



# 13

## HOW CHILDREN LEARN (EARLY LEARNING AND TEACHING)

The curriculum is the sum total of possible experiences that could be provided to children in early childcare centers. In the last lesson, we discussed the importance of taking account of children’s social situations for each child to develop a sense of belonging. This lesson will convey patterns and variations of children’s natural ways to learn. Interactions with children must be appealing to compel children’s involvement and learning. There is utmost primacy of how the curriculum or content is used with children in early learning settings. Experiences fostering development in all domains must be included in a day keeping in mind the interdependence of growth in different domains.

Curriculum in preschool encompasses the entire range of preschool experiences and opportunities for learning designed and planned for the total and integrated development of children.

In a loosely structured manner, the curriculum for ECCE includes the entire day’s activities; caregiving strategies with relative emphasis on all domains that is cognitive, emotional, or social values; and discretion to accept and use unplanned events as developmental experiences.

This lesson deals with developing an understanding of how children learn.



### LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- explain how children have their unique methods of learning;
- discuss strategies and activities for various domains;

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- describe the significance of arts as medium for expression and communication; and
- identify developmental variations and suggest appropriate interventions.



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### 13.1 INDICATORS OF CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

Babies are born ready to learn and their brain develop by use. In fact, it is often said that of the brain, 'use it or lose it'. What and how you serve the brain determines the returns. Human babies have the longest period of dependency making it imperative for the environment to be rich with a wide range of sensory inputs. We have to ensure that we are providing enough warm interactions of stoking children's sensory capacities to reach their optimal competence. Developmental milestones describe emergence of new capacity or skill. Neck control, creeping, crawling, standing, making sounds, responding to faces are all indicators of development in different domains. As they grow, they form different relations. No two children learn in the same way or at the same pace. Some children walk earlier while some may talk earlier. How we review that learning is occurring is by watching for changes also called as progress.

### 13.2 HOW CHILDREN LEARN

Children learn in different ways. Some learn by seeing, some by hearing, some by listening, some by doing. Giving your child chances to play with other children is a great way to develop skills needed to get on with others. As mentioned in earlier lessons, the time between birth to six years are filled with the natural desire to learn and to make meaning of the world around them. There is a possibility of tremendous social, emotional, physical and cognitive development, and it can come and go before you know it. It is necessary and essential to provide high quality stimulating experiences, opportunities of a wide variety to kindle and sustain children's interest in their surroundings and joy in learning.

For children, early learning is best through play, stories, conversations, songs, rhythm, movement and opportunity to explore.

Children learn best by actively engaging with the environment. This may, in the early years include:

Development capacity	Learning
• observing things, watching faces	responding to colour, shape, voices
• listening to sounds and rhythm	making sounds and singing
• exploring	learning by experiencing
• experimenting by turning things around	curiosity and interest



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- asking questions like, "Why?" solving problems
- experimenting with textures or objects categorizing and
- listening, mimicking, repeating, practising building skills
- moving to rhythm, repeating small stories memory, recall and sequence

#### 13.2.1 Indicators of Progress

By progress, we mean that children have gained skills and competencies. In an ECCE centre, how would we gauge that children have benefitted from being in a learning setting? Regular observations, keeping daily records of individual child are some common methods.

Observations need to be in all domains of development. It is through such diary noting and records that parents are informed of their children's unique features as well as how they compare with age related behaviour referred as 'age norms'.

Building understanding of children's progress is when a child acquires milestones such as standing with support and then starts walking, climbing steps, jumping, holding a ball, being able to push and pull objects. Children gain cognitive progress when they are able to sit and listen to a story or engage in completing a puzzle. Social progress is defined when children are together and may play individually with blocks or share crayons while painting, wait for a turn on the swing etc. Learning to care, share, take turns and get along with others are important in the foundational years.

Children also learn communication skills, enrich their expressive vocabulary and participate in art, music and dance. They also acquire early numeracy and literacy as they display interest in similar sounds, identifying sounds with other similar sounds and repetition of numbers.

Children moving freely, asking questions, playing with each other, exploring, watching, sitting, listening or watching a puppet show, resolving conflict are often indicators of a dynamic early learning space. Often, children may face limitations and inability in completing tasks; they may be helped or allowed to understand limitations.

