just a few lines of text per page.
- Illustrations are of high quality and relate directly to the text.
- Short sentences (with an occasional longer sentence for variety).
- Consistent placement of the text on each page.
- Strong oral language patterns with some repetition of sentences or phrases (see Predictable books).
- Interesting, engaging and developmentally appropriate story line.
- Appropriate and culturally sensitive story lines, portrayal of characters and situations.

Predictable Books

Predictable books should be found in the book area of every developmentally appropriate child care setting. Predictable books are ones that contain repetitive words, phrases, or sentences and because of this repetition, they invite children to read along with the adult as the book is being read to them. Predictable books come in many forms including:

- Circular Story, e.g., *If you give a Pig a Pancake* by Laura Numeroff
- Cumulative Story, e.g., *The Napping House* by Audrey Wood
- Familiar Sequence, e.g., *The Grouchy Ladybug* by Eric Carle (or most counting books)
- Pattern Stories, e.g., *Something from Nothing* by Phoebe Gilman or *The Gingerbread Man* by Paul Galdone
- Question and Answer, e.g., *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin, Jr.
- Repetitive Phrase, e.g., *A Promise is A Promise* by Robert Munsch
-

In addition to Predictable books, a well stocked book area should contain other types of books as well. When stocking the book area, early childhood educators should select:

- picture books (wordless and otherwise),
- fairy tales and fantasy,
- factual, concept and information books,
- folk tales,
- books of poetry and song, and
- home made books.

For a list of favourite authors for this age group, see *Appendix A*.

For a list of picture books that are suitable for reading to emergent or early readers, see *Appendix B*.

Art Area

In a well-equipped and well designed art area, children have the opportunity to:

- express and/or release their feelings through creative expression.
- learn the properties of a wide variety of art materials.
- be creative as they try various ways of using the materials.
- problem solve as they brainstorm for innovative ways of creating art.
- develop fine motor skills.
- learn more about the function of written language when they “write” their own captions on their drawings or when their description of their drawings are dictated to an adult who can include it on or with the artwork. This is done only with the child’s permission.

In the Art Area provide:

- a table and chairs - space for four to six children to participate comfortably in art activities.

- a well-lit space, with a washable floor, near a sink if possible.
- a variety of age appropriate drawing, painting, collage and stitchery materials. Remember to rotate materials on a regular basis, adding new ones, leaving some familiar materials and storing the rest.
- one or two two-sided easels.
- good quality children's scissors (enough for each child in the art area) tape, staplers, hole punchers.
- plasticine, playdough and clay.
- shelving or other storage arrangements that allows children independent access to materials
- suitable surfaces for the children to use with art materials.
- smocks to protect the children's clothing.
- something that can be used to clean up any spilled materials, e.g. a child-sized broom and dustpan.
- a suitable arrangement for wet artwork to dry without any damage.
- suitable areas to display children's artwork.

Manipulative Area

It is in the manipulative area that children become familiar with concepts relating to math and numeracy. Of course math occurs in every area of the room, but the manipulative area is especially conducive to the development of math concepts as children sort, classify, count, compare and manipulate objects in ways that are meaningful to them.

Through their use of play materials in this area children have opportunities to:

- develop hand-eye coordination and fine motor control.
- develop math concepts such as matching, sorting and patterning that are prerequisites for the ongoing development of math skills.
- experiment with concepts and skills such as one-to-one correspondence, classification, quantification (counting, more than/less than) and division of materials.
- have opportunities to take turns, make up rules and solve problems by participating in math board games.
- begin to develop understandings of shapes, transformation, rotations, conservation of area, conservation of number and conservation of volume.
- become confident in their problems solving abilities.
- develop effective communication/relationships with others by working together on self-selected projects.
- develop creative and innovative ways to use manipulatives.

In the Manipulative Area provide:

- a carpeted area and tables so the children can decide where to use the materials.
- shelving and containers that make the materials easy for the children to access and replace when play is finished.
- a variety of age appropriate building toys (e.g. Lego, Duplo, Tinker Toys, Lincoln Logs, etc.), puzzles, sorting materials, beads, etc. with each set in sufficient quantity for more than one child to use at the same time. Remember to rotate materials on a regular basis, adding new ones, leaving some familiar materials and storing the rest.
- nesting toys, seriation materials (i.e. materials that can be sorted from tallest to shortest).
- collections for sorting, matching, classifying, e.g. shells, keys, buttons, jar lids, coins, pom-poms, costume jewelry (rings, necklaces, bracelets) nuts and bolts, spools, small plastic figures of insects, dinosaurs, people, animals... Remember to rotate collections on a regular basis - have one or two available at a time (depending on space restrictions) and store the rest.
- containers that children can use when sorting collections, e.g., small baskets, divided trays, fishing tackle boxes, ice cube trays, bowls.
- tools to pick up objects when sorting, e.g., tongs, scoops, tweezers.
- occasionally add dice or spinners to the collections and the children can turn the sorting into a game for one or more players.
- math board games, that are open-ended enough that children can make up their own rules. The games can consist of a simple grid pattern drawn on a piece of bristol board that is placed next to a collection and a couple of dice or it can be a simple path game where the child/ren move game pieces up and down a clearly drawn, linear path marked off into individual spaces (using dice or a spinner in whatever way the child decides).

Science Area

Like math, children learn scientific concepts and skills in all areas of the room. It is effective, however, to designate a specific area in the room as a science area or discovery area. Through their interactions with the materials in a well-equipped science area children will:

- become interested in science.
- construct their own knowledge about how the world works.
- learn to predict, hypothesize, observe, measure, communicate, experiment, explore, create, gather, organize and record data, and discover new things.
- explore life science - the senses, living and non-living things, plants and animals.
- explore earth science - air, water, soil, rocks, minerals, day and night, seasons and weather.
- explore physical science - the study of matter, energy, movement and change.

In the Science Area provide:

- a table (either a flat table or a structure similar to a sand table where materials can be placed within) that contains materials that focus on one particular topic, for example, shells, fossils, rocks and minerals, magnets and iron filings, acorns/pinecones/seeds/seed pods, birds nests, samples of animal fur, spinning tops, pulleys and ropes, ramps and wheels. Remember to rotate materials on a regular basis.
- shelving or other storage for science materials that are easily accessed by the children. Samples of science materials that can be used to assist in exploration and discovery include magnifying glasses, scales, tweezers and tongs.

Gross Motor Area

Through using the materials in this area, children will:

- satisfy their need to be physically active.
- develop their physical fitness and strength.
- develop their physical skills such as jumping, throwing, kicking, catching and climbing.
- develop body and spatial awareness.

