COMMUNITY MANAGED
EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS
CURRICULUM GUIDE

Australian AID

Plan

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COVER: Children play and learn at a Plan ECCD centre in Haiti. The ECCD centre is housed in a temporary shelter that is inexpensive and environmentally friendly.

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SECTION A
ABOUT THE MANUAL

Right: Children in Laos enjoy a snack during their preschool class.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEFINING SOME KEY TERMS

Preschool/ECCD centre

These terms are used interchangeably throughout this guide. It is also recognised that different terminology is used in different local or country contexts. The important thing about quality early learning programs (ELPs) as articulated in this guide is that children benefit from an organised, group learning experience in the year or two before primary school. A quality program incorporates a range of activities to draw on children's interests and developmental stages. Further explanations are below.

preschool: also known as pre-primary class or kindergarten, is often associated with formal programs hosted/co-located at the primary school. One preconception might be that children 'learn' their alphabet and numbers in the preschool, and that learning is conducted at desks or tables with the teacher and a blackboard as the prominent learning tools. In preschools that are co-located with a primary school, the teacher might be required to achieve a credential, and, in most cases, is a qualified primary school teacher with a relevant teaching qualification. Formal preschools are more likely to charge fees and require uniforms, which brings up equity issues.

A caregiver in Plan's CLAC Uganda project reads a storybook as a part of structured literacy activities. Good storybooks for ELPs should have an interesting plot, character development, informative pictures and half pages of writing.

ECCD centre: this is often associated with non-formal learning programs organised and managed by the community. These centres might receive assistance from a service provider such as a non-government organisation (NGO) or church. One preconception is that these programs are play-based, with songs, games and stories dominating the curriculum, with little academic learning (alphabet and numbers). ECCD centres are usually facilitated by a community member who has at least a Year 8 education, but rarely a university degree or official teaching certificate. The Community Led Action for Children (CLAC) program envisions a future where quality of learning is improved in both formal settings (ie preschool) and non-formal settings (ie ECCD centres) to include an array of stimulating activities and materials that produce measured growth in four development areas and enable children to begin school ready to succeed. Teacher training will be directed to knowledge and skills required to ensure development and learning in young children, aged from four to six. 'Preschools' and 'ECCD centres' can work as a team to provide the same quality of learning and care to every child. In this way,

those children who live in remote areas or cannot afford the fees often charged at 'preschools' can achieve equitable early learning opportunities. Better and more appreciative collaboration between the community and primary school will occur.

Teachers/caregivers

The terms 'teacher' and 'caregiver' are used interchangeably throughout this guide. However, it is important to acknowledge that there can be differences (real or perceived) between teachers and caregivers that might relate to things like

qualifications, remuneration, workplace, and teaching and learning techniques used. How young children learn should determine how teachers of young children teach. The word 'teach' implies telling or giving information. But the correct way to teach young children is not to lecture or verbally instruct them. Early childhood teachers are therefore more like guides or facilitators and are often referred to as caregivers, rather than teachers.

Teacher: sometimes the difference between a teacher and a caregiver in an early childhood setting is that the teacher is working within

a government system (ie formal preschools co-located with primary schools) and is paid by government. A teacher might be focused on children learning their alphabet and numbers and have a more formal classroom set up (tables and chairs).

Caregiver: a caregiver tends to be a community member, paid an honorarium, who works in a non-formal/community managed ECCD centre. Research has shown that, with training and support, community members can become highly effective caregivers. A good caregiver will prepare the environment so that it provides stimulating and challenging

materials and activities for children. Effective caregivers watch closely to see what children understand and pose more challenges to push their thinking further.

Ultimately it should not matter whether a person working with young children is called a 'teacher' or 'caregiver.' The CLAC approach aims to improve the skills of people working with children so that the quality of learning and teaching helps children to develop holistically in four domains so they are ready to succeed in school.

CURRICULUM SYNOPSIS

Plan International works in some of the most vulnerable communities in the world with the goal of improving children's outcomes. In these communities, there remain significant equality and poverty alleviation concerns that justify the need for a development model that proves vulnerable children can be highly successful in school and life, if provided with effective supports. There are good reasons to focus on the early childhood years (from birth to eight years) due to their significant influence on later life. "Early childhood can create the foundation for a life of expanded opportunity or it can lock children into a future of deprivation and marginalisation" (UNESCO 2010). There is strong and growing evidence that high-quality care in the early years can act as a springboard for success in school. In turn, education provides vulnerable children with a chance to escape poverty, build a more secure future, and realise their potential. For these reasons, early childhood care and development (ECCD) has been described as a child's right and a community and child development imperative.

Plan International Australia's early childhood approach takes on the ambitious task of proving that 100 per cent disadvantaged children

Outdoor play is an important part of the ELP daily routine. Children in India are participating in a ball game which helps develop gross motor skills.

of relevant age in a targeted high-poverty community can achieve child wellbeing indicators and school success through effective early childhood supports. The changes in children result from building ECCD leadership skills in the community to manage an integrated system of child and family services and an ethos of social and education equality. These include: a parenting program that improves knowledge and practical skills to improve child health, learning and protection in the home and wider community; a low-cost, high-quality ELP that serves every child in the year or two before primary; a transition to primary program with school- and community-based activities that enable disadvantaged children to enter primary school on time, stay in school and learn; and innovations in sector integration and public private partnerships to ensure that

CURRICULUM SYNOPSIS

health, education and other services reach the most vulnerable children.

Every child is born with great potential to lead a happy, productive and fulfilling life. The theory of change (ToC) that enables 100 per cent of disadvantaged children of relevant age in a targeted high-poverty community to reach their potential requires demonstration that effective early childhood supports can be understood, promoted and applied by local people living in high-poverty settings. Social and education equality prejudices – at the heart of the problem – can be overcome when communities come together to ensure that every child reaches their potential.

Community Managed Early Learning Programs Curriculum Guide explains the characteristics of effective school readiness programs and practical steps for setting up and managing ELPs in vulnerable communities for children in the year or two before entering primary school. Suggestions are also provided for selecting, training and supervising caregivers and monitoring program quality.

The four most essential components of curriculum – (1) goals and standards, (2) teacher interactions, (3) activities and (4) materials – that help children learn and grow will be discussed in detail. By using this guide, project managers, trainers and supervisors will be able to:

• Understand the skills and aptitudes children need to acquire by eight years.

• Be able to set up a quality ELP that provides a safe, enjoyable, and stimulating place to learn and grow.

• Establish goals for the program – identify knowledge, skills, attitudes and values children will gain from the program in key developmental domains:

 – Physical health, safety and protection: physical fitness, good hygiene, adequate nutrition, rest and play, and avoiding unsafe situations.

 – Social and emotional development: making friends, solving disagreements, developing self-respect, self-control, confidence, cooperation, and the ability to deal with feelings.

 – Communication skills and early literacy: understanding and using language to express ideas, interest in books and stories, beginning to write and read.

 – Cognition and general knowledge: beginning to understand how things work and why things happen, concepts and vocabulary to describe many aspects of everyday life experiences, the natural world, science and maths concepts, understanding past, present and future, and having a sense of place and relationships.

 – Approaches to learning: interest in things, curiosity to find out, initiative to try things, trying different ways to solve a problem, creativity, persistence in solving problems.

 – Spiritual, moral and cultural development: demonstrating spiritual values, showing respectful interactions important to the culture, being honest and responsible, showing love and respect.

• Ensure core values of disability inclusion, child protection and gender equality.

• Train and support early childhood caregivers to provide warm, caring relationships with children, and skilled interactions that enable children to fully develop cognitive, social and emotional skills for school success.

• Plan a daily schedule and activities that support development in all domains.

• Produce a low-cost, high-quality set of learning materials to support the curriculum and engage children in hands-on exploration.

• Monitor progress, evaluate effectiveness and produce program improvements through a cycle of learning, reflection and action.

SECTION B
INTRODUCTION

Right: Children participate in early learning activities in Cambodia which help promote all areas of development.

HOW THE EARLY LEARNING CURRICULUM GUIDE WAS DEVELOPED

In 2008, Plan International Australia launched support for the development of comprehensive early childhood community models in Uganda and Indonesia. The aim was to identify the type and quality of early childhood supports that enable children living in high-poverty communities to succeed in primary school. Plan International Australia was also interested in finding a strategic approach that builds sustainable community leadership and action to improve child wellbeing in the home and community.

Early childhood specialist, Deborah Llewellyn, was contracted to provide technical help to the Plan International Australia Early Childhood Team, Katie Ramsay and Nicole Rodger for the development of these models. Llewellyn provided extensive field support in Uganda and Indonesia for developing the conceptual framework, implementation methodology, and evaluation strategies, documenting the model development process, and revising approaches and tools based on lessons learned from the field. This contracted relationship enabled Llewellyn to refine, expand, and field test a number of early childhood curricula, tools and training programs she had previously developed and implemented for Save the Children US and Plan International in more

than a dozen countries in Africa and South Asia over a 10-year period. It also enabled the development of a systematic approach for linking parenting education, early childhood centres, transition programs and formal/non-formal partnerships in a holistic model.

The toolkit is a consolidation of the methodologies developed and lessons learned from practical field experiences and best practices research. Plan International Australia and the Plan International Uganda and Indonesia field teams knew what they wanted to achieve and had ideas about how the program components should unfold as part of a holistic model. But the most important learning occurred on the ground, and is ongoing. It is hoped that these efforts will inspire others to join a community of learners working to bring changes in communities that support children's optimal development in the critical early childhood years.

Llewellyn's initial ideas for the early learning curriculum were derived from working as a technical advisor with Plan International and Save the Children early childhood programs in Bangladesh (from 2000 to 2005). These programs demonstrated

that quality programs could be achieved for vulnerable and excluded children living in the most difficult circumstances. Moreover, children who participated in these programs enrolled in primary school, stayed in school longer and performed better than those without the quality early learning experiences. As technical advisor, Llewellyn: documented the methodologies; spearheaded contracts for longitudinal impact studies; improved literacy and maths curricula and materials; developed classroom monitoring instruments; and strengthened the teacher development strategies. In 2007, Save the Children International/ US contracted her to develop a *Fieldworker's Notebook on Early Childhood Development*. The purpose was to document these best practices and create an at-a-glance guide to spread these good ideas to field teams who want to start their own ECCD programs. Some *Fieldworker's Notebook* contents, other materials and training programs developed by the author are referenced and credited in this curriculum guide. Funding from Plan International Australia enabled further field testing and refinements on all previously developed materials, as well as the new learning tools and strategies that are contained in this guide.

INTRODUCTION TO THE EARLY LEARNING CURRICULUM GUIDE

The purpose of establishing early childhood supports in local communities is to ensure that children living in poverty develop their physical, social, emotional and cognitive potential to fully succeed in school and in life, thus breaking the cycle of poverty. A holistic early childhood model generally includes initiatives to develop leadership and advocacy for children, low-cost, high-impact learning programs for children, and strong connections between the community and primary school.

An important component of the early childhood strategy is to nurture a solidarity group of families in the community with knowledge, skills and commitment to model effective care and stimulation for their own children, and promote improvements in the broader community. These families play a key role in managing quality ECCD centres that complement and support the family to promote learning, while reinforcing the social and citizenship values that are important to the community. Achieving these ends requires a parenting education approach that is goal and skill focused. It must be able to produce changes in parenting practices that are required for children to develop and learn effectively, while also motivating community-led

action for child development, learning and protection. Through discussion groups, parents learn how to conduct conversations and everyday activities that increase children's enthusiasm for learning, language development, thinking skills and sense of self. These capacities have a great influence on children's ability to succeed in school.

Quality ELPs complement the family's efforts to promote school readiness. All children should have access to quality ELPs in the year or two before entering primary school. Providing for some and not all children in a cohort might create greater inequities in

Grade 1 achievement than previously existed. This guide offers goals and practical strategies for developing low-cost community-managed ELPs that should be available to all children living in poverty. This includes all children with disabilities whose needs can be accommodated.

School readiness implies more than academic skills, such as literacy and numeracy. Quality programs include several other key dimensions that promote confidence, health, friendships, and interest in learning that carries children far beyond Grade 1. Quality ELPs attend all areas

Children in the Plan-supported CLAC project in Uganda have their own slates on which to practice writing, so as to develop early numeracy and literacy skills.

of development (physical, social, emotional, language, cognitive, and approaches to learning) and emphasise learning through hands-on exploration and quality interactions with teachers, peers and materials. Each area of development contributes to and is dependent upon other areas of development. This guide promotes a holistic child development focus characterised by active, engaging, experiential, cognitive, and democratic experiences that provide a strong basis for school and life success.

Over recent years communities have developed ELPs with NGO support. In these programs, one might find children ranging in age from two years to six or seven years. While the children are poor, they often do not represent the poorest and most marginalised segments of the community. It could be argued that the most vulnerable and marginalised children should be the primary targets. The CLAC model recommends shifting to a new approach, where 100 per cent of five-year-old children attend a well-designed and well-equipped ELP to promote social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. Those who have benefited from the old system, where all their children aged

Children at an ECCD centre in Indonesia engage in play-based learning.

THIS GUIDE PROMOTES A HOLISTIC CHILD DEVELOPMENT FOCUS CHARACTERISED BY ACTIVE, ENGAGING, EXPERIENTIAL, COGNITIVE, AND DEMOCRATIC EXPERIENCES

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two to six years are accommodated, will resist the new approach.

In countries around the world, the formal education sector is recognising the importance of ELPs. They are being incorporated into primary schools, as funds are available. Even so, there is a need for community-based and managed ELPs for several reasons:

• Community programs build parents' confidence about their role in contributing to children's education.

• Young children often cannot walk the long distance to primary school due to fatigue and safety risks.

• When primary schools host an ELP, those who live nearby are more likely to attend than those living remotely. This creates an

even greater challenge for children without school readiness to keep up once they enter the primary school and might widen the divide between more privileged and vulnerable children.

• The ELP caregiver's salary for community programs is low. This enables more funds for hands-on learning materials so critical to early learning.

• Teachers require specialised training for ELPs through to Grade 2. Primary teachers without early childhood skills and training are often assigned to teach the kindergarten to Grade 2 classes in the formal primary school.

NGOs such as Plan International have a great deal of experience in early childhood education. Through the ELP, they can work hand in hand with government to get children in school on time and establish a research base for effective kindergarten to Grade 2 strategies for vulnerable children. Part of the success will lie in the implementation of a successful transition to primary school program. This includes specific community- and school-based activities to aid children's transition from the community to the school and create a more welcoming climate for them at the school. The

ELP facilitators prepare children for school success, and then advocate for them in the first years of primary.

This curriculum guide is divided into sections:

Section A: About the manual
This section provides a synopsis of the curriculum, how the approach was developed, and an introduction to community-based and managed ELPs.

Section B: Introduction
Brief background into the development of this guide.

Section C: Designing an ELP
This section highlights important things to think about in designing an ELP. Why is an action needed? What do we hope to achieve and why? What does this mean for the way we think about the program and our work? All the basics are here with at-a-glance indicators for program staff and community leaders to plan the program. This includes

practical concerns such as selecting and training caregivers, selecting the location, establishing the facility, monitoring and evaluation, and planning for sustainability. While many of these topics are discussed in greater depth at other locations, this is the section to refer to for basic and important ideas to keep in mind from the onset of the planning phase.

Section D: Curriculum principles and goals
This section suggests three curriculum goals: learning for life success; learning for school success; and learning that is developmentally appropriate. This section explains how children learn and the implications for teaching. These goals provide the foundation for the program. This section is a good place to learn about child development.

Section E: Activities and learning materials
This section describes the activities and materials required to bring the

changes in children we want to see. It provides in-depth discussion about activities and learning materials that enable children to achieve the curriculum goals and school readiness indicators (see Appendix 6). It suggests a daily routine that gives children a variety of play and learning experiences. Detailed directions for implementing the activities and producing low-cost learning materials kits are provided. This section is a stand-alone resource guide for training caregivers on what to do in the classroom. The easy-to-manage activities provide para-professional teachers with a blueprint for successful teaching.

Section F: Monitoring and evaluation
This section explains how project managers/project coordinators and field staff can make sure they are doing what they planned, and that they are getting the results they want. It describes the importance of monitoring and evaluation, as well

as tools and strategies that can be incorporated into the day-to-day work of the staff. It also provides information about conducting longitudinal impact research.

Section G: Professional development for caregivers
This section explains the aims and strategies for ensuring that caregivers are skilled to conduct the program. It includes modules for five-day foundation training and examples for designing ongoing professional development. Caregivers should meet once a month to review the experiences of the previous month, and to prepare to implement new learning activities in the coming month.

Section H: Appendices
Reprints of indicator charts and other helpful information can be found in this section.

SECTION C
DESIGNING AN ELP

ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY-MANAGED ELP

This section provides an overview of quality ELPs that support children's overall development and school readiness potential. It provides important background information that field staff and early childhood caregivers will need to implement the program.

There is vast research that confirms the importance of the early years for learning and life success. The critical influences during this period are the family and community. Even in more supportive home environments children benefit from structured early learning experiences outside the home in the year or two before entering primary school. ELPs can complement and support the family to promote development and learning, while also influencing future school success, citizenship and adult competence. High-quality programs improve child outcomes and enable the child to have positive and enjoyable experiences in which to learn and develop.

Program components

Quality ELPs are judged by two components: program structure and learning environment. This section provides suggestions on how to organise and structure a program and establish the learning environment. Section D provides more in-depth information for establishing learning goals and developing a curriculum. Section E explains the interactions, activities and materials that support a quality ELP.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Objectives and strategies clearly stated and 'owned'.
- Measurable outcomes (evidence based) for program and operational levels.
- Management system provides materials and support for outcomes.
- Physical meeting place is safe and welcoming.
- If covered physical structure is used, provide 1.5 metres per child.
- Adequate light and ventilation.
- Safe outdoor play area.
- Access to toilet; use of soap and water.
- Small group size, 25–30 maximum.
- Curriculum supports all child development domains: social, emotional, motor, cognitive, approaches to learning, and cultural values.
- Ample supply of stimulating materials for children to use independently.
- Qualified community teachers: meet selection criteria; trained; apply training.
- Frequent supervision of teachers: mentoring and feedback tied to classroom practice.
- Ongoing teacher development.
- Community involvement.

Program structure:

- Physical facility
- Curriculum
- Learning materials
- Group size
- Caregiver skills and training
- Supervision

Learning environment:

- Social and emotional atmosphere
- Activities (how curriculum is implemented and how materials are used)
- Interactions (teacher to child; teacher to parents; and child to child)
- Classroom management (positive discipline; effective use of time – follows daily routine)

PROGRAM PLANNING CHECKLIST

Action	Details	Status (1-2-3-4)[1]
1. Select communities.	Identify targeted communities based on high prevalence of poverty and low primary school success.	
2. Select ECCD facilitators and provide foundation training in early childhood development and education.	Identify staff from the area who can be trained as early childhood field workers. One frontline worker can easily support five communities, spending one day a week in a community. The frontline workers do not have to be from the selected community but from a nearby area to ensure shared cultural values and ease in transport.	
3. ECCD facilitators help in conducting situational analysis.	ECCD entry activities in a community include conducting a situational analysis and establishing a parenting group. The situational analysis begins a conversation with community members to hear their views about child wellbeing status and priority needs. The situational analysis is designed to raise awareness about the importance of the early childhood years on later school and life success, and to invigorate interest among 25 to 30 families to join a parenting discussion group focused on improving children's outcomes.	
4. Parenting group is formed.	The parenting group receives support to enhance knowledge and skills to improve early childhood outcomes, building on existing strengths. The parenting approach promotes ECCD community leadership. Parenting group members work as a team to address community issues that put children at risk, and influence neighbours to improve childcare. Be sure to identify and include all parents who care for children with disabilities, as well as parents with disabilities.	
5. Parenting group provides advice for setting up ELP and helps to identify children to target.	The community parenting group is a good venue to launch a discussion about the benefits of a community managed ELP. Some members of the parenting group might help in conducting a census to identify all children who are five years old and any other children who were kept out of school.	
6. Parents of eligible children meet, discuss benefits of ELP, and form management committee.	Once the parents of all eligible children are identified, call a meeting with them to discuss the value of an ELP. Four very important outcomes include: agreement by parents that the program will serve every eligible child so that no child is left behind; agreement to limit enrolment to children in the year before primary so that all children in the Grade 1 cohort can be served; understanding that the group must be small (25–30 children) to provide adequate contact with caregiver and learning materials; the caregiver must be trained and supervised to provide good interactions, activities and learning materials; and several parents of eligible children agree to form a management committee to help with organising the program.	
7. Establish ELP goals.	ELP management committee community leaders identify program and operational goals; core values of child protection, disability inclusion and gender equality should be included.	
8. Clarify roles.	Clarify roles of community (ownership/management) and facilitating organisation (technical help).	

[1] Review the planning chart frequently with others and discuss the status of the activities.

Action	Details	Status (1-2-3-4)
9. Establish calendar and hours of operation.	Consider five days per week, 9am to 12pm. There are several reasons for this: it is difficult for a caregiver to maintain the required energy level for longer periods; the fact that it is a semi-volunteer position indicates that caregivers have their own livelihood issues; shorter hours reduces the need for food at school; and children need adequate balance between home and school influences.	
10. Select caregiver(s).	Community agrees on early learning caregiver selection criteria and begins search. Parenting group members are potential candidates. Project coordinator or other staff from sponsoring organisation interviews candidates, along with community representatives, and selects caregiver that best meets criteria.	
11. Select adolescent volunteer assistant caregiver.	Together the selected caregiver and community select an adolescent volunteer to act as assistant caregiver. Be aware of child protection issues. Is this activity preventing the teen from advancing their education? Are teen volunteers supervised in their interactions with young children? Do they work in the presence of a responsible adult? Are they never left alone with young children?	
12. Develop curriculum and learning materials kit.	Sponsoring organisation develops educational curriculum and play/learning materials. In some cases a community might have the resources to provide an ELP for all children aged four and five years. If this is the case, consider providing the same curriculum for both groups, providing activities that can be enjoyed by children with a range of different abilities. This will be easier in training para-professional teachers and strengthen their capacity to work as a team, supporting and learning from each other.	
13. Provide foundation training for caregivers.	Sponsor organisation conducts foundation training for cluster of teachers; program should last a minimum of five days and a maximum of 10 days.	
14. Select ELP centre location and prepare site or building to meet criteria.	Community selects location for learning centre, based on criteria. A building is not required for a quality learning program. If a building or covered space is provided then size must provide 1.5 metres of space per child, with good lighting and ventilation. If no building is available, provide large plastic tarp to demarcate the space.	
15. ELP operations committee formed.	Community forms operations committee to manage the centre and ensure its sustainability (ensure attendance; quality of facility; community relations; meet monthly to discuss progress). Committee members are the parents of participating children. A few other community members might be on the committee but parents should hold the major decision-making positions.	

Action	Details	Status (1-2-3-4)
16. Enrol all children of relevant age who are not participating in an ELP.	Community selects children based on established criteria. (Group size is important: no more than 25–30 children; every child in their relevant age group; special attention to ensure enrolment of all girls; special outreach to HIV and AIDS orphans and children with disabilities who can benefit from the program.) Priority should be given to 100 per cent disadvantaged children in year before Grade 1. If children enrol in primary school at age six, consider opening the ECCD centre for five-year-old children in year 1. In year 2, aim for four- and five-year-old children. Three-year-old children can be served through informal neighbourhood playgroups managed by parents from the parenting groups.	
17. Deliver learning materials kit. Caregiver involves parents to prepare supplementary learning materials.	Sponsoring organisation delivers basic set of learning materials organised into bags for easy transport to the learning centre. Storage trunks can be placed in nearby homes. Caregiver involves community in collecting additional materials and making toys and games.	
18. ECCD facilitator collects sample of child/family profiles/case studies.	These are analysed in relation to the child wellbeing indicators selected for the program (see Appendix 3). This is one baseline for the ELP.	
19. Develop monitoring and evaluation plan to track outcomes and impact.	Monitoring and evaluation ensures that programs are improved and refined to achieve the goals of 100 per cent disadvantaged children of relevant age completing an ELP, enrolling in Grade 1 at the right age, and continuing through subsequent grades. Baseline school readiness tests might be administered to the research sample. Individual school readiness assessments might also be conducted on a sample of children at the beginning and end of the program. Someone who is trained to assess child development and learning should conduct this. Child development and learning indicators are provided in this guide (see the appendices). These form the basis for the curriculum. The readiness assessment should capture major indicators found on the chart.	
20. Prepare classroom quality observation checklists.	Another way to determine whether the ELP will result in good learning outcomes and future school success is to measure the quality of the environment that predicts school success, rather than assessing individual children which is more difficult and often less valid. The early childhood environment rating scale (ECERS) has been used in many countries for this purpose.	
21. Celebrate opening of ELP.	Community holds opening day celebration to raise awareness about the program within the community. Operations begin.	
22. Supervision visits.	The ECCD facilitator visits the centre weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly depending on the scale of operations. They complete classroom-monitoring forms and discuss these with the caregiver at the end of the sessions. Findings from field supervision feed into the ongoing teacher development program.	

Action	Details	Status (1-2-3-4)
23. Caregiver facilitates ELP parenting group bi-monthly.	Parents of enrolled children participate in monthly or bi-monthly parenting meetings with the caregiver and the ECCD facilitator. Topics might include: what children will learn and do at school; how parents can support learning at home; what will happen when child transfers to primary school, etc.	
24. Caregivers attend one day of training monthly.	They attend in a cluster with other nearby early learning caregivers. At this meeting they reflect on practice, prepare to conduct next month's literacy and maths activities, focus on one other area of child development or learning, and produce a make and take educational toy for the classroom.	
25. Prepare for transition to primary school.	Children begin the transition process three-quarters through the year. They visit the primary school classroom. The primary teacher visits, observes the ELP and answers children's questions about what to expect.	
26. Transition activities implemented.	Caregivers and primary teachers plan welcoming and orientation day, and other activities such as assigning a Big Buddy– Little Buddy system. Big Buddy–Little Buddy programs pair older children (ie Grade 5 or 6) with younger Grade 1 and 2 children to help look after the young child and assist with homework.	
27. ELP children enrol in Grade 1 with tracking system in place to monitor persistence in primary.	All ELP children are enrolled in primary school and tracked at the beginning, mid-way and end of the year, through to the completion of primary school.	

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

ECCD project coordinator

The project coordinator is an administrator and a learning leader. Principle administrative roles include: 1) Select quality staff and monitor performance; 2) Monitor quality of project and progress toward goals through supporting data and regular field visits; 3) Develop practical management tools that are used and reviewed (eg scope of work, implementation plans, monitoring plans, quarter and annual reports, budgets).

Principle roles as a learning leader include: 1) Maintain professional expertise in field of ECCD through reading, conferences, and other sources; 2) Train field management staff to implement the curriculum and monitoring roles; 3) Conduct review and reflection meetings leading to individual and project improvements; 4) Inspire and mentor staff to attain high levels of professionalism.

Monitoring and evaluation specialist and area managers

Area managers have the principle role in direct supervision and training of all field staff on a regular basis, as well as the collection and analysis of data under the direction of the monitoring and evaluation

specialist. Area managers should be well informed about the curriculum content of the ECCD program, and be able to demonstrate expertise. They use monitoring and evaluation to monitor progress of a project, and to clarify where additional training and mentoring is needed.

ECCD facilitators

Train, supervise and mentor community volunteers in parenting, ELPs, and transition programs. Might work in five communities per week for three weeks per month. One week each month is required for training and documentation. ECCD facilitators and other project staff partner with government education officers, primary school personnel, and NGO sector specialists in health, nutrition, child protection, water and sanitation, gender, and school improvement to implement and manage the program.

Early childhood community volunteers

These include early childhood committees, parenting facilitators, early childhood caregivers, and transition to primary activities coordinator. These volunteers reside in the community. Some are paid a stipend to conduct specific work.

In Laos, children participate in a range of activities that support holistic child development during their early years.

Operations support (sponsoring organisation)

Administrative assistant, finance assistant, learning materials specialist, volunteer interns and drivers.

Program support

- NGO Country Director
- Monitoring and evaluation advisor
- External technical consultants

PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS

Parents are an integral part of ELPs. Parents, after all, are the first and most important teachers. The quality of care and stimulation they provide in the home affects how well children will benefit from schooling. When children are at risk it is important to teach parents how to stimulate language and cognitive development in the home. Ideally parenting support services should begin before a child is born. However, the ECCD centre should also hold monthly discussion groups to promote practical skills for improving school readiness. This is especially important for children at risk due to low language or slow thinking skills development. In this way parents and caregivers work in partnership to help children reach their potential. Parents also have a significant contributing role to the development of the ECCD centre curriculum. The stories, crafts, songs, and oral histories they share enrich the learning experience and ensure that the program is culturally grounded.

CHECKLIST FOR PARENTING PARTNERSHIPS

✓ Understand the benefits of quality ELPs and parenting education for school success.

✓ Assist in setting up the ELP.

✓ Visit program regularly to watch activities and see how children are progressing.

✓ Be part of children's learning by teaching traditional games, songs, crafts and stories.

✓ Attend monthly meetings with ECCD caregiver.

✓ Practice new things at home to help children develop, including thinking about problems and solutions, discussing experiences of the day, etc.

✓ Make sure children enrol in Grade 1 at the correct age; talk with the teacher about the child's needs and how they are doing in school.

✓ Participate in evaluation.

✓ Encourage parents of children with disabilities to participate in parent activities, including parenting groups.

✓ Form a support group for parents of children with disabilities.

✓ Ask parents, including those of children with disabilities, how their child learns best. ECCD caregivers should share observations with parents about how each child learns and interacts with others

PARTNERSHIPS WITH PRIMARY SCHOOLS

In countries around the world, the formal education sector is recognising the importance of ELPs. They are being incorporated into primary schools as funds become available. Even so, there is a need for community-based ELPs for several reasons. First, they are useful to build parents' confidence about their role in contributing to children's education. Second, young children cannot walk the long distances to school due to fatigue and safety risks. When primary schools host an ELP, those who live nearby are more likely to attend than those living remotely. Third, the caregiver's salary/honorarium for community ELPs is low; this enables more funds for hands-on learning materials, an essential ingredient for ELP curriculum. Fourth, teachers require specialised training for early childhood education. Primary teachers without early childhood skills and training are often assigned to teach the ELP classes.

NGOs have a lot of experience in non-formal education and early childhood development. Therefore the formal education and NGO sectors could work together to establish a research base for effective ELP methodologies. One potential scenario is to establish a network of ELPs, with one on or near the primary school grounds,

Partnerships with primary schools are important for successful ELPs and for supporting children's transition to primary school. For children with disabilities, inclusive classrooms, like this one in India, are vital.

and others in the communities. A Grade 1 cohort of 150 children would require five feeder ELPs. Having one ELP on school grounds enables the teachers to become familiar with interactive learning methodologies that might also be usefully applied to the Grade 1 and 2 classes. It enables the ECCD centres to learn from the primary school teachers, and to create a collaborative approach to children's education.

SELECTING CAREGIVERS AND VOLUNTEER ASSISTANTS

Selecting a caregiver and volunteer assistant (most likely an adolescent) from the community to be ECCD caregivers has many advantages:

- Selecting candidates for the caregiver position is the first step in community ownership.

- Parents know and trust this person to share their values and respect their culture.

- Parents are unlikely to entrust small children to strangers.

- Caregivers, over time, become child development experts and this knowledge is kept within the community.

- Caregivers become a beacon for the rights and proper care of children.

- Caregivers decrease costs and increase sustainability. Community caregivers see their role, foremost, as a community service. A stipend of US$10 to US$20 has proven a satisfactory honorarium.

- Caregivers are better able to: invigorate parent involvement in ELP management; help with the construction of learning toys; and volunteer their time. In addition, they help to ensure a sustainable force of knowledgeable child development advocates in the community.

- Adolescents are untapped resources that make excellent assistant teachers. Adolescents are more likely to play on the child's level, they bring energy to the classroom, and they might have greater literacy skills than parents in the community.

- The wise and mature adult and the energetic teen make a great team for quality childcare.

ECCD caregivers in Timor-Leste are helping children to develop good health and hygiene practices, including handwashing.

SUGGESTED CAREGIVER SELECTION CRITERIA:

- Age range 17–40 years.

- Knack for working with children (child-friendly).

- Completed two years of secondary school (Grade 7 and 8) education.

- Trusted by the community.

- Energetic and shows initiative.

- Speaks freely, conversant.

- Agrees to commit four hours per day and attend one day of training every month.

- Agrees to accept position as semi-volunteer (small stipend).

ESTABLISHING A LOCATION AND FACILITY

It is more important to put resources into teacher training and learning materials than a physical structure. Reduced facility costs enable a greater number of children to be served in developmentally appropriate group sizes. Building costs should not present an obstacle to communities. It is possible to conduct a high-quality program even when no physical facility is available. In fact it might be useful to begin a program without a building. It will help the community learn that teacher interactions, activities and materials are the most important aspects of the program.

As an alternative to building, encourage the early learning committee to select a home with an open room or large covered veranda. Some communities get permission for the ECCD centre to use a meeting space that is unused during the morning hours. Some build simple open-air huts with thatched roofs or a raised cement area with open sides and a low overhanging roof as protection from rain. These structures might be used in afternoons for primary children and for community meetings on weekends. All materials are stored in bags and boxes in a nearby home. Alternatively, a small storage room for materials can be constructed

Communities in Indonesia are using posyandu (community health centres) as a venue for their early learning programs.

BUILDING COSTS SHOULD NOT PRESENT AN OBSTACLE TO COMMUNITIES. IT IS POSSIBLE TO CONDUCT A HIGH-QUALITY PROGRAM EVEN WHEN NO PHYSICAL FACILITY IS AVAILABLE.

ESTABLISHING A LOCATION AND FACILITY

adjacent to the open-air structure. Consider the following criteria:

- Close to homes of children who enrol; ask parents of children with disabilities about location and/or how to improve the centre to make it more accessible for their child.

- Adequate space to accommodate 25–30 children (approximately 1.5 metres per child).

- Good ventilation and lighting.

- Toilet and safe water available.

- Dry floor and mats.

- Safe outdoor area (away from dangerous ponds, markets, etc).

- Simple, low-cost adaptations for children with disabilities will help everyone in the community to access the centre: ramps, handrails, floor and path surfaces and doorways. Don't forget access for people with disabilities to toilets and hand-washing areas.

- Owner of facility must be a child-friendly person.

- If community owned, create multi-use space and arrange nearby home to maintain learning materials

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Clean, attractive environment.

- Learning posters and children's work displayed.

- Seating areas dry and off dirt or cement.

- Safe and caring atmosphere.

- Positive and consistent discipline.

- Frequent warm and responsive interactions.

- Daily routine posted and followed.

- Good time management; no long wait periods.

- Girls and boys called on equally by teacher, given equal leadership roles, and equal access to all toys and materials.

- Activities support all areas of development and encourage reasoning.

- 'Corners' organised for independent play with stimulating materials in adequate supply to sustain an activity.

- Opportunities to be in a large group, small group or alone.

- Opportunities for children to initiate as well as listen.

- Activities that are culturally appropriate, including use of mother tongue.

- Adaptations made for children with disabilities.

- Children escorted to and from the ELP by parents or teachers.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

A positive learning environment meets children's developmental needs. It makes them feel safe and comfortable. It provides them with challenging and interesting learning experiences. Children are alike in many ways but also have learning differences. These differences and preferred ways of learning are more easily accommodated if a variety of activities are available, and if children have the opportunity to learn alone, and in small or large groups. Children learn from self-directed play, interactions with peers, and from teacher-directed guided learning experiences. Children need a mixture of direction and freedom. The daily routine provides a predictable use of time that helps children feel safe and secure, and allows them to develop independence and self-reliance.

The learning environment reflects knowledge about child development and activities that help children develop, and should have an adequate supply of stimulating learning materials. ECCD caregivers and volunteers are learning, along with children. A daily routine, a good set of learning materials, and some established practices help new caregivers cater for children's needs and manage the classroom in a professional way. These tools reduce anxiety for community

Activities, interactions and materials in Plan's CLAC project in Uganda are all designed to support children to achieve development milestones and school readiness.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT REFLECTS KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVITIES THAT HELP CHILDREN DEVELOP, AND SHOULD HAVE AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF STIMULATING LEARNING MATERIALS.
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volunteers who begin teaching with only a few days of preparation. Greater understanding will unfold as teachers gain more knowledge and learn to reflect on practice.

Section E describes the activities and materials needed to support child development and learning and a suggested inventory of materials is provided.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE CAREGIVERS AND FACILITATORS

The caregiver is the most essential ingredient of an effective early childhood program. Selecting a parent from the community as an ECCD caregiver has many advantages, particularly that parents know and trust this person to share their values and respect their culture. ECCD facilitators become child development experts and this knowledge is kept and shared within the community. Caregivers see their role, foremost, as a community service. This decreases costs and increases sustainability. Adolescents are an untapped resource in communities. Adolescents are more likely to 'play' on the child's level, bring energy into the classroom, and they might have more advanced literacy skills than older adults. With effective training the wise and mature adult and the energetic adolescent make a great teaching team.

Effective caregivers and facilitators know how to provide caring interactions and teaching techniques that get children to think, solve problems, and learn from play. If caregivers know how to stimulate early literacy and mathematics reasoning, and also understand how children develop and learn, they are better prepared to implement challenging and child-friendly programs.

Caregivers who have specific preparation in early childhood development and education are more likely to engage in warm, positive interactions with children, offer richer language experiences, and create environments that result in learning.

The aim of the ECCD program is to ensure that disadvantaged children attain skills and aptitudes for learning in the early years that will increase primary school success and adult competence. The teacher development and supervision system builds a cadre of professionals who have the knowledge, skills and dedication to accomplish this goal.

CAREGIVER INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Non-instructional talk (conversation) is now known to be one of the most important ways that adults help children develop intelligence and thinking skills.

- Listen to children and encourage them to talk.

- Respond to what they say.

- Increase conversation with children.

- Use free playtime for teacher and child interaction.

- Ask questions that require thinking.

- Be patient; give time for a response (five seconds plus).

- Use follow-up questions, "Tell me more?"

- Encourage children to ask questions.

- Use warm, positive body language.

- Smile!

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CAREGIVERS

(See Section G for caregiver training tools.)

A specialised training program is required to ensure that volunteer caregivers are not just highly committed but also highly capable to guide children's learning. Thus professional development is the cornerstone of a quality ELP. To plan a training program, first identify the core knowledge and competencies needed to help children become successful learners in today's world. Make sure that teacher development provides caregivers with the knowledge and skills to achieve these goals. Teachers need five to 10 days of foundation training and monthly follow-on training (extended learning opportunities – ELOs). Early childhood caregivers should attend a five-day residential training every year to share experiences, learn new things and consolidate knowledge and professional practice. A professional development program should be ongoing.

Caregivers benefit from monthly meetings with other caregivers where they can build knowledge and skills, prepare and practice for the coming month, and reflect on practice. Professional development is enhanced when the trainer and supervisor are the same person. Professional development is tightly linked to the work in the classroom.

In Indonesia, Plan is training ECCD centre caregivers to make learning materials from low cost and locally available resources, to be used in the daily routine.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS THE CORNERSTONE OF A QUALITY ELP

A. Foundation training
(Five to 10 days/area-wide/ conducted by project coordinator and area managers)

Things to consider

- Education is connected to experience. Tap into caregivers' life experiences and connect these to the topic under discussion. (For example, *From your schooling, what did you notice about very strict teachers who beat children? Do children learn more in these classes? Why or why not?*)

- Knowledge is connected to practice. Caregivers must have a chance to learn something. Try it out among peers and children, and reflect on classroom practice and teacher growth. For example, caregivers learn how to increase child's vocabulary and thinking skills during story time. They plan

to tell a story to their peers using this method. Caregivers' peers participate and then offer advice. Working in groups of four to five, caregivers go out as a team. One tells a story to children in the vicinity using the methods. The others observe. Together they reflect on what they learned and how to improve enjoyment and outcomes for children.

Foundation training suggested topics:

1. Get acquainted. Clarify ECCD objectives and the teacher's important role. Explain and demonstrate the characteristics of effective teachers who achieve child outcomes. Describe training program, support, and ELOs.

2. Learn about ECCD program structure. How to organise a school management committee and plan operations; how to enrol children (group size 25-30); identify volunteer caregiver; minimal criteria for physical space to be donated by community; hours of operation, etc.

3. Learning environment – learn about: setting up a space for learning; daily routine and variety of activities; establishing a safe/caring atmosphere; teacher-child interactions.

4. Social and emotional development – goals, activities, materials, interactions and indicators; and guided practice to interact with children and using positive classroom management.

5. Physical development – goals, activities, materials, interactions and indicators; and guided practice in outdoor play and games.

6. Literacy development – goals, activities, materials, interactions and indicators; and guided practice conducting literacy lessons.

7. Mathematics development – goals, activities, interaction, materials and indicators; and guided practice conducting maths lessons.

8. Child-directed corner play – importance, activities, materials, interactions, indicators; and guided practice conducting corner play.

9. Development of thinking skills and approaches to learning; teacher facilitation skills that improve cognitive development; guided practice.

10. Review ELP day through simulation. Simulation is so important. These should be interspersed throughout the training program. For example, on day two in the morning, give trainees the opportunity to be a child with the trainer simulating a three-hour session, following the curriculum. On day four, provide a second simulation; the caregiver trainees will now be more familiar with the materials and the program and will realise how much they have learned. On the final day the caregivers should take the role as teacher, each being in charge of some aspect of the daily routine and others participating as children.

11. Use the curriculum guide to set up the program. Caregivers should become familiar with the guide, how to use it and expectations for the first week or two.

• Training is an incentive. An effective teacher development program can act as an additional incentive for volunteer caregivers who work for only a small honorarium. Caregivers enjoy the professional camaraderie of meeting with other caregivers from surrounding communities, learning together and sharing their experiences.

B. Ongoing professional development – ELOs

(Offered monthly; clusters of five to 10 early childhood teachers; facilitated by the ECCD facilitator.)

Things to consider

Training is provided on a continuum to expand and deepen knowledge over time. Each month teachers will have the opportunity to meet with other teachers in a one-day professional study group for ELOs. In the ELO, they will reflect on experiences over the past month, expand knowledge, and gain new skills to foster children's growth across a broad range of developmental and content areas. Each month they will make and take practical materials and new ideas to enrich learning in the coming month. The monthly ELO helps them to step outside their day-to-day work and recognise the importance of their role in the lives of children and to the advancement of the community.

CAREGIVER SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT STRUCTURE

The ECCD facilitators conduct the monthly training for caregivers. They visit the programs almost weekly and provide feedback and mentoring at the same time. The ECCD facilitators meet quarterly with area managers and the project coordinator. They share observations from the field and receive training to conduct the upcoming monthly teacher training programs. Through a rotating schedule, the area managers and project coordinators visit all program sites.

- About five new community ELPs might form a cluster under one field supervisor during the initial year.

- ECCD facilitators should live in the area. This builds child development expertise in the community, as well as sustainability.

- Caregivers and ECCD facilitators strive for a common set of outcome indicators and these are recorded on checklists for reference for teachers, parents and supervisors.

- The ECCD facilitator's task is one of consultation about what is observed in relation to these standards.

- The ECCD facilitator visits the program three weeks in each month for the first year of operation. During this community visit, the

In the Philippines, Plan staff provide supervision and support to children and their caregivers in ECCD centres.

ECCD facilitator will observe the classroom for an entire morning and meet with the school management committee. During this visit the ECCD facilitator might help the early childhood caregiver to facilitate a parenting class for the parents of children. The ECCD facilitator has other early childhood duties when they come to the community. They also provide support for transition to primary activities and conduct the community parenting group.

- The ECCD facilitator also spends five days per month compiling data, making and gathering learning materials, and preparing to facilitate the monthly refresher training.

- The ECCD facilitator is an important facilitator for sharing good ideas from one school to the next, and recognising problems and issues to be discussed at the monthly teacher training.

- The quality of the ECCD facilitator's support will be evaluated by caregiver feedback and by the quality of ELPs under supervision.

- The ECCD facilitator position is paid, full-time.

Example 1:
ECCD facilitator scope of work

In this schedule, the ECCD facilitator works in five communities and spends three days in each community every month.

Week/day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	ELP 1	ELP 2	ELP 3	ELP 4	ELP 5
2	ELP 2	ELP 3	ELP 4	ELP 5	ELP 1
3	ELP 3	ELP 4	ELP 5	ELP 1	ELP 2
4	Documentation; training; preparation of materials; quarterly meetings, etc.				

Example 2:
ECCD facilitator scope of work

In this schedule, the ECCD facilitator is responsible for five communities, but works in each community two times per month. Three days are set aside to work in communities that require extra help. Fridays are spent logging observation visit data on the computer. The caregiver monthly meeting might be held on one Friday each month, or if the caregiver training is held on Saturday, the ECCD facilitator might be allowed a day off on that Friday.

Week/day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	ELP 1	ELP 2	ELP 3	ELP 4	Office
2	ELP 5	ELP 1	ELP 2	ELP 3	Office
3	ELP 4	To be decided (TBD)	TBD	TBD	Office
4	Documentation; training; preparation of materials; quarterly meetings, etc.				