Children with varying abilities need to be supported with assertive design and architecture such as ramps, hearing devices and sound-rich inputs. Barrier-free and supportive interventions besides addressing ability, build empathy and awareness for co-existence.

Development opportunities have to provide variations in activities as development is integrated and growth is holistic as well as dependent on domain interdependence. For example, a child who is not healthy may not be active, while a socially aloof child may lose on group participation.

### 13.3 DOMAINS OF DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING AREAS

The principles and practices relevant to learning and development in the early years (National ECCE Curriculum Framework, 2013) are based on the insights and observations of thinkers and evidence from researches.

You have read in Module 2 that, development and learning take place in all domains. Development in one domain influences the other domains. A single experience may also impact multiple domains. The dispositions developed in one domain often influence young children to learn in other areas.

Children are thinking, feeling and interacting human beings and it is important to give them experiences to touch, feel, observe, listen and express. The early years of development are critical and the brain's plasticity is enhanced by sensorial inputs with emphasis on integrated and holistic development in accordance with age and developmental needs of the child.

Let us study about different areas of development in connection with planning a balanced ECCE curriculum.

**13.3.1 Physical-motor development:** It includes gross motor skills; coordination of fine muscles with dexterity; eye- hand coordination; sense of balance, physical coordination, and awareness of space and direction; nutrition, health status and practices.

#### 13.3.2 Language Development and Communication

From birth, children make sounds, listen and respond orally. Children learn to speak and understand in a language-rich environment. This domain encompasses listening and comprehension; oral skills/speaking and communicating; vocabulary development; pre-literacy/emergent literacy skills like phonological awareness; print awareness and concepts; letter-sound correspondence; recognition of letters; building words and sentences and early writing and introduction to language of school transaction.

#### 13.3.3 Cognitive Development

Curiosity, asking questions to know concepts, words to build pre-number and number concepts comprise elements of cognition. Knowledge or skills related to comparing, classification, seriation, conservation of space and quantity, one-to-one correspondence, counting, spatial sense; patterns and estimations in measurement develop with engagement and play. Other skills also relate to cognitive growth such as data handling; skills related to sequential thinking, critical thinking, observing, reasoning and problem solving; and knowledge of concepts related to the physical, social and natural environment. ***Sensory and Perceptual Development*** based on development of the five senses through visual, auditory and kinesthetic experiences is crucial for mental functions.



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### *Development of Creative and Aesthetic Appreciation*

It is about involvement in different art forms, expression and appreciation for dance, drama and music.

### **13.3.4 Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

It refers to development of self-concept; self-control; life skills or self-help skills; habit formation; initiative and curiosity; engagement and persistence; cooperation; compassion; social relationships; group interaction; pro-social behaviour; expressing feelings, accepting others' feelings.

## **13.4 INTERDEPENDENCE OF DOMAINS OF DEVELOPMENT**

Learning during the early years grows with effective transaction of the ECCE curriculum that promotes holistic development of children. Development in domains is not in isolation but in an integrated manner. It is important to understand that deprivation in any one domain influences all domains. If children are physically weak, have low mobility or are listless, it will make them low on attention, participation and may be ignored, thus becoming irritable. These children may require intervention and extra attention.

Secondly, the interdependence of domains has to be seen in transaction of activities. Storytelling is largely a language activity, however it enhances imagination, social skills in listening together and content may appease emotions. Children in outdoor play may be centrally focusing on exercise of physical and motor skills, however they learn social skills by having to take turns on the swing, sharing play equipment and other such moments.

Early learning curriculum require to be wide ranging keeping in mind all around development and also different needs of children.

### **13.4.1 Features ensuring learning in all domains:**

- Observe children to identify their needs and capabilities
- Develop responsive relationship with children as transaction within the classroom is a journey of mutual learning between children and the teacher
- Ensure holistic development through challenging activities
- Respect children's social environment as emotional security influences classroom attention
- Focus on planning and conducting activities as well as processes of interaction modifying according to children's responses
- Create a nurturing and positive relationship with children and among children

- Ensure social inclusion of children with disability in the ECCE classroom
- Identify areas of intervention and regulation
- Work in partnership with parents as they are valuable resources



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.1

- I State whether the following statements are true or false:
- (a) Changes or development in one domain facilitates or hinders the development of another domain.
  - (b) Development of various concepts come under cognitive development.
  - (c) All domains of child development are not interrelated.
  - (d) Print awareness is a part of emotional development
- II Answer briefly:
- (a) List some ways to note children's progress?