In the Gross Motor Area provide:

- space and time for the children to be physically active.
- materials to promote the physical skills of balancing, lifting, running, kicking, jumping, climbing, dancing, throwing, aiming and catching. The way in which these material are provided will vary depending upon the space available. Remember to rotate materials on a regular basis, adding new ones, leaving some familiar materials and storing the rest. Examples of materials that can be used include:
 - bowling ball materials,
 - sponge balls, beach balls,

- large building blocks,
 - beanbags and targets,
 - scooter boards,
 - lightweight soft paddles, bats and balls,
 - parachute,
 - streamer ribbons,
 - velcro catch mitts and balls, and
 - hopscotch diagram on floor or carpet.
-
- storage that permits children easy access to the materials that are available for their use.
 - the opportunity for activities that are challenging but will allow the children to be successful and also activities that allow them to practice skills they have recently developed.
 - daily outdoor play (for more information on this see “Active Living”).

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY AREAS

(The following areas are not considered basic or required areas but would be beneficial to include in a child care centre where space permits.)

Writing Area

Opportunities for writing occur throughout the room, however, having a designated writing area can provide additional opportunities for the development of early literacy skills.

In a well-equipped writing area, children will:

- explore the process of writing in a fun, non-directive, meaningful way.
- incorporate writing into other areas of their play, e.g., dramatic play, block play.
- become more aware of the function of print.
- see the relevance of print in their own lives.

In the writing area provide:

- a writing desk or table that can comfortably accommodate two or three children.
- materials that encourage the exploration of writing such as paper of various types and sizes, notebooks, notepads, pencils, markers, stamps, stamp pads, envelopes, old (but functional) typewriters, hole punchers, staplers, tape. Remember to rotate materials on a regular basis, adding new ones, leaving some familiar materials and storing the rest.
- An alphabet chart that is placed at the children's eye level.
- A "word box" containing index cards with common words that children may recognize (one word per card).

The writing area should NOT include:

- Alphabet tracing sheets - these isolate letters out of context, making print less meaningful. They set young children up for failure - tracing perfect letters is very difficult for preschoolers and it is NOT writing.
- Worksheets (tracing, counting, identifying letters, sounds, etc.) These also isolate specific skills at a time when children should be learning instead that writing is fun, relevant and useful. Children learn to write by writing. Specific skill development, e.g. letter formation, writing in straight lines, will come with time and experience. The adults in a child care centre should carefully model appropriate writing (by forming letters correctly and writing in straight lines) whenever they write with the children or for the children (on signs, charts, etc.) so that the children become familiar over time with the conventions of print, however, children's attempts at writing should be recognized and acknowledged as being part of the emerging literacy process.

Woodworking Area

Some child care centres stay away from offering a woodworking area because of the perceived risks of combining children and tools. The benefits, however, far outweigh the risks and as long as the area is closely supervised, woodworking can be another creative and constructive activity for children in a child care setting. In a woodworking area children will:

- have an opportunity to use real tools in a closely supervised environment.
- express and/or release emotions in a satisfying and constructive way.
- create, problem solve, and explore using wood and other building materials.

In a Woodworking Area provide:

- a child-sized workbench.
- safety goggles, both child-sized and adult sized which must be worn at all times while in the woodworking area (by both children and adults).
- adequate storage for tools when the area is closed and not available for children.
- a display area for tools to hang when the area is open, such as a pegboard.
- a variety of sturdy tools such as a hammer, a hack-saw, hand drill, screwdrivers, pliers, vises, sandpaper, C-Clamps, etc.
- wood scraps and pieces (softwood such as fir, pine, spruce), dowels, jar lids, bottle caps.
- nails, screws, nuts, bolts, washers, wire.

Computer Area

Computers can be useful in a child care setting if they are used properly. The computer software must be chosen carefully, ensuring that it is developmentally appropriate and allows the child to be actively engaged and creative, rather than just be required to passively supply a “correct” answer to questions. Some software is simply computerized worksheets while other software can encourage creativity and independence. It is up to the ECE to do the research and make decisions based on developmentally appropriate practice.

In a well-equipped computer area, with developmentally appropriate software and programs, children will:

- be able to create pictures and stories, solve problems and make decisions.
- refine hand-eye coordination and spatial awareness.
- be exposed to letters, numbers and print in a meaningful context.
- expand their vocabulary.

In a Computer Area provide:

- one to three computers, depending on resources,
- one printer,
- adequate, comfortable seating,

- support and attention from adults,
- developmentally appropriate software, and
- accessible storage for software.

How to Choose Developmentally Appropriate Computer Software

When choosing software for children, keep the following points in mind (*Haugland, 2004*).

- it must have age appropriate content, learning objectives, and expectations.
- the child must be able to take control of the experience, setting the pace for the action and learn the consequences of their choices.
- it must provide instructions that are easy to understand. Instructions should be verbal accompanied by visual prompts.
- it should contain varying levels of complexity and challenge. In the beginning, it should be simple enough to allow children to be successful and then follow a logical learning sequence.
- it must allow children to operate the program independently with minimal adult assistance.
- it must be non-violent. Sometimes the violence in children's software is subtle, for example, using the sound of explosions or crashes to move from one screen to the next. Look for software that demonstrates construction, not destruction and that incorporates positive social values.
- the activities should be pleasurable and engaging in and of themselves and should not offer rewards as the main motivating factor for completing the activity.
- when presenting information or teaching concepts, the software should realistically portray the new ideas or information, using real world pictures and examples whenever possible.
- if the software program depicts people, it should reflect diverse cultures, family styles, ages and abilities in a respectful and appropriate manner.

Outdoor Play

Children need outdoor play experiences of all kinds and in all kinds of weather. They need to play outdoors on a daily basis for at least once a day and, whenever conditions permit, twice a day. They need an outdoor play space that is safe, suitable and welcoming. In a well equipped outdoor play space children will:

- develop positive attitudes about themselves, their physical abilities and the outdoor environment.
- engage in games and activities that will help them in developing concepts relating to body awareness spatial abilities.
- develop fine and gross motor skills.
- engage in solitary and group play situations.
- be creative, solve problems, explore and discover new things about the world around them.

