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Excerpts from “ELECT”

Foundational knowledge from the 2007 publication of *Early Learning for Every Child Today: A framework for Ontario early childhood settings*



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In January 2007, the government published *Early Learning for Every Child Today: A Framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings*. This document was developed by the Best Start Expert Panel on Early Learning to help to improve quality and consistency in early childhood settings across Ontario. This framework, often referred to as ELECT or the Early Learning Framework (ELF) throughout the province, sets out six principles to guide practice in early years settings. It also provides a continuum of development for children from birth to age eight.

The *Statement of Principles and Understanding of Children's Development* sections from ELECT have been reproduced here, with no changes from the original document, and are provided as a companion to *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*. ELECT is recognized as a foundational document in the early years sector. It provides a shared language and common understanding of children's learning and development for early years professionals as they work together in various early childhood settings. The principles of ELECT have informed provincial child care policy, such as the *Ontario Early Years Policy Framework*, as well as pan-Canadian early learning initiatives such as the Statement on Play of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. ELECT principles are also embedded in the program document used in Ontario's innovative Kindergarten program.

ELECT provides the groundwork for *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*. The goals for children and expectations for programs that are set out in *How Does Learning Happen?*, incorporate and build on foundational knowledge about children and child development discussed in ELECT. *How Does Learning Happen?* provides a way to think about the ELECT principles and how they work together.

A solid understanding of child development is essential for educators. ELECT provides a continuum of development as one, among many ways, to understand children. The continuum of development helps educators to articulate children's observed behaviours and discuss their emerging skills with families and others. Knowing what to expect in typically developing children can also help educators to recognize when a child is experiencing challenges or when his/her needs are not being met. While the continuum of development is broken down into separate domains, it is important to keep in mind that all aspects of human development are interconnected. It is also important to note that the continuum of development does not suggest a lock-step, universal pattern of what should be achieved according to a specific timetable nor is it intended to be used as an assessment tool or checklist of tasks to be completed.

The resources provided by the Ministry including *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*, ELECT, as well as the *Think, Feel, Act* videos and research briefs provide a starting point to strengthen the quality of early years programs and services across Ontario as we explore together, how learning happens.

Statement of Principles

Early Learning for Every Child Today brings together established research findings and diverse perspectives, beliefs and recommended practices. It recognizes that families, communities and cultures hold distinct values about how young children should experience and interact with the world around them.

Values are complemented by detailed attention to the early child development research in the fields of early childhood education, family studies, developmental psychology, neurosciences, anthropology, sociology, pediatrics and epidemiology.

Early child development sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health.²

Early development takes place in the context of families and communities and is shaped by the day-to-day experiences and environments of early life. The steady drip of daily life (Barr, 2001) establishes pathways for lifelong learning, behaviour and health that are inextricably linked to the development of the whole child.

The brain orchestrates physical, social, emotional, linguistic and cognitive development. It governs capacities to learn, ways of behaving, and immune and hormone systems that influence physical and emotional health (Mustard, 2006).

Genes set the parameters for the basic structures of the developing brain, but it is a child's interactions and relationships with parents and significant others that establish neural circuits and shape the brain's architecture (Shonkoff, 2006).

The dynamic dance between genetic and environmental variability establishes neural pathways and the biological potential for learning from experience, including the capacity to perceive, organize and respond. The brain's capacity for higher-level human functions, such as the ability to attend, interact with others, signal emotions and use symbols to think, builds on this platform.

The brain's architecture and a child's skills are built from the bottom up. Neural circuits that process basic information are wired before those that process more complex information. The sequence is similar for all children but the rate of development and variety of pathways vary, illustrating the wide arc of human possibilities.

"Early brain development sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health."
- (Mustard, 2006)



² This section is based on Mustard, J.F. (2006) *Early Child Development and Experience-based Brain Development: The Scientific Underpinnings of the Importance of Early Child Development in a Globalized World* Brookings Institute.

Children begin life ready for relationships that drive early brain development (Greenspan & Shanker, 2004). The abilities of children to regulate their own emotions, behaviours and attention increase over time with maturation, experience and responsive relationships. Supporting self-regulation is a central focus of early development because self-regulation skills lead to physical, social, emotional, behavioural and cognitive competence.

Differing cultural and social contexts, including quality of stimulation, availability of resources and preferred patterns of interactions within communities, interact with each child's potential for development (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2005; Greenspan & Shanker, 2004).



Early brain development benefits from interactions with adults who are responsive and from activities that challenge young children. Access to shelter, clean water and food, and to developmental opportunities such as parks, high-quality early childhood programs and libraries increases families' abilities to be responsive and stimulating. Fewer resources make it more difficult to sustain optimal conditions for development.

Unfortunately, one quarter of children in Canada are vulnerable when they enter Grade 1 – they have learning, health and behaviour problems that are likely to interfere with their academic achievement and abilities to get along with others (Willms, 2002; Kershaw, 2006; Janus, 2006).

In some communities, the percentage of vulnerable children is much higher. Many families and communities face societal barriers (such as poverty, employment demands, transient living conditions, parental health problems, minority ethno-cultural, racial or linguistic status and limited time and/or resources) that make it difficult to support their children's optimal early development.

While children facing these barriers are more likely to have problems, vulnerable children are present across the socio-economic spectrum. Early identification of learning and other developmental difficulties combined with additional support to families can lead to interventions that reduce difficulties and set children on more optimal developmental pathways.

Recent attention to rising rates of childhood obesity and subsequent health problems highlights the importance of physical health and well-being in early life (Health Council, 2006). Nutritional diets, physical activity, ability to handle day-to-day challenges and awareness of healthy habits in the early years set a biological foundation and behaviours that promote well-being and healthy choices into adulthood (Mustard, 2006).

Partnerships with families and communities strengthen the ability of early childhood settings to meet the needs of young children.

The web of family and community is the child's anchor for early development. Families are the first and most powerful influence on children's early learning and development.

Families live in, and belong to, multiple communities that may support or thwart their ability to support young children's optimal development. Relationships between early childhood settings and families and their communities benefit children when those relationships are respectful of family structure, culture, values, language and knowledge (Weiss, Caspe, & Lopez, 2006).

Increasing families' participation in their children's early learning and development reaps powerful benefits (Mustard 2006, Greenspan & Shanker, 2004). Families provide both learning and care.

'Learning' begins as infants seek patterns and begin to recognize the familiar voices and faces of family members; in turn, responses to infant cues set in motion a dynamic learning system. Contingent and sensitive responsiveness to children's signals is a natural form of teaching and learning.

As children grow, families can offer learning opportunities that are based on the deep knowledge they have of their children. This can take the form of conversations in the home, shared reading, outings, recreational activities and other meaningful moment-by-moment experiences.

'Care' begins prior to birth and continues throughout life through feeding, sheltering, nurturing, stimulating and protecting. Care and learning cannot really be separated since high quality care includes learning and high quality learning is dependent on care.

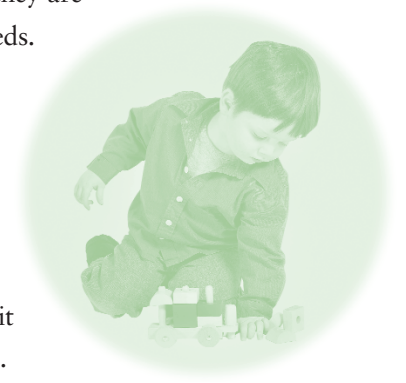
Family involvement in early childhood settings benefits children (Weiss et al., 2006) and multiplies children's opportunities for learning. Parents and other caregivers who are involved in early childhood settings tend to be more supportive of children's learning and their children tend to have positive outcomes in primary grades (Cleveland et al., 2006; Sylva et al., 2004).

Early childhood settings can reinforce the interrelationship of care and learning and the benefits of direct family participation in children's early learning and development.

Family involvement practice in early childhood programs needs to go beyond *whether* parents are involved and focus on *how* they are involved and what happens as a result (Corter & Pelletier, 2004).

- Benefits are greatest when there is planned programming for children and their families and relationships with families are based on mutual trust and respect and are sensitive to family culture, values, language and composition (Bernhard, Freire, & Mulligan, 2004; Gonzalez-Mena, 2005). Guidelines for culturally responsive family involvement emphasize respectful dialogue and awareness of cross-cultural communication skills.

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- Parents want to understand how their children develop and learn. They benefit from observations and information about how to support learning and recognize how their children are doing. Parents also benefit from having a say in what is offered in the program and what goes into the curriculum.
 - Early childhood programs need family/community perspectives if they are going to serve young children in light of parent and community needs.
 - Learning about community life can be part of projects in early childhood settings that include community field visits, community experts and relevant artifacts from home and community to promote learning. Links within communities bring together families, schools and early childhood programs and bring the local environment into the daily activities of young children. Children benefit from respectful interactions with a variety of community members.
 - Early childhood settings have daily opportunities to connect families with each other. They have strengths, experiences and skills that they can share with one another (Gordon, 2005; Wilson, 2006). Families who are newcomers to Canada and far away from family and friends who share similar cultural traditions, or those who speak languages other than English or French, gain from meeting each other. Families also benefit when they learn about child rearing practices from families that have different backgrounds. Informal social networks among families with young children can become valuable resources that promote children's health and well-being (McCain & Mustard, 1999; Weiss et al., 2006).



Family and community involvement is a focus for educational improvement in Canada and internationally (Pelletier, 2006). Family involvement in schools is associated with academic success across all socio-economic groups.

Families who are involved are more likely to establish peer networks with other families and to have more information about their children's school. Family involvement in school settings includes parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community. These strategies can be useful to organizing family involvement in early childhood settings (Epstein & Sanders, 2002; Corter & Pelletier, 2005).

Family involvement studies in early childhood settings illustrate an array of different program types (see Cleveland et al., 2006). They include home- and centre-based programs and activities. They aim to support families and parents to improve children's early environments and outcomes.

Because they are so varied, finding out what really works is difficult. The clearest effects seem to be when programming for parents and other caregivers is combined with programming for their young children. Engaging parents and other family members in children's activities connects them to their children's early development and ignites the child's learning (Gordon, 2005).

Early childhood settings provide information and resources that families can use to enhance development, as well as early interventions that can help children experiencing developmental difficulties and delays.

The challenge is often linking families to needed resources. Early childhood settings can communicate with, and connect families to, other community resources, including public health, primary health care, housing and specialized services.

The recommendations of the Report of the Expert Panel on the 18-Month Well Baby Visit (Ontario Children's Health Network & Ontario College of Family Physicians, 2005) identify the role of the primary health care system as pivotal in reaching all young children and their families. The 18-Month Expert Panel recommended an enhanced 18-Month Well Baby Visit with a primary care practitioner (family physician, primary care paediatrician, nurse practitioner).

The 18-Month Well Baby Visit is coupled to the last of the immunization visits for several years and includes a developmental review, discussion about healthy child development, information about parenting and community early childhood settings and referrals to early childhood settings and other specialized services as needed (Williams, Biscaro, Van Lankveld, 2006).

Demonstration of respect for diversity, equity and inclusion are prerequisites for optimal development and learning.

All children have a right to live and learn in an equitable society. Early childhood settings can plan for meaningful engagement and equitable outcomes for all children.

They can take into account the differences each child and family brings to an early childhood setting including appearance, age, culture, ethnicity, race, language, gender, sexual orientation, religion, family environment and developmental abilities.

Young children with different abilities, challenges, resources and cultural backgrounds, and their families, come together in early childhood settings. They bring unique life experiences and orientations.

They and their families benefit most when they are fully included and when they feel that they belong. Children grow up with a strong sense of self in environments that promote attitudes, beliefs and values of equity and democracy and support their full participation (Bennett, 2004).

To include everyone, early childhood settings must encourage healthy dialogue about the principles and shared beliefs that relate to inclusion, diversity and equity. They must recognize every child as a citizen with equal rights and unique views about how to participate in the world.

To turn belief statements and principles into practice at the community level requires an infrastructure that actively promotes engagement of all children and their families (Bernhard, Lero & Greenberg, 2006).

Ontario is a province of many cultures, religions and languages, particularly in its urban centres. English or French language may be unfamiliar to many children and they need support to maintain and expand their home language as well as learn a new one.

For many children, mainstream Canadian culture is different from their home environments. All children gain when they learn early to live together comfortably with others who look and talk differently than themselves (McCain & Mustard, 1999; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

Early childhood settings can be pro-active in identifying strategies that will respect families' diverse linguistic, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds and value this diversity as an asset that enriches the environment for everyone.

- Effective strategies begin by identifying the early learning and child care needs of families in their communities, and taking this information into account when planning the curriculum and pedagogy of the program (Ali, 2005; Bernhard, 2003). Because many children live in newcomer, immigrant and refugee families, information that is collected should include migration history.
- Meaningful participation for all requires strategies for second language acquisition (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2004; Tabors & Snow, 2001). Children who are learning English or French as an additional language benefit when their first language is valued. It is a challenge to know what children are capable of learning when early childhood practitioners and children and their families do not share the same language. In order to be able to determine a child's capacity to learn, the child needs adequate opportunities to learn in a language that she or he can understand. Interpreters can increase the level of effective communication with parents.
- Preconceived notions about children's ethno-cultural backgrounds, gender, abilities or socio-economic circumstances create barriers that reduce engagement and equitable outcomes (Bernhard, Freire & Mulligan, 2004). Addressing prejudices increases the involvement of all children. Early childhood practitioners can take actions to avoid prejudice and to counteract bias when it occurs in early childhood settings.