## 13.5 PROMOTING LEARNING

Learning in different domains is impacted by the nature of interaction strategies used during early years. The strategies are essentially to be based on child-centered approach. Hence, play and activity-based approach cater to the needs, interests, abilities and social context of the children. The teaching-learning approach should be inclusive so that all children feel emotionally safe to engage, with no feeling of discrimination.

Activity is a part of a well-planned series of experiences identified by the teacher for children aimed at a particular learning area/areas and not an isolated learning experience.

While doing an activity, children are actively engaged both physically and cognitively. An activity needs to be challenging enough for children allowing them to practice and apply already acquired skills and knowledge in a variety of ways, across many situations. Attempt to provide pleasurable activities is central to the well-being of children. Uniformity or being judgmental is obtrusive to learning. Play stimulates curiosity and exploration and leads to mastery of body controls, encourages creativity and social skills and develops emotional balance and language skills.

**13.5.1 Play and activity-based transactional strategies** provide learning experiences to children in concrete form. Play situations help children to become an active participant and not a passive recipient in the learning process. Such an



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approach provides balanced, process-oriented programmes that fulfill all developmental objectives. It nurtures development of learning processes like observation, experimentation, problem-solving and creativity in children, while at the same time, caters to the promotion of their physical, language and social development.

**13.5.2 Opportunity for learning in all domains** happens through mediums that allow expression and participation. Group and individual play activities provide immediate feedback for children’s orientation to learning processes.

Below is the box which will help you to understand play based activities:

#### Some Common Activities for All-Round Development

- Free and structured conversation	- Sand play
- Storytelling and storymaking	- Water play
- Dramatisation	- Puppet play
- Rhymes and songs	- Circle/group and activities
- Music and movement	- Structured cognitive and language activities with play material
- Free indoor play with puzzles, beads, blocks, etc.	- Nature walk
- Outdoor play	- Fieldtrips/outings



#### INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.2

Fill in the blanks:

- ECCE teaching and learning strategies are essentially .....
- The teaching-learning approach should be \_\_\_\_\_, that is including all children.
- Play stimulates ..... and ..... body.
- ..... strategies provide learning experiences to children to become an active participant in the learning process.

#### 13.6 PLANNING DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES FOR DIFFERENT DOMAINS/AREAS

Providing children with regular everyday rhythms foster emotional security. However, children have a unique pace as well as they have short attention spans. Caregivers need to be open to flexibility in their transaction as well as to modify for specific children.



### 13.6.1 Health and Physical well-being:

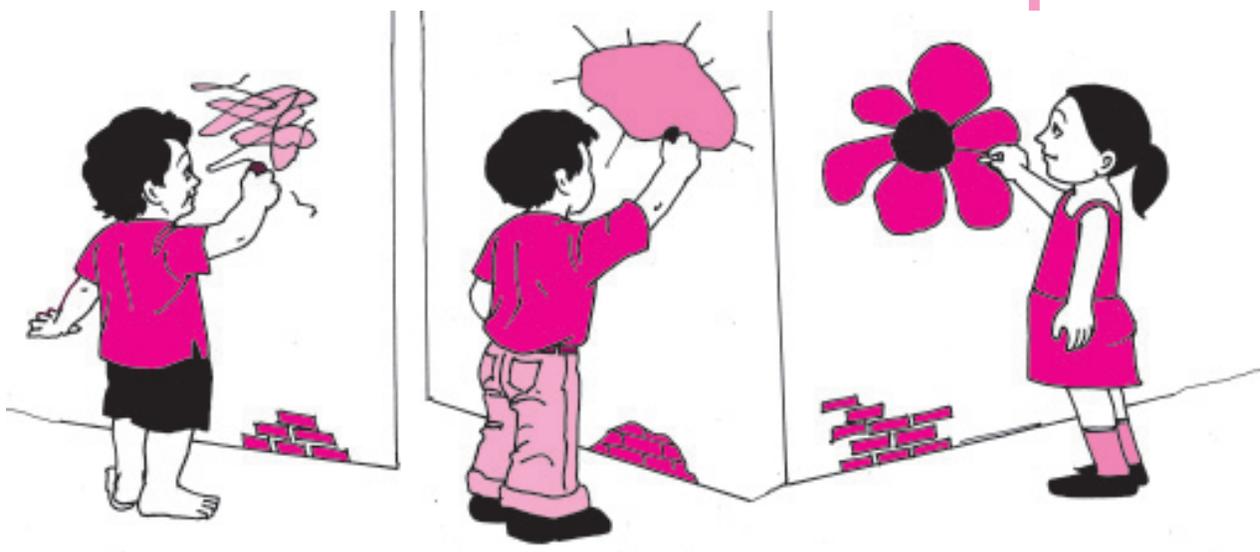
Physical and motor development of children is crucial to their learning and is influenced by many factors, such as genetic inheritance, nutritional status, general physical conditions as well as opportunities for movement and exercise.