Planning the Outdoor Environment

When planning a developmentally appropriate on-site outdoor play space, ECEs must incorporate the developmental needs of the children into the design. The following design principles can help to guide the ECE in planning an outdoor play environment based on children’s interests and developmental needs:

Children’s interests and developmental needs	Design Element
The need to move	open, flat area for running, paths for riding toys, boundaries defining play areas
The need to climb	slopes with varying inclines, fixed climbing equipment, portable climbing equipment, protective surfacing
The need to experience nature	trees, bushes, shrubs, flowers, soil, grass
The need to experience challenges and make mistakes	age appropriate equipment that provides a moderate risk, protective surfacing to cushion falls, appropriate supervision, adult encouragement, well planned and designed environment
The need to socialize	a place to sit, quiet areas, semi-private places that can be easily seen by an adult but can create a feeling of privacy; larger areas where more organized group games can be played
To construct, transform and create in a hands-on way	well equipped sand play area, manipulative materials such as large blocks, art materials such as brushes and buckets (for “painting” with water)
To make choices	a variety of areas/zones in which to play (manipulative, gross motor, quiet, creative) and a variety of play materials and equipment ranging in simple to complex

Designing and Equipping an On-Site Outdoor Play Space

Designing an outdoor play space requires many of the same considerations as designing an indoor play space. As with room arrangement, there are specific questions that each ECE should ask when evaluating the outdoor play space, These questions include:

- Are there cozy, comfortable spaces available to the children?
- Are there opportunities for individual children to have some private time, alone and away from the group but still within the view of the ECE?
- Is there plenty of natural light (and shade)?
- Is there enough space that children and adults can move about freely?
- Is child-sized and adult-sized seating provided?
- Are there clear pathways from one activity area to another?
- Are materials accessible to children?
- Is there good ventilation (e.g. is it far enough away from a parking lot so that children are not overly exposed to car exhaust fumes?)
- Is the space clean and well-maintained?
- Are materials and equipment in good repair?
- Is the surfacing suitable?
- Are areas accessible to all children?
- Is the space inviting to children and comfortable for adults?

The first step in designing an appropriate outdoor play space is the landscaping of that space. Landscaping deals with such features as space, surfacing, activity areas, terrain, pathways, gardens and weather. As much as possible, naturally occurring elements and features should be incorporated into the landscape, e.g., natural slopes, trees and grassy areas, keeping in mind the safety and developmental needs of the children. Some factors to keep in mind for each one of these landscape features are:

Space

An outdoor play space must contain enough space for all children to be active while at the same time providing room for a variety of activities to be taking place at one time. When designing the space, attention must be paid to the following considerations:

Outdoor play space must include:

- adequate space (a minimum of 7m² per licensed space),
- a sheltered space that provides protection from the elements,
- a source of drinking water,
- easy access to a bathroom,
- easy access to homeroom, and
- storage for outdoor play equipment.

Surfacing

An outdoor play space must provide two or more suitable play surfaces for different types of play. Hard surfaces, such as asphalt, may constitute up to 50% of the minimum required space. Hard surfaces are used as riding paths for children on riding toys and may also be used for bouncing balls, chalk drawing or for playground games like hopscotch. A variety of “soft surfacing” would be used in any areas of the outdoor play space that are not covered with a hard surface. Providing children with a variety of surfacing allows them to experience various textures and enriches their sensory environment. The chart below provides some examples of hard and soft surfacing.

Examples of Hard and Soft Surfacing Materials*

Hard Surfacing Materials	Soft Surfacing Materials
Asphalt	Grass
Hard Packed Dirt/Soil	**Wood Chips
Patio Stones	**Coarse Sand
Interlocking Bricks	**Fine Pea Gravel
Wooden Decking	**Medium Pea Gravel
Flag Stone	**Shredded Tires
Concrete	**Rubber Matting

* This chart is not meant to be considered a complete list of hard and soft surfacing materials - these are examples only.

**Can also be used as protective surfacing.

Activity Areas

Similar to the indoor play space, the outdoor play space should also have various activity areas, as weather and other conditions permit. Some of the activity areas that can be found outdoors include:

- **Art/Manipulative/Creative area** - this area would contain materials that allow children to be creative and constructive. Some of the materials that would be found in this area are art easel, art materials, carpentry materials, and/or construction materials (e.g. large blocks).
- **Sensory area** - this area would include the sand box, water play area and related materials. For more information on what could be included see Section III, Water Play and Sand Play Area in this document. Adding plastic or PVC tubing (available at hardware stores), clear tubing, corks, adds additional possibilities for sensory play.
- **Dramatic Play area** - this area might include a play house structure that can be used in a variety of ways. Props and materials will be included that can support the children's dramatic play and should be rotated on a regular basis, depending on the children's interests. Prop boxes on themes such as picnics, the beach, gardening, store, restaurant and so on can be moved outside to enhance outdoor play.
- **Gross Motor Play** - included in this area would be stationary play equipment such as a climber or slide. Portable equipment such as riding toys, balls and other types of sport equipment will also contribute to gross motor play. Try tying a beach ball to a branch of a tree to be used as a tether ball. Use riding toys as a method of creating a painting, much like children do with small toy cars in the art area (use large pieces of paper and have children drive through a small puddle of paint in the middle of paper!) Participation in this area leads children to develop a greater awareness of their body and it challenges them to discover what their body can do. It leads to greater coordination and development of movement and gross motor skills.
- **Quiet Area** - this area would be one where a child or a small group of children can sit comfortably to observe the play that is occurring in other areas of the outdoor play space. In the quiet area children can also socialize with each other, read books, or engage in quiet, less active play. Soothing music playing in a CD player in a quiet area outdoors can encourage children to relax and enjoy their surroundings.
- **Science Area** - science will be occurring in all areas of the outdoor play space, however, the discovery of scientific concepts can be encouraged by providing some basic equipment in an outdoor science area. Providing magnifying glasses, weighing scales, small containers and sets of tweezers or tongs (for collecting "specimens") will assist children in exploring the world around them. This area helps children to develop a sense of wonder and curiosity about the world around them. It encourages children to explore, experiment, hypothesize, and problem solve.

Terrain

Terrain refers to the type of land being used as an outdoor play space. For example, terrain can be described as “hilly”, “rocky” or “grassy”. It is desirable to maintain the natural elements of the terrain as much as possible. Small hills and slopes are desirable in an outdoor play area as they provide many opportunities for children’s experimentation. Children can roll balls, toy cars and trucks (and when it is safe and practical even themselves) down a slope, experimenting with speed and gravity. Hills provide sliding and climbing opportunities as well. Large rocks (boulders) can be objects of interest in an outdoor play area and should be incorporated whenever possible as long as they are large enough to not be considered a tripping hazard.