SUPERVISION FOR SCALE-UP

It will take at least one year for an ELP to be fully functional with effective activities, materials and interactions to meet the goals. In the second year, the ECCD facilitator might take on five new programs. They would continue to visit the centres set up in Year 1 once a month, while visiting the new centres every other week. Monitoring and evaluation will indicate whether it is possible to scale up at this pace with bi-weekly supervision for new programs.

Consider engaging early childhood community leaders from Area 1 to also provide additional support to communities in Area 2. One of the goals of the program is to develop early childhood leadership in the communities for sustainability and expansion throughout the area. This strategy requires that the community leader accompany the ECCD facilitator for classroom visits in the first year of operation to learn what to look for when observing a classroom. Another way to provide additional supervision to both old and new communities is to partner with district education officers, health sector workers, or child rights and child protection sector specialists. They would also need a year of mentoring to take on this role.

A young girl in Ethiopia is developing her literacy skills through an early learning program.

ELP supervision Year 2 (illustrative)

• Area 1 (A1) monitoring five Year 1 centres, visit once per month.

• Area 2 (A2) start-up five new centres, visit twice per month.

Week/day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	A2 ELP1	A2 ELP 2	A2 ELP 3	A2 ELP 4	A2 ELP 5
2	A1 ELP 1	A1 ELP 2	A1 ELP 4	A1 ELP 4	A1 ELP
3	A2 ELP 2	A2 ELP3	A2 ELP 4	A2 ELP 5	A2 ELP 1
4	Documentation; training; preparation of materials; quarterly meetings, etc.				

MONITORING AND EVALUATION: AT-A-GLANCE

(See Section F for more information about monitoring and evaluation, as well as monitoring and evaluation tools.)

The ELP program will need a systematic method for documenting progress and engaging all stakeholders in the task of continuous improvement. There are formal and informal methods for doing this. This section will help you learn some of the evaluation terminology and steps for getting started. While outcome assessment might involve an external consultant, everyone on the team is responsible for conducting regular evaluations of the various components and to see how they did or did not achieve the objectives. This practice will generate knowledge, strengthen professionalism, and enhance outcomes.

A preschool teacher in China helps children to learn about nature.

1. A project vision could be: "Vulnerable children have improved wellbeing that enables them to achieve development and learning potential." Some organisations refer to this as the 'goal'.

2. A situational analysis is conducted in a targeted population to gather information on needs, resources, conditions and barriers related to this vision. A development hypothesis is formed. It says, "Here is where we want to go. These are the problems that exist as barriers. We believe that if we do certain things, we can overcome the problems and achieve the goal."

3. Select a major objective that can be measured and provides evidence that you are moving toward this vision. Ask yourself, *What is the change we want to see?*

4. Identify three or four changes (sub-objectives) required to achieve the goal or major objective. Each objective might have several activities with evidence-based outcomes to guide planning and assessing. Key results and strategies form the results framework.

5. The most important thing to pay attention to is the major objective. Establish a baseline against which progress will be measured throughout the life of the project.

6. Baseline studies will focus on a few indicators closely associated with the sub-objectives, sometimes referred to as the intermediate results.

7. A research study to measure ELP impact can be designed. An example has been implemented in Bangladesh[2] where ELP impact is measured in primary school. ELP readiness tests are not required to measure impact and might be

[2] Aboud, F., et al, (2008), 'Evaluating an improved quality preschool program in rural Bangladesh', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 3 (2), pp 118–131

less useful than measuring primary achievement. At the first year of the ELP, an assessment of the performance of a representative sample of Grade 1 children in participating or 'feeder' primary schools is assessed. This will establish the goal level indicator against which ELP participants will be measured once they reach Grade 1. Since programs of even low quality produce higher performers in Grade 1 due to the 'halo effect', it is valuable to also establish baseline performance for second and third graders. Again, each year, the performance of the children is measured against the baseline that was established in the year when the program began. This is a more reliable and dependable approach than comparing children in the same class who did and did not participate in an ELP. This can be explained for several reasons: ELP graduates by their presence alone can change the pedagogy and atmosphere of the classroom; eventually all children in a class might have attended an ELP; and transition programs in primary school might influence improved teacher practice that affects overall performance of children who did not attend an ELP. The same Grade 1, 2 or 3 child assessment will be repeated each year with a sample of ELP graduates. If the program is extended, reassess baseline after a few years.

8. Baselines for other indicators might include: ELP quality associated with school achievement; primary school profiles; parenting practices; and ELP and primary teacher practices.

9. Monitoring focuses on measuring indicators as the input, activities, and output levels and is routinely carried out by all project participants at regular intervals throughout the life of the project. Data is quantitative and qualitative. Parents and community members should be involved in monitoring. The program assumption is that community leadership is essential for change in children. Engaging partners to monitor and evaluate the project is an advocacy strategy.

10. Case studies of children, teachers and families over time are part of the monitoring system. The purpose is to think about complicated problems, such as how to influence parents or teachers to change practice, or to understand the experiences and perceptions of the child. Gender and disability inclusion issues provide valuable case study material. Observe differences in teacher interactions with girls and boys, and differences in the classroom experiences of girls and boys. Also identify: children with disabilities; decision-making processes and adaptations to include children with disabilities; their experiences in the classroom; and changes over time.

11. Special studies that focus on issues that arise in the implementation can be conducted by the staff or by external consultants. A special study might examine efforts to improve child health and nutrition or child protection through the ELP.

12. Formative evaluations are conducted internally as part of the annual project review. The staff assembles and analyses baseline and follow-up studies, and monitors reports, case studies and special studies. An evaluation aims to measure outcomes and impact, and is usually external. Summative evaluations summarise the status of the project at a given point in time.

SUSTAINABILITY AND ADVOCACY

The ELP can be thought of as a preliminary model that will be tested over three years in partnership with families, village leaders, and government ministries at district and national levels. The sponsoring organisation will join with the community to ask and answer a fundamental question: "What is the potential within disadvantaged communities to take charge of their children's development in a way that brings transformational improvements?" To answer this complex question, the ELP model approach aims to build ECCD expertise within the organisation and then strategically engage partners and the community to monitor and refine the model, scaling up best practices at community, district and national levels in the subsequent years. Change is often thought about in a top-down way: what government or organisations can do for people. The ELP model strategy explores how people at the grassroots can also reshape institutions. Families need to become more active citizens on behalf of their children and themselves. Sometimes systems are set up in ways that exclude or marginalise some families and their children. In such settings ELPs should also be designed to help change the systems. Therefore it is important to take an 'ecological view' and create programs that strengthen all the systems that must eventually support and sustain families.[3]

Advocacy is essential to making this happen, and how to do this is one of the challenges of model development. The ELP model strategy must set its sights beyond local activities towards fashioning an approach that can potentially change the lives of every vulnerable child in the country. Sharing ECCD approaches among NGO partners provides the opportunity for growth for everyone. Input from others and their experiences can be incorporated to improve the model. Other NGOs that adopt the model create the opportunity for scale-up at no additional cost to the sponsoring organisation(s).

Engaging those in power to really care about the struggles and potential of children and families in poverty is both a challenge and an opportunity. New partnerships with government will be forged. The constructive dialogue, appreciative inquiry, and the promotion of positive deviants ready to lead by example in the neighbourhood must somehow be replicated at district, provincial and national levels with government officials, external donors and NGO partners. Early childhood advocacy should lead to greater government commitment to community-based and managed ELPs that reach more vulnerable children than the formal system. The major assumption of the CLAC model is that change can come from families and the community. Involving them in the monitoring and reflection process further empowers them with the tools to refine, implement and promote the program.

[3] Llewellyn, D., (2008), *Fieldworker's Notebook on Parenting Education*, Save the Children Federation, US

CURRICULUM PRINCIPLES AND GOALS

Right: An early learning program in Bangladesh provides children with a range of materials and activities to support child development. Puzzles and games help children develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

UNDERSTANDING CHILD DEVELOPMENT

This section explains five curriculum principles and goals:

- Learning for life success.

- Learning for school success.

- Learning that is developmentally appropriate.

- Learning that promotes equality: gender equality, disability inclusion, and ethnic and cultural equality and harmony.

- Learning that ensures child protection.

Section D explains how children learn and the implications for teaching. These principles, goals and teaching approaches provide the foundation for the ELP. This section is a good place to learn about child development and to think about how particular principles and practices enable every child to realise their potential.

The early years of a child's life set the stage for adult competence. Therefore, it is important that we take every step necessary to ensure that children grow up in environments where their social, emotional and educational needs are met. ECCD caregivers and parents should understand: the developmental changes that typically occur in the ELP and early primary

Blocks and building toys are important for corner play as part of the block and construction corner. Such materials, enjoyed by these children in India, help children develop a range of skills, including fine motor skills and problem solving.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT DOMAINS

- Physical development – growth and motor control

- Social and emotional development

- Language development and communications skills

- Cognitive development – knowledge and thinking

- Spiritual and cultural values

- Approaches to learning

years; variations in development that might occur; and how to best support children's learning and development during these years.

Children develop in six areas referred to as 'domains' (see text box on page 39). Spiritual and cultural values might be considered part of social and emotional development, rather than a separate domain. Approaches to learning, such as developing interest, initiative, curiosity, creativity and persistence can be considered part of cognitive development. In that case, an ELP will address four domains of development and learning – physical, social and emotional, language and cognitive development.

Principles of child development[4]

1. **The domains of development are closely related so that development in one domain influences and is influenced by development in other domains.** Example: *A child who is stunted might have difficulty keeping up with the activity level of other children, which affects social development. Stunting is known to reduce intelligence.*

2. **Development occurs in an orderly sequence. Later abilities, skills and knowledge build on those skills already acquired.** Example: *Before children can learn to read words they must develop the skills to hear that some words start or end with the same sound. They must be able to speak well and have a good vocabulary before they can read well.*

3. **Development proceeds at different rates from child to child and also unevenly within the individual child.** Example: *This is easy to notice in one-year-olds. One child might put all of their developmental energy into learning to walk and climb, but have few words. The other child might concentrate on talking, imitating all the adults around them and not think at all about walking. They are both developing important skills but at different rates and also unevenly within the same child. In the classroom, this explains why group instruction might not reach all children with the same outcomes.*

4. **Early experiences, both positive and negative, have lasting effects.** Example: *A child's social experiences in an ELP helps them develop the social skills and confidence that enables them to make friends*

In Vietnam, children from the H'mong ethnic group have benefited from participating in playing and reading activities as part of the ECCD program.

in primary school, and these experiences further enhance social competence. A child in an ELP who is neglected or rejected by peers is at risk of dropping out from primary school, becoming socially delinquent, or developing mental health issues as an adult.

5. **Optimal periods exist for certain types of development and learning.** Example: *When children do not have early literacy experiences, such as being read to regularly, their* *later success in learning to read is affected. Children are able to identify rhyming words at about age four or five, and they become aware of syntax (the grammatical way sentences are organised). Ages four and five are important years for pre-literacy.*

6. **Learning during early childhood proceeds from knowing through our physical senses to knowing through symbols.** Example: *A child learns that they pass a pond and three houses, then they*

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[4] National Association for the Education of Young Children, (2009), *Developmentally Appropriate Practice*, Position Statement, Washington, DC

turn down a path on the left, go through some trees and come to the school. If a teacher draws a map with symbols to represent the houses, trees and pond, the child will understand that the map is a symbol for what they did with their body. After that a map can be used to guide physical action. Children learn from action first, symbol next. "I recognise my face, then I recognise a drawing of my face, then I recognise a written word with my name as a symbol of myself."

7. **Development and learning are influenced by social and cultural contexts.** Example: *Children are capable of learning to function in more than one cultural context at the same time. Teachers need to recognise how their own culture influences their expectations for children. If teachers set low expectations for children based on their home culture and language, children cannot develop and learn to the fullest. A child who is lame might be excluded from play in the community. The teacher should work hard to create a different experience at school where the child is included in play.*

8. **Children are active learners who construct their own understanding of the world from first-hand experiences with objects and through social experiences.** Example: *Children contribute to their own development and learning as they reflect on and learn from daily experiences and try to make sense of things. Each experience builds new knowledge. When providing direct instruction, it is important to connect new information with the actual knowledge the child has at that point.*

9. **Development and learning are influenced by both heredity and environment.** Example: *The child's inherited temperament might be either cautious or outgoing. But this can change over time by how other adults and children communicate with that child.*

10. **Play is an important means by which children can develop in all areas and it is also a predictor of how well a child is developing.** Example: *Since children are active learners, play becomes a good way to teach. By observing a child's play, adults can learn about the child and find opportunities to support development. Play provides a context for children to practice skills, to try new social skills, attempt challenging and new tasks, and solve complex problems. Children also express their ideas, thoughts and feelings when engaged in symbolic play. They can learn to deal with emotions, interact with others, resolve conflicts, and gain a sense of competence. They also develop their imaginations and creativity. Therefore child-initiated, teacher-supported play is an essential component of an effective child development program.*

11. **Children need opportunities to practice skills and then experience challenge beyond what they have mastered.** Example: *Children are highly motivated to understand what they almost, but not quite, comprehend and to master what they can almost, but not quite, do. They enjoy trying something over and over again until they can do it. However, if they are confronted by repeated failure, the child will no longer try. If they are offered no new challenges they become bored and do not practice further. So, most of the time, they should be given tasks that, with some effort, they can accomplish. This 'scaffolding' allows the child to take the next step.*

12. **Children demonstrate different ways of knowing and learning and different ways of representing.** Example: *One child might like to memorise and recite a poem before a group, another will like to illustrate it, and a third might appreciate the poem best if they can make a dance to the words.*

13. **Children develop and learn best in the context of a community where they feel safe and valued.** Example: *The health, safety and nutrition needs of children have to be met before they can learn. Children need to be exposed to consistent, stable adults who are emotionally invested in them, to a physical environment that is safe and predictable, and to competent children with whom they can develop caring friendships.*

CURRICULUM GOAL 1 – LEARNING FOR LIFE SUCCESS

How can ELPs help children overcome the hardships of poverty and prepare them for the challenges they will face in the future as adults? How can schooling help them to become effective citizens and workers? What types of experiences might enable them to contribute to a more just, humane and secure community for their family? To help children prepare for the future, we must offer opportunities to help them develop skills that build resilience, citizenship and work productivity.

Resilient children

We can study the characteristics of resilient children. They are children who grow up in very difficult circumstances but become highly successful adults despite the odds. Resilience is described as the ability to 'bounce back'.

Characteristics:

- **Presence of a significant adult:** providing unconditional acceptance and encouraging sense of purpose and hope for the future.

- **Social competence:** sense of humour, good communication skills, empathy and caring for others.

Quality early learning programs help children develop problem-solving skills, autonomy and inventive thinking. In the Indonesia CLAC project, children have access to a variety of materials to support learning through play.

TO HELP CHILDREN PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE, WE MUST OFFER OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP THEM DEVELOP SKILLS THAT BUILD RESILIENCE, CITIZENSHIP AND WORK PRODUCTIVITY.
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- **Problem-solving skills:** thinking abstractly and creatively, trying alternative solutions for a problem, reflective, asks questions.

- **Autonomy:** independence, self-control, feeling of competence, strong self-concept, desire to accomplish tasks on one's own.

Work force skills

When employers are asked to identify priority work skills for the future, here are some that they cite:

- **Literacy:** ability to derive meaning from symbols used in culture – spoken or written language, music, art, maths, technology.

- **Inventive thinking:** curiosity, creativity, thinks about ideas and explores what one can do with ideas.

- **Judgment:** (decision making and problem solving) dealing with problems that have more than one answer, being able to give reasons for the choices that we make.

- **Effective communication:** teamwork, collaboration, interactive communication skills; personal and social responsibility.

- **High productivity:** ability to prioritise, plan and achieve results.

Values and character development

We can look to the community for models of respected citizens and community leaders and identify the values that make them successful. Research has shown that people with high intelligence quotients (IQs) and education are not always successful. Emotional intelligence

and moral reasoning matter a great deal in how well people do in life.

- Values are basic convictions about what is right and wrong.

- Values generally influence attitudes and behaviour.

- Values differ between regions and cultures.

- Genetics and early childhood experience influence values.

- Terminal values are the end state we hope to achieve. Examples include a comfortable life, a strong family, inner peace and true friendships.

- Instrumental values are how we get there. Examples include self-aware, kind, ambitious, cheerful, clean, polite, hard working, persistent, etc.

- If we know an individual's values, we are better able to predict behaviour.

- Morality and values must be shown to people of equal and lower status than oneself, not just to higher status people.

- Respect not only for elders, but also peers is important

ELP application

Early childhood is a critical time to develop skills and attitudes for life success. Think about how these characteristics are nurtured not only in the child's home, but also in the classroom. Think about what types of adult-child interactions and learning experiences will help children become 'life smart' not just 'book smart', and become responsible and caring adults. The early childhood years are an important time to establish cultural and spiritual values, good work ethics and resilience.

CURRICULUM GOAL 2 –
LEARNING FOR
SCHOOL SUCCESS

Success in school begins before a child enters Grade 1. Studies show that at least half the educational achievement gaps between school achievers and non-achievers already exist at preschool entry. Children from low-income families are likely to start school with limited language skills, health problems, and social and emotional problems that interfere with learning. The larger the gap when children begin school, the harder it is to close. If we want children to be successful and persist in primary school, we must make sure we are using the early childhood education opportunity to give them the skills to succeed.

Based upon a wealth of research, we have identified key areas that seem to make a difference in how well children perform in primary school.[5] Indicators checklists for children and teachers are from the *Fieldworker's Notebook on Early Childhood Development* (Llewellyn 2008).

Communities in Uganda have been involved in making outdoor play equipment from local and low cost materials as part of the Plan-supported CLAC project.

[5] Packard Foundation, Kauffman Foundation and Ford Foundation, (2005), *Getting Ready, Findings from the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative*, Rhode Island, US

A. Physical wellbeing and motor development:

Health status, growth, gross and fine motor skills, and attention to disabilities and learning differences are pre-requisites to learning. An important role of the ELP is to help children develop healthy bodies. This is accomplished through outdoor play and exercise to develop gross motor skills, indoor games and activities to develop finger muscles (fine motor skills), and through basic health and hygiene activities.

Physical development: classroom indicators at-a-glance

What children do	What teachers do
Develops gross motor skills • Demonstrates basic loco-motor skills such as running, jumping, hopping, and skipping. • Shows balance while moving. • Uses body movements to express feelings. • Shows coordination with swings, ropes, climbing or moving toys. • Demonstrates throwing, kicking and catching. **Develops fine motor skills** • Controls small muscles in hands: pours, cuts, traces, twists, inserts, ties, zips and pounds. • Coordinates hand-eye movement. • Uses tools for writing and drawing. **Develops healthy body** • Washes hands after toilet and before eating. • Eats three nutritious meals a day. • Drinks safe water. • Is fully immunised. • Takes Vitamin A supplement. • Identifies community health worker in case of accident.	**Gross motor – outdoor play** • Makes sure that there is a clear space with no sharp rocks or debris. • Creates an outside boundary with sticks or string, or by using landmarks that children can clearly see. This is important because some areas might have ponds, roads or other hazards. • Has fun. When children sense that caregivers are enjoying the game, they will have more fun. • Teaches children that it is okay to win (but not all the time) and it is okay to lose (but not all the time). **Fine motor** • Provides many small and interesting objects to pick up, fit together, and stack. Strings to tie and lace, and small containers to fill. • Lets children do things for themselves. **Healthy body** • Provides clean drinking water and hand-washing facilities. • Provides health, nutrition and hygiene lessons for parents, including malaria control. • Links to health providers for distribution of Vitamin A, de-worming tablets and iron.

B. Social and emotional development:

Provides a foundation for cognitive development because children are more likely to do well in school when they have a positive sense of wellbeing, emotional support and secure relationships that build confidence to function well in a group. Key social skills are respecting others, respecting self, not being too shy or too aggressive, and a willingness to give support and confidence to communicate wants and needs.

Social and emotional development: classroom indicators at-a-glance

What children do	What teachers do
Develops sense of self • Likes self and feels valued. • Adjusts easily to new situations. • Recognises own feelings and manages them appropriately. • Demonstrates appropriate trust in adults. • Is confident to express need. **Shows responsibility for self and others** • Follows through on simple tasks to take care of self. • Helps others. • Takes responsibility for own wellbeing without being told to do so. • Follows routines and rules. • Respects and cares for home, classroom and personal items. **Develops positive social behaviour** • Sociable, plays well with other children, has at least one friend. • Shows empathy for peers and stands up for what is fair. • Is able to control own behaviour and impulses. • Can tell right from wrong.	• Greets each child by name. • Models respect for children and teaches them ways to respect each other – speaking kindly, eye contact, apologies, and helpfulness. • Makes the class a 'community' where children feel safe and appreciated. • Makes sure that all children have at least one friend. • Uses positive discipline to promote development of self-control. • Is fair, helps children verbalise feelings. • Redirects inappropriate behaviour to constructive activities. • Involves children in discussing problems in the class, giving opinions and coming up with an agreement on what they will do. • When a rule isn't working, asks children what they think the problem is and how to solve it. • Teaches children to appreciate differences. • Provides time for 'free play' so that children can develop relations with each other. • Monitors and supports children to solve conflicts with words, not by hitting.

C. Language and literacy development:

Language proficiency is a key predictor of school success. Children's emergent literacy skills at preschool predict their reading abilities throughout their educational career. Elements of emergent literacy include: oral language skills and vocabulary, alphabet decoding (letters represent the sounds in spoken words), print awareness (words are made by an intentional arrangement of letters and that together words create sentences and stories, print directionality), and shared reading experiences (storybook and conversation about the book). Experience with written and oral language equips children with the tools to express their thoughts, feelings and experiences to interact with others.

Language and literacy development: classroom indicators at-a-glance

What children do	What teachers do
• Talks with others about personal experiences and views. • Describes objects, events and relations. • Expresses feelings in words. • Enjoys books and discusses them. • Actively listens to others (telling back what someone says to develop understanding). • Notices differences in sounds. • Learns new vocabulary. • Uses and makes labels for objects in the classroom. • Draws to represent ideas and develop motor skills to write. • Dictates something to an adult writer and can then read what was dictated. • Recognises the alphabet and the sounds of the letters. • Writes name and the alphabet. • Recognises some words by sight. • Has fun with language.	• Talks to children in a conversational way (not teacher talk) about life experiences and things in the environment. • Uses mother tongue – it is how children make sense of the world and develop intelligence. To read they have to be able to speak well in their mother tongue. • Shows interest in what children say and responds to what they say. • Has fun with words through rhymes and songs. • Becomes a good storyteller. • Carries out three daily literacy activities – story reading and discussion, alphabet and word study, and journal or news sharing. • Gradually introduces national language.

D. Thinking skills and approaches to learning:

Children's everyday experiences can help them acquire new knowledge and information if they are encouraged to recognise differences and similarities, ask questions and solve problems. Cognitive development encompasses language and literacy, mathematical knowledge, science and the arts, music and other means for gaining knowledge, such as creative expression and problem solving. Success in school also depends on the child's approach to learning. Learning is enhanced by curiosity, creativity, independence, cooperativeness and persistence.

Thinking skills and approaches to learning: classroom indicators at-a-glance

What children do	What teachers do
• Have choices; make decisions. • Observes things with curiosity. • Asks questions, *What? Why? How?* • Persists in solving a problem and explains reasoning when solving it. • Applies something known to new situation. • Takes on pretend roles and makes believe with objects. • Discusses ideas and participates in making decisions with friends. • Compares, sorts and matches objects by size, shape, colour, number and amount. • Arranges objects by categories and in sequence. • Understands location and position words. • Solves puzzles – pictorial and geometric. • Counts objects accurately to 10 or 20; can rote count higher numbers to 50 or 100.	• Reduces rote learning. • Offers choices to children. • Encourages children to figure out something alone. • Talks about logical relationships while children play with materials that stimulate reasoning. • Encourages creativity and imagination. • Discusses things with children and makes decisions as a group. • Asks questions to promote thinking. • Waits with patience for children to answer questions. • Provides daily maths problem-solving activities using concrete objects.

CURRICULUM GOAL 3 – LEARNING THAT IS DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE

Would you expect to teach a three-year-old, eight-year-old, or 10-year-old in the same way? No, because we all know that they are quite different in their needs, interests and abilities. Some teachers try to teach younger children with a 'watered down' curriculum for older children but this frustrates the child and the teacher. This does not give children the head start we had hoped for, and it can destroy children's enthusiasm for learning. Instead of trying to prepare a child for the rote-learning environment of primary school, provide them with good and positive experiences that are just right for their needs and interests. There is an old saying, *Give a child what they need at one level, and they will always be ready for the next.*

We have now learned a better way to educate young children. A phrase used to describe programs that are right for the child's development is 'developmentally appropriate practice'. Developmentally appropriate practice takes into account those aspects of teaching and learning that change with the age and experience of the learner. Developmentally appropriate practice has three important elements: individual appropriateness; age appropriateness; and meaningful to the child.

Individual appropriateness

Think about this:

- All children are at a different stage of development.

- They have different learning styles, personalities and family backgrounds.

- Learning is an interaction between the child's thoughts and previous experiences with materials, ideas and people.

- This is why group teaching is minimised in the early childhood setting.

Age appropriateness

Think about this:

- It reflects what we know about how children develop and learn.

- Growth and change is predictable and follows a sequence.

- Growth occurs in four major domains: physical and motor; social and emotional; language; and cognitive. Two other areas require attention. These are approaches to learning and spiritual and cultural development. Activities should be based on the level of development in each area.

- It does not mean making things easier than children are capable of, activities must be challenging enough to promote progress and interest.

Meaningful to the child

Meaningful learning includes:

- Hands-on experiences with concrete materials (active learning).

- Real-life experiences (authentic learning).

- Interaction with peers, adults and the environment because the child's work and interest is in constructing their own understanding about the world (constructivism).

- All domains of development are used in an activity. For example, block building is meaningful because it has social, intellectual, physical and emotional dimensions (holistic learning).

- Child's involvement in learning activities is due to own interest and excitement (intrinsic motivation).

- Active, experiential, interactive, democratic, and cognitive experiences.

CURRICULUM GOAL 4 – LEARNING THAT PROMOTES EQUALITY

In order for several Millennium Development Goals to be met, the cycle of negative stereotypes against girls and women, people with disabilities and those disadvantaged by poverty and ethnicity must be broken early in life. ECCD programs are key in closing the discrimination gap. CLAC approaches early childhood programming as a poverty alleviation tool and an instrument for building education and social equality. If every child in a high-poverty community participates in a high-quality, pro-equality ELP supported by parenting education and community action for children, then both girls, boys, children with disabilities and children from ethnic minorities and ultra-poor families will be prepared for success in school and the road out of poverty.

All children should have access to quality ELPs in the year or two before entering primary school. In countries with a strong son preference, parents are likely to send sons rather than daughters to pre-primary institutions. This disadvantages girls in primary school. In response, parents might withdraw girls rather than boys from school. The cycle of discrimination continues as the young girls marry and become mothers. In some cultures parents have different sociological goals and childrearing practices for

Revathi, age 23, contracted polio when she was 18 months old. She received assistance for rehabilitation and was able to attend school thanks to support from her parents and teachers. Now she is a fully qualified teacher herself and can act as a role model for inclusive practice.

girls and boys. For example, girls must 'learn to serve others' and 'stay at home and play'. In contrast, expectations that boys should be a bit naughty and encouraged to play in the broader community shape expectations and outcomes for boys. Similarly, children with disabilities or those from ethnic minorities or ultra-poor families are provided with fewer opportunities and are treated in ways that limit the development of their potential.

To overcome these barriers, CLAC recognised the need to make these equality principles explicit during the program planning, implementation

and evaluation discussions with community families, leaders and partners. While individuals might say they believe in equality, changes in practice will be required to achieve it. Examples include:

- Enrol every five-year-old, without exception (include every four-year-old if resources allow).
- Ensure ongoing participation of every child in the year or two before primary school, without exception.
- Situate the ECCD centre so that every child can attend.
- Provide safe passage to school for those living more remotely.
- Identify all five-year-old children with disabilities by name and make accommodations that enable them to learn and play with other children.
- Ensure that caregivers are trained to provide equal learning opportunities and the same quality of interactions to girls and boys, as well as those from ethnic minorities or ultra-poor families.
- Select caregivers who can speak to children in their mother tongue.
- Make sure there is a system of support in place that helps families in need to develop social and

knowledge capital to participate equally with other parents and access resources that will improve their child's wellbeing (kitchen gardens, prenatal and perinatal care, breastfeeding, community health visits, livelihood skills development, literacy programs, hygiene and sanitation, etc).

- Ensure that a 'community watch' program is in place to step in for abused or neglected children.
- Ensure there are links between the ELP and other sectors to achieve a high level of child wellbeing.
- Create a well-functioning approach to ensure ongoing support to children as they transition into primary school, so that every child can stay in school and learn through to completion.

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY[6]

When a child is born, families immediately start conditioning girls and boys to take on the different roles and behaviours that reflect local norms and values. These social norms can influence whether girls and boys get equal access to early education and how caregivers interact with them when they attend. That

is why promoting gender equality is so important in the ELP.

Some might argue that discrepancies between girl and boy enrolments are low in ECCD centres. In the early years of the CLAC program we found this to be true, but the numbers were masking actual gender discrepancies. Community members said that every child was attending, but in fact this was not the case. For example, girls who were attending lived close to the school rather than remotely. Some girls attending were primary school age. Their parents sent them to an ELP rather than a primary school because it was free. Some ultra-poor girls living near the centres were not attending because they looked after younger siblings while parents worked in the fields. These extremely poor children were initially 'invisible' to the field staff and even the centre management committee. UNESCO (2009) provided other examples of how national figures can confuse notions of gender parity. For example, the birth of female children is sometimes not officially registered. Enrolment data is collected at the beginning of the year and does not reflect regular attendance. National statistics or even local data might not show those excluded due to poverty,

ethnic minority status, or because they are a child with a disability.

While CLAC promoted the enrolment of every child we found that most children attending were from higher status families and lived closer to school. We decided to take another approach. During the pre-planning stages, a census was taken to identify the names, gender and location of every four-and five-year-old child in the targeted community. The community then discussed these children and agreed to convince all parents to let their children participate. This became a condition for start-up funding from the sponsoring organisation. The parenting groups got involved, as well as the parents of children in the centre, to address any problems that affected regular attendance of any child enrolled in the program. They began to care about problems and issues that had not concerned them before. This helped build social inclusion and community action for children, which are core values of the program.

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[6] The majority of recommendations in this section come from UNESCO, (2009), *Gender in Education Network in Asia-Pacific (GENIA) Toolkit: Promoting Gender Equality in Education*, UNESCO Bangkok.
Also see Wendy, R., Llewellyn, D., and Anderson, S., (2003), *Toolkit for Assessing and Promoting Equity in the Classroom: Equity in the Classroom Project*, Creative Associates, Washington, DC.

Here are some other ideas for promoting gender equality in the ECCD centre:

Gender training and gender audits

Early childhood caregivers should be trained to recognise gender bias in the community and actively keep it out of the classroom. Equal treatment sends the message that each child is worthy and valued regardless of their gender. A gender-sensitive caregiver treats girls and boys with the same respect and supports each child to express their ideas and to participate fully. The educator develops skills to be sure that they are not treating girls and boys differently. For example, a supervisor/mentor or trusted friend can note:

• How many questions they ask girls compared to boys.

• How much wait time they provide for girls and boys to answer.

• How much time they give individual feedback or attention to girls compared with boys.

• Whether the tone of their feedback is equally supportive.

• Whether girls and boys equally share classroom tasks and leadership roles.

The majority of early childhood educators are women who can be inspiring role models for girls. However, the lack of male educators denies boys positive male role models. A mix of male and female educators is recommended, taking into consideration the community's level of confidence that those selected will protect their children from physical or emotional harm.

Curriculum and activities

The teaching and learning process should be as participatory and child-centred as possible, remembering that all children learn best through doing and playing. Here are some things to keep in mind to enhance gender equality:

• Children often opt for the things they do best; it is up to the caregiver to ensure that both genders join in all activities and improve all their skills.

• Gender roles shape how children spend their time; girls and boys have some different experiences and ideas. Make sure that materials in each of the free play corners enable them to express these ideas and experiences while building others. For example, adding figures to the block centre might increase girl participation, and adding costume props, boy dolls, puppets, etc, might increase boy interest in the house play centre. When girls and boys role play the opposite gender they are learning to understand the opposite gender.

• When children express gender bias in words or actions, the caregiver builds comfort for them to talk about these feelings.

• Girls and boys should be invited to make choices about activities, books and games within a framework of balanced learning. Having choices, carrying out a plan and taking responsibility empowers children to have diverse roles in society.

• No toys or games should be reserved for one gender. Encourage children to try new things.

• Audit books and materials. Select books that model positive gender roles and avoid those that perpetuate stereotypes. Make sure that art on the wall includes work by each girl and boy or that it reflects the ratio of girls to boys. Learner art is rotated so everyone's talent is featured. Make sure that toys promote gender, ethnic and cultural equality and harmony.

Early learning facility

The location of the centre and the arrangements of space can affect equal participation of boys and girls.

• Select a location that is safe and comfortable for mothers and sisters to bring the child to school.

• Parents should feel that children are safe while at school.

• Arrangements should be made to escort children to school as a group with the responsibility rotated among parents.

• Both girls and boys thrive where there is colourful, age-appropriate art, adequate light, outdoor play space, and age-appropriate materials.

• Provision of safe drinking water and easy-to-use toilets respect the needs of girls and boys.

• Child protection must be ensured.

Parent and community support

When community participation is encouraged in an organised way, children can take pride in both mothers and fathers as role models and see a variety of options for their future. Here are some ideas:

- In the parenting program, work with parents to help them understand and stop discrimination. Encourage parents to visit the centre and see what girls and boys can do in an equitable classroom.

- Parents are more likely to enrol children in an ELP when they realise that ELP education affects Grade 1 performance. Find ways to help parents understand why they should also prioritise ELP education for girls.

- Educate mothers. Educated mothers are more able to support education for their daughters; parenting education can also contribute. Mothers develop skills that improve confidence to express ideas and negotiate any differences with their spouse about childcare and education.

- Engage fathers in early childhood education. If fathers are more aware of how much their daughters learn and benefit from an ELP, they are more likely to send them to an ELP.

- Ensure that the sponsoring organisation equally values input from mothers and fathers.

- On a regular basis, schedule mothers and fathers to teach children life skills or anything they know how to do. They can tell a traditional story, teach a traditional song or dance, and show children how to make a rope or a fish trap, or plant or harvest a crop. Children have the opportunity to introduce their mother or father. All children are encouraged to ask the parent some questions about the life skill and to thank the parents for teaching them. Both girls and boys should have the opportunity to try out these skills.

Measurement

Longitudinal research studies underway in Bangladesh, India and Nepal show that children who participate in quality programs are ready for primary school, have better cognitive development, and better attendance than those who do not attend. These studies highlight the importance of measuring and improving quality as a means to promote gender equality. Here are some recommendations:

- Maintain gender-disaggregated records on both enrolment and attendance over time.

- Monitor classroom quality on a regular basis and provide feedback to the caregiver at the end of the session.

- Include gender analysis in classroom monitoring and discuss findings during teacher training workshops. Encourage caregivers to develop ideas on how to improve gender equality, and to highlight success stories.

PROMOTING DISABILITY INCLUSION

Disability inclusion in community-managed ELPs is essential to ensure that all children are enabled to participate, learn and contribute according to their growing capacities to reach their fullest potential. Children with disabilities are often excluded from vital early learning activities that help their transition into school. Children with disabilities might be hidden away by their families due to the stigma and discrimination they experience in the community. The attitudes of the teacher and other children can contribute to children with disabilities being excluded from ELPs and later education. Women and girls with disabilities are more vulnerable as they have the 'double disadvantage' of discrimination based on gender and disability.

Disability, along with child protection and gender, are core issues to be integrated into community managed ELPs to ensure that every child has the opportunity to learn in a safe and welcoming environment. Catering to the needs of the most marginalised and excluded children enables creative, flexible and inclusive learning environments that will benefit all children. Disability inclusive ECCD centres can also positively contribute to changing attitudes and beliefs in the value and capacity of children with disabilities among caregivers, families, other children, the community and children with disabilities themselves.

Definition of disability

"Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers might hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006). The implications for this definition are that disability is not about impairment, it is the way the impairment impacts on a person's interactions and participation in society at any level.

The terminology most accepted is 'people with disabilities' or 'children with disabilities', rather than 'disabled people'. This is

thought to put the person rather than the disability first. Avoid using terms such as 'handicapped, crippled, mentally retarded', which have negative connotations.

Principles of disability inclusion:

Inclusion: Inclusive ELPs enable all children to learn and participate. It is creating a learning environment that is child-centred, flexible, and enables children to develop their unique capabilities in a way that fits their own style of learning.[7]

Implications for practice:

- Find and reach out to children with disabilities and their families in the community.

In Laos, Plan is helping children from ethnic minority groups to access pre-primary school.

- Adapt activities and learning materials to include all children. Provide training for caregivers on inclusion of children with disabilities through improving teaching methodologies and use of materials.

- Include children with disabilities in age-appropriate peer groups and activities.

- Caregivers can role model inclusion to other children and parents in the way they communicate and interact with any child with a disability.

Participation: *Nothing about us without us* is a slogan that many people with disabilities and people with disabilities organisations use. People with disabilities participate in processes and are represented in community decision making related to ECCD centres. This participation could be parents with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities.

Implications for practice:

- Include parents with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities in community consultations, meetings and discussions.

- Build partnerships between people with disabilities and the centre. Look for collaboration with the disability community, including disabled peoples organisations (where they exist).

- People with disabilities can become role models in the centre. Invite them to talk to the children.

Accessibility: Work towards creating welcoming and barrier-free environments for children with disabilities to access ECCD centres. Barriers to access can be physical, attitudinal, economic or institutional.

Implications for practice:

- Identify the barriers that might exist for children with disabilities to access the ELP, remembering that barriers are not just about the physical building, but include attitudes, poverty and policies.

- Raise awareness and train ECCD caregivers in disability and inclusion.

- Make simple low-cost adaptations to any buildings or structures. Also consider how children with disabilities will travel to the centre and provide support for transport, where necessary.

- Review the way that information is communicated – written, verbal, visual. Try to use more than one method of communication.

- Involve parents in activities happening in the classroom. Their help might enable you to accommodate children with disabilities that require extra support and attention. The parent will also learn good skills for interacting with children and appreciating their child's ability and right to play with their peers.

PROMOTING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The problems that confront indigenous children around the world in acquiring literacy have been identified over and over again. In every country, education systems are failing to meet the needs of these children, despite the allocation of

[7] Dutch Coalition on Disability and Development, (2006), *All Equal, All Different – Inclusive Education: A DCDD Publication about Education for All*, The Hague

extra resources and modifications to the mainstream curriculum. There is a growing belief that alternative educational strategies need to be implemented to connect with these children in more meaningful ways.

Children learn best in the language of their thoughts and in the language that can be reinforced in the home environment. This primary language is commonly known as the 'mother tongue' language. However, in environments where many languages are spoken, this might mean the language of the broader community.

Mother tongue dialogue and instruction allows teachers and children to interact naturally and negotiate meanings together, creating learning environments that are conducive to optimum cognitive and linguistic development. Mother tongue dialogue promotes learning through communication rather than memorisation.

This has important consequences, including:

- Evidence that mother tongue education plays an important role in keeping children who are from ethnic minorities at school.

- The use of a familiar language to teach early literacy facilitates

an understanding of sound-symbol or meaning-symbol correspondence, and enables children to employ psycholinguistic guessing strategies that are essential skills in learning to read.

- The use of mother tongue instruction means that the learning of new concepts is not postponed until children become competent in the second language.

- The affective domain, which involves confidence, self-esteem and identity, is strengthened by use of the mother tongue, increasing motivation and initiative, as well as creativity.

In response to this evidence, organisations such as UNESCO and AusAID recommend and support work where a child's mother tongue is used as the language of instruction in the early years of school.

In addition, providing early learning experiences in the mother tongue contributes to access by reducing barriers for families to participate in children's learning, and by acknowledging the relevance and importance of culture. It also contributes to quality since conceptual understanding is enhanced and education outcomes are improved. In countries where a foreign language

is the language of instruction, education outcomes tend to be poor. In developing countries teachers often cannot speak the foreign language of instruction well, which increases the problems associated with learning.

Improving and enriching indigenous education and literacy approaches within the ELP environment is an important undertaking. The development of quality learning materials and approaches that integrate tribal knowledge systems and language into early learning is a vital element for improving literacy outcomes. Indigenous language materials and story-centred teaching approaches are ways of providing a meaningful ELP experience for culturally and linguistically diverse children. The broader aim is to make learning relevant to reduce poor attendance and increase community engagement. This can be done through the increased participation and empowerment of parents, extended family members, and elders.

Developing a culturally responsive curriculum begins with engaging with indigenous knowledge systems in a comprehensive way. Indigenous knowledge is stored in culture in various forms, such as traditions, customs, folk stories, legends, myths, folk songs, folk dramas and proverbs.

Integration has potential implications for sustainable development, which preserves indigenous knowledge for the benefit of future generations. The integration of indigenous knowledge into ELP approaches also enables them to act as agencies for transferring the culture of the society from one generation to the next. This assists in the development of intergenerational harmony.

ELPs need to provide foundational learning experiences that enable children to become literate. However, ELPs can be foreign spaces for indigenous children and their families. Curriculum activities and approaches must aim to make indigenous children feel at home in the ELP setting. This can be done by incorporating the language, ideas, concerns and sensibilities of the indigenous communities into the curriculum. There is a need to place the communities and their knowledge at the centre of the educational strategy. Activities should harness the indigenous tribal worldview. It is hoped that this will make the ELP an inviting learning space for the whole community. This holistic community-led approach is what is needed to help children and communities achieve learning outcomes.

CURRICULUM GOAL 5 – ENSURING CHILD PROTECTION

Child protection expert, Stephanie Delaney, says it is easy to be confused with all the technical definitions that are used when talking about child protection issues (such as neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking). "However, basically child protection means keeping children safe from intentional and unintentional harm and ensuring their wellbeing by making sure they are looked after properly."[8]

The early years of a child's life are very important for helping them to develop the skills and capabilities necessary to reach their full potential. It is also a time when children are very vulnerable because they are dependent on adults to look after them. The child wellbeing index (see Appendix 3) provides a list of child protection indicators that are essential for children to grow well and achieve their potential. Plan's child protection policy provides other detailed information for planning a child protection strategy.

According to Stephanie Delaney, "ECCD projects come into contact, and have long relationships, with large numbers of children, and reach many families. This means that projects can contribute to the protection of a lot

Considering safety for children when they travel to and from home is an important responsibility for ECCD projects, including in China.

of children…There are many aspects of child protection that can easily (and cheaply) be included in ECCD projects through the way they are organised and run, and the activities that take place." (2012) For this reason the early childhood resources available through Plan International Australia include the *Enhancing Child Protection Through Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD): Technical Manual and Training Guide for Project Staff* written by Stephanie Delaney (2012). It provides specific suggestions and training modules for ensuring child protection in ECCD, and increases the skills of early childhood workers to prevent and respond to child abuse or neglect in the community.

[8] Plan International has very comprehensive Child Protection Policies and Procedures. For more information visit: http://www.plan.org.au/child_protection_policy

Children should be able to fully participate at home, in the neighbourhood and at school without fear of reprisal or humiliation. Young children are very sensitive to their physical and psychological environment. ECCD caregivers and facilitators must ensure that the ELP environment promotes child protection. When they enter the centre, children should know that they are in a place that is:

- Psychologically safe: they will not be hurt physically or emotionally.

- Physically safe: toys and materials are age appropriate and safe; playground equipment is safe; water and toilets are safe; paths to and from school are free of rubble; the centre is located a safe distance from roads or waterways; adults ensure safe passage to and from school.

- Child-friendly: they are active in many ways, participating in activities they enjoy; learn through play and interactions with safe and interesting materials, other children and their teacher.

- Supportive: adults support, protect and involve children in approaches and activities that help them develop their minds, bodies, social skills and behaviours; children feel they can talk to their caregivers about the problems they experience at home or school.

- Nurturing of each child's self-esteem: social and emotional development is given high priority in the centre (see Section F, which contains a school readiness indicators chart). Children experience pride in learning; they gain communication skills to express ideas and communicate needs; and they feel good about who they are.

- Equitable: girls and boys receive equal attention and respect, and equal opportunity to access materials. Through activities in the classroom, girls and boys learn to value themselves and think of girls and boys as equals. Children with disabilities and children from ultra-poor families or ethnic minorities are treated respectfully by caregivers and other children, and are full and equal participants in the program.

- About self-protection skills: in the classroom children and teachers discuss ways they can keep themselves safer.

- Well managed: the local community cares about the program, respects the caregivers and management committee, and supports the program.

ECCD facilitators also have a role in promoting child protection in the community. Some ways this occurs:

- Caregiver selection committees must only consider candidates with no child abuse or protection violations, and any candidate under consideration should be vetted with the wider community to ensure that everyone feels that the person poses no potential threat to children.

