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Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

1A Principles of physical development

1B Physical development outcomes

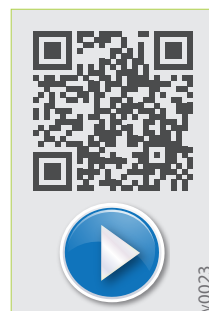
1C Physical development practice

Supporting physical development

There are many critical periods in children's learning and development in which they will be affected either positively or negatively by their experiences and the relationships they build with others. As children grow, they reach common developmental milestones at individual rates and at different ages.

Educators play an important role in promoting physical skills by offering children time, space, resources and a safe environment in which to practise their skills. A supportive learning environment builds confidence and offers challenges, exploration and discovery.

Watch this video about children's physical activity and skills.



The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
✓	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
✓	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
✓	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
✓	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children
✓	Learning through play
✓	Intentional teaching
✓	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
✓	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
✓	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
✓	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

- ▶ suicidal thoughts
- ▶ aggression
- ▶ impulsiveness
- ▶ criminality
- ▶ hyperactivity
- ▶ substance abuse
- ▶ poor health.

By creating a responsive, safe and healthy care environment, you will be helping children to learn and develop to the best of their potential.

Biological influences are linked to heredity, genetics and maturation. Environmental influences are linked to nurturing and what children are taught through interaction with the environment.

Example

Biological versus environmental influences

Gina, an educator, identifies some of her personal characteristics and tries to work out whether they originate as a result of biological or environmental influences. This is what she thinks:

- ▶ Biological: blonde hair, big feet, quick learner.
- ▶ Environmental: afraid of spiders (her dad once scared her with one), plays guitar (she had lessons at school), interested in gardening (her mum loves to spend time with her in the garden).

Gina is also patient and mathematical, but doesn't know how to categorise these characteristics. She knows that biological and environmental influences work together, and that some characteristics may arise from both. She thinks the following may be true:

- ▶ Patient: she may have been born with a patient personality, but she was also born into a large family where they need to help each other and share things. Her patience was probably influenced by biological and environmental factors.
- ▶ Mathematical: she was probably born with a brain that works well with numbers, but she also had positive mathematics experiences in kindergarten and grade two, when her teacher encouraged the class to see numbers as fun and organised lots of interesting mathematical activities. Her abilities were probably influenced by biological and environmental factors.

Developmental milestones

Every child passes through key stages of development, as described in the following table.

Developmental stage	Approximate age
Infant (from birth to walking)	0–12 months
Toddler (from walking to preschool age)	1–3 years
Preschooler	3–5 years

As each child develops at their own rate, there is a period of transition between each of the stages.

Milestones are the markers that identify that a particular stage of development has been reached. Many planning processes use milestones in some way, as they are significant skills or events in a child's life that help educators, parents and health professionals to monitor and support their development and learning.

1B Physical development outcomes

The EYLF guides your work with children. Outcomes have been designed to capture the learning and development that you will observe when working with children from birth to five years. Each child will progress at their own pace, and outcomes will have different importance to each child during their learning and development.

Allowing a child to independently practise their physical skills at a time when they are ready helps to develop their self-confidence and a range of physical skills.



The EYLF helps you understand the importance of physical development, and how you can work toward supporting children's learning and development.

EYLF	Areas of focus
Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Using daily routines ▶ Physical environment ▶ Resources ▶ People ▶ Safety

Daily routines

When children are involved in daily routines and encouraged to develop their independence, they learn about their bodies and how to care for their own health. Modelling is the main way that children learn.

The following table gives examples of routine activities that are ideal opportunities for children to:

- ▶ acquire physical skills and independence
- ▶ take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

Mealtimes	Hygiene and self-care	Care for others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Opening and closing lunch boxes and removing food wrappers ▶ Eating finger food ▶ Feeding themselves using cutlery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Turning taps on and off ▶ Using child-sized brooms and cloths to clean the environment ▶ Dressing and undressing ▶ Cleaning up messes ▶ Washing and drying hands ▶ Using and flushing the toilet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Serving lunch and pouring drinks ▶ Setting a lunch or snack table

Outdoor spaces should have the potential to rearrange equipment, change the location of activities, add or remove items, and provide either simple or complex play arrangements. Consider providing the following items:

- ▶ wooden planks
- ▶ car tyres
- ▶ small ladders
- ▶ A-frames
- ▶ outdoor blocks
- ▶ cable reels
- ▶ off-cut logs.