Activities would include giving a nutritional supplement in the ECCE centre to compensate for any nutritional deficiencies in the home diet. Milk, sprouted pulses, protein biscuits, green vegetables with porridge (dalia), idlis, fruits can be suggested for the school snack. Helping children develop good food habits through songs, rhymes and stories will increase their orientation to nutrition and health.

Health is also dependent on preventive practices such as immunization which is a schedule of preventing different diseases. Good health ensures that children stay healthy and active. Outdoor play with swings, slides, jungle gym allow children to use their muscles. Running, jumping, hopping, pulling and pushing are moments of play that also assist in developing more complex motor skills. There is a need to monitor physical, health and motor development on a regular basis.

### 13.6.2 Motor Development

You have studied that physical and motor development of children is influenced by many factors. Motor development depends on neural and muscular maturation. Children cannot learn any skill until they are ready for it. Motor development follows a predictable pattern. There are individual differences in the rate of motor development. Though the sequence remains the same, the specific age at which different children reach different stages differ from child to child depending upon the experiences and opportunities. You have read in Module 2 that motor skills are of two types: gross motor skills and fine motor skills.





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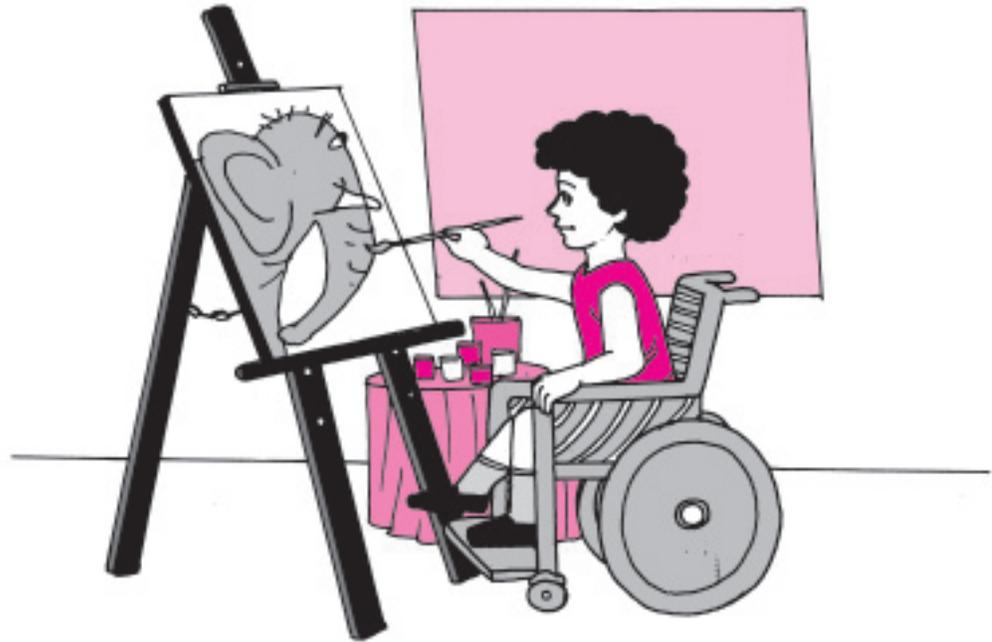