Pathways

Pathways should be constructed in such a way that children can move freely from one area of the outdoor play area to another. Creating paths that are clearly marked and distinct from the rest of the play area can add interest to the outdoor play space and can also increase the safety of the area by encouraging children to not wander too closely to play equipment that is already in use. Paths can also prevent children from crossing into another’s child’s play and can, therefore, help to prevent the conflict that arises from these types of situations.

Gardens

Incorporating non-poisonous plants, flowers, shrubs and trees into an outdoor play space serves many uses. Children can learn about and develop an appreciation for nature, science and natural beauty. When children are encouraged to help create and maintain the garden they develop a sense of responsibility and stewardship.

Weather

There is only one certainty when it comes to weather in Newfoundland and Labrador and that is, we have lots of it! Knowing this, care must be taken to ensure that the outdoor play space is usable and interesting in all types of weather throughout the year. When planning the outdoor play space, the ECE must allow for such factors as:

- adequate drainage after rainstorms,
- shelter from high winds/hot sun using trees, fences and other shade/shelter features,
- clear pathways to equipment after snowfalls or, if necessary, removal of certain pieces of equipment if banks of snow alter their standards of safety.

Planning an Outdoor Play Program

Planning outdoor play experiences is an essential component of any developmentally appropriate program. Too often outdoor play is viewed as a time where adults get a break and children get to burn off excess energy. It is, certainly, a time when children get to be physically active, however, thought and preparation must be put into every outdoor play time so that the children and the adults can make the most of the time allotted for outdoor play. Outdoor play experiences must be planned regardless of whether the outdoor playspace is on-site or whether the centre uses a designated off-site outdoor playspace as their regular outdoor play area.

Outdoor play should occur every day and in every type of weather. Unless it is hazardous for the children to be outside (e.g. in extreme weather conditions) children need to be outside every day. Remember that activities that are conducted during summer activities, e.g., playing in the sandbox, can be easily done in the winter as well - substituting snow for sand. Snow is an excellent play medium that can be moulded, sculpted, explored, measured and used as a play surface.

Outdoor play should be scheduled in large blocks of time (minimally 45 - 60 minutes) so that children have the opportunity to become involved in complex play activities. There should be time set aside in both the morning and the afternoon schedules for outdoor play time so that it can occur twice a day, whenever conditions permit.

As with indoor play, ECEs observe children's play outdoors and these observations become the basis for planning outdoor play activities. Activities should involve materials and experiences that challenge the children, providing learning opportunities that lead to the development of effective problem solving skills.

The Role of the ECE during Outdoor Play

The role of the ECE during Outdoor Play is the same as the role of the ECE during any play time. Outdoor play time is not to be seen as a type of "recess" where the ECE's only role is to supervise the children's play to ensure that everyone stays safe. The ECE must also be a facilitator of play, an assistant to the play and a play-planner. As with all components of the program, the adult sets the tone for the types of interactions that occur among the children and with the environment. If the adult has a positive attitude about outdoor play, then the children's interactions with each other and with the environment will be positive and constructive. If the adult does not enjoy outdoor time the time spent outside will not be as valuable. It is important for ECEs to examine their own feelings about outdoor play and do whatever they can to make the experience a positive one. Dressing comfortably and appropriately, being actively involved and designing the space in such a way that it is attractive for adults as well as children are ways that positive feelings for outdoor play can be encouraged.

Outside play time is an ideal time to provide planned activities based on science and nature, art, gross motor development, music and movement and even whole group times. During outside play time the adults should:

- assist children in their play by supplying the materials they need.
- interact with the children by being a play partner when appropriate, expanding and extending the play as necessary.
- look for 'teachable moments'.
- observe children's play, noting their interests, their questions and their discoveries. Use these observations as the basis for planning outdoor play experiences.
- guide children' behaviour by allowing them the opportunity to solve their own problems and resolve their own conflicts but stepping in when it appears that they need help. Any intervention should be done in a helpful and matter of fact manner.

What Can Children Do On Your Playground?

(These lists are from a Playground Policy Manual, Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services and were published in the Summer, 2002 issue of Interaction. Reprinted with permission from CCCF)

Once you understand the various types of play necessary for children's healthy development, how can you implement these types of play into every day activities? Examples of the many sorts of activities that can benefit children in a playground setting follow. It may be helpful to circle or check those activities you already use; then try to figure out how to implement some of the ones you do not use. Don't forget to ask the children!

Movement and Perception:

- sit
- stand
- crawl under, in, over
- creep
- roll
- walk
- hop
- skip
- run
- jump
- sprint
- turn
- stop
- pedal
- push
- pull
- throw at a distance
- throw at a target
- catch
- reach
- grasp
- grip
- hold
- lift
- carry
- dump
- punch
- balance
- somersault
- swing
- sway
- climb
- slide
- tumble

- kick
- dig
- use sled
- roller skate
- ice skate
- strike object
- make an obstacle course
- stretch
- pull up
- assemble
- disassemble
- stack
- pile
- build
- put in
- take out
- pound
- pinch
- scrape
- poke
- squeeze
- dance
- smell
- touch
- feel
- taste

Expression

- talk
- shout
- scream
- whisper
- make noises
- sing
- be quiet
- listen
- see, watch, look
- create
- sculpt
- weave
- paint with water
- paint with fingers
- paint with brushes
- paint with rollers
- paint with branches
- tear down
- build
- woodwork
- nail
- glue
- dress up
- play doll
- imitate
- imagine
- invent
- play with water
- pour
- splash
- play with sand
- mix
- wash
- play with bubbles