If you provide the appropriate props for children, they can create the type of physical play experience they want to participate in for themselves. There is more information about using props in Topic 5.

All age groups need to be given many opportunities to engage in physically active play. Children need to be able to involve themselves in physical movements such as running, jumping, digging, pushing, skipping and climbing. Children need to be challenged; they need to be able to actively manipulate their play space by redesigning and reinventing with movable equipment and props. Through this interaction with the outdoor space, children practise skills of balancing, bouncing, lifting and pushing.

In addition to these areas for active hands-on play, children also need areas where they can experiment and explore. Almost all experiences planned for indoors can also be offered in an outdoor space.

Encouraging challenge, choice and spontaneity

Children will be occupied and learn through play easily when:

- ▶ there is a choice of experiences
- ▶ they can move to different experiences spontaneously
- ▶ the experiences provide challenges.

Children should be able to choose between quiet and active play, and open and private spaces. They will be fulfilled by having three or more choices that are based on their interests and meet their skill levels. Children will move to the different experiences and use them spontaneously in ways they enjoy. They will also be challenged if the materials and equipment are open-ended; this allows the children to learn different skills depending on their interests and how they approach the set-up.

Challenging experiences are ones that:

- ▶ suit the child's ability
- ▶ can be adapted to develop with the child
- ▶ are based on things the children are interested in
- ▶ allow children to make choices, solve problems and make decisions
- ▶ can be changed by the child to meet their interests at the time.

When you offer challenging experiences, you need to consider:

- ▶ safety
- ▶ appropriate risk-taking behaviour
- ▶ supervision and support requirements
- ▶ assistance to overcome or reduce any frustration
- ▶ flexibility to change the equipment or experience to suit the child.

Physical development milestone	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
1–2 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Holds large crayon with a palmar grasp (in a fist) and marks paper ▶ Places objects in another person's hand and lets go ▶ Attempts to feed self with spoon ▶ Uses thumb and forefinger to explore objects ▶ Walks unassisted ▶ May begin to run 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Repeat sounds and words back to the child. ▶ Read simple books with the child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide thick crayons and large pieces of paper. ▶ Provide push and pull-along toys, and abacus beads.
2–3 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Turns pages of a book one at a time ▶ Runs with ease ▶ Pedals a tricycle ▶ Builds a tower of up to 10 blocks high ▶ Screws and unscrews objects such as lids and knobs ▶ Jumps using both feet ▶ Kicks a large ball ▶ Walks on tiptoes ▶ Feeds self with fork and spoon ▶ Holds a crayon or pencil between the thumb and fingers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Read books with the child. ▶ Participate in action songs and dancing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide books. ▶ Allow children to play chasey. ▶ Provide balls and tricycles. ▶ Provide forks and spoons for the child to use at mealtimes.
3–5 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Walks up stairs one foot at a time ▶ Throws a ball overhand ▶ Balances on one foot momentarily ▶ Uses scissors with some control ▶ Draws a person with some recognisable body parts ▶ Begins to hold a crayon/pencil in tripod grasp (between the thumb and two fingers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Join in games and conversations. ▶ Encourage children's efforts, e.g. 'Well done', 'Good try', 'Keep going'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide hoops. ▶ Set up an obstacle course. ▶ Provide pencils, paper, scissors and craft items. ▶ Provide equipment for ball games: basketball ring, soccer net, cricket bat and ball, etc.

Gender differences

You should encourage children to accept and respect gender differences.

Steps to encourage children to accept gender differences:

- ▶ Avoid labelling children's activities as 'for boys' or 'for girls'.
- ▶ Be aware that boys and girls play differently.
- ▶ Encourage everyone to participate in all areas of play; for example, encourage boys to dress up, girls to engage in more messy play and initiate more spontaneous interactions with all children in the group.
- ▶ Be sensitive to the attitudes of families – some cultures have strict ideas on suitable behaviour for boys and girls, and you may need to make compromises.