- Caregiver training should increase understanding about child protection and ways to increase protection in the school and community.

- Caregivers will understand how to recognise and report child abuse and neglect.

- The ECCD centre promotes a 'child watch' system in the community to address child neglect and protection issues.

- The parenting program increases understanding about what is child abuse and neglect and ways parents and extended family members can work together to improve the care of children.

- The ECCD program takes a holistic approach to child development. The ECCD program works in tandem with the health clinic, educational institutions, nutrition experts, water and sanitation, and livelihood experts to improve family conditions that support child development and protection.

HOW YOUNG CHILDREN LEARN AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

Young children learn by doing. They take information from their experiences and readjust their thinking based on experience. As children get older, they acquire new skills and experiences that help the learning process. For example, as children grow physically, they are more able to manipulate and explore their own environment. Also, as children mature, they are more able to understand the point of view of other people.

Knowledge is not something that is given to children as though they were empty vessels to be filled. Children acquire knowledge about the physical and social worlds in which they live through playful interaction with objects and people.

Children do not need to be forced to learn; they are motivated by their own desire to make sense of their world. Keep the principles below in mind when working with any child, including those with disabilities.

Key principles:

Children learn by doing
Young children require lots of experience playing with solid objects before they 'understand'.

Children learn through play
Through play children form their understanding about the natural world, mathematical and literacy ideas, and social competence. Through play children learn to reason. It satisfies an innate need for creativity and self-expression.

A boy in Timor-Leste is developing the early literacy skills that will help him succeed in school.

Children learn what is personally meaningful to them
Children, like adults, try to make sense of things. Curiosity motivates learning. Surprisingly children respond better to challenging tasks than to simplistic and rote ones.

Children learn well when they use what they already know as they construct new knowledge
Learning is developmental and follows a pre-determined sequence. Build on what children know and can do. Children with disabilities might not meet milestones at a 'normal' age, but they follow predictable development. Pay attention to what they know and can do according to milestones charts and what generally follows as the next developmental skill to acquire.

Children have greater potential for learning than is commonly recognised
There is no limit to the capacity of children to learn more if they are motivated, have self-confidence, and the required support.

Learning is social
Learning is influenced and motivated by social interactions. Learning cannot take place without engagement in the real world. That is why children learn more from teacher-child interactions

that are conversational rather than by rote.

Each child learns differently

Children construct new knowledge by building on what they already know. Each brain is organised differently. Children have unique strategies, approaches and capabilities that result from different language, cultural and social backgrounds. Children learn well when they can learn in their own way and have some degree of choice and control.

There is a strong relationship between emotions and learning

Strong emotions enhance memory; people learn poorly in stressful environments. Children's ability to think and learn effectively is closely linked to physical and emotional wellbeing. An appropriate emotional climate is critical for learning. Physical environments affect emotion and learning. The total environment influences learning.

Children learn well when they get helpful feedback

Feedback is often associated with someone pointing out errors or suggesting ways to improve performance. This type of feedback can be hurtful to children. Helpful feedback offers comments and

questions that help children draw helpful conclusions.

Implications for teaching

How young children learn should determine how teachers of young children teach. The word 'teach' implies telling or giving information. But the correct way to teach young children is not to lecture or verbally instruct them. Early childhood teachers are more like guides or facilitators. They are often referred to as caregivers, rather than teachers. Caregivers prepare the environment so that it provides stimulating and challenging materials and activities for children. Effective caregivers watch closely to see what children understand and pose more challenges to push their thinking further.

It is possible to drill children until they can correctly recite pieces of information, such as the alphabet or the numbers from one to 20. However, children's responses to rote tasks do not reflect real understanding of the information. For children to fully understand and remember what they have learned – whether it is related to reading, mathematics, or other subject matters – the information must be meaningful to the context of the child's experience and

development. Learning information in a meaningful context is not only essential for children's understanding and conceptual development, but for stimulating motivation in children. If learning is relevant for children, they are more likely to persist with a task and be motivated to learn more.

Many principles of effective teaching also apply to working with children with disabilities. Children also learn from other children. Plan your teaching to provide opportunities for children to learn from each other. Match a child with a disability with a peer and let them do things together. Encourage the peer to help the child do what they cannot do, but make sure that the peer does not do everything for the child. Being a peer benefits those children who do not have a disability just as much as it benefits the child who has a disability. Make sure that the child who has a disability joins in the activities that other children do together.

These tips suggest strategies for teaching that would benefit children who have a disability and at the same time benefit all children:[9]

- Just as you do with other children, find out:
  – What each child can do and cannot do

  – What each child's needs are
  – What each child likes to do and does not like to do
  – The best ways in which the child learns
  – Use what you have found out to give the child the best early education that you can

- Ways by which children learn from you:
  – Listening to you when you explain and speak
  – Watching you when you do something
  – Touching and feeling what you are doing
  – Doing things with you
  – Imitating you

- Take into account that some children learn quickly and others more slowly and vary the pace at which you teach accordingly. This applies to all children, whether they have a disability or not.

- Respond flexibly and creatively in a way that you meet the needs of individual children, as well as the needs of children as a group.

- Match a child who has a disability with a peer and encourage them to do activities together; this will benefit both children.

- Involve parents in activities happening in the class.

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[9] Mendis, P., (2006), *Children who Have Disability in Early Childhood Care and Development Centres: A Resource Book for Teachers*, Save the Children, Sri Lanka

HOW CAREGIVERS FACILITATE LEARNING

The caregiver is the most essential ingredient of a quality program. They require knowledge about how children develop and learn, and skills to facilitate a daily routine that helps children develop essential life and learning skills.

A teacher's interactions with children are critical. It affects their self-esteem and learning. Responsive conversations, or non-instructional talk, help develop caring relationships and enhance children's vocabulary and speaking skills. Teachers ask children many questions. If teachers learn to use higher-level questions rather than rote learning questions, the children will develop their capacity to think. Children should also be encouraged to ask questions.

Feedback is another important element of facilitating learning. Some kinds of teacher feedback help children learn and think. Other kinds cause children to be fearful and disengaged. Effective feedback helps children see connections between what they already know or to learn from mistakes. Many teachers give praise, such as, *Beautiful picture*, or *Smart girl*. Praise can be more beneficial if the teacher comments on the substance of the work. For example, rather than saying, *Nice block building*, say, *You figured out how to make the blocks stack very high without falling.* Or, *There are so many interesting things in your picture. Tell me about it.* Children who get this type of feedback are receiving a better education.

Children play in the playground of a Plan-supported preschool in Cairo, Egypt.

Indicators at-a-glance

What caregivers do	What caregivers need

• Nurtures caring relations; is kind and patient; uses positive body language; smiles.
• Exhibits enthusiasm, dedication and high energy.
• Knows each child well, and uses their names.
• Encourages independence and self-belief.
• Reinforces positive actions; redirects negative actions.
• Listens to child; increases conversation; shares stories of own life.
• Encourages children to ask questions.
• Uses high-level questions that promote thinking; waits with patience for a response.
• Provides feedback that extends learning.
• Gives choices; reduces rote learning; stimulates creativity and reasoning.
• Uses routines to increase productive learning time.
• Participates in professional development.
• Applies new knowledge in the classroom.
• Reflects on practice and demonstrates continuous improvement.
	• Foundation training
	  – How children learn and grow.
	  – Knowledge of content being taught.
	  – Inclusion of cultural traditions.
	  – Managing bilingual settings.
	  – Supporting most vulnerable children.
	  – Opportunities to model and practice new skills among peers.
	• Supervision that provides consultation.
	• ELOs.
	• Timely payment of monthly honorarium.
	• Community appreciation for caregiver's time and commitment, and a job well done.

More information about effective facilitation methods:

1. Non-instructional talk

a. Holds natural conversations with children and encourages them to talk.

b. Listens to children and responds to what they say.

c. Stimulates them to think, *Tell me about your idea.*

2. Questioning

a. Uses open-ended questions, for example, *What did you like about the story?*

b. Uses higher-level questions that require thinking or reasoning, for example, *In the story who do you think did the wrong thing and why?*

c. Uses follow-up questions, *Can you tell me more?*

d. Monitors the number and types of questions they are asking girls and boys, minorities, and those children perceived as more capable.

e. Encourages children to ask their own questions.

f. Finds out how many children agree or disagree with a point, and asks them to defend their opinion.

g. When a child doesn't answer, asks a simpler question (yes or no type), selects from a choice, repeats the question, waits longer, or provides a cue to ensure all children are participating.

A volunteer teacher in Timor-Leste demonstrates positive interaction with a boy in a village-level preschool.

3. Wait time

a. Waits three to five seconds before calling on a child. Give 10 or more seconds for questions that require higher-order thinking.

b. Knows that wait time results in more thoughtful responses.

c. Knows that wait time encourages participation by more children.

d. Knows that wait time surprises children and engages the entire class more than when teachers habitually acknowledge those who raise their hands quickly.

4. Encouragement

a. Uses positive body language with all children.

b. Creates safe environment for sharing ideas.

c. Offers non-judgmental remarks.

d. Uses the same type of responses for all children.

5. Summarising and scaffolding (feedback that extends learning)

a. Reflects back and restates what the child says.

b. Shows children that the teacher is really listening.

c. Brings out clarity.

d. Is useful in resolving conflicts or issues.

e. Pulls information and facts together.

f. Models how to organise information.

g. Responds to what the child says and provokes them to think one step further.

SECTION E

ACTIVITIES AND LEARNING MATERIALS

Right: Children enjoy the imagination/pretend play corner at a Plan-supported ECCD centre in Indonesia. This corner encourages creativity and socialisation.

ESTABLISHING A DAILY ROUTINE

This section describes the activities and materials needed to support child development and learning. It provides in-depth discussion on activities and learning materials that enable children to achieve the curriculum goals and the school readiness indicators. It suggests a daily routine that gives children a variety of play and learn experiences. Detailed directions are provided for implementing the activities. General information on the production of low-cost learning materials is also provided.

This section is a stand-alone resource guide for training caregivers on what to do in the classroom. The easy to manage activities provide para-professional teachers with a blueprint for successful teaching.

A quality early childhood learning program meets children's development needs. Program planners and caregivers must have a clear picture of the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive indicators associated with school and life success. Activities, interactions and materials are designed to support children to achieve these milestones and the curriculum goals. A quality learning environment makes children feel safe and comfortable. It provides them with challenging and interesting learning experiences.

A child and her teacher at a Plan-supported ECCD centre in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

Children are alike in many ways but they also have learning differences. These differences and preferred ways of learning are more easily accommodated if a variety of activities are available and if children have the opportunity to play alone, work in small groups, and enjoy some structured activities with the entire class. Children learn from self-directed play, from each other, and from structured learning activities, such as games, songs and stories. Children need a mixture of direction and freedom.

Two highly effective ECCD programs in Bangladesh, conducted by Plan International and Save the Children, include six components in the daily routine. This guide includes several daily activities

used by these programs. Others are from the author's experiences developing and observing programs in other countries.

The daily routine provides a predictable use of time that helps children feel safe and secure and allows them to develop independence and self-reliance, which are key skills for school and life success.

Daily routine activities:

• Morning greetings and attendance.

• Structured literacy activities.

• Corner play (individual choice).

• Physical exercise and outdoor play.

• Structured maths activities (alternated with science activities or cultural activities).

• Wrap-up meeting.

Each component of the daily routine might highlight one child development domain. For example, outdoor play is especially geared toward gross motor development. On the other hand, every activity is enhanced when it incorporates other domains. This is especially useful to accommodate different learning styles and interests. Learning is enhanced when all activities are holistic and integrated. The chart below shows a good way to get

In Peru, Plan is working with teachers, education promoters, parents and government officials to improve preschools and non-formal early education programs for children in rural communities.

Examples

Daily routine activity	Social and emotional development	Physical development	Cognitive development	Language development
Morning meeting	Greeting child by name enhances self-concept; child of the day gives every child the opportunity to be a leader.	Morning games and songs include physical movements, such as snapping, clapping and jumping.	Finding nametag; identifying which children are absent and counting those who are present.	Recognising written names on the attendance and child of the day charts.
Outdoor play	Learning to share; getting along with others; making and keeping rules.	Large motor skills, such as jumping, running, hopping and climbing through games and play equipment.	Following rules of a game; thinking about what comes next; counting; using ordinal numbers such as first and last.	Talking to friends about what is taking place, such as taking turns on the swing; solving a disagreement; or teaching a jump rope rhyme, etc.

caregivers thinking about how to enhance their planned activities by integrating all four domains.

Life skills teaching led by parents

The curriculum is also enriched when parents share local knowledge with the children. Every parent knows something that they can teach the children. A father might show the children how to fish, weave a basket or plant some corn. A grandmother might tell a story or teach a traditional game. A mother might teach the children a traditional dance, tell a story, or teach them how to catch a chicken. Save the Children Bangladesh refers to this activity as 'cultural day'.

Another appropriate name is 'life skills'. Consider a space and time for parents and caregivers. The children will love the activity. It will increase the pride of the parents and positive feelings about the learning program. It makes important statements that underpin and support the community-led action for children philosophy.

General recommendations for implementing the daily routine:

- Start on time. Use time wisely. Every class should have a clock.

- Establish schedule of activities with a balance of teacher-directed and child-directed learning.

- Post the daily routine and stick to it (plastic or cloth is more durable for posters than paper).

- During child-directed time, provide a variety of interesting materials to explore and use for props.

- When children are playing, stay involved. Observe. Help children share materials. Talk to them about what they are doing.

- During outdoor free play and corner time, always give five minutes notice before the period ends.

- During teacher-directed time, use more high-level questions that promote thinking and problem solving. When children

say something to you, provide feedback that helps them think some more about what was said.

- Make calm transitions from one activity to the next. Encourage children to stretch their bodies and clean up materials.

- Teach children to take care of learning materials. Torn and dirty materials lose value for learning.

- When children follow a routine, take care of materials, and help tidy the classroom, they develop a sense of order. It makes them feel protected. Chaos makes children feel threatened.

SUGGESTED DAILY ROUTINE SCHEDULE

Time	Activity	Details
8:30am	Caregiver sets up classroom with assistance from children who are early arrivers.	Caregiver transports learning materials from storage areas with children or volunteer assistance and sets up classroom.
9am	Morning meeting.	Greetings, attendance chart, active songs.
9:15am	Structured literacy activities.	News sharing or journals, storybook or storytelling; alphabet; writing practice; reciting rhymes and songs.
10:15am	Corner play.	Free choice to play in five areas: pretend play corner; blocks/building toys; puzzles and games; books and pictures; water and sand play.
11am	Outdoor play.	Teacher-led outdoor games and physical exercise, as well as informal play with friends. Might include snack time.
11:30am	Structured maths activities: four days. Parent-led life skills activities or science activities: one day.	Maths games and problem solving skills-building activities using a bag of manipulatives. Parents teach children cultural or life skills one day each week.
12pm	Closing meeting.	Reflect on day; planning for tomorrow; sing a song; and put materials away.
12:15pm	Departure.	Children walk home escorted by a parent volunteer.

A WORD ABOUT SCHOOL FEEDING

Disadvantaged families are faced with food shortages. It is helpful for them to learn how to feed their children as best as possible within their constraints (for example, feed children before they go to school, find ways to give foods rich in vitamins C and E, supply adequate protein with eggs, grow kitchen gardens, and learn to sun-dry fruits). Discussions about nutrition and technical training to grow chickens and high-yield household gardens should be included in the parenting program. Improved nutrition is a priority concern for the ELP, given its impact on brain development.

Providing food supplements at school can be problematic. Food supplements can be difficult to phase out and can cause parents to view the ELP as a feeding rather than educational program. When parents know there is food at school, they might forgo feeding breakfast to their child. The emphasis should be on the parents understanding the importance of feeding breakfast and taking responsibility for feeding their child. In addition, the duration of some programs require that children bring a snack from home. The CLAC Uganda project gives children a small backpack and colourful plastic water and food containers to fill. The children love the backpacks and this encourages them

As part of the CLAC ECCD project in Uganda, parents are encouraged to provide a snack and clean water for children who attend early learning centres. Children also share their snack with other children who were not able to bring one.

THE EMPHASIS SHOULD BE ON THE PARENTS UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF FEEDING BREAKFAST AND TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR FEEDING THEIR CHILD.

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to ask their parents for snack foods and safe water. Experience has shown that when schools do offer porridge, it is often mid- or late-morning. If the school provides a meal, consider a boiled egg and a piece of fruit rather than low-value porridge and serve this upon arrival, not later in the day.

LEARNING MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT[10]

Children need solid objects to manipulate with their hands. They mainly learn from doing not observing, so they need ample supplies of interesting materials to use in creative ways. Toys need to match developmental learning goals, support the literacy and maths curriculum, and inspire creative free play. Innovative teachers and parents have demonstrated the array of toys that can be made from locally produced materials. Others can be centrally produced according to clear criteria. Adequate time for production and distribution should be provided.

All learning toys should be locally produced, with few exceptions. There are many reasons for doing so. By producing the materials, the ECCD facilitators and caregivers develop an understanding about the learning value of the toys. Each component in the daily routine requires certain learning materials. Developing the materials also helps project facilitators understand the curriculum and, in this way, toy development is also a staff development tool. Local production lowers costs and increases sustainability.

Some items should be centrally made but also locally produced. This includes slates, wooden blocks, word cardholders, maths bags, etc. As the

In Indonesia, Plan staff and ECCD centre caregivers are involved in learning materials development at community level.

number of centres increases, local cottage industries might emerge for producing educational toys. A basic set of storybooks should be bought, although the staff might learn to produce supplementary books, such as Big Books.

One approach is to create a complete set of corner play toys for each field office. The caregiver borrows one toy per week to replicate, with the help of parents and other caregivers.

They learn how to play the game and then they teach the children. They also teach the children how to store the game pieces after play. That way there is a stream of new materials coming into the centre, and each one is appreciated and used effectively.

Each component of the daily routine requires a specific set of learning materials. They should be safe, attractive and challenging enough to benefit the child. For example,

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[10] Llewellyn, D., (2007), *Fieldworker's Notebook on Early Childhood Development,* Save the Children Federation, US

a puzzle made from a simple line drawing of a cat cut into three pieces is of little interest to a four-year-old. Children like to look at pictures with lots of detail and four-year-olds can easily build puzzles out of a dozen or more pieces.

Remember, materials are for the child to 'manipulate', not for the teacher to 'exhibit'. New materials are needed to increase novelty; teachers can 'make and take' new toys at monthly teacher development meetings, and they can involve parents to produce them. Learning materials production offers a positive way for engaging parents in the

educational program. They will also bring what they have learned home.

Storage of materials for security and protection from the weather must be planned. Any toy with pieces should be stored in a container, small bag or envelope. If the ELP is open-air, toys can be stored in bags and the bags can be placed in a metal trunk in a designated home. Children should be involved in making rules for the use and care of toys. Helping to clean up teaches children many good life skills, such as caring for themselves and their belongings. It gives them a sense of order and ritual that helps them feel safe and secure.

LEARNING MATERIALS – WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

- Support all areas of development.

- Majority can be used in many different ways, such as blocks, shells, bottle caps, and picture cards.

- Challenging, different levels of difficulty.

- Safe, no pointed objects, lead paint, splinters, etc.

- Attractive and well made (colourful, careful lettering, pictures with much detail).

- Ample supply for child to create something or sustain activity over time.

- New things added to increase novelty.

- Well organised in storage containers.

- Board games with rules are exciting, spinners or dice and something to compete for, played by two to four children, challenging – not too easy or too difficult, bags for pieces.

- Puzzles – six to 16 pieces can be put together with or without self-correcting base, has interesting picture with a lot of detail (for example, from a magazine, newspaper or the internet).

- Storybooks – at least 25 with interesting plots, character development, informative pictures, half pages of writing, includes some new words and concepts unknown to most, and arouses emotions and engages thought.

LEARNING MATERIALS INVENTORY[11]

The previous pages explained the important things to consider in developing a set of learning toys and materials. It cannot be over-emphasised that these toys should be locally produced to reduce costs and increase sustainability. Use durable materials such as plastic and grain sacks for posters and games rather than paper. Produce bags and containers for each toy or game so that pieces are not lost. Make them beautiful with bright colours and clear neat writing. Find caregivers and parents with talent in art to make the pictures.

Classroom environment

- Attendance pocket chart with name cards for each child.
- Calendar pocket chart.
- Variety of colourful posters made on grain sack or cloth (no paper).
- Floor covering.
- Wall clock.

Literacy circle

- Blackboard and chalk. If possible, one slate and chalk per child, or four to five slates for the 'book corner'. Consider building the blackboard as a low, freestanding easel that children and the caregiver can use.

Each ELP should have a wide range of colourful, durable play and learning materials for children. Materials can be made by parents and caregivers using low cost and locally available resources.

Provide a small stool for the person writing on the board and make sure children can see what is written.

- 25 storybooks (some homemade and some commercial).
- Exercise book (journal) and pencils, sharpeners, coloured crayons or pencils, if possible.
- Alphabet picture flags or poster (use cloth or white grain sacks).
- Big Books (nine to 10) locally produced, to teach pre-reading skills.

[11] For detailed information on learning materials production and use, please see Baillet, A and Llewellyn, D., (2013), *Learning Toys Production Guide for Early Learning Programs and Home Play (Ages Birth to Six)*, Plan International Australia.

Maths circle

- Calendar with pockets and removable number cards (use cloth).

- Number banner (objects one to 20).

- Individual maths bags – contents:[12]

  - Two strings (one metre long).

  - Some things to count and sort such as buttons, shells, seeds, small stones, small wooden cubes of multiple colours, or 2.5cm squares of cloth in multiple patterns and colours (things that are plentiful in your area; attractive to see and touch, and have a number of characteristics that make them interesting to sort). Provide 15–25 each of two or three kinds of objects (for example, 15 bottle caps, 15 seashells and 15 large seeds in three colours).

  - 20 metal soda bottle caps (variety of types).

  - 20 paperclips (coloured clips are nice).

  - 10 plastic water bottle caps, five each in two colours, or spray paint in two colours. If not possible, use one colour initially.

  - 100 toothpicks (in plastic container, if possible), or a set of 20 small sticks made from bamboo. Paint in three of four colours, if possible.

  - One wooden dice cube with dots. To make, take long strip of wood, moulding and cut into small cubes. Use permanent marker pin to make dots. If two per child, make one with dots and one with numbers.

  - Number cards one to 20.

  - 10 x 2.5cm square tiles: wood, cardboard, or laminated paper. Front side colour: five white and five red. Backside: divide in half on the diagonal. Paint ½ red and ½ half white.

  - A4 size cloth mat to use as a workspace (optional). Cloth should be a solid colour. If possible, vary colours in the class. In this way the cloth mats also serve as a learning toy for sorting or grouping children. For example, everyone with red mats are in one group, etc. It helps children focus their attention on their work and not mix materials from one bag to next.

Corner play materials

Block and construction corner

- Blocks cut into cubes, triangles, and rectangles (note: rectangle is size of two cubes). Triangle is made from cutting cube into two pieces. Size: cubes are 5cm square; rectangles are 5 x 10cm.

- 2.5cm wooden cubes (100 each of red, blue, yellow, green, purple and orange, for a total of 600).

- 40 bamboo sticks (four colours) about 20–25cm long; children produce designs with these or add to the block structures.

- Small figures of animals, people, vehicles made of cardboard or painted on blocks.

- Other interesting construction materials such as tin cans, corncobs, large seedpods spray-painted with bright colours, or cardboard discs (circles/triangles/squares) with notches that can be fitted together in a colourful sculpture.

Games and puzzles corner

- Picture puzzles nine to 16 pieces (commercial). If locally produced, five to 10 pieces.

- Shape puzzles (tangrams, pattern blocks, geoboards, concentric shapes).

- Logic games (for example, Memory, Tic-Tac-Toe, Dominoes, Bingo, Checkers).

- Playing cards and dice (if culturally appropriate).

- Board games with rules for shapes, alphabet or colour recognition, and for counting practice.

- Lace-ups or beading/threading, or stitchery with string and loosely woven cloth or grain sack.

Books and pictures corner

- Storybooks (three to five books per week in the corner, rotate each week).

- Double sets of picture cards (animals, flowers, fruits, and birds; they can be laminated, labeled and plain on backside; images can be downloaded from the internet). Teach children to play games with these.

[12] Maths bags can be made from bright traditional fabrics, each with a drawstring closure. One community produced small banana leaf baskets for each child's maths materials.

- Alphabet cards (laminated, two of each), or cut from cardboard, and game activities.

- Number cards one to 20 (laminated, two of each), and game activities.

- Wall pocket chart for sorting cards (optional).

- Drawing paper and/or slates.

- Crayons, pencils, erasers and sharpener (if possible).

- Clipped magazine or newspaper pictures and newspaper pages.

Pretend play corner

- Small dishes, stirring spoon, coconut shells.

- Cloth dolls (male and female).

- Graduated small baskets or coconut shells.

- Balance scale.

- Pieces of solid colour cloth – A4 size, to use as a tabletop, baby bed, store counter, etc.

- Plastic mat (8cm x 10cm) with road and typical landscape drawn with permanent markers or paint.

- Plastic or wooden farm animals, boats, vehicles, and people and sticks to use on mat.

- Buttons, pebbles, shells, seeds, bottle caps used for making designs or to play shop or house.

- Empty food or medicine containers, etc.

Sand and water corner

- Sand play

- Cups of different sizes or measuring cups.

- Spoons.

- Wooden objects for making designs (for example, sticks).

- Cups or coconut shells for moulding sand.

Water play

- Set of graduated measuring cups.

- Funnels.

- Rubber tube.

- Plastic bottles with different size openings.

- Lids with holes for sprinkles.

TIPS FOR HANGING POSTERS AND ART

1. Cut a long bamboo strip or rope the length of the wall.

2. Attach to the wall so it can be easily removed.

3. Make strips of newspaper to loop over the bamboo.

4. Attach art and posters to the strips of newspaper by glue or staple.

5. Make sure the posters are at child's eye level.

6. Quickly slide the posters off at the end of the day.

7. Lay them on top of each other; roll up and store until the next day.

8. Change children's art often and include everyone.

DAILY ROUTINE

8:30–9AM: SETTING UP THE CLASSROOM

Teachers will need about 30 minutes to set up the classroom. Materials should be well organised and ready for the children to use when they arrive. This way the teacher can focus on the important job of greeting children. It prevents important learning time from being lost. The orderly display of posters and materials create a welcoming environment.

Things the teacher will do before children arrive:

✓ Arrive early.

✓ Make sure the classroom is clean.

✓ Set up the learning corners.

✓ Place soap and a towel by the water play bowl.

✓ Display posters and children's work on the walls at the child's eye level.

✓ Child of the day: move marker on chart to show name.

✓ Arrange the name cards in the attendance chart.

✓ Stand at the door to greet the children.

✓ If parents come to school, greet them in a friendly way, but turn your attention to the child.

✓ Smile, use the child's name and say something personal to each one.

Things children do upon arrival:

✓ Some might be assigned to collect learning materials from storage area.

✓ Wash hands with soap and water.

✓ Place shoes outside the door in a row.

✓ Find name card and turn it over to show the smiling face drawing.

✓ Find out the child of the day.

✓ Talk with friends.

✓ Early arrivers might help display materials in the learning corners.

Why caregivers should start class on time:

• Children will arrive on time.

• Important learning time is not wasted.

• It rewards children who are punctual.

• Waiting for latecomers sends a negative message to those who arrive on time.

GOOD HABITS START EARLY

• Reduced sickness, diarrhea and skin disease.

• Reduced absences from school.

• Establishes good practice for life.

HELPING TO SET UP AND CLEAN UP THE CLASS/BENEFITS

• Art skills – arranging toys in an attractive way.

• Maths skills – sorting objects that are similar.

• Responsibility – habits of organising, cleaning, caring for belongings and helping others.

DAILY ROUTINE

9–9:15AM: MORNING GREETINGS

Objectives for morning greetings:

- Assure a safe, healthy and secure environment.

- Make each child feel valued.

- Develop caring and trusting relationships.

- Create a sense of community.

- Note child's state of alertness and wellbeing – is the child sick, were they fed before school, are they clean and neat, is there any evidence of abuse or neglect?

- Motivate children to attend every day.

Key activities:

1. Teacher announces, *Good morning. It is 9 o'clock and time to start our day.*

2. The children move into a circle, seated on the floor.

3. Teacher greets the group, *It is nice to have you here today.*

4. *Let's see, who is the child of the day today?*

5. Teacher and children look together at the attendance chart.

6. Count together the number of children who are absent.

Children at a Plan-supported ECCD centre in Uganda look at their attendance chart to see who is present and who is absent as part of morning greetings.

RULES AND ROUTINES TO MAKE CHILDREN FEEL SAFE AND SECURE

- Like a village, the classroom needs rules and routines.

- It helps things run smoothly and provides a sense of security and belonging.

- Children should be involved in developing rules as required.

- Make sure everyone knows the reason for the rules.

- Involve children in solving problems and conflicts.

7. Teacher asks if anyone knows why the children are absent and encourages the children to check on their friend/s after school.

8. Count together the number of children who are present.

9. The next three steps can be done indoors or outdoors, depending on weather and space.

10. Children stand in two straight lines or a circle so they are facing each other.

11. Child of the day leads a welcoming song. Sing a song that uses every child's name at least once or twice each week.

12. The child of the day can also lead a quick pattern game such as, 'Just Like Me' or 'Circle Clap Dance' (see below).

How to play:

Just Like Me (patterns practice): Children face each other in two lines or stand in a circle. Leader creates a pattern – snapping, clapping or moving (for example, snap, snap, lean to the left, lean to the right, or clap, snap, snap, jump, jump, jump). Others follow the pattern. After everyone gets it, a child calls on another child who starts a pattern, and the others follow. This continues through four to five children.

Circle Clap Dance (numbers practice): Children form two circles, an inner circle and outer circle. The teacher calls out a number. The inner circle walks in one direction and the outer circle walks in the opposite direction. With each number the child taps the hand of a child in the opposite circle. When they get to the final number, they say the number, turn and start back in the other direction, *1-2-3-4-5, turn, 1-2-3-4-5*. Repeat this several times. Each day pick a new number.

Learning to respect others

How teachers model respect

✓ Get down to the child's eye level when talking to them.

✓ Use the child's name.

✓ Speak to the child individually as often as possible.

✓ Listen to what the child says and respond to what is said.

✓ Treat every girl and boy with equal attention and care. Find ways to ensure that you are promoting gender equality rather than gender bias. The children will tell you the truth if you were to ask them, *Does the teacher like girls or boys better?* The children

ATTENDANCE CHART

- Each ECCD centre is provided with a pocket chart for attendance.

- Write each child's name on a card.

- Use six colours so that there are five names for each colour. This makes it easy to divide the children for small group work.

- Make the letters large and easy to read.

- Ask children to draw a picture of their face on the back.

- Before school, turn the cards so the printed name faces out.

- Make the pocket chart out of plastic or heavy cloth with tabs at the top.

- Use a light coloured cloth to make child of day list so that names can be read easily. Write names with a permanent marker.

internalise messages from the teacher's treatment of them.

✓ Be patient. Give children the time they need. Children with disabilities require more time. Your patience and interest in their participation provides a positive role model for the other children.

✓ Involve children in making classroom rules:

  – *What kind of rules should we have at circle time?*

  – *What kind of rules should we have about the toys?*

✓ Respect their time – do not keep them waiting.

✓ Prevent boredom – do not let a game go on too long.

How children practice respect with their friends

✓ Learn and use my friend's names.

✓ Pay attention to the feelings of my friends.

✓ Take turns.

✓ Share materials and talking time.

✓ Be friendly to everyone.

✓ Invite others to join activities.

✓ Solve problems together.

✓ Talk and share feelings.

DAILY ROUTINE

9:15–10:15AM: STRUCTURED LITERACY ACTIVITIES

Language development is emphasised in every activity and throughout the day. In addition, a 60-minute period is set aside for children to participate in structured literacy activities. These give special focus to speaking, reading and writing. Activities include:

- News sharing/journals.
- Dialogic reading and storytelling/Big Books.
- Rhymes, songs and finger plays.
- Alphabet activity.

Skills children need for reading and writing (Preschool and Grade 1)

The ELP years are an important time to develop pre-literacy skills. To become skilled and confident readers over time, children need lots of opportunities to acquire skills in the 10 areas mentioned in the table on the following pages. Each of these skill areas is introduced in an ELP and further developed in Grade 1. An effective reading and writing program does not require many materials if the materials developed are matched with the activities and skills, and if they are fully used.

A Plan staff member conducts a storytelling session with children in a preschool in the Philippines. It is important that children develop positive reading habits in the early years.

THE ELP YEARS ARE AN IMPORTANT TIME TO DEVELOP PRE-LITERACY SKILLS.

Concept	Illustrative activities
1. Talking and listening Children develop important pre-reading skills by listening to interesting conversations and talking about their ideas.	'Show and tell/class news': select a child of the day through rotation. This child gets to stand in front of the class and share some news or show and describe an object. For example, what they did yesterday, what is happening in their family, an interesting rock or insect, etc. If classmates are encouraged to ask questions, it will help them be good listeners. If there is time for other news stories, the child of the day can select a designated number of other children to talk.
2. Print and books Children need to learn the proper way to hold books and turn the pages, left to right. They need to see printed words around them and realise that the words they speak and hear and read are related.	1. Provide time each day where children can look at picture books. 2. Word hunt: give each child a page of an old newspaper to circle words that they know. 3. Morning message: the teacher writes a short greeting or some news on the board while they say the words aloud. 4. Label familiar objects in the classroom. 5. Children enjoy making a class book about a familiar subject by dictating the words to the teacher and making their own pictures.
3. Sounds in language Children must notice that some words rhyme, all words have parts (syllables), some words begin or end with the same sound, and all words are made up of separate sounds.	1. Clap sounds in a word; find other words with the same claps (syllables). How many children have the same claps in their name? 2. Let children change a familiar rhyme or song by adding new rhyming words. 3. Teacher pronounces three words, children raise hand if they all begin with the same sound. Also use with ending sounds or vowels. 4. Group pictures by those that sound alike, rhyme, etc. 5. Syllable war (two children or teams): use picture cards, divide them into two stacks and turn them upside down. Children turn over the cards at the same time. The picture with the most syllables wins both cards.
4. Alphabet Children who go to school knowing the names of letters and how to write them have an easier time learning to read.	1. Make a letter out of mud or bits of string. 2. Jigsaw ducks. Cut out a duck shape for each of 10 or 12 letters. Write the letter on the duck and glue or draw one or two pictures that go with the letter. Cut each puzzle so that the child matches the letter and picture. Each puzzle should be cut differently so that it is self-correcting. 3. Tic-Tac-Toe. Letter toss with beanbags. Divide class in two teams: X and 0. Use string to make the cross hatches. Put letters in the squares. Each team throws the beanbag, names the letter and puts an X or 0. Three in a row win points for the team.

Concept	Illustrative activities
5. Reading aloud Reading aloud to children has been called the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for success in reading. Children's literature is a teacher's most valuable tool because so much learning can come from a good story. It helps them develop vocabulary outside their everyday experience, new concepts, and interest in learning to read.	Set aside a time each day to read a story of high interest to the children. After the story, ask children a question and let them discuss their answer with a partner or have them draw a picture of something that happened in the story or a favourite character. They can present their ideas to the class.
6. Code focused skills Understanding the relationship between sounds of language and the letters of written language gives children a tool to recognise familiar words quickly and to figure out words they have not seen before. Word-study instruction helps them to apply this knowledge. Rapid word recognition means they struggle less and have more time getting meaning from what they read. Identify some frequently used words and play games with the words to help children in their phonics and reading. Of course, you will introduce the words a few at a time.	This begins in an ELP and continues into Grade 1. 1. Children's names written on individual cards can be sorted by the first letter. They can also be used to help children learn and remember the sound of the letter. 2. Lotto: make several game boards each with a different set of 12 high-frequency words. Make cards to match each word. Children listen for the words and see who can fill up their game board the fastest. 3. Spin and win: use high-frequency word cards in a stack, and place the stack upside down. Spin a spinner or role a die to see how many cards are to be picked up. One point for every word they can read, unknown words are placed back on the bottom of the pile.

Concept	Illustrative activities
7. Spelling and writing Children need the chance to spell and write on their own to practice what they are learning about sounds in words and how the sounds relate to letters. At first they will draw and scribble. Then they will try to write words and invent spelling that shows how much they are learning about sounds and letters. Invented spelling encourages children to think and is a useful step before formal spelling lessons begin.	1. Daily journal: children draw a picture of something about their life. The topic can be freely chosen or assigned. If the topic is assigned the teacher can write a short sentence for the children to copy and then they can try and write others by themselves, for example, *This is my grandmother.* 2. Lacing cards: draw a letter or word on a tag board. Add holes and a shoestring to go in and out of the holes, following the design, moving left to right. 3. Dictionary: give each child an inexpensive notebook to make their own dictionary. For each new letter learned, the child could add pictures and words of familiar objects. 4. Print a word on an envelope. Put individual letters inside. Let the children practice putting the letters together to make the word on the envelope. Now turn it over and try to spell the word from memory.
8. Fluency Children need to learn to read smoothly and with expression. When they lack confidence and skill, the reading is choppy and the words carry no meaning.	1. Big Books are short and interesting stories that children can learn to read quickly. They allow them to practice their fluency and to develop the confidence that they can read. Small take-home copies of Big Book give children the chance to practice at home. 2. Word card games: Using a list of frequently used words, put each word on a separate card and play games such as Memory (see page 108 for more information). Two identical sets of cards will be needed.
9. Vocabulary Researchers have found a strong connection between the size of vocabulary, how well the child comprehends what is read, and how well the child does in school. Children who are poor readers often do not have the vocabulary knowledge they need to get meaning from what they read. Children who know something about the world are better able to understand what they read.	1. Short walking field trips give children the opportunity to develop their vocabulary about the environment. 2. Pocket charts can be used to display photos from the newspaper or picture cards for discussing concepts such as large or small, more or less, names and descriptions of animals, etc. 3. Object guessing game: teacher picks a theme such as objects in a house, animals, children in the class, etc. The child makes up a riddle, for example, *I am thinking of something with four legs and you eat on it.* 4. There is no better way to build vocabulary than through storybooks. Children can be exposed to things outside their everyday experience.

Concept	Illustrative activities
10. Comprehension Children need to understand what they are reading. Making predictions, asking questions and summarising the stories that are read to them will prepare them to comprehend stories they read alone. Dialogic reading is a practice used by caregivers when they ask questions about words and concepts during the story, evaluate children's understanding, expand the child's understanding, and review what was learned.	After reading a story to children, ask them to draw a picture of what happened in the beginning, middle and end. This will show whether they understand the story. It is a good step before acting out a story. This is called a storyboard.

Literacy activities

Overview

Day 1 Monday	Day 2 Tuesday	Day 3 Wednesday	Day 4 Thursday	Day 5 Friday
9:15–9:45am	**9:15–9:45am**	**9:15–9:45am**	**9:15–9:45am**	**9:15–9:45am**
Journals and news sharing	Journals and news sharing	Journals and news sharing	Journals and news sharing	Journals and news sharing
What day is it?	What day is it?	What day is it?	What day is it?	What day is it?
News sharing/listening game	Journal/thinking and drawing personal experience	News sharing/listening game	Journal/thinking and drawing personal experience	Class discussion about a selected theme and picture drawing
a) pairs; b) child of day then selects child two; child two selects child three; up to four or five children	a) pairs; b) child of day shares journal and then selects child two; child two selects child three; up to four or five children	Same as Monday	Same as Tuesday	Teacher takes dictation from class about topic or children copy key words or sentences as able
Teacher writes and reads morning message sentence	Morning message	Morning message	Morning message	Children read dictated sentence or key words together
9:45–10am	**9:45–10am**	**9:45–10am**	**9:45–10am**	**9:45–10am**
Storybook	Storytelling	Storybook	Storytelling	Big Book
10–10:05am	**10–10:05am**	**10–10:05am**	**10–10:05am**	**10–10:05am**
Rhyme or song	Rhyme or song	Rhyme or song	Rhyme or song	Rhyme or song
10:05–10:15am	**10:05–10:15am**	**10:05–10:15am**	**10:05–10:15am**	**10:05–10:15am**
Alphabet	Alphabet	Alphabet	Alphabet	Alphabet

Materials needed:

- Slates.
- Journal notebooks.
- Alphabet notebooks.
- Pencils and coloured pencils.
- Two storybooks per week.
- Pocket chart
- One Big Book per month.

Summary of key literacy experiences:

- Talking with others about my experiences and views.
- Describing objects, events and relations.
- Expressing feelings in words.
- Enjoying books and discussing them.
- Actively listening to others (telling back what someone says) to develop understanding and to notice differences in sounds.
- Learning new vocabulary.
- Using and making labels for objects in the classroom.
- Drawing to represent ideas and develop motor skills to write.

- Having spoken language written down and read back.
- Recognising the alphabet and the sounds of the letters.
- Writing name and the alphabet.
- Recognising some words by sight.
- Having fun with language.

LITERACY ACTIVITY 1
NEWS SHARING/JOURNALS
Time: 30 minutes

The first literacy circle activity lasts for 30 minutes. During this time children develop the confidence to describe events in their life and to listen to others. They learn to use symbols to represent their experience. At first they draw pictures and later they learn to write words. There are three methods. News sharing is conducted for two days. This involves talking and listening, no writing. Journals are used for two days. This involves drawing pictures about an experience first and then talking about the drawing. Theme journals are used on the last day. All children discuss the same topic, draw a picture and write a dictated sentence. The purpose and methods are explained for each.

JOURNALS ARE EFFECTIVE TOOLS FOR:

- Teaching reading and writing skills to children at different ability levels.
- Building a sense of self and developing decision-making skills.
- Developing confidence to speak aloud before a group.
- Increasing children's interest in the lives of others.
- Developing a sense of community among classmates and teacher.

Tools needed:

- Pencil and crayons or coloured pencils.
- An ordinary, low-cost notebook or a special notebook with pre-printed pages.
- If a special notebook is designed, make a blank space at the top for picture and lines at the bottom for words.
- Plan on using two pages per week for journal stories.
- The back of the same notebook can contain a child's personal dictionary, with one page for each letter of the alphabet and a picture of something that begins with that letter.
- Below the alphabet letter leave space for children to write their own words or make pictures of things that begin with that letter.
- Space for about eight to 10 words and pictures per page should be adequate.

Tips for conducting news sharing and journal writing

• News sharing and journal writing use the child's experiences as a starting point for developing skills in language, writing and reading.

• A different activity is provided for each day of the week. Having different ways to share news will keep the interest high and prevent boredom.

• Always follow the same order and then children will soon know exactly what to expect.

• Each day of the week, begin in the same way with, *What day is it?* The teacher always asks the children to name the day of the week. It is written on the board. The teacher briefly points to the word and then each letter, spelling it out. The teacher should ask them, *What day was yesterday? Tomorrow, what day will it be? Today I am sure that everyone has news to share. Let's get started.*

• The next activity is different for each day of the week. See the schedule and read below to find out how to conduct the activity.

• News sharing focuses on telling about life. Children will learn

to use complex sentences and explain whole ideas.

• Journals focus on writing about life. Children will learn that their thoughts can be represented with symbols, either drawings or words. They will experience the feeling of having something important to write. They will learn to sequence their thoughts and practice all aspects of writing in a meaningful context (left to right progression, letter formation, punctuation and capitalisation, etc).

How to conduct news sharing and listening game

Children work in pairs, taking turns talking and listening. If there is an uneven number, one group might have three children.

Steps:

1. Child one gets to tell something that they saw or did since yesterday, or anything of interest. (Teacher calls time after three minutes.) Child two must sit very quietly and listen. Then child two repeats back what child one said. Child one gets to say whether Child two was a great listener.

2. Child two shares something of interest (three minutes). Child one listens carefully then repeats back what child two said. Child two gets to tell child one whether they correctly retold what was said.

3. In the remaining time, a few children get to tell their news to the entire class. It begins with the child of the day who shares and then selects another child to share. Child two shares and then calls on child three until the time is up.

4. After each child shares the teacher might use the game 'Three Questions'. That means that children might raise their hand to ask the talker a question to get more information about what was said. (For example, the news sharer might tell that they

rode in a rickshaw to the market. Their friends might ask questions such as, *Did you buy anything there?; What did you see along the way?; How much did the rickshaw puller charge?* The child who is sharing the news can only pick three questions to answer. This game keeps children actively involved with news sharing.

5. The teacher shares a morning message, which is their news. Their news might be about a personal event in their life, or news around the village.

How to conduct journal writing

Journal writing takes place two days per week. Children can write two different entries or complete

MORNING MESSAGE

A morning message is one sentence long. The teacher writes the day and date and then a morning message. The teacher says each word as they write the letters of that word. Writing it takes about 30 seconds. It is a special message from the teacher to the children. It can tell something that will happen in school. It might also be about the teacher's life. It might be something funny. The children are interested in the teacher's life. They learn that words can be said and written down. Over time they will begin to recognise some of the words.

the first journal story on day two if they need more time.

Day 1 steps (journals):

1. The teacher asks each child to think of something they saw or did since yesterday, or of something important that they want the other children to know about.

