



for
EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT
in the Caribbean



A HANDBOOK FOR PRACTITIONERS



Learning Outcomes for Early Childhood Development in the Caribbean:
A Handbook for Practitioners

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Preface



The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat is pleased to introduce the ***Learning Outcomes for Early Childhood Development in the Caribbean: A Handbook for Practitioners***. The Handbook provides practical and informed guidance for early childhood practitioners in support of the acknowledged regional imperative to give our youngest citizens the best possible start in life.

This handbook draws on the outcomes of a series of regional activities which gained momentum in 2004 when representatives from eighteen Member States of the Caribbean Community came together with support from The University of the West Indies to develop a consensus on Regional Early Childhood Development Learning Goals and Outcomes. They drew on research evidence on the developing child and practical programming experience in day care and preschool settings, which demonstrated emphatically the positive impact of quality early childhood interventions on both cognitive and affective outcomes. Important among these were valuing one's culture; respect for self, others and the environment; communication skills, independent learning and critical thinking skills; physical and emotional health; and resilience. These six areas of learning and development formed the basis of strategies elaborated in the Curriculum Resource Guide printed by the University in 2005.

Since 2005, many Member States have made concerted efforts to reform their Early Childhood Education Sectors and have made considerable progress in developing curricula at the national level. The Regional Early Childhood Development Learning Goals and Outcomes have been widely used as the basis for curriculum development, for example in Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and several Eastern Caribbean States. In some instances, components which address specific areas of national focus have been added, for example, citizenship education. In others, the regional learning outcomes have been aligned with International Developmental Indicators such as those of the HighScope Educational Research Foundation (St Kitts and Nevis, Dominica, Grenada and Antigua Barbuda).

In addition, the issue of the development of policies and standards for Early Childhood Development Services has also been the focus of regional attention and functional cooperation among Member States. Following the publication by the CARICOM Secretariat in 2008 of **Guidelines for Developing Policy, Regulation and Standards in Early Childhood Development Services**, it was recognized that practitioners in early childhood services such as day care centres, pre-schools and the early grades of primary school, would benefit from specific guidance on improving learning environments and practices in order to meet minimum standards. The CARICOM Early Childhood Development Minimum Service Standard was developed using the Early Childhood Development Learning Goals and Outcomes, thus ensuring that the requirements of the standards were addressed from the perspective of the child's development and well being, and at the same time harmonising expectations across the Region for quality in early childhood services.

The value of the Curriculum Resource Guide for national curriculum development and the development of Policies and Standards for ECD services has been well demonstrated. The decision of The University of the West Indies to develop the Guide into a Handbook for Practitioners will enable the Early Childhood Development Learning Goals and Outcomes, and the recommended strategies, to be widely available in the Region for use in teachers' colleges and by individual early childhood services. The CARICOM Secretariat welcomes this initiative and thanks The University of the West Indies for its continuing support for the professional development of early childhood practitioners across the Region.

Myrna Bernard,
Director, Human Development
CARICOM Secretariat
July, 2010

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The Learning Outcomes for Early Childhood Development in the Caribbean: A Handbook for Practitioners

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Introduction

This Handbook aims to provide practical guidance to early childhood practitioners who are implementing early childhood curricula in countries in the Caribbean Community. The premise of the Handbook is that whatever curriculum we choose to follow our intention is the same: we are trying to achieve learning goals and outcomes for children's development and well being during their early childhood years.

Learning Outcomes are different from Curricula. Learning outcomes are the consequences of a child's early learning experiences for the child's development. Children will have most of their early experiences in the family and in early childhood settings. Therefore, next to parents, early childhood practitioners are very important people in the early years of a child's development. Their choice of curricula in their settings has been shown by research to have the potential to make a significant difference to the children's learning outcomes.

This Handbook is intended therefore to provide visualizations of the Learning Outcomes to guide early childhood practitioners in their choice of curricula for children. It aims to address questions from the practitioner's point of view: What am I trying to achieve? What can I do to achieve it? What works? What doesn't work? How could I organize what I do to achieve it? How can I be sure I am respecting children's rights? How can I involve parents? What kind of resources will help me?

To guide the practitioner through the Handbook, the Learning Outcomes Framework provides the visualization of a holistic picture of children who will value their culture; respect themselves, others and the environment; be healthy, strong and well-adjusted; be effective communicators; be critical thinkers and independent learners; and, be resilient. These six areas of learning and development form the six sections of the Handbook which follow; each section following a sequence of birth to three years, three to five years and five to seven years of age. The

sections are presented in the following sequence: *Wellness, Effective Communication, Valuing Culture, Intellectual Empowerment, Respect for Self, Others and the Environment, and Resilience.*

Each section elaborates on the main expectations of children during each age span and sets out what practitioners can do to support children's learning and development. Practitioners are alerted to what practices are inappropriate. Practical suggestions for involving parents and community, for supporting diversity and special needs, and for realizing children's rights, are included, together with examples of effective practice in different parts of the region. Translating these understandings and suggestions into their own work, practitioners can plan the curricula they offer and ensure that they engage parents effectively in the process.

The final sections of the Handbook provide useful examples from across the Region of resources in use. They include architect's scale drawings of learning environments that can be used by practitioners to guide discussions on refurbishment and new-build projects for early childhood settings. Tips on how to support children's free choice, manage children's behaviour and build secure relationships provide expanded guidance on how to overcome challenges to ensuring success in achieving children's learning and development. More Ideas for creating child-friendly, effective learning environments are also shown.



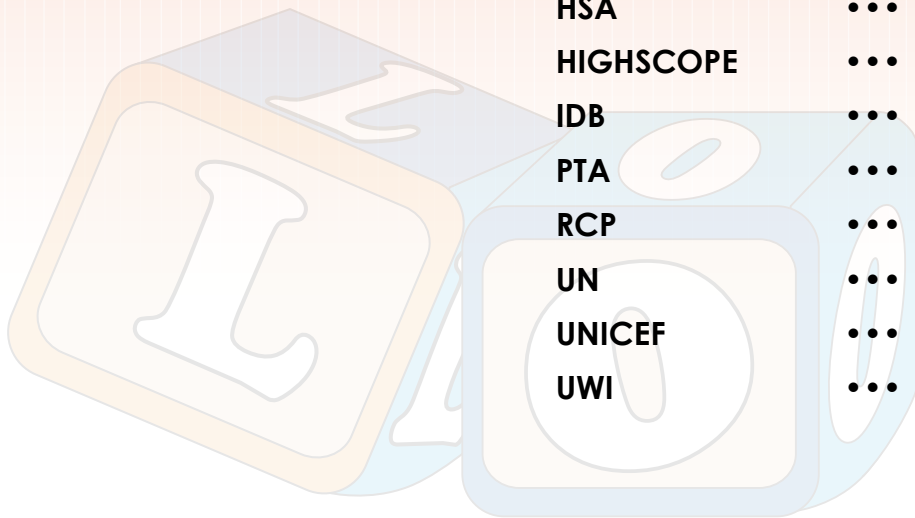
Definitions of Common Terms

- **Early Childhood Practitioners** are persons employed as teachers, caregivers, principals and supervisors to care and provide learning experiences for children in day care centres, preschools, other similar early childhood services and primary school.
- **Early Childhood Development** or **ECD** is a “comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for children from birth to eight years of age, their parents and caregivers. Its purpose is to protect the child’s rights to develop his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential” (UNICEF, 2001).
- **Emergent literacy** is “...all the reading and writing that children do before it becomes conventional” (Teale & Sulzby, 1989) such as drawing, scribbling, making letter-like forms and copying; prephonemic, invented and conventional spelling; looking at and talking about (wordless) picture books; following along as another person reads, with a tape or computer programme to assist; and “reading” (from memory) a familiar book.
- **Oracy** is the ability to express oneself in and understand spoken language through developing oral skills in talking, listening and communicating with others
- **Supporting Special Needs** means providing specific attention or assistance, or where necessary intervention (such as therapy or treatment) to meet needs which are sensory, cognitive, physical, health, language/communication or social/emotional/behavioural, and those arising from developmental delays (mild, moderate, severe or profound).
- **Supporting Diversity** means supporting children’s developing knowledge, understanding, appreciation, acceptance and tolerance of differences between people due to race, culture, religion, age, ability or gender, by creating opportunities for children to learn about their differences in a positive way, to include others who are different from themselves and to develop their own rules for generous, fair and non-discriminatory treatment of one another.



Abbreviations & Acronyms

CARICOM	...	Caribbean Community
CCDC	...	Caribbean Child Development Centre
CCS	...	Caribbean Community Secretariat
CDB	...	Caribbean Development Bank
CRC	...	Convention on the Rights of the Child
EC	...	Early Childhood
ECD	...	Early Childhood Development
ENT	...	Ear, Nose and Throat
HSA	...	Home School Association
HIGHSCOPE	...	HighScope Educational Research Foundation
IDB	...	Inter American Development Bank
PTA	...	Parent Teacher Association
RCP	...	Roving Caregivers Programme
UN	...	United Nations
UNICEF	...	United Nations Children's Fund
UWI	...	University of the West Indies



Learning Outcomes for Early Childhood Development in the Caribbean

HOW LEARNING OUTCOMES ARE ACHIEVED

LEARNING OUTCOMES



WELLNESS

A child who is healthy, strong and well adjusted.

1. Physical health and holistic development are promoted.
2. Emotional well-being is nurtured.
3. Sense of belonging and being affirmed is fostered.
4. Protection and safety of self and others is understood and practiced.
5. Ability to assume responsibility for own actions and behaviour is encouraged.
6. Awareness of own preferences, potential, abilities and limitations is encouraged.



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

A child who is an effective communicator.

1. Verbal and non-verbal communication skills are developed.
2. Receptive language skills and expression of information, thoughts and ideas are developed.
3. Creative and expressive skills are encouraged.
4. Emergent literacy and oracy are supported.



VALUING CULTURE

A child who values culture.

1. Awareness of and appreciation for own and other cultures are emphasized.
2. Appreciation for local, national and international cultural forms is encouraged.
3. Pride in national and regional identity is promoted.



INTELLECTUAL EMPOWERMENT

A child who is a critical thinker and independent learner.

1. Equitable opportunities for learning, irrespective of gender, ability, age, faith, ethnicity or background are provided.
2. The importance of play for meaningful creative learning is recognised and promoted.
3. An awareness of using gathered information to solve problems, reason and gain understanding of events and experience is promoted.



RESPECT FOR SELF, OTHERS & THE ENVIRONMENT

A child who respects self, others and the environment.

1. Knowledge of the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour is supported.
2. The ability to express empathy for others is encouraged.
3. Ability to understand and appreciate the views and feelings of others is fostered.
4. Building relationships, connecting links, interacting with family and others are promoted.
5. Showing love and acceptance of others is encouraged.
6. Caring for and protecting the environment are promoted.
7. Making sense of the living, physical, and materials worlds is developed.



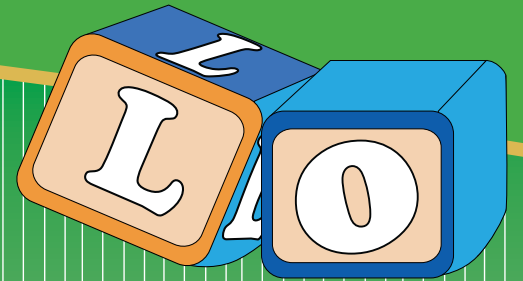
RESILIENCE

A resilient child.

1. Addressing difficulties, challenges and conflicts using a range of appropriate and acceptable social and coping skills is promoted.
2. Dispositions of persistence, willingness to complete an unpleasant or challenging task or take calculated risks and perseverance are encouraged.
3. Knowledge and skills in self-protection and the protection of others are demonstrated.

IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD

Wellness



A child who is healthy, strong, and well-adjusted.

Wellness

BIRTH TO THREE



A child who is healthy, strong, and well-adjusted.



Young children have the right to be provided with all they need to live, be healthy and develop well in all areas.



A child who is healthy, strong and well-adjusted.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thrive healthily when both their nutritional and emotional needs are met; rest, feed and sleep well. • Indicate their needs vocally, e.g., crying. • Become increasingly mobile and venture out to explore wider boundaries. This involves risk at times. • Discover and learn with all their senses. • Become increasingly aware that choices have consequences ; demonstrate some sense and awareness of danger. • Show preference for people and for what they want to see, hear, feel and taste. 	<p><i>Birth – 6 month old babies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend much of their time sleeping; show liking for some foods and rejection of others; cry when hungry or uncomfortable. • Turn their heads toward sounds; hold up head while on stomach, stare at and follow moving objects with eyes; thrust arms and legs in play, bat at objects while trying to reach them; smile at others. • Stand with support, roll over from front to back, reach for objects with good aim and transfer objects from hand to hand, explore objects with hands and mouth, engage in large muscle play, e.g., rocking, bouncing. • React to light and are attracted to moving objects; show preference for people, especially faces and voices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a predictable environment in which children feel safe and able to cope with temporary changes; provide a routine of activities e.g., receiving child at arrival, meal times, outdoor activities. • Provide periods of stimulation throughout the day; offer infants and toddlers a variety of objects of various shapes and colours to play with. • Arrange activities with many opportunities for talking, singing along and interaction with babies, infants and toddlers; play peek-a-boo and hiding games. • Make a special effort during routines, e.g., diaper changing, feeding, to talk to babies about what will happen, what is happening, what will happen next. Show interest in babies' responses and participation. • Make eye contact with the child and smile. • Be aware of the symptoms of common illnesses and alert to changes in children's behaviour that may signal illness or allergies. • Conduct daily health checks, recording any signs of illness on each child's daily record form. Such details are to be conveyed to parents.



A child who is healthy, strong and well-adjusted.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display a biological drive to use their bodies and develop their physical skills. • Gradually gain control of their whole bodies and make strong and purposeful movements with small and large muscles. • Crave close attachment with a special person within their setting because of their need for affection, attention, security and feeling special. • Actively explore their environment with a sense of trust in the adults who care for and protect them in different settings. • Show curiosity and pleasure as they interact with and discover new things in their environment. • Crawl, walk, balance, climb and play ball. 	<p><i>6-12 month old babies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for objects out of sight; show fear of strangers; react badly to change. • Enjoy certain activities such as bath time and splashing in water; sit unsupported, roll over both ways, hold cup or bottle to feed self, use pincer grasp (thumb and finger) to pick up small objects. • Crawl/creep well, climb on furniture, rotate trunk while sitting alone, hold object with one hand and manipulate it with the other; explore objects by poking, squeezing, banging, dropping, shaking, opening, shutting etc; raise body to standing position and sit down again, walk with support, e.g., holding on to furniture or holding adults' hands; might walk alone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond promptly to infants' cries or calls of distress in a calm, tender and respectful manner. • Respect and adjust to infants' individual feeding and sleeping schedules, infants' food preferences and eating styles. • Use brightly coloured cushions/ mats to stimulate infants' interest; use lead-free, easy-to-clean paints on walls and chose floor surfaces that are neutral in colour, easy to clean and not abrasive. • Provide items for infants to retrieve using pincer grasp while being closely supervised by adult. • Provide stories, pictures and puppets etc. which allow them to experience and express their feelings. • Arrange space so that infants and toddlers can enjoy moments of quiet play by themselves, have ample space to roll over and move freely, and can crawl/move toward interesting objects.