Children with additional needs

Steps to encourage children with additional needs to play and be social:

- ▶ Include them in all types of play for all areas of development.
- ▶ Participate in the play to model ways to include the child and encourage interactions.
- ▶ Provide specific equipment or set-up to ensure success.
- ▶ Follow individual programs that have been developed for the child by a specialist service.
- ▶ Ensure that the child's individual programs are incorporated into the overall play setting to provide an inclusive experience for the child.
- ▶ Encourage other children to participate in the activities specified by specialist services as well.

When you encourage all children equally, you are modelling communication and interactions that the children will learn from, which assists them to use appropriate communication.

Example

Encouraging participation

Belinda, an educator, is in the home corner with a group of five-year-old children. She is part of their play as they make breakfast using toy foods and do the dishes. Belinda says, 'I need to drive my grader (earth mover) today so I can build the new road'. She points to the poster of the graders and says, 'That's my grader, the big one at the top'. She then asks each child where they will be working today as she dries the dishes. The children respond as they help Belinda dry the dishes. Belinda says, 'Thank you, everyone!' They all say goodbye and head off to 'work'.

Using play

Play can help children to accept and value all people, particularly those who may appear different from themselves. In the following table, there are some examples of how you can support this learning.

Taking responsibility for actions

Another way to support children to strengthen their social and emotional wellbeing is by expecting them to take responsibility for their actions – particularly in regard to how they interact with others and the environment. This is especially important when working with toddlers and preschoolers as they are attempting to assert themselves, and often test situations and people. You can help a toddler or preschooler to understand the effects of their actions by:

- ▶ discussing what is occurring
- ▶ encouraging children to help rectify a situation
- ▶ being consistent.

Strategy	How you can do it
Discussion	Discuss what is occurring in a simple way; for example, say to the child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ‘You threw the ball and it went under the bench. You can’t play with it now.’ ▶ ‘If you throw your biscuit it will go on the floor and then you will have no biscuit to eat.’
Rectifying	Encourage the child to help rectify a situation they have caused; this might include hugging a child they have hurt (with the other child’s permission) or cleaning up a spill.
Consistency	Be consistent and follow through with limits and guidelines. This is important as the child will quickly learn that testing you is not necessary and that you will continue to have the same expectations and support for them.

The outcome of any discussion should be that the child understands what has happened and what the result is – these are the consequences. To support children to understand consequences, you can explain to them what happened, what the consequences are, why this occurred and how they can avoid this in the future.

Practice task 5

1. Obtain a copy of a plan of activities. Identify the following things on the plan:
 - a. When one-on-one interactions could be used

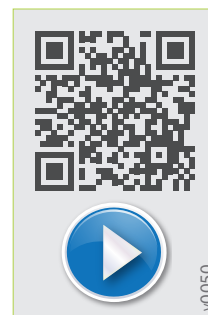
 - b. Where respect for difference could be included

2. Explain how you would assist a child to use communication with others to:
 - a. Communicate their ideas

3A Principles of emotional development

Understanding the basic principles of emotional development will help you to support children to express and manage their feelings appropriately, and provide a basis for understanding how to support and encourage their efforts.

Watch this video about healthy emotional development.



Humanistic theory

Psychology theorist Abraham Maslow (1908–1970) identified the basic needs of children and adults that must be met before we progress to satisfying other needs. You may recognise Maslow's theory, presented as a pyramid:



The hierarchy of needs demonstrates that emotional needs link with most needs of humans. You can see that the basic needs are food, rest and sleep, and basic body functions (toileting, swallowing, etc.).

Once basic physical needs are met, emotional needs are tied in with all other levels, forming a type of foundation for success. Safety, security, limits and consistency allow people to feel like their emotional needs are being met and acknowledged. Love and belonging support feelings of being needed. Self-esteem and the need for respect, attention and appreciation are directly linked to how people experience and react to feelings and change, and how they feel others will experience and react. Maslow's theory shows that an emotionally cared for and confident child can attempt to be all they can be.

Developmental stage	Basic emotional needs
Infants	Infants need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ be responded to ▶ have their nonverbal communication understood and be attended to.
Toddlers	Toddlers need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ express themselves through activities and experiences ▶ express themselves verbally ▶ name their feelings.
Preschoolers	Preschoolers need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ express themselves through physical activities, such as clapping and stamping ▶ express their feelings verbally ▶ express their feelings through paintings, drawings and other creative experiences.

Expressing and managing feelings

There are a number of strategies you can use to encourage children to express and manage their feelings appropriately, and to support their efforts.