Fig. 13.1 Activities–Fine Motor Development

**Examples of gross motor skills** are walking, balancing, running, jumping, creeping, crawling, rolling, swinging, hopping, climbing (ascending and descending), rhythmic movement, playing with a ball, throwing, catching and kicking. **Fine motor skills** may include threading, tearing, cutting, pasting, drawing, colouring, painting, printing, paper folding, clay work, sorting, pattern making, using manipulative material, pouring etc. Activities for fine muscle coordination are related to muscular control of the eyes, hands and fingers as well as coordination of eye and hand movement. These activities lead to development of self-help skills like self-feeding and self-dressing. Pre-writing, drawing, painting, clay modelling, play with manipulative materials are activities that develop and strengthen eye- hand coordination.



Fig. 13.2 Gross Motor Development

### 13.6.3 Language Development

Learning language is crucial for children in early childhood since it provides the foundation for later learning. Children learn language through imitating others around them, encouragement from others and opportunities for listening to and expressing ideas, thoughts and feelings. Children differ in the levels and quality of language acquired by them. Some start talking early, others start late. Some

are highly talkative, while others are quiet. To some extent, these differences may be inherited, but to a large extent, they are due to the kind of environment the child gets. By the time children come to preschool, they are already using a language at home.

*Given the right experiences and environment, their vocabulary increases steadily and rapidly. Educated parents, exposure to toys, pictures, storybooks, newspapers and a variety of objects around them, opportunities for listening good quality conversation, stories, rhymes, songs, etc., opportunities for talking and expressing their ideas to adults and other children, opportunities for play, exposure to television, radio, puppet shows, outings and excursions extend their experiences.*

Children from disadvantaged homes, or where parents do not get enough time to interact with their children, often do not get the benefit of all these experiences. This deprivation can be compensated to a considerable extent through a meaningful preschool programme. As far as possible, the medium of interaction in early childhood must be home language of the child.

**Major areas that need attention for transaction of language and early literacy activities are:**

- Development of listening skills (sound discrimination, listening span, listening comprehension).
- Development of vocabulary related to body, home and environment (physical, natural and social environment).
- Development of speaking skills and oral expression (conversation, story-telling, dramatisation, puppet play, picture reading, creative self-expression).
- Development of reading readiness (auditory/sound discrimination, visual discrimination, auditory-visual association, left-to-right directionality).
- Development of writing readiness (fine muscle development, eye-hand coordination, letter perception).

Children improve language and literacy by activities like narrating and listening to stories, conversation on project/theme, recalling the story, simple riddles, group games, listening to clues and completing a thought. Simple tasks of picture reading, helping children follow simple instructions, spotting the odd man out are good for recall and expressive vocabulary.

**Activities of performance:** Action rhymes, dramatisation, role play, puppet play, oral expression, nature walk, creating sentences using vocabulary related to home, body, fruits, vegetables, etc., are essential for developing listening, expressing and speaking skills. These activities can be done with three to six year olds and also with six and eight years olds. For older children, complexity of the story or instruction may be increased. Free conversation helps children express and share



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when they come in the morning or when they reach home. They must be encouraged to speak without too much correction. If children's sentences are incorrect, they should not be immediately stopped, Repetition or rephrasing keep children confident. Sharing stories as daily schedule of the ECCE programme helps build communication. Stories need to be short, age appropriate and be narrated with both facial and voice expressions.

**Development of Reading and Writing Readiness:** Readiness is a stage when children are mature and ready to learn something without any stress. Reading and writing readiness refers to the ability of children to profit from any reading and writing instruction. Some amount of visual and discrimination activities are conducted with children right from three years onwards. More systematic focus on specific activities for reading and writing readiness is needed by the time the children are four-and-half to five years and ready for these activities. Activities like identification of sound in the environment, discriminating sound in the environment, identification of beginning sounds, rhyming words, antakshari, matching, odd-man-out, spotting the difference, classifying objects/pictures of objects beginning with a given sound, matching pictures with verbal words, etc. support in developing reading and writing readiness. Five to six year old children are normally in Class I of primary school. If, they are in ECCE centres, they can be given some exposure to the letters of the alphabet and small words. Children at early primary classes can match the sound with letters of the alphabet, match pictures of an object with the initial letter of the name of the object and match pictures with words.