2. The teacher asks children to draw a picture of it with as much detail as possible. The children think quietly and then they begin to draw. While the children are drawing, the teacher walks about and looks at the pictures. The teacher should show genuine interest in their drawings, speaking and asking questions in a very quiet voice. This way the teacher does not disturb the concentration

of the others. The teacher tells the children that tomorrow they will get to show their picture to a friend and tell them about it.

3. At first the concept of drawing about their life is difficult for children. They might respond by drawing an object such as a flower or fish. The teacher can ask them again, *Tell me something that you saw or did yesterday after school or early this morning before you came to school.* The teacher might ask, *Tell me something that you are hoping for, or something that makes you sad or happy. This is what I want you to draw a picture of. The picture is about your life.*

4. At first the drawings will be very crude. Even if they are crude the child will recognise exactly what

is drawn and the drawing will allow them to recall the event.

5. After drawing time, the teacher might end the session by writing a morning message on the blackboard. As the teacher writes the simple greeting, they read each word as written. Then the children can read it together. The morning message could include a comment about the day, something funny or tell a surprise. The teacher should make the children anticipate and look forward to the morning message.

Day 2 steps (journals):

1. Children take out their journal. They are given five minutes to finish up their picture, add more details. Over time the teacher will encourage them to try to write a word or two below the picture or 'scribble write' (5 minutes).

2. Children work in pairs. Child one shows picture journal to child two and tells about it. Allow five minutes to combine activities two and three.

3. Child two shows child one journal picture and tells about it.

4. The child of the day gets to 'pretend read' their journal

entry to the class and show the picture. Then they pick someone who would like to share. Child two picks child three and so on as time allows (4 minutes).

5. Teacher shares a morning message. The teacher writes it on the blackboard as they talk and the children watch (1 minute).

Thematic instruction versus competency-based instruction

Some ELP curriculums are organised around themes. Dr Frances Aboud, early childhood specialist at McGill University in Canada, identified several problems with a theme-based curriculum during a curriculum review in Indonesia:

"First, it requires a level of teacher training and resources not commonly found in rural areas. Developing a theme with the necessary visual and manipulative materials takes resources. The second is that play is not free: children are assigned to work individually on a construction related to the theme; consequently motivation is not high and children are not playing with other peers. The third and most important problem is that theme-based curricula do not easily converge with competency-driven objectives. If you want children to

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PICTURE JOURNALS – A RECORD OF MY LIFE

The child learns:

• My ideas and experiences can be represented by a symbol – drawing.

• People can look at my drawing and 'read' my story.

• This helps me understand writing and want to write.

• I can create my own books about my life.

• I am an author.

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acquire a skill, then give them the kind of experience necessary to develop the skill. For example, if children are to learn the logical rules underlying patterns, then they must have direct experience solving pattern problems and identifying the logical rule. If they are to expand their vocabulary, a necessary precursor to reading, then they need to be introduced to new words in a context… The use of themes artificially forces all activities of that day into that theme with no attention paid to new skills to be mastered… An alternative to theme-based activities is competency-based activities. Children spend time singing songs and learning rhymes to develop skills to hear sound differences. Then in the context of a story reading they learn about vocabulary and the social and natural world. Playtime could then be free, not limited to acting out a specific theme."[13]

One way to make the transition from theme-based to competency-based instruction is by designating one journal writing period per week for the selected theme. The teacher selects what the children will draw and write about in the journal on that day. The topic could be a shared experience from the previous cultural day activity or a village event. It

might be a topic that the children or teacher selects such as *Our Family, Best Friends,* or *Favourite Animals.* It exposes children to concepts and vocabulary that they need to know. Ideally these would include hands-on experiences with things children can touch or feel, or review an experience they had. After talking they decide on a sentence or sentences they want the teacher to write about the experience. They can practice reading it together and also might try to write it in their journals under the picture representing that topic or theme.

How to use journals for weekly thematic lesson

1. In this activity the teacher or children select a topic of interest. The whole class discusses. To do so the teacher asks them what they already know about the topic. The caregiver expands their knowledge. After the discussion the children draw a picture.

2. Some topics might review an experience that the children had. Encourage the children to remember the experience. Perhaps a big storm came the day before. Maybe the children saw an accident near the school; perhaps the class took a walk and

watched some carpenters building a kiosk. Village celebrations are another good topic to discuss and write about. The discussion begins by asking the children to tell all they know about this subject. The caregiver might then also share information.

3. Other topics commonly selected include:
   – Parts of the body.
   – Family: mother and father; grandparents; sisters and brothers, each as a separate topic. In the case of orphans, perhaps they can use the time to talk about what they remember about their mother or father, or the family they wish they could have.
   – My home.
   – My best friend.
   – Animals in my village.
   – Work that grown-ups do in my village.
   – Things we like to play.
   – Fruits and vegetables that we grow.
   – Elders in the village.
   – How to make traditional crafts.

4. The class discusses the selected topic. This is not question and short answer. It is giving children a chance to talk in a conversational

way about what they already know, each sharing ideas. The teacher listens to what each says and encourages them to say something further. Various children might add points of interest.

5. Children are given the opportunity to draw a picture related to the theme. They use their journal notebook.

6. Dictation. The teacher tells them to write down a sentence about what was discussed. The teacher asks them to suggest what to write. The children dictate something and the teacher writes it in large clear letters on the blackboard. Everyone reads it back together.

7. The children copy the sentence or key words into the notebook. Later in the year, children will be able to add more sentences on their own.

**LITERACY ACTIVITY 2
STORY READ ALOUD
Time: 15 minutes**

The ELP aims to develop the concept of children's literature as a source of information and recreation. The positive reading habits required for school success are developed in the early years. To become independent readers, children must first enjoy a

[13] Aboud, F. and Mehta, N, (2010), Curriculum Review of Early Childhood in Indonesia, for Plan International Indonesia (unpublished).

selection of interesting books and have a story read to them every day.

Reading aloud to children has been called the single most important activity for building the knowledge for success in reading. It helps them to:

✓ Love books and want to read for themselves.

✓ Develop oral language skills by providing something interesting to talk about.

✓ Expand vocabulary and reasoning about everyday life, social roles and emotions.

✓ Communicate creative ideas and meaningful issues, thus developing important concepts.

✓ Develop connections between spoken and written words.

✓ Become exposed to the elements of a story – plot, character, setting, sequence, conflict resolution, etc.

✓ Broaden their world by seeing things outside their everyday experience.

Effective reading methodology

1. Read the book yourself before reading it to the class.

2. Seat the children so everyone can see the page.

3. Let the children discuss the cover picture and predict the story.

4. Note the title (characteristics of the words) and author on the cover.

5. Hold the book away from you with the pictures facing the children.

6. Stop occasionally and ask children to predict what will happen next. The teacher should ask children about the meanings of words, or point out repetitive sounds or words. This is called dialogic reading, which means having a conversation about the book.

7. Read slowly and clearly with expression and fluency.

8. After the story is complete, encourage children to discuss the story. Children should discuss characters and what happened. Compare characters. Discuss why they think something happened. These are all open-ended questions with many right answers.

9. Read the same book the next day and ask more questions. Also consider other follow-up activities: acting the story out; drawing pictures of favourite characters or events; making a story map that shows drawings of the main events (can be done on a blackboard); making storyboards that show the sequence of events on cards that can be put in order; or making up a new ending for the story.

Dialogic reading

Using books to expand children's vocabulary and comprehension

1. Every three to four pages ask children to predict or explain, for example, *Can you tell what the monkey is doing with the coconut? What do you think the monkey will do next?*

2. Ask about the meaning of difficult words. Then repeat the sentence and elaborate on its meaning so all of the children understand.

Use the word in another context that is familiar to them.

3. Point out letters or rhyming sounds that are used repeatedly in the story.

4. Stop at a critical point in the story to ask what happened and why, and to describe and elaborate on the characters, for example, *What is happening to Mina? Why is she so sad?*

5. If you interrupt the story too many times with too many questions, then the children will lose the meaning of the story. This reduces comprehension.

> **JUST AS A CHILD MUST WALK BEFORE THEY RUN, THEY MUST TALK BEFORE THEY READ**
>
> **Consider this:** Developing spoken language skills and a good vocabulary is necessary for reading.
>
> We now know that advantaged children might come to school with 6,000 more vocabulary words than the disadvantaged child. Research on what happens to the brain when children read has taught us that children who are effective readers use their vocabulary knowledge and familiarity with how sentences are structured to guess at a word. When they can't guess, only then do they try to 'sound it out'. This tells us that one of the most important things ELP teachers and parents can do is to develop rich language before they learn to read. Talk to the children about everything. Read and discuss interesting stories with them.

6. After completing the story, ask questions that require analysis or evaluation, for example, *What is your favourite character and why? What would you do if you were the monkey? Do you think this is a real or imaginary story? Why do you think this?*

Children like to look at books independently. They learn how to:

• Hold a book the right side up.

• Turn the pages one at a time.

• Develop a left to right orientation.

• Become familiar with print.

• Enjoy books as a pastime.

• Get ideas from books and pictures.

Selecting storybooks

✓ Books should have an exciting storyline, with a variety of themes.

✓ They should include universal themes that connect children to the wider world beyond their village.

✓ They should also expand the children's vocabulary, concept formation, and understanding of why things happen. If not, there is no learning.

✓ Children need to hear and discuss a story one day and reread it the next day with further discussion. Two new books per week are suggested. One familiar book might be repeated.

✓ Half-page coloured pictures and half-page words; about 12–15 pages per book.

✓ Memorising a story is not necessary, unless of course it is a famous traditional story, because there are already enough things that need to be memorised, such as rhymes and songs, numbers and letters. Too much memory work stops thinking.

Classroom library size

Classroom libraries should contain about 25 books when they are first established; add 12 new books each year. In cases where resources are low and books are few, buy 12 books for the initial collection. Aim to use one commercial storybook, one oral folk story, and one teacher-made Big Book each week.

Big Books

On the last day or two of the week, teachers might use a Big Book at story time. Big Books are a method used to teach reading to young children. A Big Book is a child-friendly, fun story especially designed for beginning readers. It appeals to the children because it is large in size, measuring about 30 x 50cm. It is very short and often funny. It has few words. It is easy to read because it uses repetition.

Using the Big Book:

1. Teachers will learn how to make and use Big Books during their professional development course.

2. As they read the book, they point to each word.

3. They will make word cards and think up games and activities to go with each book.

4. A pocket chart is provided to hold the word cards and to make sentences with the cards.

5. The goal is to have one Big Book each month.

6. Each week the children and teacher 'read' the book together. This is followed by an activity. There will be four activities for each Big Book.

7. The Big Book and follow-on activity is used instead of the storybook on this day.

8. If the Big Book is produced to be eight pages long, then it can be reproduced on A4 paper and cut and folded into a book. The cost is a one-page photocopy, front and back.

9. On the last day, the children can colour the pictures in their book and take it home to read to their parents.

10. If parents attend a parenting program, consider teaching non-literate parents to read the same book during one of the monthly parenting sessions.

LITERACY CIRCLE ACTIVITY 3 RHYME OR SONG
Time: 5 minutes

Rhymes and songs

Children learn about the sounds of language through enjoyable linguistic games like rhymes, songs and finger plays. Early skills in phonetic awareness are thought to be a predictor of later reading success. The lively nature of singing and moving to rhymes and finger plays gives a nice change of pace following the quiet, more passive act of listening to a story. Many countries have a rich history of poetry and song to draw from in the ELP classroom. This is a quick five-minute activity.

Steps:

• The teacher selects a rhyme, song or finger play from the resource book.

• The teacher introduces one or two new rhymes or songs each week.

• A familiar rhyme or song is repeated on other days.

• Increase novelty by adding body movements or changing rhyming words.

• Put a few favourite rhymes or songs on posters and let the children illustrate them.

LITERACY CIRCLE ACTIVITY 4 ALPHABET
Time: 10 minutes

Learning the alphabet

The two most important ways that children learn the letters of the alphabet are by talking about letters and using them throughout the day as they work and play. The most important thing that children must learn is that there is a relationship between letters and sounds. They begin to learn the letters by noticing the special spatial features (shapes) of different letters. Next they learn the names of letters that have meaning for them. Noticing the letters in their name and noticing the names of friends that start with the same letter is a great way to begin.

By participating in a short, enjoyable alphabet activity for a few minutes each day, the children will learn the names and sounds of all of the alphabet letters. Each letter is reinforced when the children make letter books with pictures of objects beginning with the particular letter and sound. Teachers also reinforce the alphabet throughout the day. They connect the alphabet letters to storybooks they are reading to the children. They might use a character or an important word in a storybook to reinforce a letter of the alphabet. They might also play letter-matching or memory games with the alphabet cards, or develop other board games using the letters of the alphabet. Alphabet letters can also be used for interesting art activities.

ELP children first learn the consonants. They will learn the sound of the letter and then connect it to the first sound of a common word. Vowels are much more difficult. Once children learn consonant sounds, a vowel can be added. Children can play games to see which consonants can be combined with the vowel to make a word.

Teach two alphabet letters per week and review them on Friday. During the week, focus on making words from the letters that have been learned. This is another way to review the letters and to understand that letters not only make sounds, but that the sounds are combined to make words.

The daily 10-minute alphabet activity will teach children how to:

• Recognise the letters of their own name.

• Recognise letters of the alphabet.

• Know the sounds of each letter.

• Be able to write each letter.

• Learn that words are made of letters.

• Recognise some words.

A. Name recognition

A good way to learn the alphabet is to start with name recognition. Here are some activities to help children notice the letters in their name. Each activity is one day's lesson. The lessons below cover the first two weeks of school.

1. Children play with their name cards from the attendance chart. Divide the class into four groups. Give each group a bowl of uncooked dry beans. *See how many letters are in your name. Put a bean on each letter. Now look for names that have the same number of letters or beans. Put the cards into a group if they have the same number of beans.* Store the beans in a jar for another day.

2. Divide the class into two groups and try the activity again. *What did we find out?*

3. Children play with the name cards again and touch the first letter. Divide the class into two groups and see if they can find other names that begin with the same letter. The teacher helps them say the letter. They lay the cards on the floor into groups. They practice saying the first letter. Finally groups one and two show each other their work. *What did we find out?*

4. Each child takes their name card outside. They hold the card with one hand so it does not get dirty. They try to draw the letters of their name in the dirt with a stick.

5. Each child uses the name card. Each child goes around and says the first letter of their name so everyone can hear. Next the teacher gives them small pieces of straw and string and asks them to try and make the letter.

6. Children sit in a circle. They put the name cards on the floor. They practice clapping the letters in their name. Then they take turns going around the circle, one at a time, clapping the letters. Challenge them to go faster and faster in a continuous circle with only a one second break between names.

7. The teacher brings one sheet of newspaper for each child. The name of the child is written on the top of the page. The children say the first letter of their name. They look for that letter on the newspaper page. When they find a letter, they circle it with a pencil. The teacher takes up the newspaper page to use on other days.

8. Repeat activity five for the second letter.

9. Repeat activity seven for the second letter of the name.

10. Repeat activity five for the third letter of the name.

11. Repeat activity seven for the third letter of the name.

12. Children might try to write the letters of their name on a page in their journal book.

The teacher moves from child to child and helps them say the names of the letters.

B. Introduce clusters of alphabet letters

A fun and easy way for children to learn the alphabet letters and sounds is through stories.

1. Begin to teach alphabet letters in clusters of four to five letters. One of the letters in each cluster should be a vowel, so that letters in clusters can be put together to make words. Each letter is written on a card.

2. A popular method is to invent a character for each letter. It can be an object or person that begins with the sound of that letter. By having a key picture or subject for each letter the child learns to associate the letter with a sound. The card is illustrated with the picture so children remember the sound of the card. The teacher and children can make up stories about the letter people. Eventually children will put the letter cards together to make words.

3. These letter cards will be produced in the teacher development workshops.

MATERIALS NEEDED TO TEACH THE ALPHABET

- Dry beans.

- Small pieces of straw and string.

- Dictionary: each child has a notebook to use as a dictionary. One letter is written on the top of each page.

- Name card for each child

- Alphabet cards – plain (two sets) about 7cm square.

- Large 'Letter Land' alphabet cards – decorated to show sound of letter (approximately 20cm square).

ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT

1. Labeling familiar objects in the classroom helps children see the connection between learning the alphabet and learning to read.

2. In the beginning label only five or six objects, such as 'door', 'blackboard', 'clock'.

3. After one month the teacher can add a new word each week and ask the children if they found it.

4. Alternatively the class can select the object to be labeled. The teacher will make the word card as the children watch, noticing each letter and the sound.

5. Children can all become 'word finders', looking for familiar words on advertisements, old cans and boxes, and all around the community.

Children use slates to practice their writing at a Plan-supported ECCD centre in Uganda.

4. Each day one letter is introduced. The teacher makes up a story about the letter character.

5. The children find the letter in their dictionary/letter book. They trace the letter, copy it and make a picture.

6. After all letters in the group or cluster are introduced, the teacher brings them all out and tells a story that uses all the letters. The children can also make up stories.

7. The teacher shows the children how to put the letters together to make words. The children try it for themselves.

8. The sequence is repeated with five more letters.

9. All ten letters are then reviewed.

10. The letters that have been learned are displayed on the wall each day.

11. Once children know the alphabet, here are some games to reinforce the alphabet and word reading skills.

Alphabet games

• Work in small groups to practice making words with the 'Letter Land' cards, combining consonants and vowels. The child chooses one word to write in their dictionary.

• **ABC Hunt:** Give one alphabet card and a half-page piece of newspaper to each child. The children play a game to see how many words they can find. The child uses a pencil or crayon to put a circle around the letter. Children might enjoy this activity once a week.

• **ABC Lotto:** Children work in pairs. Each pair is given six letters and a duplicate for each. The children turn over the cards and mix them up. Then they place the cards in four rows of three cards. Taking turns, they turn over two cards. If they match and if the child can say the name, they keep the card. For a more difficult version, four children can play the game with 24 cards. Once children learn how to do it, they can continue playing the game in the words and pictures corner. Once they know the alphabet, they can play lotto with sight words.

• **Buzz:** Use the stack of alphabet cards. Mix in five cards, each with a drawing of a bee. The children sit in a circle. One child gets the stack of cards and turns it over to see a letter. The child names the letter and the sound, and puts the card on the bottom of the stack. The stack is passed to the second child, and then this is repeated around the circle. When a child turns over a picture with a bee, the entire class jumps up and buzzes around the room like a bee while the teacher rings a bell or beats the drum. The children then sit down and the game continues.

• **Spill the Beans:** Paint some large beans white. Write one alphabet letter on each with a permanent marker, and put them in a can. Write the alphabet on a long strip of paper. See how fast a group of children can place the beans on the letters. Other children can slowly clap and count together. This activity can be moved to the words and pictures corner for more play.

• **Word Wall Hunt:** Use two stacks of cards that contain the same words for this game. Place the words from one stack of cards on the wall. Then each child is given a word from the second stack of cards, face down so they cannot see the word yet. When the teacher says, *Go*, the children turn the card over to read the word. Then they quickly run to stand in front of the same word on the wall. If there are fewer words than children, the children can work in pairs. See who gets there the fastest. The teacher mixes up the words, passes them out again and repeats the activity three or four times.

• **Wall Word Riddles:** The children might also play a guessing game with the stacks of cards used in Word Wall Hunt. Each child gets one card. The child of the day looks around the room and secretly chooses one of the wall words and makes up a riddle. *I am thinking of something that has a square shape and begins with the _____ sound.* The person with that card holds it up. All the children turn over the word card and pass one to the right. The child who won the last word is now the leader and gets

to make up another riddle about a wall word. The child with the wall word card gets the next turn.

- **Clothes Line Words:** The teacher makes three stacks of alphabet cards. Consonants on the left and right, vowels in the middle. A child chooses a consonant, vowel and another consonant and hangs them on a 'clothes line' to make a simple three-letter word. Once the teacher and children demonstrate this activity it can be moved to the words and pictures corner.

Preschool children in China use hands-on materials to help them learn numbers and letters.

- **Letter Hunt:** Children work in pairs. A piece of paper and pencil are needed to keep score. Each pair is given one storybook to share. Starting on the first page, child one says the first letter of the alphabet and searches for it on page one. If they find it, they get one point; if they can also say the word they get another point. If the letter is not on the page, they get no points. Child two says the second letter of the alphabet and searches for it in page two only. If they find it they get one point; if they can also say the word, they get another point. If the alphabet letter is not on the page, they get no points. Child one then says the next letter of the alphabet and looks for it on page three. This continues until they get to the last page. They then continue with the alphabet but go back to the first page to look for the next letter through the book and alphabet. At the end of time, the children count the points to see who is the winner.

Reading board games for corner play

Reading board games extends reading activities into child-directed corner play. Teachers can produce new reading games during the monthly ELOs. There are several characteristics to consider in producing board games: it has to be exciting – with rules, spinners, dice, something you are competing for; it has to be attractive – colourful, nice pictures, careful lettering; it has to be appropriately challenging – not too easy; and it has to have a storage container – a way of storing it so that it stays in good condition and the game pieces are not lost. A board game can be attached to an inexpensive plastic file folder. Below are several board games.[14] The purpose of each and description follows:

1. Colour recognition

Colour Bingo (or another word that means, *Hooray, I won!*):

Each game board has eight squares. A coloured shape is drawn in each box. All the game boards are different in some way. There is a set of coloured cards, one for each shape and colour. (There might be a green triangle, a red triangle, a yellow triangle, etc, as well as an orange circle, red circle, etc.) One person is the caller. They mix up the cards and draw one from a special bag. They call out what is on the card. The players who have this coloured shape cover it with a token. The first one who covers his board calls out *Bingo!* and wins the game. They then get to be the caller for the next game.

2. Visual discrimination and memory

Develop a game board with 12 squares. Use identical bottle caps. On the inside of two bottle caps draw identical symbols with a coloured marker, for example, a star with a circle around it. Make at least 30 pairs of these, but children play with six pairs at a time. The first child turns over a bottle cap and then a second. If they match, they get to keep them

14 These games were developed by Deborah Llewellyn for Plan International Bangladesh (2003).

both. If they don't match, they turn them back over. The second child now turns over one bottle cap and then a second. If they match, they get to keep them. The child who can remember their opponent's bottle caps will have the advantage.

3. Hearing words that start with the same sound, and variation hearing words that have the same number of syllables/parts/claps

Animal hunt: Develop a game board with a path through the forest with at least 50 stepping-stones. In the forest there are many animals. The pictures of animals can be cut from the calendar and glued on small cards. On the back of the card is a number that tells how many syllables the word has. Before the game, the animals are placed along the path. Children use a token to move along the path according to the roll of a die. If they land on a stepping-stone with no animal they have to miss a turn. When they land on a stepping-stone beside an animal they have to tell how many parts or syllables are in the name of the animal. If they are correct, they get to put the animal in their cage and stay at the spot. If they are wrong (checking under the card), they have to go back to the start.

Going fishing: The game board is a big pond. Each player has a little paper boat. The water is full of fish; each one has a different letter written on its scales. Each player draws a card. The card has a picture. If the child can find a fish with a letter that makes the same beginning sound as the picture, they get to catch the fish and put it in their boat. Opponents have to agree that the fish's letter makes the same sound as the picture.

4. Letter recognition

Stack the blocks: Using the wooden letter blocks, a child makes a tower as high as they can say the name of the letters. Then the second child does the same. The one with the highest tower wins a token. This is a fun game when children are beginning to know some letters, but not all of them.

Alphabet memory: Produce a memory game board with 12 squares. Make two sets of letters. Each takes turns turning over one letter, then a second. If they match and the child can say the name, they get to keep the letters. If they miss the name of the letter, they turn them back over. The one with the most letters wins the game.

A preschool boy in El Salvador develops his fine motor skills through gluing pieces of paper onto his drawing.

5. Building sight word vocabulary: spin and spell

Produce simple picture word cards such as sun, dog, bug, fish, etc. Produce a spinner that includes all letters appearing in the words. There should be sets of words that have the same number of letters. The letters for each picture word card should be large enough to cover with a coloured tile or block. Each player gets four word cards, each with the same number of letters. They take turns spinning a spinner. If the spinner lands on a letter that appears on their word cards, then they get to cover this letter. The winner is the first one to cover all the letters of their word.

6. Additional fine motor activities to build reading and writing skills

Lacing helps develop the motor and visual coordination necessary for reading. Children can enjoy dress-up dolls where body parts and new clothes are laced together. Mount

a shoe on a board for children to lace and practice tying a bow.

Language literacy competencies and standards: what children should know and be able to do at the end of an ELP

Children should complete the year with knowledge and skills that provide a strong foundation for reading and writing in primary school. These skills might be described as terminal competencies. However, much more is achieved in the language program. A measure of an effective language program is not only the skills that can be measured, but also the quality of the opportunities that were given and the enjoyment experienced as children engage in word play, listen to and respond to stories, and build reading and writing concepts and skills.

Highly specific timetables for what skills children should acquire might be detrimental. It can focus the teacher's attention on getting children

to perform narrowly defined skills by a specific time rather than on providing a rich array of language experiences that will serve children well in the long run. Striving to achieve terminal competencies often leads to superficial teaching and rote learning at the expense of real understanding. Under these conditions children might develop a shaky foundation for literacy.

Expectations about children's performance should be equally balanced with appraisal of the environment to see if children are provided with rich opportunities for expanding literacy skills. Consider using the ECERS – R and ECERS – E.[15]

Language goals and competencies

Language development begins at birth. It is strengthened and refined through play, dialogue, and first-hand experiences in reading, writing, listening and speaking.

This happens at home and then at school. Instruction in an ELP will focus on the development of the following learning competencies:

- Listens to stories and can retell the story.

- Follows three unrelated commands appropriately.

- Combines thoughts into a complete sentence.

- Asks *When? How?* and *Why?* questions.

- Refers to causality by using *Because* or *So.*

- Understands comparatives, such as: loud, louder, loudest.

- Demonstrates understanding of sounds of letters.

- Recognises and names upper and lower case alphabet letters, and can write some.

- Recognises common sight words.

- Reads or attempts to read the child's own dictated story.

- Reads or attempts to read simple patterned or predictable texts using letter sound knowledge and pictures to construct meaning.

- Relates the content of stories to the child's own experience.

- Listens to, discusses, illustrates and dramatises stories.

- Retells or summarises main points of stories.

- Follows oral directions.

- Uses new vocabulary in conversation.

- Uses a variety of sentence patterns.

- Uses correct letter writing formation.

- Uses invented spelling and conventional spelling to form words.

See Appendix 1 for more ideas about aligning literacy activities.

[15] ECERS R (Revised) developed by Thelma Harms at Frank Porter Graham Child Development Research Center in Chapel Hill, US. ECERS E (Extended) developed by Effective Provision of Preschool Education project by the UK Government. ECERS R contains the basic early childhood environments rating scale. ECERS E provides more extensive examination of maths, literacy, and science curricula and diversity.

DAILY ROUTINE

10:15–11AM: CORNER PLAY ACTIVITIES

Children love to play. Through play, children form their understanding about the natural world, mathematical and literacy ideas, and social competence. Play is such an important learning tool for children. Yet many parents and teachers overlook and undervalue play.

Play satisfies an innate need for creativity and curiosity. Children who are skilled at play have more power, influence and capacity to create meaningful lives. Play builds skills like problem solving, persistence, and collaboration that are required throughout life. Practice with play helps children cope with new experiences. A playful attitude enables the mind to explore and remain open to a wide range of possibilities. Play is a natural place to integrate academic learning such as maths, science and literacy. Play settings are good places for children to develop an understanding of how communities of people can and should work together.

Children at play learn how to:

- Sustain self-initiated, goal-directed activity.

- Learn from trial and error, imagination and problem solving.

- Apply concepts of quantity, science and movement to real life.

Children play with water toys at a Plan-supported preschool in Bangladesh. Sand and water play helps children learn. For example, when children pour water from one container to another they not only develop eye-hand coordination, but they also learn about the science of water flow, and mathematical concepts, like volume.

- Reason in a logical, analytical manner by acting on objects.

- Communicate with peers and negotiate differences in points of view.

- Derive satisfaction from one's own accomplishments (pride).

To learn more about the science of play, explore the research of Ken Rubin, Sara Smilansky, and Lev Vygotsky.[16] Rubin explained that children's play, and the development of social skills and thinking skills, go hand in hand. Rubin gave names for the developmental stages of play. Smilansky's research focuses on how children learn through play and the relationship of play to future academic success. Smilansky found a connection between children who conducted high levels of social/dramatic play and high cognitive performance in primary school. Vygotsky explained that children develop thinking skills not only by acting on objects but

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[16] Refer to Bodrova, E. and Leong, D. J., (2006), *Tools of the Mind: The Vygotskian Approach to Early Education*, 2nd edition, Prentice Hall Press, Columbus

also through social interaction with adults and knowledgeable peers while they play. The teacher's verbal directions and probing questions help children acquire knowledge and improve skills as they play.

Social categories of play

- **Solitary play**
  The child plays alone with objects that are different from those used by others; there is no verbal communication with others about the play activity.

- **Parallel play**
  The child plays separately at the same activity, at the same time and in the same place and in close physical proximity to another child. The child is aware of the presence of the peer, and the presence of others has some meaning for them, but each child is playing separately. There is no sharing or discussion.

- **Group play**
  Child engages in activity with others, in which all members share a common purpose.

Cognitive categories of play

- **Functional play**
  Simple, repetitive muscle movements performed with or without an object. Examples are

knocking over blocks, kicking a ball, pouring water, pounding a rock, and skipping rope.

- **Constructive play**
  Manipulating objects for the purpose of making or creating something. Examples are a block construction, doing a puzzle, building a sand tower, or drawing a picture.

- **Dramatic play**
  Letting an object or person symbolise a thing or a person it is not. Examples are being the mother or baby, using a block as a hammer, feeding the doll, pretending a block is a truck.

- **Games with rules**
  This refers to game-like activities with pre-established rules and limits to which the child conforms. Examples are card games, board games, and tag games. Dramatic play that includes rules, and the acting out of a pretend story with others, is the most sophisticated play.

How the adult supports development through play

Play is voluntary, not instructed. However, parents and teachers can help children learn through play by providing enough time for children to

play and ensuring that the materials are stimulating for the level of the child. Opportunity to practice and master a skill is important. After mastery the child becomes bored. Novelty is required for the brain to continue development. The teacher will need to change and add new play materials to increase novelty and stimulate the child to try and learn new things. Therefore, the teacher's role in establishing the environment for play is important. During free play the teacher is busy observing the children. They look for opportunities to talk meaningfully with children and to ask probing questions that extend a child's thinking. They use the opportunity to reinforce academic skills in literacy, maths and science. They also use the opportunity

to develop children's friendships and cooperative social values.

Organising corner play

Corner play might be the most important activity of the day. It is the part of the day where the child directs the learning rather than the teacher. By choosing to play with the things they are good at and like to do, they will actually develop skills in all areas of development: intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically. They will do this through hands-on learning processes, which is the way children learn. The teacher helps children learn through play by moving around the room, showing interest in their 'work', asking questions, and encouraging them to explore further.

BENEFITS OF CHILD-DIRECTED PLAY

Research studies have been conducted to find out the effects of different kinds of preschool programs on children, over time, as they grow to be adults. One 40-year longitudinal study indicated that children who were allowed to plan and direct their own play in preschool, and had caring teachers to support and protect them, engaged in half as many delinquent adult behaviours as those who attended preschools that were dominated by direct instruction focused specifically on academics. Self-directed play appears to foster confidence, independence and concentration.

High Scope Educational Research Foundation, see www.highscope.org for more information.

When children make plans about what they will do during corner play, it helps them develop higher-level thinking skills. They develop skills to make decisions, regulate their own behaviour, and take responsibility for their actions. Some ELPs ask children to make a plan with drawings to show what they will do, where they will do it, what materials they will use, who they will do it with and how long it will take. Planning involves deciding on actions, recognising problems and solutions, and thinking about interactions with others and the consequences. An easy approach to helping children learn how to plan is to ask each child to say which corner they want to play in and what they intend to do there.

Corner play can be set up in the four corners of the classroom space with an additional 'corner' in the garden for sand and water play. Children are given a chance to select a corner and decide what to play. When they finish, they clean up the materials they are using and then select another corner where there is space for them to play. Each corner has a limit on the number of children that might play at one time.

The learning toys in each corner are low-cost and locally made. The materials are selected because they can be played with in different ways at different levels. Using open-ended materials, children are less likely to become bored. When boredom occurs, learning stops. Caregivers can add novelty to each area by bringing in and rotating materials from the local environment. They can introduce new ways to use old materials, such as a game to play with the picture cards. Caregivers also produce new materials and games throughout the year as a component of the teacher development program.

Because children have different interests, learning styles and temperaments, they might be attracted to one learning corner over others. For this reason, it is a good idea to provide a variety of materials and activities designed to attract children who might not normally use that area. For example, the books and pictures corner will attract children who like to look at books, draw pictures, be alone or with others, play a game, manipulate objects, use large muscles (putting cards in wall chart), as well as small muscles (using pencils). All of the different types of activities in this corner build language, reading and writing skills. If a child only goes to one corner, the teacher might ask what could be done to interest that child in another corner. A teacher might also ask whether there are enough learning opportunities within any one corner so that a child who spends a lot of time there can continue to benefit.

The name of each corner is written on a poster and displayed in the corner. Some ELPs might find it easier to write the name on a piece of heavy duty cardboard and stand it on the floor, against the wall. Each sign should have a pocket or six clips to hold the name cards of the six children who are playing at the corner.

Corner names:

1. Blocks and building
2. Imagination
3. Books and pictures
4. Puzzles and games
5. Sand and water

DESCRIPTION OF THE LEARNING CORNERS

Blocks and building corner

Blocks help children develop reasoning skills and fine motor coordination. They learn maths concepts, such as sorting things that are alike and different, ordering things by size, and counting. Making a block building requires spatial reasoning, which is needed for advanced mathematics. Blocks help children develop skills to use their hands and fingers well. They learn to coordinate hand-eye movements. These skills will help them read and write. At first, block constructions are very simple, such as a straight line or square. Later block buildings become more complex and three-dimensional. Children might make a design or balance blocks in a challenging way.

Suggested materials:

- Geometric blocks cut into cubes, triangles, rectangles. (Note: A rectangle is the size of two cubes. A triangle is made from cutting a cube diagonally into two pieces. Size of cubes: 5cm square; size of rectangles: 5cm x 10cm.)

- 2.5cm wooden cubes (100 each of red, blue, yellow, green, purple, orange for a total of 600). Geometric blocks are most important. If you can have only one block, cut them into shapes as described above.

- 40 bamboo sticks (four colours) about 20–25cm long in three graduated sizes.

- Small figures of animals, people, vehicles made of cardboard or painted on blocks.

- Other interesting building materials such as tin cans, corncobs, large seedpods painted in bright colours, or cardboard discs (circles/triangles/squares) with notches that can be fitted together in a sculpture, colourful if possible.

Games and puzzles corner

Board games and puzzles help children solve problems, move objects with their fingers, and follow rules. Board games can extend maths and reading activities into the corner play areas. Commercial puzzles might range from nine to 16 pieces for five-year-olds. Use fewer pieces for teacher-made puzzles (five to nine pieces). Puzzles help children see how parts of something become a whole. Self-correcting puzzles are ones that have a base and the children place the puzzle pieces on top of the base. They can also try to make the puzzle without the base for more of a challenge. Other kinds of puzzles are made from blocks. These include tangram blocks, pattern blocks, cuisenaire rods or geoboards. Children can make their own designs or replicate designs that are on cards.

The blocks and building corner helps children, like these boys in Uganda, to develop reasoning skills and fine motor coordination during corner play.

Suggested materials:

- Picture puzzles nine to 16 pieces (commercial). If locally produced, five to 10 pieces.

- Shape puzzles (tangrams, pattern blocks, geoboards; concentric shapes).

- Logic games (for example, Memory, Tic-Tac-Toe, Dominoes, Bingo, Checkers).

- Playing cards and dice (if culturally appropriate).

- Board games with rules for shape, alphabet or colour recognition, and counting practice.

- Lace-ups or beading/threading.

- Beanbags made of different printed and textured cloth, containers such as boxes or cans for tossing the beanbags into, and small sticks for keeping score.

Books and pictures corner

This corner focuses on pictures in books, pictures on cards, and pictures that children make themselves. It combines art activities and language skill building materials such as storybooks, lotto games, alphabet and picture cards. Art supplies such as paper, glue, scissors, crayons and paints are very costly and not easily found in remote villages. Volunteer caregivers also lack the time to gather materials for daily art lessons. The minimum of drawing materials should be available. Children also enjoy the opportunity to look at books, and to play with picture, alphabet and word cards. When messy art projects are available, the storybooks are removed to prevent damage.

Drawing their own pictures develops the motor skills necessary for writing. Creativity should be encouraged, not replications of simple stick figures. Their drawings show them that something they are thinking about can be represented in a picture. Later they will learn that ideas and pictures can also be written as words. They can dictate words that they want the teacher to write as their picture. They might choose to copy or trace the words if they like. Consider using slates, as well as paper, for drawing.

All art is exciting to children. It helps them develop fine motor skills and visual reasoning. They also enjoy talking about their pictures and so art motivates language development. Interesting art materials are available at no cost and the teacher should be encouraged to provide them. This includes mud and water for moulding. Collages can be made with leaves, bits of paper, and glue made from a flour and water paste. Children might practice weaving with string and a notched piece of cardboard. Children also enjoy sewing as an art activity that develops reasoning and fine motor skills.

Reading to children is one of the most important things teachers can do to help children develop literacy skills. This corner creates the opportunity for the teacher to sit with a small group of children and share a story. Children should also have the opportunity to look at books on their own. A love of books is a necessary skill for life-long learners. Children must be able to talk in sentences and express whole thoughts before they can learn to read. Talking about pictures and sorting them in different ways helps children develop important skills for reading. A large set of picture cards (two of each) and alphabet cards can be used in so many ways. Children can play a memory game, make up a story, play 'school' with their friends, or match letters to words.

Books and pictures corner

- Storybooks (three to five books per week; rotate each week).

- 100 picture cards (of animals, flowers, fruits and birds) and duplicates (laminated, labeled; plain on backside; downloaded from the internet).

- Alphabet cards (laminated; two of each), or cut from cardboard, and game activities.

- Number cards, one to 20 (laminated, two of each) and game activities.

- Wall pocket chart for sorting cards (optional).

- Drawing paper and/or slates.

- Crayons, pencils, erasers and sharpener (if possible).

- Clipped magazine or newspaper pictures and newspaper pages.

Imagination or pretend play corner

This corner encourages creativity and socialisation. Children learn and play with familiar objects from everyday life, such as dolls or farm animals. Other objects, such as buttons or seeds, can be used as the child wishes. Children can pretend to be a mother, a shopkeeper, a doctor or even a baby. Through pretending, children are not trying to escape from the reality of life, they are trying to understand it.

Some ELPs put vehicles, animals and people figures in the block centre and a play mat for setting up a village scene. Putting these figures in the imagination corner draws interest to this area by children who might not otherwise choose it. Figures need not be costly. Drawings of people or vehicles glued to scrap blocks of wood are adequate.

Suggested materials:

- Small dishes, stirring spoon, coconut shells.

- Cloth dolls (male and female), clothing for dolls.

- Graduated small baskets or coconut shells.

- Balance scale.

- Pieces of solid colour cloth – A4 size to use as a tabletop, baby bed, store counter, etc.

- Plastic mat (8cm x 10cm) with road and typical landscape drawn with permanent markers or paint.

- Plastic or wooden farm animals, boats, vehicles, and people and sticks to use on mat.

- Buttons, pebbles, shells, seeds, bottle caps used for making designs or to play store or house.

- Dress-up clothing and props.

Sand and water corner

Children can make playful discoveries about science and maths using water and sand. It develops their measuring, reasoning and analytical skills. The water and sand play corner is a high-energy and talkative one. Children are naturally talkative and cooperative as they play. Having such a fun thing to do at school makes them think positively about school and learning. The water bucket can also be used to improve health and hygiene. Children should wash their hands with soap in the water bucket before entering the classroom. It is easy to add interesting new materials by using bottles of different sizes and shapes, and adding funnels, tubes, eye droppers and squeeze bottles for squirting. Teachers should allow children to add water to the sand so they can mould houses and tunnels. This is an ideal area for modeling clay, if it is available. Some caregivers add bright coloured paint to two or

three long sticks and call them 'magic drawing sticks'. This encourages children to draw pictures in the sand.

Suggested materials:

Sand play

• Set of measuring cups.

• Spoons.

• Wooden objects for making designs (ie sticks).

• Cups or coconut shells for moulding sand.

Water play

• Set of measuring cups.

• Funnels.

• Rubber tube.

• Plastic bottles with different size openings.

• Lids with holes for sprinkles.

• Eye droppers (if available) and small bottles for filling.

• Spray bottles if available.

Managing corner play

To achieve maximum benefits from corner play the children must be able to select where they want to play and who they play with. They must also take responsibility for the care of the materials. It is very important to make sure that children have been taught how to use and care for all of the materials before they are allowed to play with them. A system must also be in place to regulate how children move from one corner to the next. It is a step-by-step process over several days or weeks. Suggestions are provided at the end of this section. Following these steps will help children be able to manage self-directed play as described in the corner play reference chart (right).

Corner play clean up time!

Materials for each corner should be stored in sturdy jute, cotton or webbed plastic bags and then placed in a tin trunk. The bags should have two sturdy handles. After completing the last corner, teacher will hand out the storage bags. Children will place the toys in the bags and take them to the tin trunk for the teacher to store. Helping with clean up teaches children many good life skills such as self-help and care for belongings. It gives them a sense of order and ritual that helps them feel secure and safe.

Managing conflict during corner play

1. Teachers will have very few behaviour problems if children understand the rules listed on the corner play reference chart.

2. If there is confusion and chaos, the teacher will need to repeat the method used during week two, for example, *Choosing your own corner/or cleaning up is not going very well.* The teacher explains the specific problems that are occurring, for example, *We are going to go back to the old method of selecting corners for a few days.* (See suggested steps for successful corner play on page 102). *Once we are doing very nicely with this system we will try again to let you select your corner.*

Corner play reference chart
1. Child of the day takes name card and chooses corner.
2. Child of the day calls name of a friend who takes name card and chooses a corner.
3. Each child in turn takes name card, chooses a corner and calls name of next friend.
4. Each child attaches name card to corner card.
5. There will be no more than six children in a corner.
6. Child plays until finished and then cleans up.
7. Child selects another corner that has less than six children playing.
8. Child tells teacher where they want to play.
9. Child attaches nametag to corner sign.
10. Child continues playing until teacher says it is time to clean up.
11. Each child helps to store the corner materials in bags.
12. The teacher places the bags in the tin trunk until the next day.
13. Each child puts name card back in attendance chart.

3. Teachers might also have discipline problems with children who are not sharing the materials. If this occurs, the teacher should get down to the child's eye level and listen to their complaints. Each child should have a turn to explain what happened. The teacher will ask them how they think the problem can be resolved. If the children cannot come up with a solution, the teacher will have to make the decision.

4. If a child speaks badly to another child, or physically attacks another child or the play materials being used by the child, then the child should be removed from that corner. The child can stand next to the teacher until they calm down and can apologise to their classmate. Then the child and the teacher will make a decision about where the child can play.

Suggestions for selecting and producing toys:

1. Produce one complete set of materials for each area. Use the set of materials for training caregivers in how to use them.

2. Provide a basic set of materials to each centre but engage teachers in making as many of the materials as possible, especially the board games for corner play. This will increase their understanding about how children learn through play. Caregivers can ask parents to help. Many parents are artistic or good with crafts and enjoy this activity.

3. Choose materials that can be used in many different ways, such as blocks or picture cards.

4. If an adequate supply of materials exists, rotate them to increase novelty. For example, two board games one week, two different board games the next week.

5. Encourage children to invent ways to use materials.

6. Materials should be complex enough to interest five-year-olds – nine to 18 piece puzzles, storybooks with captivating pictures, and smaller blocks rather than large ones.

7. Novelty helps the brain to grow. Rotate materials such as board games and storybooks. For example, put out only two board games or puzzles and three to five books each week. Bring in new things to spark interest, for example, fresh flowers to draw or sort in the picture corner.

8. Questions to ask: Are children bored with the materials? Has the novelty worn off? Are children doing anything new with the materials? Are the toys challenging them to master higher skills? Are children eager to tell and show you their creations? Are most children happily occupied for one hour?

9. These topics should be discussed during monthly teacher development meetings. Teachers can exchange ideas about new activities they develop for corner play and materials that have interested the children.

Corner play – teacher's role

The teacher has an important job to do during corner play – observing and talking with the children. Responsive stimulation is the cornerstone of any child development program. Non-instructional talk or 'conversation' is now known to be one of the most important forces for intellectual development to be used by parents and teachers. Responsive communication can foster cognitive and language development. Some suggestions:

1. Observe children when they are talking and interacting with other children, but do not interrupt them.

2. When a child is playing alone, hold natural conversations with the child and encourage them to talk.

3. Listen to children and respond to what they say.

4. Stimulate them to think and extend their play to a higher-level.

5. *Tell me about your block building. What other shape block could you use here? You need some food in your pot. Why don't you eat this pumpkin?* The teacher hands them a few orange buttons to symbolise pumpkin. *Or would you like some other kind of food?* The teacher hands them the button jar.