Negative feelings experienced by children are commonly caused by:

- ▶ accidents
- ▶ other children
- ▶ losing a toy or having a toy taken from them
- ▶ embarrassment
- ▶ the environment being too noisy, crowded, large, busy, quiet or uninteresting
- ▶ not being heard.

When feelings are being expressed as clear responses to one of these causes, they can be responded to in simple ways. When children express feelings and ideas, both positive and negative, you can respond using the following strategies.

Strategy	Responding to a child expressing negative feelings	Responding to a child expressing positive feelings
Listen to what the child has to say. Use body language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use active listening. ▶ Face the child. ▶ Get down to their level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use active listening. ▶ Face the child. ▶ Get down to their level.
Avoid leading the child with specific questions; respond with simple comments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 'Oh, I understand.' ▶ 'Mmmm.' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 'That's interesting.' ▶ 'What an interesting idea.' ▶ 'So how does it feel?'

Supporting decision-making about behaviours

Some ways you might support decision-making about behaviours include:

- ▶ recognising problems
- ▶ clarifying goals
- ▶ planning strategies
- ▶ finding solutions
- ▶ asking open-ended questions
- ▶ supporting children to share their ideas with others
- ▶ answering questions
- ▶ talking about routines and choices
- ▶ encouraging children to consult each other
- ▶ supporting parents to provide learning environments at home.

You can help children to develop their decision-making skills by teaching them how to:

- ▶ break decisions into manageable tasks
- ▶ identify which issues to tackle in which order
- ▶ apply a strategy to use when they are faced with decisions
- ▶ see other people's points of view.

A child who has a strong sense of 'being able' will more confidently make a choice and will have more knowledge of their choices to enable them to make an informed decision.

Element 5.2.2 of the NQS states: 'Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts'. Element 1.2.3 states: 'Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions, and influence events and their world'. When you help children to share their feelings with others in an appropriate manner, and to make informed choices, you are demonstrating these elements in practice.

Example

Encouraging children to resolve problems

Katrina, four years old, has crossed arms and a scowl on her face, and is stomping her feet and growling as she stands close to May, also four. Iris, the educator, comes over to the pair and moves to their level. She asks what is wrong and Katrina says, 'Grrrrr!'

Iris explains to Katrina that she might be scaring May, but Katrina continues to scowl. Iris asks Katrina, 'Why are you upset?' Katrina says, 'Because of her!'

Iris asks May, 'Do you know what Katrina is upset about?' May shakes her head.

Iris explains to Katrina that she might need to talk to May and tell her what the problem is. She asks Katrina, 'Do you know what to say to May?' Katrina says she does.

Katrina tells May that the scarf she is wearing is from the home corner and she wants to play with it herself when she has finished doing a puzzle.

Iris explains to Katrina that May only knew this because Katrina told her, and she thanks Katrina for letting May know. Iris tells Katrina that when she uses a growling voice, May will be scared and won't know what she wants.

Iris supports Katrina to ask May about using the scarf: 'May, can I play with the scarf when you're finished?'

May replies, 'Yes, I'm nearly finished!'

Iris compliments the children for working out the problem by talking to each other.

You can help them achieve this by:

- ▶ discussing the situation openly
- ▶ refraining from blame or punishment
- ▶ discussing the effects on others
- ▶ providing alternatives
- ▶ modelling and/or demonstrating appropriate behaviour
- ▶ acknowledging efforts
- ▶ guiding or assisting the child during an event.

Practice task 8

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

Case study

Mason is a student educator working with a group of children aged six months to five years. It is a hectic morning and many children are upset and irritable. During the morning several situations arise that Mason has to resolve.

When two children are fighting over a tricycle, Mason resolves the issue by putting the tricycles away and replacing them with a new activity.

When a child is frustrated while struggling to complete a puzzle, Mason tells the child that he might be better at building with blocks.

When a child tries to clean up a paint spill with a soaking wet face washer, he slips over on the floor and bumps his knee. Mason tells the child never to use face washers on the floor again.

When a child is afraid of a fly that's buzzing around the snack table, Mason tells the child not to be silly.