<input type="checkbox"/>	make bubbles		
<input type="checkbox"/>	use objects in original ways	Cognitive Skills	Emotion and Affection
<input type="checkbox"/>	blow	<input type="checkbox"/>	observe
<input type="checkbox"/>	shape earth	<input type="checkbox"/>	understand
<input type="checkbox"/>	shape a sphere	<input type="checkbox"/>	make rules
<input type="checkbox"/>	shape a space	<input type="checkbox"/>	decide
<input type="checkbox"/>	invent	<input type="checkbox"/>	choose
<input type="checkbox"/>	draw caricatures	<input type="checkbox"/>	collect
<input type="checkbox"/>	sketch	<input type="checkbox"/>	gather
<input type="checkbox"/>	play with mud	<input type="checkbox"/>	compare
		<input type="checkbox"/>	select
		<input type="checkbox"/>	match
		<input type="checkbox"/>	arrange
		<input type="checkbox"/>	rearrange
		<input type="checkbox"/>	put in order
		<input type="checkbox"/>	discover
		<input type="checkbox"/>	question
		<input type="checkbox"/>	notice changes
		<input type="checkbox"/>	develop theories and concepts
		<input type="checkbox"/>	count
		<input type="checkbox"/>	write
		<input type="checkbox"/>	explore by trial and error
		<input type="checkbox"/>	read books
		<input type="checkbox"/>	read symbols
		<input type="checkbox"/>	cuddle
		<input type="checkbox"/>	hug
		<input type="checkbox"/>	kiss
		<input type="checkbox"/>	tickle
		<input type="checkbox"/>	change their minds
		<input type="checkbox"/>	be alone with a friend
		<input type="checkbox"/>	be alone
		<input type="checkbox"/>	be in a small group
		<input type="checkbox"/>	have individual attention
		<input type="checkbox"/>	be in a large group
		<input type="checkbox"/>	retreat
		<input type="checkbox"/>	nest
		<input type="checkbox"/>	hide
		<input type="checkbox"/>	look
		<input type="checkbox"/>	help
		<input type="checkbox"/>	pat
		<input type="checkbox"/>	feel
		<input type="checkbox"/>	hear
		<input type="checkbox"/>	take care of
		<input type="checkbox"/>	plant
		<input type="checkbox"/>	prune
		<input type="checkbox"/>	mix
		<input type="checkbox"/>	water
		<input type="checkbox"/>	tend
		<input type="checkbox"/>	enjoy
		<input type="checkbox"/>	eat
		<input type="checkbox"/>	sleep
		<input type="checkbox"/>	rest

Reaching a Balance Between Safety and Physical Activity*

(Note: for more information on outdoor play and safety, see *Standard and Guidelines for Health in Child Care Settings*, published by Department of Health and Community Services)

It is the responsibility and legal obligation of all early childhood educators to ensure that children in their care have a safe place to play. ECE's can also help children become more responsible and safety conscious by being aware of the potential consequences of their actions. This can be taught through education and practice. As a result of being active in a setting which is appropriately designed and well supervised, a child will learn what is safe and what is not.

Reaching a balance between safety and physical activity within a child care setting represents a typical "trade-off" situation. If children are not allowed to take risks they will not engage in physical activity for fear of becoming injured. However, if children are allowed to pursue physical activities as they wish, their safety may be jeopardized.

Injuries in an outdoor play area usually occur because of one or more of the following reasons:

- inadequate supervision,
- improper use of equipment/toys,
- using equipment that was designed for older or younger children, and
- poor maintenance of equipment.

To reach a balance between safety and physical activity, keep the following points in mind:

- ✓ Active supervision is most important! Scan the environment constantly. Provide appropriate adult:child ratios. Position adults in the play space in such a way that all children are able to be seen at all times.
- ✓ Educate children on safety; that is, helping them to determine what is safe and what is not safe. Tell the child about the proper uses of equipment and demonstrate when appropriate.
- ✓ Maintain equipment so that it is safe for all children. Discard or repair broken equipment immediately.
- ✓ Supply only equipment/toys that are suited to the developmental age of the child.
- ✓ Check the environment for hazards on an ongoing basis (at least daily). Implement a safety checklist to ensure a safe play environment.
- ✓ When using playground equipment, check the clothing of each child for straps, buckles, hoods and strings that could become snagged. Long hair should be tied

back or tucked in.

- ✓ Have simple, clear rules that can be understood by each child. Phrase the rules and guidelines in such a way that they tell the child what to DO as opposed to what not to DO.
- ✓ Many injuries occur to children as pedestrians. On outings and field trips, use a rope that each child must hold. Place one leader at the front of the line and one at the end.
- ✓ Educate the children on traffic safety. Make the outings safe and fun.
- ✓ Ensure that outdoor play spaces are enclosed by a fence or a similar barrier.
- ✓ Ensure that the appropriate play surfacing is used in all areas of the outdoor play area.
- ✓ Guidelines and rules need to be consistent among all ECE's so that children are not confused.
- ✓ Have information cards on all children. These can be used for attendance purposes while on field trips. Cards should also contain medical information and emergency telephone numbers.

In case of emergency:

- ✓ Be prepared.
- ✓ Have mandatory first aid/CPR training for all employees. Make sure that this training is regularly updated.
- ✓ Develop an emergency plan. Quick action often reduces the seriousness of injuries.
- ✓ Preplan activities that will keep other children occupied if a child should become injured.
- ✓ Refer to the child's information card that will contain his or her medical information and emergency telephone numbers.

* from: *Active Living for Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers*, (1994) published by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SECTION IV: ACTIVE LIVING

For infants, active living means to reach out, to crawl, to walk and to play simple games. For toddlers, it means jumping, running, exploring. For preschoolers, living actively involves playing games with loving adults and friends, singing, dancing and skating.

Very young children living actively are eager to explore their world and to move freely through it. Activity satisfies their curiosity and gives them real happiness. Movement is an important part of a child's physical, emotional and mental development.

For school age children and youth, active living builds on their natural enjoyment of physical activity. Their overall well being is enhanced by integrating physical activity into all aspects of their daily life. Positive attitudes towards active living in the younger years will result in more involvement in sports and fitness activities later in life.

Canadians are recognizing the need for an active and healthy lifestyle. However, many Canadian children are still not as fit as they should be.

Modern life has created a society that is generally less active. Children today are more restricted in their freedom to move about their neighbourhoods on their own. They are driven to and from most of their activities. It is estimated that more than half of Canadian children are not active enough to promote healthy growth and development. Recently, there has been significant coverage in the media reporting high rates of childhood obesity. It is estimated that 25% of children are considered obese and the numbers are increasing all the time. Research suggests that from 1981-1996, the incidence of overweight has doubled and obesity tripled among boys and girls.

The main reasons for this increase are:

- § Overall lack of regular physical activity - Many children and youth are not getting enough physical activity due to the increased amount of time spent sitting around watching TV, using the computer and playing other video type games. Many of the sports activities are structured and organized in such a way that parents often drive their children to and from these activities. There is also less time devoted to physical education in schools.
- Poor eating habits - Many children and youth consume an overabundance of fast foods, junk foods and convenience type meals that are very high in fat and calories.

The high rates of obesity and lack of physical activity are significant threats to the health and well being of Canada's children and youth. Childhood is the perfect time to acquire active living skills and to develop the enjoyment that active living brings. It has been demonstrated that children who are active have better attitudes towards health, more positive health behaviours, and are more fit as they get older.