Writing readiness requires activities for small muscle development, eye-hand coordination, handling of writing material and for letter perception. It is not advisable to introduce formal writing since children are at a developmental level when their fingers and eye muscles still need strengthening and coordination.

### 13.6.4 Cognitive Development

Cognition refers to the process of knowing and understanding the environment around us. Cognitive development is the development of observation, classification,



Fig. 13.3 Activities–Cognitive Development

sequential thinking, problem solving and reasoning which are basic to get to know the environment. Providing mediation with dialogue, action and direction by adults



make children curious, with a desire to explore and experiment. The thought process of children keeps getting evolved as they grow. Children between three to six years of age are at pre-operational stage of cognitive development. They think from their limited perspective and are slowly able to do logical and abstract thinking. They learn through concrete and first-hand experiences. Play and activity are key sources in their learning to build their power of reason and problem solving..

### Major areas that need attention for cognitive development are:

**Sensory and perceptual development:** Children learn through their senses. Use of senses is basic to the process of knowing and understanding. Senses are the gateway of knowledge. The more varied and extensive these experiences, the broader will be the base for children to form ideas about the world. Any kind of sensory deprivation or limitation may lead to development of incomplete or distorted concepts. Greater attention needs to be on development of the five senses (seeing, hearing, touch, smell, taste) through plenty of activities and opportunities.

**Development of cognitive skills:** These include memory and observation, classification, sequential thinking, problem-solving and reasoning. The teacher needs to develop and plan activities and experiences for all these cognitive skills.

**Formation of basic concepts:** Concept is a mental construction or picture of a class of objects, people, places and phenomena. For example, if children have developed a concept of colour, they will be able to classify or categorize objects in the environment on the basis of this dimension. Formation or development of basic concepts in children is crucial to their understanding of the environment. Only if they have the clarity of these concepts will they be able to observe, discriminate and categorize the different objects in their environment and progress from perception-bound reasoning to logical reasoning. For development of any concept, the activities are planned in the sequence like Matching (children match at perceptual level), Identification (e.g. what is red? children include concept in their passive vocabulary) and Naming (e.g. what colour is that?) where children include concept in their active vocabulary).

Let us see the example of pre-number concepts:

**Pre-number concepts:** It is recommended that children master the following pre-number concepts before proceeding with instruction to specific numbers:

Big, small, same as ( in size); long, short, same as ( in length); heavy, light, same as ( in weight); tall, short, same as ( in height); fat/thick, thin, same as ( in thickness); wide, narrow, same as ( in width); more, less, same as (concept of



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mass/quantity); far, near, same as( in distance).It helps children make a correct assessment about the value of a number before they understand the more complex mathematical principles. If mathematics is imposed on children before they have developed pre-number concepts, then they end up simply memorising and are likely to run into trouble when they are expected to apply their knowledge to more advanced levels of reasoning.

Before coming to number concept, the teacher needs to provide lots of number readiness activities that include activities for all cognitive skills followed by pre-number activities.

**Number concept:** Number is an abstract concept which comes to our mind after counting things. Developing a concept of numbers in terms of the irrelative value; number symbols; counting and placing the numbers in order needs to be part of the curriculum. Children are familiar with numbers because they have seen these on telephone instruments, addresses, speedometers, page numbers, newspapers, calendars and so on, but they have no experience with mathematical operations. In the early years, all learning occurs through play rather than through didactic communication. Therefore, instead of rote learning of the number sequence, children need to learn and understand, in the context of small sets, the connection between word games and counting, and between counting and quantity. Making simple comparisons and classifications along one dimension at a time, and identifying shapes and symmetries, are appropriate skills to acquire at this stage.

**Development of environmental concepts:** Children learn from their environment. The immediate environment of children can be categorized into:

- Natural environment (animals, birds, insects, vegetables and fruits, plants)
- Physical environment (water, air, sky, earth, seasons, weather)
- Social environment (self and family, transport, community helpers, festivals)

These environmental concepts may be taken up as projects and may form part of a theme for all activities to be conducted with children. The concepts discussed earlier; i.e., colour, number, shape, time, temperature, etc., can be introduced to children through these themes also.