From birth, children's capacities are rapidly maturing and they are learning. They have the right to the resources and opportunities that enhance growth and development.



Young children depend on adults (parents and caregivers) to help them to realize their rights.



A child who is healthy, strong and well-adjusted.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show an increasing desire to do things on their own, but crave adult reassurance and support. 	<p><i>12-24 month old toddlers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk alone (by 18 mos.); run, jump, kick at ball; push, pull, drag toys and other play materials around; walk up and down stairs with assistance. Play with nesting and stacking toys; build tower of 2 cubes, dance, walk in circles, use crayons or pencils to make vertical or horizontal strokes, string large beads, use a spoon to feed self, drink from a cup. Open doors, take off clothes, throw and retrieve all kinds of objects; push selves on wheeled objects with good steering. <p><i>24-36 month old toddlers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in rough and tumble play; build tower of 8 cubes; kick balls, jump at least 4 inches distance, manipulate, push and pull objects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep play areas for younger infants separate from those for crawlers to promote safe interactions among children at a similar stage of development. Provide equipment for gross motor activity. Plan daily opportunities for toddlers to engage in exploratory activities such as water and sand play, painting and play dough manipulation. Provide a variety of nesting and stacking toys and small blocks for infants to manipulate. Provide safe, large area and small wheeled toys for pushing and pulling (ensure they are safe for children under 3 years). Reassure and encourage children who are fearful of some activities.



INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES	INVOLVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	USEFUL SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All forms of corporal punishment, including pushing, pulling, physically hurting, shouting, embarrassing or degrading by an adult. • Crowded areas with cribs and cots; dark and dingy areas for children to remain for long periods of time; space allows little opportunity for body movement. • Leaving babies, infants and toddlers to lie down/sleep/sit down for long periods without stimulating activities. • Too little time spent in adult-child interaction. • Toys and other materials provided for children are too large to handle or so small that infants could choke on or swallow them. • Sugary foods are used as treats and rewards. • Infants share bottles, utensils, and bibs. • Toys are stored out of the children's reach. • Keeping children inside all day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite paediatricians or developmental specialists to talk with staff and/or parents. • Have regular parent conferences and keep them updated on their child and the centre. • Provide either a Parents' Corner at the entrance with helpful information or a one-page newsletter sent home on a regular basis. • Create a parent database with information on each parent and how he/she can be a potential resource person. • Encourage parents and children to accept and respect everyone including those who are different. • Invite parents to visit and spend time in the playroom with the practitioner and children, when possible, as well as to participate in toy-making workshops to produce play materials for their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update facilities according to National Standards Document; make community map (or list) of the resources available in the immediate community; invite the Ministry of Health to visit the facility, assess current status and make recommendations. • Visit helpful websites to access references/journals, regional/international research, documents. • Have workshops/sessions for caregivers and parents on creating flexible equipment and a variety of interesting materials appropriate for babies' and toddlers' play. • Use safe, indigenous and recycled (trashable) materials to make learning aids as much as possible.

Hurting a child, even mildly (physically or emotionally) to control the child's behaviour is a violation of the child's rights.



Every child should be protected from all forms of neglect and abuse.



Supporting Diversity and Children with Special Needs

- Caregivers and practitioners can create an inclusive environment, making sure that spatial and environmental organisation, materials and activities enable all children to participate actively; for example, children with various physical challenges eat at the table with the other children.
- In rooms that accommodate children with special needs, additional adults should be available to assist with activities that require assistance or individualised attention.
- When other toddlers are carrying out gross motor activities such as climbing, running and rolling, a child with physical challenges may become frustrated and will require sensitive adult support, additional resources or adaptations to equipment.
- Learn about the disabilities that affect the children in your care. Assist and encourage them to participate and to be as independent as possible.
- Plan carefully with parents to ensure that their expectations for their child's nutrition, physical care, emotional reassurance and activities are respected.

**Always ask yourself,
is this in the child's best interest?**



Get to know each child in your care and use your knowledge of child health and development to help parents support the healthy development of their young children, emphasising the importance of preventative and responsive health care.



IN THE FIELD

Overcoming Challenges

If the Centre's indoor space is too small and cramped to allow for comfortable and meaningful play, consider designating each room for different types of activities, e.g., Room 1 – arts & crafts and sand & water play, Room 2 – area for circle time activities, e.g., dramatic play and music, Room 3 – table top games and manipulatives, reading/book area. Groups of children can then participate in the activities in each room on a rotating basis.

- To increase indoor space, consider building a sturdy wooden loft (if the ceiling is not too low) which can become a special activity area, e.g., library, reading area, or for quiet games, manipulatives, drawing and writing materials, etc.
- If lighting and ventilation in the room are inadequate, and there is no possibility of installing a window, make more use of the outdoors to conduct activities during fair weather.
- More space can be created outside to facilitate activities, such as circle time. Create outdoor spaces (by fencing off or hanging a tarp for shade) and facilitate outdoor play where/when possible.
- To create storage space, consider installing wall cupboards or benches with storage boxes built beneath the seat.

What Really Works

In Guyana-

The Georgetown Municipal Clinic, Mothers' Union Day Care Centre and South Street Nursery School are all located on the same compound. The Clinic is responsible for maintaining pregnant mothers and for providing ante-natal care to mothers and new-born babies. The Clinic is conveniently located next to the Day Care (originally established to assist Mothers who are vendors at the nearby municipal market) and the Nursery School. Children from both facilities can receive emergency attention, if necessary.

Also, for those children attending either the Day Care Centre or Nursery school, diagnosed illnesses and physical and developmental needs can be monitored conveniently over time and space. The concept of having all three facilities on the same site has proven to be quite fortuitous for parents and children involved, therefore demonstrating the usefulness of integrating community services.

Wellness

THREE TO FIVE



A child who is healthy, strong, and well-adjusted.



A child who is healthy, strong and well-adjusted.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate pride and satisfaction in their increasing independence and ability to do things for themselves. • Engage in various activities with energy, enthusiasm and joy. • Begin to understand right from wrong. • Learn to respect and care for their bodies; recognise good and bad health, safety and nutrition practices. • Know and distinguish gender and different body parts. • Use all their senses when involved in an activity. • Know what foods are healthy, what they are allowed to eat and what to avoid for their own well-being. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress themselves, e.g., button own clothes, brush teeth, bathe with decreasing need for assistance. • Practice basic personal hygiene, e.g., washing hands after toileting and before meals. • Demonstrate understanding of difference between appropriate and inappropriate touching e.g., reject/complain about such touching. • Show curiosity and interest in different sounds, smells, tastes, textures, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide learning centres and allow each child to interact with centre of choice. Centres should provide for dramatic play, building with blocks and other materials, creative expression, library/listening/writing, manipulative games/activities, science/discovery, physical/ motor development. • Encourage children as often as possible to do things for themselves, e.g., dressing, feeding, brushing teeth, toileting, hand-washing and assist with routine chores, e.g., clean-up, distributing items, etc. • Keep physical-motor activities short, varied and interesting as 3-5 year olds tire easily. • Provide nutritious energy-giving foods and teach children about the importance of a healthy diet. • Children must be supported in learning about healthy foods and allergy prevention.



A child who is healthy, strong and well-adjusted.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use their upper and lower limbs and whole body competently for balancing and other locomotor skills. • Develop mastery/control/ co-ordination of small muscles e.g., use of finger muscles with dexterity, hand-eye coordination. • Recognise and avoid dangerous situations. • Exhibit increasing endurance with long periods of high energy. • Play cooperatively with other children, including games with rules; however they do not respond well to competition as they hate to lose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice skills requiring eye-hand coordination , e.g., cutting, tearing, pasting, drawing, modeling with playdough/ plasticene, etc., and similar tasks. • Show dexterity in fine motor coordination such as fitting (5-20 piece) puzzles, stringing beads, tracing templates, using pencils, colouring with crayons, etc., and similar tasks. • Pedal a tricycle, use upper and lower limbs and whole body to jump, hop, run, skip, balance, throw, kick, ride, swim. • Use toys and tools safely. • Plan and discuss with each other, who should do what. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities each day for gross and fine motor development through activities such as running, skipping, jumping, hopping, balancing, drawing, cutting, tracing, and the like. • Provide opportunities each day to sort, group, categorise, match, count and sequence. • Provide appropriate and safe play equipment, e.g., jungle gym, swings, slides, monkey bars etc., on safe surfaces. • Help children understand and cope with strong feelings by giving them words to use when they are angry, sad, disappointed etc., e.g., "I see you are angry at Mary because she took your game". • Model, teach, and encourage appropriate responses to children.



Children have the right to rest, leisure and play. Provide opportunities for young children to meet, play and interact in safe, supportive, stimulating child-friendly environments. Encourage but do not force children to play in groups. Allow them to solve problems and resolve conflicts on their own.



Young children have the right to be provided with all they need to live, be healthy and develop well in all areas.



Allow children to play freely outdoors everyday.

A child who is healthy, strong and well-adjusted.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to form and appreciate peer group friendships. • Show desire for adult's presence and assurance. • Participate as member of a group. • Share things spontaneously. • Express both positive and negative feelings and emotions behaviourally, even if unable to label them. • Display a developing concept of self and sense of honesty and fairness. • Show curiosity and interest in exploring. • Begin to develop social and self-help skills and habits. • Engage in simple board and table top games. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show enjoyment in singing songs, listening to stories over and over. • Show increasing interest in group pretend games. • Engage in social play that sometimes tests limits. • Accept challenges and begin to demonstrate problem solving and conflict resolution skills. • Show joy, anger, sadness by facial and body expressions. • Ask many questions, always wanting to find out more. • Fabricating stories. • Observe how each child plays/ interacts with other children as they are engaged in play, free, self-selected and structured activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and reinforce cooperation between children. • Guide children to request, negotiate, express themselves, apologise, etc., in socially acceptable ways. • Provide opportunities for interaction in small and large groups. • Provide specific praise to help each child understand the true value of actions. • Help children learn to verbalise their different feelings. • Acknowledge the child's sadness or anger as valid, allow the child to express feelings and reassure the child, focussing on the positive events of the child's life. • Provide a comfortable place for a child to be alone and for quiet play/ activity. • Maintain and carefully supervise a safe, healthy environment for children. • Anticipate and prevent accidents or problems before they occur.



A child who is healthy, strong and well-adjusted.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show desire for adult's presence and assurance. • Accept rules and limits set by adults. • Know their phone number, address and other personal information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display individuality and personal preferences; make choices, e.g., select and put on own clothes to be worn. • Share personal and family information with others. • Show pride in personal achievements. • Show awareness of own limitations. • Seek adult attention and are more cooperative with adults. • Begin to show interest in, and concern for peers who are challenged in various ways, e.g., mentally, physically. • Become more helpful to others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond warmly to children and guard their safety while encouraging them to do what they are capable of doing for themselves. • Assure children that it is "OK" to be different and that they can feel free to make choices and express preferences that are different from others, e.g., a child may like a certain food that no one else in the group likes. • Model fairness.

Young children depend on adults (parents, early childhood practitioners and caregivers) to help them to obtain their rights.



Be consistent and fair in responding to children's individual needs.



As children grow, adjust the way you guide and direct them based on their individual stage of development.



Parents and practitioners should continually adjust the levels of support and guidance they offer to a child, taking into account the child's best interests and wishes including the child's capacities and comprehension.

INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES	INVOLVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	USEFUL SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials for fine and gross motor activities are unattractive or in disrepair. Children are hardly encouraged to explore new activities, but do the same things over and over. Careless supervision and monitoring of children's safety (indoor and outdoor). Adults do things for children that they can do themselves because it is faster and less messy. Playtime is permitted only for a brief period early in the morning or late in the afternoon resulting in some children missing it all together; children are mostly expected to sit quietly doing rote tasks. Low emphasis on offering children choice; practitioner is chief decision-maker; children's efforts are judged by adult standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask parents to assist with collection of discarded/ recycled materials for making learning aids, and costumes, clothes for "dress up". Encourage and guide parents to create appropriate play equipment and instructional materials for gross and fine motor development from collected discards. Send home information to parents that describe activities that can be done and enjoyed by the whole family, e.g., bowling with a ball and empty soda containers or plastic juice bottles. Encourage parents to pack nutritious lunches/snacks for their children, including fruits and natural fruit juices. Share healthy snack ideas with parents. Encourage parents to give children choices and to teach them about consequences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make use of safe, discarded or recycled materials for playground equipment, e.g., used tyres, shipping barrels, large, sturdy carton boxes, oversized electrical wire reels, etc. Smaller discarded/recycled items such as plastic bottles, different sized cans, cotton thread reels, old magazines, calendars, newspapers and cardboard can be used for making indoor play materials and tabletop games. Invite resource persons such as a health worker, physician/ dental hygienist, nurse, nutritionist, and general safety personnel e.g., fireman, security forces etc., ophthalmologist, ENT specialist, paediatrician etc., to assist with health and safety projects and for Parent Teachers Association (PTA) or Home School Association (HSA) meetings.



Supporting Diversity and Children with Special Needs

- Children with special needs can participate in outdoor play and physical activities with some adaptations to the activities and equipment and support from an adult.
- Children with mental retardation can participate in most outdoor activities but need more encouragement and praise than other children. Adults must help them establish motor patterns by moving them into positions or modelling behaviours over and over. Repetition is quite often necessary.
- For children with visual impairments, be attentive to lighting and choice of equipment.
- For children with hearing (auditory) challenges, ensure eye contact is made.
- Children with auditory disabilities/challenges are rarely prevented from participating fully in physical activities. These children should be placed in front of the practitioner/caregiver so they can read lips and have the best opportunity for hearing directions.
- Practitioners should show awareness of and sensitivity to children's cultural preferences, e.g., how they dress, what they eat, and prayer rituals.

Disabled children have the right to special care



All children are to be treated with patience, dignity and respect.



IN THE FIELD

Overcoming Challenges

- Give special attention to children in need and reassure the others that if/when they need special attention, they will get it too.
- Some outdoor playgrounds have inadequate or no playground equipment, but in spite of this, children can engage in active, healthy activities that are carefully planned by practitioners.
- Consider using large, sturdy carton (cardboard) boxes that stimulate pretend play. Let the children paint/decorate these as an activity. Large boxes can be used creatively as houses, vehicles, a puppet show stage, a TV, etc., for imaginative play.
- Pack smaller outdoor equipment in boxes that can be transported to/from the playground for children's use, such as balls and jump ropes, bean bags, hoola hoops, shovels, push and pull toys, etc.
- Car tyres, plastic or metal barrel tunnels, large wooden cable spools placed in playgrounds can bring much joy to children. Be sure to check for sharp, rusty objects before installing these items.
- Practitioners need to identify children who need additional emotional or behavioural support and ensure that these children receive it.
- Seek partnerships with parents in providing healthy nutrition, such as fruit (instead of junk food) for snacks.