6. Add new materials to an area to increase novelty.

7. Avoid gender bias; encourage boys to play house and girls to build with blocks.

8. Sit in one corner with children for about 10 minutes, teach them how to play a game, let them 'pretend' read a story to you, and observe how children play. When you are sitting in one area, you must also be aware of all other areas and know when you are needed to help or intervene.

Suggested steps for successful corner play

Step 1: Introduce children to the five corners

1. The first two days of corner play will be used for talking, not playing.

2. The teacher will explain the ground rules and directions. *Every day after the literacy circle, you will have one hour to play with the toys in the five corners.*

3. There are four corners inside and one outside. We will visit each corner and learn about the materials. We will decide together what rules we must follow to take care of the materials and share them with our friends.

4. The teacher moves to each corner and asks the children to sit on the floor so they can see the materials but not touch them. They will watch the teacher hold up the materials.

5. The teacher tells the name of the corner. They show the children the card with the name of the corner. The teacher holds up each material in the corner and says its name. The children will listen as the teacher discusses the activities for the corner.

6. The teacher will not be able to cover all areas in one day. It might take two days to introduce all the corners and discuss the rules. On the third day the teacher and children revisit all the areas. The children tell the teacher what they remember. The teacher then demonstrates how to play with the materials.

Step 2:   Setting rules for corner play

1. Children should help to make the rules for corner play.

2. After seeing all the corners, the teacher asks the children if they can think of some important rules that everyone should follow when they play in the corners.

3. Listen to what the children suggest for themselves.

4. Encourage them to discuss the following:
    a. *When we finish playing, how should we leave the materials? Should they be scattered all over the place and mixed up? Yes, we should tidy up every corner before leaving and arrange materials as we found them.*

    b. *Should we keep all the materials for ourselves or should we share them with our friends. Why?*

Step 3: Managing corner play during the first week of school

After completing steps one and two, the children will have a direct experience in each corner. They will go to a corner in groups of four to five children. They will play there for about 20 minutes. They will go to two corners each day. The teacher will explain the steps as follows:

1. *Yesterday we learned the names of the corners. We looked at the materials. We learned how to care for them and we made up some rules. Who can remember the rules?*

2. *Today you will have the chance to play in two corners. Tomorrow you will play in two other corners. We will practice in this way until everyone is doing a great job in playing nicely together and caring for the materials.*

3. The teacher takes the name cards from the attendance chart. *I will call out your name and put the name card in a corner. Please remember where I put your card. You will play there until I tell you it is time to clean up the corner.* The

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS:

-   Book and picture corner – proper way to hold a book and turn the pages; stacking the picture cards neatly when finished; putting all materials back where they belong.

-   Block corner – all the same type of blocks arranged together before leaving. Careful with sticks not to poke others in the eyes, etc.

-   Puzzles and games – all the same pieces together; do not mix up game or puzzle pieces. Discuss why.

-   Imagination corner – all seeds and buttons back in containers. Do not put objects in mouth as it might cause choking.

-   Sand and water – please keep sand and water in container. Be careful not to wet clothing.

teacher calls out the names on four to five cards and attaches them to the sign that tells the name of the corner. The teacher calls out four to five more names and puts them in the second corner, etc.

4. The teacher tells the children that they will go to the corner that has their name card. The first thing they will do when they get there is to learn each other's name. The teacher will ask them to tell the teacher this before they can begin to play with the toys.

5. The children can now play for 20 minutes. During this time the teacher walks from corner to corner, observing the children and helping them.

6. When there is only five minutes left to play, the teacher quietly informs each group.

7. At the end of 20 minutes, the teacher asks them to tidy the corner, putting all materials as they found them. Once all corners are tidy, the teacher asks the children to pick up the name cards and rotate the entire group clockwise.

8. Children attach names to the sign and begin to play. Again the teacher informs them when there is only five minutes left. At the end

of 20 minutes the teacher asks the children to tidy the corner as they found it. The teacher asks them to remember who they were playing with, and where they played during the last corner activity.

9. Tomorrow they will begin in the next corner, rotating clockwise. The teacher asks the children to tell the name of the corner where they will begin the next day. The teacher compliments them on how well they played together, how nicely they cared for the materials, and how nicely they tidied up.

10. This progression is used to complete the first week. After three days the children will have gone through all the corners and repeated one.

Step 4: Managing corner play during the second week of school

This week the teacher will again select four to five name cards for each corner. The teacher should make some changes in the card groups so that children have the opportunity to make new friends. The teacher follows the same procedure as the previous week.

1. The teacher takes the name cards from the attendance chart. *I will call out your name and put the*

name card in a corner on top of the corner card. Please remember where I put your card. You will play there until I tell you it is time to clean up the corner. The teacher calls out the names on four to five cards and places them in the first corner. The teacher calls out four to five more names and puts them in the second corner, etc.

2. The children go to the corner. Before they begin to play the teacher asks that they learn each other's names. Then they can play for 25 minutes. During this time the teacher walks from corner to corner, observing and helping the children.

3. At the end of 25 minutes, the teacher asks them to tidy the corner, putting all materials as they found them. The teacher asks them to pick up the name cards and rotates the entire group clockwise.

4. Children now put down the name cards and begin to play. At the end of 25 minutes the teacher asks the children to tidy the corner as they found it. The teacher asks them to remember who they were playing with and where they played during the last corner activity.

5. Tomorrow they will begin in the next corner, rotating clockwise.

The teacher asks the children to all tell the name of the corner where they will begin the next day. The teacher compliments them on how well they played together and how nicely they cared for the materials and tidied up.

Step 5: Managing corner play during the third week of school (partial self-selection)

In order to gain the full benefits of corner play, children must be able to select the corner where they want to play. It will help them develop confidence, independence, initiative, and planning skills. They must also be able to select the friends they want to play with. It will help them develop their social and language skills.

This week the teacher and children take the first step toward child-directed play. The teacher introduces it this way:

1. *This week we will try something new. This week you will get to choose where you want to play.*

2. *Each corner can only have six children. Do you know why? Yes, if there are too many children there are not enough toys to go around.*

3. *Each corner card has the name of the corner and six paper clips so*

that six children may attach name card to the corner where they want to play. Note: Another approach is to provide pockets. Explain to the children that if there are no more pockets or paper clips then there is no space to play. Another less complicated approach is to simply ask children to count how many children are there. If there are less than six there is space to play.

4. *Here is how we will do it.*

5. *First I want you to think about where you want to go and what you plan to do there.*

6. The child of the day gets to choose first. The child tells where they want to play and what they plan to do in the corner. The child then goes to that corner and attaches their name to gem clips on the corner card. Before they go to the corner they pick the child who will choose next. The second child gets to tell where they want to play. Before going to the corner, the child calls out the name of the next child and so forth. The teacher must keep this moving very quickly so the children called last will not experience frustration.

7. The last children will have fewer choices, but this will change every day because the child of the day changes every day, and the

order in which children's names are called changes every day. *So today you might not begin in your favourite place, but probably the next day you will be able to.*

8. The children play in the corner for 25 minutes. After 20 minutes the teacher quietly reminds them that in five minutes it will be time to tidy the corner and move to a second corner.

9. The teacher then rotates the children one place to the right. In this way, each child chooses one corner and the teacher chooses one corner through rotation.

10. The next day, the teacher repeats the same process. The child of the day goes first to select a corner. Each child in turn calls out the name of another child. The children attach name cards to the six gem clips. If the gem clips are full, the child must choose another corner.

11. After 25 minutes they tidy up and the teacher rotates them clockwise to the next corner. Remember, each child plays in two corners, one that was selected and one that the teacher selects through rotation.

Step 6: Managing corner play through self-selection

In the fourth week the children are ready to try the next step in

choosing corner play. They will select the corner and move freely as they wish during corner playtime. Here is how the teacher explains it:

1. *Each day you will select a corner in the same way. The child of the day will select a corner, tell what they plan to do, and then pick another child to select their corner. As we did before, you will call someone else's name before you leave the circle. Then you will go directly to the corner and attach your name card to the corner sign. This way your friends do not have to wait so long to make their selection and get started. We will learn to do this very quickly.*

2. *So you can see, we will begin in the same way but we will try something new.*

3. *When you are tired of playing in that corner and want to go to another corner you can do so after you tidy up the toys where you were playing.*

4. *Take your name card and look for a corner where there is an extra gem clip. Then tell the teacher where you plan to play. Show the teacher that you tidied up the toys you were playing with. Then go to the corner, attach your card to the gem clip of the corner card, and then you can begin to play.*

5. *So when you are ready to go to another corner, what is the first thing you do?* (Tidy up.)

6. *What is the second thing you do?* (Find a corner with an extra gem clip and tell the teacher where you plan to play.)

7. *How many children can be in each corner?* (Only six.)

8. *How many gem clips are on each corner card?* (Only six.)

9. *I will let you know when corner playtime is nearly over. At the end of corner play we will go for outdoor play.*

10. *Are you ready to try it?*

ASKING CHILDREN QUESTIONS DURING CORNER PLAY

- It isn't sensible to ask adults questions to which you already know the answer.

- The same applies to conversations with children.

- Ask questions only to seek genuine information.

DAILY ROUTINE

11–11:30AM: OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is an important daily activity because it has so many benefits for physical health. It reduces stress and improves learning. Outdoor time is most beneficial when it includes a balance between structured physical education activities and free play. Here are some ways that outdoor play helps children develop:

- **Thinking skills:** There are many things to investigate outside such as insects and their movements, plants and their growth, the sun and its shadows, and even evaporating puddles. The outdoor environment can build children's curiosity about the world around them. It gives them the opportunity to apply and practice things learned in the classroom, for example, drawing squares in the sand for a jumping game. Many games require strategy and reasoning.

- **Communicating skills:** There is opportunity to learn new words outdoors while exploring nature or conducting group games. Outdoors is a natural place to develop conversation skills and self-expression. Outdoors children feel more comfortable talking about themselves and they enjoy chatting with their teacher. They are curious about their teachers and appreciate the chance to ask questions and

talk freely with them. There are many opportunities to teach where children can be encouraged to talk about something that they see outdoors and to ask questions.

- **Social and emotional development:** During outdoor play, children learn to recognise and manage feelings, and to play well with others. They learn to listen and follow rules. They learn to lead and to follow. They learn to share and take turns.

- **Physical development:** Children develop the ability to control muscles in their fingers, hands, arms and legs. They learn to coordinate hand-eye movements and develop the coordination to run, jump, hop, gallop and balance.

Outdoor play is scheduled between corner play and maths circle time. Children get very excited during corner play and it might be difficult for them to settle down to a structured, teacher-directed learning activity. Vigorous outdoor play helps them expend energy and get ready for a quiet indoor activity.

Playground safety

Make sure that there is a clear space with no sharp rocks or debris for children to play. Create an outside boundary with sticks or string, or by using landmarks that children can clearly see. Some areas might have ponds, roads or other hazards nearby. Children might also have a tendency to wander off. For these reasons, a set of rules and a step-by-step process for helping children to learn and follow them must be developed.

Physical education

Physical education includes a variety of organised group games that help children develop motor skills, including:

- Basic locomotor skills – running, jumping, hopping, skipping.

- Coordination and balance.

- Using body movements to express feelings.

- Throwing, kicking and catching.

Teachers should plan activities to develop these motor skills. Two pieces of equipment that are low-cost and good value for physical education are balls and ropes. Metal hoops or bicycle tyres can also provide interesting physical challenges that combine running, balancing and hand-eye coordination. On the other hand, many fun

and beneficial activities can be performed with no equipment at all.

It is useful for the teacher to have a small drum, traditional instrument, or two sticks to use for rhythm games, and to attract the children's attention when they need to give instructions. Remember, the best physical education activities are those that keep everyone active. Traditional games can be modified so more children are involved and less are sitting or waiting. Consider inviting parents or grandparents to school to teach children games that they played as children. This can also be a nice activity for cultural days.

Physical education suggested activities

1. Relay races: Relay races are a good way to encourage children to move their bodies in different ways. Divide children into two lines. The teacher stands in front of them, several metres away. The first two children are ordered to race and tag the teacher's hand. After they tag the teacher's hand they run back, tag the next person in line and then go to the rear of the line. Everyone gets a chance to race to the teacher. The first team to finish is the winner. Each time the teacher provides a new challenge

for the relay, such as: hop on one foot, run backwards, skip, or twirl.

2. Animal charades: Children enjoy imitating animals – turtles, monkeys, chickens, ducks, dogs, cats, fish, birds, lions, etc. The teacher might call out an animal, and then beat the drum. When the drum is beating, the children move all around the play area making the animal movement. When the teacher beats fast the children move fast, when the drumbeats slowly the children make the same movement in slow motion.

3. Ball throwing: Rolling balls within a circle is a fun activity, as is tossing a ball at an obstacle and getting points for your team. Children can toss and catch balls as a relay activity. Children like to play dodge ball. Six children stand on the outside of a circle area. They toss the ball at children who are inside the circle (rule: heads are off limits). The children in the centre try to dodge the ball. If the ball hits them, they go to the circle and become a thrower. This is done until there are only six people left in the circle. Now those six come to the outside and other children go in the circle. For variety, change the rules of the game.

4. Tag: Tag is a good way to practice running. **Freeze tag** is when children are tagged and have to hold a pose

until everyone is frozen. This is a good game to develop balance. **Glue tag** is highly participatory. The teacher calls out the name of two tag team leaders. The two children chase other children until they 'glue' someone. The glued child then has to join hands and run together with the person who tagged them. Now the two of them go after another child. The other children try to keep from getting caught. When the third child is tagged, they are also 'glued' to the tag team and together they chase after a fourth child until all children are captured. Finally, there are two large groups of children holding hands trying to 'tag' the last person. When all children are caught, they count how many are glued together. The largest group is the winner. The last two children to

be caught get to start the game again as tag leaders. **Under the bridge** is another type of tag game. One child is the tagger and tries to tag as many children as possible. A tagged child must freeze with feet wide apart. To free a child, a player must crawl under the bridge, and then the frozen child is free and can run again. In this game of tag, change taggers often.

5. Ropes: Ropes are good for balance and jumping. Spread ropes on the ground in different formations. Children walk and balance on the rope without falling off. To play **Jump the river** lie two ropes on the ground in straight lines opposite each other. Children line up and try to jump the river. After everyone has a turn, widen the river and continue

TEACHER TIPS:

Let yourself have fun when playing games. When children sense that you are enjoying the game, they will have more fun.

If you join in a game, it doesn't mean you give up control. It means dividing your attention between playing and observing.

Try out games during teacher development meetings so the rules are clear and everything will run smoothly.

Teach children that it is okay to win (but not all the time) and it is okay to lose (but not all the time).

until all children have fallen into the river. **Jump rope** is twirling ropes over the head and under the feet are excellent games to build coordination.

6. Traditional hopscotch, line and pebble games: Many traditional children's games are played by drawing lines on the ground with a stick and tossing rocks for points or to move the body by jumping. Teaching these games to children is an excellent way to pass on a cultural heritage.

Rainy day indoor games: Sometimes there is rain or mud that prevents children from playing outside. Here are some indoor games that can be played in a small space. When playing indoor games, it is sometimes difficult for children to settle down for the maths circle time that follows. If so, conclude with a quiet game or 'guided dream' to calm children.

Guided dreams: A calming activity that helps children make the transition from indoor games to quiet group time. The teacher announces that indoor games are finished and that it is time for guided dreams. The teacher asks the children to lie on their backs and close their eyes. The teacher asks them to breathe slowly in and out many times. Then the teacher asks them to close and open toes, rotate ankles, tighten muscles

in legs and release, then stomach, fingers, hands, arms and shoulders, neck and head. Then breathe deeply again, in and out, in and out. The teacher then gives the children a little story to think about while their eyes are closed. The teacher might begin, *Today we are taking a walk along a road.* Then the teacher tells them everything they see until they come to the classroom, ready for circle time and maths. Another day they might take an imaginary boat ride, or sit in a tree and watch a mother bird feed her babies or teach them to fly. The children listen with closed eyes until the teacher says to open eyes and come for circle time. The children enjoy this restful activity.

Indoor game suggestions

Seven up: All but seven children put their heads in their lap with their eyes closed and thumbs up. The seven children walk around and choose one child and gently push their thumb down. When all seven are done, they line up and call, *Seven up.* Each child whose thumb was pushed tries to guess who did it. The thumb pusher doesn't say whether each child was right or wrong until all children have had a chance. Each child has only one guess. Then the seven up have to tell the truth. Those

who guessed correctly change places and become one of the seven up.

Mirror: The teacher tells the children to copy everything the teacher does until they say stop (the teacher might stand up, sit down, scratch head, twist, etc). When children understand, ask them to pair up and try it with a partner. Each pair goes to a spot in the room. One child makes a series of body movements and the other copies the motions as if they were a mirror reflection. The teacher calls stop and partners change places. Try a different way where children try to

mirror emotions. A variation is **Simon Says** where children stand in straight lines. They are told to only imitate what Simon says. The leader calls out, *Simon Says jump up and down; Simon says clap hands; Simon says...* When Simon says to do it, the children must do it. The leader tries to trick the children by calling out a command that Simon doesn't say. Anyone who moves must sit down until the next round begins. This teaches good listening skills and fast-paced physical exercise in a small space.

MORE TIPS FOR TEACHERS:

Games teach skills, release energy and build a community when everyone is having fun and the atmosphere is playful.

Talking about games increases the benefit. For example, *I saw Kiran help Arif when he fell down and Arif smiled. Did we remember to tag safely? Who thinks we should play this game tomorrow? Why? Can you think of any way we could change this game so it would be more fun?*

Introduce new games before going outside. You might draw a figure on the blackboard to explain. Go over any safety rules, such as safe tagging (gentle open handed touch on the shoulder, arm or back). Count off and form partners or teams before going outside where it is more difficult for children to hear.

All classrooms need a safety signal that means, *Stop immediately!* For example, the teacher can raise their hand when they want children to stop and listen. Anyone who sees the raised hand must freeze immediately and also raise their hand until everyone is frozen and listening.

Hot and cold: An object, such as an eraser, is selected. One child is sent outside. An object is hidden. The child enters the room. As they get close to the object, the children clap loudly and, as the child moves away from the object, the children clap softly. When the child finds the object, they choose the next person to go outside, and then they choose another child to hide the object.

Memory: Children sit in a large circle. One child goes and touches something in the room. The second person touches that object and then something else. The third person must touch the objects in order and then a third object. The fourth person must touch all three objects in order and then a fourth object. Children sitting will watch but not give clues. When a mistake occurs, the next person to play starts the game over, touching only one object. The game continues as before. The teacher might help the children count how many things they could remember and challenge them to go higher and higher.

Circle swap: The children stand in a circle. They point to the person who is opposite. When the teacher calls, *Go,* all the children will try to go through the circle and swap places. If they bump into someone, they have to call beep and continue to the other side. Every time they bump into someone they call, *Beep.* The object of the game is to try and make a circle swap in silence.

Alphabet soup: Children work in small teams of two to three children. The teacher calls out a letter of the alphabet and the children lie on the floor and try to form the letter with their body. In a variation, children can form numbers. The teacher can acknowledge what they see and might ask children to stand and look at a particular group. They all try another letter and this time the teacher points out how other children made this letter or number.

Duck, duck, goose: Children sit in a large circle. The tagger goes around the circle. They tap each child on the head, saying *Duck, duck, duck.* Eventually the tagger taps a child on the head and calls *Goose* instead of *Duck.* The goose jumps up and chases the tagger around the circle. The tagger tries to get into the same spot where the goose was sitting before being tagged. If they get caught the tagger must sit in the centre of the circle. The goose is now the tagger. The game continues. If someone else is caught, they replace the person in the centre and the centre person sits back in the circle and joins the game.

Outdoor free play: Out of a 30-minute physical education period, be sure to provide 10-15 minutes for children to walk around, talk to friends and make up their own games. During this time, children might elect to play with the ropes and balls, draw with sticks, or make designs with rocks. Children might also use the time to follow-up on a previous science lesson such as taking care of a garden or observing insect behaviour.

Building playground equipment

All children enjoy playing on outdoor equipment – swings, balance beams, tyre tunnels, and climbing towers – if available. Building a play area for children can be a good way for communities to work cooperatively and do something very special for their children. Plan International Uganda facilitators worked with community members to produce outdoor playground equipment for little cost, using local materials like wood and tyres.

Discuss safety standards with the community and then check throughout the building process that the equipment is safe and sturdy. Safe sliding boards are difficult to produce (tin gets hot in the sun, broken tin can cause cuts, children fall when an angle is too steep) and not an essential part of the playground.

Make sure there is some play equipment that children with disabilities can enjoy. Having opportunities to play together builds friendships and understanding for children with and without learning differences.

DAILY ROUTINE

11:30AM–12PM: STRUCTURED MATHS ACTIVITIES

A positive attitude toward mathematics, and a strong foundation for mathematics learning, begins in early childhood. Children learn maths concepts and skills best through everyday activities. They need many concrete materials to count, sort, compare, match, put together and take apart before they will understand the properties of a number and the meaning of maths operations – addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. To become skilled and confident in maths, children must believe that maths makes sense. Children benefit when teachers ask questions to encourage thinking and suggest interesting problems to solve. They must hear and use maths language and trust their ability to solve and explain a problem. If they enjoy maths, they will see themselves as a successful learner and develop a disposition for maths in the early years. To help them develop maths competency, children need the opportunity to acquire skills in the areas mentioned below.

Skills children need for mathematics

1. Sorting and classifying:

Organising objects according to their properties (size, colour, shape, texture, etc) helps children to think logically and develop the language of mathematics.

Suggested activity:
Provide containers of objects such as buttons, bottle caps, rocks or large seeds, squares of cloth, or leaves. Ask the children to sort them by one attribute (such as colour). Then ask them if they can find another way to sort them. Let other children guess how they did it. Ask them to compare which group has more and which has less.

2. Recognising patterns:

The ability to recognise and describe patterns is the key to mathematical thinking and is basic to understanding all concepts in mathematics. A child who does not see patterns does not expect things to make

A boy in Ghana practices counting and writing numerals as part of structured maths activities.

sense. Children need to get into the habit of looking for patterns as a strategy to solve maths problems.

Suggested activities:
1. Teacher or children claps or snaps a variety of patterns. Others repeat and continue the pattern.
2. Using objects above make a simple pattern, for example, large-small, large-small. Ask children to guess what comes next. Ask children to make a different pattern. Make the patterns more complex over time.
3. Make a triangle with matchsticks. How many matchsticks does it take to make one, two or three triangles? What is the pattern? Can you tell how many matchsticks would be needed for four triangles?

3. Counting and writing numerals:

Being able to recite numbers in order does not mean that a child can count. A child might know the counting sequence one to 10 perfectly and still be unable to use the sequence to count a group of objects. Children need lots of practice in counting real objects. Counting with skill and understanding is an important problem-solving tool in mathematics. To write numerals, children must have the necessary motor coordination. It helps to practice writing numerals in

the air tracing large number posters in the classroom that show the starting point and directions. Writing numerals in sand or producing them in clay helps children gain practice.

Suggested activities:
1. Let children count as they line up to go home or outside.
2. Count a sequence and do something with the body. *1-2-3-4, spin 1-2-3-4, spin.* Also let them try it backwards.
3. Circle game. Stand six to eight children in a circle. Pick a number. The children count to that number. The one who says the last number sits down. Begin again with the next person. *Who will be the last person standing?* Try again and let the children predict who will be the last person standing.

4. Comparing:

The skill of making comparisons is important in mathematics. Children start with real objects, such as girls and boys in the class or shoes by the door, eventually comparing one number to another. The children must first understand the concept of equal groups, then more and less. They can make picture graphs to compare numbers of things – are there more girls or boys, more shoes of one colour

than another? Which names have the most or least number of letters?

Suggested activities:
1. Give each child a string. Ask them to find something the same length as the string. Next find things that are shorter and longer than the string.
2. Using the water play container, have children sort objects to predict which will float and which will sink.
3. Two children play a 'more' and 'less' game. Each takes between one and five blocks and stacks them in a tower. Children decide who has more and who has fewer blocks. Use a spinner that shows 'more' and 'less' to determine the winner.

5. Understanding numbers at the conceptual level:

When developing early concepts of numbers, children benefit from exploring concrete materials and relating numbers to problem situations. Each child needs to explore the numbers one to 10 with many different materials, until they begin to understand the relationships between numbers, patterns and similarities and the real meaning of addition, subtraction and division. Everyday

Children at an ECCD centre in Mali play a traditional game that helps them develop an understanding of maths concepts and skills through hands-on experience.

classroom situations provide many opportunities for demonstrating and solving maths word problems. Relating maths to classroom routines helps children apply maths in a real setting and see the usefulness of maths.

Suggested activities:
1. Use any small objects, count out a given number, and ask children to explore and describe the possible arrangements for the number of objects.
2. Using cubes or toothpicks, explore all the possible designs that can be made with the designated number.
3. Presto-change-o: Give each child six cubes. Ask them to solve these

problems. Make two stacks of three, three stacks of two, one stack of five, five stacks of one, etc.

4. Act out addition and subtraction word problems. Use story mats (pictures of a road/pond/house) and blocks to symbolise objects like rickshaws, fish or people. Children make up stories for their friend to solve. *There was a big fish in the water, two little fish came. How many were there? The big fish ate one little fish, how many were left?*

6. Recording numbers at the symbolic level:

At this point children are able to make a written record of an abstract maths problem. *Four children were playing with blocks. One left and went to the books. How many were playing with blocks? How many different ways can you arrange four blocks? Can you write down the addition problems to show your work?* Writing symbolic numbers should occur only after child has a strong concept of numbers from working with concrete objects.

Suggested activities:
1. Children use the string to make a shape. They copy the shape in their notebook and write down the number of sides.
2. Children repeat many of the activities listed above, but this

time they write down addition or subtraction problems to show what they did.
3. For story mat problems, give each child a card with an addition or subtraction problem. The child makes up a story to fit the problem.
4. Circles and stars: one partner rolls a die and draws the designated number of circles, then the partner rolls a die and draws circles. The first partner rolls again and draws that many stars in their own circles. Then the second partner does the same. They each count the stars and write it as an addition or multiplication problem. The largest number wins each round.

7. Shape and space:

Children spend a lot of time playing and building with shapes. Through play they can learn how shapes fit together. They can investigate patterns and structures of shapes and develop the ability to reason in a spatial context. Geometry has many applications in the ELP classroom and develops spatial reasoning that is one of the most important skills for being good at maths.

Suggested activities:
1. Fit together paper or block shapes to make a design. Children can try to replicate their friend's

design. They can count the number of each shape used. *Can you make a design with three triangles and three squares?*
2. Shape hunt. The teacher draws a shape on a large poster paper and discusses the name and properties. Over several days, the children look for shapes in the local environment. At school children can tell what they found and draw a picture of it on the poster. After several weeks looking for shapes, the children can count and compare which shape is most common in the environment.
3. Using a string, children can find things that are the same length, longer or shorter than the string. They can use other objects for measuring – shoes are especially good. *How many shoe prints does it take to cross the room. Is our room wider or longer?*
4. *Using a designated number of small sticks, can you build a large triangle using small triangles? Can you build a large square from small squares?*
5. *How many different shapes can you make using four triangles?*

Ways of teaching maths: the importance of manipulatives

If young children are asked to solve problems abstractly with no concrete objects, they memorise

answers instead of thinking through problems. Over time they rely too much on memorisation and distrust their ability to think. Children who score high on tests and seem to be doing well in maths will not sustain this when maths problems are more complex, unless they develop a maths foundation where they truly understand the concepts. With the use of maths manipulatives, all children can be successful at maths, not just those few with an innate aptitude.

ELP maths program components

1. Children will be given the opportunity for free exploration with maths materials during corner play

Between the ages of five and nine, most children pass through an important stage of mental development. They become capable of logical thought. They can learn to pose problems and test solutions. To begin thinking logically they first need to examine problems or puzzles using concrete objects. Giving children experiences with concrete objects is not idle playtime, but sets up situations to practice logical thought.

Geoboards, pattern blocks and cubes are useful for sorting, classifying, logical thinking, counting,

identifying patterns and testing solutions. As children handle pattern blocks and fit them together in various configurations, they will be learning in an informal way about geometric shapes and relationships. As they build with the coloured cubes, they will develop visual spatial reasoning, a skill that has been linked to maths aptitude.

Containers of objects such as seashells, rocks or buttons encourage children to count. Number cards from one to 10, and then progressively higher number cards from 11 to 100, will be made available during the free play period. Children might use the pocket chart for putting the numbers in order. Pictures from magazines and newspapers can be glued to cardboard. Children can sort the pictures (for example, people or animals) and hang them on the pocket chart. They can put numbers in the pockets and then put pictures of objects to match the number. There are many games that they will freely invent if they have a pocket chart, numbers and pictures.

Maths board games will also be provided during corner play. Maths skills board games extend maths activities into the free playtime. One new maths board game will be introduced each month. Teachers will prepare the games during the teacher development course.

2. Teachers will use mathematics language in the classroom

Young children do not think about the world as if it were divided into subjects such as maths, language or science. Likewise effective maths programs do not limit mathematics to one specified period or time of day. They learn many important maths ideas throughout the day and across the curriculum. Effective ECCD caregivers will gain skills to promote maths learning naturally. They will also learn how to lead a maths lesson that helps children gain key maths competencies. The maths lessons will rely on problem solving and play with concrete materials as the primary means of teaching maths.

Every day the teacher will find ways to bring maths into the experiences of the classroom. The teacher can have the children count when they line up, notice and record how many children are absent and present, and make a point to use relational terms and numbers (before and after, more or less) in the context of daily routine activities such as looking at the calendar or attendance chart. The

MATHS BAGS

Contents

- Two strings, one metre long.

- Sorting objects (25 such as shells, buttons and small stones).

- 25 paperclips.

- Wooden dice.

- 10 tiles, five white and five red, backside half red and half white to form two triangles.

- Matchbox with 24 matches (tips removed) or container of 100 toothpicks or small sticks cut from bamboo.

- 12 small (1cm) coloured cubes in four colours.

- Solid colour cloth – A4 size to use as a work mat.

- Number cards, one–20.

Check contents

Halfway through the year, the teacher and children should recheck contents of maths bags to make sure they are in order. Do the maths bags have all the materials in the right number? Repair and replace materials as needed to keep them in order. Also, it is a good time to add a few new items to increase interest in maths. Novelty is one of the key ingredients for learning.

teacher can suggest competitions for discovering shapes that exist in the village, or count and compare objects in the vicinity of the school. The teacher will use maths concepts during story time as they discuss the order of events, make comparisons between characters, and counting where it is useful. Indoor and outdoor games, as well as songs and rhymes, can also be modified to include numbers. The most important time for teachers to use maths language is informally during corner playtime. The teacher will move around the class and talk to children as they play, looking for opportunities to bring in maths concepts. This provides meaningful learning on an individual basis, which is the way that children learn best.

To gain the experience and confidence to do this, teachers will share ideas and experiences during the teacher development meetings. One or two suggestions per month can be put forth at the meeting. The teachers should try it and report back at the next refresher course.

3. Children will solve a problem during a 25-minute maths time

Effective maths programs also include structured learning experiences that build children's understanding over time. Every day children will be challenged to solve a problem using small objects in a maths bag or in the environment. First each child will work independently. Then they will compare or share the work with a partner or small group. The emphasis will be on playing with objects and thinking mathematically. This will help the children to enjoy the subject of maths and really understand the concepts. Solving problems through exploration will help them develop confidence.

Materials for solving maths problems: Children will use concrete objects to solve maths challenges and develop an understanding about maths concepts and numbers. These materials might be pulled from corner play materials and from the natural environment. A better approach is to provide each child with a small drawstring bag of low-cost materials that are used especially for maths. The maths toy bag enhances children's excitement for maths time and serves as an incentive. It prevents loss of productive learning time that occurs when teachers have to scramble for materials. Materials for maths bags cost about $1US per bag in many countries, if items like paperclips are bought in bulk. In Indonesia, parents produced maths baskets for each child made from palm leaves. All items were collected at no cost.

Maths time
Calendar: 5 minutes
Maths challenge: 20 minutes
Counting song or rhyme: 5 minutes

Steps for conducting maths time

1. Begin with the calendar (5 minutes)

Child of the day gets to turn over the number card to show the date. The child says the day of the week and the date. The teacher asks, *What day was yesterday? What was the yesterday's date?*

Then the class counts together all the days of the month so far. The child of the day leads the activity by pointing to each number with a small stick as they count together.

2. Provide maths challenge[17] (20 minutes)

Each child should have a maths bag. Children use materials in maths bags to solve the problems.

The daily maths challenge gives children practice in sorting objects into groups, counting and using numbers, identifying shapes, and making patterns and comparisons. The maths bags are used for most

maths time activities. Other days the maths challenge might involve a game being played in the class or outside. The children themselves and objects in the environment are then used as the materials for solving the challenge. Examples are taking a walk to look for circle shapes or sorting children into groups according to the colours of their clothes. The 100 coloured cubes in the block corner will be used for some of the maths time activities.

3. Conclude with a counting rhyme or song (5 minutes)

Singing, moving and making rhythms provides a happy conclusion to maths time and leads into the closing meeting.

Suggested maths board games for corner play

Maths board games: Maths skills board games extend maths activities into the free playtime.

If the board games are too boring, easy or unattractive, then they are not appropriate. A number of maths board games should be produced for the free play areas. Some examples are provided below. By producing these, staff will learn to see some of the key characteristics of good

games. The staff will then have many additional ideas of their own.

Skill: awareness of geometric shapes

Shape man: The game board is a file folder game. The border is divided into squares and each square has a coloured shape or words such as, *Lose one turn.* A collection of colourful shape pieces is needed. The centre of the playing board has two shape men, made from tracing the shape pieces with a black marker. The board could be enlarged for four players with four shape men in the middle. The shape men are formed from triangles, squares, circles and rectangles. The child rolls a die and moves along a game board, landing on a space with a shape. The player puts this shape onto his shape man. If the shape is already covered, the player does nothing. The first player to cover the shape man with all the shapes wins the game.

Skill: patterns and shapes

Pattern shapes race: A long game board is provided with a sequence of rectangle, circle, triangle and square shapes. To make the game fun, it should have about 100 shapes. Two levels of playing cards – beginners and advanced – are made available. Each player turns over a card in turn. The card shows a pattern, such as circle, rectangle, circle, rectangle, etc (easy version). The child moves their token to the shape indicated – the one that is next in the sequence. The more difficult set of playing cards has a more difficult sequence, such as square, square, triangle, triangle, square, square, triangle (advanced version). Children should begin with the easy version. Once they master it, they can be shown the advanced version. Additional playing cards are called 'risk cards'. A smiling face – take an extra turn. A frowning face – lose a turn. Other cards say, *Move to the nearest square* (show square shape, not word) or, *Move to the nearest triangle*, etc. Other cards say, *Go forward two*, or *Go back two.* The risk cards help children clarify their understanding of sequence. This is a fun and challenging game for ELP children.

Skill: counting and number recognition

All the way home: Prepare a game board with spaces that move along a path from a train station or boat toward a house. It should be a colourful and interesting village scene with lots of detail. At the door of the house, a mother or father is standing there to greet their child. A set of game cards show things the child might see along the way. Each game card has a designated number of objects that the child can count, for example, one fisherman, two boats, three palm trees, four rice plants, six fish, seven rickshaws, eight children, nine frogs, etc. The player turns over the card, counts the objects in the picture and moves the same number of spaces along the game board. It's a race to see which child can get home first.

Picking papayas: Produce a game board of a large papaya tree. Each player needs a miniature basket. Produce 12 cardboard or cloth papayas. To begin, the children place the papayas on the tree. The papaya tree is full of papayas. Each papaya has a number on it. The game has a large spinner that is divided into 12 sections with dots to show numbers one to 10. One space on the spinner shows the basket of papayas all on the ground. If the child lands here, they have to put all the papayas back on the tree. Another space shows the words, Spin again. The child spins, counts the dots and then finds the papaya that shows the corresponding numeral. The child gets to pick the papaya. For this game, the child is practicing counting dots and then recognising a number that represents the same number of dots. To clarify, the spinner only has dots, while the papayas only have numbers. Children love this game because they get to pick the pretend papaya from a tree and keep it in their own little basket.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE MATHS BOARD GAMES

1. Exciting – with rules, spinners, and dice, something you are competing for.

2. Attractive – colourful, nice pictures, careful lettering.

3. Appropriately challenging – not too easy.

4. Sturdy pieces – made of cardboard or laminated.

5. Storage container – keeps board game in good condition and the playing pieces are not lost. A cloth bag can be made for each board game and its pieces. Board games can also be attached to an inexpensive plastic file folder.

Skill: logical reasoning and spatial sense

Geoboard – square it up!: Two children play with one geoboard and wooden cubes in two colours. Rubber bands are also needed. Children take turns making a line segment of any size with a rubber band. The second child takes another rubber band and makes a line. The object is to form a square with no line in the middle. When the child forms a square on their move they get to put a coloured block in the square. When no more squares can be formed, the game is over. Each child takes the cubes from the geoboard and builds a tower with the blocks. The tallest tower is the winner.

Funny shapes challenge!: Two to four children can play. Each player has a geoboard and rubber bands. A stack of cards is upside down. Each card has a number written on it. The numbers are 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. There should be several sets of the same numbers. When the card is turned over the children quickly try to build a shape with that number of sides. The first to finish wins a cube or token. The rubber bands are removed and the children get ready for the next card. They can make any shape they want as long as it has the correct number of sides. This game is good practice for counting, visual reasoning and developing a sense of space and shape.

Skill: addition and subtraction

Race to the stars (addition): Make a game board with two sides. In the middle is a row of stars. Along each side of the game board write the numbers two to 12. Above each number are designated numbers of squares to reach to the stars. Children take turns rolling two dice. Each time they add the numbers they place a token in the square. Lotto tokens with stars are excellent for this game. Each time a child reaches the top they win that row.

Empty the bowl (subtraction): Use a small plastic bowl with 10 coloured counters and one die. *Who can empty the bowl with the least rolls of the die?* One child rolls the die and takes out the number of counters designated by the die. They roll again and take out the number designated until the bowl is emptied. To keep score each child uses a spinner with numbers one to six, or a special game board can be produced that has a way to keep score. Each time the child rolls the die, they move the spinner up to the next number to help them remember how many times they rolled to empty the bowl. In this game, one partner plays until they empty the bowl. The other player watches. Then the second player empties the bowl. After both have played the winner is the one who emptied the bowl with the least number of rolls of the die. It will be the player with the smallest number. With this game the children are practicing subtraction without realising it. When they get good at this game, they can play with more cubes in the bowl.

Maths competencies and standards

What children should know and be able to do at the end of an ELP

Children should complete the year with knowledge and skills that provide a strong foundation for maths success in primary school. These skills might be described as terminal competencies. However, much more is achieved in the maths program. The goals of deep understanding and reasoning are given priority and are difficult to measure. A measure of an effective maths program is not only the skills that can be measured but also the quality of the opportunities that were given. Standards or competencies should also consider a range of what children might be expected to accomplish over time.

Highly specific timetables for what skills children should acquire might be detrimental. It can focus a teacher's attention on getting children to perform narrowly defined skills by a specific time rather than on laying the conceptual groundwork in maths that will serve children well over time. Striving to achieve kindergarten competencies often leads to superficial teaching and rote learning at the expense of real understanding. Under these conditions children might develop a shaky foundation for further maths learning.

Standards should be equally balanced with an emphasis on children's opportunities to learn, not just on expectations for their performance. This is especially important in maths programs that emphasise important skills of maths reasoning and problem solving, which are not easily measured or ticked off as accomplished. The environment for maths teaching and learning in the ELP can be monitored using the ECERS – R and ECERS – E (see page 94 for more information).

Preschool maths competencies[18]

The maths program will enable children to solve problems and

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[18] Competencies typically identified for preschool maths programs in the US.

to describe, compare and discuss their approaches. The emphasis is on maths reasoning and problem solving rather than rote learning. Children will be encouraged to find multiple approaches for solving a problem and develop the skills to communicate their maths work. In preschool, children will be expected to use problem solving, communication, reasoning and representing (drawing a diagram/writing notations for a number or problem) to demonstrate the following competencies:

Number sense and operations

- Count accurately by ones to at least 20, with some skills in counting 50–100.

- Match quantities up to at least 10 with numerals and words.

- Identify positions of objects in sequences (for example, first, second, third, forth, fifth).

- Compare sets of up to at least 10 concrete objects using appropriate language (for example, none, more than, fewer than, same number of, one more than), and order numbers.

- Understand the concepts of whole and half.

- Identify names for local currency.

- Use objects and drawings to model and solve related addition and subtraction problems from one to 10.

- Estimate the number of objects in a group and verify results.

Patterns, relations (algebra)

- Identify the attributes of objects as a foundation for sorting and classifying, for example, a red truck, a red block, and a red ball share the attribute of being red; a square block, a square cracker, and a square book share the attribute of being square-shaped.

- Sort and classify objects by colour, shape, size, number and other properties.

- Identify, reproduce, describe, extend and create colour, rhythmic, shape, number, and letter-repeating patterns with simple attributes. For example, *AB, AB, AB*.

- Count by fives and tens at least up to 50.

Geometry

- Name, describe, sort, and draw simple two-dimensional shapes: circle, rectangle, square, triangle and oval.

- Describe attributes of two-dimensional shapes, for example, number of sides, number of corners.

- Name and compare three-dimensional shapes.

- Identify positions of objects in space, and use appropriate language (for example, beside, inside, next to, close to, above, below, apart) to describe and compare their relative positions.

Measurement

- Recognise and compare the attributes of length, volume/capacity, weight, area and time using appropriate language, for example, longer, taller, shorter, same length, heavier, lighter, same weight, holds more, holds less, holds the same amount.

- Make and use estimates of measurements from everyday experiences.

- Use non-standard units to measure length, area, weight and capacity.

Data analysis, statistics, probability

- Collect, sort, organise, and draw conclusions about data using concrete objects, pictures, numbers and simple graphs.

See Appendix 2 for more ideas about aligning maths activities that promote competencies in preschool.

DAILY ROUTINE

11.30AM–12PM: SCIENCE ACTIVITIES

(once per week replacing structured maths activities)

There are many opportunities to integrate science and maths. Science can be offered one day per week instead of maths, and gradually the two activities can be integrated.

Young children are like scientists in that both have an insatiable curiosity about the world in which they live. The ELP should encourage young children to exercise their in-built curiosity using simple and easily available materials. The primary goal of the science curriculum is to build skills of investigation. Special materials are not required to investigate physical, earth and life sciences. The ECCD caregivers will use the surrounding environment to improve and develop:

- observation of objects with the five senses;
- observation of interaction of objects; and
- classification of observations – similarities, differences and changes.

While most children in your class might not grow up to be a scientist, all children will need to make informed decisions about how the environment is managed in their community. That is why teachers must nurture their need to know and approaches for investigating solutions. It is not

A child in China is learning about scientific concepts through studying an insect. Children are curious about insects. When children study insects and where they live in the environment, they learn about how living things depend upon each other.

THE ELP SHOULD ENCOURAGE YOUNG CHILDREN TO EXERCISE THEIR IN-BUILT CURIOSITY USING SIMPLE AND EASILY AVAILABLE MATERIALS. THE PRIMARY GOAL OF THE SCIENCE CURRICULUM IS TO BUILD SKILLS OF INVESTIGATION. SPECIAL MATERIALS ARE NOT REQUIRED.

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just about economics; the science curriculum should focus on real-life problems because it is meaningful to children. It is also essential for the development of their minds and their community. An example might be a wetlands area where birds and fish have disappeared. One community investigated the problem and decided to test out various solutions. Today the wetlands in their region are brimming with fish and birds. Children can be part of such scientific investigations and solutions in their community.

Skills for scientific thinking

Scientific thinking involves the skills a person uses to approach problems. It is a type of puzzle solving, where those who are most successful show independence of thought, concentration, focus on details, and a willingness to try something, even if it seems silly.

The process starts through discussions with children about the things they think about in relation to the environment (for example, *Why does a shadow move?*) or physics (*Will my block tower always topple over when I stack more than 10 blocks?*). By focusing on a particular event, observing it, asking questions, developing an investigation, trying it out, recording data and sharing findings, the children are carrying out a scientific investigation. Science involves trial and error. Children should be encouraged to ask questions and never be made to feel 'stupid' for doing so.

Children learn science best and understand scientific ideas better if they are able to investigate and experiment. Hands-on science helps children think critically and gain confidence in their own ability to solve problems.

Four-step process for problem solving:

1. **Observing**
   Help children gain full understanding about the problem through close observations.

2. **Predicting**
   Help children decide what steps they will take to solve the problem or answer the question, and what they think might happen.

3. **Test predictions**
   Help children carry out their plans and results.

4. **Discuss**
   Encourage children to communicate their solutions with others and try to make sense of their observations.