"A language thrives when people use it in daily communication and when it permeates the space in which they live and build their communities."

**Aménagement Linguistique
Ontario Ministry of Education**

- Early childhood settings in Francophone communities can contribute to the protection, enhancement and transmission of the French language and culture in Ontario (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006). *Aménagement Linguistique* refers to language planning and is a policy for Ontario's French language schools and Francophone community. Early childhood settings should adopt the same guidelines and ensure that young Francophone children and their families are exposed to as much French as possible before entry to Grade 1.

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- Aboriginal early childhood settings require programming that values Aboriginal languages and culture and is generated from the community rather than imposed on the community (Ball, 2005).
 - Rural and remote communities require flexible early childhood settings that can adapt to the challenges of geographic distances and isolation (Gott & Wilson, 2004). *Early Learning for Every Child Today* can be used as a structure to programming so that children and families in rural and remote areas have the same opportunities as those living in more urban regions.
 - Early childhood settings can organize programming to use the diversity of the participants as an asset that enriches the environment for everyone.

Children with developmental difficulties, particularly those who have special needs, can benefit from participation in quality early childhood settings with other children. But despite the good intentions of inclusion, mere exposure to age-appropriate activities and peers is no guarantee that children with special needs will experience positive interactions with their peers or acquire new skills (Frankel, 2004; Irwin, Lero & Brophy, 2004).

Some children need different balances of child- and adult-directed activity. For some children, special programming strategies are necessary to support more positive interactions with peers, greater involvement in play opportunities and social skill development.

Children who are vulnerable (that is, are experiencing developmental difficulties) may have more difficulties with the social and emotional demands of early childhood settings (Lero, Irwin & Darisi, 2006). They may need additional attention in supporting their abilities to build relationships, use language and develop trust.

Early childhood settings should check their curriculum and pedagogy against program standards that reflect inclusion (for example, see Irwin, 2005). Additional early childhood practitioners with specific expertise who can build and support capacity may be needed to support inclusion.

Programs may require technical support and special consultancy or special equipment and materials.



A planned curriculum supports early learning.

Curriculum is often described as the content of early childhood settings (National Research Council, 2001). It includes the organization of the physical space, materials and activities that are designed to encourage learning processes, skills and the acquisition of specific information.

A planned curriculum with goals for children's learning and development impacts on the quality of early childhood settings (Cleveland et al., 2006; Sylva et al., 2004; National Research Council, 2001; Bennett, 2004; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2006).

- It begins with an informed understanding of what children are capable of learning and how they learn effectively.
- It has specific goals for children that support self-regulation (behaviour, emotion and attention), identity, social inclusion, health and well-being, language and thinking skills, and physical skills, as well as the foundation knowledge and concepts needed for literacy and numeracy.
- It provides structure and direction for early childhood practitioners who support the development of capacities and skills while respecting a child's interests and choices (Bennett, 2004).



Many factors contribute to children's early learning and development so it is difficult for researchers to isolate the impact of any one curriculum (e.g., Reggio Emilia, High Scope, Montessori). The effect of an individual teacher, early childhood educator or family worker can outweigh the effect of a particular curricular approach.

Curriculum should be applied in context of how well it enables children's full participation (Bernhard et al., 2006; Bernhard, Lefebvre, Chud & Lange, 1997). What is clear is that having a planned curriculum with specific goals for children's holistic development and families' participation benefits children's enjoyment, development and learning.

A broad research base on early learning and development informs the development and selection of curriculum approaches (National Research Council, 2001; Galinsky, 2006; Bennett, 2004; Sirgi-Blatchfield et al. 2003; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2006).

- Learning is fundamentally social and takes place within children's cultural contexts. During the early years, children learn through active engagement, activity, observations, experimentation and social interactions with others. As they develop an understanding about themselves and others, they learn to regulate their emotions, attend to what is important, and to make plans – all based on the cultural values and practices embedded in their social and physical environments. A planned curriculum can support children's interactions with other children and adults and respect those values and practices.

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- During early childhood, children learn how to learn. Children construct knowledge through physical activity, social interactions with others and their own active thinking. Children practise the tools of learning: how to plan, monitor, revise, reflect, investigate and solve problems; and to see and exchange points of view with others. Through observation and action, children form their own hypotheses, try them out, find out what happens and formulate their own answers. Children develop learning strategies from first-hand actions with objects in their world and from exchanging points of view with peers and adults.
 - Children build new understandings from existing ideas and concepts. Starting from what children know and want to know motivates engagement and excitement about overcoming challenges and solving problems. First hand, concrete experiences shape ideas that can be expressed symbolically in drawings, paintings, dramatic play, and in verbal and written forms (Greenspan & Shanker, 2004). Learning proceeds from the concrete to the abstract.
 - Basic skills and facts are meaningless if they are not part of a larger context (Wein, 2005). Information and skills become knowledge when facts are combined with concepts (Keating, 1998; National Research Council, 2001). For example, literacy emerges when children mimic the reading and writing process. Children derive meaning from text by combining a growing sense of story and the structure of language with the idea that print represents spoken language and thoughts. Children's ability to derive meaning from text is further enhanced with greater understanding of letter-sound relationships and word recognition (Neuman & Dickinson, 2001; Bennett, 2004).

Play is a means to early learning that capitalizes on children's natural curiosity and exuberance.

Pedagogy is about how learning takes place. Play is child-centred activity that engages a young child and promotes learning (Berk & Winsler, 1995; Kagan & Britto, 2005; Kagan & Lowenstein, 2004; Greenspan & Shanker, 2004).

Play is how children make sense of the world and is an effective method of learning for young children. Ideas and skills become meaningful; tools for learning are practised; and concepts are understood.

Play engages children's attention when it offers a challenge that is within the child's capacity to master. Early childhood settings that value children's play create a "climate of delight" that honours childhood (ETFO, 1999). Effective settings take advantage of play and embed opportunities for learning in the physical environment and play activities.

Children who thrive in primary school and whose pathways are set for later academic success are those who enter Grade 1 with strong oral communication skills are confident, able to make friends, are persistent and creative in completing tasks and solving problems and excited to learn (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Bennett, 2004; National Research Council, 2001; Sylva et al., 2004; Maggi et al., 2005). These are the same qualities that children strengthen through high quality play during their early years.

The imitating and exploring play of infants and toddlers (and the underlying development and organization of the brain) evolve into symbolic thinking and the capacity for pretend or imaginative play. As children engage in pretend play with each other, they are learning to get along with each other, make compromises, resolve conflicts, regulate emotions and behaviour and initiate friendships.

Pretend play is a form of communication that requires the pretenders to communicate with each other using language gestures and symbolic objects to tell and retell stories (Berk & Winsler, 1995). Social competence, emotional and attention self-regulation and the ability to communicate with others are foundational to all types of learning and are best developed in play-based environments (Barnett et al., 2006; Ziegler, Singer & Bishop-Josef, 2005; Kagan & Lowenstein, 2004).

Pretend play is the primary mode of learning during the preschool years and continues to be important into the primary grades. Pretend play means practice in choosing, generating possibilities and taking risks.

“The developmental literature is clear: play stimulates physical, social, emotional and cognitive development in the early years. Children need time, space, materials and the support of informed parents and thoughtful, skilled early childhood educators in order to become master players. They need time to play for the sake of playing.”

Hewes (2006), *Let The Children Play*

Children use language and thinking skills to compare and plan, problem-solve, negotiate and evaluate in pretend play. Language shapes and extends their play as they express ideas and tell and retell stories. High quality pretend play means the child is deeply involved and is acquiring and practising emerging skills.

In pretend play, children try on a variety of roles and scenarios which facilitate perspective-taking and, later, abstract thought. The relationships between pretending and the development of mental representation have been studied extensively (for example, see Astington, 2004; Bergen 2002; Schwebel, Rosen & Singer, 1999).

Pretending involves mental representation. A child’s ability for joint planning and assigning roles during pretend play with other children is related to the child’s level of theory of mind or ability to understand that others have beliefs, desires and intentions that are different from one’s own.

The understanding that what one believes and what others believe may not be the same is a critical element in the development of theory of mind that is acquired around four years of age (Astington, 1993). Children’s abilities for joint planning and role assignments during pretend play expand (Moses & Carlson, 2004).

Although play is a well-established feature of early childhood education, there is often a lack of general understanding of the important contribution that high-quality play – especially pretend play – can make to children’s literacy, numeracy and inquiry skills in the early years.

If the focus shifts from play during preschool years to a strong emphasis on the formal instruction of isolated skills like learning symbols (letters, sounds, numbers), children’s literacy skills – as well as their numeracy and inquiry skills – may actually be reduced (Bennett, 2004; Nabuco & Sylva, 1996).

In fact, high-quality play that is mediated by adults who are play partners and able to inject small amounts of focused direct instruction based on the needs of the child into the daily play, is an effective pedagogy for emergent literacy, numeracy and inquiry skills (Clarke-Stewart & Allhusen, 2005; Kagan & Kauerz, 2006; Schweinhart, 2006; Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002).

Cognitive research points to the role of pretend play in literacy acquisition (National Research Council, 2001; Neuman & Dickinson, 2001; Zigler, Singer & Bishop-Josef, 2004). Symbolic play requires children to determine tasks and goals, to carry them out, and provides opportunities for narrative recall and use of complex language.

Children in complex pretend play situations use more advanced language and have higher levels of narrative structure than they do in other situations. Children become storytellers, creating new versions of familiar stories and composing new stories.

The ability to use narrative and more advanced oral language is linked to later reading comprehension and fluency (Roskos & Christie, 2004; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2005). When literacy materials are embedded within play settings in preschool, kindergarten and multi-age programs, studies find increases in children’s use of literacy materials and engagement in literacy acts (Zigler, Singer & Bishop-Josef, 2004).

By using and creating environmental print in their pretend play, children begin to understand what reading is and how print works. Pretend play helps children develop schemas and scripts as organized mental structures that are applied to understanding print.

Numerical thinking begins early in life. Young children’s informal mathematical knowledge is broad and complex. They begin to understand the language of numbers when they recognize quantity differences, the role of special numbers like five and ten and the relationships between big and little, large and small, more and less, tall and short.



The social environment in general, and rich pretend play opportunities with adult coaching in particular, provide counting words and mathematical relationships, including one-to-one correspondence and the various contexts in which numbers are used: to put things in order (ordinality) and to count “how many” (cardinality).

“Stacking blocks, and mixing sand and water, encourages logical-mathematical thinking, scientific reasoning and cognitive problem-solving... the learning that occurs is a by-product of play.”

– Cappon (2006), Canadian Council on Learning

Play can consolidate understanding about numbers, and children can then begin to use a number line that is a prerequisite for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division (Case, Griffin & Kelly, 1999; National Research Council, 2001). Play that involves games that use a number line, one-one correspondence and counting (for example, simplified variations of Snakes and Ladders) helps children master and integrate understanding about numbers (National Research Council, 2001).

Scientific reasoning begins in infancy (Gopnik, Meltzoff & Kuhl, 1999). Babies see how objects move and behave, gather information, build patterns of expectations about the world around them and form general categories.

Toddlers experiment with tools and learn to manipulate objects. They learn to solve simple problems they encounter in their environment (e.g., how to get an object out of reach or how to make their desires understood).

Preschool children use methods of inquiry including data collection, predicting, recording and talking about findings. Problems to be solved emerge in preschool pretend play.

Also, early childhood practitioners may introduce problems into the environment that engage children’s curiosity and provide opportunities for them to apply and reinforce their problem-solving skills.

In summary, children learn best when they can play, explore the world and interact with adults and peers. Their explorations require flexibility and inventiveness.

Children react to the outcomes of their investigations and create strategies for discovery. Play is the platform for inquiry and exploration.

Early childhood practitioners balance opportunities for the child to figure out how the world works and how to overcome challenges, with the practice necessary to perform skills effortlessly.

Knowledgeable and responsive early childhood practitioners are essential to early childhood settings.

Knowledge about and responsiveness to the developmental level and characteristics of the child, his or her family and communities are central to supporting learning and development in early childhood settings.

Early childhood practitioners who are responsive to children, their families and their communities, establish social and physical environments where children thrive.

Knowledgeable and responsive practitioners are **reflective practitioners**.

- **Reflective practitioners** use an emotionally warm and positive approach which leads to constructive behaviour in children (The Canadian Child Care Federation/Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 2003). Reflective thinking and empathy are required as children grow and meet the challenges of an increasingly complex world and diverse social environments. Reflective thinking and empathy have their roots in early relationships, where emotions are shared, communicated and expressed. Empathy is broadened when children share experiences, relate and respect each other in the context of caring, secure relationships with adults. When children share emotions and ideas with others, they come to feel that they are a part of another's feelings and ideas. Sharing emotions and ideas enables children to begin to see the world from another's perspective, to identify with others and to put themselves in someone else's shoes. Opportunities to connect ideas logically to pretend play are promoted by adults who value, respect and have concern for others while establishing responsible limits.
- **Reflective practitioners** integrate theoretical frameworks, research findings and their own daily experiences to guide their interactions with young children and their families. Reflective practitioners figure out how the children in their program think, learn and make sense of the world. They know what the children are currently capable of doing and what next steps are possible. Responsive adults help to focus children's observations, use language that describes events and ask questions that provoke children's thinking. Thus curriculum is meaningful when there are clear matches between a child's current knowledge and interests and the opportunities provided.
- **Reflective practitioners** communicate to family members and other caregivers about what they are doing and why they are doing it. They understand and seek out opportunities to support interactions between young children and their parents and other caregivers that build on the child's interests and skills. They are able to articulate how play experiences promote learning and optimal development. They coach family members and other caregivers on how to participate in play activities in ways that encourage exploration, expand use of language and introduce literacy and numeracy concepts. They also know and respect that parents and families remain the experts on their own children.