What Really Works

Since 1986, the McCam Child Development Centre has operated an inclusive early childhood (nursery and preschool) programme that specialises in serving children with special needs, their parents and teachers in Kingston, Jamaica. The Centre's services also include.

- developmental assessments;
- occupational therapy and psycho-educational assessments and therapy;
- behavioural therapy;
- speech and language assessment and therapy;
- a diagnostic kindergarten/grade 1 programme;
- after-school tutoring;
- special education intervention;
- a parent support group;
- annual teacher training workshops (approved by the Ministry of Education's Special Education Unit) on Developmental Issues in Learning;
- counselling and referral.

The McCam Resource Centre provides information to special interest groups (such as teachers, students and parents) on a range of topics related to disabilities in children. It also operates a "help line" to provide information on where to get help and how to care for children with learning and developmental disabilities.

The staff includes early childhood practitioners, special educators, practical nurses, a speech and behavioural therapist and a psychologist. The team uses an individualised, developmental approach to education, including a play-based curriculum and activities to foster growth in each child's physical, emotional, moral, spiritual and cognitive development.

Wellness

FIVE TO SEVEN



A child who is healthy, strong, and well-adjusted.



A child who is healthy, strong and well-adjusted.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate curiosity about themselves, others and the world around them. They are persistent in wanting their questions answered. • Enjoy active play, especially use of outdoor playground equipment. • Demonstrate competence in self-help skills. • Demonstrate increasing awareness of the importance of hygiene. • Show interest in fair play but are apprehensive about competitive activities (they do not like to lose). • Show self-confidence and willingness to take risks. • Show increasing interest in playing games with rules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show increasing interest in peer group e.g., having special friends, exclusive cliques etc., prefer play with same-gender peers. • Engage joyfully in outdoor and dramatic play with peers e.g., police, fireman, shop, market, family and other themes; begin to participate in more structured, rehearsed plays. • Dress and undress, engage in feeding and toileting needs independently. • Make decisions about preferred activities quite readily; chose to play particular games as motor coordination and skills improve. • Participate in more ring games, group sports and games with rules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve children in a variety of health and safety projects (e.g., nutrition, dental health, exercise, personal hygiene, prevention of substance abuse) that help them learn important concepts about health and safety; emphasise group work • Encourage children to demonstrate and share their creative ideas and skills while working on projects. • Assign children activity area responsibilities and tasks, fairly. • Set up themed learning centres to stimulate children's interests and social interaction. • Integrate and reinforce knowledge of health and safety practices and routines into children's daily habits, at school and at home. • Plan and provide daily outdoor periods (including snack breaks and extended lunch time, nature walks, rambles, exploration) for children to learn about outdoor environments, experience unstructured time, get fresh air, play and express themselves freely.



A child who is healthy, strong and well-adjusted.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to grow and develop at a slower rate than before but relatively steady with growth spurts. Demonstrate greater motor coordination and control in fine motor skills e.g., plaiting and writing, as well as gross motor skills such as balancing, running and jumping. Demonstrate clear evidence of right or left-handedness. Demonstrate improved competencies in throwing and catching a ball, as well as skills that require following instructions such as dancing and swimming. Take pride in being independent and in looking after most of their personal needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display better physical coordination e.g., adept at walking on a balance beam, catching and throwing a ball, manoeuvring curves, etc. Carry out with accuracy, fine motor activities requiring hand-eye coordination e.g., cutting with scissors, etching, paper weaving, writing, twisting and plaiting. Write legibly (alignment, formation and spacing are much improved). Paint, colour and write in a restricted or controlled space. Engage in increasingly complex gross motor tasks and organised games and activities such as rounders, cricket, ring games, etc. Create drawings with some detail, including people and houses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide age-appropriate, safe equipment (e.g., balls, bats, jump ropes, hoops, balance beams, ladders, climbing structures) and play spaces for children to play freely and participate in organised games and sports. Encourage friendly competition. Provide places indoor and/or outdoors for quiet activity and reflection or nature study. Provide materials to refine fine motor skills, e.g., puzzles, sewing, braiding, writing, drawing, stringing, etc. Plan opportunities for children to actively participate in motor development activities, games, sports, recreation or dance. Assist children in acquiring and refining their physical skills. Do not force left-handers to change to use their right hand. Support, supervise and monitor children's engagement in physical activity.



Hurting children, even mildly, to control their behaviour is a violation of their basic human rights.



A child who is healthy, strong and well-adjusted.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show eagerness to please adults and copy the behaviour of those they admire. • Cooperate as a member of a team and participate better in team sports and group activities. • Maintain strong interest in pretend play and then trying things out for real. • Form friendships even though these might last for brief periods only. • Show more interest in toilet humour and in their own genitals. Questions about reproduction, sexual intercourse and gender matters are common. • Enjoy increasingly better health, fewer illnesses and infections. • Select healthy foods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice to improve a chosen skill or talent e.g., a sport or musical instrument. • Show dislike for competition; might become upset or "cheat" to avoid losing. • Take initiative and start a task on their own. Express their ability or inability to do things. • Read a situation and respond using socially acceptable behaviours (anger, frustration affection, enthusiasm); display a sense of right and wrong. • Show curiosity and interest in sexual differences. • Accept consequences and are accountable for their own actions and behaviours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that playground equipment is designed to conform to recognised standards for the protection of children's health and safety and are consistently monitored and maintained by adults. • Use a variety of ways of flexibly grouping children to allow them to work and play with others. • Include group/team games as a teaching strategy. • Allow all children to have a chance at being teacher's helper, to help set classroom rules and to experience carrying out a variety of responsibilities. A daily or weekly roster works well for this. • Encourage children to make suggestions and help with preparation of healthy meals and snacks. • Plant a garden with the children and have them help to maintain it. • Give simple "matter of fact" answers to children's questions /comments on sexual matters. Avoid appearing alarmed or referring to the child as "bad".





A child who is healthy, strong and well-adjusted.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have healthy eating habits. Show preference for specific activities. Increasingly observe rules and regulations. Increasingly become more responsible to self and others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend to personal needs with increasing independence, e.g., hand-washing, teeth brushing and toileting. Engage in team/group activities based on their own selection and preference. Work without adult supervision. Adhere to activity area/safety rules and regulations and accept consequences. Exercise caution during work and play (risk-taking is not inhibited). Exercise good judgment in dangerous situations. Encourage and support friends and peers. Assume roles and responsibilities in the activity area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and allow children to volunteer for specific tasks. Give appropriate praise and positive feedback. Avoid being too critical and negative as this can directly damage self-confidence. Reassure children when they make mistakes, as five to seven year olds value what adults think of them. Encourage children to be kind, helpful and supportive toward each other. Support children's need/desire to venture out into the wider community and new experiences, e.g., through organised field trips or shorter, informative walks to interesting places in the community. Guide children gently toward more pro-social behaviours and use of appropriate language. Stress the importance of fitness and physical activity. Teach children about the importance of healthy dental care and oral hygiene.

Children learn to eat healthily when they are consistently encouraged to eat, suggest and help to prepare healthy snacks and meals.





INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES	INVOLVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	USEFUL SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers not giving individualised attention and support that children need. Physical education activities are cancelled on a frequent basis in order to accommodate more academic ones, or as a form of punishment. Organisation of learning environment or schedule does not allow flexibility in the use of space/time for activities that interest children and support wellness. Teachers have so many duties that they do not have enough time to get to know and establish relationships with each child. Teachers do administrative duties during time that should be spent engaging the children. Staff eat unhealthy foods in front of children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage parents to get involved in their children's physical development by sending home descriptions of activities that can involve the whole household e.g., bowling (use a ball and empty soda cans or plastic juice bottles), catching and throwing, tag games, card and board games. Have parents collect recycled materials, "trashables" such as clean, thick socks and pantyhose, different sized plastic bottles, bottle caps, shower curtains, tarpaulin, shipping barrels, rope, clean cans of different sizes, old car tyres/inner tubes, reels, large and small carton boxes, buckets, wire hangers etc. Invite parents and other community members to participate in planned workshops to create/make instructional materials for both gross and fine motor development. Advise parents on packing nutritious meals and snacks for their children. Encourage parents to allow children to suggest and help prepare healthy meals and snacks. Invite parents to come in and volunteer as teacher assistants, if possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite resource persons such as the health worker, physician, dentist/ dental hygienist, nurse, nutritionist, general safety personnel, e.g., fireman, security forces, etc, to assist with health and safety projects and for meetings with parents. If a breakfast and/or lunch programme is offered, this should be guided by national or international guidelines/standards on nutritional requirements for children. Balanced meals for children with special dietary restrictions must be provided. Invite representatives from local food manufacturers and distributors within the school community, to participate in school wellness projects. In addition to supplying nutrition products, they can help promote good health and nutrition practices by sharing information with school canteen, kitchen staff, parents; can also sponsor sports events and dance festivals etc.



Supporting Diversity and Children with Special Needs

- Adapt areas and materials where necessary to make them wheelchair accessible or to add visual or auditory cues and information to help all children experience planned activities as independently as possible.
- Make adaptive equipment available so that all children can experience what adaptive equipment actually feels like and therefore be less wary of it. Close supervision is necessary for this.
- Where special needs children are integrated in the programme/learning setting, provide additional supervision to allow for individualised attention.
- Where children with orthopaedic disabilities are involved in programmes, consult with specialist doctors or physical therapists regarding the levels of physical activities to be included and the changes to be made to the learning environment.
- Ensure girls and boys have equal opportunities and time to play with equipment uninterrupted and according to individual needs and interests.





IN THE FIELD

Overcoming Challenges

In some learning environments, class size, adult:child ratios, furniture and room arrangements can be hindrances to children's development and learning:

- If there are too many children to one adult, try inviting the children's family members/community volunteers who have time and skills to assist as they can serve, if adequately guided, as excellent and very helpful teacher assistants.
- If parent assistance is unavailable, consider reorganising the learning activities, e.g., divide children into small groups and provide each group with interesting, self-directing activities that children can do on their own or with minimal supervision, while the teacher engages one group in concept learning activities for which children need more direct guidance. The teacher must engage each group alternately in the planned concept learning activity to ensure that all children participate.
- If furniture is cumbersome and does not allow for social groupings, consult with a local carpenter on how furniture may be adapted or constructed to provide table units for small groups (6–8 children).
- More use can be made of floor space by providing children with small mats which can be rearranged in different grouping configurations.
- Encourage children to eat healthy foods and model healthy eating habits (do not eat junk food in the presence of children).
- Prepare children to protect themselves by teaching them about personal safety procedures.

What Really Works

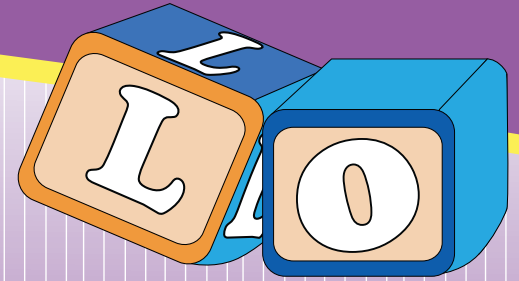
In some preschools, internationally and in our Caribbean countries, teachers help the children prepare for and make visits to the grocery store, market or supermarket. They plan along with the children, what needs to be done, activities to be carried out, telephone calls to be made, parents to be notified, transportation to be arranged, etc.

Parents who have a flexible work schedule are invited to participate in the planning and preparing with smaller groups of children. As each task/activity is conducted, group members are encouraged to record each step in various forms such as written, graphic, pictorial, tape record and other creative ways. During the visit, children are encouraged to take cameras, clipboards and pencils/crayons to again record observations and interviews, etc.

Following the visit, photographs are developed, categorised and displayed with captions. Drawings and illustrations are also mounted and displayed, while discussions are carried out to elaborate, clarify and illustrate events/experiences of the visit. A story book is often prepared as a worthwhile culminating activity.

E

ffective Communication



A child who is an effective communicator.

BIRTH TO THREE

Effective Communication



A child who is an effective communicator.

Take time to listen and try to understand the child. Say what you think the child is trying to express while making eye contact.



A child who is an effective communicator.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<p><u>Verbal and Non-verbal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate awareness of sounds in the environment. • Listen and respond to the speech and voice of those around them and are startled or cry at unexpected noises. • Recognise and turn to familiar voices and smile. • Respond to comforting voice tones. • Between 3 and 9 months: vocalise two to three different vowel sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to voices and make small cooing sounds, enjoy being talked to, gurgle and squeal, begin extended vowel sounds, start to laugh and have different cries for different needs. • <i>Between 4 to 6 months:</i> sputter, babble and try to mimic sounds. • <i>Between 6 to 9 months:</i> make longer and more varied sounds, experiment with producing sounds of varied volume and pitch, make two-syllabled sounds, vocalise three different vowel sounds and imitate vocalisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in many one-to-one, face-to-face interactions with infants. • Talk in a pleasant, calm voice, using simple language (not baby talk) and frequent eye contact while being responsive to the child's cues. • Observe, listen and respond to sounds that infants make, imitate their vocalisations, and appreciate infants' sounds as the beginnings of communication. • Frequently talk with, sing to and read to infants. • Observe infants at play and engage them in appropriate games, such as 'peek-a-boo', 'Round-and-round-the-garden', 'This little piggy'. • Assign caregivers to care for and bond with specific children. • Make eye contact and smile with the children as often as possible.

A child who is an effective communicator.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<p><u>Receptive, Expressive and Creative Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use their developing physical skill to make social contact. Cry differently to express different needs. Young babies convey messages about what they want and need, as well as how they feel. Learn that their voice and actions have effects on others. <i>Between 4 to 6 months,</i> respond to changes in the tone of a familiar voice, and sounds other than speech. Look in an interested or apprehensive way for the source of sounds such as a dog barking, a car alarm going off or a telephone ringing. 	<p><i>9 to 12 months:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Say simple words such as "cat," "juice," "come," understand, "no," mimic sounds, use gestures to make wants known, look at pictures in a book and turn the pages. <p><i>12 to 15 months:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young toddlers enjoy singing, can vocalise four different vowel-consonant combinations, say several words, say "no" and shake head. Identify and name objects while pointing, identify pictures in books, make marks on paper, scribble spontaneously and like being read to, looking at picture books, saying nursery rhymes and doing finger plays. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place sturdy cardboard and plastic books on low shelves or stands for children's easy access. Respond quickly to toddlers' cries or other signs of distress, recognising that toddlers have few words with which to communicate their needs. Read frequently to toddlers individually or in small groups. Sing with toddlers, do finger plays, act out simple stories or folktales with children participating actively, or tell stories using a flannel board and allow children to manipulate and place figures on the board. Talk regularly with children throughout the day. Speak clearly, listen to their responses and provide opportunities for the children to talk to each other, uninterrupted.

Every child has the right to be heard.