Young children are physically active not because of the benefits they perceive but simply because of the fun they have. It is a period of tremendous potential as they learn to accomplish new tasks and enjoy increasing physical growth which allows them to experiment with new challenges.

Children develop both large and small muscles of the body through play as they engage in constant movement and manipulation. Gross motor skills allow the child to develop coordination, balance, flexibility, agility, strength and endurance. In addition, they are conditioning these muscles as well as their hearts, blood vessels, and lungs.

Whether it is swinging, sliding, running, climbing, balancing, riding or water play, children develop and refine their movement skills. Interactive play such as “hide and seek”, “tag” or “follow the leader”, often come next. These set the foundation for teamwork.

Every effort should be made to provide the same opportunities for physical activities within your child care setting for boys and girls. The gender of a child is not relevant when planning physical activities and games. Gender stereotypes towards physical activity have led to lower fitness levels of girls. Choose toys and equipment that cannot be labelled male or female. Toys such as balls, hula hoops, bean bags, balance boards are used by all children and are good examples for use in the child care setting. Children with special needs may need to have the environment or the activity modified to encourage their active involvement in physical activity. Keep activities short. Adapt games and activities to meet level of children. Equipment may also need to be modified for use by a child with special needs. It is important to remember that no children should be excluded from an activity as this affects their self-esteem.

Benefits of Active Living

There are many benefits to active living. Active living:

- improves overall health and fitness.
- promotes a healthy weight.
- promotes stronger muscles and bones.
- enhances posture, balance and coordination.
- promotes a positive self image.
- improves self-confidence.
- encourages new friendships and improved social skills.
- improves emotional well being.
- helps children cope with the pressures and stresses of childhood and adolescence.
- helps children improve academic skills e.g. problem solving.
- improves energy levels.
- encourages a healthier lifestyle in adult life.
- develops competence in movement.

Promoting Active Living with Preschoolers

Early childhood educators are in an ideal position to help young children develop the skills necessary to live a healthy active lifestyle. Children need good role models and early childhood educators who participate actively and who have a positive attitude toward active living are more likely to get active participation from the children in their care.

Children learn to understand movement by exploration, experimentation, trial, error and imitation. These traits combined with encouragement, direction and practice will help them refine their skills. Physical activities need to be child centred and should cater to the individual needs and skill levels of each child. While some children may have more highly developed skills, it is more important to promote cooperation and not competition. Children also need reinforcement for improvements in skill development. Remember that the activities are for children and should be fun. If an activity is not working, maybe it could be changed or improved or perhaps another activity is best.

The following tables outline some characteristics of preschoolers and offer some suggestions for the types of active living in which they are best suited to participate.

MOTOR

CHARACTERISTICS	SUGGESTIONS
Children are relatively competent in running and jumping. They are developing their hopping abilities. They enjoy moving quickly and in different directions. They enjoy stop and go games.	Create environments that encourage children to move in different ways, in a variety of directions, and at different speeds.
Balance is gradually developing. Children are capable of maintaining their balance on one foot for a short period of time. They enjoy balancing on different body parts	Provide opportunities for children to stand on one foot. Children can create statues and creatures. Encourage children to develop balance at their own rate.
Children are rapidly developing their abilities to kick, throw, catch, and strike. They are capable of learning and practising a variety of individual skills.	Encourage individual skill development. Modified team games are sometimes appropriate with the oldest children. Encourage cooperation, not competition. Do not keep score. Children should play in small groups, with very few, if any, rules. Rules should only be used to maintain a safe playing environment. Make sure each child experiences success.

INTELLECTUAL

CHARACTERISTICS	SUGGESTIONS
Children have well-developed imaginations.	Provide an environment that allows children to use their natural creativity and desire to experimentation
Perceptual abilities are developing	Provide frequent opportunities for children to develop skills that have been demonstrated.
Attention span is short, but increasing as the child ages. Memory is slowly developing.	Change the activities frequently. Provide games and equipment that challenge memory skills.
Verbal communication skills are developing rapidly. Children are improving their ability to think rationally.	Provide clear, concise, and logical commands. Provide children with opportunities to tell you their stories Try not to interrupt them. They want you to listen

SOCIAL

CHARACTERISTICS	SUGGESTIONS
Children are eager to try new experience on their own.	Provide children with opportunities to learn new skills in a safe environment.
Children are egocentric and very sensitive. They are easily embarrassed.	Avoid placing children in threatening situations where incompetence will likely be demonstrated. Be aware of their individual skill levels. Do not make fun of a child's behaviour
Children like to play with other children.	Games in small groups are very appropriate.
Children are constantly seeking approval. It is important for them to please others, particularly adults.	Provide constant encouragement. Positively reinforce desirable behaviour.
Children have well-developed imaginations.	Provide children with opportunities to participate in activities that allow them to explore, imagine, and create.
Children are starting to develop decision making decisions. Involve children in age-appropriate decision making.	Children are better able to control their frustrations. Encourage children to develop movement skills at their own rate. Provide children with opportunities to practice individual skills and achieve success.
Children like to know the purpose for playing a game or participating in an activity.	Explain the benefits of the activity to the children.

Source: *Movability, Ontario Physical and Health Education Association, Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation.*

Active Living Experiences

Music is a great addition to active living, Music can motivate, excite, accompany, slow down and relax children. Try to incorporate music, singing or rhythm into each of the following activities.

Safety must always be the first consideration when planning active living experiences for children. Adequate supervision and child providers ratios are essential. Be prepared - anticipate and eliminate any possible dangers as a result of a particular activity. Remember the aim of the game is to have fun.

Following are some activities to encourage physical activity which you may add to your grab bag.

Ages 24 months to 36 months.

Zoo Loo

Have the children move their bodies to imitate animals' movement. Musical accompaniment from percussion instruments or records will stimulate children to

- slither along the ground like a snake;
- stomp along like a big black bear;
- hop like a kangaroo that never stops;
- crawl along like a slow old turtle carrying his heavy house on his back;
- fly like a bird so high in the sky;
- climb like a monkey up in a tree;
- gallop like a horse crossing in a field.

Good Morning World (To strengthen arms)

Position: Lie flat on your stomach with your hands on the floor and underneath your shoulders.

Action: Pretend to fall asleep, relaxing with no sound or movement. "Wake Up" saying "Good Morning, World" by raising your bodies to a semi-push up, keeping your hips, leg and feet on the floor. Lower your bodies and relax.