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- **Reflective practitioners** participate in play, guiding children’s planning, decision-making and communication, and extending children’s explorations with narrative, novelty and challenges. When adults become involved in children’s play, they help with the difficult spots: they may sequence activities in a way that is clearer and reinforces learning or use language that helps to clarify challenges and solutions. Play creates important learning moments that build children’s competencies. Practitioners can set up and participate in play opportunities that relate to the children’s experiences and help them to move beyond their current levels of understanding and abilities. Responsive adults know when and how to enter the child’s play in order to stimulate children’s thinking but not take command over the play.

“On-going support to build and sustain capacity with respect to diversity, equity and inclusion is essential.”

Bernhard et al., (2006)

The work environment of early childhood settings influences adults’ responsiveness to children, families and communities (for example, see Doherty et al., 2000; Beach et al., 2004; Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000).

Early childhood settings that are offered within an infrastructure of support, with working conditions that facilitate an early learning environment and reasonable levels of compensation are judged to be of better quality and are associated with better outcomes for children (Beach et al., 2004; Goelman et al., 2000; Lero & Irwin, 2005).

Early childhood practitioners require a working environment that provides time for program planning, observation and documentation, opportunities for professional development and regular conversations with families.

Pedagogical leadership contributes to a working environment that encourages responsiveness (Jorde-Bloom, 1997; Sylva et al., 2004; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2001; Bennett, 2004).

Program supervisors/directors and school administrators in all early childhood settings can support and value the development, implementation and evaluation of a coherent curriculum.

They can set the stage with program practices that respect all families; provide leadership in developing a vision and philosophy to guide the setting’s curriculum and pedagogy; and create a workplace that values the practice of early childhood practitioners.

The Child Care Human Resource Sector Council has prepared an occupational standard (2006) for early childhood program managers that articulates the roles and responsibilities of pedagogical leaders.

The report of the Quality and Human Resources Expert Panel outlines the requirements for quality work environments in early childhood settings.



Understanding Children's Development

The metamorphosis of childhood can be understood as a dynamic dance between children and their environments.

Understanding the patterns of development (as well as the underlying processes outlined earlier) helps early childhood practitioners plan optimal environments and interact positively with young children and their families.

Domains of Development

All aspects of human development are interconnected. Separating out the development of emotional maturity from social competence or language abilities or cognition is an artificial categorization of what is an integrated process.

However, categories allow us to think and share ideas about specific aspects of development.

In doing so, it is essential to keep in mind the interconnectedness of early child development. Learning to talk is social, emotional, cognitive and physical.

Sequence of Development

Children usually learn to sit before walking and running, babble before talking, and scribble

before drawing faces and printing letters. New learning and skills build on earlier changes. Each skill is necessary for the next emerging skills.

Knowing what comes before and what comes next helps early child-

hood practitioners determine where to enter and what experiences to provide.

Understanding children and their development is central in the attitudes, skills and knowledge possessed by practitioners. Observing children's behaviour; knowing individual children, their

families and their community; and using relevant theory to interpret the behaviour one has observed provide the foundation for curriculum development.

In early childhood settings, practitioners continually observe children for the purpose of improving teaching and learning.

The rate of development is shaped by each child's family, culture and daily experiences. To say that a child's development is typical implies that development is following a predictable broad pattern that is filled in with considerable cultural and individual variation.

Development and Values, Beliefs and the Context of Children's Lives

Values and beliefs about childhood influence ideas about child development (Friendly, Doherty & Beach, 2006). Children's development happens within the context of children's daily lives in families and communities.

Early development and learning patterns are shaped by a complex array of environmental and biological factors. Genetic make-up, the quality of interpersonal relationships within and outside the family, the quality of environment and experiences, and range of programs and supports available to enable optimal development and learning, impact on the pattern and timing of development.

"The appropriate sequence in each area of development is an important indication that the child is moving steadily along a sound developmental continuum."

- Allen & Marotz (2006)

Children's development happens within families who can be supported by informal networks, programs and services, which in turn can be supported by community and government infrastructures.

"...[the] child is growing, changing, and acquiring a broad range of skills characteristic of the majority of children of similar age within the same culture."

- Allen & Marotz (2006)

The idea of including broad developmental domains and pathways to organize a curriculum framework has been questioned by some recent initiatives (for example, New Zealand's innovative Te Whariki approach, Carr, 2001; Dickinson, 2006; Moss, 2004). The idea of culturally

agreed upon values is promoted as the organizing framework in New Zealand and elsewhere.

In Early Learning for Every Child Today, the six principles are shaped by values about childhood, early development and the role of families and communities.

Understandings about human development are incorporated with the principles to create and apply *The Continuum of Development*.

The Continuum of Development³

The *Continuum of Development* describes predictable sequences of development within broad domains of development. It helps early childhood practitioners observe and document children's emerging skills, based on an understanding of children's development.

The primary purpose is to use that information to plan curriculum that is meaningful for individual children and groups of children because it is grounded in an understanding of child development.

The *Continuum of Development* is not a tool to assess children's progress against a set of benchmarks or child outcomes. Nor is it a screening tool to identify developmental difficulties.

The *Continuum of Development* outlines the sequence of steps along developmental trajectories that are typical for the majority of children. The *Continuum of Development* is not a locked step, universal pattern of skills that should be achieved according to a specific timetable.

Rather, it is a guide that identifies sequences of development as a foundation to implementing early childhood curriculum and pedagogy in a variety of settings. It is a base for observation and discussion of children's growth and learning.

It helps adults see individual growth, strengths and challenges and supports planning for individual children as well as the group. Each age and domain of development is equally valued.

Children's abilities, experiences, rights and needs are respected. It describes the predictable progression of social, emotional, language, cognitive and physical skills in young children

The *Continuum of Development* is a tool that can help early childhood practitioners and families exchange information about children's growing skills. Families have knowledge of how and what their child has learned at home and in the community, The early childhood practitioner has knowledge and observations of that child in an early childhood program. The continuum provides a reference point for discussions about the child's development.

When particular communities have important values and needs, they may emphasize them by adding items to *The Continuum of Development*.

³ The references used to develop *The Continuum of Development* are listed in a subsection of the reference section.

For instance, Aboriginal communities may emphasize their connection to nature. Rural and urban values may be recognized in the continuum.

Early childhood settings in Francophone communities may wish to put more emphasis on language learning. When a community includes immigrant and refugee families, early childhood settings may add more items on culture, language, security and transition.

In high-density communities where families live in high-rise buildings, early childhood programs may add more items to the physical development section to ensure children have the opportunity to practise important motor skills that are not fully supported in the community. School-age settings may want their programs to include peace and global issues. These individualised items would reflect the circumstances of particular families and communities and be grounded in evidence from professional expertise and current research.

The *Continuum of Development* describes the progression of development for infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school-age children. There is overlap in the age ranges, reflecting that the sequence of developmental skills will be achieved within a broad range of time. The continuum is made up of *root skills* and their *indicators* organized into developmental *domains*. Interactions describe experiences that support children's development.

Domain

A domain is a broad area or dimension of development. There are many ways to organize development into domains. The social, emotional, language, cognitive and physical domains were chosen for the continuum because they reflect areas of significance in the early years and are the most commonly used

domains in early childhood education curricula in Canada and internationally. Though presented separately, the five domains of children's development are interrelated and no one domain is more important than another.

Root Skills

Root skills that emerge and are practised in the early years are important both in their own right and as foundations of later development. Pathways for learning, behaviour and health are constructed in the early years. The continuum identifies the root skills that predict later learning, behaviour and health.

Root skills are specific capacities, processes, abilities and competencies that exist within a domain. When adults understand and observe emerging skills, they can create individual strategies to support the practice and extension of the skill. A skill may appear in all four age groups, indicating pathways that emerge early and are elaborated over time. Attention to root skills supports children's learning in early childhood settings using different curricula.

Indicators

Indicators are markers of what a child knows or does which show that the skill is emerging, being practised or being elaborated. Indicators are given in progression within each root skill. Early childhood practitioners observe children's behaviour and can use the indicators to identify the related skill, set goals and plan appropriate curriculum.

Interactions

Interactions are examples of adult-child communications, contacts and joint activity that support the child's accomplishment of the indicators and related skill development. The examples also describe why the example interactions are effective.

Infants (birth to 24 months)



1. Social

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
1.1 Social Interest	• preferring human faces to inanimate objects or animals • smiling at an adult • returning the gaze of an adult • seeking adults for play, stretching arms to be picked up • examining objects with others as a means of forming relationships • observing peers	Play with the infant on her physical level. This tells her that you are available as a respectful partner in play.
1.2 Imitation	• imitating adult behaviour • take part in pretend play with simple scenarios like caring for dolls	Opening your arms wide, say, “Big!” Pause and look directly at the infant. Repeat. When he imitates this action, say, “You did it!” Playing “copy me” games supports observation and imitation as a way of learning.
1.3 Simple Turn Taking	• playing simple one-to-one games such as peekaboo	Cover your face with a transparent scarf. Pull it off and say, “Peekaboo!” Pause and repeat. Soon the infant will pull off the scarf when you pause. When he does, say, “Peekaboo!” Repeat so the infant takes turns. This simple game provides practice in the give and take of simple turn taking.
1.4 Maintaining Connection across Space	• uses gestures, vocalizations and her emerging expressive language to keep connected to an adult across space	Make eye contact when you are across the room. Mobile, older infants are now able to communicate across space (distal communication). Making eye contact from across the room can help to maintain your connection to an infant who is exploring.

Infants (birth to 24 months)



2. Emotional

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
2.1 Expression of Emotion	- expressing comfort and discomfort - expressing pleasure and displeasure - expressing anger, anxiety, fear, sadness, joy, excitement - showing affection with hugs - showing anxiety at separation from parents - showing clear attachment to parents	Observe infants to determine what senses and motor skills they enjoy and use for exploring. Sensory and motor skills form the basis of individual differences in how infants calm themselves (self-regulation). If an infant uses his visual sense to calm himself or pay attention, provide interesting visual stimulation (your face or the infant's favourite toy) to support self-regulation.
2.2 Self-Regulation <i>Emotion Regulation</i>	- becoming calm when comforted by familiar adults - comforting self with thumb - recovering from distress and over-stimulation in a secure relationship	Respond to infant's distress by supporting his self-soothing behaviours. When recovery from distress is supported by an adult, the infant's attachment to the adult is reinforced. The infant learns that strong emotions can be tolerated and recovery is hastened.
2.3 Sense of Self	- sucking fingers, observing own hands - showing preference for being held by familiar people - beginning to distinguish known people from strangers - showing pleasure in mastery - playing confidently in the presence of caregiver and frequently checking in with her (social referencing) - increasing awareness of opportunities to make things happen yet limited understanding of consequences of own actions	Hold the infant securely when she is meeting a new person. Look at the person and reach out to them. This helps the infant remain secure with new people and build confidence as she expresses her preference for certain people.
2.4 Empathy	- noticing and responding to distress of others - offering comfort by touching	Respond to infant's distress and provide comfort. Responsive care-giving establishes the foundation of empathy.
2.5 Agency	beginning to sense that her behaviour can have an effect on others	When an infant smiles at you, smile back. When she raises open arms, pick her up. Adult responses to an infant's attempts to communicate, support her sense that her behaviour can have an effect on others.

Infants (birth to 24 months)



3. Communication, language and literacy

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
3.1 Non-verbal Communication Skills <i>Referencing</i>	checking in with caregiver using eye contact	When the infant checks in with you and stops playing to look up at you, comment on his play. This reinforces his sense of security and also encourages continued exploration.
<i>Joint Attention</i>	- looking at what an adult is looking at - pointing to direct the adult's attention - sharing attention with an adult, looking at the same thing as the adult - looking at photos and books with adults	Share the infant's gaze by looking at the same thing that the infant looks at. This reinforces his shared communication with an adult and provides a shared reference point for language.
<i>Gestures</i>	- shaking head to mean "no" - using gestures in the presence of objects that show the purpose or function of an object - showing intentional communication, e.g., waving - using gestures when objects are not present that show purpose or function of the object	Interact with gestures used in the infant's home. This is a particularly positive approach when supporting emotions. Using home gestures provides security and establishes the shared meaning of the gesture.
<i>Intentional Communication</i>	using gestures with the intention of meeting goals	Observe infant to determine his intentions. Interpret his gestures with clear and simple language. This provides a rich context for language and exploration.
<i>Simple turn taking</i>	- taking turns in simple games like peekaboo - taking pleasure in back-and-forth vocal play	Use simple sentence structure – for example, "Where is the ball?" Pause and look at the infant. This conforms to the infant's ability to attend and provides the social cues necessary to take turns in communication.
3.2 Receptive Language Skills	- responding to human voices and distinguishing familiar voices from other sounds - by six months, distinguishing sounds of home language - responding to a verbal request - recognizing named objects and body parts - pointing to objects named	Use the child's name when playing with her. This helps to focus her attention while she is listening.



3. Communication, language and literacy (cont'd)

3.3 Expressive Language Skills

Signaling

- crying to signal distress
- looking at others and opening body (i.e., arms and chest lifted) to others
- raising arms to invite interaction

Interpret the infant's signals:
"You're ready to play. Let's go."