Children have the right to have their opinions considered.



A child who is an effective communicator.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<p><u>Emergent Literacy and Oracy Skills</u></p> <p><i>Between 7 to 12 months:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen when spoken to, turn and look at a face when called by name; enjoy games and finger plays such as 'Peek-a-boo' and 'Pat-a-cake.' Recognise familiar words such as 'Daddy,' 'juice,' 'telephone,' 'car' and begin to respond to requests and questions "Give Mummy the keys" and "Go down." <p><i>Between 1 to 2 years:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point to pictures in a book when named and identify body parts when asked; follow simple commands, "Pick up the cup" and understand simple questions such as "Where do you want to go?" Toddlers also enjoy listening to simple stories, songs and rhymes, and may want them repeated quite often. 	<p><i>Between 15 to 18 months:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Say 10 to 20 words, put short words together ("Go bed," "want juice"), scribble spontaneously, imitate single words, make first sentence and enjoy interactive games. <p><i>Between 18 to 24 months:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Say 20 to 50 words, make 3-word sentences, use words to make wants known, combine words and gestures, point to and name three or more body parts. Enjoy active play with small objects, explore different qualities of play materials, show interest in attributes of objects – texture, shape, size, colour and enjoy listening to simple stories read from picture books, especially stories with repetition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage individual children and small groups in conversations about real experiences, projects and current events of interest to the children and speak in whole sentences for children to pattern. Encourage children to describe their ideas, tell parts of the body, respond to questions. Respond attentively to the children's initiatives. Plan experiences to enhance children's ability to listen and observe. Model and teach the children to try to remain calm in challenging situations and how to appropriately express feelings of anger, frustration and disappointment. Provide a variety of picture and story books for the children to use. Read to the children. Provide a range of colourful manipulatives for children to use. Engage children in listening to stories and telling their own.

Children learn from the adults around them about right and wrong. Set good examples for the children in your care to follow, especially when dealing with challenges, conflicts and stressful situations.

A child who is an effective communicator.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<p><i>Between 2-3 years:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand vocabulary dramatically; understand more complex commands, such as "Pick up your cup and come to the table." They are able to understand concepts such as hot/cold, fast/slow. 	<p><i>Between 24 to 30 months:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use three-word sentences, know object names before being able to say them, enjoy word and rhyme games, use words to express self effectively and ask "why". <p><i>Between 30 to 36 months:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin to do problem-solving, develop fantasy in language, understand at least two prepositions, use compound sentences, use adjectives and adverbs. Have a speaking vocabulary that may reach 200 words, can recount events of the day. Increasingly use words to demonstrate knowledge of a wide range of concepts, e.g., size, shape, temperature, time, texture and others. Listen and observe the children as much as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer children's questions honestly and simply. Ask the children open-ended questions that encourage the use of language skills. Allow children time to answer questions or to comment. Use short, simple sentences and articulate words clearly when speaking with children. Provide opportunities and activities for children to acquire knowledge and understanding of new concepts, e.g., hot/cold.



Encourage parents to address problems with the child by talking and explaining to the child why such behaviour is unacceptable and what is expected, rather than by using corporal punishment.

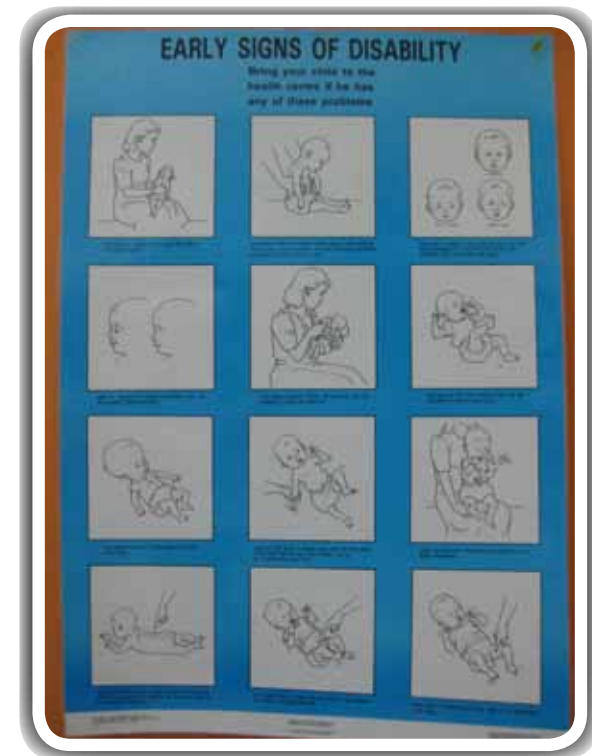


Instead of saying that the child is rude (labelling the child), explain what is rude about the child's behaviour.

INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES	INVOLVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	USEFUL SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregivers rarely play or interact with infants and toddlers. Room decorations are at adult eye level. Play areas are sterile, designed for easy cleaning, but are unstimulating to the infants' senses. Activities are either too strictly time scheduled, too structured, or completely unstructured and unpredictable. Caregivers have little time for special needs children, who are often overlooked and neglected. Adults do not understand the importance of solitary and parallel play and expect children to play with others all the time. Unrealistic and/or unreasonable explanations. Adults do not use "teachable moments" to help reinforce children's concept learning. Rather than tell children to "use your words", teach them appropriate words and ways to express themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregivers and practitioners work in partnership with parents, communicating daily in order to build mutual understanding and trust in ensuring the welfare and optimal development of each child. Frequent meetings with parents or established 'open-door' policy promote an atmosphere of cooperation, as caregivers and parents confer in making decisions about how best to support children's development. Problems, concerns, or differences of opinion are quickly dealt with as they arise. Keep parents abreast of what children are doing and learning. Reassure parents that you support their children's best interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate group experiences are critical to effective learning in the early years. It is recommended that group sizes for appropriate early group experiences observe the regional guidelines. Use reading volunteers (parents or community members such as teens and seniors) and story tellers, puppet shows, dramatic play.

Supporting Diversity and Children with Special Needs

- Children need to know that their home language is valued without being pressured to respond in any particular way that is foreign/strange to them.
- Children who experience severe communication difficulties should be encouraged to use non-verbal ways of making contact. These children should be made to feel that their attempts to listen and respond are being valued as others' attempts are valued.
- In learning settings where there are children with language impairment or communication disorder, opportunities for sharing meanings are important, so, for example, use body language to convey meaning.
- Children with special needs may require that you repeat and/or re-phrase what you are saying. They require patience.



Young children are more willing to communicate when all their needs are met, that is, when they are rested, well-fed and not in need of changing.



IN THE FIELD

Overcoming Challenges

- In bilingual and multilingual settings, a child can be disadvantaged if the practitioner can communicate in only one language. If possible, establish a roster of parents/volunteers who speak the respective language(s) to spend short, scheduled time periods at the Centre to provide help to children who need this support.
- Some practitioners demonstrate lack of knowledge and skills in how to communicate with and respond to children's talk and conversations. Practitioners should remain calm and respectful when communicating verbally with children; be mindful of choice of words, facial expressions and body language.
- Always try to meet the children at their own level by bending down and making eye contact while speaking with each child.
- Shouting at children creates fear and lack of self-confidence.
- In settings with a high noise level, it is even more important for adults to address children individually, as often as possible.
- Encourage children's family members to adopt the same communication strategies being used at the Centre.

What Really Works

In Jamaica and Guyana:

Some parenting programmes operate through clinics. Each pregnant mother who is registered at a public clinic for ante-natal care becomes a member of a group of other pregnant mothers. The group attends regularly scheduled meetings that coincide with regular check-up appointments.

Mothers-to-be meet with various specialists such as nutritionist, nurse, counsellor, paediatrician, obstetrician, etc., at each meeting. Programmes for parenting support meetings include "Ways to prepare mother's body to care for baby," "Giving the new-born a bath" along with demonstration, "Early stimulation activities for babies" etc. Mothers-to-be learn about their babies as they develop in the womb. They discuss the pros and cons of various forms of delivery. After the baby is born, mothers continue in their support groups, to learn about caring for and communicating with their baby.

Children are encouraged to use and understand spoken and gestured language through eye contact, body language and the expression of feelings. Opportunities are provided for children to look at books, listen to stories, rhymes and songs whilst they are waiting in the Clinic.

THREE TO FIVE

Effective Communication



A child who is an effective communicator.



Help to create spaces in the community for children to meet and play. Encourage parents to provide opportunities for young children to meet and play at home.

A child who is an effective communicator.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<p><u>Verbal and Non-Verbal Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond when called by name and follow simple directions. Expand vocabulary and speak in fairly complex sentences. Enjoy listening to stories and repeating simple rhymes. Enjoy telling jokes and using funny or nonsense words. Recognise common everyday sounds and use articulate speech that is easily understood. Enjoy singing simple songs and finger plays. Demonstrate appreciative and attentive listening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate language structures to describe events/situations. Express feelings in different ways. Imitate and participate in conversations with increasing use of appropriate new vocabulary. Articulate words and express themselves clearly. Use forbidden words at times. Describe objects and their use(s). Ask many questions and make suggestions. Follow simple instructions and receive and deliver messages. Talk about each other and of home/community incidents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage children to always use language to express themselves. Encourage development of language and communication skills by engaging individual children and groups in conversation about real experiences, projects and current events, speaking clearly and listening to their responses. Provide opportunities for children to talk to each other. Provide opportunities for fantasy and dramatic play. Include dramatic play in free and organised activities. Encourage children to take pictures, objects, pets etc., and talk about them to their group (show and tell), also share with the group news about daily happenings. Encourage communication by allowing children to speak most of the day. Respond in a pleasant voice, using eye contact and language the children can understand.

A child who is an effective communicator.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen analytically, respond to and evaluate what has been heard. <p><u>Receptive, Expressive and Creative Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand simple "who" "what" and "where" questions. Hear and understand nearly everything that is said to them. (This is the stage when hearing difficulties may become evident). Learn to sing more complex songs as language skills grow and vocal chords develop. Enjoy stories and answer simple questions about them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with others as part of play. Use six words and more in a sentence; use appropriate vocabulary. Imitate and participate in conversations and communicate freely. Tell, retell, make up, explain, interpret, act out stories. Create and adapt their own games, songs and stories. Repeat rhymes, jingles, finger plays and sing songs. Describe events and situations, relate personal and meaningful experiences and relate own experiences to stories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide masks, various types of puppets, accessories and props for miming, role play and dramatic play. Provide opportunities each day for singing songs, rhymes, jingles and favourite advertisements. Encourage children to bring their favourite story books to picture read to the group. Play games that encourage questions, comments, criticisms and critical thinking. Make up nonsense words and sentences. Share jokes, puzzles, riddles, etc. Visit the centre's or public library with the children and allow them to feel "at home" to develop skills in finding, accessing and selecting books.

Children have thoughts and feelings about situations and may have special insight. Allow them to express themselves. Take time to listen to and understand each child.



Encourage freedom of speech that is respectful.



A child who is an effective communicator.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combine more words to make longer sentences. Apply thought and language to problem solve and categorise. <p><u>Emergent Literacy and Oracy Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak fluently and clearly when talking about preschool happenings, friends, family and other interesting experiences. Develop basic concepts of print and begin to engage in and experiment with reading and writing. Comprehend complex sentences and deliver messages. <p><i>By five years:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct long and detailed sentences; tell long and involved stories using "adult-like" grammar. Recognise many sight words and familiar sounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express themselves clearly; write/read in various ways. Draw/paint with increasing control. Show interest in books and stories; picture read from books. Display various competencies in beginning reading and writing skills and sub-skills. Tell/retell/paraphrase stories; speak in correctly structured sentences; use appropriate vocabulary. Recognise, copy and/or write letters, numbers, names, etc. Use past and future tense; understand relational terms, for example, "before", "after", "above", "below", "under" etc. <p><i>By five years:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise and read familiar words seen in their environment and in books. Recognise many sight words and begin to read sentences and simple texts. Write own stories often using invented spelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help children create their own story books using magazines, newspapers, postcards, etc. Read all kinds of books to the children. Allow children to explore the many uses of books. Record children telling stories, singing songs, sharing news, reading and telling jokes. Play many games with letters, numbers, pictures, objects, words, sentences, etc. Provide daily opportunities for children to write freely. Encourage children to talk about reading and writing experiences. Provide many opportunities for children to explore and identify sound-symbol relationships in a meaningful context.

A child who is an effective communicator.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand time concepts such as "early in the morning", "next month", "next year", "once upon a time", etc. • Understand spatial concepts such as "in front of", "behind", "far", "near", "over", "under", etc. • Follow three step commands. • Use compound sentences combined by <i>and</i>, <i>but</i>, <i>or</i>, <i>so</i>, <i>because</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write own stories often using invented spelling. • Adapt their language according to audience. • Demonstrate understanding that stories have a beginning, middle and end. • Demonstrate knowledge that books are read from left to right, top to bottom (according to western orientation). • Demonstrate knowledge of computer technology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help children to segment spoken words into individual sounds and blend the sounds into whole words. • Teach children words to express feelings and model appropriate responses in all situations. • Encourage children to always speak the truth. • Provide only educational computer games that are suitable to the child's ability. • Encourage children to write as often as possible in their own journals, accept invented spelling. • Make sets of sight words flash cards for use with children. • Create a "word wall" to keep children developing familiarity with and recognising an increasing number of new words.





INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES	INVOLVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	USEFUL SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioner's speech is mostly one-way – more often spent in telling children what to do than facilitating back-and-forth exchanges; emphasis is placed on having them keep quiet. • Use of the chalk board, workbooks and worksheets is predominant. • Activities are developed only for mainstream cultural groups for those whose first language is English. • Children are discouraged from using their native languages when necessary for communication; children are corrected when they use their own dialects. • Isolate ESL (English as Second Language) children from other children instead of giving them special help in learning English. • More than one hour of TV viewing per day is allowed. • Children's efforts to write are discouraged by continuous emphasis on immediately correcting their 'invented' spelling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan a family literacy night using a "big book", flannel board or puppets to demonstrate how to help children to learn in fun ways. • Share with parents the topics/ themes/areas being learned by the children. Make suggestions of the storybooks and activities that can reinforce or encourage the children's knowledge and interest. • Invite parents and community members to the centre as presenters and resource persons. • Share with parents (at parent teacher conference night perhaps), the kinds of materials provided to promote reading readiness with their children, show the usefulness of each and indicate how additional ones can be created. • Ask parents to contribute used books and develop an in-house borrowing library. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a print-rich environment. Make use of children's effort/work, calendar pictures, advertisements, magazines, stickers, signs, posters, newspapers, etc. • Teachers can pool resources and work in a shared, team-teaching method. • Lesson planning can be done in groups, creative and imaginative ideas can be exchanged. • Charts, posters and other effective audio visual aids can be prepared jointly and shared by all. • Practitioners can keep up-to-date with currently produced audio-visual materials and software as well as more recent publications of children's books and literature. • On-line educational computer games. Limit each child to one 20 minute session per day. • Themes should be guided by children's interests and be relevant to their lives.

