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You can find out a great deal about individual needs of children by watching them perform tasks and interact with others, especially to determine the child's level of interest in certain activities. Observation allows you to see problems that a child faces in communicating and socialising with other children and adults, and will alert you to any limitations.

Talking to children and their parents can also provide you with a great deal of information that contributes to your ongoing assessment of individual needs.

## **Communicating with children about specific support needs**

Effective communication with children is the foundation for encouraging a high level of participation in school age care programs. Address any barriers to communication to ensure the child's needs are identified accurately. Your own style and method of communication can then be adjusted accordingly.

Children can be hesitant to communicate with you if they are shy, uncertain or fearful of how you might react to their interaction. This can prevent them from:

- seeking help with an activity
- acting independently; for example, going to the toilet while you are leading a group discussion
- discussing ongoing difficulties, such as bullying from other children.

There are many other situations where communication difficulties may arise; for example:

- Children with speech or linguistic problems will struggle with communication and may require more of your time to attend to their needs; speech impediments, slow development of speech or poor comprehension of the subtleties of language can contribute to this.
- A child with a learning delay may have difficulty following instructions or understanding the exact meaning of what you are saying.
- A child who does not have English as their first language may have difficulty communicating with staff and other children.

## **Providing specialised physical aids or equipment**

Children with additional support needs can participate more in programs when specialised aids and equipment are supplied and used correctly. Aids and equipment are a positive way for the child to overcome barriers and maintain their independence. When a child can perform an activity independently, they are encouraged to feel more like their peers and have a greater scope for play and learning.

Physical aids and equipment may include:

- mobility aids; for example, wheelchairs and leg braces for children with physical disabilities
- living aids; for example, large switches adapted to everyday appliances (including computers) for children with reduced fine motor skills common to muscular dystrophy and other neurological conditions

- lean meat, fish, and poultry, or alternatives for children who have a vegetarian diet
- milks, yoghurts and cheese, or alternatives for children with allergies or intolerance to dairy foods
- water rather than sugary drinks.

Children’s diets should include only limited quantities of:

- foods high in saturated fats
- foods high in salt
- foods containing added sugars.

Your service will have routines for eating; however, these should be flexible to meet individual children’s needs and events of the day. There should be water available for children to drink at all times. Additional food may be required when:

- a child arrives at the service in the morning without eating a suitable breakfast at home
- a child has a condition that requires additional attention to eating patterns, such as diabetes.

Children with allergies need to have special attention paid to their diets and to the wider school age care environment. When a child has a food allergy, even the smallest traces of that food may cause serious illness. In rare cases, contact with the food can even cause a child to stop breathing. This reaction is called anaphylaxis. Common allergens (foods that can trigger severe reactions) include milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, fish, shellfish, wheat and soy. If a child who has allergies attends your service, it is important to inform parents and staff not to bring these foods into the centre, even in small traces.

## Matching specific support needs of children to existing experiences

Encouraging a child to take part in existing programs and everyday experiences is the most successful method of appropriately meeting the needs of a child. The following table provides examples of methods used to match an existing experience with the specific support needs of children attending your service.

Specific support needs	Matching school age care experience
To have needs heard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple questionnaires and feedback surveys</li> <li>• Group discussions about children’s needs and preferences</li> <li>• Opportunities to talk to staff individually, such as during quiet times</li> <li>• Asking questions and engaging in conversation with children frequently</li> </ul>

*continued ...*

Children who are reluctant or unable to talk to you openly may react positively to sensitive questioning. When asking questions, be guided by the child's conversation and try to reflect the child's own thoughts and direction from the conversation. Open questions that do not lead the child in a specific direction are useful here. For example, 'What are your favourite subjects?' or 'Who do you most enjoy playing with?'

Once a child has indicated a concern, you might ask further questions that encourage a more specific response such as, 'What particular homework problem can I help you with?' or 'How do you feel when other children leave you out of the game?'

## Using open and closed questioning

Using a combination of different question styles can guide children's discussions effectively. Closed questions are those that only require a yes or no response. They can be useful when you require brief information or for establishing a fact. For example, you might ask closed questions like, 'Do you like that game?' or 'Do you need any help?'