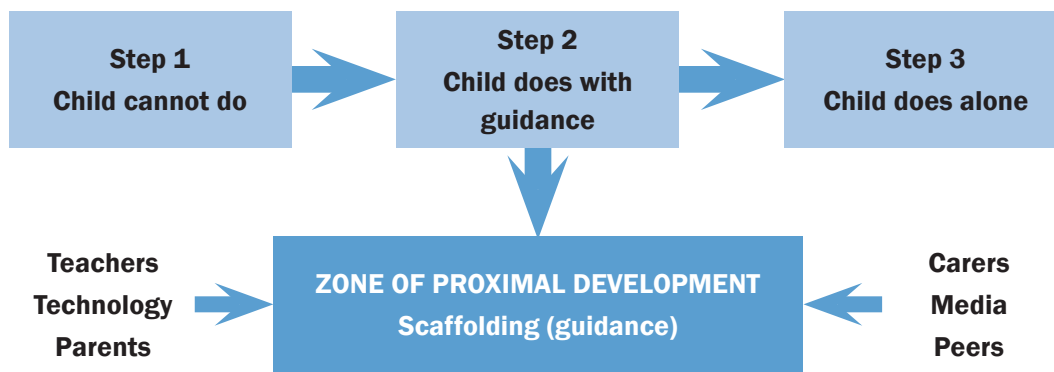
1. What could Mason have said to the children fighting over the tricycle to help them to express their feelings and make informed choices to solve the conflict?

2. When the child was frustrated while struggling to complete a puzzle, what could Mason have done to reduce the child's frustration, yet encourage him to persevere with completing the puzzle?

3C Emotional development practice

As you care for children you provide valuable attention, feedback and guided challenges, which influence their emerging sense of self. The following table illustrates the emotional milestones for each age group, which have been linked to practical application (interactions and experiences) in the service setting.

Emotional development milestones	Practice	
	Interaction examples	Experience examples
0–6 months		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Cries in response to another infant's cry ▶ Capable of demonstrating various emotions, e.g. interest, sadness, happiness, joy, anger and disgust ▶ Uses various cues for gaining attention to needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sing lullabies while gently rocking or swaying the infant ▶ Pick up on the infant's cues and verbally say what they are expressing, e.g. 'You are hungry and want your bottle now.' ▶ Use infant's name during experiences, e.g. 'Jack's smiling, you like the rattle that makes noise.' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Help infant to clap hands to a song, e.g. 'If you're happy and you know it' or 'Everybody clapping, clapping... just like me'
6–12 months		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Becomes increasingly shy with strangers ▶ Begins to demonstrate fear ▶ Separation anxiety increases ▶ May begin to test caregiver and parent responses to behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Establish a routine of separation ▶ Make frequent physical contact according to infant's preferences, such as cuddling, sitting them on your knee or rubbing their back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Allow infant time to get to know new people by using 'transition actions' – using an object to gain infant's interest such as a special toy
1–2 years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Demonstrates self-awareness ▶ Toward the latter part of this stage, separation anxiety may begin to fade ▶ Defiant behaviour is more apparent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Play games where the child points to self, people and familiar objects, 'Where's Sophie?', 'Where is the horsie?' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Hide a familiar toy in an obvious place and encourage the child to find it; clap and cheer when found



When a child demonstrates an emerging skill, they seek guidance, or you may identify the emerging skill yourself and offer guidance. Vygotsky calls this guidance ‘scaffolding’ and does not limit it to just what you as an educator provide. He states that there are many different ways for a child to receive scaffolding.

According to Vygotsky, if scaffolding is provided and the child is ready, soon afterwards they can develop and master the skill themselves. You should be able to see how readiness and scaffolding in relation to the zone of proximal development fit with most of the strategies provided in this learner guide.

Toilet training is an excellent example for demonstrating Vygotsky’s theory, as illustrated by the following description of the steps in toilet training and the role scaffolding plays.

1

Child cannot do

A child is unable to learn to use the toilet independently until their spinal cord develops to a point where they can feel the sensations required for toileting and they gain a range of self-help and self-awareness abilities.

Children show emerging skills (signs they are ready) for toilet learning by:

- ▶ being interested in the toilet and their nappy
- ▶ being dry for periods of time
- ▶ being able to hold on for a short time – long enough to tell you they need to use the toilet and then remove their clothes
- ▶ showing that they know when they are wetting or dirtying their nappy.