Supporting Diversity and Children with Special Needs

- Practitioners accept and respect the child's first language, the language of their family and home. As far as possible, the practitioners use the child's first language in care and learning activities, to encourage children to become competent in their first language.
- Practitioners gradually introduce the country's standardised language as the second language children will be learning to use, by demonstrating its use to children in translation of their first language. Children are encouraged to express themselves switching between the two languages.
- If in doubt about any child's hearing, recommend to parents that the child be seen by a clinical audiologist.
- If in doubt about a child's language comprehension then parents should have the child assessed by a speech/language pathologist.
- Children with physical disabilities, such as sight or hearing loss, may need special materials and resources to make their encounters with print successful. For children with vision limitations, instructional materials will need to be done in very large print. Teachers may need to learn the use of sign language or have an interpreter present for the children who use sign rather than spoken language.
- Children who cannot hold regular writing instruments may need an adult (parent can assist here too) or older child to act as a scribe for them. Where available, computers can be used.
- Children who have language delays should be encouraged to interact with other children as much as possible and to talk with adults.





IN THE FIELD

Overcoming Challenges

Making the transition from home to preschool and then from preschool to primary school is often traumatic for children as they move from familiar to unfamiliar settings which are different in physical environment, programme schedule and time, and teaching/learning methodologies.

- Practitioners should take children, who are about to enter kindergarten or pre-school, on a few visits to the school which they will attend; these visits should be scheduled during the last term of the school year when the child is expected to leave the Centre.
- Similar arrangements must apply to children who are making the transition from kindergarten or pre-school to primary school.
- Visits should be used to familiarise children with the physical facilities of the new school, as well as to meet the teachers who are likely to teach them.
- Teachers/practitioners from both the sending and receiving schools should use the opportunity to share some useful information about the children.

What Really Works

In the Bahamas, Jamaica and Trinidad, arrangements are made between the relevant teachers of preschools and primary schools ahead of the new school year, for the 5-6 year old children making the transition to Grade 1 primary, to visit the schools and classrooms in which they will be placed. The children are allowed to spend either the whole day or a couple of mornings getting acquainted with new faces, routines and the new environment.

At some primary schools in Jamaica, newly registered children for Grade 1 are required to attend one month of summer school during which children and teachers get to know one another. At this time when the school is less crowded and intimidating, teachers provide a rich reading readiness programme of activities after which they are able to group the children appropriately for the new term. Some Grade 1 teachers provide learning centres that allow children choice and variety of activities. Some centres include, dress-up, home, shop, and blocks. In addition table-top activities are provided.

Effective Communication





A child who is an effective communicator.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<p><u>Verbal and Nonverbal Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a diverse and extensive vocabulary consisting of words that are a reflection of experiences and background. • Initially express both positive and negative feelings and emotions through their behaviour; have some difficulty labelling their feelings. • Eventually begin to use words more than actions to express feelings and emotions. • Gradually shift from an emphasis on oral expression to written expression. They are able to use language more effectively and efficiently. • Can learn new words at a far more rapid rate than previously. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display enhanced skills in oracy, e.g. express themselves in sentences that are structurally complex. • Recognise nonverbal clues. • Exhibit appropriate nonverbal communication skills. • Continue to learn new vocabulary from everyday situations. • Enjoy "show and tell" sessions sharpening their communication skills. • Pretend play being the "teacher" of others, sharing knowledge and new information. • Imitate others. • Show confidence in communication, can be bossy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use pictures, objects, events familiar to the children's experiences. • Provide many opportunities for using dramatic play and verbal and nonverbal communication skills. • Use a rich variety of objects, pictures, activities and events to stimulate forms of communication. • Allow children to have frequent opportunities to use language - questioning discussions, dramatisations, etc. • Facilitate discussion among the children by making comments and soliciting their comments, views and ideas. • Use of local dialect. • Encourage use of "word wall", and individual journals to reinforce word knowledge and write down experiences.

A child who is an effective communicator.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<p><u>Receptive, Expressive and Creative Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in fairly complicated conversations with adults. Demonstrate a noticeable development of receptive language skills and the expression of information, thoughts and ideas. Demonstrate understanding of simple and multistep direction. Associate symbols such as letters, numbers and words with meaning and use them in receptive and expressive language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak and express themselves effectively. Respond rapidly to questions, queries and commands. Listen to others and show understanding. Respond appropriately to directions. Speak with authority of things within the community. Formulate more complex sentences and arguments. Express approval/disapproval of ideas. Make valuable contributions to discussions and decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurately identify numbers, letters, words and sounds. Read books with rhymes and allow children to practice the sounds of language. Help children take spoken words apart and put them together. Allow children to identify the many words in their environment. Show children ways to think about and understand what they are reading. Provide a language-rich environment to enhance children's literacy and oracy skills. Involve children in planning activities.





A child who is an effective communicator.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<p><u>Emergent Literacy and Oracy Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate varied stages in the development of skills and competencies in emerging literacy and reading readiness. • Given a language-rich environment, children's skills in literacy and oracy will flourish. • Begin to sound out written words and print letters with greater accuracy and precision. • Use reading skills more efficiently and read independently for enjoyment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compose stories, poems and songs; recall story details and predict outcomes. • Read and comprehend simple sentences signs, label simple stories with pictures. • Read/tackle and sound out new words; write their own sentences and stories and compose poems. • Understand the meaning of symbols. • Sequence pictures and sentences and predict story endings. • Read independently and collectively, demonstrate pre-reading readiness skills; use mathematical language appropriately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for children to practice the sounds that make up words. Children will then learn to put sounds together to make words and break words into their separate sounds. • Provide many activities and games that help children learn to recognise letter names and shapes, learn and use new words. • Create an environment where stories are told and read everyday. Teachers should read with expression and ease and should talk with children about what they are reading. • Provide supervised access to educational computer games (for 20 minutes per child per day).

INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES	INVOLVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	USEFUL SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominance of whole class teaching using choral approaches as main form of getting the children's responses. • Over-reliance on reading schemes and not making use of a wide array of objects, pictures and events from the children's experience to stimulate language development. • Limiting questioning just to literal responses and recall thinking level. • Overuse of workbooks. • Practitioners use negative communication techniques such as shouting or "hissing their teeth". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for parents whose first language is not English to share some of their native language with the class. Children might like to learn greetings, counting words, or days of the week in other languages. • Bilingual parents could also be asked to translate a few of the favourite class stories into their native language and then share them with the children. • Encourage parents to support their children's use of first/ home language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers should assess each child at the beginning of school to get as much information as possible about each child's language background as the children begin the school year. • Create a library by having each child donate/lend at least one story book to the class. • If the teacher is unaccustomed to having bilingual children in his/her class, then he/she should seek assistance from other teachers who have had success in their experience. • Encourage parents, grandparents and adults in the community who have the same language as the children to assist in their English language acquisition. Have the children suggest how best to do this. Budget for this.



Supporting Diversity and Children with Special Needs

- Post signs and announcements in as many of the languages spoken in the class as possible.
- Encourage the parents of bilingual children to read to them frequently.
- Share special words with children who speak other languages.
- Share the feeling of accomplishment when children learn new vocabulary or forms in their native languages or new languages.
- Include storybooks (and other oral resources) that use the languages spoken by the children in the classroom.





IN THE FIELD

Overcoming Challenges

Many early childhood centres and classrooms in the Caribbean lack adequate teaching/learning materials that support children's active and self-directed learning.

- Practitioners/teachers can seek the support of parents and others to make teaching/learning aids from usable discarded items.
- Very simple materials can be used to support the development of early literacy, e.g., puppets made from socks, sticks or paper bags encourage children to speak and act out various roles.
- Similarly, a wide variety of table top games, books, shapes, letters and numbers can be made from reinforced cardboard.
- Consult websites and catalogues for useful ideas on making learning materials.

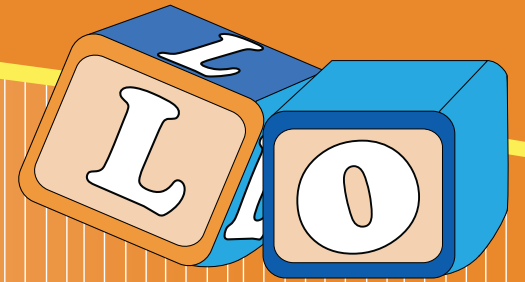
What Really Works

Effective early literacy environments are evident in many early childhood settings in our Caribbean region. Such environments generally:

- Involve children in learning finger plays, songs, poems, chants and choral readings.
- Emphasise reading books and writing stories with each child everyday.
- Encourage pretend play. Help children create props from discarded materials such as old sheets cardboard boxes and household items.
- Put on a puppet show illustrating children's favourite stories told as read.
- Use flannel boards, masks, finger puppets, etc to relate stories more efficiently.
- Have teachers who are good story-tellers and who familiarise themselves with the stories before relating them.
- Engage children in conversation and ask open-ended questions.

V

Valuing Culture



A child who values culture.

BIRTH TO THREE

V

aluing Culture



A child who values culture.



Ensure that children experience no distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference because of their colour, language, race, sex, religion, or family background.



A child who values culture.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<p><i>Babies gradually:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become aware of themselves as separate from others. • Develop an understanding and awareness of themselves, as they are influenced by their immediate family culture, other people and the environment. <p><i>Toddlers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become aware of the similarities and differences they share with others and those that distinguish them from others. • Slowly build a picture of themselves and a sense of 'self'. This happens gradually as they learn what they look like. The toddler's view of self is very much influenced by what others seem to think of him/ her. 	<p><i>Toddlers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify symbols or items related to their culture. • Recognise others who are like or different from them. • Identify elements of difference, for example, clothing, colour, speech. • Enjoy listening and moving their bodies to music. • By 2 years: Listen to stories for a short while; imitate actions of those they see around them, e.g. dances, sports such as football, cricket, athletics. • By 3 years: Initiate pretend play that includes characters unfamiliar to their own culture. For example, children pretending to be cowboys. • Sing parts of local folk and popular music, and imitate folk and popular dance moves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hang pictures and mobiles representing cultural symbols, e.g., national fruits, animals and flowers. • Read books to children that show families of different racial and cultural backgrounds (including their own), and people of various ages and abilities. • Display pictures of the children and their families. • Provide sturdy/ big picture books that depict people of different ages, racial and cultural groups, family types, occupations and abilities/ differently abled persons. • Sing to/with babies and toddlers, do finger-plays, act out simple folktales. • Tell stories using a flannel board or peep-show and allow the children to manipulate the illustrations. • Foster an awareness and appreciation of cultures by celebrating all that exist in the centre community. • Play appropriate folk and popular music for children to listen and dance to.



A child who values culture.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to imitate actions of others they see around them, e.g., dance, playing a sport such as football or cricket. • Begin to respond to music in a co-ordinated way; develop awareness of a beat in music and recognise different rhythms. • Begin to show awareness of and interest in cultural images projected in the media (television). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Between 18 months to 3 years:</i> toddlers identify themselves with children of same age and gender, show an interest in other children and their similarities and differences. • Imitate sounds from the environment and indulge in much role-play and pretend-play. • Begin to show awareness of different music, stories, food, clothes. • <i>By 3 years:</i> begin to demonstrate socially acceptable behaviours e.g. respect for national anthem, pledge and songs. • Begin to imitate behaviours related to religious and cultural practices such as saying prayers and dancing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite parents into the Day-care centre to teach well-known songs, rhymes and finger-plays in different languages. New songs, jingles, rhymes and finger-plays can be taught in different languages too. • Display pictures of the children and their families. • Play appropriate traditional/folk/contemporary and children's music. • Take children for walks/rambles around the neighbourhood or to a park or public place and on field trips so they can see different people engaged in all sorts of activities and thus become aware of many outdoor environments. • Bring the children's home cultures and languages into the centre so that children feel accepted and develop a sense of belonging. • Hang your national flag in the centre.





Ensure that children experience no distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference because of their colour, language, race, gender, religion, or family background.



Discrimination hinders those who need help most.

INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES	INVOLVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	USEFUL SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregivers communicate with parents only about problems or conflicts, ignore parents' concerns, or avoid difficult issues rather than resolve them with parents. There are no family pictures displayed nor any indication of family involvement. Books, pictures and other interesting materials related to various cultural practices are neither visible nor available. Cultural and other individual differences are ignored, e.g., prayers. Differences among children are stressed to such an extent that some children are made to feel that they do not belong or fit in. Negative comments, including value statements about ethnic features, e.g., referring to straight hair as "pretty hair" implies other types are not pretty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite parents, grandparents and other members of the community to the learning environment (Day-care, Preschool, etc.) to share stories, cultural practices, songs, etc., with the children. Organise parent evenings or schedule some time during the Parent-Practitioner's meeting for parents to share their culture and aspects of their cultural practices with other parents. Invite all parents to bring cultural artefacts, foods, pictures, music/video presentations, dress, etc. for display and/or use in sensitising all in attendance about the diverse cultural practices celebrated at that centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask parents about their different cultural practices and be careful not to be critical or judgemental. Encourage parents to expose children to role models from their own and other cultures. Develop a collection of children's jingles, rhymes, songs and finger plays in the dominant language of the group along with all others represented in the children's group. Make a collection of cultural artefacts, clothing, pictures and other items to be used for displays, discussions and project-work especially for special cultural celebrations. Be sure to collect artefacts and objects for all the cultural communities represented in the children's group. Highlight and celebrate different holidays/festivities with help from community leaders. Use materials that reflect people of different races and cultures, such as books, puzzles, pictures, puppets, and art work.



Supporting Diversity and Children with Special Needs

- Practitioners must learn about the values and expectations that different cultures (represented among the group of children in their care) have for the behaviour of children and what the children's families support within their cultural group. This knowledge is not supposed to result in caregivers feeling that they cannot make decisions about guidance. When caregivers make decisions that conflict with children's cultural norms, they have an obligation to explain to the children and their parents why the behaviours at the centre are different from home behaviour.
- Provide materials and resources to help children appreciate, accept and be proud of their culture and to appreciate the culture of others.
- Materials can include books, puzzles, pictures, puppets, artwork that reflect people of different races and cultures.
- Children with special needs can be encouraged to participate in their own way in cultural traditions, such as dress, dance, music and foods. Involve them by providing the necessary individual support to ensure their full participation.
- Emphasise activities that build respect and understanding (cultural traditions of clothing, visual and performed arts).
- Sensitive care requires acceptance, respect and understanding that nurtures every child's sense of belonging.



Allow young children to express how they think and feel about their own and other cultures. Help them to understand the people and world around them.



IN THE FIELD

Overcoming Challenges

Ensure that parents are made aware of the centre's policies, procedures and practices in dealing with diversity and tolerance towards others.

- Be tolerant and understanding of different cultural values of families from which some children come to the centre, and do not criticise these in front of any child.
- Focus on the positive personal characteristics of children who have handicaps, before drawing attention to what makes them different; this will build their self-esteem and encourage others to see them as "regular" people with physical difference.
- Model attitudes and behaviours you want children to develop. Do not let prejudicial remarks (from children or adults) go by without intervening.