Suggested questions

The teacher can help extend children's thinking by asking open-ended questions such as:

- *Why? How? What if?*

- *How are things different and alike and?*

- *Tell me what happened?*

- *What can we try?*

- *What do you predict would happen if…?*

- *Explain what you did. Did you think that would happen?*

- *What could you try instead?*

- *What does it look like? Feel like?*

Suggested science topics

Things that engage children are events and objects that they can see, touch, manipulate and modify, and situations that allow them to find out what happens. It is best to introduce them to a few topics in depth rather than covering many topics. Here are some tips:

- Encourage activities that are neither too hard nor too easy.

- If children don't seem interested, it might be too difficult.

- Some science projects are best done alone and others in groups.

- Select activities appropriate for the environment where children live. City children might investigate mosquitoes, whereas children living in rural areas have many options to investigate animals and insects.

The internet is a great resource for ideas on how to conduct science with young children using the local environment. The examples below will get you started:

Rocks

Lesson 1: Young children enjoy collecting and classifying rocks. The teacher might pose a question, *I am holding an object that is millions of years old. What do you think it is?*

- After the children find out that the teacher is holding a rock, the teacher can ask them, *When you see this rock, what kinds of things do you think about?*

- This starts the lists of questions such as, *Where did it come from? Are there different kinds of rocks near our school? Where do you find rocks?*

- Then the children can go on a rock hunt, bring back some specimens and examine them.

Lesson 2: Ask the children to group the rocks according to those that are alike and those that are different. They can play games to guess how the rocks were sorted. Children should describe how they sorted the rocks.

Lesson 3: Teacher asks, *Are all rocks hard? How can we find out?*

Children can use a nail to find out and order the rocks from hardest to softest. If available, teachers might provide a hammer, which

also allows children to see whether rocks look different on the inside.

Bugs

Lesson 1: *How many different types of bugs are near our school?*

Children go on a hunt. The teacher compiles a list for them as they walk. They stop and observe characteristics of each bug before moving on. When they come back to the classroom the teacher asks them what they found out. All children share something. The children list questions about the things they want to find out.

Lesson 2: *What's special about places where bugs are found? Where did we find the most bugs? Do bugs like sun or shade? How could we find out?* The class divides into groups. Some sit in the shade and some sit in the sun with the slate, making marks to record the number of bugs. They return to the room and discuss.

Lesson 3: The teacher asks, *What were the bugs doing? Did you notice the different ways they were moving? Let's find out.* Children might compare movements of bugs with and without legs by collecting some of each and bringing them to the classroom for observation.

Bubbles

You can make bubbles using dishwashing liquid, water, a drinking straw, one tin can open at both ends, and a shallow pan. Cut a straw into thirds. Ten straws will be required for 30 children.

Lesson 1: Teacher holds a cake of soap and asks children, *What is it? Can it pour? Is there any soap that can pour? Yes, liquid soap. We can do something special with liquid soap and water. If we blow with a straw we can make bubbles. What shape do you think they will be?* (The answer is, *Sphere.*) *Now you will have a chance to make some bubbles. Then we will stop and tell what we noticed and we will also ask questions about things we wonder about.* Children might notice different colours. They might notice that bubbles can move.

Lesson 2: Investigate one or two of the questions posed. For example, *Do large bubbles have different colours from small bubbles? How can you make a very large bubble?* They might compare bubbles made from a tin can and those with a straw. These bubble investigations can be continued in the water play corner.

Free science activity resources that integrate science and maths

- AIMS Foundation, www.aimsedu.org

- GEMS Laurence Hall of Science, www.lawrencehallofscience. org/gems

- John McGavack, (1969), *Guppies, Bubbles and Vibrating Objects*, John Day Company, New York

DAILY ROUTINE

LIFE SKILLS AND CULTURAL LESSONS LED BY PARENTS

(one to two times each month, replacing outdoor play and maths)

Children benefit when parents are involved in the ECCD program. Sometimes parents who are uneducated feel that they have little to offer. But indeed they are one of the richest sources of curriculum. Establish an official time in the curriculum when parents take turns teaching the children something that they know how to do. You might call this life skills or cultural studies class. The children will love to watch a parent weave a basket or play a traditional instrument, especially if the children get to try it as well. Learning how to plant a garden or safely climb a coconut tree are not only the skills children will need to survive, but also a celebration of their culture. Parents will feel important as the children look to them as teachers. It might increase their appreciation for schooling.

How to organise the life skills or cultural studies lessons:

- At the parent meeting, make a list of all the skills the parents have.

- Ask who would like to demonstrate one of these skills to the children.

- Select the first few activities and plan what kinds of props will be needed.

- Think of ways the children could have some hands-on experience with the activity.

- For example, a parent might talk about caring for baby chicks. It would be great if they could bring a chick. The children could sit in a circle with the chick in the middle. They will enjoy watching the chick as the parent talks to them.

- Make sure that the parents use words to describe what they are doing. This expands children's vocabulary.

- Perhaps the activity is better taught by going on a small field trip. For example, the children could go and watch the boat builders work. Each child could ask a question.

- Plan one hour for the activity. It can take place at the end of the morning, replacing outdoor play and maths.

- Cultural studies day could be once a week, bi-monthly, or monthly.

DAILY ROUTINE

12PM—12.15PM: CLOSING MEETING

Each day should end positively and with a sense of closure. Children should take the time to pause and think about what happened that day, and to plan for tomorrow. This teaches them how to reflect, which is a useful life skill.

The closing meeting is brief (up to 15 minutes). Suggestions for helping children to reflect about their day are provided below. It is also a good time to make announcements or reminders. Many ELPs conclude with a happy song.

Teaching children to plan and reflect

Young children are capable of making thoughtful decisions about their behaviour and good observations about their environment. The ELP program can help children develop these important thinking and problem-solving skills. These develop when we encourage children to:

• reflect;

• predict;

• question; and

• hypothesise or make guesses based on reasoning.

The ELP teacher can help children develop these skills by providing two curriculum components: planning and reflection. Children should be encouraged to reflect on what they are doing and what they are learning. Throughout the day, the ECCD caregiver helps them reflect while they play by commenting on what they see the children doing, or by asking them open-ended questions, such as *How did you...? Why do you think...? What happened when...?* It encourages them to evaluate an experience as they are having it.

Close-of-day reflection

At the end of the day, children are invited to reflect on their day. Encouraging children to think about what they did enables them to use this information as they plan what they will do next. The point of reflection is not to arrive at some absolute truth about what did or did not happen, but to encourage children to think for themselves about what happened and why.

Steps:

1. ECCD caregiver asks children to think back over their day to remember:
   • One thing that they learned.
   • One thing that was interesting or enjoyable and what made it so.
   • One problem or difficulty they had and why.
   Give them about 30 seconds to a minute to think about their responses. During that time sit silently.

2. By asking one child at a time, the teacher gives each child the opportunity to quickly tell one of the following: something I learned today; something that was interesting to me; one problem or success I had today. (Each child has about ten seconds to speak, so it will take about three to five minutes in total.)

3. Help children connect their plans and activities for the next day with these reflections.

4. This is a good time for caregivers to write down one or two words to remember what the child said. It tells them their thoughts are worth preserving. It becomes a good record for assessing learning and development.

5. The final important teaching activity of the day is to make sure that children have a safe passage from school to home. Parents do this on a rotating basis in some ECCD programs.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Right: In Timor-Leste, community preschools offer a safe space for children to play and learn.

INTRODUCTION TO MONITORING AND EVALUATION

CLAC promotes results-based monitoring and evaluation (M & E) which is focussed on the nature and quality of change; continuous improvement; and learning and reflection. The most important focal point for M & E is the changes found within the child due to the interventions.

When developing an M & E framework ensure that:

- There are a set of evidence-based standards that make assumptions clear, and provide a framework for planning and assessing.

- The learning goals of the program are the guide for evaluation.

- Multiple sources of data are used.

- Sampling is used when assessing children to diminish the burden of testing and to reduce judgments about children.

- All program staff are involved in collecting quantitative and qualitative data to assess impact.

- The evaluation process and findings are used for continuous improvement.

- Evaluators are well trained to conduct evaluations in a fair and unbiased way; they

Children play on a roundabout at a community managed preschool in Ethiopia.

receive ongoing training and quality/reliability checks.

- Evaluation results are shared with families and other stakeholders, and are used to refine and improve the program.

- Families/community members have the opportunity to be involved in project monitoring.

The three key elements of project monitoring and supervision are:

- Goals – does the program support the goals and objectives?

- Child – is the program bringing the changes in children that we want to see?

- Inquiry – what are we learning? What is going well and why? What is not going well and why not? What are the unexpected results?

Things to keep in mind:

1. Connect professional development, supervision and evaluation.

2. All three should be focused on improving the child's experience

in the classroom and their development and learning.

3. Must be driven by a well-defined image of an effective classroom – ECCD program essential elements, child development indicators, and teacher development indicators.

4. ECCD facilitators should be trained in classroom observation tools that help them see the child's experience in the classroom, teacher practice and use of materials with an unbiased eye.

5. Project coordinators and supervisors should maintain observation records using the instruments above, as well as the required data records.

6. Observations can be summarised in a rubric for each classroom and kept over time, shared at review/learning/action meetings (see #7). Use codes: 1 (partially met); 2 (met); and 3 (exceeded). Scores relate to

indicators on child and teacher indicator lists. (See appendices). Write down specific evidence.

7. Monthly meetings should be structured to share and learn from field observations: review, learning and action.

- **Review** (effective teaching, problem areas identified which provide information useful for designing teacher development and any/some specific actions taken by supervisors to help teachers while in the field).

- **Learning** (some aspect of program essential elements is delved into for greater understanding and/or tools for supervision are taught; planned opportunity for supervisor to gain new knowledge and skills/tools).

- **Action** (individuals or the group should plan some action to improve the child's

learning experience through their support of the teacher).

8. These review sessions increase accountability of the ECCD facilitators and create a learning community among project coordinators and supervisors that is essential for professional improvement.

9. ECCD facilitators, project coordinators and supervisors should be trained in supervision consultation techniques: how to conduct themselves during field visits (that is, what to do and how to act); how to provide constructive feedback and consultation to the teachers.

10. ECCD caregivers should be able to give feedback to project coordinators and supervisors about ECCD facilitators that forms part of the evaluation and review of the ECCD facilitator's performance.

What changes will result?

The ELP is one component in the system of integrated early childhood supports. The importance of ELP education and school readiness for primary school success is widely acknowledged. However, only programs of good quality achieve lasting results in terms of providing the social and academic benefits that sustain primary school performance. High-impact ELPs can be very low cost and managed by para-professionals, parents and community members. However, they do require a well-designed curriculum, developmentally appropriate materials, and a system of training and mentoring for staff. A sample results framework is provided on page 126, as well as a definition for quality ELPs.

WHAT GOAL-LEVEL CHANGES DO WE WANT TO SEE?

Two goal level indicators have been identified, one relates to the child's readiness to succeed in school, and the other relates to improvements in child wellbeing.

Readiness to succeed in primary school

The first assumes that children living in high poverty will not enter school on time, if at all. If they enrol in school, statistics reveal that they will drop out by Grade 3 or even earlier. If significant changes occur in on-time enrolment and participation in school through primary completion, then the parenting support, school readiness activities, and school transition supports have been effective. There are low-cost methods of conducting the research, which include simply tracking graduates at the beginning and end of each school year. The staff can conduct this research. More formal, external research might be contracted to examine changes in learning.

Improvements in child wellbeing

The purpose of the early childhood community supports is to ensure that children fully develop in the critical and formative early childhood years. The concept of child wellbeing provides a picture of what we might hope to see in a child who has reached eight years of age and is well equipped developmentally for school and life success. Several years ago, the author began to develop the child wellbeing indicators index (see Appendix 3) with input from specialists around the world. While the index might continue to evolve at a global level, it should also be shaped by the local country context, values and perspectives about well-developed children. All areas of development are inter-dependent. Health, development, learning, protection and participation go hand in hand.

Obtaining a reliable measure of changes in child wellbeing is more challenging. The initial step is for health, learning and child protection sector experts to agree on an essential list of indicators. A child wellbeing index is provided in Appendix 3 as an example. The indicators must be culturally and developmentally appropriate. They should be described in ways that are easy to measure in the child. What would you hope to see in place in the child's life by the time they are eight years old? A child wellbeing baseline is collected in the targeted communities during the focus groups (situational analysis) and most specifically in the beginning session(s) of the parenting group.

During these sessions parenting group members describe their views about important indicators of child health, development and protection. At the end of each session, what the parents describe as their goals and concerns can be compared with the child wellbeing list developed by sector experts. During these sessions, parents discuss areas of concern and where they want help. Each parenting session begins with a review of what parents learned in the last session and how they are using the new information. A record of their feedback provides evidence of changes. In addition, facilitators visit two homes monthly for in-depth interviews on changes in practices and perceptions related to child wellbeing.

Decisions will be made about the role of the ELP to ensure the achievement of child wellbeing indicators. The ELP's special mandate is to support development and learning milestones in four domains – social and emotional, motor, language, and cognitive development – according to the child's age. In addition, the ECCD centre should contribute to health and child protection indicators. A specific plan of action should be developed for doing so, and progress evaluated quarterly.

ECCD program results framework (illustrative)

The ELP should be understood as a component of the early childhood strategy. It should be implemented in a way that links with and contributes to the other objectives.

Goal: Improved child wellbeing[19] (from birth to eight years) in targeted high-poverty communities through effective and holistic early childhood supports[20]

Indicators

1. Changes in primary school on-time enrolment; completion of each grade; and enrolment in subsequent grades toward primary school completion.[21]
2. Changes in child wellbeing indicators (health/growth; development/ learning; and protection/participation) for children aged five to eight years in targeted communities against the baseline.[22]

Objective 1	Objective 2[23]	Objective 3	Objective 4
Parents take action to improve child wellbeing in the home and community	All targeted children in targeted communities participate in quality ELPs in the year or two before primary school[24]	All targeted Grade 1 and 2 children participate in school- and community-based activities that improve performance and retention in school	Formal and non-formal sectors work collaboratively to improve early childhood wellbeing outcomes (from birth to eight years)

Early learning program intermediate outcomes

2.1 # % children completing ECCD centre and enrolling in Grade 1 at appropriate age
2.2 # % ECCD centres with quality scores for program structure, environment and activities (classroom monitoring tools)
2.3 # ELP caregivers effectively using new learning tools and methods (classroom observation tool)
2.4 # % eligible children attending ECCD centres in targeted communities
2.5 # pre-primary teachers and administrators trained in ELP education
2.6 # ECCD centres established and equipped with learning materials to support early learning for vulnerable children
2.7 # organisational capacity, training materials and programs developed for community ELPs

[19] Child wellbeing indicators for health, development/learning, and protection are established at onset of program and can be found in Appendix 3. Situational analysis will indicate status of children's wellbeing, as well as existing family and community supports.

[20] Plan International promotes a community system of integrated supports for children aged from birth to eight years, including parenting education, quality ELPs, and transition to primary initiatives. Activities are integrated and holistic. 100 per cent participation of disadvantaged children and families in targeted areas is required to promote and ensure equality.

[21] Slow progress achieving *Education For All* indicates the need for maximising early childhood development potential and school readiness. If 100 per cent of children in a high-poverty area enrol in school at proper intake, complete each grade and enrol in subsequent years, then there is reason to conclude that the early childhood interventions were effective. This is an easy, low-cost indicator to measure.

[22] Health, learning, and protection sectors will establish baseline and develop instruments to measure improved practices of parenting group members to increase child wellbeing, increased evidence of child wellbeing supports in the community, and improved participation in ELP and primary school for targeted high-poverty children, aged five to eight years.

[23] 100 per cent participation of disadvantaged children in targeted area of relevant age.

[24] *Quality early learning:* Quality programs achieve measurable cognitive, social, emotional and physical development indicators, while providing an enjoyable place for children to learn and grow. Learning takes place through structured games and activities, and child free-play with materials. Thinking, creativity, problem solving, social skills and communication skills are emphasised. Small group size (25 to 30 children maximum) is important to meet social and emotional needs and enable adequate contact with caregivers and play materials. Early childhood program quality is measured at two levels: *Program structure* (physical facility or designated space; curriculum; learning materials; group size; staff skills and training; centre management; and supervision); and *Environment/activities* (social/emotional atmosphere; learning activities; teacher/child and child/child interactions; structured use of time; positive behaviour management). Enrolment: priority focus should be 100 per cent attendance of all children in age cohort who will enter primary school in subsequent year. Where space, materials and personnel exist, four-year-old classes might be started. Children (2-3 years) benefit from informal playgroups with similar age children in nearby neighbourhood. Parents from the parenting group are well equipped to manage playgroups and develop no-cost, developmentally appropriate play materials. Playgroups might occur once or twice per week for an hour or two.

Illustrative indicators

1. Increased parent/caregiver skills and actions to support effective child growth, development and protection.

2. Increased parent/caregiver awareness regarding education rights and family responsibilities.

3. Preschool environment is welcoming (eg colourful posters; variety of hands on learning materials; storytelling; music, etc).

4. ECCD caregivers provide effective instructional and emotional support (ELP quality checklist).

5. ECCD caregivers ensure classroom equality with girls, boys, disadvantaged children and children with disabilities receiving equal quality of attention and interactions from teacher, and equal access to learning materials and equal opportunities for classroom leadership (ELP quality checklist).

6. Curriculum and learning materials are produced and used.

7. Increased ECCD caregiver awareness about barriers for transition to primary school (eg bilingual education; fear of corporal punishment) and actions to reduce barriers.

8. Every child identified and enrolled in primary school at proper intake age.

9. Collaboration with health, nutrition and water partners to improve sanitation and health.

Case studies and impact research conducted to monitor progress and test assumptions.

Examples:

· Identifying characteristics of highly effective teachers that can then be used to establish criteria for teacher selection.

· The process of engaging caregivers and community in developing play and learning materials made from low-cost, locally produced materials.

· What factors have influenced teacher improvements in key areas of math, literacy and corner play?

· How can children with disabilities or children from high poverty circumstances be supported in the ELP?

· Are any gender issues observed in the classroom i.e. are there differences in teacher interactions with girls and boys and differences in classroom experiences of girls and boys? Do girls and boys equally share classroom tasks and leadership roles? Are there toys or games that are reserved for one sex when all children should be encouraged to try new things?

· How are language/mother tongue issues being addressed to ensure that children i.e. from ethnic minority groups are supported to make a transition to the language of instruction?

HOW DO WE EVALUATE OUTCOMES AND IMPACT?

The ELP will require a systematic method for documenting progress and engaging all stakeholders in the task of continuous improvement. There are formal and informal methods for doing this. While outcome assessment might involve an external consultant, everyone on the team is responsible for conducting regular evaluations of the various components. Then, together, they see how they did or did not achieve the objectives. Practice habits of reflection (become more aware of own thinking and reasoning) and inquiry (asking others about their thinking and reasoning). These practices will generate knowledge, strengthen professionalism, and enhance outcomes.

Key reflection questions for planning the monitoring and evaluation approach:

- Why is an ELP needed? What is the change we hope to see?

- What strategies, curriculum, training tools and structure are needed to bring the change? Are these compatible with the objective? Will they lead to the objective?

- What are people actually doing on the ground? What is their understanding? How are they prepared and evaluated? Are they able to carry out the design and bring the change?

- Are we collecting the right data and is it feeding into the reflection and action cycle?

- Is the project having an impact on children, caregivers, parents and the community? If not, at what level does the problem lie?

Evaluation will show how well each of the objectives are being achieved and whether the objectives led to the goal. In the case of ELPs, the best evidence that the ELP has contributed will be that 100 per cent of children of relevant age complete a quality ELP and enrol on time in Grade 1.

The monitoring and evaluation research for ELP education requires several classroom observation and record-keeping tools. Project managers can collect qualitative and quantitative data during supervision visits. Data collection should be coupled with reflection sessions where critical questions about the changes that are taking place, the unexpected changes, and the inputs and outputs are examined. In addition, external formal research might be conducted that includes the provision of school readiness tests for a sample of children with and without an ELP.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION STEPS

1. Establish targets for the objective and each sub-objective.

- What child development indicators describe a well-developed child ready to succeed in school and life?

- How many children are in the five-year-old cohort?

- What are the indicators of a quality ELP?

- What type and amount of learning materials are required?

- What are indicators of teacher effectiveness?

- What are indicators for effective supervision to maintain quality?

2. Establish baselines

- What is the current level of on-time enrolment, participation and persistence in primary school among high-poverty children in the community?

- What is the status of child wellbeing in the community?

- How many children enrol in the program? What percentage of the target?

- Establish a simple school readiness test with basic knowledge that Grade 1 teachers expect upon entry.

Handwashing is an important part of the daily routine at Plan-supported ECCD centres in Indonesia.

- What is the current level of child development and school readiness in a random sample of targeted children?

- What are the numbers of caregivers trained to deliver quality ELP?

- What materials, training programs, evaluation instruments and training programs currently exist?

3. Measure changes

- What are the improvements in child wellbeing of high-poverty children in the community?

- What are the improvements in child development and school readiness status among children in the random sample?

• What percentage of targeted children completes ELP and enters primary school on time?

• What are the levels of grade level completions and enrolment in the next grade throughout the primary cycle?

• What are the improvements in classroom quality?

• What are the changes in teacher effectiveness?

• What is the average number of absentees? What is the ELP graduation rate compared to enrolment?

4. Collect qualitative data including case studies and most significant change stories

• Facilitators should maintain community profiles that capture qualitative and quantitative data about the targeted community, families and child services. This includes meetings with community leaders and parents to discuss child development in the community, and priority issues identified and addressed by the community during the course of the project. Each facilitator should maintain a case study of complex questions and issues that arise during the

project design, implementation and evaluation phases. Case studies are also excellent tools to capture qualitative changes over time, as well as snapshots of children who have been positively affected by the project.

• Photos and films can also provide a lens for examining how well a program is being implemented. Select a topic for study and document this across several programs. Share it with the team and discuss observations.

5. Analyse findings and improve project: reflection and action cycle

ECCD facilitators will convene on a quarterly basis for review and training sessions facilitated by the project coordinator. They will review and discuss classroom monitoring data, particularly progress and areas for attention. They will discuss how well the teacher training sessions are affecting classroom quality. They will also share interactions that took place with the community. The focus of these review meetings is to determine how well the project is achieving the objectives and what more needs to be done.

Children in Laos enjoy outdoor play with friends which supports social and emotional development.

Case studies should be discussed, and important findings should be documented in annual reports. Since case studies deal with complex development questions for which there are no easy answers, the findings have broad appeal. The ECCD project team might want to develop a newsletter to share with other colleagues within the

organisation and with development partners using the case study data.

6. Consider conducting a formal impact evaluation

A quality ELP will contribute to improvements in the primary education sector by focusing on the conditions and opportunities necessary to prepare children to be

successful learners at school. It is important to track the performance of ELP graduates as they enter and progress through primary school. It is also important to monitor the quality of the ELP. One assumes that higher quality ELPs affect primary school performance. A longitudinal impact study will enable project managers to answer these questions. It will help clarify the child and educational inputs that are necessary for school achievement, and the kind of early childhood care and education required to support children's overall development in the early childhood years. An aim is to clarify the child and educational inputs that are necessary for school achievement and the kind of early childhood care and education required to support children's overall development in the early childhood years.

Children's readiness to attend primary school is shaped by many factors. School readiness improvement must address the child's development of skills and behaviours, parents' understanding of child development and the demands of schooling, and the environments in which children spend their time. The ELP must be relevant to children's needs, cultural context, and globally accepted 'best practices' to make an impact. Important questions when planning the program will be, *How can we determine whether children who have attended an ELP for the year will surpass children who have not in their intellectual, social, and physical development? Will the ELP graduates continue to do well in subsequent school years?*

The question of measuring the child's school readiness is a point of

wide discussion in the ECCD field. One trend in thinking supports assessing the ELP's readiness to meet the needs of young children in relevant and appropriate ways versus assessing child readiness through a test. Assessing individual children is difficult and expensive and it is not easy to obtain reliable and valid measures. Maintaining early childhood environments that offer a level of quality associated with successful outcomes in school and life is an alternative strategy to ensure school readiness. It is also significantly less costly to conduct.

In the Plan International Uganda and Indonesia CLAC programs, Plan is using the ECERs to identify and monitor the levels of preschool quality that positively correlate with achievement outcomes.[25] In these programs, longitudinal impact studies

are assessing[26]: the quality of the preschool programs; the cognitive development and school readiness of 5 and 6 year olds attending Plan-supported ELPs compared to children in other programs; the school achievement of Plan ELP graduates in comparison to classmate controls who had not attended; and child outcomes related to health and physical development.

Initial results are showing that children from Plan-supported ELPs are performing significantly better than the control group in a range of areas, that Plan graduates are also performing better and that the ELPs are demonstrating quality elements.

Through the evaluation process, strengths and areas to improve and identified that contribute to program learning and improvement.

[25] The ECERS is the acknowledged international measure of preschool quality and has been used in national surveys in North America, Europe, India and Israel. The ECERS can be used by a teacher for self-assessment or by an outside observer for program monitoring, program evaluation and research. ECERS levels of quality are based on standards established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The focus is on the needs of children and how to best meet those needs based on current understanding. The ECERS scoring guide gives a detailed description of what one might see in a classroom with the scores of 1, 3, 5 or 7. For that reason the scoring instrument provides a useful teacher training tool. Teachers can discuss why something would receive one score rather than another. In ECERS, '3' represents minimum standards. The CLAC program aims to achieve a score of 5 in community ECCD centres. ECERS subscales include: space and furnishings; personal care routines; language-reasoning; activities; interactions; program structure; and parents and staff.

[26] Plan is working with Dr Frances Aboud, McGill University Canada and local universities (Mbarara University of Science and Technology in Uganda and Mataram University in Indonesia) to design, plan and carry out the longitudinal impact studies (currently unpublished).

ELP MONITORING INSTRUMENTS

The ELP quality checklist, child profile, school readiness indicators, teacher development indicators and ELP profile provided in this guide (see Appendices) are tools that can be used by project managers and supervisors to capture 'snapshots' of how well the ELP is supporting children's development. The most important purpose for observing classrooms is to understand the experience of the learner and to ensure that the activities, learning materials, and teacher-child interactions are instrumental for the child's future school and life success.

Child profiles are in-depth studies of children – their situation, strengths and needs. Child profiles take information about the child in their community setting. Child profiles should also include an observation of a child in the classroom

The ELP quality checklist and school readiness indicators can be used to monitor the child's school experience and to assess child growth. In this way, the child profile and ELP profiles are complementary tools to monitor and support program improvement.

The monthly visits of supervisors provide a 'snapshot'. The snapshot does not provide conclusive information about classroom quality or school readiness, but it can provide important indicators that the program design, activities and child outcomes are on track. The ELP quality checklist can be used during monthly supervision visits and child profiles of a random sample of children can be maintained over time.

In addition to the supervisor's 'snapshot' observations, a formal impact evaluation is recommended. This might include child and family assessments and program quality evaluations conducted by experts. Formal studies are used to measure and improve impact, and for the cost-benefit analysis. The ECERS is an instrument that has been used for ELP impact research by Plan International.

School readiness indicators

School readiness is an important factor for achieving child development outcomes. Quality ELPs support school readiness through a range of activities, materials and interactions that address and respond to children's needs in all four development domains (cognitive, social and emotional, physical, language).

Within the CLAC program, 63 school readiness indicators (see Appendix 6) are used as a tool for caregivers and other ECCD professionals. The indicators help to understand the quality of ELPs and their effectiveness in preparing children aged four to six years for school. By using the indicators, an observer can determine if materials, activities and interactions in the ELP contribute to the gaining of skills needed for school and life success and can evaluate the quality of the program. They are also a valuable tool for professional development programs and should be referred to at the design stage of an early learning activity or learning materials production as the more child development domains and indicators a toy/activity can address, the better it is for child development.

Teacher development indicators

The teacher development indicators chart (see Appendix 7) identifies key areas of teacher quality associated with professionalism (capacity development and ethical behaviour), knowledge and skills, and teacher-child interactions. Teachers should be aware of the core knowledge and competencies of quality teachers. The indicators serve as a reference for assessing ELP quality, consulting with and mentoring teachers during field visits, and designing monthly teacher follow-on training. By

recording teacher progress, it is easy to design monthly teacher training that reinforces observed strengths and addresses areas where skill building is needed. To keep records on the teacher, prepare one page for each of the three areas. Note the date and record specific numbers that apply to that observation and the evidence that the indicator is partially met, met or exceeded. These can be coded 0, 1, 2 or 3, with a few words about the score.

ELP profile, ELP quality checklist and ELP quality scoring sheet

The ELP profile (see Appendix 8) contains information required for monitoring. It might include enrolment, health interventions, committee meetings etc and should be updated annually.

The ELP quality checklist and ELP quality scoring sheet (see Appendices 4 and 5) should be used by ECCD facilitators and project coordinators/managers every time an ELP is observed as a means to understand and improve classroom quality, track changes over time

and identify capacity development needs. The checklist is compatible with ECERs quality standards..

How to monitor ELPs and consult/mentor teachers

1. Observe the entire morning from beginning to end, once a month. The purpose of the observation is to develop more understanding about the children we are serving in our programs, and the quality of the programs to achieve child development indicators.

2. Teachers will understand the purpose of the visit, and the observation methods. The teacher understands that you are observing the child's experience and that you will be taking notes. After school closes, the observer will share notes with the teacher.

3. Use the ELP quality checklist in Appendix 4.

Procedure

4. Quietly sit in the back of the room so that you do not distract the children's attention. If a child looks at you, smile warmly but

do not converse with the child. Just watch, listen and take notes.

5. Record information about the learning environment.

6. Record evidence of teacher quality indicators.

7. Complete observation log of teacher-directed activity, such as a welcoming meeting, and literacy and maths circles.

8. Complete observation log of two children during corner play. This includes activities, interactions and skills observed.

9. Observe outdoor play and supervision. When children are informally playing outdoors this is a good time to have a conversation with a few children. It will add to your information about how well children are developing in key areas.

Consultation/mentoring

10. After the children leave, teachers should be provided with an opportunity to explain the things that the observer saw and recorded. First, warmly thank the

teacher for the chance to let you observe the children. Provide a positive comment to describe something you appreciated about their teaching practice.

11. Next, discuss observations made during the visit. It is important to state precise observations, not opinions. This will ensure that the observer 'saw' things as they really are, and that the teacher has the opportunity to become more reflective about their practice. For example: *The song you sang with the children was useful for teaching them tall to short. You picked five children to come to the front. Most of the children were singing but there were a few children sitting in the back who were not participating. I'd like to hear more about this lesson; how often do you use this song? Do you ever sing it in different ways? Why do you think some children weren't participating?*

You can use the ELP quality scoring sheet in Appendix 5 to summarise the observations and scores from your visit.

COLLECTING CHILD PROFILES

A child profile is an important way to find out about daily life and supports for children's development. Child profiles can help project coordinators to understand the constraints that might need to be overcome to develop the child's full potential, as well as the strengths at home and in the community to build on. Understanding one child well is a worthwhile endeavour. It helps make sense of what they are doing on a day-to-day basis, and to ensure that programs reflect real needs. Child profiles can also be used to monitor impact.

Community observations

Child profiles begin with informal observations in the community. Some of the most valuable information about a child's situation comes from informal observations and conversations with people. Unfortunately, many people who work in a community 'look' without really 'seeing'. They notice what is going on in a general way, but have trouble remembering details afterwards. Sometimes if they are part of the same culture, they take things for granted. It might be helpful to pretend you are from another planet trying to understand this community. Take notes like an anthropologist would.

Poov, now aged 10, has a hearing impairment and learnt to sign when he was four. With support from his family, friends and teachers in India, he was ready to succeed in school. Poov loves to go to school and play cricket with his friends.

Make sure that the observations help improve the outcome of your work.

Some important things to notice include:

Water supply; sanitation; quality of housing; accessibility to schools, health services; cooking fuel and costs; religious views; gender roles; local and seasonal challenges; coping strategies; livelihood and wealth; decision making; community participation in local governance; organisations and community perception of them; household structure and workloads; support to women; level of education of mothers and fathers; beliefs about the past; worries for the future; cooperation among families; tensions in the community; comparisons of past and present childrearing; perceptions about child rights and entitlements; children's play and work; views and practices related to child discipline.

Interview with primary caregiver/parent

After selecting a child, interview the primary caregiver before spending time with the child on a one-on-one basis. It is important to develop rapport with the parent and to make sure that they understand why you want to observe their child. Interviews with parents provide background for a child profile. However, interviews with caregivers do not provide adequate information about children. Sometimes what people say differs from reality. Sometimes parents, for different reasons, are not as aware of their children's strengths and limitations. Sometimes they say things that they think the researcher wants to hear. Direct observations and interviews with children are necessary.

Tips for interviewing parents:

• Be familiar with how people converse in the community.

• Assume that this mother or father has valuable information you cannot find elsewhere.

• Give your undivided interest and respect.

• Encourage an informal atmosphere, not a list of questions to be ticked off.

• Record information with brief notes, and then write more detail immediately after the interview.

• Ask open-ended questions and follow them up with probing questions – Why? How? Why do you think that is?

• Clarify to make sure you understand their point, and listen very carefully.

• Be sensitive to the realities of people's lives.

• End the interview well. Ask if there are other points the mother or father would like to cover.

• Request parents' permission to talk with a child and observe the child.

Information about children to collect:

The primary means for obtaining information about children is to observe them in their natural setting at different times of the day, and to record the time and date of the observation. Also note down the people who are with the child. In the case of babies or young children, note who is responsible for the child and other activities or involvements of the caregiver at that time. If the child attends school, observe the child in the school setting, as well as at home.

The quality of children's interactions with other people affects the way they learn, their sense of identity, their level of security and sense of wellbeing, and their ability to relate to others. Pay attention to the quality of everyday experiences and interactions.

Tips for interviewing children:

1. Get parents' permission and chat with the parents. Let the child observe this interview.

2. Build rapport – show an interest in what the child is doing; do a fun activity with the child.

3. Ask the child if they are willing to talk to you.

4. Interview the child in a comfortable place where they can easily speak their mind. The place they play in the community is generally a better place than at school.

5. Be aware of children's attention spans. Interviews should be stopped when the child loses interest. Combine interviews with observations of the child's play.

6. Focus on everyday experiences of the child; ask them to give you a tour of what they do each day and encourage them to discuss the activities.

WHY COLLECT CHILD PROFILES?

• Capture development and experiences of a child over time – baseline and impact.

• Reflect on the conditions at home, in the community and at school that affect the child's ability to learn.

• Improve understanding about the child's situation so that appropriate interventions can be made.

• Ensure in-depth contact between community development facilitators and children (beneficiaries).

• Put the face of a real child on program planning.

• Enhance goal focus, personal accountability and desire to affect change.

7. Sometimes group discussions with the child and peers can provide useful information.

Observing infants:

1. Do people show love and affection to infants? Who? In what ways? Do people consider this important for infants? Why?

2. Who do infants most like to be with?

3. Do people talk to infants? What do they talk about? Is there a special way to communicate? Do they think infants understand?

4. When do infants begin to communicate? When do they first use words? How do people encourage them?

5. What else do infants learn? At what age?

6. Do people play with infants? When? How? Who?

7. What makes infants happy or unhappy? How do people respond? Who responds? Is it considered important for people to respond quickly?

8. Are people interested in what infants are feeling or thinking?

9. How do infants go to sleep? Do they fall asleep when they are tired? Does someone rock them or sing to them?

10. Are infants ever left alone for long periods? Under what circumstances? Is safety a problem? Do parents worry?

11. Do people ever become angry with infants? Punish them? Do they think infants can learn what is right or wrong? How?

12. Is there any indication that infants are abused? Under what circumstances? By whom?

13. For all the questions above, are there differences in treatment between girls and boys?

Observing small children

NB: You might want to divide into them two groups: toddlers and pre-school children.

1. Do people show love and affection to them? Who? In what ways? Do people consider this important for small children? Why?

2. Who do they most like to be with? Doing what?

3. Do people talk to small children? What do they talk about? Is there a special way to communicate?

Do they tell stories? Is it considered important? Do children ask questions about stories?

4. How do young children learn to talk? When do they first use words? How do people encourage them?

5. When do they learn to walk? How?

6. What do people think this age child needs to know? How do they learn? Who teaches them? How?

7. How do they learn about household routines? Who teaches them? Are they allowed to help?

8. Do people play with small children? When? How? Who? What do they like to play?

9. What makes small children happy or unhappy? How do people respond? Who responds? Is it considered important for people to respond quickly?

10. How do they learn to get on with other people?

11. Are people interested in what young children are feeling or thinking?

12. How do they establish a sense of self?

13. What interactions are there around sleep, dressing, washing, and eating?

14. What are they expected to do for themselves?

15. Are young children ever left alone for long periods? Under what circumstances? Is safety a problem? Do parents worry?

16. What do people do if they get hurt or cry?

17. Do people ever become angry with small children? Do they punish them? Do they think they can learn what is right or wrong?

18. Do young children make their own decisions about anything?

19. Are there any indications that young children are abused? Under what circumstances? By whom?

20. For all the questions above, are there differences in treatment between girls and boys?

Observing school-age children

1. Do people show them love and affection? Who? In what ways? Is it considered important? Why?

2. Who do they like to spend time with? Doing what?

3. Who do they speak to? Do they spend time interacting with adults? Under what circumstances?

4. What makes them happy or unhappy? How do they let people know? How do people respond to them? Are people interested in their ideas and feelings?

5. What are their responsibilities? How do they learn the skills they need?

6. What happens when they don't want to work? Or fail to do a good job?

7. How much time is designated for play? What do they play with? Who do they play with?

8. When do they do school work? Do parents talk to them about homework? Are they able to help them in other ways?

9. How are children expected to behave with others? Peers? Older people? What happens if they don't behave in the right way?

10. Is there any evidence of neglect or abuse?

11. What do they make their own decisions about? Would they like more independence? Are they encouraged to express opinions? Are they permitted to argue? Are

children encouraged to think for themselves? In what situations?

12. School performance

- Academic performance in end of term exams per semester.

- Best subject.

- Poorest subject. Are they getting assistance?

- Participation and performance in after-school activities.

- Teacher's views on child's performance.

- Relationship with other pupils at school.

- Learning problems or disabilities?

Nutritional status, food and mealtimes (all children)

1. Nourishment. Are children well nourished? Record on height and weight? Do they appear to be hungry? Are there any signs of deficiencies? Any feeding programs?

2. Parent concerns about child's nutrition? Informed about nutritional needs?

3. Breastfeeding? How long? On demand? Duration? Beliefs about breastfeeding?

4. Weaning? When are solid foods introduced? For girls? Boys? What is fed? How often? Any changes from past practice with older siblings?

5. Obtaining food. Do families grow or purchase food? Can they get enough? Are there difficult times of the year? Difficulties with storage? Access to markets?

6. Preparing food and feeding children. Who is responsible? Any difficulties?

7. What do children eat? Most common foods? Special foods? Do children eat same as adults? What amounts? (Age? Girls? Boys?) Any changes in diet?

8. What happens if a child doesn't want to eat? If parents are worried about malnutrition, what do they do?

9. What are mealtimes like? Is there a feeding order? Does the household eat together? Are there rules? Is it enjoyable?

Preventive illness and injury (all children)

1. Preventive health care. How good? Do people know about immunisations? Attitudes toward immunisation? Do children have regular check-ups?

2. What beliefs and practices exist around preventive care? Special foods? Blessings?

3. Awareness of hygiene? Do people practice? Facilities available? Children kept clean? Given clean water to drink?

4. Responsibilities for hygiene? Bathing? Toileting? Hand washing? When do children become responsible for themselves?

5. What are the most significant problems related to preventive illness and injury?

6. What measures are taken to protect children from injury?

7. Common illnesses? How much in the last year? How life threatening?

8. Common injuries for children at different ages? Different for boys and girls? Could they have been prevented?

9. Who cares for sick and injured children?

This is a summary of information about child profiles found in the following participatory research book: Arnold, C., (2001), *Conversations with Families to Prepare for Early Childhood Programming,* Save the Children US

COLLECTING AND WRITING CASE STUDIES[27]

Think of a case study as a tool to help your program learn how to be more effective in solving difficult challenges. ECCD centre challenges and opportunities might relate to one of the following:

- How can we ensure 100 per cent of children enrolled in the ECCD centre will begin Grade 1 in one year?

- What changes occur in an extremely vulnerable child and their family due to participation in the ECCD centre?

- What are effective strategies to influence changes in families to improve child nutrition?

- How well are the ECCD centre materials and activities contributing to child development improvements? What changes are required?

- How can the ECCD centre influence or improve relations between the primary school and community, especially about most vulnerable families?

- What makes a highly effective caregiver? Is the caregiver selection process working well to identify these individuals? Is the training program working well to build their skills?

Plan is supporting children in Bolivia to access early childhood care and development programs that promote learning through play.

- Does inclusion of children with disabilities in the ECCD program enhance the program?

- How can adolescents contribute to the ECCD program, and how does participation influence other aspects of their life?

- What strategies successfully engage community members to support the ECCD program – toy making, cultural day, ECCD centre management, etc – and does this involvement lead to other good things for children?

- What makes a community commit to *Education for All?* How might they achieve it?

A case study can describe a problem in great detail, including how it affects individuals or communities. The proposed solution is then laid out. Periodically return to the case study document and add additional information and updates, new data,

[27] Developed by Deborah Llewellyn for Plan International Tanzania 2006.

reflections and strategies. Track any changes in the beneficiaries as part of each new entry. Take photos to show the problem, and then photos that show the changes.

Case study preparations

1. Identify the subject: One might examine one of the less successful aspects of the ECCD centre or its activities and try to understand why. Or you might consider a particular challenge, such as those found in the bulleted list above.

2. Think: Determine how this program activity is linked to the overall objective. Was it a strategic and necessary step to attain the goal?

3. Think: What assumptions were made? How were they made? Were they accurate?

4. Think: What implementation process was selected and what were the trouble spots for achieving the goal?

5. Write down your initial answers to the first four questions.

6. Now go to the field and investigate further. Talk to stakeholders and beneficiaries.

7. Document what was learned from the interviews. Include quotes.

8. Tell why you think the strategy and implementation approach should be changed and what you would propose. Discuss this with your team. Get their feedback. Write your conclusion as a new entry in the case study.

9. Develop a plan to do something differently that will overcome the challenge or better achieve the objective. Include timelines, the people who should be involved, new knowledge and the capacity development required.

10. Add new entries on a quarterly basis until you can see that the challenge has been overcome and is now a success story.

Case study outline:

Section 1: Introduction

Document answers to questions 1 to 4 above. Prepare to submit by the end of the quarter (*Quarterly Report 1*).

Section 2: Inquiry, reflection and inspiration

Document what was learned. Include quotes and photos. Explain why you think the strategy or implementation approach should be changed. This should be presented to the team for feedback. Write conclusions as a new entry in the case study (*Quarterly Report 2*).

Section 3: Describe strategy

Develop a plan to overcome the challenge. Prepare a timeline, how you will involve critical stakeholders, any new knowledge and skills required, plan training and the capacity development approach, and determine additional resources needed. Write this down as the third entry in the case study (*Quarterly Report 3*).

Section 4: Progress

For each quarter, write an update about changes that are occurring. Interview stakeholders, collect statistics to show changes, take photos, and write what you are learning. (Add an updated case study with each *Quarterly Report*. Note

dates so that it flows like a journal, and that your work to address the problem can be documented over time.)

Section 5: Conclusion

There comes a point at which you give up the strategy, take a different approach or declare it a success story. If the challenge is overcome and the objective achieved, it is now time to take the case study document and use the information to write a compelling success story. Then it is time to pick another challenge and begin the process again. Selections from case studies and success stories should be attached to each quarterly project report.

Sharing case studies

Case studies are excellent to include in country program progress reports. All project facilitators should write case studies. The project coordinator will select several case studies to include in annual reports. Remember a case study includes all documented steps one to 10 listed under case study preparations. New entries are added to the previous sections. They are dated so progress can be reviewed.

HOW TO WRITE A SUCCESS STORY

Stories and photographs can help to educate the public about early childhood development. They can demonstrate the impact of a quality ECCD program on children's lives, and future school success. In writing a success story it is important to convey information that the everyday reader can care about and understand. A success story does this by telling how an individual or community benefited from the activity, illustrated by a powerful photograph. The story should introduce a challenge, person or opportunity, explain the program approach, and the end result or benefit. Producing success stories also has internal benefits for the organisation. It builds reflection and observation skills, and energises commitment to the work.

The quality of preschool teaching and support for learning and development of children was improved in Plan-supported preschools in Sri Lanka through training, materials provision and introduction of a daily routine.

Choosing the topic and preparing to write

1. Select a program intervention that you really care about.

2. Think of a short story you can tell that will give a practical understanding of how the intervention impacts on a particular stakeholder. The stakeholder might include a child or adult, a group of people, community volunteers, a family, a community, or staff of a partner organisation.

3. Provide meaningful facts and statistics. For example, primary school performance and participation were at ____ per cent in this village, compared to national average of ____ per cent. After participating in the ECCD centre, ____ per cent entered school on time and have stayed in school for three years.

4. Use quotes. Let your stakeholders do the talking. Interview those involved in the project and include one or two quotes. The quotes should reflect how the project changed the person's life.