Open questions attempt to extract more than a one-word response. They are useful when encouraging a child to expand on their needs or feelings. For example, you might ask questions like, 'What would you like to do now?' or 'What did you think of that game?'

Alternating between open and closed questions can help to establish a deeper rapport with the child and feels less threatening than using only open or only closed questions.

## Active listening

Active listening involves showing the child through your words and actions that you care about what they have to say, and encouraging them to say more.

The following techniques contribute to active listening and are useful in drawing out a child's feelings and concerns:

- Taking a position close to the child speaking
- Focusing attention on the child speaking
- Suspending opinions and emotions
- Checking understanding and clarifying information

## Taking a position close to the child speaking

Children often talk openly when the perceived difference in power and size are minimised. To make a child feel more comfortable, sit at the same level as the child; for example, in a similar sized chair next to them at a table or on the floor. Reducing the distance between yourself and the child to a close but comfortable level can encourage the child to speak about problems that are more difficult for them to discuss.

## Cognitive needs

Children learn in different ways and school age care services should include a range of different approaches to address cognitive needs. Collaborating with your supervisor can help you to develop approaches that use:

- opportunities for children to learn through a range of hands-on experiences
- visual information available from books, computers or posters
- learning through instruction
- unstructured time allowing children to follow their own interests
- time set aside for structured learning
- learning through making mistakes
- a nurturing learning environment where children feel safe from criticism from their peers and from adults.

The age or developmental stage of the child can determine how you adjust your communication style to meet their individual cognitive needs. For example, younger children often miss the subtleties of language such as sarcasm, humour or complex words and phrases, and therefore need to be spoken to in simple and clear language. Older children can develop a mistrust of certain styles of communication, such as being told what to do without collaboration, and need communication that is not patronising or demeaning to them.

## Social needs

When children move through their primary school years, their social skills tend to develop significantly. The importance of peer acceptance and being part of a group increases with the child's age. Needs that relate to a child's social development include:

- opportunities to participate in a range of games and activities that promote and teach cooperation
- instruction and reminders about social rules
- safe environments to play and explore
- encouragement to feel a part of their community and to care about issues that matter to the community
- having adults around them who form caring and positive attachments
- rules that encourage fairness in children's behaviour.

Your supervisor can help you to recognise anti-social or uncooperative behaviours in children that are unexpected in their age group, such as aggression towards other children.

Developmental area	Example activities
Cognitive development	Memory games, puzzles, any problem-solving activity
Creative development	Art, dance, music
Language development	Singing nursery rhymes and songs, conversing, asking questions, using sign language
Physical development – gross motor skills	Riding a bike, playing ball, skipping, hopping, dancing
Physical development – fine motor skills	Art and craft, gluing, colouring, lacing, playdough, puzzles
Social and emotional development	Reading books about feelings, asking children to describe how they feel or how others might be feeling, activities that require children to share or be part of a group

## Behavioural needs

Children who demonstrate behaviours of concern sometimes have underlying needs that are not always obvious. These behaviours can be the result of a range of problems or emotions that the child is experiencing and should be referred to your supervisor to determine how the child's needs could best be met. For example:

- a child who shows bullying behaviours may have been the victim of bullying themselves
- a child who is angry or in frequent power struggles with staff or other children may have emotional or developmental problems
- children with attention-seeking behaviours may have problems related to self-esteem.

Your supervisor can sometimes help you to recognise the factors behind certain behaviours. They may suggest documenting or charting the behaviour to help you determine environmental factors that trigger each episode, such as excessive noise, food intolerance or overstimulation. Underlying causes for serious behavioural problems can sometimes be best determined by a trained professional such as a doctor, psychologist or behavioural expert.

The following case study illustrates how an educator consults with their supervisor about a child's particular needs.

### Case study

8-year-old Jonathan has been displaying unusual and uncharacteristic behaviours. He frequently appears irritable, occasionally even lashing out at other children when they come too close during activities. He ignores staff requests to help tidy the room when an activity has finished, preferring to sit down and watch.