What Really Works

Practitioners can show respect for the community and cultures of the children in the centre by asking for information from parents and various members of the community. Special materials can be selected for display or to be made available for conversations with toddlers, particularly during the times of celebration. Highlight different holidays and festivities.

Other materials can be available in learning areas for children to observe, examine and manipulate. For example, several pieces of clothing that are typical of that worn by particular ethnic groups in the community can be included in the Dress-up Box.

THREE TO FIVE

V

Valuing Culture



A child who values culture.



A child who values culture.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to have an interest in what is happening in the homes of other children locally, nationally and in other countries. • Show interest in similarities and differences among peers. • Respond to music with free as well as instructed movement; can cope with more sophisticated movement to music. • Identify art in the daily environment and perceive own creative work as art. • Begin to become more aware of pitch and rhythm. • Take great pleasure in exploring new sounds and instruments of their own culture and that of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy stories and songs about people and events from their own, neighbouring and foreign communities. • Recognise and appreciate differences and similarities among themselves. • Show willingness to participate in cultural activities such as Carnival and festival celebrations. • Begin to understand and behave respectfully toward people of other cultures and religions. • Experiment with various musical instruments. • Help to make their own percussion instruments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage multicultural awareness through representative dolls, puppets, pictures, and books. • Highlight cultural aspects of all families and learn recipes, songs and information about their cultural celebrations. • Enrich dramatic play by providing a variety of props, clothing, accessories, masks, etc. used in different cultural celebrations represented in the centre and the community, nation and region. • Share/learn poems, rhymes, finger plays and songs of own and other cultures. • Draw attention to people's differences in a positive and sensitive manner. • Regularly celebrate and encourage bilingual ability in children. • Collect usable discards for children to make musical percussion instruments.



A child who values culture.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorise and appreciate the music and songs of their own and other cultures through repetition and patterns. • Can develop a passion for particular types of music and song. • Begin to appreciate a variety of art work from different cultures and time periods. • Recognise differences in culture, race and ability of other children. • Identify and name cultural symbols. • Continue to imitate behaviours related to religious and cultural practices. • Create and express art, music, dance, stories, poetry, etc., to express their own culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to and show appreciation for music of different cultural and ethnic communities. • Show awareness of food, dress festivals/celebrations of other cultures. • Recognise national symbols, dress, anthem, pledge, heroes, heroines, song, flag, foods, etc. • Know and can sing the national anthem. • Talk to each other about themselves and their families. • Describe and imitate people from different cultures, e.g., language. • Pretend to be visitors from other countries. • Share and express their culture in different ways such as games, song and dance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide in addition to the other learning centres, a centre of interest that focuses on the culture and cultural practices and celebrations of all ethnic groups represented in the centre, the country and the region. • Alternatively a "national learning centre" (for example Barbados Corner, Suriname Corner, Guyana Corner, etc.) can be generated focusing on the various ethnic communities along with the national emblems, motto, flag, etc. • Frequently engage children in discussions about the positive features of their community and country, what they have in common with each other and how they differ. • Encourage children to meet and talk with children and adults from other cultures and countries. • Intervene when prejudice is shown.

Culture shapes the young child's growth and development, defining some of the child's needs and how the child should be treated. Respect the differences in culture and customs of the children in your care.





Every child has the right to enjoy his or her culture.



INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES	INVOLVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	USEFUL SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural and other individual differences are ignored. • Some children do not see their race, language or culture reflected in the centre, so they do not feel a part of the group. • Differences among children are stressed to such an extent that some children are made to feel they do not fit in. • Learning materials and toys do not reflect the children's ethnicity. • Practitioners encourage or ignore stereotyping, e.g., boys should not play with dolls. • Negative comments are made about others and their practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families can serve as resources for helping all children learn about and respect cultures that are different from their own. • Families can become resources as food, songs and stories from different cultures are experienced. • Invite families to participate in centre celebrations, cultural and religious days, National independence celebrations or fund-raising variety concerts that focus on various ethnic practices and celebrations within the local community. • Teach tolerance by inviting parents to describe experiences, what they learned and how their feelings and actions might have changed because of intolerance. • Families can provide support to enable children to participate in traditional and national celebrations, e.g., Trinidad Carnival. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite speakers to the centre who are skilled in both children's dialect, other languages and English. • Provide a selection of children's books about cultures in the reading/book corner. • Invite parents and grandparents (in particular) to share stories or memories of when they were children. • Invite people with disabilities to visit the centre and interact with the children. Allow the children to ask questions about people who seem different so they can receive very clear and honest answers from the persons themselves.



Supporting Diversity and Children with Special Needs

- All children's families can be invited to contribute items that are significant in their cultural traditions to the centre's play.
- Have children take in cultural items for "show and tell" or "showing time".
- It is very important for the centre and practitioners to acknowledge the children's cultures and help their families feel comfortable in the centre.
- When centre and family values are different, staff should not be critical of such children, but begin by being flexible and tolerant of some home habits, even while making an effort to expose the children to different behaviours. Communication with the family should be regular, such as home visits and conferences to share news and work toward developing new behaviours, e.g., children who have no clearly defined schedules at home and have difficulty being focussed.
- Include children with special needs in cultural activities and create opportunities for them to express their culture with other children.





IN THE FIELD

Overcoming Challenges

Make it a priority to encourage and maintain the involvement of parents, children and the wider community in various centre activities.

- Practitioners should ensure that their own views, biases, prejudices, and perceptions do not obstruct any child's ability to learn.
- When children display biased attitudes toward others, this might reflect biases that exist in their family/community, such as toward people of a different race, religion or ability. Make an effort to direct undesirable behaviour toward the offended child or children by:
 - providing correct information to children who make stereotypical statements about others.
 - helping the offended child stand up for him/herself, e.g., by saying, "I am proud of my skin colour."
 - creating and telling stories that include all types of children and cultural groups.

What Really Works

Arrange for parents whose first language is not English (or the language of the majority) to share some of their native language with the class. Children might like to learn greetings, counting words, or days of the week in another language. Ask bilingual parents to help to translate some of the favourite stories into their native language and then share them with the children.

Members of each family are encouraged to participate in the classroom in ways that they feel comfortable. Family members may take part in classroom activities (sharing a cultural event or language, telling or relating a story, tutoring, making learning materials or playing games), or contribute to activities related to but not occurring within the classroom (designing or sewing costumes, working in the school library, supervising extra curricular activities or participate in decision making).

Children learn biases from the adults around them.

FIVE TO SEVEN

V

aluing Culture



A child who values culture.



Every child has the right to be respected.



A child who values culture.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be interested in what is happening in the homes and communities of other children locally, nationally and in other countries. • Be aware of and appreciate the various aspects of their own culture. • Become increasingly aware and knowledgeable about special traditions and features of their own culture and country, e.g., music, economic activity (tourism and farming). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy activities that allow them to play/dramatise the roles of family and community members. • Recognise and appreciate differences and similarities among themselves and various cultural groups. • Display a willingness to participate in cultural activities. • Enjoy participating in field trips to different places such as farms, museums and local attractions. • Observe and exhibit rules of protocol in respect of national symbols and practices (for example to stand at attention when the national anthem is sung/played). • Appreciate significant aspects in the lives and accomplishments of national and regional heroes/heroines. • Share and express their culture in different ways, e.g., playing games, singing and dancing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide, among other learning centres, a home corner equipped with male and female dolls and a rich array of materials that can be found in the home. • In addition to the home corner, provide a dress up corner containing a mirror, masks and a variety of accessories and clothing for different ethnic groups and communities, across age, gender and occupation. • Use a variety of teaching aids. The more diverse the children's backgrounds are in the class, the wider the variety of teaching methods and materials required. • Ensure teachers and teachers' methodology and materials recognise and reflect the cultural variety within the class, school, community and country.



A child who values culture.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise and show respect for national symbols, e.g., flag, coat of arms, know the national anthem and/or pledge. Begin to show awareness of basic civic values related to being their nationality. Show pride in their own culture. Express their own ideas about their culture through visual and performing art forms. Understand basic principles of fairness (democracy and justice). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show pride in being a citizen of both country and region. Develop an appreciation for regional similarities and differences. Recognise and participate in national and regional events (such as carnival, CARIFESTA, national days of independence, etc). Talk to each other about themselves and their families. Identify some special features of being their nationality, as well as some popular national past-times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage children to play fairly, taking turns. Use themes and celebrations that reflect all represented cultural communities in the class, school and country. Create a national corner (St. Kitts Corner, Suriname Corner, Dominica Corner, Jamaica Corner, etc.) to display the country's motto, national emblems, national and governmental leaders, ethnic dress and practices, etc. Establish a regional centre of interest around the countries of the Caribbean. The project can include resource materials, displays and music from various countries of the Caribbean. Encourage children to select activities by a majority vote.

Every child has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.





INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES	INVOLVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	USEFUL SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's language, family or cultural background, and other individual differences are ignored, devalued or treated as different from the culture of the majority. Some children do not sense their language, family or cultural background reflected in the classroom, making it difficult for them to feel a part of the group. Expressing bias toward others through verbal and body language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's families can be invited into the classrooms to share traditions, expectations, and stories during a period of study on "The Peoples of our Country". Having family representatives from each ethnic community can help to dispel inaccurate perceptions and images of various groups held by young children. It is also important that after parents visit the classroom or contribute significant items from their cultures they be acknowledged in class newsletters, on bulletin boards, at PTA meetings and in displays. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make use of a rich variety of children's storybooks, big books, rhymes, finger-plays, poems about people from different cultural backgrounds. Children can be encouraged to make friends from other communities, locally, nationally, regionally and internationally. Collect/purchase available pictures, brochures, pamphlets, posters, videos of nationally-produced emblems, mottos, flags, celebrations, etc. Families of various ethnic origins can be invited to participate in the heritage days. They can share foods that they enjoy or that are served at a special time in their cultures. Clothing accessories and other paraphernalia used during special events can be displayed. Develop a database of the children's families – the ethnic communities represented, the languages, traditions, practices, foods, traditional dress and other characteristics. Children can begin to explore racial and ethnic differences by examining differences in skin colour, hair texture and eye shape. They can create a chart illustrating the range of colours in the class. Another chart can be created to show hair textures and eye shape and colour.



Supporting Diversity and Children with Special Needs

- A child with special needs may require more guidance and repeated explanations, in simpler terms. Be patient and encouraging.
- Ensure individualised care, close communication and planning with parents, and that cultural values are considered when planning activities.
- Help to remove the physical, social, cultural and attitudinal obstacles that children encounter in their daily lives by not treating a child's disability as a barrier.



Does your centre allow every child to enjoy his or her culture, religion and language of origin?





IN THE FIELD

Overcoming Challenges

- Schedule some time to encourage and maintain involvement of parents and members of relevant/appropriate ethnic communities.
- Some children and their parents have biased views of each other, such as being unfriendly towards children with special needs or who are culturally different. Create an environment in which all children are equally respected, regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnicity, religion, family background, etc.
- Encourage children to take pride in their home language as an equal language to the standard form of the country's official language.

There may be instances where difficulties arise on account of religious issues. The centre might represent a particular religious denomination but it accepts children whose families belong to other religious groups, or the centre might be eclectic but have children from special minority religious groups who have different practices.

Always ensure that upon enrolment, all families are made aware of the various religious holidays and festivals that are recognised and celebrated at the centre and negotiate with the families what they wish for their children to participate in or be excused from.

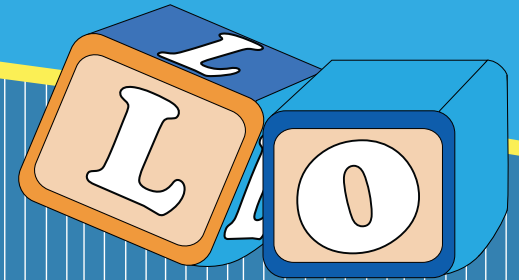
What Really Works

Members of each child's family are encouraged to participate in the classroom in ways that make them feel comfortable. Family members may take part in classroom activities (sharing a cultural event or language telling or reading a story, tutoring, making learning materials, or playing games).

Some parents contribute to activities referred to, outside of the classroom e.g. designing or sewing costumes, working in the school library, supervising extra-curricular activity or participating in decision-making.

Social discrimination and stigmatization leads to the exclusion and marginalisation of children.

Intellectual Empowerment



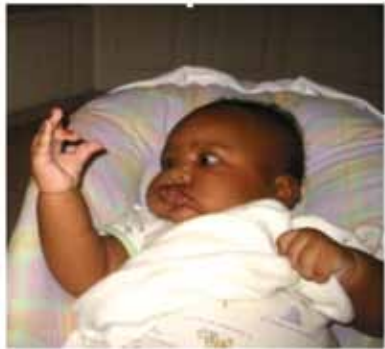
A critical thinker and independent learner.

BIRTH TO THREE

Intellectual Empowerment



A critical thinker and independent learner.



A critical thinker and independent learner.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<p><i>Babies 1 to 4 months:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive information about themselves, others and their environment, using all their senses. Use motor activity, movement and sensory exploration to adapt to their immediate environment. Learn by imitating others. <p><i>Older babies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become more mobile and therefore more familiar with a wider group of toys, objects, people. <i>Between 8 to 12 months,</i> develop awareness of object permanence which forms the basis for rapid development of symbolic play and language. <i>12 to 18 month:</i> toddlers show interest in observing the effects of their own and others' actions. 	<p><i>Babies 1 to 4 months:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initially use reflex actions e.g., cry when hungry or feeling under or over stimulated. React to sound, light and motion; like to look at bright colours, patterns and faces; like to hear familiar voices. Begin to make associations - learn cause and effect e.g., crying or protesting brings the needed attention. Discover and play with their hands and feet, fingers; explore things by tasting them; put all objects in mouth. <p><i>Older babies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show awareness that people and things have names and labels, for example, "dada", "mama", "baby." Demonstrate signs of decision-making, e.g. pushing away unpleasant experiences like wiping the nose, or unpalatable foods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare visually attractive cribs and walls next to cribs by providing colourful objects for visual stimulation; provide soft calming sounds e.g. music and singing, talking, a variety of other sounds to support a multi-sensory experience. Provide visual displays to help infants and toddlers focus on patterns and shapes; mobiles should be placed within the infants' line of sight but not within reach. Provide toys that are responsive to the young child's actions e.g. a variety of skill development materials including grasping toys; stacking and nesting materials; cardboard/ plastic activity boxes; variety of containers to be filled and emptied; variety of balls and sound producing materials e.g., rattles, shakers, chimes.

Practitioners help to empower children by developing their skills, learning and other capacities, human dignity, self-esteem and self-confidence through a child-centred approach.