Interpreting and responding to an infant's signals promotes language and communication by pairing actions with words and responsiveness.

Vocalizing and Babbling

- vocalizing to initiate social contact
- babbling using a wide variety of sounds

Imitate the infant's vocalizations.

Infant: "Ba, ba!" Adult: "Ba, ba!"

Imitation encourages the infant to repeat or expand the vocalizations and thereby practise pre-verbal skills.

One Word

- using one word to communicate

Respond to the infant's expressive language.
Child: "Ball." Adult: "Where's your ball?"

This encourages the infant to continue to talk and thereby practise expressive language.

Words with Gestures

- speaking with words and gestures
- beginning to speak with more words than gestures

When an infant points to a toy he wants, respond by offering the toy and naming it: "You want the ball. Here's your ball."

Responding to infant's gestures with language and actions reinforces communication (the gesture) and language by providing the vocabulary in a meaningful context.

Vocabulary

- beginning to repeat overheard words
- beginning to use "me," "you" and "I"

Expand the infant's one-word communications.
Infant: "Ball." Adult: "You've got the blue ball?"

This helps to add new words to the infant's vocabulary.

Infants (birth to 24 months)



4. Cognitive

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
4.1 Attention Regulation	- shifting attention with increasing ability - attending, disengaging and returning attention	Observe an infant who is focused on her play. When she disengages and looks up, comment on her play. When infants play, they focus their attention, disengage and then return their attention to their play. When adults comment as infants disengage, they reinforce infants' exploration and support the return of their attention back to their play.
4.2 Problem Solving	- setting goals and acting to achieve them - solving problems with actions by trial and error - engaging others as agents in solving problems - beginning to use objects as tools for solving problems; e.g., pulling a string to retrieve a toy	Admire the infant with words and tone of voice, e.g., "Wow! Mary, You pulled the string! You've got it!" Pause. "Hurrah!" Admiration for the infant's achievement of her goals reinforces and promotes continued exploration and problem solving. Using an enthusiastic voice tone ensures that your positive message is understood because infants understand non-verbal forms of communication before they understand the spoken language of others.
4.3 Cause-and-Effect Exploration	- repeating actions that produce outcomes - distinguishing actions from outcomes - using actions that show the properties and functions of things	When an infant is exploring actions and their outcomes, offer him materials with immediate, striking, observable responses. This ensures he can construct the relationship between his actions and the reaction of the material.
4.4 Spatial Exploration	- tracking moving objects with eyes - looking for dropped toys - elaborating search with watching and seeking after a number of changes - identifying objects from different points of view (perspective) - using body to explore space by crawling in, by and through various objects - exploring objects in space by dropping toys into containers and dumping them out	Say, "Where's the ball?" while shrugging your shoulders, arms out, palms up. The simple question (coupled with the action) invites spatial exploration.

Infants (birth to 24 months)



4. Cognitive (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
4.5 Spatial Problem-solving	- persisting in search for hidden toy - searching for toy that rolled under furniture by crawling around to the other side - solving spatial problems involving barriers by moving over, around or through barriers - stacking blocks	Use a cushion to create a new barrier on the floor. This creates a new spatial problem for the crawling infant to master.
4.6 Object Permanence	- searching for playthings that move out of sight - finding hidden objects	Demonstrate an infant game at the beginning of play. Hide his favourite toy under a small blanket while he watches. Pause. Lift the blanket and look surprised. Say, "There it is! There's the doll!" This action-oriented strategy is how infants learn the rules of the game.
4.7 Symbolic Thought, Representation and Root Skills of Literacy	- creating internal image of an absent object or past event - using gestures and materials to stand for ideas - pointing to photos, pictures in books	When looking at pictures with an infant, name the object in the picture and use simple words to describe it. When possible, match the picture to real objects. Pointing to the picture say, "It's a ball, a big, red ball." Pause. Pointing to a nearby ball, say, "Look, there's your ball!" Naming pictures shows infants that pictures represent real things and that things and pictures have names.
<i>Imitation</i>	imitating adult actions	Imitate an infant's block play and invite the infant to watch. When you are finished, invite the infant to imitate your building. When an infant has the opportunity to be a leader and a follower, she is learning through imitation and is beginning to learn about working together.
4.8 Memory	- recognizing previously seen faces and objects - increasing capacity of recognition memory	Attention is essential to memory. Point to play materials and touch them. This focuses the infant's attention on the materials.
4.9 Sorting	grouping like objects together	When an infant is picking up objects that are similar to each other, move a variety of objects close so that they may be included in her selection. Ensure that some objects match each other and some are clearly different. This provides the opportunity for the infant to sort by discriminating same from different.



5. Physical

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
5.1 Gross Motor <i>Reaching and Holding</i>	- reaching towards objects - reaching and holding with palmar grasp	Hold an object the infant wants so that she must extend her arm to reach it and then take hold of it. This provides practice in the coordination of reaching and holding.
<i>Releasing Objects</i>	dropping and throwing objects	Offer objects to infants who are holding something. This will cause them to drop or throw away what they are holding.
<i>Holding Head Up</i>	lifting head while held on a shoulder	Hold the infant on your shoulder with someone or something interesting behind you so that she will lift her head to look. Providing interesting situations that engage the infant's natural interest in the world allows her to use her own body to explore.
<i>Lifting Upper Body</i>	lifting upper body while lying on the floor	While the infant lies on his stomach, place interesting objects close, point to them, touch them and move them to invite him to respond with interest and to lift his upper body. When these actions are paired with verbal encouragement, the infant's interest in the world expands and his body strength increases.
<i>Rolling</i>	- rolling from side to back - rolling from back to side	While the infant is lying on his back, hold his favourite toy within his line of vision. Move the toy so he tracks it and reaches for it, rolling onto his stomach. Bringing together vision and motor skills provides practice that promotes the strength and coordination required to roll over.
<i>Sitting</i>	sitting without support	While the infant is straddling your extended leg, hold her arms and bounce her gently. This rhythmic movement strengthens the muscles and balance involved in sitting.
<i>Crawling</i>	crawling on hands and knees	Sit at the opposite end of a short tunnel from an infant. Call to her to crawl through the tunnel to you. This provides practice in moving and fitting her body into the space provided.



5. Physical (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
5.1 Gross Motor <i>Pulling Self to Stand Up</i>	using furniture to pull self to standing position	While sitting on the floor with an infant, extend your arm as support. When he has a firm hold, gently raise your arm so that he stands up. Using your arm to help him practise standing makes it possible to repeat the action and to easily adapt this interaction to the infant's individual needs.
<i>Cruising</i>	walking while holding on to furniture	Sing and clap while the infant cruises. This brings shared joy when the infant is exercising an emerging skill.
<i>Walking</i>	walking unassisted with wide gait	Provide push toys that motivate walking. Push toys provide purpose and support for infant's walking.
<i>Strength</i>	increasing strength in gross motor skills	Play with the pre-mobile infant on your lap because you can use your body to provide responsive physical support when needed.
<i>Coordination</i>	- transferring object from hand to hand with increasing coordination - putting objects inside other objects	Create a small collection of objects and containers that can hold them. Offer the infant two toys. Wait, then offer a third toy. This provides an opportunity for the infant to coordinate which hand she will use, which toy she will hold and which toy she will drop. When you offer a small container, she may try to fit a toy into it. This game encourages the coordination of motor skills and the exploration of objects in space.

Infants (birth to 24 months)



5. Physical (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
5.2 Fine Motor <i>Palmar Grasp</i>	holding objects with whole palm	Offer toys that the infant can hold of safe and assorted sizes. Different-sized toys provide variation when he is practising the palmar grasp.
<i>Coordination</i>	- holding and transferring object from hand to hand - manipulating small objects with improved coordination	Create a rhythm of give and take by passing toys with different weights back and forth. As the infant transfers toys from hand to hand, her coordination improves and she learns about the weight, size and shape of things.
<i>Pincer Grasp</i>	using forefinger and thumb to lift and hold small objects	Place finger foods on a clean table. The infant will use his forefinger and thumb to pick up these small items from a flat surface.
<i>Holding and Using Tools</i>	- making marks with first crayon - scribbling	Secure a large piece of paper to the table and provide bright-coloured crayons. As the infant makes his own scribbles, comment on the marks that are left on the paper: "Your line is long and blue." This reinforces his scribbles and encourages more scribbling. Repetition establishes control of hands and tools.
5.3 The Senses Visual <i>Face Perception</i>	- showing a preference for simple face-like patterns by looking longer - responding to emotional expressions with facial expressions and gestures - turning and looking at familiar faces	Play face-to-face games with infants. Use animated facial expressions and gestures. The simple turn-taking of face-to-face games focuses the infant's attention on facial expressions and gestures that are a large part of communication.
<i>Pattern Perception</i>	- showing a preference for patterns with large elements - showing a preference for increasingly complex patterns - visually exploring borders - visually exploring entire object	Observe the infant to determine his visual preferences for various objects. Place the items he prefers on a kitchen turntable. Point to each object and touch it. Name it. Rotate the lazy turntable slowly and invite the infant to watch. The movement of favourite objects engages the infant in sustained visual exploration.

Infants (birth to 24 months)



5. Physical (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
5.3 The Senses Visual <i>Visual Exploration</i>	- tracking moving objects with eyes - looking and searching visually	Create a collection of plumber's pipes with joints and multiple openings and balls that will roll through the pipes. Roll a ball through a pipe. Say, "Look!" Pause. "Where's the ball?" This game invites a visual search. The infant must persist in searching when the ball disappears into the pipe then reappears.*
<i>Visual Discrimination</i>	scanning objects and identifying them by sight	Invite the infant to pick up a specific toy from a group of toys with different attributes. As the infant scans the toys to identify the specific one, she will discriminate between the visual attributes of the different items in the group.*
Auditory <i>Auditory Exploration</i>	making sounds by shaking and banging objects	Create a collection of bottles with objects sealed inside. Ensure the objects inside provide auditory contrast, some soft sounds and some loud. When the infant makes a sound with a bottle, react in a way that is responsive to the sound. For example, when the sound is loud, look surprised and say, "Wow, you made a big noise!"*
<i>Auditory Discrimination</i>	- turning to source of a sound - responding to familiar sounds with gestures and actions - responding by turning towards a sound when more than one sound is present	Hide a music box behind a shelf. Turn the key, look at the infant and say, "Where's the music?" The infant will use his auditory and motor skills to find the source of the music.*
Touch <i>Tactile Exploration</i>	touching, rubbing, squeezing materials	Ensure the environment is rich with opportunities for exploration. When the infant repeatedly squeezes a soft toy, imitate her actions and admire her explorations: "You've found a soft teddy. You're hugging it. Me too!" These interactions support the infant's tactile learning while pairing language with actions. Imitation strengthens the infant's confidence in her explorations.
<i>Tactile Discrimination</i>	showing preferences for some tactile properties	Observe the infant for his tactile preferences. Pair the materials he prefers with new materials. The preferred tactile experience will encourage the exploration of the new material.*

Infants (birth to 24 months)



5. Physical (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
5.3 The Senses Olfactory (smell) <i>Olfactory Exploration</i>	calming by familiar scents associated with security	In the infant's pocket place a soft material from home, for example, a handkerchief that Dad has carried. The scent from the handkerchief will be accessible to the infant for comfort or to re-establish security.*
<i>Olfactory Discrimination</i>	turning away from unpleasant smells and reacting with facial expressions	Put cotton balls with familiar scents inside empty, clean detergent bottles. Place a different scent in each bottle. Pop the top and squeeze the bottle. Model inhaling the air that escapes the bottle. Squeeze the bottle under the infant's nose. Observe his response, which will indicate his preferences. The infant strengthens his ability to discriminate scents and to communicate his responses.*
Taste <i>Taste Exploration</i>	trying new foods	Ensure snacks and meals are healthy and varied and that they include both new foods and foods from home. Eat a bit of each food with infants. This supports the acquisition of a broad palate that promotes healthy nutrition.
<i>Taste Discrimination</i>	showing preferences for certain foods by sucking longer, eating more or turning head away	Observe and respect an infant's food preferences. When he turns away from a food and does not return his attention to it, this means he is no longer interested in eating that food. Respecting the child's choice builds his control.
5.4 Sensory Motor Integration	coordinating senses with motor skills in exploration and problem solving, e.g., looking at a bubble, reaching for it, then crawling after it	*The items identified above with an asterisk are examples of the coordination of senses with motor skills in exploration and problem solving.

Toddlers (14 months to 3 years)



1. Social

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
1.1 Social Interest	• observing and imitating peers • beginning to play “follow the peer” games • observing and playing briefly with peers – may turn into struggle for possession • offering toys • engaging in short group activities	Incorporate singing games into play and routines. Engage one child at a time where other toddlers can observe. Toddlers’ natural social interest in adults and children helps to focus their attention. Observing the shared joy of the singing game will motivate involvement when a new game is being introduced.
1.2 Perspective Taking	• in simple situations beginning to take the point of view of others	During snack routines, keep waiting to a minimum but use the brief periods of waiting to pair one toddler's waiting with another toddler's turn: “Prya, you’re waiting while Josh picks his fruit. It’s your turn next!” Engaging the waiting toddler supports her behaviour regulation while she waits. She also hears information that helps her understand the point of view of others balanced with her own viewpoint.
1.3 Parallel Play	• playing in proximity of peers with similar playthings without an exchange of ideas or things	Set out duplicate materials in a play space large enough for two toddlers to play side by side – i.e., parallel play. When toddlers engage in parallel play, join them in play with your own materials. This provides context for toddlers’ social play where interest in others is expressed by being close and playing with similar materials.