*continued ...*

with them and using positive language to affirm their relationship. Remember, siblings are not responsible for the safety and wellbeing of their family members, no matter how protective they appear to be. You should remain aware of the activities of the siblings at all times, and not allow the older child to take over your supervisory role.

## Managing conflict between siblings

Sibling interactions should not be treated in isolation or differently to interactions between other children, as their behaviours need to conform to the limits and guidelines of the service, just as they would be applied to any other children. Unkind words or actions should not be permitted. Conflict should be managed positively and according to service behaviour support procedures.

It can be useful to determine what might be behind these behaviours, since sibling rivalry can be caused by a variety of factors. Jealousy of the sibling's achievements can sometimes be countered by ensuring that praise is provided in equal measures. Children should not be asked to compete against each other when one child has an advantage such as age or unusual talent. Try to foster individual talents that suit each child's own abilities and praise them for their own achievements rather than making comparisons with siblings. Avoid statements like, 'If only you behaved as well as your brother' or 'Your older sister is very good at sports. You must be very proud'.

Putting pressure on children to leave their own friendship groups or activities to take a parenting role can be unfair to the older child. You can support children to foster their own friendships. In some cases, asking the older child to help their sibling to make friends first can be a good option when the younger child is shy or reluctant to leave their older sister or brother. Stay with the pair until the shyer child has become involved in an activity with children from their own age group.

The following case study illustrates how an educator recognises and supports sibling relationships.

### Case study

Emma and Kate are sisters aged 6 and 9 respectively. They have recently commenced at a new school and will be attending the school age care service attached to the school every afternoon. Emma is shy and nervous about her new surroundings and the sea of unfamiliar faces. She clings tightly to Kate. Kate is very protective of her younger sister. Sally, the educator, can see that Emma's clinging behaviour is preventing Kate from making friends from her own class. Sally talks to Kate alone when she has a chance and praises Kate for her kindness towards her sister. She reassures Kate that she will begin to introduce Emma to other children from her class and that once Emma begins to feel more comfortable in the service she will naturally begin to develop her own friendships.

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## Chapter 2

# Implementing support and guidance strategies

Providing physical assistance with tasks and activities is sometimes seen as the core responsibility of your role in delivering school age care programs. However, it is just as important to develop and foster your skills in supporting and guiding children's social and emotional wellbeing. Children from different cultures or those with disabilities sometimes require additional support to have these needs met effectively.

Children need to have their emotions affirmed to enable them to participate fully in programs, and to help them develop a positive sense of self that will take them through life. Teaching effective communication skills to children can help you to support children who are reluctant to speak up about their needs. It can also help you to teach a child who uses aggressive and abusive behaviours to release their frustration or anger in more effective ways.

When you are faced with difficult situations, your supervisor is the best person to provide additional support or guidance. They may have access to services and strategies that will add to your own abilities.

In this chapter you will learn about:

- 2A Ensuring inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds and children with additional needs
- 2B Minimising the effects of aggressive or abusive behaviour of children
- 2C Enabling children to express their need for support
- 2D Accessing support from your supervisor to optimise children's participation



Celebrate the achievements of all children, no matter how small, and encourage other children to do the same. Strengths-based approaches are important, because they focus on what the child can do, rather than treating the disability as a problem. For example, children with high-functioning autism spectrum disorders such as Asperger's syndrome can be reliant on predictable routines and clear directions. However, they can also have high intellectual abilities and often enjoy being challenged in maths and language games.

## Talking to children about differences

Children are naturally curious about differences. It is important that you do not avoid answering questions or show that you are uncomfortable discussing a child who is from a different culture or who has a disability. Be honest in your responses, highlighting that the disability is just one aspect of the child using a strengths-based approach.

For example, you might answer a question about a child with a hearing impairment in the following way: 'Ned has some trouble hearing. The hearing aid helps him to hear better, but he is very good at understanding what you are saying by watching your lips move. You can help him by facing him while you are talking. You don't need to shout'. Where possible, and when the child with the disability appears comfortable, you might encourage them to lead the discussion, rather than talking for them.