A critical thinker and independent learner.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make the association between objects and their functions or uses. <i>18 to 24 months</i> toddlers know that an object exists even when it is out of sight; they imitate past events. Engage in symbolic play, representing objects with substitutes. <i>24 to 30 months</i> toddlers sort objects according to perceived characteristics. Construct and organise knowledge about the world as they begin to classify objects and situations, and to develop basic concepts of quantity, number, space and time. <i>30 to 36 months</i> children are curious, exploring problem-solvers. They seek information about what makes things function, what objects are made of and how actions happen. They persistently ask "why." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>6 to 9 months</i> babies study objects intensely; analyse one toy at a time and what to do with it e.g., squeezing, poking, throwing, banging, dropping. <i>9 to 12 months</i> babies resist confinement as they seek to explore things by touching; they build, stack and disassemble blocks and other toys. <i>12 to 15 months</i> toddlers favour one hand over the other (handedness); use both hands to combine two objects; show interest in mechanisms or objects that move. Show persistence in exploring/learning by trial and error; they attempt, probe and practise activities and observe the results of their actions. Imitate and repeat others' behaviour patterns; develop their own routines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt schedules and activities to meet individual needs within the group setting; recognise toddlers' need to repeat tasks until they master the steps and skills involved; allow toddlers to move through activities and skill mastery at their own pace. Support play by encouraging toddlers to remain interested in an object or activity for increasingly longer periods of time, as their play becomes more complex, moving from simple awareness and exploration of objects to more complicated fantasy and pretence. Organise the learning environment and space into interest or activity areas/ corners, including areas for <i>small-group play</i> (home corner), <i>being alone play</i> (book corner or tabletop area), <i>messy and creative activities</i> (art/water/sand) pretend/dramatic play, and in construction (blocks, puzzles and "small world" play). Allow children to choose an activity.

Inform parents of any observed abnormalities. Early identification and intervention helps to ensure the child will achieve his/her learning and development potential.





A critical thinker and independent learner.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe, question, manipulate, classify and measure in learning about their world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>15 to 18 months</i> toddlers enjoy pretend games, simple puzzles, water/ sand play and interactive play. <i>18 months to 2 years</i> toddlers can understand and follow 2-step directions. <i>24 to 36 months</i> toddlers have good hand and finger co-ordination and carry out active play with small objects. Explore different qualities and attributes of texture, shape, size, colour; understand rudimentary categorising, sequencing, pattern-making, concepts of number, quantity, space, time. Participate in creative activities such as drawing, construction, painting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide for pretend/ dramatic play(dress-up) and construction (blocks and woodwork). Ensure that adequate play/learning materials are provided to allow the children to choose what they wish to engage in. Seek support from parents and community members to contribute to a toy-making workshop aimed at supplying the centre with games and manipulatives for children's use.

Children have the right to seek and receive information.



INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES	INVOLVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	USEFUL SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregivers rarely play or interact with infants and toddlers. Room decorations are at adult eye level. Play areas are sterile, designed for easy cleaning, but are unstimulating to the infants' senses. Activities are either too strictly time scheduled or completely unstructured and unpredictable. Caregivers have little time for special needs children, who are often overlooked and neglected. Adults do not understand the importance of solitary and parallel play and expect children to play with others all the time. * Children are not given enough choice/ opportunities to choose activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregivers and practitioners work in partnership with parents, communicating daily in order to build mutual understanding and trust in ensuring the welfare and optimal development of each child. Frequent meetings with parents or an established 'open-door' policy promote an atmosphere of cooperation, as caregivers and parents confer in making decisions about how best to support children's development. Problems, concerns, or differences of opinion are quickly dealt with as they arise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate group experiences are critical to effective learning in the early years. It is recommended that group sizes for appropriate early group experiences observe the CARICOM Regional guidelines. Good record keeping facilitates monitoring each child's progress.

Children learn through play.



Each child is unique and special. Each differs in the way he/she learns and the rate at which he/she develops



Free play helps children to develop creativity and leadership.

Supporting Diversity and Children with Special Needs

- Children with physical challenges or special learning needs are included in the learning environment socially and intellectually as well as physically, and necessary supports are provided to ensure that their individual needs are met.
- As much as possible, children with physical challenges and special learning needs should receive therapeutic or other services within their regular learning environment to maintain their sense of continuity and support a feeling of belonging to and acceptance by the group.
- Caregivers and practitioners listen carefully to what parents say about their children and child-rearing practices and seek to understand parents' goals. Help parents to establish realistic goals for their children.
- Some children with special needs tend to engage in solitary play or parallel play only. Assist each child to learn to play with others by:
 - involving the children as much as possible in all group games and activities.
 - engaging in one-on-one pretend play with the child, e.g., pretending to be animals.
 - encouraging the child to imitate actions.
 - introducing the child to another to share in an activity which started out as parallel play.
- Use cultural items as teaching aids, e.g., a drum can be used to keep rhythm in verbal and physical exercises.



IN THE FIELD

Overcoming Challenges

Many early childhood centres in the Caribbean have very limited materials and resources to facilitate and support child play. The supply of interesting toys and equipment are generally quite inadequate. Practitioners and teachers can overcome this problem in creative ways:

- Ask parents and staff to collect safe, free, usable and recyclable materials that can be used to make different games, toys and instruments;
- Check with local manufacturers for useful scrap materials such as paper, wood, plastic containers, fabric and cardboard. These can be used to make unit blocks, measuring and weighing equipment, puzzles, games, bean bags and other items;
- Ask newspaper companies for old newsprint and companies for paper that can be re-used for children's art work;
- Ask parents to donate re-usable items such as plastic cups and utensils, metal pots and pans.

What Really Works

Many public and private day-care facilities in our Caribbean countries offer a caring setting for infants. Schedules are flexible so that babies can sleep when and where they want to. They can eat when they are hungry and are given food that meets their individual needs.

They can play when they want to, with many opportunities for floor movement and activity. They are encouraged to interact with and explore a variety of toys and materials, such as blocks, "small world" figures, sand and water, puzzles, manipulatives, music equipment, dressing up clothes, and art materials, to play alone, with other children and with adults.

A caring, intimate setting recognises infants' and toddlers' individual needs to explore, assert autonomy and develop a secure relationship with the caregiver.

THREE TO FIVE

1 Intellectual Empowerment



A critical thinker and independent learner.



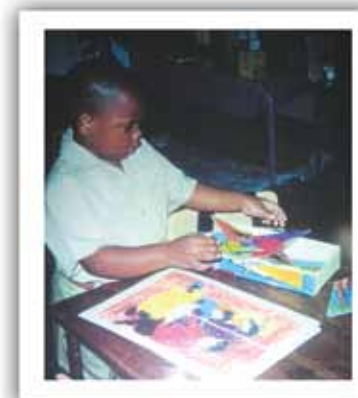
A critical thinker and independent learner.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display certain cognitive and perceptual limitations e.g. self centredness. • Seek answers to <i>who, what, why, where</i> and <i>what if</i> questions. • Recognise likenesses and differences in pictures and designs; demonstrate left and right. • Identify and correctly name objects, colours, letters of the alphabet, shapes, and numerals. • Develop basic skills of numeracy, literacy and oracy. • Show interest in counting and numbers; explore measurement of length, capacity, weight, volume, time, temperature, money. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express themselves freely with words; incessantly ask many questions about many things; recall events from memory. • Listen attentively to stories for 5 to 10 minutes; retell stories, poems in correct sequence from memory. • Sort and match various objects according to particular features, e.g., same/ different. • Create interesting patterns from sequencing objects of different shapes, colours, sizes etc. • Describe objects in relation to others e.g., up/down, in/out, top/bottom, little/big. • Arrange three or more objects in logical sequence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a wide range of interesting and developmentally appropriate hands-on experiences that allow children to observe, manipulate, classify, compare and contrast, inquire, explore, experiment, discover, identify cause and effect, estimate, measure, count, problem-solve, analyse, create, etc. • Include children in establishing classroom rules and routines and consequences for breaking rules. • Plan a variety of concrete learning experiences with materials, events and people relevant to children's own life experiences. • Provide materials and learning centres that include, but are not limited to blocks and other construction materials, books and other language-arts materials. • Encourage children's learning by praising them when they demonstrate learning.



A critical thinker and independent learner.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can collect, organise, describe, interpret information and make graphical/pictorial representations of the results; begin to enjoy predicting outcomes. Demonstrate use of mathematical language and operations in real-life and manipulative situations. Remain focused on an interesting task or discussion. Use understandable speech and talk in sentences of five or more words; tell their telephone number, address and other personal information; recall details of previous events. Recognise word categories used to represent people, places, and things. Listen attentively to stories; learn and sing songs, create/adapt songs, games, stories etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow rules and routines. Identify and name the shapes: circle, square, rectangle, triangle, oval, diamond and heart; copy, trace simple shapes. Count orally from 0-30 and become aware of skip counting by 5s and 10s; compute simple mathematical concepts and principles e.g. add, take away. Count various objects frequently, combine and separate sets; show understanding of the value of money in their play. Make representations of aspects of the environment using modelling clay, play dough and other materials. Predict cause /effect relationships; guess story outcomes. Start sorting and appreciating the value of money. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include dramatic-play, health and home-related themes and props, art and modelling materials, sand and water with tools for measuring, pouring, sifting, etc., and instruments for simple science and environmental exploration and study. Provide ample time each day for children to explore and learn about the environment, investigate what sparks their curiosity and experiment with cause and effect relationships. Stimulate and support children's engagement in play and self-chosen activities. Extend children's thinking and learning by posing problems, asking questions, making suggestions, adding complexity to tasks and providing information, materials and assistance as needed. Facilitate outdoor free-play.





Providing structure enables the child to develop discipline and the ability to concentrate for longer periods.



A critical thinker and independent learner.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correctly sequence objects, words, sentences, events, and the like. • Demonstrate good fine motor coordination and control, e.g., print/write letters and numerals; demonstrate skills of cutting, pasting, folding, painting, printing, weaving. • Follow rules and routines; play involves structured games as well as fantasy activities. • Create art work that reflect their personal experiences and imagination; use a variety of materials for art expression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning through specific extended projects, e.g., on safety or weather. • Write with appropriate directionality – left to right. • Engage in group games with rules. • Express themselves creatively in song, dance, movement, story-telling and art work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a range of art media for children to choose from to make their own creations. • Provide opportunities, indoors and outdoors, for children to play/work in groups and share in group games. • Create a garden with the children.

INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES	INVOLVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	USEFUL SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers expect children to respond with one right answer most of the time. Teachers do not clue into children's thinking from their responses; spend more time on administrative duties than on active involvement in promoting children's learning. Frequently, teachers talk to the whole group or expect all children to do and learn the same things at the same time without any attention given to individual needs or differences. The learning environment does not reflect children's developmental progress; same materials, same physical arrangement, "year-in, year-out. Conversely some teachers expect more from children than they are capable of. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate regularly with parents, to build mutual understanding and ensure that children's learning and developmental needs are met. Listen to parents, seek to understand their goals and preferences for their children, and respect cultural and family differences. Work together with parents to make decisions about how best to support children's development and learning. Solicit and incorporate parents' knowledge about their children into programme planning, ongoing assessment and evaluation. * Encourage parents to show patience and adjust their expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make use of instructional materials and resources of Early Childhood Resource or Pedagogical Centres. Make suggestions that will assist Resource Centres in updating their available curriculum-related materials. Plan in groups with other teachers in order that each can benefit from the collective pool of ideas and talents. Make use of field trips and visits from community resource persons to help children to do direct investigations and first-hand research. Make a study of the available resources that exist and are accessible within the school community and environment. Provide, if possible, structured and supervised access to information and communication technologies (for a maximum of 30 minutes per day for each child) to encourage collaboration, communication, exploration and role-play.





Children need to be challenged in their learning environments.



Children with disabilities should be provided with support that helps them to enjoy a full and decent life.

Supporting Diversity and Children with Special Needs

- Teachers can show respect for the community and the cultures of children in their classrooms by asking for information and help from various parents and patrons from the community.
- Some special materials can be selected for learning areas that will help children feel more at home. For example, the Dress-Up Corner could include several pieces of clothing and accessories that are typical of that worn by certain ethnic groups in the community and used as illustrations in student-made books or as posters for the classroom.
- Books, pictures, posters, instructional materials and resources include people of different ethnic origins, ages and abilities and of both genders in various roles.
- Different cultures have different values and sometimes these are in conflict with the values upheld by the Centre. Have conversations with parents about the differences in values and work to arrive at a reasonable compromise.



IN THE FIELD

Overcoming Challenges

Some centres are located in buildings where space has to be shared, such as a church hall, in which there are activities for children in the week, and for church members on the weekends. To make the adjustment easier:

- Arrange occasional meetings with the responsible church members to agree on where your materials can be safely stored.
- Add roller-wheels to the bottom of furniture that needs to be moved frequently.
- Provide large plastic storage containers or sturdy carton boxes on roller wheels for storing table top and other games and toys and clearly label each container.
- Make arrangement with other staff members for help to clean and put away toys and play equipment on a regular basis.

Encourage practitioners, especially those newly-trained, to share and make use of more appropriate and innovative teaching methods and to contribute to activity planning.

Ensure that at least one senior practitioner has specialised ECD training.

The programme for 5 year olds should remain play-based.

What Really Works

In many of our Caribbean early childhood and transition programmes, some teachers make a special effort to create a "parent-friendly" environment. They provide clear signs that help parents find their way around the centre. A parent corner is established. In it, notices for parents are posted, a flowchart of the activities planned for the week is displayed along with ways by which parents can assist, for example, by saving recycled materials or creating other instructional materials.

The most important thing that these programmes do is ensure that teachers make relationships with each child's parent, to exchange information, to strive to meet parent's expectation, to show what the centre is aiming to achieve, and how parents' support at home can help.

Parents, assisted by teachers, are encouraged to support learning activities in the classroom, e.g., working with groups at various learning centres, supervising reading, games and activities, or helping with use of the computer by the children, reading with children and helping with projects.

**Encourage
children to
use their
imagination.**

FIVE TO SEVEN

1 Intellectual Empowerment



A critical thinker and independent learner.



A critical thinker and independent learner.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show interest in and carry out the mental operations required for reading, mathematics and other content learning. • Understand more complex concepts such as number and time (though not until about 8 years are they reasonably accurate in placing events in time sequence). • Understand reality vs. fantasy. • Categorise events according to elementary time concepts of past, current and future. • Process information more efficiently, e.g., in problem-solving, thinking and reasoning about situations, objects and symbols. • Focus on several aspects of a problem at one time and able to reverse their thinking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy activities involving reading, writing, spelling, tracing, printing, number games, calendar, etc. • Love to play with weights and measures, coins; show interest in investigating aspects of nature and conducting simple science experiments, and in cooking activities. • Enjoy silly rhymes, riddles and jokes; share humour and giggle about silly things. • Begin to be interested in hobbies, e.g., collecting things like stamps, dolls, shells, etc. • Like listening to historical tales and fables from other places, "long ago and far away". • Have lively imaginations; tell fantasy tales that seem very real, enjoy magical tricks. • Can listen attentively for long periods of time; can remain on a task until its completion; express pride in finished items, e.g., art and craft work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make effort to know and plan for each child, taking individual abilities into account. • Display children's work attractively around the classroom. • Provide real objects for children to manipulate and experiment with; plan field trips and activities that lead to discovery, experimentation, use of concrete materials, novel situations, surprises, and games. • Create opportunities during each day for music and movement, drama, dance and singing. • Provide things for make-believe and pretend play. Allow children to participate in role-playing and dramatisation. • Have children suggest themes of interest that can generate project work and activities.