### 13.6.5 Personal, Social and Emotional Development

This refers to the development of those characteristics or behaviors that help children adjust to their social environment. Emotional development provides the base for social development. The family, particularly the parents become the primary agents of socialisation. Other agents which include peers, teachers, neighbours and even mass media play a significant role in social development. When children come to preschool, they are generally egocentric, see and feel things only from their own point of view. They are also more used to individual or

solitary play or parallel play i.e. play by the side of another child, are used to one-to one interaction with parent are given and are not yet capable of pro-social behaviour like cooperation, sharing and helping.

A major objective of the ECCE centre is to help children progress from ego-centric towards socio-centrism i.e. towards playing with others, helping others and generally getting socialized. The ECCE centre needs to provide a trust worthy and secure environment so that children adjust to the activities of the centre, develop good habits, maintain personal hygiene and cleanliness, develop proper eating habits, use the toilet correctly, wash hands before and after meals, puts away objects after playing and keep the environment clean.

It also includes developing positive self-concept, social manners like sharing and cooperating with others, respecting others' rights and property, waiting for one's turn, independence and leadership, cooperating with teachers and other adults, etc.

Therefore, the most important needs of children that the ECCE centre must address are the need for security and acceptance. When children come to the centre, they leave home for the first time and the challenge is to adjust to the new environment. The centre/preschool must provide the kind of environment that will help them in this adjustment.

There are also wide individual differences in behaviour, characteristics and abilities of children. Each child has a unique personality. Emotional development provides base for social development. Opportunities for children must be provided through creative drama, role play, music and movement and creative activities to express emotions.

Children often develop behavioural disorders, for example, unusually aggressive behaviour, withdrawn or unusually shy behaviour, undue anxiety, hyperactivity, regression (i.e. going back to earlier infantile forms of behaviour, for example bed-wetting and nail biting). An understanding of the problem by parents and teachers and a reassuring attitude to help children overcome the anxieties and fears will enable them to get over these behavioral disorders. Punishment is not desirable since it only adds to the humiliation and anxiety.

During early childhood years, the concept of gender also develops among children. Sex-role stereotypes are also formed around this stage. The teacher and other adults including parents should not encourage differences in expected behaviours from boys and girls. They should treat all children alike and not have favourites. In achieving all this smoothly, the teacher needs to be familiar with the home environment of every child in the class by maintaining regular contact with the parents. This calls for quality partnership between teachers, parents and other caregivers.



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### 13.6.6 Art and Aesthetics

All children have the potential for creativity although they may differ in the degree of creativity. Creativity does not take place in a vacuum. The more experiences children have, the better are the foundations on which they will build their creative efforts. A stimulating and encouraging environment promotes creativity in children. Opportunities and facilities for free play, dramatic and constructive play fosters creativity in children. An authoritarian and strict atmosphere in the ECCE centre may impede the development of creativity in children.

**Major areas that need attention for development of creative and aesthetic appreciation are:**

- **Creative and aesthetic appreciation through arts**– Activities like drawing and colouring, painting, printing, tearing, cutting and pasting, making a collage, clay modelling, paper folding, etc. may be the part of the curriculum.
- **Creative movement:** Children may be engaged in activities like action rhymes, rhythmic movement like dancing, finger clicking, foot stamping and clapping to a beat.
- **Creative drama**– Activities to suggestions like, walk like an elephant, hop like a rabbit, etc. Dramatising stories or situations by creating their own dialogues and actions and games like dumb charade promote creativity.
- **Creative thinking**- Free play, dramatic and make-believe play, constructive play need to be promoted. Open ended questions stimulate imagination and enhance creativity. Creating stories and rhymes promote creativity.
- **Development of aesthetic appreciation** - Developing sensitivity towards colour and beauty in the environment is essential. Simple activities such as decorating the classroom, making the classroom display attractive and relevant at the eye level of the children, change of classroom displays as often as feasible, nature walks and outings, drawing children's attention towards beauty of nature and encouraging them to verbalise their appreciation, promotes aesthetic appreciation. Aesthetic experience through music and art can easily be a part of the daily routine like, beginning the day with songs, group movements and the physical exercises. Each day needs a time for songs, when children can repeat songs or rhymes and enjoy.