Never allow negative comments or insults to go unchecked. When a child makes a hurtful or stereotypical comment, challenge them by giving more accurate information, and invite them to consider how their comment makes the other child feel. You might first need to work on your own feelings of bias or stereotypical attitudes.

Inclusion can be modelled most significantly in your words and actions. If you do need to point out differences at all, use terms that recognise the person first, rather than focusing on a disability. Refer to an unknown person in a discussion as a person or child with a disability, rather than a disabled child. A child with autism is preferable to an autistic child. Refer to a child who *uses* a wheelchair, rather than using negative terms like 'confined to a wheelchair', or 'wheelchair-bound'.

The following case study illustrates how to include children from diverse backgrounds.

Examples of this type of behaviour may include:

- hitting or slapping
- force feeding
- yelling at or belittling
- humiliating a child
- physically dragging a child
- depriving a child of food or drink (for example, saying to a child ‘If you don’t eat your vegetables, you can’t have dessert’)
- time out where a child is placed in an alternative place and in isolation.

## Unacceptable practices

What is generally considered as unacceptable practice within a service includes:

- negative labelling
- criticising
- discouraging
- blaming or shaming
- making fun of or laughing at
- using sarcastic or cruel humour
- using negative language, such as ‘no’, ‘stop that!’, ‘don’t...’ and ‘you never...’
- using restraint, unless in an emergency situation.

## National Quality Standard

The National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5 Relationships with children, states:

Standard 5.2	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults.
Element 5.2.2	Each child is supported to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
Element 5.2.3	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times.

## My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care

All Principles and Practices of the MTOP relate to your role in supporting behaviour positively. They pull together everything you know and understand about children and support your use of positive interactions in shaping behaviour.

The Outcomes each relate back to supportive behaviour strategies. There are many strategies that may be commonly used, but some of these are considered controversial. Here are some examples of controversial strategies.

## Behaviour plans

Children who show regular and serious behavioural problems, or children with developmental delays whose behaviour is consistently concerning, may require specialist intervention. This can include drawing up behaviour plans, combined with supplementary support including counselling. When developing behaviour plans, educators may benefit from input and advice from a behavioural expert, such as a psychologist who specialises in child behaviour. The child's parents and program staff, and the child themselves, are also often asked to collaborate on developing the plan.

Behaviour plans provide an individualised set of responses that must be followed consistently by all staff in the event of behaviours of concern. Plans usually outline the child's history of aggression towards others, and identify triggers that commonly lead to the behaviour, such as food allergies, losing at games or not being given their way in a group decision. The plans provide specific strategies that should be used to prevent escalation of aggressive behaviour, and appropriate and safe responses to behaviour that puts other children at risk. They should also include ongoing positive behaviour support strategies, such as praising the child when they communicate in a respectful way.

The following example demonstrates how a behaviour support policy can help to minimise the effects of behaviours of concern.

### Example

A school age care service has a bullying policy that requires certain actions to be taken if a child has shown bullying behaviours towards another child. The policy includes the following instructions:

- Talk to the perpetrator, explaining the consequences of their behaviour on the other child. Inform the child that the behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Provide a warning to the child that clearly explains the consequences of further behaviour.
- Arrange a time to speak to the parents of both children, on separate and private occasions about the strategies that have been put in place to resolve the problem.
- Develop and record strategies in consultation with the parents of the child who has shown bullying behaviours.
- Use agreed disciplinary actions if the behaviour continues.

## 2D

## Accessing support from your supervisor to optimise children's participation

Regardless of whether you work alone in a school age care service, within the grounds of a school, or in a busy school holiday or vacation care program with numerous other staff, you will have access to help and guidance from a manager or supervisor, either on site or external to the service grounds. Many school age care services report to local councils or community organisations to ensure that they adhere to legislative and industry requirements, and managers from these central organisations can provide advice and assistance when you work alone.

### Seeking guidance and direction

There might be times when you are unsure about your legal responsibilities in relation to providing support, or whether your care practices meet the best interests of children in complex situations. It is your responsibility to ask for assistance when you are unsure about how to proceed with an approach or task related to individual children. Your supervisor might give you this support in numerous ways, including:

- additional instruction and advice about proceeding with a child's care and education
- directing you to reading materials such as industry codes of practice or organisational policies
- providing you with physical assistance or opportunities to practise an unfamiliar task under supervision
- making recommendations to the family that the child be referred to external services or professionals such as behavioural psychologists or doctors.