5. Think of any other changes that have occurred.

6. Explain any project terms that the reader might not know.

7. Select a mix of stories. You might want one or two stories that reflect core program activities, such as health or education, and another one or two to showcase other things you are doing.

8. Tell how children and community members are involved.

9. Demonstrate the extent of the collaboration and partnerships required to carry out the project.

10. What is the future outlook of this initiative: Will it grow? Evolve? Scale-up?

11. Length 400–1300 words (one to three pages).

Headline

Good headlines or titles are simple, jargon-free, and have impact. They summarise the story in a nutshell and include action verbs that bring the story to life. Your headline should include few words.

Photograph

Your photograph will bring the story to life. The photo should be colourful, depict action, capture people's attention, and feature a person prominently. Provide two or three good high-resolution digital photos and save them in a separate electronic file labeled with the name of the story and the project facilitator. Do not embed the photo in the document.

Story outline

Part 1: Challenge

The first two paragraphs showcase the challenge the person or community or organisation encountered in the context of the project. Presenting a conflict or sharing a first-person account is a good way to grab the reader's attention. Use baseline information when possible. Use numbers; don't generalise.

Part 2: Initiative

Continue by describing how individuals took action to improve the situation, highlighting what was done and how funding was acquired. In this paragraph, summarise the activity.

Part 3: Result/impact

Finally, describe the end result or benefit. What changed for the person or community? What was learned? What was received? What was the impact? How did this make a difference in the community?

Pullout quote

Provide a quote that represents and summarises the story. This quote should capture the success of the project and will be highlighted in the piece. This quote should be no more than 10–20 words.

How often do I write a success story?

Success stories should be produced on a semi-annual basis. They are easy to select and write if you follow this practice: every month each ECCD facilitator contributes their field notes, which contain observations, quotes and photos that capture the essence of the project, its activities and the results it is achieving. This can be very informal but it should be produced electronically. It doesn't have to be long. It might be one page with key topics and bullets. These field notes should be discussed at a staff meeting. Collaboratively the staff can select the topics that will make the best success stories and decide on responsibilities for producing it. Two or three staff members might work on one together. These are submitted on an agreed date.

What are the internal benefits? Staff development!

Organisations that build their staff's skills in reflection, observation and discussion generate success story products more easily. ECCD facilitators play a critical role in collecting the information needed to write effective case studies. They must have a clear understanding of the project at the program, design and results level, and be able to describe it in a few words. They should have access to a digital camera and submit photos on designated topics on a regular basis. They will benefit from training to use observation and interview tools that help them to gather concrete, everyday examples of how the project is changing lives. The expectations for staff to be more aware and accountable will energise commitment and strengthen the organisation internally.

TRAINING GUIDE FOR SUPERVISORS WHO MONITOR AND MENTOR ECCD CENTRE CAREGIVERS

Introduction

ECCD caregivers benefit when the supervisor is also the trainer and mentor. In other words, the same person facilitates teacher development workshops, observes the classroom at least once each month, works with other mentors to prepare follow-on training that addresses issues found during the ELP visits, and uses helpful consultation methods to talk to the teacher about what they observe in the classroom.

The individual that supervises teachers should be competent in setting up a classroom and managing all of the activities, and know how these contribute to development and learning. The supervisor observes an ELP from opening to close one day each month. These observations help the supervisor reflect on their own skills. *How well is the professional development program working? Do caregivers demonstrate understanding of the content and apply the knowledge in the classroom?* If caregivers are not doing well, they might not have skills to be an effective ELP teacher. If this is the case, the criteria for caregiver selection should be revised to better capture the characteristics required for effective ECCD teachers/caregivers. If the

Children in Laos enjoy outdoor games with their caregiver. Physical activity helps develop gross motor skills and is good for children's socialisation.

THE INDIVIDUAL THAT SUPERVISES TEACHERS SHOULD BE COMPETENT IN SETTING UP A CLASSROOM AND MANAGING ALL OF THE ACTIVITIES, AND KNOW HOW THESE CONTRIBUTE TO DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING.
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person has the basic characteristics required, then poor teaching in the classroom becomes a reflection of the competence of the supervisor. Working together, supervisors and project coordinators can modify and improve training and supervision consultation approaches that result

in teacher/child interactions, daily activities, and use of materials that achieve development and learning indicators for children.

This section contains activities to fulfill the tasks of supervision, research and consultation. This work leads to reflection and planning for future

teacher development workshops or for program improvements. Before supervisors are trained, they need to consolidate understanding about early childhood development and learning goals/indicators, ECCD centre activities, and materials and interactions that achieve the indicators. In other words, supervisors must gain the knowledge and the methods required to apply the knowledge. They must simulate a daily routine.

Objectives:

• Knows that the purpose of program supervision is to improve the child's opportunity for development and learning.

• Has a well-defined idea of an effective classroom and uses indicators to monitor progress.

• Uses classroom observation tools that capture the learning environment, child's experience in the classroom, and teacher practice with an unbiased eye.

• During observations, knows what to do, how to act and how to provide constructive feedback and consultation with teachers.

• Records observation logs and required monitoring data in files for each school/teacher for each visit.

• Monitors one girl and one boy (uses random number selection) to record evidence that children are developing the skills listed in the four areas.

• Discusses classroom observations with colleagues, identifies areas where teachers need additional training, and self-assesses own roles and responsibilities about quality outcomes.

• Knows effective facilitation techniques to conduct monthly training for teachers.

Day 1

Activity 1: ECCD supervision – purpose and methods

1. *Today's focus is monitoring and mentoring. It's all about you and your role as mentors. As a mentor you will play an important role in changing the lives of children. Soon you will co-facilitate a training program for caregivers/teachers. Next week we will simulate and prepare for that training. Once the training is over and school begins, you will make monthly visits to each school. You will observe each classroom for an* entire morning. Let's brainstorm a list of the most important reasons for classroom monitoring and supervision (15 minutes).

2. *Divide into three groups* (45 minutes).

• *Please select 10 reasons why your group feels monitoring and supervision are important.*

• List each on an index card.

• *Order the index cards from most to least important, and glue them onto flipchart paper.*

• Groups put work on walls.

• Facilitator invites participants to walk around and look at each other's charts.

• Groups return to tables.

3. Facilitator introduces teacher development indicators (see Appendix 7).

The purpose of program supervision is to make sure that the environment is supporting children's development and learning. It requires teachers that are trained and committed. There are characteristics necessary for effective teachers. Tools for monitoring capture the learning environment, child's experience in the classroom, and teacher practice with an unbiased eye.

We are going to look at the teacher development indicators. Please take a few minutes to look over the chart (three to four minutes) (15 minutes).

Break (15 minutes).

4. *The list is divided into three columns* (45 minutes).

• *Column 1 looks at professionalism, which includes participation in a training program and ethical behaviour.*

• *Column 2 identifies the knowledge they are acquiring through training.*

• *Column 3 lets us see that teachers are using the knowledge.*

5. *In Column 1, under ethical behaviour, can you find one thing that fits with something on your team's chart? I will give you three to four minutes to discuss this with each other.* Facilitator then asks for a comment/observation from each group (total 15 minutes).

6. *In Column 2, under knowledge and skills, can you find one thing that fits with something on your team's chart? I will give you five minutes to discuss this with each other.* Facilitator then asks for a comment/observation from each group (total 15 minutes).

7. Repeat with Column 3 (five minutes to look at the chart and discuss in a group, and about five minutes to share the example) (total 15 minutes).

Activity 2: ELP profile

Each supervisor will keep a folder on each ECCD centre. The ELP profile (see Appendix 8) *has basic records that are important for reporting to funders. Let's look at each section and make sure we all know how to complete the items.*

Note: This sheet might be modified to include items of particular interest to this program.

Activity 3: Introduce ELP quality checklist

Facilitator introduces ELP quality checklist (see Appendix 4).

Activity: Go over each component of the tool and make sure everyone understands how to use it. Prepare to work in pairs to visit an ELP and use the instrument the following morning.

Activity 4: Icebreaker – unique me/fingerprints

Fingerprints are one of the many things that make each person unique. There is only one person in the world who has a set of fingerprints that belong to you. Each person outlines their hand on a piece of paper. Help participants make fingerprints using a stamp pad with ink. If possible, examine the fingerprints with a magnifier. *Compare your fingerprints with a partner to see how they are the same and different. Typical characteristics include arches and loops.* Participants can take one fingerprint and try to draw it in an enlarged way. This is useful if there are no magnifiers.

Lesson: *We are each unique in our own special way. Even with differences we can find similarities and ways to bring us together.*

While we are looking at the quality of classroom, we must not forget that it is the experience of the individual child that helps us know whether the classroom is a good and effective place, and whether it is changing the life of a child. Supervisors should not only watch classrooms, but they should randomly select a girl and boy from each class to watch in the classroom, and to get to know outside of the classroom. We will learn how to collect a child profile.

Activity 5: Introduce child profile

The quality of the classroom predicts how well a child will do in primary school. It is nice but not necessary to keep records on each child. We do want to track a sample of children to see whether the learning environment is providing opportunities for them to develop in the four areas (social emotional, physical, cognitive and language development). Information about collecting child profiles is on page 134.

Activity 6: Consultation methods

You have observed a classroom. You have observed 'your child'. You might see some things that you think are good or bad, but you do not talk or interrupt the classroom. Why? After the class is over and the children go home, you have a chance to talk to the teacher. It is important to realise that what you think you saw might not have been the way the teacher saw it. You might not have all the information. Also people do not respond well to criticism and it rarely results in changed behaviours. So how do you approach this? Brainstorm ideas.

Consultation: *The purpose of observation is to improve learning quality. Please discuss your observations with the caregiver. Give them the opportunity to explain. Discuss ideas for improvement.*

Let's try this out:

- *Divide into groups.*

- *Each group writes down on a card a scenario of something the mentor might observe that would not be acceptable. For example, the teacher reads a story and only asks questions that can be answered Yes or No, and does not require any reasoning or complete thoughts and sentences from the child.*

- *Now pass each card to another group.*

- *Each group develops a role play of how the mentor could talk to the teacher and help them draw their own conclusions about how it could be handled more effectively. Give the teacher constructive feedback. Remember, always begin with sharing something positive that you observed.*

Activity 7: Preparations to visit an ELP the following morning to use the ELP quality checklist.

Day 2

Activity 1: ELP classroom observations (time: morning)

In pairs, participants observe an ELP classroom using the ELP quality checklist.

Activity 2: Mentor practitioner study group (time: afternoon)

Facilitator uses the reflection on practice study group method (see page 158) to guide mentors through the tool that will enable them to use their observations for reflection, program improvement, and to develop monthly ELOs for caregivers/teachers.

In a group discussion, each mentor shares something positive that they saw. They then share a problem they found. The group selects one that seems particularly challenging and together they go through the process for solving problems. When the facilitator comes to the section on new knowledge, they provide a handout on teacher study groups. The facilitator explains how supervisors will use the process that they are currently trying as a way to share their findings each month, and then they will use the same tool/method for conducting a monthly teacher study group.

Conclusion

You have used all the tools for monitoring and supervision. Let's review your role for monitoring, supervision and training using the tools. Here are the responsibilities:

1. *Know and understand the child and teacher indicators, and how they are applied.*

2. *Complete and update ELP profiles as asked.*

3. *Visit each ECCD centre once each month. The visit will last the entire morning. Use the ELP quality checklist during the visit. Compile the sheets in a folder, one for each ECCD centre.*

4. *Collect a child profile on one girl and one boy from each centre. The child is selected using a random selection methodology. A simple way to do this is to assign a number to every child. Put the numbers in a container. Draw a number for girls and a number for boys. The child assigned to that number is the child selected for the child profile.*

5. *Maintain a case study on one of the ECCD centres that you supervise. Update this at least once a month.*

6. *Review all of your notes from the month and prepare for the monthly reflective practitioner meeting with your colleagues. Plan to share something you feel proud of (how you helped a teacher improve practice), and a problem area that is a challenge.*

7. *Project coordinator maintains case study on how supervisors are changing and growing, and program improvement decisions that come out of the reflective practitioner study groups and data collection.*

8. *A statistical sample of ELPs is selected for internal research. At a designated time (visit one, visit five, visit 11), the indicators are logged into the computer to track changes over time. Children from the same school will be tracked into Grade 1. How many enrolled, how many complete Grade 1 and are promoted to Grade 2, and how many persist through this level and go on to the next.*

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CAREGIVERS

Right: Plan in Bangladesh is working to increase the access of poor and marginalised children to early learning opportunities.

INTRODUCTION TO CAREGIVER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Effective early childhood caregivers are the most important component of ELPs to help prepare children well for school and life. Effective teachers know how to provide caring interactions and teaching techniques that get children to think, solve problems, and learn from play. If teachers know how to stimulate early literacy and maths reasoning, and also understand how children develop and learn, they are better prepared to implement challenging, yet child-friendly programs. All early childhood development professionals should have broad knowledge about the birth to eight years age range, and in-depth knowledge about the age span of the children they are working with. Knowing what comes before and after that development phase helps them to be successful teachers for inclusive classroom settings that promote every child's social, emotional and academic needs.

ELPs can be the equaliser that enables children from a variety of backgrounds and skills to begin primary school at a community of respectful and supportive friends. Effective caregivers have a critical role to reduce bias and stereotypes about gender, disabilities, diverse social and economic backgrounds, and children and families who are linguistically

ECCD caregivers practice teaching methods that will stimulate children's cognitive development during training in Nepal.

or culturally different. All aspects of the professional development should prepare caregivers to respect and support diversity. It is a core value of the community-led action for children program.

We know that teachers who have specific preparations in early childhood development and education are more likely to engage in warm and positive interactions with children, offer richer language experiences,

and to create environments that result in learning. Teacher education significantly predicts ELP quality. Thus professional development is the cornerstone for a quality ECCD program.

An effective professional development program is based on a body of core knowledge and competencies. There is a system in place to ensure the quality of training. There are clearly defined requirements and

incentives for participants. Increased competence gained from training and experience results in job advancement. An effective system provides for the needs of teachers at all levels. Training is provided on a continuum to expand and deepen knowledge over time. Education is connected to experience. Knowledge is connected to practice.

Core knowledge: Range of knowledge that adults working with young children need to facilitate learning and development.

Core competencies: Range of observable skills that adults working with young children need to facilitate child development and learning.

Community volunteers staff community ELPs. The community selects candidates based on a set of criteria. They range in age from 17 to 40 years and are willing to volunteer their time. While they are known for their love of children, they rarely hold more than a Grade 8 education certificate. Staffing a program with community volunteers decreases costs and increases sustainability. On the other hand, it requires a specialised training program to ensure that the volunteers are not just very committed, but also highly capable of guiding children's learning. To give them the knowledge and skills, they will require a foundation training course and monthly (one day) ELOs.

The five-day foundation training course prepares caregivers to manage an ELP committed to child development and learning outcomes. The foundation course takes them through the daily routine, helping them gain essential knowledge about child development, curriculum content, learning materials, teaching strategies, and reflective observations that will get them started in their own classroom. Each month they will have the opportunity to meet with other caregivers in a one-day professional study group, referred to as the ELO. In the ELO, they will reflect on experiences, expand knowledge, and gain new skills to foster children's growth across a broad range of developmental and content areas. Each month they will make and take practical materials and new ideas to enrich learning in the coming month.

An effective teacher development program can act as an extra incentive for volunteer caregivers who work for a small stipend. Teachers enjoy the professional camaraderie of meeting with other women and men from surrounding communities, learning together and sharing their experiences. The monthly ELO helps them step outside their day-to-day work and recognise the importance of their role in the lives of children.

The quality of ELP teaching practices is monitored using the ECERS, child development indicators, and maths and literacy benchmarks. This provides consistency and fairness in the supervision system. Teachers strive for common goals related to the quality of the environment, child development indicators, and maths and language outcomes. The supervisor's task is to consult about what is observed in relation to these standards. The supervisor is an important point for sharing good ideas from one school to the next, and for recognising problems and issues to be discussed at the monthly meeting. The supervisor's support will be evaluated by teacher feedback and by the quality of ELPs under supervision.

The ELP aims to provide opportunities for disadvantaged children that enable them to attain skills and aptitudes for primary school success. The professional development system builds a cadre of professionals who have the knowledge, skills and dedication to accomplish this goal.

STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

ELPs that promote children's optimal development and learning have caregivers who maintain high standards of practice. The National Association for Education of Young Children (2009) recommends the following standards:[28]

1. **Promoting child development and learning**
   This implies knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs, what influences development and learning, and how to use child development knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive and challenging learning environments.

2. **Building family and community relationships**
   Successful ELPs depend on partnerships with children's families and community. They support and empower families and involve all families in their children's development and learning.

3. **Documenting and assessing to support young children**
   This implies knowing how to use observation, documentation and other appropriate assessment tools, and practicing responsible assessment.

4. **Using developmentally effective approaches**
   Caregivers understand that positive relationships and supportive interactions are the foundation of their work with children. They know and understand effective strategies for optimal learning and development.

5. **Using content knowledge to build meaningful curricula**
   Caregivers understand the domains of child development and have knowledge about academic disciplines. This enables them to design, implement and evaluate challenging activities for each child. Early childhood content includes language and literacy, maths, the arts, science, physical activity and social studies. A well-implemented curriculum creates a secure base for children to explore, and helps them express their emotions and manage their impulses effectively. It supports young children's ability to solve problems and think well. It supports the growth of academic and social skills.

6. **Becoming a professional**
   Because young children are at such a critical point in their development, and because they are so vulnerable and cannot articulate their own rights and needs, early childhood caregivers have compelling responsibilities to know about and uphold ethical guidelines and professional standards. They continue learning about early education and reflect on practice in a team of professionals. They engage in informed advocacy for children and the early childhood profession.

[28] National Association for Education of Young Children, (2009), *Standards for Professional Preparation*, Washington, DC

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Effective professional development enables caregivers to achieve standards of practice. Here are some principles of professional development to keep in mind:

1. **ECCD professional development is an ongoing process.**
   All early childhood professionals, no matter how qualified, need to continue acquiring new knowledge and skills related to working with young children and their families.

2. **ECCD professional development is most effective when grounded in sound child development theory and structured as a coherent and systematic program, not as one-off workshops.**
   Isolated one-off training workshops make it difficult for teachers to integrate and apply new information. They often result in duplication of some topics and gaps in others.

3. **Professional development experiences are most successful when they respond to an individual's background, experiences, and their actual work and role.**
   The trainer helps the caregiver look back on their own experiences and link these experiences to the

A volunteer teacher in Vietnam uses children's drawings to teach Vietnamese vocabulary.

ALL EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS, NO MATTER HOW QUALIFIED, NEED TO CONTINUE ACQUIRING NEW KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS RELATED TO WORKING WITH YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES.

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content under discussion. New knowledge is linked to specific activities and processes to be conducted in the classroom.

4. **Effective professional development opportunities are structured to promote clear links between theory and practice.**
Without clear links between theory and practice, caregivers might reject new knowledge as 'book learning' or fall back on comfortable strategies and practices that have worked for them in the past.

5. **Early childhood trainers and supervisors require an appropriate knowledge and experience base.**
Trainers should be well informed about child development and early education theory and

practice, and be able to apply and demonstrate these practices in classroom settings.

6. **Effective professional development experiences use an active, hands-on approach and stress an interaction that encourages participants to learn from one another.**
This reflects principles of how adults learn and has the added benefit of modeling the same type of teaching practices that are effective when working with young children.

7. **Effective professional development experiences contribute to positive self-esteem.**
Professional development acknowledges the skills and resources brought to the

training process as opposed to creating feelings of self-doubt or inadequacy. When practitioners have low self-esteem it can have negative effects on their interactions with young children. Also, by building on existing strengths, it is more likely that new skills will be incorporated into the practice, and less likely that the new approaches will be rejected (for example, *You don't know the children in my village; that would never work with them.*)

8. **Effective professional development experiences provide opportunities for application and reflection, and allow for individuals to be observed and receive feedback on what has been learned.**
ECCD professionals are more likely to use new knowledge when there

are immediate opportunities to practice, feedback is provided on practice, and there is opportunity to reflect on the experience with other teachers during the next professional development session.

9. **Teachers should be involved in the planning and design of their professional development program.**
The professional development program should be tailored to meet individual needs and evolving issues. Further, the caregivers should have input about what is taught. Caregiver leadership should be encouraged by inviting caregivers to present their strategies. It will give them a stronger sense of ownership for their learning and reinforces the notion that contributing and leading are other ways to learn.

TEN-DAY FOUNDATION TRAINING WORKSHOP OUTLINE

This section provides a description of core information to cover in a foundation training program and proposes an experiential approach that enables application of knowledge to classroom practice. Caregivers learn how to conduct a classroom by simulating classrooms, and taking on the role of children and teachers. A foundation training program can be conducted in five days, but caregivers will receive added benefits from a ten-day program. Information and tools for developing training content are found throughout this guide.

Caregivers' ten-day foundation training – suggested outline

Days 1 and 2: Building a team and sense of purpose

(Topics: Getting acquainted and building a team; Introduction to ELP; Goals for child development and learning; How children learn; and Accommodating learning differences.)

Day 1 and 2 of the foundation training focuses on building a team among caregivers, and developing a sense of purpose for the work of teaching young children. Caregivers will get an overview of the training program and the materials. They will learn that

Children and their teacher sing a song at a Plan-supported ECCD centre in Mozambique.

the ECCD centres have three goals for learning: life success; school success; and developmentally appropriate practice. They will share their ideas and experiences in relation to new knowledge about child development and learning. They will recognise that the early years are an important time to build skills for life and school success, and will be able to explain some of the ways that the ECCD centre supports children to do this. They will learn that children develop in four areas and how to use a chart to monitor child development indicators. They will also learn that each child and community is different. Therefore, quality ELP programs aim to respect different ways of learning and the cultures and communities they serve.

TEN-DAY
FOUNDATION
TRAINING
WORKSHOP
OUTLINE

The primary focus for the remainder of the foundation course will be to give caregivers the confidence to implement the ELP curriculum and daily routine with an understanding of child development. The child development information presented on Days 1 and 2 will become more meaningful as caregivers see how it was applied to the curriculum and the development of learning materials. It will shape the participants' understanding about effective teaching practices that reflect both cultural and accepted knowledge about child development.

Learner outcomes

Participants will:

1. Get acquainted and build a team.

2. Become familiar with ELP goals and curriculum guide.

3. Describe important life skills that are learned in the early years.

4. Describe four areas of development and some skills ELP children should achieve in each.

5. Explain some of the ways children are different and how to accommodate difference.

Days 3 and 4: ELP daily routine – strengthens all areas of child development and promotes learning through play

(Topics: Simulation of ELP; Child development indicators; Role of play in development and learning.)

Day 3 of the foundation training will provide participants with an introduction to the curriculum. Participants will spend the morning participating in learning activities, as their children will do. Facilitators will act as the teachers. They will conduct lessons and activities in the ELP daily routine, model good teaching practice, and stay on schedule. Participants will role play ELP children. Throughout the morning, participants will also be asked to stop briefly at key moments to put on their 'adult hats' and analyse the experience they are having. The facilitator will ensure that participants see the links between what is happening in the daily routine and child development knowledge gained on Day 1 and 2. The purpose of this activity is two-fold. First, it will reduce anxiety of participants about what to expect when they are teachers. Second, all content in the foundation course will make more sense and be more usefully applied due to the concrete experience. In

the final morning activity, participants will determine whether the ELP is set up to achieve the goals – learning for life success and school success. The ELP development indicators chart will be used, as well as the checklist for characteristics of resilient children. These instruments were introduced on Day 1 and 2.

On Day 4 participants will learn why play is the most important vehicle for learning. Corner play will be the main focus of the afternoon. Participants will understand the purpose of corner play and how to use the materials. They will develop skills to manage corner play. They will play with the toys and evaluate what children learn in each corner. Finally, they will learn a technique called 'scaffolding' to extend children's learning through conversation while they play.

Learner outcomes

Participants will be able to:

1. Explain the daily routine.

2. Describe classroom set-up and materials.

3. Describe teacher skills required to manage the learning environment.

4. Identify aspects of the program that help children develop in four areas.

5. Identify aspects of the program that help children develop life skills.

6. Explain the importance of play for child development and learning.

7. Understand the importance of corner play and how to manage it for optimal learning.

Day 5 and 6: Maths and literacy skills development

(Topics: Skills children need in maths and literacy, and methodologies.)

Days 5 and 6 will explain effective early literacy and maths instruction that provides ELP children with developmentally appropriate materials, and experiences and approaches that help them develop skills and attitudes for school success. Play and the use of hands-on materials have a prominent role in these strategies, making literacy and maths activities meaningful and enjoyable for children.

Components of the literacy approach emphasises rich teacher talk (that is, using complete sentences and good vocabulary, not talking 'down' to children or simplifying speech for them), language expression through news sharing and journals, listening to stories for meaning, listening for sound differences, alphabet

activities, and recognising and writing their name and simple words.

Components of the maths approach emphasises maths concepts, number skill development, and problem solving. Participants will learn to conduct a maths and literacy circle, integrate maths and literacy into other activities, and assess maths and language skill development.

Learner outcomes

Participants will be able to:

- Effectively implement a literacy circle with news sharing, journals, read a story aloud followed by discussion, and conduct alphabet activities.

- Enhance children's skills in listening and speaking, reading and writing to achieve competencies found on the ELP readiness indicator chart.

- Effectively implement a maths circle time with calendar activities, maths problem solving using a maths bag, and number rhymes and songs.

- Enhance children's skills in logical thinking and number awareness to achieve seven competencies.

Day 7 and 8: Components of an effective learning environment

(Topics: ELP simulation and analysis of key areas: maths, literacy, learning through play, learning environment ((physical environment, schedule and routines, and social emotional climate)); and assessment using the ECERS.)

Day 7 will provide a second simulation of a day in ELP. It will give participants another look at the child's day in relation to what they are learning in the foundation course about effective ELP curriculum. Participants can now recognise that play in five corners leads to learning. They are familiar with skills children need to develop in maths and literacy and the components for daily lessons at literacy and maths circles. They know that children also develop maths and literacy in activities throughout the day, especially during play. Participants will gain more confidence to implement the daily routine, and they will have the opportunity to ask questions and clarify understanding. The topic of science will be covered in the monthly follow on. Cultural day or life skills lessons taught by parents will be further discussed following an evening

cultural performance organised during the foundation training.

On Day 8, participants will discuss three components of the learning environment: physical environment, schedule and routines, and social emotional climate. They will relate new knowledge to what they have learned from implementing the ELP simulations. The afternoon activities will emphasise how environments affect children's behaviour. The environment can cause stress, frustration and aggression or encourage safe feelings, kindness and cooperation. Participants will be introduced to the ECERS – R. Participants will use the ECERS checklists for physical space and furnishings, as well as routines, to see how well the ELP plans to support international standards.

The teacher has a big role to play in establishing an environment for learning and building positive classroom relations and behaviour. The topic of teacher effectiveness will be covered on Day 9.

Learner outcomes

Participants will:

- Develop confidence to implement the daily routine.

- Be able to describe aspects of the physical environment that encourage positive behaviour and learning.

- Be able to describe the benefits of a daily routine for children's social emotional development and for learning.

- Be able to explain what teachers do to build a positive social emotional climate and community of learners.

- Be familiar with the ECERS rankings for physical space and routines.

Day 9 and 10: Effective teacher essentials and organising ELP operations

(Topics: Detailed guidelines for organising the ELP, and learning and practicing effective teaching skills.)

Day 9 provides participants with information on ELP operations: how to organise the ELP, talk to parents about ELP, enrol children, maintain records, and select the venue. Participants will find out about the supervision and support that they will receive as teachers.

They will discuss goals for including children with disabilities, promoting gender equality, and ensuring child

protection. They will learn how the program's impact will be monitored.

On Day 10 participants will consolidate knowledge about effective teaching gained during the week and practice using the skills. They will think about a teacher they admired and identify strategies these teachers used. They will compare their ideas about effective teacher characteristics with research findings by the National Centre for Early Development and Learning (NCEDL). NCEDL identified processes that effective teachers used in social-emotional dynamics, and classroom management and instructional support that led to learning gains in primary school children. After discussing the

findings, participants will discuss their cultural relevance. Finally, they will review standards for teacher-child interactions found in the ECERS. There are five areas. Participants will create role plays that demonstrate four levels of quality interactions. The role plays will provide review and reinforcement for knowledge gained during the week and some practice for using effective interactions in practical classroom settings.

Learner outcomes

Participants will:

- Understand how ELP is organised and their role to promote core values of the program:

  – venue selection (criteria and process)

  – child selection (criteria and process)

  – inclusion of children with disabilities – aims and strategies

  – promoting gender equality – aims and strategies

  – child protection – aims and strategies

  – school records and reporting

  – committee formation (process and responsibility)

  – form partnerships with primary school

  – form partnerships with families

  – anticipate problems that might arise and seek advice.

- Describe characteristics of effective teachers in social-emotional relations, classroom management, and instructional support for learning.

- Demonstrate effective interactions between teachers and children.

- Be familiar with ECERS standards for interactions within the context of the following: outdoor play, supervision of children, discipline, teacher-child interactions, interactions among children.

MONTHLY CAREGIVER STUDY CIRCLES

The foundation training serves as an introduction to quality ELPs and standards of teacher practice. Every topic discussed in the foundation training will be revisited month to month as teachers gather to reflect on practice and learn new skills. Think of the foundation training as an introduction. Once operations begin, the caregivers will want and need more opportunities to discuss their growing understanding of the foundation course content. The facilitators should constantly revisit those learner objectives so that, over time, they are truly understood and effectively applied.

Caregivers' monthly training

Purpose

Teachers will have the opportunity to meet together on a monthly basis to discuss experiences, practice new skills, and prepare lessons for the coming month. A specific format is followed.

Teacher of the month

Starting in the second month, a teacher of the month will be recognised, similar to the child of the day practice used in an ELP. Over the course of the year, all teachers will have the opportunity

In Laos, Plan supports regular preschool teaching training to help teachers with ongoing professional development.

to be recognised. If more than ten teachers are in the cluster, then some months will have more than one teacher of the month. These teachers help the facilitator lead all the activities. They are the first to share and to talk in each activity. They are noticed and given positive attention. They are also in charge of the 'make and take' learning toys.

'Make and take'

Each ELP is supplied with a basic set of books and toys that are open-ended, imaginative and can be used in many ways. To accommodate the brain's need for novelty, project facilitators will bring two no-cost learning toys that teachers can 'make and take' to add new interest to the learning corners. The teacher of the month is also asked to bring their own creative idea for a toy. Criteria for 'make and take' include: children love to play with it; it enhances imagination, reasoning, maths or literacy skills; and it costs little or nothing to make. 'Make and take' activities are made during lunch for relevant content areas, and at the end of the day.

Monthly teacher study circles format

Activity 1: Reflection on practice circles
Time: 8:30–10am

Description: Trainer follows procedure described in handout, 'Reflection on practice teacher circles' which can be found on the following page. The activity moves quickly if guidelines are followed. After the first experience, teachers anticipate the next month's meeting and spend time thinking about what they are going to talk about. Teachers are eager to adopt ideas from their colleagues and this gives them a chance to hear what others are doing. They feel less isolated in their work and begin to function as a team.

Break
Time: 10–10:15am

Activity 2: New knowledge and skills – application
Time: 10:15–11:30am

Description: One topic will be presented, new skills modeled, and an opportunity for in-depth discussion is provided. The topic presented might be one that was introduced in the foundation training. Teachers will commit to trying a new skill in the coming month, or to investigating this particular topic through a case study. They will be asked to read a section in the curriculum guide or discussion notes/handouts. Reporting on an experience or investigation will occur the next month during Activity 3.

Activity 3: New knowledge and skills – reporting progress
Time: 11:30am–12pm

Description: Each month teachers gain new knowledge and skills in Activity 2. Their assignment is to practice that skill or to observe children related to the topic and prepare to share at the next meeting. This is a time when teachers revisit the skill learned and how they were able to apply it.

Activity 4: Monthly lesson and materials preparation – literacy
Time: 12–1pm

Description: Teachers review storybooks for the coming month and prepare questions they will ask children, as well as activities related to the book. Each month one teacher reads a storybook to the group and the others offer suggestions. Teachers also practice activities for teaching the new alphabet letters. Teachers show examples of one or two children's journals and talk about the process and how to improve it. A new literacy game for corner play is made and played, and a new rhyme or two is learned.

Lunch
Time: 1–2pm

Activity 5: Monthly lesson and materials preparation – maths
Time: 2–3pm

Description: The trainer models one of the new maths lessons and the participants role play as children and solve the problem. Together they discuss what children learn, and an effective facilitation technique for the activity. Then teachers plan for new maths lessons using maths bags. They model the lessons in small groups and offer suggestions to one another. They discuss any difficulties that they are having teaching maths. They make new board games or learn new indoor/outdoor games that teach maths skills.

Activity 6: Other content areas
Time: 3–3:30pm

Each month one other curriculum activity will be discussed. This includes morning greetings, outdoor play, corner play, science, cultural day, or the closing meeting. Teachers and the facilitator recommend issues and improvements.

Activity 7: ELP operations updates and information
Time: 4–4:30pm

This is the time where teachers discuss logistics, reporting or other administrative matters.

Activity 8: Closing meeting

Immediately following Activity 7, teachers share warm goodbyes and words of encouragement for the coming month.

REFLECTION ON PRACTICE CIRCLES

Purpose

Reflection on practice is a useful tool to begin staff or monthly teacher meetings. The facilitator asks teachers/staff to reflect on ordinary work experiences. Teachers will focus on successes, as well as problems they might be facing. The teachers begin to realise more meaning in what they do and develop habits of reflection. It provides permission to feel proud and boast about accomplishments, and to share difficulties in a collegial community of learners. Teachers learn from each other, both through difficulties and successes. Trainers also benefit because it provides rich anecdotes about children, and the classroom reality, to be referred to in the training course. It helps the trainer assess each teacher's progress in applying what they are learning, and to identify areas that require further professional development. This process brings spontaneity to the workshop and allows teachers to partially take on the role as trainers.

The act of reflection with a group of colleagues provides the opportunity for:

- realising more meaning in one's work through the insights of others;

An ECCD centre caregiver in Pakistan uses picture books to teach children vocabulary. Books are an excellent tool for building children's vocabulary and a way to expose them to objects and things outside their everyday experience.

TEACHERS WILL FOCUS ON SUCCESSES, AS WELL AS PROBLEMS THEY MIGHT BE FACING. THE TEACHERS BEGIN TO REALISE MORE MEANING IN WHAT THEY DO AND DEVELOP HABITS OF REFLECTION.

- learning from each other's successes and difficulties;

- applying meaning beyond the situation in which it was learned;

- making a commitment to try out new ideas; and

- documenting learning and providing a rich base of shared knowledge.

Steps (Time: 1.5 hours)

1. **Share a professional accomplishment related to the ELP's goals**
   Each teacher briefly describes something that they did in the past month related to helping children develop and learn, which they feel proud of. Others listen but do not interrupt, comment or question. Listen only.

2. **Identify and describe a problem or challenge in the work related to the goal**
   Next each teacher has three to four minutes to describe one problem they have identified. Others listen and do not comment. This helps teachers develop listening skills and allows the speaker to reflect, as they speak, without interruption. This also allows the sharing process to move quickly.

3. **Problem analysis**
   The facilitator selects one problem to analyse. Group members ask information-seeking questions, pushing for clarification about the problem, but they do not offer advice.

4. **Problem – solutions and action**
   The group then brainstorms possible solutions and helps the teacher in developing an initial plan of action. At the next meeting, the teacher reports on the success of the plan.

5. **Building new knowledge and skills – presentation**
   The session concludes with a short presentation (15 minutes) by one of the members. They teach a skill to the group, explain an effective strategy, or share something recently learned. Selection for the next month's presentation often arises from what is shared in Step 1. There will be something that the group wants to learn more about. This provides a forum for teachers to be recognised and develop leadership.

Teacher training warm-up and ice-breaker exercises

Early childhood classroom activities make excellent warm-up and ice-breaker exercises to use during teacher training workshops, teacher study circles and reflection on practice circles. The exercises offer two benefits. Teachers experience the types of play-based learning activities that engage children and nurture development. Simultaneously, the teacher learns methods and activities that they can directly apply in their own classroom. Examples of energiser activities can be found in Appendix 9.

APPENDICES

Right: Children at a preschool in Thailand enjoy outdoor play on a double slide.

1 – MORE IDEAS FOR LITERACY ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE PRESCHOOL COMPETENCIES AND ECERS QUALITY STANDARDS

1. Print in the environment

a. Label the **attendance pockets** with a title: "Our Class" or "Our Friends". Consider adding this sign: "Today there are ___ girls and ___ boys." Children should take their own attendance by turning over or hanging up their name cards. Draw attention to names of children who are absent. Conduct activities so that children learn to recognise the names of their friends. For example, "How many names begin with the letter "D"? "How many letters are in your name? Can you find other friends whose names have the same number of letters?"

b. Label the **calendar**: "The month is _____." "The day is _____."

c. Use colourful **cards to label objects in the room**, such as the five corners: "Games", "Blocks", etc. Make a second set of matching cards. At least once a week, play a game matching the cards to the signs on the wall. Each week ask the children to choose two or three other things in the class to label, such as 'door', 'blackboard', 'clock', 'window', etc. Play a game where children find the matching words. As the number of word cards grow, play other games with the words. For example, ask children to sort the word cards into groups – words that begin with the same letter, or words with same number of letters.

d. Display **alphabet letters** with the capital and lower case letter, a picture of an object that begins with the letter, and the name of the object. Alphabet letters that are produced as A4 size 'flags' can be attached to a string. Any letter can be easily removed for instruction. All letters can be removed for activities, such as putting the letters in alphabetical order.

e. All **posters (learning aids)** should be hung at children's eye level. Posters produced on cloth or rice sack material last longer than paper. Use bright colour markers or paint. Label each poster with words to explain what is being seen.

f. Enhance corner play areas with objects from the environment that contain written words.

2. Book and literacy areas

a. Place books in the book corner for children to use freely.

b. When funds are available to purchase additional books, use the criteria in the curriculum guide: engaging pictures are important but children need books with more words, more storyline, and more character development. Add books about science and some that deal with counting themes.

3. Adult reading with children

a. ECCD team should prepare suggested questions for each book. Glue these to the back inside cover.

b. While reading the story, caregiver should stop to discuss unfamiliar words or concepts.

c. After the story, ask questions about the meaning of the story. Use open-ended questions that require children to express a thought in complete sentences.

4. Sounds in words

a. Teach alphabet letters associated with a word that begins with the sound.

b. Play listening games to find words that start with the same sound, or the word in a group of word that has a different sound. For example, line up three or four children and ask which names are alike and which are different.

c. Teach children to identify and clap syllables in words.

d. The ECCD team should identify five to 10 rhymes for preschoolers and teach these to the caregiver. Use rhymes and songs with rhyming words during literacy circle several days each week.

5. Emergent writing

a. Add practice of journal writing.

    i. Give each child own notebook to use as a journal during the school year, and to take home at the end of the year. Conduct the 'journal' activity during the 40-minute literacy circle.

    ii. The journal motivates emergent reading and writing because the words are attached to their own life and personal meaning.

    iii. Journal drawing and writing, and talking about the picture, will take about 30 minutes. Since the literacy circle lasts 40 minutes, the teacher might provide two 15-minute periods over two days to complete and discuss one journal entry. In this way the child could produce at least two journal entries per week. A suggestion for the fifth day (Friday) is discussed in the final point of this list.

    iv. On the cover write the child's name and a label, such as "A Book About Me".

    v. Each page in the book should be $^2/_3$ blank for drawing a picture. $^1/_3$ should have lines for writing words.

    vi. Ask children to draw a picture about something that is happening in their life. It can be something they saw or did. It might be something that makes them happy or something that they are sad or worried about.

    vii. Teacher observes and quietly interacts with as many children as possible during each session. Teacher will ask child to tell them about their drawing. Each day the teacher should ask several children, *What do you want me to write about your picture?* The child dictates and the teacher writes on the line using the child's exact words and order of words, even if the grammar is incorrect. The teacher points to each word and reads back to the child. The child might also read with the teacher. The next day the teacher will take dictation from other children.

viii. After drawing, children work in pairs. The partners tell each other about their picture. They are learning that a picture represents an idea, as do words. The child can look back through the journal and remember and read their stories.

ix. After some time, the teacher shows children how to scribble write. They can produce a scribble for each word and 'read' their story.

x. At this stage, when the teacher takes dictation, they ask the child to help them identify the beginning sound of each word. The teacher might show the child how to write the letters they know and these will stand for a word. They can scribble-write those they do not. Over time children will realise they can 'sound out' words.

xi. In some countries teachers are expected to teach a theme each week to comply with policy. This curriculum promotes competency-based rather than theme–based teaching. Where theme-based teaching is practiced, consider using the journal one day per week for the child to record something meaningful related to the theme. For example, if the theme is family, they might draw a picture, write about their family and discuss their concept of what a family is.

b. Produce **wall displays** to remember an **experience** such as a collecting leaves or taking a walk to look for things shaped like a circle. After the experience children will discuss or conduct a follow-up activity, such as sorting leaves. To produce the wall display the teacher asks students to tell about two or three things they learned. The teacher writes these on the chart while they watch the teacher write. The teacher and children read the poster together. The poster can be taped to the wall. The collection, such as leaves or shells, can be placed below the poster. Children can play with the materials and will probably try and read the poster.

6. Talking and listening

a. Teach caregivers the important concept of 'scaffolding' – informal interactions with children where the child and teacher respond to each other through several interactions, somewhat like climbing a ladder. Children gain practice explaining things in depth, rather than providing one word or simple phrases to a question or comment from the teacher.

b. Help teachers understand the importance of these interactions and time in the day when they take place – arrival time, playground time, corner play time.

c. During maths and literacy structured activities, teachers should ask follow-up questions that require children to think deeper and to explain ideas.

d. Corner play is an important time for children to talk to and listen to each other. They will talk more when they choose where and with whom they play.

e. Teach caregivers news sharing games where children in pairs tell each other the news of the day. The partner tells back what they remember was said and the speaker gets to say whether they were a good listener.

f. Give two or three children per day the opportunity to share news or a journal story with the class. Encourage active listening by playing a question game. The speaker gets to call on three children to ask them a question about the news or journal story.

Literacy – training and mentoring caregivers

1. Caregiver training priorities

a. Use competencies (preschool readiness chart and ECERS Levels 5 and 7) to plan training activities.[1]

b. Introduce teachers to competencies and encourage them to think about the ways children can be assisted to develop these competencies.

c. Make sure they understand the training activity as skill-building to achieve competencies.

d. Support teachers to conduct an effective 40-minute to one-hour literacy lesson that includes journal writing or news sharing (talking and listening), storybook reading using dialogic reading method, and alphabet/sounds in words activity.

e. Assist teachers to enhance each corner play area to include literacy-related activities. For example, put paper and pencils in each area so children can make a sign related to what they are doing.

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[1] The Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) can be used as a training tool. The ECERS ranges from 1 (low quality) to 7 (high quality). The narrative descriptions provide concrete examples of caregiver practices, which receive rankings of 5 to 7. Caregivers can discuss, compare and even role play caregiver interactions that are high and low quality. ECERS R (Revised), developed by Thelma Harms at Frank Porter Graham Child Development Research Center in Chapel Hill, US. ECERS E (Extended), developed by Effective Provision of Preschool Education project by the UK Government.

2 – MORE IDEAS FOR MATHS ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE PRESCHOOL COMPETENCIES AND ECERS QUALITY STANDARDS

1. Counting and application of counting

a. Add counting activities to daily attendance and other daily routines. Attendance: How many girls are present? How many boys? Are there more girls than boys? How many children are in our class? How many are absent? Routines: Seven children are allowed in a centre. When you choose a centre, count and see how many children are already there.

b. Teachers should use ordinal numbers – first, second and third – so that children become familiar with the meaning. "You are the third person who has a birthday in April." "Put six stones in a row. Show me which is third; which is second, etc."

c. Check to see that each corner has objects to count. Every corner should have objects for children to count and the caregiver should encourage counting as part of play. "Your block tower is very high. How many blocks did you use?" "I see you are serving dinner in the house. Will each plate get the same number of beans?"

d. Produce the maths board games for every centre. Maths board games encourage children to count and move tokens on a grid. Dice games are also fun ways to encourage counting. Make sure there are maths counting games in the puzzles and games centre.

e. Produce a resource guide with number songs and rhymes. Check the internet website, "Dr Jean" for maths song lyrics (see www.drjean.org). Also Google "kindergarten maths songs". Teach these to the caregivers.

2. Reading and representing numbers

a. Every classroom should have a calendar. Each day the children can read and count the numbers up to the current day.

b. Every classroom should have a number chart to 100. Write the numbers in rows of 10 so that children can visually see the patterns. Write the fives and 10s in a different colour from the other numbers. Children will notice the number pattern and learn how to count by fives and 10s.

c. Each classroom should have a pocket chart that can be used for maths and literacy. Children can insert words and numbers in the pockets to form sentences. Prepare materials by writing number one to 10 on cards. Also write number words one to 10 on cards. Put pictures cards representing animals. Children can make a sentence. "I see two chickens." Making number sentences is a fun activity during free choice time or as a structured maths activity.