2

Child does with guidance (Zone of proximal development)

When a child shows these signs, they have entered the zone of proximal development in relation to learning toileting skills. Your role is to recognise this and to provide guidance (or scaffolding) to the child. Note that the child is also influenced by other factors.

Scaffolding can be provided in the following ways:

- ▶ Educators provide scaffolding by encouraging the child to go to the toilet; providing child-sized toilets or toilet seats; assisting the child to remove and replace their clothing; and making positive comments even when the child makes a mistake.
- ▶ Parents provide scaffolding by encouraging the child to go to the toilet; being positive about toilet learning; being patient and providing opportunities; and being consistent.
- ▶ Scaffolding is provided by things such as training nappies, child-sized seats and toilets, and clothing that is easy to take on and off.
- ▶ The media provides scaffolding through advertising and media images (in magazines and on television) that show children using the toilet and training nappies, and the message that children are ‘big kids’ when they can toilet themselves.
- ▶ Peers provide scaffolding as they learn to use the toilet themselves; show pleasure in achieving toilet learning; and talk about toileting and whether they are wet or dry.

Practice task 11

1. Identify one experience that is useful for learning each of the following concepts:

a. Problem-solving

b. Numbers

c. Matching pairs

d. Sorting objects or shapes

2. Choose one of the experiences identified above and write down what you might say to the child at this activity to assist their learning.

Summary

- ▶ Scaffolding refers to educators' decisions and actions that build on children's existing knowledge and skills to enhance their learning.
- ▶ Children's emerging skills can be scaffolded by your intentional application of interactions and experiences.
- ▶ Children's cognitive development will be extended by using a range of materials, technologies and resources that encourage problem-solving.
- ▶ Experiences provided to children can enable them to explore a range of cognitive concepts.

Language for expression

Role-modelling communication to children encourages the child's communication skills and their self-esteem, as they hear the correct way to pronounce without being corrected.

There are many experiences that provide children with maximum exposure to communication. The value of these experiences relies on you being a positive role model and interacting frequently with children. To provide experiences and encourage children to speak, you should:

- ▶ respond to infant babbles and coos by babbling and cooing back
- ▶ speak about the things you are doing with the children as you do them
- ▶ put words to objects and emotions
- ▶ use a variety of sounds and voice pitches
- ▶ sing songs and rhymes
- ▶ read stories to them
- ▶ speak clearly and introduce new words
- ▶ use every opportunity for interaction
- ▶ give the child time to speak.



It is not advisable to prompt children to communicate verbally solely by asking them 'to use their words', as this can simply set them up to make mistakes. Children need guidance, options to choose from or even exact phrases to be modelled. Without your help, the child may use words that are not suitable, or may not know which words fit the situation. Always give the child some words to use to express themselves.

When a child pronounces a word incorrectly, repeat the word to the child the correct way, as in the following example.

Thomas is sitting at the drawing table holding a yellow pencil in his hand. He turns to Megan (the educator) and says, 'I did a lellow sun!' Megan looks at his drawing, smiles and replies, 'You drew a very bright yellow sun!'

It is not helpful to constantly correct children or tell them that they are saying something wrong. They will learn through interaction and experience.

Developing communication skills

You can support children's developing communication skills by:

- ▶ modelling and encouraging two-way communication through questions, careful listening and consultation on daily activities
- ▶ creating opportunities for group discussions and exchanging views
- ▶ reading and telling stories
- ▶ using puppets and other props to stimulate enjoyment of language and literature
- ▶ encouraging children to explore symbols and patterns and their meaning, such as letters, sounds, numbers and musical notation.

Watch this video about developing communication skills.



Two-way communication

Two-way communication can be encouraged through questions and careful listening. An effective way to facilitate two-way communication is by consulting with children, as this involves questioning and listening skills.

Numbers, time and money

Numbers, time and money can be explored using the following ideas.