When asking for assistance, always provide the supervisor with adequate information about the situation to enable them to make an informed decision about how they can best help you. When important information is not passed on, the supervisor might unwittingly provide incorrect or inappropriate advice.

The following case study illustrates the importance of passing on adequate information when seeking help.

#### Case study

Mary-Jane phones her off site supervisor about Vincent, a child who is showing aggressive behaviours towards other children. Mary-Jane has trialled the strategies outlined in the service's policies and procedures, but the behaviour is increasingly frequent and severe. The supervisor agrees that the aggressive behaviour is unacceptable, and recommends that Vincent be provided with a series of consequences for his behaviour that might include insisting he participate in an individual activity if he is unable to cooperate with others at the time.

*continued ...*

3. Why is it important that all educators follow a behaviour plan for a child who regularly demonstrates aggressive behaviours?
4. How might a child who is showing signs of rising anger during a group activity be encouraged to use an alternative way to vent their anger, rather than yelling at other children? Explain:
  - a) your expectations and actions if this occurred
  - b) how Element 5.2.2 of the National Quality Standard supports these actions – see the *Guide to the National Quality Standard*
  - c) how the Education and Care Services National Regulations support these actions
  - d) how the Practice from *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia*, ‘Intentionality’, supports these actions and the importance of supporting children to learn to manage their feelings.
5. List three reasons why a child might feel uncomfortable approaching you with a concern about feeling unwell. Explain how your own behaviour could encourage this child to tell you their problem.
6. Explain how you might gather feedback about your performance to identify areas that might need improvement.

## Part B

Read the scenario, then answer the questions that follow.

### Scenario

Ahisma is 6 years old and comes from India. She speaks English well, but she is very shy. Her parents have asked that she eat only halal foods, which are foods that are specially prepared according to the Muslim culture. Ahisma’s parents bring these foods to the program every morning.

Harry, who is 9 years old, also attends the program. He has a history of behavioural problems, and has been teasing Ahisma about the Muslim headscarf that covers her hair and neck.

Ahisma has become more withdrawn during the activities in recent weeks. Another child tells you that Harry has continued to taunt her when you are out of earshot, but you cannot be sure about this. When you ask Ahisma whether anything is worrying her, she tells you quietly that everything is fine.

1. Explain two strategies to help Ahisma feel proud of her cultural background, and to make her feel included in the group despite her differences.
2. How might you respond when you hear Harry calling Ahisma’s headscarf ‘weird’ when he is talking quietly to his friends?
3. How might you encourage Ahisma to talk to you openly about the reasons for her recent withdrawn behaviour?

Compare the results against the child's participation by:

- observing children taking part in programs to assess their level of participation
- comparing the activities needed for the child's development and other needs to the actual program schedule and activities, in consultation with supervisors
- collecting ongoing feedback from children about their enjoyment of the program
- holding discussions with parents about their level of satisfaction with the program
- reviewing children's records of attendance and participation.

## Observing children to assess their level of participation

Watching children learn and play is just as important during the review process as it is when assessing the child's needs. Children of different ages and abilities might prefer different levels of participation. For example, younger children might be content to sit and watch other children take part in a sports game, and still enjoy doing so. For older children, participation in a board game may involve a higher level of communication and interaction with other children, such as laughing and talking about the game in an animated way.

Also observe how the child reacts to interventions from educators.

Questions that can be asked to review the child's participation while undertaking observation include the following:

- Does the child participate actively with other children?
- Do educators support the child's emotional needs when they are upset or withdrawn?
- Does the child have friends who treat them fairly and with respect?
- Do educators provide praise and attention to the child in equal measures with other children?
- Does the child show signs of enjoyment during the program, such as smiling, laughing and talking to others?
- Is there any evidence of unmet needs, such as withdrawal or challenging behaviours?