3. Shapes

a. Caregivers should teach children the names and properties of basic shapes: circle, square, rectangle, and triangle. Kindergarten children can also learn the concept of oval and diamond.

b. Children should be able to describe the characteristics of the shape, draw the shape, find the shape in the environment and make pictures from shapes. See page 169 for a series of activities to use in teaching shapes.

c. Make a board game related to shapes and make it available during corner play. Maths board games are described in the curriculum guide.

4. Sorting, matching and comparing

a. Sorting is a new concept for the caregivers to understand. It means putting things in groups according to one or more properties (i.e. objects that are red and large).

b. Some things we can sort include girls and boys; shoes by colour or type; natural objects such as leaves or stones; children who prefer one type of food versus children who prefer another kind of food; children whose name begins with a certain letter; and just about everything inside and outside the classroom.
You can play a game, "Guess how I sorted the objects?" Children sitting in a circle take turns thinking of different ways to sort a set of objects, such as shells or leaves or soda caps.

c. A sorting activity results in several groups of things. These can be compared. Children can count the letters on their name cards, and then sort the cards by those with the same number. These can be compared.

d. Matching refers to grouping things according to a rule: "Two shoes to one child. How many shoes will four children need?"

e. Counting and sorting should be an everyday activity in the classroom, not just at maths circle time.

f. Teach caregivers how to make a pattern. When objects are divided into two or three groups, children can use these objects to make patterns such as cap-bean-cap-bean. Once children can make patterns with two objects, try three, such as cap-bean-stick. As children become skilled at simple patterns, increase difficulty such as snap, snap, clap, snap, snap, clap.

Maths bag activities to teach competencies

1. Maths bags are an important learning material for children. These bags contain sets of sticks and small objects to count and sort, such as shells, beans, seeds, rocks, pieces of string, soda bottle caps, plastic water bottle caps, paper clips, and cloth squares cut into shapes – square, triangle and circle.

2. Other things to include in the maths bags:

    a. Add one or two dice.

    b. Cut the strings into half-metre lengths. Use these to form circles for sorting and comparing objects. Use them to form geometric shapes.

    c. Add number cards one to 10. Later add + and – and = signs on cards, same size as the number cards.

    d. Increase the number of soda bottle caps. These are great for sorting and patterns.

    e. Increase the number of plastic water bottle caps. These are useful to show addition and subtraction problems by stacking.

3. Maths bag use

   a. Use contents of the maths bag to conduct a daily structured activity that teaches a maths concept. Children should solve the problem using materials from the maths bags. The activity should take about 20 minutes. See examples below.

   b. Give children the remaining ten minutes to explore maths bags materials any way they like. At this time, the teacher observes what the children make with the materials and asks maths-related questions.

Sample maths lessons to teach caregivers

Caregivers are unfamiliar with maths activities other than rote counting. Children can learn to rote count numbers to 100. However, they should acquire understanding about the properties of numbers to 20, and be able to count objects and compare groups of things with numbers up to 20. Using maths materials they can learn to add numbers with a sum up to 12 and subtract from 12. Children need lots of time to explore a number to really understand the quantity. Provide a series of activities that teachers can use and then repeat for all numbers from two to 12.

Below is a list of maths competencies to keep in mind, and sample maths lessons that can be repeated to teach numbers two to 12.

Maths competencies

1. Organises objects according to their properties (size, colour, shape, texture).

2. Recognises patterns (large, small, large ____; snap, clap, clap, snap clap____).

3. Arranges numbers and objects in a series (big to small).

4. Counts accurately to 20; with some skills in counting 50–100; and by fives and tens.

5. Matches quantities up to 10 with numerals and words.

6. Compares sets of up to at least 10 concrete objects using appropriate language (eg none, more than, fewer than, same number of, one more than).

7. Uses objects to solve addition and subtraction problems to ten; and group objects in tens and fives.

8. Estimates the number of objects in a group and verify results.

9. Recognises shapes – circle, triangle, square, rectangle, oval.

10. Identifies positions of objects in space (beside, below).

11. Uses a calendar, order events (today, tomorrow, and yesterday; morning, afternoon, and night).

12. Compares two objects by height, weight, and length using non-standard measure such as a string or balance.

13. Solves puzzles – geometric, picture puzzles (up to 12 pieces) and logical reasoning puzzles.

Dozen number lessons using maths bags

(Teach numbers two to 12 using the following set of activities; number 6 is provided as the example.)

Materials	Activity	Competencies
Body Blackboard	1. Introduce number 6 using these steps: • Write number 6 on the blackboard. Children write the number 6 in the air and on the back of a friend. • Invite children to clap, stamp, snap, etc, 6 times each. • Play a circle counting game where children count 1 to 6. The person who counts number 6 squats. Continue until everyone is squatting. • Play the game again starting in a different place. Ask children to predict who will be the last person standing.	#4
Sticks Notebook Pencil	2. Designs with number 6 • Take 6 sticks from the maths bag and make a design of the number 6. • Reproduce the design in your maths notebook and write the number 6.	#4 and #9
Dice	3. "6" counting race • Children stand side by side in the garden. Each child has a die from the maths bag. • Demonstrate how to play: child roles a die and takes that many jumps. Children all count together as the friend jumps toward a finish line. • The next child rolls and jumps with everyone counting. • *Now you are ready for the race.* • Teacher calls roll and each child rolls own dice and jumps the same amount. Once everyone is in place teacher calls roll again and each child rolls and jumps according to dots on the die. • First one to reach the finish line is the winner.	#4

Materials	Activity	Competencies
	4. Recognising numerals and order • Teacher writes numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 on blackboard. • *Take out your number cards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Put them in a row in front of you.* • *Does everyone have the correct order? Let's point to each number and say it. Which number comes before 3? Which number comes after 4? Which number comes before 5?* • *Now let's use your shells/caps to show how many each stands for. Place the correct number of buttons under each card to show how many.* • *Check your partner's work and help them if they are having difficulty.*	#4 and #5
	5. Staircase with 6 • Select number cards 1 to 6. • Put these in order. • Above each number put beans or bottle caps to show the number. • Form the beans in a way that they form a stair step up to the 6. • Ask children to now form the staircase down the other side using 5-4-3-2-1 beans.	#3 and #4
	6. Patterns • Take out 6 each of three objects such as stones, shells, and seeds. • Make a pattern of 3 using the materials.	#2 and #4
	7. Shapes • For numbers that are multiples of 3, children can form different size triangles. For multiples of 4, children can form squares. • Take out six sticks. • *How many triangles can you make with your six sticks?* • *Can you use the sticks to make a big triangle?* • *Draw a picture of your work in the notebook. Write the number 6.*	#9 and #4

Materials	Activity	Competencies
Number cards 1-6 from maths bag	**8. Memory game** • Children work in pairs. Each child takes out their number cards 1 to 6. Shuffle cards and lie them face down in two rows so the order and location of the cards is not known. • Teacher shows them how to play memory game. Each student takes a turn playing memory game. • One child turns over a card. Then they turn over a second card. If they match the child gets to keep the cards, if they do not match they turn them back over. Then the next player takes a turn, also trying to remember all the cards that have been turned over so they can find a match. Compare the numbers of cards to determine the winner. • At the end of the game, children sort out the numbers and put 1 to 5 back in their maths bag.	
	9. Addition and subtraction stories • Teacher makes up a story that deals with the number six. Different things happen in the story that requires the children to add or subtract. • As the teacher tells the story, the children show it with their beans or caps. • The maths story is more fun if the children produce a simple drawing for the picture. In the example below, the children might show a house at the bottom of the page, a school at the top and a path between. The teacher can show this on the board. • Example. One little girl was walking to school. She was lonely. But soon she saw a friend. She said, *"Come walk with me."* How many children are walking to school? How would we write this? 1 + 1 = 2. The story can result in numbers being added or subtracted. For example, one child might need to return home because she forgot her snack. So in this case the children will subtract.	#7
	10. Sorting 6 objects • The teacher lines up six children in the front of the class. The teacher sorts them according to some property (tall versus short; girl versus boy; colour of clothing). The teacher asks the children to guess how they were sorted. Then the teacher re-sorts the children and they guess how they were sorted. • Children sit in groups of 6. They each take out one bottle cap or seashell from their maths bag. (Or they might take a nature walk and collect an object such as leaves or flowers or stones.) • They put the selected object in the centre of the circle. Take turns finding a way to sort the leaves into groups according to properties.	#1

Materials	Activity	Competencies
	11. Addition and subtraction trains • Take out 6 paper clips and hook them together like a train. • Now make different length trains that add up to six. For example 4 car train + 2 car train. • Can you think of different arrangements? • Record these in your notebook or on a slate.	#7

Body	**12. Review dance**
	• Children clap forward in a rhythm, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and then snap fingers as they count backward: 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.
	• Now children slowly rise from their seat counting forward 1 to 6, and
	  then slowly sit counting backward, 6, 5,4, 3, 2, 1.
	• Finally they try to increase the counting speed with claps, snaps, rising and
	  sitting, without losing their balance as they stand and sit.
	• The last activity is like a dance. Children stand with a partner, clasp right hands together up in the
	  air and slowly walk in a circle and count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. When they reach 5, they quickly release the
	  hand, turn direction, slap the left hands together and walk and count backward, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. See
	  if they can do this backward and forward until they can do it smoothly without losing a beat.
		#2, #3 and #4

3 – CHILD WELLBEING INDICATORS[1]

Health/growth	Cognitive/psycho-social	Protection/participation
1. Fully immunised, takes vitamin A supplement, and is de-wormed. 2. Breastfed exclusively for first six months; includes colostrum; no other food or drink provided. 3. Eats three nutritious meals every day; includes protein, fruit and vegetable; eats breakfast before going to school; eats from own bowl to measure sufficient quantity for age; girls and boys served same amount and quality. 4. Has shelter that is hygienic, safe, warm and dry. 5. Has clean place to sleep and gets approximately ten hours sleep per night; girls and boys have the same quality bedding and hours of sleep. 6. Uses toilet and washes hands with soap after toilet and before eating. 7. Drinks safe water. 8. Brushes teeth before sleep. 9. Girls and boys participate in recreational activities every day. 10. Provided time for physical exercise in a clean and safe outdoor environment every day. 11. Can identify health worker within their community and seeks their support when in need. 12. Weight and height normal for age. 13. Provided medical care when ill, without gender discrimination. 14. Knows/practices accident prevention relative to setting.	1. Child likes self and feels valued. 2. Has at least one friend. 3. Shows acceptance of people who are different. 4. Solves conflicts without aggression. 5. Follows through on simple tasks to take care of self and help others. 6. Is learning to practice cultural and spiritual values. 7. Curious about things around them and actively engaged to 'find out'. 8. Persistent and creative in solving problems. 9. Asks questions without fear. 10. Has time and materials for enriched play and learning with friends and mentors in the community. 11. Has a conversation with adults that builds language, knowledge, thinking skills and sense of competence every day. 12. Is read to and told stories. 13. Engaged in learning: participates in ECCD centres[2] (four to five years) and primary classrooms that promote social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development; achieves quality scores for emotional and instructional support. **Note:** *When assessing child wellbeing ensure that girls, boys, children with disabilities and those from other vulnerable groups are valued and treated equally. Children with disabilities should be assessed and provided with necessary referrals and appropriate support.*	1. Birth is registered and certificate provided. 2. Knows name, address and guardian's name. 3. Receives consistent love and support from primary caregivers. 4. Neighbours provide caring support and supervision against physical and emotional abuse/harm. 5. Begins to sense dangers and seeks help from trusted adults. 6. Can distinguish between right and wrong, truth and lies. 7. Can resist peer pressure. 8. Child's guardians are aware of where and what child is doing at all times. 9. Child and guardians know how to report and respond to child protection violation. 10. Can identify at least one source of adult support. 11. Child understands, can follow and achieve positive guidelines for behaviour. 12. Able to control own behaviour and impulses. 13. Shows empathy for peers; stands up for what is fair and right. 14. Able and allowed to make small decisions appropriate to age and capacity. 15. Communicates needs and views and feels that views are taken seriously. 16. Participates in activities that cross gender barriers.

Revised April 2012

[1] Deborah Llewellyn compiled these indicators from multiple sources, with assistance from Plan International country offices in Australia, Finland, Uganda, Egypt, Indonesia and India, and Save the Children offices in the US, Mozambique, Tanzania, Bangladesh and Bhutan. Plan International Finland and child protection consultant Stephanie Delaney provided valuable input for child protection indicators. The indicators should be in place by the time the child reaches eight years.

[2] Quality ELPs and primary classrooms: quality programs achieve measurable cognitive, social, emotional and physical development indicators while providing an enjoyable place for children to learn and grow. Play and exploration provide primary vehicles for learning in early childhood development. Thinking, creativity and communication are emphasised in both. Small group size is important to meet social and emotional needs and enable adequate contact with caregivers and play and learning materials. Quality is measured by: 1) social and emotional climate: caring and supportive relations – teacher to child and child to child; 2) classroom management: productive use of classroom time – teacher encourages initiative and choice, monitors and redirects negative behaviour, uses routines to maximise learning time; follows daily routine; and 3) instructional support: teacher interactions that challenge/extend thinking skills; daily plan with range of activities that draw on children's interests and needs, all developmental stages and backgrounds.

4 – ELP QUALITY CHECKLIST

School:

Location:

Date:

Observer:

Teacher:

Supervisor:

Observation instructions:

1. Observe indoor and outdoor preschool activities over several visits. Observe the daily routine from start to finish.

2. Make a map on back to show children's locations and teacher interactions during one activity in the daily routine. Watch for gender or social equality bias.

3. On the back, record everything that takes place during one activity in the daily routine. This includes what teachers and children say. State times.

4. Throughout the observation check to see the presence of quality indicators in each section.

5. After observation, discuss several strengths and areas for improvement. Use findings as a conversation starter with caregivers and program managers about improvements required to support children's development potential. Record discussion points on this form or on the ELP Quality Scoring Sheet.

Scoring instructions

A. Put check mark/tick by activities and materials that are observed during visit.

B. Give overall score for each category as follows: 0 = unacceptable; 1 = occurred but minimal; 2 = occurred and fairly well done but room for improvement; 3 = excellent

C. Take notes in margins to provide examples.

Scoring sheet (lowest 0; highest 3)	Score
Attendance	
Effective learners	
Effective teachers	
Social emotional climate	
Daily routine – greetings and closing	
Daily routine – literacy circle	
Daily routine – corner play	
Daily routine – outdoor Play	
Daily routine – maths circle	
Physical environment and learning materials	
Sub-total	
Centre score (divide by 10)	

	Score
Children show evidence of becoming effective learners Positive features: independence, responsibility, curiosity, initiative, cooperation, concentration, creativity, perseverance, self-confidence, resourcefulness, and creativity.	
Teachers use effective methods Positive features: nurtures caring relations; exhibits enthusiasm and dedication; knows each child well; reinforces positive action monitors, prevents and redirects negative behavior; uses routines to increase productive learning time; reduces rote learning; gives choices and encourages creativity and imagination; uses high-level questions to promote thinking and waits with patience for answers; provides feedback that extends learning; encourages children to figure out something alone; stimulates reasoning.	
Social/emotional climate Positive features: smiles and laughter present; no bias; warm and caring child-to-child and teacher-to-child interactions; age-appropriate activities; positive and consistent discipline; staff involve children in solving conflicts and problems; uses activities to help children develop positive social skills; smooth transitions between activities.	
Attendance Enrolment: G_____ B_____ CWD_____ G_____ B_____ Attendance: G_____ B_____ CWD_____ G_____ B_____ **How to score:** Attendance 80% or more score 3; 65–79% score 2; if attendance is 50–64% score 1; less than 50% score 0. CWD = children with disability.	

	Score
CLASSROOM DAILY ROUTINE	
Schedule posted and teacher follows routine.	
Greetings (15 minutes) Combine greetings and closing meeting for Score. Positive features: starts on time; greets each child by name; reviews attendance chart and expresses concern for absentees; identifies child of day; invites child to lead happy greeting song; calendar activity.	
Literacy circle (45 minutes to 1 hour) Positive features: news sharing; journal writing/drawing; storybook or storytelling and follow-up discussion to assess understanding; rhymes; songs to teach concepts; alphabet activity focused on sound of letters – not rote chanting; and letter writing. For fine motor: small muscle development; hand-eye coordination; pre-writing skills; self-control, and creativity; various writing materials available; teacher models for children; children talk about their writing; samples of children's work displayed with name.	
Corner play (45 minutes to 1 hour) Positive features: children self-select free play activities; areas – blocks, puzzles, games, storybooks, art, imagination corner (house, store, cars/animals); water and sand play; teacher observes play and talks with children in conversational way; children respect materials, play well with other children, and clean up.	
Outdoor play/gross motor (30 minutes) Positive features: combination of organised games with rules, and free play to develop gross motor skills. Watch for taking turns and sharing versus aggression. Adult supervision at all times.	

	Score
Maths or science activity (30 minutes) Positive features: counting objects accurately to 20; sorting, ordering, making patterns, and solving addition and subtraction using maths manipulatives, such as sticks, rocks, dice, cubes, seeds stored in individual bags; maths logic games; maths songs or rhymes; some experience rote counting to 50 or 100, and by tens and fives. For science: children observe, predict, have sensory stimulation, experiment, classify, communicate about characteristics of natural materials, plants, animals and properties of things and how they change. Scientific words and concepts and science materials used.	
Closing meeting (10 minutes) Positive features: reflection on day, planning for tomorrow, farewell song, encourage attendance.	

Physical learning environment and learning materials
• Children sit on mats, not on cement or dirt.
• Clean – free of rubbish.
• Safe – free of hazards indoors and outdoors.
• Attractive learning posters at eye level and labeled with
  words; includes children's work with their names.
• Adequate natural lighting.
• Good ventilation.
• Corners organised for playing with quality learning
  materials that promote development in all domains.
• Adequate supply of materials to sustain activity.
• Safe drinking water is available.
• Clean toilet available and used.
• Soap used for washing hands after toilet and before eating.
• Adequate indoor space – 1.5 metres recommended
  per child.	

Quality learning materials – what to look for:
- Attendance chart.
- Calendar chart.
- Floor covering/mats – plastic, woven, cloth.
- Wall clock.
- Blackboard, slates and chalk that children use.
- Storybooks (15–25), both commercial and homemade.
- Alphabet wall chart, upper and lower case with pictures to denote sound.
- Pencils, crayons, paper.
- Number wall charts.
- Individual maths bags with objects for counting, sorting, pattern making.
- Blocks – minimum 100; three to four geometric shapes.
- Construction objects – sticks, cans, caps, coconut shells, corncobs.
- Small figures – animals, people, vehicles.
- Picture puzzles – five to 12 pieces.
- Shape puzzles.
- Board games for shapes, colour recognition.
- Board games for counting practice and alphabet/word recognition.
- Lace-ups or beading or sewing.
- Picture cards – double sets for lotto.
- Alphabet cards – double sets for lotto.
- Number cards – double sets for matching.
- Sand and water – cups of different sizes, spoons, tubes, funnels, sprinklers.
- Imagination – puppets, dolls, dishes, market and store props,
  mat with landscape design with cars, animals, boats, etc.

5 – ELP QUALITY SCORING SHEET

ECCD centre: _____

Location: _____

Observer name: _____

Caregiver name: _____

Date: _____

Observer's signature: _____

Caregiver's signature: _____

Instructions:

1. Score sections below as directed on ELP quality checklist.

2. Record the following on the back: classroom mapping for maths or literacy circle; record all dialogue between teacher and children during one daily routine activity; list three strengths and three areas for improvement to discuss with the teacher at the end of the session.

ELP quality checklist	Score	Explain reason for score (0 lowest; 3 highest)
1. Attendance		
2. Effective learners		
3. Effective teachers		
4. Social emotional climate		
5. Daily routine – greetings and closing		

5 – ELP QUALITY SCORING SHEET **CONTINUED**

ELP quality checklist	Score	Explain reason for score (0 lowest; 3 highest)
6. Daily routine – literacy circle		
7. Daily routine – corner play		
8. Daily routine – outdoor play		
9. Daily routine – maths circle		
10. Physical environment and learning materials		
Sub-total		
Centre score (divide by 10)		

6 – SCHOOL READINESS INDICATORS (FROM FOUR TO SIX YEARS)

Social and emotional development	Health and physical development	Cognitive development	Language development
Sense of self	**Gross motor**	**Observation and problem solving**	**Listening and speaking**
1. Likes self and feels valued.	17. Demonstrates basic movements – runs, jumps, hops, skips, balances.	32. Observes with curiosity.	48. Talks with others about personal experiences/views.
2. Adjusts easily to new situations.	18. Uses body movements to express feelings and needs.	33. Asks questions, *What? Why? How?* (Without fear.)	49. Describes objects, events and relations.
3. Demonstrates appropriate trust in adults.	19. Shows coordination with swings, ropes, climbing, etc.	34. Shows persistence in solving a problem.	50. Expresses feelings in words.
4. Recognises own feelings and manages them well.	20. Can throw, kick and catch.	35. Uses creativity and imagination.	51. Actively listens to others (can repeat back and ask questions to further understanding).
5. Confident to express needs.		36. Reflective; applies learning to new context.	52. Notices differences in sounds.
6. Is learning to practice cultural and spiritual values.	**Fine motor**		53. Uses new vocabulary.
	21. Controls small muscles in hands: pours, cuts, traces, twists, inserts, ties, pounds.	**Logical thinking and maths**	54. Understands and follows oral directions.
Responsibility for self and others	22. Coordinates hand-eye movement.	37. Compares, sorts and matches objects by size, shape, colour, number, amount.	55. Asks and answers questions.
7. Follows through on simple tasks to take care of self.	23. Uses tools for writing and drawing.	38. Organises by category.	56. Actively participates in conversations.
8. Helps others.		39. Arranges objects in series (for example, big to small).	
9. Takes responsibility for own wellbeing without being told to do so.	**Healthy body**	40. Recognises patterns and can repeat them.	**Reading and writing**
10. Follows routines and rules.	24. Uses toilet.	41. Shows awareness of time and sequence.	57. Draws to represent ideas and develops motor skills to write.
11. Respects and cares for home, classroom and personal items.	25. Washes hands with soap after toilet and before eating.	42. Understands location and position words (for example, above).	58. Enjoys and values oral stories and storybooks.
	26. Eats three nutritious meals every day (protein and fruits and vegetables).	43. Can count objects accurately up to 20, some skills for rote counting up to 50 or 100.	59. Comprehends what is read.
Social behaviour	27. Drinks safe water.	44. Solves puzzle pictures (12 pieces) and geometric puzzles.	60. Knows that print carries a message.
12. Sociable, plays well with other children, has at least one friend.	28. Is immunised, takes vitamin A supplement, and is de-wormed.		61. Knows that spoken words can be written down.
13. Shows empathy for peers and stands up for what is fair.	29. Lives/plays in clean and safe environment, protected from injury.	**Represents with symbols**	62. Knows letters and sounds.
14. Able to control own behaviour and impulses.	30. Sleeps under insecticide treated nets in malaria regions.	45. Takes on pretend roles.	63. Writes name, alphabet, and some words.
15. Uses respectful words to resolve conflicts.	31. Can identify community health worker.	46. Makes believe with objects.	
16. Can tell right from wrong.		47. Uses a symbol to represent.	

7 – TEACHER DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

Professionalism	Knowledge and skills	Teacher-child interactions
Capacity development 1. Foundation training completed.	1. Demonstrates knowledge of how children grow, and of content being taught.	1. Enjoys being with children; exhibits enthusiasm and dedication to support them.
2. Monthly training attendance.	2. Observes and assesses children's behaviour and plans learning opportunities that reflect children's needs and aptitudes.	2. Talks to children in a conversational tone and listens to and understands their feelings and experiences.
3. Participates in self-evaluation, seeks advice from ECCD facilitators, and demonstrates continuous improvement.	3. Maintains a safe and healthy environment for children and provides sufficient supervision.	3. Is sensitive to the quality of children's thinking and encourages them to talk about their reasoning.
4. Shares professional experiences and helps other teachers.	4. Advances all areas of children's learning and development, including social, emotional, intellectual and physical competence.	4. Uses high-level questions that promote thinking and gives adequate time for children to respond; provides feedback that extends learning.
5. Makes or collects new learning materials every month and uses them with children.	5. Implements developmentally appropriate methods of guiding children and managing groups.	5. Knows each child well, uses child's name and encourages independence.
Ethical behaviour 1. Teachers will not participate in practices that are disrespectful, intimidating, exploitive, or physically harmful to children.	6. Establishes and maintains positive and productive relationships with families; incorporates cultural traditions in program.	6. Models good social skills. Responds to children in a warm, supportive manner; nurtures caring relationships; helps children develop appropriate social behaviour with peers.
2. Teachers will not discriminate against children.	7. Is child focused and adapts to meet the needs of the children they serve.	7. Is emotionally responsive, takes pleasure in children's successes, and is supportive during times of trouble.
3. Teachers will involve family members and explain philosophy and pedagogy.	8. Demonstrates an understanding of early childhood professionalism.	8. Brings humour and imagination to the classroom.
4. Teachers will not use the relationship with families for private advantage or personal gain, and will respect family privacy.	9. Promotes understanding and acceptance of diversity; supports vulnerable children.	9. Protects orderliness without sacrificing spontaneity and child-like exuberance.
5. Teachers will be familiar with the signs of child abuse/neglect and steps to protect children.	10. Understands importance of mother tongue skills development and manages bilingual education.	10. Exercises control without being threatening; reinforces positive actions; monitors, prevents and redirects negative behaviour.
	11. Results orientated.	

8 – ELP PROFILE*

Location:

Project facilitator:

I. General information

1. ECCD centre name and location:

2. Number of rooms:

3. Year established?   Cost?

4. Why was this location chosen?

5. Description of other available ECCD centres in the community and numbers of children attending.

6. How are children selected to attend this ECCD centre?

7. Were parents equally willing to enrol girls and boys, or were gender differences identified? How were these addressed?

8. What approaches were taken to identify and serve children with disabilities?

9. What facility accommodations were made for children with disabilities?

10. Daily schedule: start time/end time

11. Fees or contributions required? Yes/no. How much?

12. What percentage of children wear uniforms? Are uniforms required?

13. How is the ECCD centre's administration costs met? Who covers them?

14. Are there any changes in questions 4 to 9 over time? Explain:

*updated annually

8 – ELP PROFILE **CONTINUED**

Details	Boys		Girls		Total	
	May	November	May	November	May	November
Number of children enrolled: Children age 6						
Children age 5						
Children age 4						
Total number of children enrolled						
Number attending on day of visit						
Number of children with disabilities						

II. Community issues affecting child wellbeing

1. Number of children aged six to eight years not enrolled in primary school?

2. Number of children in community aged 4_____ 5_____ 6_____.

3. Specific learning achievement problems in Grades 1 and 2.

4. How addressed?

5. What benefits is the committee/community leader expecting from the ELP?

6. Problems or issue recommendations related to the ELP?

III. Teachers

1. Teacher name

2. Age

3. Qualifications

4. How selected?

5. Honorarium amount? Who pays?

6. Additional duties in community. How often?

8 – ELP PROFILE CONTINUED

7. Volunteer teacher present? Yes/no. Trained? Yes/no.

    Amount of honorarium? Who pays it?

8. Dates of training

    a. Foundation course

    b. Monthly training courses attended

    c. Refresher training course

9. Is the current teacher the one initially selected and trained? Yes/no.

10. What type of training has the volunteer teacher received?

III. Program management and supervision

1. ECCD centre committees names:

2. How selected?

3. What tasks are performed?

4. How often do they meet? What do they discuss? What decisions are made?

5. Level of community involvement in ELP monitoring?

6. Dates of supervision visits and key issues discussed listed on back of paper and signed by supervisor and caregiver.

IV. Health, hygiene, and safety

1. How are children's nutritional needs addressed?

2. Water for drinking? Washing hands? Soap?

3. Toilets available? Child-friendly toilets? Clean and functioning?

4. Classroom swept and clean?

5. What health records are kept on children?

6. Safety of grounds.

7. List each piece of equipment that is in usable condition, those that are broken, and the general safety of the surrounding environment.

9 – TEACHER TRAINING WORKSHOP ENERGISERS

Teacher training warm-up and ice-breaker exercises

The following early childhood classroom activities make excellent warm-up and ice-breaker exercises to use during teacher training workshops. The exercises offer two benefits. Teachers experience the types of play-based learning activities that engage children and nurture development. Simultaneously, the teacher learns methods and activities that they can directly apply in their own classroom.

Like me/not like me

Each participant collects one object from around the school grounds during a break or lunch period. Upon their return, the facilitator gives the following instructions: *Identify some ways you are like this object, and some ways you are different from this object. Share this with a partner.*

Howdy howdy

Participants stand or sit in a circle. One person walks around the circle and taps the shoulder of another person. That person walks in the opposite direction until they meet. Greet each other three times in a traditional way, then race to the empty space. The one left standing walks around the circle and taps the shoulder of another person. They greet each other, then race to the empty space. Do this until each person has been introduced.

Juggling balls

Stand in a circle. Say a name and then throw a ball for that person to catch. Each person must throw to someone who has not been called to catch the ball. Then add two balls. Say a name and throw to that person. Keep both balls going as fast as possible.

Grab a taxi (getting into groups)

A fun way to group people is to tell them, *You are on the street and you want a taxi. The car can only take six people. Run and grab the taxi with only six people.* In this way all members are grouped into groups of six. If any are left over, the facilitator assigns them a group.

Clay construction

Give each person a ball of clay and some toothpicks. Encourage them to make the tallest structure they can. Describe the structures, any problems they encountered, and how they solved them (this demonstrates learning about balance and how to solve problems).

Getting to know a banana

The facilitator asks participants to draw a picture of an object such as a banana (or any fruit that is common and not too expensive) without showing them the fruit. Then the facilitator shows a real banana and gives each participant a banana. The facilitator asks participants to study it very carefully *Touch it, look at it, smell it.* The facilitator then asks all of the participants to draw the banana and then put the bananas in a pile. The facilitator mixes the bananas up, and asks the participants to find the object and enjoy eating it. (Increases observation and discrimination skills, also the importance of hands-on real-life experiences. The second banana drawing is more advanced.) Hands-on experiences enhance educational experience.

9 – TEACHER TRAINING WORKSHOP ENERGISERS CONTINUED

Friends

At the beginning of the workshop, take a name from out of a hat (or a cup or bag). Keep the name secret. This is your special friend. All week notice things about your friend. Send them a secret note each day with something you notice that they did or said. Alternatively, give compliments to your special friend at the end of the workshop. With children, they can drop a bean in a jar every time they notice someone in the class doing something nice for another person. They can watch the jar and the friendship grow.

Build a house of cards

Divide the group into pairs. Give each pair a deck of playing cards. Ask them to build a house that uses all of the cards. (Thinking and problem solving: What helps the cards to stand up? What seems to make them fall down? How many levels of cards can you build before they fall down?)

Shadow play

Take participants outside on a sunny day. Ask them to try and lose their shadows. Can they do it? Can they make their shadows grow bigger? Smaller or thinner? Wider? How else can they change their shadows? This could be done as cooperative problem solving.

Patchwork quilt

Explain symmetry. Give each participant nine small squares of different colours and one blank square the size of the nine squares. Participants can form the squares in any way, but the pattern must be symmetrical. Tell the participants that they can cut the squares into triangles. Arrange until the desired pattern is found, then glue on. We each begin with the same tools, but we are each unique and see things in different ways.

Mirror game/waves

This can be played in pairs or with the whole group, with one person as the leader. Participants will be the mirrors reflecting exactly each motion that the leader or their partner makes. Try to move at the same time as the partner to be an exact mirror image. Another way is to stand in a circle and let the participants pass around a movement in a ripple or wave effect.

Statue game (drumbeat rhythms)

The leader beats the drum and participants move around the room to the beat. As soon as the drumbeat stops they freeze like statues and hold their position until the drumbeat starts again.

Making shapes

Provide a challenge to practice working together as a group: ask participants to use their body to make a shape that the leader suggests. For example, square, triangle, circle, octagon (eight sides), hexagon (six sides), rectangle, or designated letters of the alphabet. (Improves spatial awareness, problem solving and application of knowledge.)

How many ways

How many ways can you move from one line to the next? One at a time, participants name a movement. Each person tries until no more movements can be thought of. For example, twirl, stamp, walk backwards, hop, crawl, close eyes, squat, walk, etc.

War cards

Show participants how to play war. Remove all non-numbered cards, such as Kings, Queens and Jacks, from the deck. Divide the remaining cards into two equal stacks and give one stack, face down, to each player. Players turn over the top card at the same time and compare. The one with the highest number takes both cards and puts them at the bottom of the stack. If cards have the same number, players turn over another card (war!). The player with the highest number takes all four cards. The game continues until one player has won all the cards. Double war is turning over two cards and the player with the highest sum wins and takes all four cards. (Practice number concept, larger/smaller, or adding sums.)

Fives/cards

Take two decks of cards and find all cards numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4 for a total of 32 cards. Divide the cards evenly among two, three or four players. Keep the cards face down. Put any extras face up. Make sure there is at least one card facing up. To start, a player turns one card face up, then another. If the cards do not add up to five, the player discards one card in a tray and exchanges it for another card if it will add up to five. If none of the cards add up to five, the player waits until the next turn. Next time that player will have four cards face up. They might be able to make two combinations. The game continues until all cards are used up. (Practice addition.)

Dice toss

Game 1: How many sides does a die have? How many numbers? If you roll the die, will each number come up as often as every other number? Or does one number come up the most? Pick your answer and try the experiment (record results on a piece of paper with six columns drawn on it). Game 2: Play the game with two dice and add sums (another piece of paper with 12 columns drawn on it). Participants can have contest between two players. Which will fill the grid first? Game 3: Make two columns. Roll a die and decide whether to put number in the left or right column. Roll again and put number in empty column. If the number on the left is smaller than the number on the right, the player gets a point. (Developing strategies.)

Who's missing?

All participants sit in a group. The facilitator asks, *Who is missing?* When they guess, the missing person comes inside the room. All of the participants close their eyes. This person touches someone to go outside and hide. Everyone opens their eyes. *Who is missing?*

9 – TEACHER TRAINING WORKSHOP ENERGISERS CONTINUED

Nim (an old Chinese game)

Give each participant 16 toothpicks. Ask them how many different ways they can arrange the toothpicks in four rows. Write down the different arrangements. To play the game two players sit across from each other with the 16 toothpicks arranged in four rows. Take turns at taking away as many toothpicks in one row as desired, but from only one row. The goal is to force the other player to take the last toothpick. (Analysis: *Does it matter how many toothpicks you leave in a row? Does it matter if you go first or second?*)

Group storytelling

One person starts a story. Go around the group and give each person the opportunity to add a sentence or two to the story. The facilitator gives an ending to the story.

Singing our song

Take a familiar children's song or chant and modify it for the group. Children enjoy, *Who stole the cookies from the cookie jar?* It goes like this: (Group) *John stole the cookies from the cookie jar.* (John) *Who me?* (Group) *Yes you!* (John) *Not me!* (Group) *Then who?* (John) *Sarah!* John identifies a new child; everyone has a turn and identifies a new child each until everyone has had a turn. This is also good for children to notice who has not had a turn, as it requires observation and memory.

Wheel of feelings (concluding/reflection activity)

Draw a large circle on a piece of paper. Divide it into six equal wedges. Tell participants it is a wheel of feelings. Ask them to name the sort of feelings they have experienced during the workshop. Write the feeling on each wheel. Draw a picture or write a few words, *I felt excited when...; I felt scared when...; I felt happy when....* Ask trainees why this activity might be beneficial to children and what children might learn from it.

The whole picture

Steps:

1. *It is essential in planning a program that we don't look at all the pieces as separate activities but see how they fit together as a whole.*

2. *Here's a fun energiser to help you see things as a whole and wake up your brain for the next activity.*

3. Facilitator shows a figure on the flipchart. (The shape is a rectangle. On top of the rectangle is a triangle. Inside the rectangle, connect the corners by drawing two lines that form an 'X'.)

4. *This is a figure that can be drawn without lifting your pencil or retracing any lines. See how long it takes you to figure it out.*

9 – TEACHER TRAINING WORKSHOP ENERGISERS CONTINUED

Squaring things up!

Materials: 24 toothpicks for each participant

Steps:

1. Give each person 24 toothpicks.

2. Arrange them so there are three squares across top and three squares down all connected.

3. *Okay, ready for the contest?*

4. *How many squares are there? I will give you three minutes to decide. When you think you know the answer write it down and cover it. Don't tell anyone.*

5. *The ones with the correct answer get a prize, such as a chocolate or a flower.* (Give extra prizes to the winners to share with others who did not get the correct answer.)

6. *Now just for one more brainteaser. Take away eight toothpicks to make two squares.*

7. *What is the point of this energiser? While we must keep our focus on the whole, we can't lose sight of all the components that make the whole, some of which are not easy to see.*

What's on top?

Steps:

1. *As you come into the training room this morning, ask the question, What's on top? What are the foremost thought(s) or question(s) on your mind at personal and professional levels?*

2. Participants share "personal" in round robin. The facilitator and the team have the opportunity to learn more about each other. An element of care is essential to job success. It is a more basic need. We must take this into consideration in building our teamwork and in working with communities.

3. Participants share "professional" in round robin. Facilitator has the opportunity to see how confident participants are feeling about their understanding of the 'model' and the skills required to implement it.

Truth and lies

Steps:

Ask each participant to write down three facts about themselves on a piece of paper. Two of the facts should be true and one should be a lie. *Read your facts. Remember keep a straight face. Everyone will guess which one is a lie. This is a good way to get to know your colleagues and their hidden skills and talents.*

9 – TEACHER TRAINING WORKSHOP ENERGISERS CONTINUED

Review of the previous day – spin the bottle

Steps:

1. Participants stand in a circle.

2. Facilitator spins the bottle. The bottle points to a participant. That participant tells one thing they have learned from the previous day. The speaker then spins the bottle.

3. Each person provides a response and then spins the bottle until all have had a chance.

Telephone

In this energiser we pass a message and see if the message is relayed the way it was intended. The reasons why whispers get distorted are ambiguity of information, careless listening, and hearing what you want to hear rather than what is actually said. This exercise gives us a chance to emphasise that some of the methods and approaches being promoted are different from other programs. It is important to really talk through and understand these differences, so at the end of the day we can understand the methods that achieved the results.

The lighter side of parenting

Steps:

1. *Over the last few days you have learned about the important indicators that children should achieve in the early childhood years. You have also read a series of parenting modules to help parents develop skills for effective parenting. We can see that parenting is a very serious business.*

2. *But it also has a lighter side. If you are a parent you can think of a very funny experience you had as a parent, or if you are not a parent you probably have witnessed a light-hearted parenting moment.*

3. *Let's take a couple of minutes to think of one. Then share this in pairs.*

4. *Decide which was the funnier of the two. That person shares the experience with the group.*

Paper puzzler

Steps:

1. *Each participant has two pieces of paper. Each piece measures half of an A4 piece of paper.*

2. *Take one paper. Fold the paper in half, then fold it again. Tear a small shape on the fold of the paper. Do not open.*

3. *On another piece of paper, draw how you think it will look.*

4. *Now open it and see if you got what you thought.*

5. *One of our challenges in developing parenting education modules or lessons is to think about where the questions and activities will lead. What will things look like at the end? Did we get what we expect?*

9 – TEACHER TRAINING WORKSHOP ENERGISERS CONTINUED

Going dotty

Steps:

1. *This game requires connecting the dots to get to our goal.*

2. *Make a game board by drawing four dots across and four dots down in rows to make 16 dots.*

3. *Game 1: Up right. Take turns. Start at the dot in the lower left corner. You can draw a line between dots up or to the right for as many dots as you like. But you cannot change direction. The winner is whoever lands on the dot in the upper right corner.*

   a. *Alternative: Game 1: Links. Take turns. Link any two dots that are next to each other, side-by-side (above or below). A dot might only be linked to one other dot. The winner is whoever makes the last link.*

4. *I called these games "Connecting the dots", but you might call them "Going dotty", which in my culture means going crazy.*

5. *I hope at the end of this session, what we discuss will make perfect sense and no one will feel that they are "Going dotty!"*

Alert awake enthusiastic: *There are three things we want to see in everyone today in order to benefit. How can we show that we are alert? Awake? Enthusiastic? Here we go, let me see: alert, awake enthusiastic, alert, awake enthusiastic, alert, enthusiastic, awake ... (mix the order.)*

Walk the line: Form two lines on the ground, about one metre across. Blindfold each person one at a time to try and walk path without touching the line. Each team gets a point for those who pass.

ACRONYMS

CLAC:	Community Led Action for Children
ECCD:	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECERS:	early childhood environment rating scale
ELO:	extended learning opportunity
ELP:	early learning program
IQ:	intelligence quotient
NCEDL:	National Center for Early Development and Learning
NGO:	non-government organisation
TBD:	to be decided
ToC:	theory of change
UK:	United Kingdom
UNESCO:	United Nations Educations, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
US:	United States

GLOSSARY

Big Buddy–Little Buddy: is a cross-age mentoring program where younger primary school children are paired with older primary school children to provide support, guidance and homework help.

Community Led Action for Children (CLAC): an approach to ECCD that seeks to prove that 100% of disadvantaged children in a targeted high poverty community can achieve child wellbeing indicators and school success through effective and quality early childhood supports. The key components of CLAC are:

• A parenting program that improves knowledge and practical skills to improve child health, development, learning and protection through a process of appreciative enquiry that engages parents in discussion and action around child development.

• A low cost, high quality ELP that serves every child in the year or two before primary school to ensure school readiness.

• A transitions to primary school program with school- and community-based activities that enable children to enter school on time, stay in school and learn.

• Innovations in sector integration and improvements in government buy-in and support for ECCD.

dialogic: relating to or characterised by dialogue. When reading storybooks, teachers are encouraged to us a dialogic approach, talking to children about the meaning of the story, asking questions, introducing vocabulary, and discussing interesting details of the story.

disaggregated: data separated for analysis to give more information about specific categories, such as dividing enrolment data into children who are girls, boys and children with disabilities.

ECCD centre: a learning centre for children aged three to five years. It incorporates a range of activities to draw on children's interests and developmental stages. ECCD centres can also be known as preschool, pre-primary school or kindergarten, depending on the country context.

feeder ELP: neighborhood ELPs that children attend before entering Grade 1 primary school.

geoboard: the geoboard is a device used in elementary schools to aid in the teaching of basic geometric concepts. A simple geoboard can be made from a square piece of wood and 25 finishing nails. A grid of five vertical lines and five horizontal lines evenly spaced are drawn on the square piece of wood. Nails are placed at the intersections of the lines so that they extend about one centimetre. Figures are made on the geoboard by stretching rubber bands from one nail to another until the desired shape is formed.

halo effect: terminology used to describe children in Grade 1 who previously attended some kind of ELP. Attending a low-quality ELP, for example, those that use rote teaching and learning approaches, means children can have basic academic and social attributes, such as the ability to stand in a line, sit still, and follow directions that cause teachers to perceive them as 'smart', but they lack attributes like initiative and independence, and skills like reasoning and problem solving.

knowledge capital: refers to the information, experience and skills of an individual that bring productive benefits.

Letter Land: an approach to teaching alphabet where each letter is symbolised by a character and a storybook about that character.

manipulatives: objects that can be used to show something or figure out an answer, such as using two sticks and two shells to conclude that 2 + 2 = 4.

positive deviants: an approach to social change based on the observation that, in any community, there are people whose uncommon but successful behaviours or strategies enable them to find better solutions to a problem than their peers, despite facing similar challenges and having no extra resources or knowledge than their peers. These individuals are referred to as positive deviants.

rote: is a form of teaching and learning through repetition and memorisation.

scaffolding: an instructional strategy to support children's learning by starting with what they already know then moving to activities or information that are just beyond the level of what the child can do alone. With assistance the learner can accomplish what they could not have done alone. The scaffolds are temporary. As understanding is acquired, a new level and new scaffold is applied. The scaffolds are often offered in form of a question to encourage the child to examine what they know in a new light. The aim of the method is to help a child become an independent learner and problem solver.

social capital: refers to the connections between and within social networks that enable individuals to successfully engage with institutions and services.

stunting: an impediment in the normal physical and cognitive development of a child commonly as a result of malnutrition experienced during the early years of life.

subscales: a component of a larger idea. Subscales for the classroom environment include: physical environment, emotional climate, teacher interactions, etc.

summative evaluation: refers to a holistic assessment of a project that looks at the impact on target groups which occurs at the end of the project.

tangrams: an ancient Chinese puzzle. A tangram square is made from seven pieces (three geometric shapes). Directions for making a tangram can be found online (www.tangram.ca), as well as many printable pictures that a child can make using the tangram shapes. Tangram blocks are geometric blocks to learn and understand fractions.

theory of change (ToC): a theory of change is a form of program logic. It is like a map that helps to plot the journey from where we are now to where we want to be. This map outlines assumptions, the context and the processes needed during the journey and the beliefs that underlie why we want to travel that way. A theory of change helps to answer the question: *What is the change we are working for, and what needs to happen for the change to come about?*

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**APPENDICES
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