Recognise numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Match numbers ▶ Sort numbers ▶ Create sensory art ▶ Incorporate jigsaws, posters and games that use number symbols ▶ Cook with simple recipes that use numbers for measuring ingredients
Understand one-on-one correspondence and count	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Count the number of items (blocks, trains, balls, doors, windows, etc.) ▶ Sing counting songs (three cheeky monkeys, five jellyfish, five little ducks) ▶ Hopscotch (younger children can jump instead of hop) ▶ Count chairs, plates, spoons or pieces of fruit at snack time ▶ Count how many cups or spoonfuls of an ingredient go into a recipe when cooking
Use time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use clocks for routines; for example, 'We have lunch when the big hand and the little hand are on 12.' ▶ Play time games (how long does it take to pack up, build a stack, etc.) ▶ Include books about time; for example, <i>Clean-up time</i>, <i>The very hungry caterpillar</i> ▶ Play games with egg timers and stopwatches ▶ Make event sequences – what do you do first, second and last? ▶ Incorporate calendars
Use money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Add play money to the home corner or create shop play ▶ Discuss how much money is needed to purchase items ▶ Create a simple budget for completing a project ▶ Count money ▶ Take money rubbings ▶ Sort coins by size, shape, colour and value

Musical notation

Musical notation includes the rhythm of music and the symbols that represent this. Some ways to involve children in using musical beats include:

- ▶ using movement games such as stomping feet to a beat
- ▶ creating beats on a musical instrument
- ▶ displaying notes and music symbols
- ▶ explaining note value through chants
- ▶ making musical instruments.

If you pair these rhythms with symbols showing how beats can be fast or slow, you will be teaching the children about musical notation. You can find many support materials online. Try 'Let's Play Music' at: <http://aspirelr.link/rhythm-activities>, which has ideas for music, songs and resources.

2

Find out what the children already know.

You ask the children questions:

- ▶ Do you know what the ball is for?
- ▶ What game do you play with it?
- ▶ What is it made of?
- ▶ What makes the ball hard?

3

This leads you to find out what the children want to know.

You find out that the children would like to know:

- ▶ the rules of basketball
- ▶ how the basketball is made
- ▶ what makes it hard.

4

Discuss the item or interest, and introduce correct terminology or language.

- ▶ You introduce a simple basketball game so that the children can play and learn the rules.
- ▶ You talk about man-made and natural materials, and the differences between them.
- ▶ You show the children how to pump up a ball and they see how, without air inside, the ball is soft.
- ▶ You introduce new words: 'hoop', 'backboard', 'foul', 'dribbling'.

5

Expand the topic or item into other areas of the curriculum.

You introduce other types of balls to play indoors and outdoors. These include:

- ▶ small softballs and a bucket so that the children can throw the ball into the bucket from a distance
- ▶ a soccer ball
- ▶ an AFL ball.

6

Watch for decreasing interest; this tells you the children are finished with this inquiry.

After a week and a half fewer children are playing. You decide to start a new topic of inquiry.

Some skills children might develop through an inquiry process are:

- ▶ exploring
- ▶ identifying
- ▶ classifying (sorting)
- ▶ comparing and contrasting
- ▶ hypothesising (putting forward an idea and testing it).

They will also have the opportunity to make mistakes as part of learning. As they try to understand how something works, the child will hypothesise and use the inquiry process to find out what the correct answer is.

Shared conversations

The two-way process of communication begins shortly after birth. Early on, it is babble that is shared to and fro, as the form of conversation begins to take shape. Later, information is passed through words and concepts shared.

Learning checkpoint 6

Creating an environment for holistic learning and development

Part A

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

Case study

Joanna has decided to create an experience for the children. A humpback whale has been sighted near the coastline, so Joanna decides to develop an experience based on this event. She plans her experience so that she can introduce new information about whales and the ocean. One of the aims of the experience is to encourage the children to think about the ocean environment and ask questions. Joanna has located posters and a book about whales. Some of the children are interested, but she has difficulty keeping their interest.

Benjamin is interested in the whales. He gets up and runs to the toy corner, finds a toy seal and brings it back proudly and says excitedly, 'See! This is a baby whale!' Some of the other children laugh and make fun of him. Benjamin throws the toy seal in the corner and sits down away from the other children, looking embarrassed. Joanna continues the discussion about whales and tries to engage Benjamin.

1. Think about how this experience is being used to initiate and extend the children's inquiry process.
 - a. What are **two** topics of conversation that may stimulate the children's thinking and interest, and create intrigue or surprise?

- b. Identify another **two** resources or materials that could be added to support the extension of this experience.

2. Discuss the case study with a colleague. Particularly focus on how child development and wellbeing are influenced by the way you would manage Benjamin's mistake so he can see this as an opportunity to learn. Following your discussion, create a role-play or write down what you would say to support Benjamin and scaffold his learning.