Jack in the Box (To strengthen leg muscles and build endurance)

Position: Demonstrate for the child by squatting and placing hands on floor by feet.

Action: Yell "jack in the box" and jump up high. Landing should be on the balls of the feet. Hips, knees and ankles should flex. Repeat

Ages 36 months to 5 years

Circle Time Activities

Circle time activities should include action songs and action games such as “All Around the Mulberry Bush” and “Simon Says”. Promote the involvement of different body parts.

Toe Touches (To stretch the muscles of the arms, back, and legs)

Position: Stand with hands stretched above head.

Action: Bend over and touch toes with knees slightly bent.

Telephone Sit (To stretch the backs of the legs, hip, groin, seat and abdominal muscles.)

Position: Sit with legs extended in front.

Action: Pick up the right foot with right hand and raise it to touch the ear on the same side. The heel of the foot can be a mouthpiece to talk to your favourite person. Repeat on the opposite side.

Sunrise, Sunset (To stretch and strengthen back and legs.)

Position: Sit cross-legged with knees bent, hands folded across chest, head between legs.

Action: On cue “the sun rises”, slowly unfold your bodies, pushing with hands, gradually rising to standing. Cue “the sun is setting” and reverse action returning to sitting position,.

Wiggle Toe Sit (To strengthen the abdomen)

Position: Lie flat on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor, hands stretched above head.

Action: Gradually sit up, grasping and wiggling toes. Child says, “Wiggle, wiggle, wiggle” to show success.

Pathways

Create pathways with obstacles such as cones and chairs that children can follow by walking, running, or steering a toy. Masking tape and rope pathways also provide challenges. Tape a pathway in a straight, angular, or curved pattern. Encourage your child to move, steer a riding toy, or push an object along the selected path.

Throw and Retrieve

Children enjoy throwing and retrieving objects such as a nerf ball, fluff ball, paper bag, or bean bag. Encourage children to experiment by:

- throwing the bean bag and retrieving it;
- throwing the bean bag high in the air and retrieving it;
- throwing the bean bag into a cardboard box;
- throwing the bean bag at a large Smiley Face target affixed to the wall.

Rhythm, Music and Dance

Encourage children to sing and dance. You can use music for walking, marching, hopping, turning, spinning, etc. Use action songs to get children moving and dancing. “Wheels on the Bus”, “Hop Little Bunnies”, “The Bear Walked Over the Mountain”, “Jack be Nimble”.

Move and Learn Games

This game is designed to combine learning and moving. The child can learn primary colours, numbers, letters, animals and shapes. Introduce only one concept at a time, reviewing the game several times before introducing a new concept. Select rubber-backed carpet pieces in blue, yellow and red. Place several pieces of each colour on the floor. There should be enough colours for each child to stand on; that is six children, six red squares, 6 blue squares, and 6 yellow squares. The children are asked to stand on their favourite colours. On the command, the children walk around the area. The adult calls, “Red ” and holds up a piece of red construction paper. The children stand on a red square. Repeat several times. As the children become more skilled, encourage them to share colour squares and remove the visual aid.

Parachute Games

Parachute games are exciting and provide opportunities for maximum participation and learning social and game skills. Purchase a parachute or make your own. You can make a parachute by cutting out pie shaped pieces of nylon and sewing them together in a circular shape. A hole in the centre is necessary to distribute air under the parachute. Games that can be played are: Row Your Boat, Merry-Go-Round, Up and Down, Popcorn, etc.

Source: *Active Living for Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers Information Folder. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador(1994) and Moving and Growing Exercises and Activities for Twos, Threes and Fours. Produced by Fitness Canada and the Canadian Institute of Child Health.*

Promoting Active Living for Adults

Working in a child care setting requires that the early childhood educator has physical stamina and a positive attitude. The early childhood educator's level of fitness has a tremendous influence on both of these characteristics. According to Active Living Canada, active living involves "*finding enjoyable opportunities in daily life to become physically active at home, school, work, and during leisure. It involves a range of activities, from walking and simple daily tasks to more vigorous activities. Together, these activities lead to improved physical health, overall well-being and an enhanced quality of life.*"

Becoming physically active has enormous health benefits. Regular activity builds strong bones and strengthens muscles. It helps you maintain flexibility and achieve a health weight. It promotes good posture and balance and improves overall fitness. Regular activity strengthens the heart, increases relaxation and improves your overall level of energy and physical self-esteem.

Adults need to have at least 60 minutes of light to moderate physical activity per day. This does not need to take place all at once - it can be four periods of 15 minutes. As the intensity of this physical activity increases, the time required can be reduced. If the activity is moderate to vigorous, 30 minutes per day can be all that is required to stay physically fit.

When thinking about physical activity, it is helpful to think of the three main activity groups - endurance, flexibility and strength. Examples of physical activities that help to increase endurance include walking, cycling, skating and dancing. Activities that promote flexibility include gardening, vacuuming, yoga, and curling. Strength training activities include raking and carrying leaves, lifting and carrying groceries, climbing stairs, and weight/strength-training routines. Incorporating these types of activities into your day can be as easy as taking the stairs at work whenever possible, parking the car in the furthest parking spot at the mall, getting off the bus two stops before your regular stop and walking the rest of the way, dancing to the music being played in the music area, playing a game of tag with the children in the outdoor play area, taking a ten minute walk during the lunch break. Eventually these activities will become part of your everyday routine and it would feel strange to not do them. Health Canada has published a physical activity guide that provides a lot of information on ways to incorporate physical activity into your day. This guide can be obtained by contacting Health Canada at 1-888-334-9769 or by visiting their website at www.paguide.com

Other useful websites include:

Healthy active living for children and youth fact sheet available from
<http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/healthy/healthyactive.htm>
www.canadian-health-network.ca
www.activeliving.ca

Promoting Healthy Living for Adults

Besides being physically active, adults who work with young children benefit from possessing other healthy living habits as well. Eating right, not smoking and taking time to relax are some of the ways that early childhood educators can take care of themselves. Working with children is a demanding job, physically and emotionally, and in order to function well in this position, it is vital that early childhood educators take care of themselves. The Provincial Department of Health and Community Services website provides access to a number of helpful links relating to nutrition, physical fitness, smoking cessation and other health related issues. It can be accessed by clicking on <http://www.infonet.st-johns.nf.ca/providers/nhhp/links.html>

Eating right provides adults with the energy they will need in their work with young children. Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating, which can be obtained by contacting Health Canada or by clicking on: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/onpp-bppn/food_guide_rainbow_e.html. This site provides information on what foods help to make up a nutritious diet. When ECEs sit down with the children during meals and snacks and eat what they eat they are providing the children with healthy role models as well as getting some nutritious food during the day.

