

**Lesson  
No 13**

**How Children Learn  
(Early Learning and Teaching)**

## SUMMARY

The curriculum is the sum total of possible experiences that could be provided to children in early childcare centres. There is utmost primacy of how the curriculum or content is used with children in early learning settings. Interactions with children must be appealing to compel children's involvement and learning. Experiences fostering development in all domains must be included in a day keeping in mind the interdependence of growth in different domains.

In this lesson, you learnt the patterns and variations of children's natural ways to learn and how children learn.

## INDICATORS OF CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

### Build Your Understanding

- Babies are born ready to learn and their brain develops by its use. In fact, it is often said that of the brain, 'use it or lose it'.
- Neck control, creeping, crawling, standing, making sounds, responding to faces are all indicators of development in different domains.

## HOW CHILDREN LEARN

### Build Your Understanding

- Children learn in different ways. Some learn by seeing, some by hearing, some by listening, and 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.
- 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
▪ Asking Questions Like, "Why?"	→	▪ Solving Problems
▪ Experimenting With Textures Or Objects	→	▪ Categorizing
▪ Listening, Mimicking, Repeating, Practicing	→	▪ Building Skills
▪ Moving to Rhythm, Repeating Small Stories	→	▪ Memory, Recall And Sequence

## INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

- Concepts need to relate to real-life concrete experiences and then gradually move to abstract.
- For example, if you are talking about animals, talk about familiar animals from the children's environment first and then gradually show pictures of unfamiliar animals. This is called contextualized learning.
- Diversity can be of two ways –
  - One, where families live in different social, physical and cultural contexts creating a unique milieu

- Second, in one class, there are children from different contexts
- One uniform curriculum will not work in different spaces. Rural children will respond differently to means of transport or what they see in the environment than urban children will answer.
- Hence, One of the major principles in planning a programme for young children is to attend and address children's social realities and not expect responses to curricular content to emerge only in a specific direction

## DOMAINS OF DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING AREAS

<b>Physical-Motor Development</b>	Includes - Gross Motor Skills 1) Coordination of Fine Muscles with Dexterity 2) Eye- Hand Coordination 3) Sense of Balance and Physical Coordination 4) Awareness of Space and Direction
<b>Language Development and Communication</b>	Includes - 1) Listening and Comprehension 2) Oral Skills/Speaking and Communicating 3) Vocabulary Development 4) Phonological Awareness 5) Letter-Sound Correspondence 6) Recognition of Letters 7) Building Words and Sentences 8) Early Reading and Writing And Introduction to Language of School Transaction.
<b>Cognitive Development</b>	Includes - 1) Number Concepts 2) Skills Related to Comparing, Classification, Conservation of Space and Quantity, One-to-One Correspondence, Counting, Spatial Sense 3) Patterns and Estimations 4) Sensory and Perceptual Development - development of the five senses through visual, auditory and kinaesthetic experiences 5) Creative and Aesthetic Appreciation - involvement in different art forms, expression and appreciation for dance, drama and music.
<b>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</b>	Includes – 1) Self-Concept, Self-Control, Life Skills or Self-Help Skills 2) Habit Formation 3) Initiative and Curiosity 4) Engagement and Persistence 5) Cooperation, Compassion, Social Relationships, Group Interaction, Pro-Social Behaviour 6) Expressing Feelings, Accepting Others' Feelings.

## INTERDEPENDENCE OF DOMAINS OF DEVELOPMENT

### Build Your Understanding

- ✓ Development in domains is not in isolation but in an integrated manner. Deprivation in any one domain influences all domains.
- ✓ The interdependence of domains has to be seen in transaction of activities

## PROMOTING LEARNING

- ✓ Learning in different domains is impacted by the nature of interaction strategies used during early years.
- ✓ Play and activity-based transactional strategies to promote child-centered approach and provide learning experiences to children in concrete form.
- ✓ 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.

## PLANNING DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES FOR DIFFERENT DOMAINS/AREAS

Though pattern of development is same for all children; they may differ in the pace of development. To some extent, these differences may be inherited, but to a large extent, they are due to the kind of environment the child gets.

<b>Health and Physical Well-Being</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Influenced by many factors, such as genetic inheritance, nutritional status, general physical conditions as well as opportunities for movement and exercise.</li> <li>✓ Providing nutritional supplement in the ECCE centre to compensate for any nutritional deficiencies in the home diet.</li> <li>✓ Immunization which is a schedule of preventing different diseases.</li> <li>✓ To monitor physical, health and motor development on a regular basis.</li> </ul>
<b>Motor Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Depends on neural and muscular maturation.</li> <li>✓ Motor skills are of two types: <b>Gross Motor Skills</b> - walking, balancing, running, jumping, creeping, crawling, rolling, swinging, hopping, climbing playing and <b>Fine Motor Skills</b> - threading, tearing, cutting, pasting, drawing, colouring, painting, printing, paper folding, clay work, sorting, pattern making</li> </ul>
<b>Language Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Learning language is crucial for children in early childhood since it provides the foundation for later learning</li> <li>✓ Children learn language through imitating others around them, encouragement from others and opportunities for listening to and expressing ideas, thoughts and feelings.</li> </ul>
<b>Cognitive Development</b>	<p>Development of observation, classification, sequential thinking, problem solving and reasoning which are basic to get to know the environment.</p> <p><b>Major areas that need attention for cognitive development are:</b></p> <p><b>Sensory and Perceptual Development</b> - Development of the five senses - seeing, hearing, touch, smell, taste</p> <p><b>Formation of Basic Concepts</b> - is a mental construction or picture of a class of objects, people, places and phenomena.</p> <p><b>Development of Cognitive Skills</b> - include memory and observation, classification, sequential thinking, problem-solving and reasoning.</p>
<b>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Development of those behaviours that help children to adjust to their social environment.</li> <li>✓ The family, particularly the parents become the primary agents of socialization including peers, teachers, neighbours and even mass media as secondary.</li> <li>✓ Emotional development provides the base for social development to help children progress from ego centric towards socio-centrism.</li> </ul>
<b>Art and Aesthetics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Potential for creativity although they may differ in the degree of creativity.</li> <li>✓ Creativity does not take place in a vacuum.</li> <li>✓ The more experiences children have, the better are the foundations on which they will build their creative efforts.</li> <li>✓ A stimulating and encouraging environment promotes creativity in children.</li> </ul>

### IDENTIFYING DEVELOPMENTAL VARIATIONS AND INTERVENTIONS

You learnt that though pattern of development is same for all children; they may differ in the pace of development known as developmental variations.

You have learnt about developmentally and age appropriate 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 known as interventions.

Some children may 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. Some common variations and nature of interventions are as follows -

<b>Behaviour variations</b>	<b>Domain</b>	<b>Nature of intervention</b>
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

### **EVALUATE YOURSELF**

- Q1.** Discuss developmentally appropriate strategies and activities for development of different domains of young child.
- Q2.** Describe the significance of arts as medium for expression and communication.

### **PRACTICE YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

All children are similar in some ways like to touch, walk, run, jump, and talk; yet there are many differences in the ways they grow. Observe at least five children in your surroundings and Identify developmental variations. Also suggest appropriate interventions to deal with those developmental variations.