Toddlers (14 months to 3 years)



2. Emotional

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
2.1 Expression of Feelings	- expressing aggressive feelings and behaviour - beginning to show self-conscious emotions (shame, embarrassment, guilt, pride) - expressing feelings in language and pretend play	Respond to toddlers' emotional experience with comments that affirm their emotional experience, for example, "Wow! You worked hard on your tower!" Toddlers need adults who are emotionally available and who maintain their connection with them. Sharing in the toddler's emotional experience reinforces and elaborates the child's emotions and motivation.
2.2 Self-regulation <i>Emotion Regulation</i>	- beginning to use language to assist in emotion regulation - beginning to recover from emotion in the presence of familiar adults - being overwhelmed and recovering - elevating positive emotions - seeking out adults as secure base	Acknowledge the child's feelings. Adult: "I see you are sad. It's hard when Mom goes to work." Pause, look at the child. "Mom always picks you up after snack in the afternoon." Pause and look at the child. "I can play with you." The empathy of acknowledging feelings can create a connection between the toddler and the adult and it also can absorb some of the toddler's emotional energy.
<i>Behaviour Regulation</i>	- responding to cues to stop actions - showing emerging impulse control with peers - waiting for peers' increases	Move close to toddlers whose activity level is rising. Being close to toddlers may provide toddlers with the secure base that assists them in regulating their behaviour.
<i>Attention Regulation</i>	- attending may be interrupted by actions of others - attending distracted by several objects to focus on - focusing attention, making choices and avoiding distractions	Participate in play and move your materials slowly into the toddler's visual frame when she is distracted. This can slow the action down, enabling her to solve a problem or avoid distraction.
2.3 Empathy	- showing awareness of own feelings and the feelings of others - showing concern for others demonstrated with caring behaviour - beginning to recognize the rights of others	Describe the facial expressions of toddlers as they happen. Match the facial expression with the associated feeling: "Look at Jessie's big eyes and his wide-open mouth. He's surprised to see the puppy." As the toddler's awareness of his feelings is emerging, this draws his attention to important non-verbal information and the feelings that accompany them.

Toddlers (14 months to 3 years)



2. Emotional (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
2.4 Sense of Self	• saying “no” in response to adult requests • seeing self as “doer” who is powerful • saying “good” and “bad” (shows emerging self-evaluation) • using name of self and others • recognizing self in mirror • pointing to parts of own body and the corresponding parts of others	Place a box of self-help items in front of a wall-mounted Plexiglass mirror. When a toddler pretends with a facecloth say, “You’re washing your ears.” Playing in front of a mirror allows the toddler to see what her body is doing. When the adult “broadcasts” her actions (describes them aloud while they are happening), the language and actions reinforce the toddler’s understanding of herself and her body.
2.5 Autonomy	• initiating activities • setting own goals and persisting in achieving them • rejecting the intrusion of redirection, saying “no” and “I do” • seeking to control others, saying “mine” • making choices and avoiding distractions increases • distinguishing own intended actions from unintended ones	Provide a building area with blocks and a collection of cans and boxes of different sizes and shapes. As a toddler builds, pay attention to his actions. When appropriate, describe his building. This provides an opportunity for the child to direct his own play, have choices and make decisions. The collection of cans and boxes requires more decisions to create a stable building. Adult attention and comments help the child feel good about his achievements.
2.6 Identity Formation	• identifying self and in relation to others	Use family photos to encourage story telling. Point to the toddler and then to others in the photo. Ask open-ended questions. “What did you do at the park?” “What did you do with your dad?” Telling stories about his family helps the toddler see his place in relation to others and to feel that he is an important member of his family.

Toddlers (14 months to 3 years)



3. Communication, language and literacy

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
3.1 Receptive Language	- listening to stories - responding to names of body parts, commands and personal pronouns - responding to longer sentences and commands	Broadcast the child's actions while they are happening. Adult: "Bobby, you're building so high!" Pairing language with the child's actions provides a rich context for a toddler's understanding of the spoken language.
3.2 Expressive Language		
<i>Words</i>	- combining words - using common verbs and adjectives	Invite a toddler to add to your description of a photo. "Look at Ned's big hat." Pause. "What else is he wearing?" This invites the toddler to notice photo details and respond in expressive language.
<i>Sentences</i>	- using simple sentences - using compound sentences - engaging in pretend play that includes language	Reflect back language and expand when a child misspeaks. For example: "Daddy wented away." Adult response: "Your daddy went away." (Reflecting back.) "Where did he go?" (Invitation to expand.) This provides a correct language model and encourages the toddler to continue to talk.
<i>Vocabulary</i>	- increasing vocabulary - identifying functions of household items	Pair functions with nouns when describing play: "You're talking to Mommy on the phone." This increases understanding in a rich context of meaning and action.
<i>Questions</i>	asking simple "what" and "where" questions	During dressing routines take turns with the toddler in finding items of clothing. This give-and-take game gives him an opportunity to ask and answer questions.
<i>Conversation</i>	observing and attempting to join conversations	"Here's Nelofer. She knows about birthday cakes." This acknowledges a toddler's interest in interaction and creates an opportunity for her to join in conversation.

Toddlers (14 months to 3 years)



4. Cognition

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
4.1 Self-regulation <i>Attention Regulation</i>	- maintaining attention for increasing periods of time - ignoring distracting variables	Offer toddlers materials with contrasting properties; e.g., add solid shapes to stacking rings. This will provide the challenge of ignoring forms with no holes when stacking rings.
4.2 Problem Solving	- setting goals and acting to achieve them - solving problems in actions by trial and error - seeking out adults to help meet goals - using objects as tools to solve problems - figuring out who is missing from a group by looking at those in attendance	Use cognitive dissonance (violating expectation). For example, during play, place people figures in the garage and cars in the house. Ask: “What’s wrong? How can you fix it?” Dissonance promotes thought and problem solving and can be humorous to toddlers.
4.3 Cause-and-Effect Exploration	- responding with joy to the predictable outcomes of exploration - exploring the functions of objects; opening and shutting doors	Invite exploratory actions with predictive questions. e.g., “What will happen when you drop the ball?” or “What would happen if you pushed the car?” Be prepared for toddlers to answer with actions. Predictive questions promote the cause-and-effect explorations of toddlers.
4.4 Spatial Exploration	- exploring containment by putting objects in containers and by dumping them - putting things together and taking them apart	When a toddler is scooping and dumping, you can scoop and dump objects of different sizes using identical containers. Ask him, “Will that toy fit into that cup?” Toddlers are parallel players and when you play alongside them at their level, you can reinforce and extend their explorations in an unobtrusive manner.
4.5 Spatial Problem Solving	- pushing obstacles out of the way - using tools to overcome barriers	Move relevant materials, such as tools, close to where the toddler is playing. Movement attracts attention, and toddlers may not see some materials when they are busy at play. Moving tools that can expand play when a toddler is stuck, can encourage him to include those materials in his play, thereby expanding his exploration or problem solving.

Toddlers (14 months to 3 years)



4. Cognition (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
4.6 Temporal	- using terms related to time: “tomorrow” and “yesterday” - understanding of “now” versus “later” emerges	Match temporal terms with blocks of time that are part of the toddler's daily life. “Later we will go outside, after snack.” This allows the child to connect temporal terms such as “later” with a sequence of time that he knows.
4.7 Symbolic Thought, Representation and Root Skills of Literacy <i>Pretend Play</i>	- using objects to stand for other things - acting out simple themes in pretend play: cooking, caring for babies	Be a partner in pretend play by taking on a role. When the toddler is cooking and serving food, eat the food and say, “Such good food. Thank you for taking care of me.” When adults are partners in play, toddlers elaborate their pretend play themes and representation.
<i>Representation</i>	- identifying objects in photos - pointing to objects in books on request - identifying objects in books	After looking at and pointing to pictures in books, invite the toddler to search back through the book: “Find the bear with his socks on his ears.” This encourages her to identify and recall representations in books.
4.8 Memory	- increasing memory capacity - following routines - establishing rituals	Establish routines. When routines are well established, ask the toddler while you are dressing him, “What comes next?” This requires his recall of repeated events in the context of the routine.
4.9 Sorting	- sorting and labeling objects by characteristics, such as hard and soft or big and small - matching items by function (e.g., spoon with bowl)	Use simple open-ended questions that invite responses that can be actions, e.g., “What else can you add to the basket of flowers?” Open-ended questions allow the toddler to give a personally meaningful response, and when he can respond with actions, it allows him to communicate his thinking even when he may not use his expressive language.

Toddlers (14 months to 3 years)



5. Physical

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
5.1 Gross Motor <i>Balance</i>	- standing on one foot - taking a few steps on raised surface	Take advantage of toddlers' enjoyment of carrying objects, marching and following others. Sing a parade song and make up lyrics that invite toddlers to march on different surfaces. As toddlers move from one surface to another, they must adjust their balance.
<i>Jumping</i>	- jumping up and down on the spot - jumping down from short heights	Include toddler-safe risers in outdoor and indoor environments. Support toddler's emerging skills by standing as close as required and admiring her stepping up, jumping and confidence.
<i>Walking and Running</i>	- balancing and coordination increase - stopping while running improves	Play stop-and-start games in environments with enough space. Playful practice of running and then stopping improves the toddler's increasing control of these skills.
<i>Climbing</i>	- climbing stairs one foot at a time - climbing on climbing equipment and furniture	Admire toddler's emerging skills, e.g., "Mark, you climbed up to the top!" This reinforces his accomplishments and encourages him to continue.
<i>Riding Toys</i>	moving riding toys forward by pushing with feet	Give toddlers a reason to ride tricycles forward by setting up play stations on the riding path. Then engage the toddler in riding. "Marcus, drive to the store and buy some milk." This motivates the continued practice of riding skills.
5.2 Fine Motor <i>Dressing</i>	- doing up buttons - pulling up zippers	During dressing, break down the job of doing up a zipper by attaching the sides of the zipper. Invite the toddler to pull up the zipper while you hold the bottom. This reduces frustration and supports the toddler's active involvement in dressing.
<i>Eating</i>	using utensils and cup independently	Make suitable utensils available as the toddler's skills emerge. Present them along with opportunities to eat finger foods. This provides choices for independence and promotes success.

Toddlers (14 months to 3 years)



5. Physical (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
5.2 Fine Motor <i>Tool Use</i>	using toddler-safe scissors	Introduce safe scissors for use with play dough. Sit with toddlers, roll a piece of play dough into a long cord and offer it to a toddler to cut. The soft texture of the dough and your involvement support the practice of tool use and independent cutting.
<i>Making a Mark</i>	- using palmar grasp to hold crayons and brushes and make scribbles - scribbling expands to include lines and shapes	Sit beside toddler with a piece of paper and a crayon of your own. Describe his scribbles: “Your line is long and straight. I am going to make a line like yours.” This reinforces the toddler’s actions and shows him that marks can be repeated.
<i>Pincer Grasp</i>	- turning pages of book - adapting holding from palmar or pincer grasp	Drop a toy into a container while a toddler watches. Invite her to take the object out. Use a variety of objects in containers with different-sized tops. The difference in objects and containers presents the possibility that the toddler will use different motor strategies to retrieve the objects.
5.3 Senses <i>Sensory Exploration</i>	using all senses in the exploration of properties and functions of objects and materials	Add a small amount of food colouring to water when toddlers are pouring water from one container to another. This will make the movement of water more visible and the toddlers’ observations of water easier.
<i>Sensory Discrimination</i>	using all senses to identify and differentiate properties and materials	When toddlers are familiar with materials, make requests by using textures to identify the objects. “Can you find the bumpy one?” While the toddler feels objects, he learns the words for what he is touching. Language and touch together expand tactile learning.
<i>Sensory Motor Integration</i>	- coordinating senses with motor skills in increasingly complex ways - using eye-hand coordination to string large beads on a pipe cleaner, do simple puzzles, pour, dump and fill	Take advantage of toddlers’ natural enjoyment of carrying objects, dumping and filling by placing buckets near toy shelves. This invites the coordination of sensory and motor skills. The integration of sensory and motor skills is essential to learning.

Preschool Kindergarten (2.5 to 6 years)



1. Social

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
1.1 Making Friends	• seeking out others to play with • offering play materials and roles to others • playing with others co-operatively • inviting others to play • exchanging ideas, materials and points of view with others • sustaining play with others	Engage in play with children. Offer toys. Take turns and exchange ideas in play. Modelling how to make friends and sustain play provides a positive example of social skills.
1.2 Conflict Resolution and Social Problem-Solving Skills	• beginning to express what they want and are thinking and feeling • regulating emotions in order to solve conflicts • beginning to attend and listen to peers • beginning to identify solutions to conflict • beginning to identify consequences • making decisions and choices and accepting the consequences	Consult children who are involved in resolving a conflict. Begin by supporting emotion regulation. Then to support their thinking, ask: “What happened?” (Pause.) Child: “He took my truck.” Adult: “How do you feel?” (Pause.) Child: “I’m mad!” Adult: “What can you do to solve the problem?” (Pause.) Child: “He could find another truck.” Adult: “What else can you do? Which solution do you choose?” When adults support children to think instead of solving the problem for them, children learn how to solve problems.
1.3 Peer Group Entry Skills	• observing before entering play • offering objects or ideas that are relevant to play • entering play by assuming available roles	Create a clearly defined entrance to learning centres. Stand at the entrance by the child who wants to enter play. With the child, observe the children who are at play. Comment on what you observe. Children who are successful entering play observe before they enter. If you slow the child down and model observation, the child may try this entry strategy.
1.4 Helping Skills	• offering assistance • identifying the emotions of others • regulating their own behaviour in the face of the needs of others • offering comfort • being generous	Interpret the non-verbal behaviour of others to children. “Look at Josie. She is eager for a turn.” This will provide practice in reading facial expressions that give social emotional information.