**TRY YOUR SKILLS**

Answer the following:

- (a) Write any two cognitive skills that need attention at the ECCE stage.
- (b) List any three pre-number concepts.
- (c) List any two activities for personal, social and emotional development.

### 13.7 IDENTIFYING DEVELOPMENTAL VARIATIONS AND INTERVENTIONS

All children are similar in some ways like to touch, walk, run, jump, talk and yet there are many differences in ways that they grow. What are these variations? We will discuss the differences in the pace of development and how should children be observed, and when these differences need attention. We have been discussing appropriateness of age-related activities that appeal to young children prompting them to engage, explore and enjoy. If some children show resistance to get involved, as an adult you must make a note of it. If this behaviour of staying aloof is repeated, the children have to be attended to.

It is natural for children to have an interactive relation with people, objects or even events in their immediate surroundings. If a child shows indifference to surroundings, it is advisable to watch the child. In fact, children at particular ages tend to do have similar behaviours, achieve certain competencies and attempt to take small challenge.

Acquiring age-related skills and behaviours reflect progress and growth in different domains. It is important to also know that no two children grow at the same rate and each child has a specific pace.

In an ECCE centre, some children will often be more active than others while some may be quiet, shy, reserved and almost aloof. Behaviour of both children will need attention and intervention if it continues and some children resist regulation. Some common variations can be:

Behaviour variations	Domain	Nature of intervention
Delayed milestones	Physical and motor	Nutrition, sensory stimulation, activity
Repetitive behaviours like rocking, or banging	Multiple domains. Pediatrician	Refer for professional help
Quiet and aloof	Socio-emotional	Art, drama, movement and conversation
High level of energy	Socio-emotional or physical	Sit down with slow activities such as colouring
Resistance to others or outdoor play	Socio-emotional or can be physical	Encouraging art, expression, conversations
Frequently asking questions	Cognitive	Encouraging turn taking
Display competence in any skill like art, numbers or music	Cognitive, language	Facilitate exposure and opportunity for skill building



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**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

In this lesson, you have learnt that:

- ECCE must be based on a holistic and integrated perspective, taking into account the various domains of development, the characteristics of children at each sub-stage, and their learning needs.
- Children have a natural desire to learn and make sense of the world around them. Learning in the early years must hence be directed by the children's interests and priorities. It should be contextualised by the experiences of children rather than being structured formally. Play and activity-based experiences should be provided to young children.
- Teacher must ensure an enabling environment that is rich in stimulation and experiences that allows children to explore, experiment and freely express themselves, and one that gives them a sense of warmth, security and trust.
- Playing, music, rhyming, art and other activities using local materials along with opportunities for speaking, listening and expressing themselves, and informal interaction are essential components of learning at this stage.
- No formal teaching of 3Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic) at preschool stage.
- Each child is unique in needs, requirements, abilities and interests. It is important to create an inclusive environment for all children, including children with disabilities.

**TERMINAL EXERCISE**

1. What do you mean by curriculum in the context of ECCE?
2. List all the domains of child development.
3. Suggest some activities to develop children emotionally and prevent the development of behavioral disorders?
4. Why should young children be provided with ample fine motor and gross motor development activities?
5. What are the areas that need attention in language development?
6. Mention some activities that would foster creativity among young children.



## ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS



Notes

### 13.1

- I. (a) True  
(b) True  
(c) False  
(d) False
- II If children are active, asking questions, playing and exploring objects, they are giving signs of progress.

### 13.2

- (a) child-centered  
(b) inclusive  
(c) curiosity and exploration  
(d) play and activity-based

### 13.3

- (a) Memory and observation, classification, sequential thinking, problem solving and reasoning.
- (b) Big, small, same as (size), long, short, same as (length), heavy, light, same as (weight), tall, short, same as (height), fat/ thick, thin, same as (thickness), wide, narrow, same as (width), more, less, same as (mass/quantity), far, near, same as (distance).
- (c) Activities for personal-social development are playing with others, being with others, helping others, socialising, developing good habits, maintaining personal hygiene and cleanliness, developing proper eating habits, using toilet correctly, washing hands before and after meals, putting away objects after playing and keeping environment clean, cooperating, respecting etc.

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## Notes

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