Statistics regarding smoking are well-known. For example, more than 45,000 people in Canada will die this year due to smoking related illnesses. Over one thousand of these people will be non-smokers who are made ill by second-hand smoke. A person who smokes is twenty times more likely to die of lung cancer than someone who does not smoke. Although the hazards are well known, people continue to smoke, harming not just themselves but the people around them. Smokers who work with young children are not only affecting their own health but also the children with whom they work. The smell of cigarettes on a smoker's clothes and in their hair is generally unmistakable so even if the adult does not smoke in the presence of the children, it can become obvious to the children who smokes and who doesn't. Early childhood educators are role models for children, who often imitate what they see. Imitating healthy habits is much preferable for a child's health and well-being. Quitting smoking can be difficult. For more information on how to quit smoking click on www.smokingsucks.nfld.net This website has a wealth of resources, information and facts about smoking. Another helpful website is www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hecs-sesc/tobacco/quitting/index.html

Taking care of one's emotional needs is important as well. ECE's do not always have control over what causes them stress but they do have control over how they react to stressful situations. Remaining calm and professional, seeking support from colleagues, taking regular breaks, getting plenty of rest and practicing healthy living habits are all ways that help to promote mental health. Having a circle of friends and a fun and active social life makes a big difference as well. Sometimes it takes an effort to cultivate and maintain friendships, however, just like healthy eating and active living, a little effort can have a big pay off.

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Appendix A - Favourite Authors of High Quality Children's Literature

The following list represents some favourite authors of high quality children's literature. Of course there are many more great authors, however, this list can help to get you started on building a developmentally appropriate, high quality, well stocked book area.

Mitsumasa Anno
Molly Bang
Jan Brett
Margaret Wise Brown
John Burningham
Eric Carle
Mem Fox
Gyo Fujikawa
Paul Galdone
Phoebe Gilman
Mirra Ginsburg
Tana Hoban
Eric Hill
Pat Hutchins
Ezra Jack Keats
Dorothy Kunhardt
Arnold Lobel
Bill Martin Jr.
Robert Munsch
Laura Numeroff
Hilda Offen
Helen Oxenbury
Dav Pilkey
Barbara Reid
Maurice Sendak
Dr. Seuss
Peter Spier
Nancy Tafuri
Brian Wildsmith
Vera B. Williams
Audrey Wood and Don Wood
Charlotte Zolotow

Appendix B - List of Picture Books Suitable for Reading to Emergent/Early Readers
*Those marked with an * have a predictable pattern.*

*Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day. Judith Viorst, Atheneum.

*Are you my Mother? P.D. Eastman. Viking

The Bear's Picnic. S. and J. Bernstein. Random House

Blueberries for Sal. Robert McClosky. Viking

Bread and Jam for Francis. Russell Hoban. Harper Collins

*Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do You See? Bill Martin Jr. Holt

*Caps for Sale. Esphyr Slobodkina. Harper Collins

The Carrot Seed. Ruth Kraus. Harper Collins

A Chair for My Mother. Vera Williams. Greenwillow

*Chicka Chicka Boom Boom. Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault

*Chicken Soup with Rice. Maurice Sendak. Harper and Row

Curious George. H. Rey. Houghton

*Each Peach Pear Plum. J. Ahlberg. Viking

*Green Eggs and Ham. Dr. Seuss. Beginner Books

*Goodnight Moon. Margaret Wise Brown. Harper Collins

*The Grouchy Ladybug. E. Carle Philomel

*Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed. (retold) Eileen Christelow

Harold and the Purple Crayon. Crockett Johnson. Harper Collins

*Horton Hatches the Egg. Dr. Seuss. Random House

If you Give a Mouse a Muffin. L. Numeroff. Harper Collins

Standards for Early Childhood Programs in Centre-Based Child Care
List of Picture Books Suitable for Reading to Emergent/Early Readers (cont'd)

- *I Know an Old Lady. R. Bonnie. Scholastic
- *"I can't," said the ant. P. Cameron. Coward, McCann & Geoghegan
- I Read Signs. Tana Hoban. Simon & Schuster
- I Went Walking. S Machin. Scholastic
- Ira Sleeps Over. Bernard Waber. Houghton
- Leo the Late Bloomer. Robert Kraus. Harper Collins
- Little Blue and Little Yellow. Leo Lionni. Asto-Homor.
- *The Little Dog Laughed and Other Nursery Rhymes. Lucy Cousins. Dutton.
- *The Little Red Hen. (retold). J. Domanska. Hamish Hamilton
- Little Red Riding Hood. (retold by Paul Galdone). McGraw-Hill.
- *Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile. Bernard Waber. Houghton.
- Madeline. L. Bemelmans. Puffin Books.
- Make Way for Ducklings. Robert McCloskey. Viking
- Mr. Grumpy's Outing. John Burningham. Harcourt.
- Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me. Eric Carle. Simon & Schuster.
- *Over in the Meadow. John Langstaff. Harcourt
- Rosie's Walk. Pat Hutchins. Simon & Schuster
- The Snowy Day. Ezra Jack-Keats. Viking.
- Stone Soup. (retold) Marcia Brown. Simon & Schuster
- The Story of Ferdinand. Munro Leaf. Viking.
- The Tale of Peter Rabbit. Beatrice Potter. Warner.

List of Picture Books Suitable for Reading to Emergent/Early Readers (cont'd)

The Three Billy Goats Gruff. (retold) Paul Galdone.

There's a Nightmare in my Closet. Mercer Mayer. Dial Press.

*The Three Little Pigs. P. Galdone. Seabury Press.

*A Treeful of Pigs. A. Lobel. Greenwillow.

*Too Much Noise. A. McGovern. Houghton & Mifflin.

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar. Eric Carle. Philomel.

*What do you do with a Kangaroo? M. Mayer. Scholastic.

*The Wheels on the Bus. Paul Zelinsky. Dutton.

Where the Wild Things Are. Maurice Sendak. Harper Collins.

Where's Spot? Eric Carle. Putman.

"You look ridiculous," said the rhinoceros to the hippopotamus. B. Wabber. Houghton & Mifflin.

Booklist from "First Steps: A Resource Handbook on Oral Language and Literacy Development for Caregivers" by Ruth Hayden, Ph.D. and Maureen Sanders, M.Ed. Centre for Family Literacy, Edmonton, Alberta. (2003) used with permission.