Preschool Kindergarten (2.5 to 6 years)



1. Social (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
1.5 Interacting Positively and Respectfully	- beginning to show respect for other children's belongings and work - playing with others who have differing abilities and characteristics - beginning to become aware of stereotypes found in books, etc. - beginning to develop ideas of, and to practise, co-operation, fairness and justice - learning music and art forms from a variety of cultures, racial and ethnic groups - using artifacts from a variety of cultures, racial and ethnic groups in socio-dramatic play	Notice the role of different children in a group activity. "Roy is tall and he can reach the pieces on the top. Meika's hands fit in the small holes where the marbles rolled." When adults admire how individuals make different contributions to a group effort, children learn how different strengths work together and are respected.
1.6 Co-operating	- exchanging ideas and materials during play - taking part in setting and following rules and inviting others to join them in play - listening, thinking and responding appropriately as others speak during group time - engaging in group decision making with voting and accepting that the majority vote will be followed by the entire group	Set the environment so children can play face-to-face or choose to watch others from nearby. Exchange ideas with children during play. "You finished the puzzle. Great. I was thinking about matching all the blue pieces at the start. What you do think?" Environments with options for social play where adults think with children and exchange ideas promote co-operation.
1.7 Empathy	- sharing emotions, communicating and expressing feelings with adults and peers - sharing experiences, relating and respecting each other - beginning to see the world from another's perspective - beginning to identify with others - putting themselves in the other person's shoes - seeing an injustice and taking action to change it	When a child is the aggressor, adults must act to stop the behaviour and help that child to see the other's perspective. When the same child is hurt by others, adults must intervene with empathy and support. It is by being treated with fairness and empathy that children develop empathy.

Preschool Kindergarten (2.5 to 6 years)



1. Social (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
1.8 Taking Another Person's Point of View	- describing their ideas and emotions - recognizing that other people have ideas and emotions - understanding the ideas and emotions of others - beginning to accept that the ideas and emotions of others may be different from their own - adapting behaviour to take other people's points of view into consideration - beginning to respond appropriately to the feelings of others - beginning to take another's point of view - engaging in the exchange of ideas and points of view with others	Create discussion of an experience that was shared by all. "When we were at the fire hall yesterday, I took these photographs? Look at this one, Jed. What do you remember? Becky, Jed remembers.... Do you remember that? What do you think?" This gives practice in describing ideas and hearing the ideas of others who had the same experience. In this way, children can recognize the ideas of others and see that they may be different from their own, e.g., theory of mind.
1.9 Interacting with Adults	- approaching adults as sources of security and support - engaging adults in activities in positive ways - seeing adults as resources in exploration and problem solving	Respond positively when a child asks you to join in their play. "Thanks for offering me some play dough. I would like to sit with you." Positive responses to children's approaches strengthen your relationships with them and reinforce their positive social skills.

Preschool Kindergarten (2.5 to 6 years)



2. Emotional

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
2.1 Self-concept	• talking about their personal characteristics • identifying what they can do and what they have yet to learn • developing responsibility for themselves during dressing and eating routines and in daily living • seeing self as competent and capable of self-direction	See children as competent. “You finished the whole game yesterday, Sophie.” Reminding children of past successes helps them see themselves as competent.
2.2 Identity Formation	• increasing identity formation • noticing their own abilities • recognizing shared abilities • expressing joy in their characteristics and identity • expressing curiosity and sensitivity to physical characteristics • understanding culture in concrete daily living within own family through language, family stories, values, and celebrations • beginning to make connections between family and larger cultural group • asserting own choices in the face of stereotype	Ensure children have opportunities to retell family stories. “Cecil, your mother said that you had a lot of people at your house this weekend. What happened?” Regular opportunities for all children to tell and hear family stories can help them understand how they and their families are both alike and different. Freely talking about one’s own family reinforces the child’s sense of self-respect and pride in who he is.
2.3 Self-esteem	• judging themselves as worthy individuals • seeing themselves as a valued member of the group • setting goals for themselves and working towards them • acting responsibly towards others	Admire the child’s strengths and achievements. Adult: “Ola, you are a good problem solver. You figured out how all four of you could play together.” Admiring the child’s achievements reinforces her strengths.
2.4 Recognizing and Expressing Emotions	• identifying their emotions • increasing or decreasing emotional energy in keeping with the situation • expressing negative emotions in ways that do not harm others	Every time group begins, say, “Let’s come together. Let’s all join in.” Using consistent phrases to signal the start of group helps focus attention and prompts children to redirect energy to the new demands of group. When responding to negative emotions, address self-regulation first. Help children to bring down their emotional energy. To address the expression of negative emotions the adult may say, “When I’m frustrated, I go for a walk and talk to myself about my problem. I come back to my work later.” Walk with the child while he expresses his feelings.

Preschool Kindergarten (2.5 to 6 years)



2. Emotional (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
2.5 Regulating Attention, Emotions and Behaviour	• increasingly expressing emotions appropriately • focusing attention • avoiding distracting stimulation • returning attention after checking in or after a distraction • stopping and starting their own actions • delaying gratification • persisting when frustrated • using language to communicate needs and regulate emotions • gaining control of their behaviour • increasingly coping with challenges and disappointments • using effective strategies for self-calming	Offer the option of extending an activity. “May, if you leave your sculpture to dry overnight, we could look for more boxes for you to use tomorrow.” Projects that are extended over more than one day involve waiting for the satisfaction of completion. When children decide what they will do, they are motivated to follow through.
2.6 Positive Attitudes towards Learning <i>(e.g., persistence, engagement, curiosity and a sense of mastery)</i>	• persevering when faced with challenging or new tasks • coping with defeats and errors • asking for and accepting help when needed • accepting challenges and taking risks when learning • expressing satisfaction and joy when accomplishing tasks	Model curiosity, creative thinking and problem solving. “I wonder what would hold these large boxes together.” Be a partner to a child when persistence is required. Be excited about learning and share children's joy in their discoveries. This provides the social support for taking on challenges and risks and staying with a task required for mastering a new skill.

Preschool Kindergarten (2.5 to 6 years)



3. Communication, language and literacy

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
3.1 Using Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication	• using gestures and signs to communicate • expressing their ideas and describing their experiences with increasingly complex sentences • using facial expression and tone matched to the content of their communication • attending to and responding appropriately to the non-verbal communications of others • increasingly engaging in more complex interactions • sharing songs and stories in home language	When Chaviva's communication is not understood by Martin, interpret what she said. In your conversation, include Martin's gestures and language that is used in Martin's home and suggest that Martin speak directly to Chaviva. This approach will promote the child's inclusion in play and the expansion of conversation.
3.2 Using English and the Child's Home Language	• entering into play using both their home language and French or English • greeting others in their home language and French or English • teaching each other names of objects, actions and events in their home language • talking about important people in their lives	Learn a few words of the home language (for example, simple greetings, names of common objects and family members) of the children in your program. Use these words in conversation. A child's engagement increases in inclusive environments where her native language and culture are valued and she is encouraged to retain her home language.
3.3 Vocabulary	• using new words in play • asking questions to extend their understanding of words • linking new experiences with words they know • defining words by function (i.e., a ball is something you bounce)	Link new words to vocabulary the child already knows and uses. Use actions to illustrate the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. Use new words in daily conversation so that the children can hear and use them in context. Words are more likely to become part of the child's vocabulary when they are used in play.
3.4 Conversing with Peers and Adults	• using increasingly more complex sentences • engaging in increasingly longer interactions • speaking in front of groups • understanding many culturally accepted ways of adjusting language to fit the age, sex and social status of speakers and listeners	Invite children to introduce their family members that are attending the program. Encourage children to bring in items from home. Ask questions that encourage more complex sentences. For example, "How do you cook food in the wok?" or "The red sari is beautiful. Can you tell me how you put it on?" Continue to ask questions that encourage children to give more detail and information. Asking children to introduce a family member in a group setting or introduce a household item requires them to adjust their conversation to a group of peers and to family members.



3. Communication, language and literacy (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
3.5 Using Descriptive Language to Explain, Explore and Extend	• using sentences to describe objects and events • expanding descriptive language to sentences of five to seven words • using new vocabulary and grammatical constructions in their descriptive language • spontaneously using the language of mathematics, inquiry and reasoning as they play	Take advantage of children's natural curiosity and make a list of children's questions about things that interest them and that they want to know. Explorations in play, interviewing family and community members, and field trips and research resources provide rich sources of information and answers to their questions. Refer to the children's question list. Comment on a child's exploration and invite the child to add what he has learned to answer a question. Adult: "How does knowing how many children came in today help us figure out how many children are away?" Provoked by their own curiosity and supported with rich opportunities for exploration, children are motivated to describe and explain what they have learned. Expand on what the children say and ask stimulating questions to extend the topic.
3.6 Listening to Others	• listening to each other with attention without distraction or interruption • engaging in give and take when interacting with others (communicative turn-taking) • understanding and following oral directions	Wait for children to respond, sit at the children's level and pay attention to them as they talk. When children watch significant others modeling communication skills and respect for others, it supports the acquisition of those behaviours and attitudes.
3.7 Enjoying Literacy	• choosing to spend time with books • discussing and making connections between books and stories in their play • requesting specific stories, poems, songs • showing pleasure and enjoyment during activities with language, music and print materials	Read and re-read interesting stories that are rich in ideas and meaning and that engage the children. Show your enjoyment in reading books. When reading is experienced with enjoyment, learning is reinforced and children are motivated to continue to expand their involvement in literacy.
3.8 Using and Understanding the Power of Literacy	• beginning to express self in print • connecting information and events in text to life and life to text • dictating stories • creating stories orally and using a variety of media • referring to print in the physical environment for meaning, rules and directions • understanding the functions of literature	Take dictation during play. Act as a scribe and record children's ideas and stories during play. This practice makes connections between experiences and the written word. It also creates a lasting record in print of children's stories.



3. Communication, language and literacy (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
3.9 Retelling Stories	• retelling stories in pretend play and art activities • making connections from stories in their daily living • dictating ideas and stories	Ask a child to retell a story after having read or listened to one. This invites the child to reconstruct the basic story elements. When adults listen to a child retelling a story, they learn what the child understands and what is important to her.
3.10 Phonological Awareness	• identifying sounds in their environment, such as animal sounds, traffic noises, music and human speech • creating sounds by singing and making music • taking part in sound games • filling in rhyming words in familiar poems, songs and books • identifying specific letter sounds and syllables • isolating sound combinations • reciting nursery rhymes, poems or sing-songs • making up chants and rhymes	Use rhyme rituals in daily routines such as, “Willoughby, Wallabee, Woo, the Elephant Sat on You.” The repetition in routines and rituals provides many opportunities to hear and match sounds in real-life situations. Also, rhymes in routines add pleasure and a positive tone to daily routines.
3.11 Letter Recognition	• identifying the letter that begins their names and its sound • picking out other words that begin with the same letter or sound as their names • beginning to identify a few consonant letter-sound correspondences in words in familiar rhymes	Play letter and sound games where the adult and child take turns leading. This game invites children to listen to and then to create alliteration. Adult: “Pat plays with purple paint. Pat, how many p’s did I use? Pat, your turn to use Hina’s name. What is the first letter in Hina’s name? Make a sentence with Hina’s name and words that start with h.” This kind of game gives children an opportunity to identify initial consonants in context.



3. Communication, language and literacy (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
3.12 Understanding of Orientation and Familiar Conventions of Print	• pretending to read • using paper and pencil to scribble • pretending to write and writing letters and words • holding books the right way up • turning pages from the front to the back • using left to right directionality • gradually moving from scribbling to drawing to writing • writing their own books	In dramatic play, include literacy-related props that let children write and read or pretend to write and read. Take on a role that promotes children's use of these props. For example, provide menus and order book, then be a guest in the restaurant and state your order to the child server, who can write your order in her order book. This embeds the practising of print concepts in play.
3.13 Matching Spoken Words with Written Ones	• associating the spoken word with the written word by pointing or talking about connections • recognizing familiar signs (i.e., stop signs, logos etc.)	Put labels and signs in important places in the room and then make reference to them when appropriate. "Look, Josh made a sign, 'Do not touch my Lego building.'" Signs like these capture attention and serve a purpose. Meaningful print in the environment invites children to match spoken words with written words.
3.14 Beginning to Write Letters of the Alphabet and Some High-Frequency Words	• recognizing and writing their own name • writing most letters and some words when dictated • independently writing many uppercase and lowercase letters • using invented spelling • writing high-frequency words	Transfer the role of writer-recorder in daily duties from adults to children as their skills permit. Children may write their names on their artwork, add names to attendance lists or make signs. Everyday writing with a purpose embeds beginning writing in meaningful contexts with print-rich examples.