## Comparing the activities needed to actual program schedule and activities

When considering the activities undertaken by your service, identify whether these activities meet the needs of the children who attend the program. This type of review can help you to decide which experiences could be provided again, developed further or stopped completely.

**3B****Consulting others to ensure support reflects organisational and industry requirements**

Wherever possible, you should consult the stakeholders of the service about relevant issues that affect them. In the case of day-to-day and organisational matters, your supervisor is the best person to consult. When any issue directly affects a child, consulting both the supervisor and the family of the child may be appropriate.

When reviewing the effectiveness of your service, compliance with regulations and industry guidelines is a priority. The services provided by your programs should reflect industry best practice.

Meeting industry standards also ensures that your services meet the high expectations of quality care that are expected by the Australian community.

There are several ways in which you can ensure that you are meeting these regulations:

- Observation of children, families and educators during the course of the program
- Reviewing documentation, especially your organisation's policies and programs, and other evidence such as individual file notes that shows that your service is meeting requirements
- Regularly consulting with supervisors about your workplace responsibilities and determining how well you are meeting expectations
- Regularly consulting with family members to determine whether you are meeting their expectations, through distributing questionnaires, arranging meetings and informal discussion

## Ensuring support reflects organisational procedures

Every organisation has its own unique set of policies and procedures that must be followed by every educator. Policies and procedures should closely reflect the legal and industry requirements your service is bound to follow.

It is important that you consult your supervisor regarding the organisational requirements that should be demonstrated when you undertake a review of children's support. Your supervisor should be able to help you with the review process, particularly in terms of the effectiveness of the support being offered to children in your service.

- Differences between children should be celebrated, rather than discouraged. Children should be allowed the freedom to express themselves in ways that are meaningful to them, whether that relates to their interests, the way that they look or dress, or the activities that they choose to take part in.
- You should never make assumptions about a child simply because they belong to a certain culture, religion, age group or gender. Stereotyping children and expecting them to conform to those stereotypes can restrict their ability to develop as individuals.

Regular consultation with family members is fundamental to the review of effectiveness of support provided by your service, especially concerning the issue of respect. Family members potentially have a lot of information to share with you about the child attending your service.

The following case study illustrates an educator ensuring that their service respects the rights of children.

### Case study

Jackie is reviewing the ability of her service to respect the rights of children as individuals. Her review process relating to this requirement includes the following strategies:

- She asks her supervisor where she might find specific information about how her service can demonstrate this requirement. Jackie's supervisor tells her that the organisation's policies and procedures supply information about how educators must demonstrate respect for individuality.
- Jackie finds a policy that outlines the rights of children to play games that suit their own individual preferences.
- She looks for evidence in the programs that children are respected as individuals. Jackie notices that one of the girls in the program likes to play with the cars and trucks with the boys. She observes that the educators at the service understand her right to choose activities that she enjoys. They respect her right to be treated as an individual, rather than expecting her to conform to traditional ideas of appropriate games for girls.

## Practice task 11

Download the *Guide to the National Quality Standard* available at: [www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/the-national-quality-standard](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/the-national-quality-standard).

1. What feature in the guide allows services to measure their performance against the standards?
2. How are these standards measured during an assessment of your service?



## 4A

### Reviewing information and support provided to children to assess continuing relevance and effectiveness

The relevance of the information and support that is provided to children can be assessed regularly by considering the child's developmental stage, and by using many of the review processes that were discussed earlier in this learner guide.

Changes are often introduced on a 'trial and error' basis. This means that new strategies can be trialled for a set period, monitored through observation, and then reviewed again at a later time. If the strategy proves to have been ineffective, future reviews might then consider whether another alternative should be trialled.



Determining whether IT equipment needs to be updated should be part of a school age care service's evaluation.

### Continuous improvement cycles

Trial and error processes can continue over time until a suitable strategy for managing the problem is found. The cyclical nature of this approach contributes to the naming of evaluation processes as 'continuous improvement'. The following diagram shows the nature of implementing strategies as continuous improvement processes.