Preschool Kindergarten (2.5 to 6 years)



4. Cognition

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
4.1 Self-regulation	• using language to regulate own behaviour and attention • using emerging ability to take another's point of view to regulate own behaviour and attention • monitoring own behaviour	Use language to describe feelings. "Mariam is frustrated. She's been working a long time and the puzzle still doesn't fit." Preschoolers are beginning to use language to regulate emotions. When children hear and use a vocabulary of emotional terms, they can express and regulate emotions with language.
4.2 Problem Solving	• identifying problems • beginning to plan ahead • collecting and organize information • brainstorming solutions and outcomes • connecting consequences to actions • taking action to solve problems • evaluating the outcomes of their problem solving • creating rules based on similarities of two situations, for transferring knowledge • generalizing solutions of problems from one situation to another	Pose problems. For example, "How can you make your building bigger?" "How can you make something sink that floats?" "How can you move the blocks across the room without using your hands?" This causes the child to solve problems, think logically and use language to represent thinking.
4.3 Representation	• pretending to be someone else • dramatic playing with a plot and imaginative features • drawing and constructing 2D and 3D models • beginning to use art media and tools to express their ideas, feelings and experiences • using a variety of materials to build with and express their ideas • generating alternative ideas • recognizing their own work and the work of others • beginning to use art media and tools to express ideas, feelings and experiences • talking about the story or meaning of artwork • connecting artwork to their past experiences or to emotions, feelings and thoughts • taking a role in socio-dramatic play; co-operating and negotiating roles with others • sustaining and extending their socio-dramatic play with language, additional ideas and props	When children's drawings represent a recent event in the program or a field trip, engage in discussion about the artwork and what it represents. "You've drawn a fire truck. It has large wheels like the one we saw at the fire hall last week." Pause to transfers the conversational lead to the child. This engages the child in thinking about his art and remembering what he knows from a field trip. The child uses representations to go beyond the present and to use ideas, language and drawing to explore people, places and events.

Preschool Kindergarten (2.5 to 6 years)



4. Cognition (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
4.4 Questioning	- telling others of problems - asking “why” to determine causes - asking questions that can be answered through observation - asking questions to solve problems - asking questions to clarify their understanding	Listen to children's questions with respect and answer them seriously. This creates an environment where children feel free to express their ideas. Children learn to ask questions when adults model curiosity and pose questions. If you don't know the answer to a question, say, “I don't know, but we can find out together.” Show your willingness to learn along with the children.
4.5 Observing	- visually attending to things in their environment - using all senses to gather information while observing - focusing their observation on details - increasing the time they spend observing - naming and describing the things that they have observed - using specialized sources and books as a means of extending their observations	Ask a child: “How does it look when you use a magnifying glass? What else do you see?” This invites children to observe more closely and to generate more than one observation.
4.6 Collecting and Organizing Information	- using objects to construct graphs - creating pictorial graphs - posing questions about graphs - placing marks on graphs indicating their choice - describing and comparing data on graphs and in surveys - using graphs to reach conclusions	When planning a field trip, brainstorm destinations with children. Create a graph with pictures of the destinations that have been identified. Invite the children to put a mark on the graph indicating the children's choice. This provides a record of information that can be examined and discussed. The information can be analyzed and compared.
4.7 Reflecting and Reaching Conclusions	- describing similarities and cause and effect in recurring events - identifying patterns of events - describing connections between different objects, events and experiences - making generalizations about different objects, events and experiences	Ask a child: “How do you know what comes next?” Or: “How did you figure that out?” This will invite the child to reveal his thinking and tell how he came to his conclusion.

Preschool Kindergarten (2.5 to 6 years)



4. Cognition (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
4.8 Communicating Findings	- presenting their ideas to others through drawings, telling, music and movement - using mathematical processing and language to communicate findings	At the end of the day, ask the child to tell and show his mother how he built a tower as tall as himself. Retelling ideas and explaining discoveries to others integrates learning.
4.9 Reasoning Logically <i>Causality</i>	- identifying actions and outcomes - identifying evidence for point of view - exploring causes - transferring rules from one situation to another - generalizing knowledge across situations	Include the language of logic in daily interactions. "You may choose Caps for Sale or Something from Nothing for group today." Words and phrases such as <i>or, not, if...then, because, some, all, never</i> and <i>probably</i> reflect thinking and logical connections.
<i>Sequential Change</i>	- making logical connections - identifying what precedes change	Avoid non-verbal and verbal responses to children's thinking that imply "right" or "wrong." Instead, communicate the message: "That's an interesting idea." As children explore, they may try out one idea. If it fails, they may move quickly to another idea. Learning to consider why the first idea did not work makes children better problem solvers. Children also monitor adult's reactions to their actions. When adults communicate "right" or "wrong," they can cut off children's thinking.
<i>Exploring Transformations and Hypothesizing</i>	- mixing and transforming materials - predicting the outcomes of transformations	Ask predictive questions. For example: "What will happen if we add more water to the play dough?" Predictive questions invite the child to construct a hypothesis about the outcome of a transformation.
4.10 Classifying	- sorting objects, pictures and things into groups - comparing, matching and sorting according to common properties - comparing objects - moving from random classification to classifying by one and then two or more properties	Provide multiple copies of paper money of many denominations. Also provide play coins of many values. Have a cash drawer with many compartments. Be a customer who makes a purchase paying with many bills. Materials with contrasting properties, together with equipment to organize the materials into groups, support the skill of classification.

Preschool Kindergarten (2.5 to 6 years)



4. Cognition (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
4.11 Seriating	- describing relationships such as smaller than, bigger than, different than - placing objects, pictures and things in order along a continuum	Provide a set of measuring cups in the sand box. When children use the cups, ask relationship questions. “Which cup is the biggest? Which cup did you use to make the small castle?” The materials and questions encourage the children to put objects into relationships, such as bigger than and smaller than.
4.12 Counting	counting in meaningful ways in play and daily living	Invite thinking about numbers when it is meaningful. In dramatic play, ask: “Are there enough plates for Tamika and me to eat with you?” Children may count the number of plates, the number of diners and the number of new guests. Using everyday situations motivates children to use the number concepts that they know, such as counting and comparing amounts.
4.13 Determining Quantity	- counting to determine quantity - matching numbers to sets of objects	At snack time, say: “Joan, bring just enough cups for everyone to have one.” During daily living there are many opportunities to think about numbers. This interaction asks the child to determine the number of cups required. It encourages the child to figure out the number of children in order to determine the number of cups. Children may respond by picking up one cup at a time and delivering it to a child or by counting the number of children.
4.14 Comparing Quantities	- making more-or-less comparisons when using materials - moving objects to align them when comparing quantities - counting to compare quantities - counting using one-to-one correspondence - using a graph to compare numbers	Invite children to move objects they are counting. “Kathy, while you are counting the cars, drive them into a parking spot.” Arranging and moving objects is a strategy children use to make sense of number relationships. When you provide movable objects and other materials, you help children keep track of the objects they have counted, so that they do not count any object twice as they construct one-to-one correspondence.



4. Cognition (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
4.15 Representing Numbers	- representing numbers in different ways (tallies, numbers, graphs) - recognizing numbers in print, children write numbers - reading numbers written in words	Refer back to children's number representations. "Let's look at your chart and count the tallies to see how many bowling pins Avi knocked down." When adults introduce and use a wide range of number representations, such as tallies, drawings, maps, graphs made from stacked objects, pictographs, bar graphs, tables and narratives, they promote number thinking and help children remember and explain their reasoning.
4.16 Describing and Determining Ordinal Number and Position	- pointing to and describing relative position: before, after, between, front, back, next, last, first to sixth - identifying position of events in a sequence	Make a numbered "elevator" available as a prop for addition to children's vertical buildings. When children build up and then use the elevator, they can see that three is more than two and less than four. Number lines allow children to see and compare numbers. Before or after positions of a number in relation to another number can be used to determine which number is larger or smaller.
4.17 Understanding Two-Dimensional and Three-Dimensional Shapes	- recognizing and naming shapes - counting sides and corners - identifying common attributes of shapes - matching shapes and names - recognizing and naming cubes, rectangular prisms, cylinders, spheres	When children are building with blocks, look at their constructions from different points of view. Describe what you see: "You have used a lot of rectangle blocks. Come over here and look at them." Pause. "Are the small rectangles on the top the same shape as the blocks on the bottom?" This gives children the opportunity to identify shapes from different points of view.
4.18 Identifying Patterns	- recognizing patterns in their environment - creating patterns with blocks and art materials - describing patterns such as plaid, checked, striped - representing patterns with movements and with symbols - identifying, creating, copying and extending a variety of patterns (e.g., sound, colour, shape, number, etc.) - identifying, creating, copying and extending patterns	Talk about patterns that are part of daily life. "Every day we start by playing inside, we go outside and play on the playground, we come back inside for group and circle. What comes next?" Recognizing patterns gives practice in predicting what will happen, talking about relationships and seeing connections.

Preschool Kindergarten (2.5 to 6 years)



4. Cognition (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
4.19 Measuring Length, Weight and Capacity, Temperature, Time and Money	- measuring to determine relationships such as comparisons of length, weight and capacity - using vocabulary of measurement such as heavier or lighter and taller or shorter - using non-standard measuring tools, such as their feet, hands, a piece of string when they play, build or create - beginning to use the vocabulary of standard units of measure - recognizing relationships between attributes (i.e., weight and size; size and capacity)	When children are lining up materials ask, “How long is your train? It has so many cars.” This helps children recognize that objects have measurable properties. Have a variety of measuring tools available for children’s use so they can explore which tools are useful for measuring which attributes. For example, a balance scale is good for measuring weight.
4.20 Completing Simple Number Operations <i>(comparing sets; simple addition and subtraction)</i>	- establishing one-to-one correspondence - identifying more than, less than, or same as, when working with concrete objects or events - adding and subtracting one from a set - performing simple operations of adding to and taking away when working with concrete objects or events - using bar graphs to compare amounts - separating a set into two equal groups - sharing objects equally among more than two groups	Many opportunities to think about numbers occur naturally in play. Describe them. “Bernie, you’ve used four Popsicle sticks for each window. Are there enough sticks to finish your house?” Describing number operations as they occur draws children’s attention to number concepts and can invite them to extend their number thinking.
4.21 Using Number Symbols and Operations	- using counters to represent objects - identifying and using the + and – symbols	When children are bowling, offer them one counter for each pin that they knock over. The counters represent the pins and will be collected in small sets for each turn. These sets can be counted or added to determine the total number of pins a child knocked over.
4.22 Using Spatial Relations, Directions, Maps	- using spatial terms in context (i.e., forward, backward, inside, next, behind, in front, etc.) - following and identifying directions - using simple maps to find a location - making a map	When children’s firefighter play includes moving to various places in the playroom to put out fires, suggest that they make a map of the playroom to guide the firefighters to a fire. Making and using their own simple maps in play gives many opportunities to use spatial terms and find well-known rooms on the map.

Preschool Kindergarten (2.5 to 6 years)



5. Physical

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
5.1 Increasing Levels of Activity, Endurance, and Variation in Types of Activity and Skills	- freely exploring large outdoor equipment - running, climbing, jumping, hopping, balancing, etc. - using open-ended materials to move about, build and construct - practising bouncing, catching, kicking balls - gaining the ability to control their movements - increasing the distance they are able to walk - increasing skill in group games	Engage children in setting up the environment. “Let’s set up the playground together. Look in the storage shed. What equipment should we set up?” Involving children in planning and decision-making increases their active involvement in play.
5.2 Gross Motor Skills	increasing in coordination, speed, and endurance	“Joe, there is enough room for you and Hildy to run and run!” Indoor and outdoor programs that offer choice and enough time and space for exploration provide the circumstances for gross motor skill practice.
<i>Walking</i>	- beginning to walk with opposite leg-arm swing - walking up stairs alternating feet - walking down stairs alternating feet	Plan walks for small groups of children that involve walking up and down stairs. Walking can be practised in daily living, and when adults participate, children are motivated to continue to practise their emerging skills.
<i>Jumping</i>	jumping increases in co-ordination	Play follow-the-leader on an obstacle course that requires children to climb up and jump down. Children’s co-ordination and jumping are practised and supported in games when adults participate.
<i>Hopping</i>	hopping on one foot increases	Invite partners to take turns in hopscotch. “Lee, you and Sunny can play hopscotch together. Roll the marker to see who goes first.” Games like hopscotch motivate active and repeated practice in hopping.
<i>Galloping</i>	galloping and one-foot skipping emerge	Play music with simple rhythms when children are engaged in gross motor activities. Join in and clap out the rhythm. Musical patterns and adults who participate with children motivate continued practice of emerging galloping and skipping skills.

Preschool Kindergarten (2.5 to 6 years)



5. Physical (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
5.2 Gross Motor Skills <i>Throwing</i>	• throwing with rigid movements • throwing with increased co-ordination	Play throwing-at-a-target games with children. Target games encourage children to throw and increase their co-ordination. When adults participate, children are motivated to continue to practise throwing and increasing their co-ordination.
<i>Riding</i>	• pedaling and steering riding toys • riding a tricycle smoothly	Create a tricycle-riding path that invites riding. Take a role that is compatible with children's riding (traffic officer, parking attendant, delivery person). For example, as a traffic officer, hold up a stop sign. This causes children riding tricycles to stop. Stopping and starting again increases children's motor control.
<i>Movement and Expression</i>	• increasing control over own movements skills • becoming expressive using movement • expressing moods in movement • moving to music • matching movements to the rhyme and mood of the music • making patterns while moving to music • working together in shared dance and movement activities	Provide expressive music and props in a space large enough for creative movement. Imitate children's actions and introduce new patterns of movements. This provides practice in becoming expressive with movement and when adults participate, children are motivated to continue to practise movement skills.

Preschool Kindergarten (2.5 to 6 years)



5. Physical (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
5.3 Fine Motor Skills <i>Dressing</i>	• mastering simple items of clothing • dressing without assistance	During daily dressing, encourage children who have completed their dressing to work with their peers to finish dressing. This increases co-operation within the group while mastering the skills involved in dressing.
<i>Eating</i>	• eating using forks and knives	Observe children's use of utensils during lunch and snacks. As their skill and co-ordination increase, add the appropriate utensils. Adding utensils as children are ready increases the chances that utensils are coordinated.
<i>Tool Use</i>	• stringing large beads • cutting paper with scissors • cutting a straight line	Ensure that a variety of tools are provided with clay and modeling materials. Discuss children's actions. Clay is soft enough to mould yet dense enough to provide resistance when cut. It is a suitable medium for fine motor practice with tools.
<i>Drawing</i>	• copying straight lines • copying triangles and crosses	Make paper, markers, crayons and pencils part of pretend play and constructive play. Model their use in play. Accessible paper and markers provide the opportunity for their meaningful use. Children may draw the shapes they encounter in their play.
5.4 Auditory Skills and Music	• identifying the sources of musical sounds • showing enjoyment when listening to music • making choices and demonstrating preferences in music • using musical instruments to move from exploration to producing patterns to reproducing patterns	Provide a variety of recorded music for children to choose from. Talk about their musical choices with them. Identify instruments. Match rhythms by clapping and with sticks. Playfully joining children in their self-initiated music activity supports their auditory explorations and the development of their emerging musical skills.

School-age Children (5 to 8 years)



1. Social

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
1.1 Friendship	- participating in peer groups - having a best friend - basing friendships on mutual trust - participating in complex socio-dramatic play - often playing with children of the same sex with gender-specific toys - playing group games - interacting with more pro-social skills - declining aggression - emerging social hierarchies - interest in pleasing adults	As social hierarchies emerge, offer children who are leaders the opportunity to serve their peers. For example, during snack they could set out food, dishes and utensils. This provides the emerging leaders with an opportunity to take the initiative and care for others. Opportunities to balance initiative with caring promote the development of positive leadership skills.
1.2 Conflict Resolution and Social Problem-Solving Skills	- identifying solutions to conflict - making logical connections between actions and consequences - constructing a sense of right and wrong - problem solving in the face of difficulty - following rules	Consult with children so that they can solve social problems. “How did you feel when Chuck took your turn? What did you do? What else could you have done?” Consultation enables the child to review and clarify feelings and think through the problem for himself.
1.3 Co-operation	co-operating and sharing frequently	Invite children to share their ideas with their peers. “Jake, tell Sasha what your solution was.” Co-operation involves sharing ideas and materials. As children’s co-operation develops, increasing the exchange of ideas promotes thought before action.
1.4 Helping Skills	increasing helping behaviours	Assign a task to a child who is interested but has not volunteered. “Jesse, would you take attendance today?” Some children may not volunteer but may want to participate. This duty would promote helping as well as leadership.
1.5 Empathy	- demonstrating empathy for the rights of others - showing concern for the future welfare of others	Use empathy: “I get sad when I lose my things, too.” Empathy can increase the connection between the adult and the child through shared emotional experiences. It can also draw off emotional energy and thus free the child to solve problems.
1.6 Taking Another’s Point of View	- understanding the point of view of others and using this to regulate their own behaviour - understanding that others think, believe or feel differently from self - viewing self from another person’s point of view - viewing a relationship from the perspective of a third party	Redirect questions to peers. Adult: “Shanti wants to know how to make her pink darker.” This engages peers in an exchange of points of view which promotes thought.

School-age Children (5 to 8 years)



2. Emotional

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
2.1 Self-Concept	• talking about personal characteristics • taking responsibility for dressing, eating and hygiene routines • using personality traits and social comparison to define oneself • being increasingly responsible and independent	Describe children in psychological terms. Adult: “Thank you for being honest, Mary.” This encourages children to see themselves and others in psychological terms and as worthy of respect and dignity.
2.2 Identity Formation	• becoming aware of stereotypes • increasing flexible expectations of the behaviour of others	Create a collection of favourite books from children’s homes. Discuss and compare the books’ characters and their actions. Through the exploration of roles in literature, children can increase their awareness of the many ways that people live their lives and make comparisons to their own lives.
2.3 Self-Esteem	• showing pride in work and achievements	Affirm the child’s strengths. Adult: “That is an amazing building. You really figured out how to fit all those rooms in that space!” Admiring the child’s achievements promotes the child’s sense of self and self-esteem.
2.4 Recognizing and Expressing Emotions	• increasing understanding of sources of pride and gratitude; jealousy and anxiety • beginning to integrate mixed emotions	Promote reflection on the circumstances that lead up to mixed emotions. “What happened when you were playing ball?” “How did you feel?” Identify the emotions experienced. “It sounds as if you were excited and anxious.” Remembering the circumstances of emotionally charged experiences may provide the information necessary to make sense of mixed emotions.
2.5 Regulating Emotions and Behaviour	• using private speech (self-talk) to regulate emotions • using empathy and perspective taking to regulate emotions and behaviour • using a variety of strategies to regulate emotions such as anxiety	Model private speech. “This puzzle is hard for me. I need to slow down and find a matching piece.” Private speech is an important tool in self-regulation. Thinking out loud helps regulate emotions and recover from increasing emotional energy while giving time for other responses.
2.6 Positive Attitudes towards Learning, such as Persistence, Engagement, Curiosity and a Sense of Mastery	• increasing pride in work and interest in learning new things • solving problems in the face of difficulty • expanding curiosity and interest in learning about the world	Model how to lead a group discussion: questioning, summarizing, clarifying and predicting. When children have had sufficient group experience, rotate the role of leader to a child and participate by listening, observing and recording. This promotes the child’s engagement and sense of mastery.

School-age Children (5 to 8 years)



3. Communication, language and literacy

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
3.1 Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication	• using fluent, grammatically correct speech • telling jokes • memorizing songs • using correct verb tense, word order and sentence structure	Write a “joke of the day” leaving out the punch line for children to complete. Read the joke aloud and invite children to read out their punch lines to the joke. Ritualizing jokes is a playful way to expand children’s use of language and communication skills.
3.2 Vocabulary	• learning more words daily • using synonyms • using local slang	Continue to read to children daily. Transcribe their stories and communications and include them in daily reading. Hearing, using and recording language expands the vocabulary.
3.3 Conversing with Peers and Adults	• adapting messages to the needs of the listeners • increasing the length of recalled stories	Provide time for conversations and prompt children to extend their communications: “Tell us what else you saw.” Conversations require time. Prompting children to add more detail increases the length of conversations, the extent of recall and the amount of language used.
3.4 Phonological Awareness and Phonics	• identifying initial, middle and final sounds in words • recognizing common patterns and words	Model sound-letter associations when reading: “The Dra – A...Dragons of Blueland.” This focuses attention and identifies a middle sound. Model looking for familiar parts or “chunks” in words, for example, “jump... ing.”
3.5 Knowledge of Print	• decoding and word identification to make meaning • beginning to understand punctuation	Use flip charts to write outcomes of group meeting. This provides a permanent record for further review and discussion.



3. Communication, language and literacy (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
3.6 Reading	• enjoying being read to • making letter-sound correspondences • sounding out multi-syllable words • reading simple stories • retelling stories that have been read • using a variety of strategies to read • recognizing global words that are understood by most readers (e.g., the, home, pizza) • reading for pleasure • reading for different purposes • reading to find information • reading with fluency and meaning • thinking critically about the content of reading	Connect stories that have been read to current circumstances. Invite a child to retell the story, “This reminds me of the time Elmer, the dragon, outsmarted the hunters who were after his family. Ben, tell us Elmer’s plan.” Connecting what you have read to what children are experiencing brings literature into children’s daily lives. Retelling what has been read reinforces comprehension.
3.7 Writing	• writing with increasing complexity • writing about a personally meaningful topic • writing messages to others • taking dictation • using spelling that grows from invented to conventional • writing in various forms (stories, poems) • writing narratives • writing adapted to suit audience or purpose	Create a message centre with individual mailboxes where children can exchange written messages and drawings. Participate by writing messages and leaving them in the mailboxes. This provides a meaningful context for children to write and read in.

School-age Children (5 to 8 years)



4. Cognition

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
4.1 Self-regulation	regulating attention becomes more selective, planned and adaptable	“Midori, tell yourself, ‘Five more pumps and the ball will be ready for the game.’” This supports self-coaching, the child’s ability to guide her actions and attention with language and thinking.
4.2 Problem Solving	- planning to achieve goals - developing strategies internally - solving problems of more complexity	Repeat a child’s ideas for emphasis. Child: “You need a heavy ball to make the basket go down.” Adult: “It works with the heavy ball. That’s an interesting idea.” This reinforces thinking and brings salience to an idea so that it may be reviewed and reworked. Engage children in problem solving that is relevant and doable through hands-on investigations and through their own research.
4.3 Representation	- engaging in complex socio-dramatic play - drawings are figurative (i.e., realistic representations) - creating complex 2D and 3D drawings and constructions - drawing becomes more detailed and organized - writing	Imitate the child’s novel methods of constructing 3D models. This promotes what the child has done with her peers. It also focuses attention on the child’s form of representation.
4.4 Memory	- using memory strategies of rehearsal and organization - using several memory strategies in one situation	Rehearse field trip procedures with children before leaving. First you say a rule and then a child tells a rule. Preparing for an event by running through known rules provides rehearsal of field trip procedures.
4.5 Inquiry	- observing and forming a question - collecting information - interpreting information - discovering relationships - comparing results with peers and in books - writing reports, discussing results - evaluating and re-adjusting	Create a garden where children decide what they want to plant and do the research to determine where to plant the seeds. Provide a garden chart where children can record when they water the plants and when the plants may bloom. Engage children in discussion about their plants and recordings. When children gather information, make predictions, record observations, discuss procedures they are engaging in elements of the inquiry process.

School-age Children (5 to 8 years)



4. Cognition (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
4.6 Classifying	- creating hierarchies - creating sub-categories and -classes - understanding relationships between categories in the hierarchy	Play team sports. Children will create categories of players and team positions, offensive or defensive. When the game is being played, children will expect team members to play according to their category or positions. These expectations will guide behaviour: If I am offensive I do... . If she is defensive she will do... . In this way, team sports engage children in the logic of classification and creating sub-categories.
4.7 Measuring Length, Weight, Capacity, Temperature, Time and Money	using conventional units of measurement (metres, litres, hours, etc.)	Provide a tape and other measuring tools to children who are making a fabric craft or sewing. Encourage them to design their own patterns using the measuring tools. This integrates use of conventional units of measurement into activities chosen by the children.
4.8 Completing Number Operations	- adding and subtracting double-digit numbers - starting to multiply and divide	Use voting to decide on an activity. “When we go outside, we can take the field hockey equipment or the soccer equipment. Let’s vote to see which game to play. Eighteen votes for soccer and there are 29 children here today. How many children want to play hockey?” Voting supports both democratic (social) and number skills (comparing yea and nay votes).
<i>Patterning</i>	- extending patterns - representing and describing patterns - growing and shrinking patterns	Paraphrase children’s pattern construction. Adult: “Jose said that if the CN Tower is taller than the SkyDome, and the SkyDome is taller than our building, then the CN Tower is taller than our building, too. How does Jose know that?” The question invites the child to describe the pattern.

School-age Children (5 to 8 years)



4. Cognition (cont'd)

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
4.9 Spatial Relations, Directions, Map	• understanding left and right • giving clear, well-organized directions • representing depth in drawing • using maps • creating maps	Make a map of the room with children. Cut out shapes to stand for furniture and equipment. Use the map and shapes to plan room changes with children. These activities engage children in practising spatial skills.
4.10 Temporal Relations	• understanding of continuum of time • using conventional units of time (hours, minutes)	When children are doing long-term projects, invite them to record their activities on a calendar. Engage them in discussions that compare the time spent on each element of the project. Invite them to use the calendar to determine the amount of time and make comparisons. This can be a part of project review and decision-making. Recording and discussing the time lines of the project encourages children to think about time in activity units and in conventional units of time. They may create temporal order by describing the beginning, middle and end of the project (a continuum of time).
4.11 Games with Rules	• conforming to the rules of the game • using strategies to improve performance during the game	Play cards with children as an equal. Reducing adult power encourages children to think for themselves and not depend on adults for answers.

School-age Children (5 to 8 years)



5. Physical

Domain and Skills	Indicators of the Skill	Interactions
5.1 Gross Motor Skills <i>Running</i>	increasing control, speed and coordination	Play dodge ball with children. Dodge ball engages children in running and changing speed and direction.
<i>Jumping</i>	- jumping vertically increases in height - standing broad jump increases in length	Play skipping games with children. Turn the rope and recite jumping rhymes while children combine jump rope tricks. Children in this activity increase agility and strengthen jumping skills.
<i>Throwing</i>	throwing speed, distance and accuracy improve	Play 4-square with children. It requires throwing co-ordination and accuracy as children throw balls into designated squares.
<i>Catching</i>	catching small balls over greater distances	Play softball with children. It requires that children catch and throw over differing distances.
<i>Kicking</i>	kicking speed and accuracy improve	Play target games like soccer where children kick a ball at a target. This will support children's increasing ability to run and kick with increasing co-ordination and accuracy.

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