When you are invited to take part in a meeting, you have a responsibility to contribute effectively. Prepare any information that you have been asked to collect in advance, and present the information to others objectively. Leaving out information that might be relevant to evaluation, such as when your own programs have provoked a negative response, can reduce the potential for improvement.

Ask questions to ensure that the group members understand the outcomes discussed during the meeting. It is also important that you clarify any actions that you have been asked to take following the meeting. These may include recording the outcomes of the meetings, making immediate changes to programs or collecting further information to contribute to future evaluations.

The following case study shows an educator taking part in a meeting.

### Case study

Penny's school age care service holds regular review meetings on various safety and support issues throughout the year. A recent meeting considered the effectiveness of the centre's SunSmart policy. The agenda of the meeting contained the following items:

1. Review information collected from educator observations about how frequently shaded areas are used by children.
2. Evaluate the SunSmart behaviour of children as recorded by educators over the past month.
3. Take suggestions for updating SunSmart educational materials for parents and children.
4. Discuss how the service can incorporate recommendations from latest SunSmart initiatives into programs.

Penny prepares for the meeting by collecting a list of observations that have been made by her work team about SunSmart behaviour and children's play routines under the shaded areas. She asks children, parents and members of her work team who will not be attending the meeting for any contributions or suggestions that she might present for discussion. These ideas include:

- the need for shade cloth
- having sunscreen available near the door
- requiring children to wear hats.

During the meeting, Penny listens carefully to the suggestions and ideas of others. She stays focused on the agenda items being discussed by referring to the agenda throughout the meeting. Penny contributes the suggestions arising from her own area when she is asked. She speaks up calmly and clearly when she has an additional idea or suggestion relating to the discussion, and allows others to do the same.

### Practice task 13

1. Find a meeting agenda for a past or future meeting at your workplace.
2. Write some notes relating to the agenda about possible contributions that you might make to a particular discussion.

The following example illustrates how problems and alternative strategies for an individual child might be identified and recorded.

<b>Example</b>		
<b>Name:</b> Hannah Goldberg		
<b>Review date:</b> 20 March		
<b>Age:</b> 6 years		
<b>Date scheduled for next review:</b> 20 June		
<b>Other information:</b> Hannah has mild autism, and attends a mainstream service in the afternoons after school.		
<b>Area reviewed</b>	<b>Review outcome, including problems identified</b>	<b>Possible alternative strategy to be trialled</b>
Communication	Hannah is learning to share more effectively with other children by asking politely for what she wants, rather than just snatching it.  She is responding well to regular reminders to use her manners when talking and not to interrupt a group discussion when another person is speaking.	-
Physical aids/ equipment	Hannah does not require specialist aids or equipment.	-
Encouragement	Hannah loves attention, and she is responding well to praise and encouragement. However, she is often reluctant to participate in group activities.	Educators should join in at the beginning of each activity with Hannah until she feels content to continue on her own.
Cultural needs/ activities	Hannah is Jewish and her family does not celebrate Christmas. However, she has a visit from Santa every year, and her mother would like her to participate in Christmas activities with the other children. Hannah was very enthusiastic about telling the other children about the meaning of Hanukkah, and they were keen to listen.	Educators will incorporate Hanukkah celebrations into the end of year celebrations for all children.

*continued ...*

4. Provide an example of an adjustment or alternative strategy that may need to be developed in consultation with a professional or expert external to your organisation.
5. How might changes to a program plan be communicated to educators in your service?

## Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

### Case study

6-year-old Kepa does not listen to other children when they are talking in groups. Educators have developed a strategy of ignoring Kepa when he interrupts other children who are talking, but this strategy seems to be making his behaviour worse.

1. How can continuous improvement processes be applied to this problem?
2. How could a meeting with other educators contribute to identifying alternative approaches?
3. Identify an alternative approach that may be used to improve this situation.
4. Why is it important that all educators show consistency in their approach to Kepa's behaviour?

## Record your foundation skills

When you have completed the assessment activity, make sure you record evidence of how you have developed and applied foundation skills. You may use the table at the end of this learner guide for this purpose. Keep copies of material you have prepared as further evidence of your skills. Refer to the information on foundation skills in Appendix 2 of this learner guide for further guidance.