A critical thinker and independent learner.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sense of new experiences and ideas by relating them to what they already know. • Group objects by a common attribute (classification) – gradually extending to using more than one attribute to classify and to understand class inclusion (the capacity for an object to be a member of more than one group simultaneously). • Place objects in order by length, weight or size. • Use symbols such as words and numbers to represent objects and relations. • Sit attentively and persist at tasks for increasingly longer periods of time. • Memorise and retrieve information more accurately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practise using the words and language they learn in school during play, ask and answer questions accurately. • Verbally point out logical relationships and solutions to problems and make informal judgements. • Represent their daily lives through various forms of creative, expressive and aesthetic activities. • Enjoy a wide range of practical activities, such as planting seeds, watching them grow; cooking and observing change in the state of things; creating stories, cardboard books, puppet shows, experimenting with mixing colours, taking nature walks and observing plant and animal life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage children's collections by allowing them to make special boxes, books or portfolios in which to store their collections. • Encourage reading and writing and information gathering skills by allowing children to produce stories with scripts, create music for plays and puppet shows, produce a newspaper, events, conduct experiments record. • Allow children to play many sorting games. • Provide materials for creative expression as well as for developing reading readiness skills, e.g., paints, paste, play dough or plasticine, scissors, old magazines with pictures, etc. • Provide several opportunities for children to learn through manipulation, experimentation and discovery within a safe environment.





INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES	INVOLVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	USEFUL SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class size exceeds 30 children and prevents teachers from individualising instruction. • Prescribed curriculum is rigidly followed without attention to individual children's interests, needs or community context. • Little or no accountability for children's achieving competencies in skills, knowledge and attitudes; children's efforts not acknowledged. • Reading is taught only as the acquisition of discrete skills and sub-skills; instruction relies heavily on either the same teaching method or on workbooks. • Children have few opportunities for hands-on activities and experiences, or small-group problem solving. • Teachers often lecture to children, expecting them to quietly sit still and to listen for too long. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and parents share decisions about children's education. Teachers listen to parents and seek to understand their goals for their children. Teachers work with parents to resolve problems or differences as they arise. • Teachers prepare prototype kits (with flash cards, pictures, colour cards, shapes, etc.) that parents can make to use with their children to develop a variety of skills and abilities. • Teachers make home visits and personal contact in order to build trust between themselves and parents. Visiting the home is often the only successful way to reach parents who have no telephone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek innovative and creative ideas for teaching by accessing a rich array of ideas and suggestions on the Internet as well as from other resource books with ideas for children's activities and projects. • Plan field trips, walks and visits from community resource persons to enable children to do direct investigations and first-hand research. • Make use of instructional materials and resources at Early Childhood Resource Centres. They may also suggest other resources that these centres could develop. • Encourage children to get engaged in project work that allows them to investigate and discover as much as possible about the topic.



Supporting Diversity and Children with Special Needs

- Children with disabilities or special learning needs are included as members of the class socially and intellectually as well as physically.
- Teachers can show respect for the community and the cultures of children in their classrooms by asking for information and help from various parents and patrons from the community.
- Some special materials can be selected for learning areas that will help children feel more at home. For example, the Dress-up corner could include several pieces of clothing that are typical of that worn by certain ethnic groups in the community. Pictures can be taken from around the community and used as illustrations in student-made books or as posters for the classroom.



Be aware of children's emerging talents. Work with parents to nurture them.



IN THE FIELD

Overcoming Challenges

Implementing appropriate curriculum in early childhood settings is the key to achieving desired learning outcomes for children. Too often, the curriculum and programme for 5 year olds are similar to the formal approaches of grade one level; the learning environment is very structured and teacher-directed.

An effective way to overcome this challenge is to use a curriculum, such as the Integrated Thematic Approach, which accommodates children's interests, immediate needs, and social and cultural contexts. A theme can last for one or two weeks and provides the basis for engaging in activities and concept learning related to all curriculum content areas such as art, mathematics, science, language arts, social studies, music and movement.

When children are allowed to suggest and choose the themes that interest them, learning is enhanced.

What Really Works

The integrated thematic curriculum approach is presently being widely implemented in preschools and lower primary schools in several of our Caribbean countries.

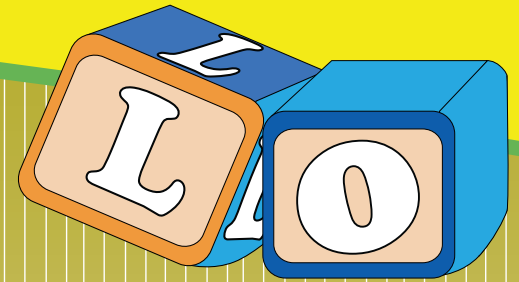
Content for the curriculum/programme is selected across disciplines and integrated through the study of Themes, making use of a project approach of study. This approach allows children to develop an understanding of concepts and make connections across disciplines – a more natural way of learning for young children.

For example, a baking project allows the children to engage in activities that develop knowledge and skills in language, mathematics, art and creativity.

The project approach allows children to develop multiple skills as they investigate and learn about different aspects of their environment and world. Play and hands-on learning experiences are central to this curriculum approach.

R

**espect for self, others
and the environment**



A child who respects self, others and the environment.

BIRTH TO THREE

R

**espect for self, others
and the environment**



A child who respects self, others and the environment.



A child who respects self, others and the environment.



What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<p><i>Infants and early toddlers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use their developing physical skills and other ways to make social contact and gain the attention of others. • Develop an emotional attachment to their primary caregiver(s). • Listen to and distinguish intonations of caregivers' voices long before they can use words to communicate. • Demonstrate their understanding of what is being said to them by their body language response. • Develop trust in the context of warm, mutual, trusting and affirming relationships with others. • Gradually become aware of themselves as separate from others and that they have influence on others. 	<p><i>Babies, birth to 6 months:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show a preference for people and faces and express pleasure vocally and physically when eye contact is maintained. • Respond to voices and recognise their parents' voices; smile with others. • Show interest in and smile with others around them, particularly children. <p><i>Babies 6 to 9 months:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to show fear of strangers • Respond to own name, indicate personal desires e.g. raise arms to show need to be picked up. • Show pleasure in own mirror image and also in the company of familiar others. 	<p><i>Early toddlers 9 to 18 months:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a stable environment with sufficient continuity of care to ensure that every infant (and family) is able to form a relationship with a primary practitioner. As the primary practitioner comes to know the infants, she is able to respond to the temperament, needs and cues of each child. • Respond quickly to infants' needs for food and comfort, thus laying the foundation for the infants to develop trust in the adults who care for them. In this environment, infants learn that the world is a secure place for them. • Initiate interactions including eye contact, holding closely, stroking, talking, playing, carrying and rocking the infant. • Greet infants and parents warmly each morning on arrival, and help each child to settle into the group as needed.



A child who respects self, others and the environment

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gradually develop understanding and awareness of selves as influenced by family, culture, other people and the environment. <p><i>Older toddlers 18 to 36 months:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasingly use simple language structures to communicate with others. Express strong feelings and preferences. Imitate the behaviours of adults and those around them; role play family roles. Demonstrate a desire to be independent and do things by themselves. 	<p><i>Early toddlers 9 to 18 months old:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enjoy exploring objects on their own and with others, enjoy imitating and mimicking others. Begin to show interest in other toddlers and express affection for others; show more concern for the feelings of others. Become attached to preferred toys or objects. Become assertive, displaying a strong sense of self. Enjoy looking at self in the mirror. <p><i>By age 3 years, toddlers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show awareness of how others view and react to them; show understanding that others have rights and privileges. Begin to enjoy exploring, and playing more with other peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that every parent and child experiences peaceful transition times as a part of the daily routine. Ensure that children treat each other gently as they display their natural curiosity about each other. Encourage practitioners to take both infants and toddlers on walks around the neighbourhood. These special trips or 'rambles' allow children to see and appreciate many aspects of the outdoor environment. Encourage children to care for and show respect for each other. Provide daily opportunities for children to play together. Teach children "the golden rule": do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Rather than blaming children for their actions, help them to understand why their actions are not correct. Present structured and unstructured opportunities for children to explore the environment e.g., to grow and/or care for living things.

Model respect for all persons.





INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES	INVOLVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	USEFUL SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES
<p><i>Practitioners sometimes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out routine care activities swiftly without interacting, playing or communicating with the infant. Regard as a nuisance and ignore infants' crying, or respond irregularly and at their own convenience. Express favouritism for and show greater attention to certain children. Adhere rigidly to schedules based on adults' convenience rather than children's needs. Make fun of children for what they cannot do or for clumsy attempts at mastering a skill. Foster over-dependency; children are overprotected and made to feel inadequate. Shout at children or make degrading/deflating remarks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help parents feel good about their own parenting by sharing with them some of the positive and interesting things that happened with their children during the day. Regard parents as the child's primary source of affection and care. Make parents feel welcome at the centre. Receive and support nursing mothers who are able to make breast-feeding visits or leave expressed milk for their babies. Model and demand that respect is shown to all (children and adults) at the centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share many stories with the children that relate positive relationships. Enhance storytelling/story-sharing by preparing puppets or paper characters and a flannel board. The children can then manipulate the illustrations as the story is related or discussed afterward. Laminate and use large calendar pictures for discussions or story sharing. Discuss with practitioners, parents and children how respect is shown in the various ethnic/cultural/religious groups represented at the centre, e.g., courteous behaviour and appropriate responses.

Supporting Diversity and Children with Special Needs

- Practitioners can provide assistance to those infants and toddlers who may require more time than others to undertake a task. Adults should encourage them to 'try'. Showing appreciation for efforts made will foster children's feelings of self-worth.
- Babies who are blind or deaf or who have severe hearing challenges need frequent reminders of your presence and that they are valued.
- Describing to a baby who is blind what s/he looks like, for example, "You have such big brown eyes" while gently stroking his/her eyelids, gesturing and touching to show a deaf baby his/her face as you look together in a mirror, helps to encourage awareness of self.
- Taking children on field trips and walks where others also frequent creates opportunities for children and practitioners to be with others.
- Protect children from all forms of maltreatment. Teach them to protect themselves and each other.
- Ensure that boys and girls have the same experiences and opportunities and that gender differentiations are not made unless necessary.





IN THE FIELD

Overcoming Challenges

Field trips provide many valuable learning experiences for children in early childhood settings. Although traditionally field trips are associated with travelling outside of the centre/school community, lack of funds can prevent early childhood centres and schools from including this very important learning experience in their repertoire of activities.

To overcome this challenge, rethink the concept of "field trip" to include places in the immediate environment and wider community, that are in walking distance. It is amazing how many interesting possibilities can emerge, e.g., a huge, old but interesting tree which might be associated with interesting folklore and stories, a nearby farm or sugar cane factory, the health centre, library, hardware store, bicycle repair shop, shoemaker, market, grocery store, restaurant, bank, tailors shop, pet store, airport, radio station and many others that might be present in the particular community. It might even be easier to get the support and help of parents in the community to accompany the group on these community field excursions.

Nature walks help to build children's appreciation of nature. As you walk, encourage them to observe and discuss what they see and smell.

Children learn prejudices from the adults around them. Practitioners highlight their preferences with their speech and behaviour. Too often, parents and practitioners use terms in the presence of children without thinking or realising the impact of their comments. Young children notice and are curious about characteristics common to other groups. Celebrate the differences and diversity that exists in the group, encourage parents to do the same and ensure that every child in your care feels valued as much as the next.

Help parents to find positive ways to correct their child, without beating or other cruel forms of punishment.

What Really Works

Forming strong partnerships with parents bring positive benefits to early childhood programmes. International research studies have repeatedly shown that children's ability to settle down quickly and optimise their benefits from participating in an early childhood programme is linked to the extent to which parents show interest and support the programme.

Children feel more secure and accepted and affirmed when the relationship between parents and centre are mutually beneficial. In Jamaican Teachers Colleges that offer the Diploma in Early Childhood Education, graduates of this programme give very high ratings to one of their study courses, "Working with Parents and Community". They feel that the strategies they learn for working successfully with parents help them to build relationships with parents and to maximise the support and contribution that parents can make to the development of their children and the centre in general.

THREE TO FIVE

R

**espect for self, others
and the environment**



A child who respects self, others and the environment.



A child who respects self, others and the environment.

What children are expected to do

What we see children doing

What we can do to support children's development

- Demonstrate more independence and sense of responsibility.
- Know and distinguish gender and different body parts.
- Learn to respect and care for their bodies; recognise good and bad health, safety and nutrition practices.
- Develop a sense of self-worth/self-confidence; take pride in their own work/effort.
- Enjoy fantasy and play with imaginary friends, making use of their expanding vocabulary.
- Engage in board games and follow the rules.
- Play cooperatively with other children, including games with rules; however, they do not respond well to competition as they hate to lose.
- Gradually learn the boundaries and limitations of appropriate social behaviour.
- Begin to understand the view of others and sympathise with others.

- Show knowledge of social graces and appropriate social behaviours.
- Show love, affection, acceptance/sympathy to peers e.g. kiss, hug, dry tears, etc.
- Plan and discuss roles of each other; who should do what.
- Play group games in cooperative play, can adhere to rules and show respect for authority.
- Wait their turn patiently.
- Distinguish right from wrong; report peers' wrongdoing to adults, show concern for honesty, fairness.
- Demonstrate understanding of difference between appropriate and inappropriate touching, e.g., reject, complain about such touching.

- To foster and reinforce children's sense of responsibility, develop a roster whereby all children in the group have the opportunity to carry out routine chores and to assist others in doing so. Tasks can include collecting and distributing materials, looking after the group's pet(s), cleaning up personal and other shared areas, switching off lights.
- Invite children to clean-up and tidy the different play areas at the end of play period.
- To build self-esteem and a positive self-image, commend each child for completing tasks and other accomplishments.
- Help children understand and cope with strong feelings by giving them words to use when they are angry, sad, disappointed, etc. E.g., "I see you are angry at Mary because she took your toy."
- Encourage children to commend each other for a task well-done.



A child who respects self, others and the environment.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a sense of community and have a desire to know about families and communities around them. Begin to play cooperatively with other children in small groups, and develop friendships. Share their toys, etc., take turns and assume their share of group responsibility. Demonstrate skills of sharing and caring. Understand the concept of group, family and community. Display appropriate and responsible social behaviours in relation to the environment. Develop respect for rights of self and others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show respect toward others and their property (ask permission to borrow pencils, crayons etc). Co-operate and participate as a responsible member of a task group. Begin to accept responsibility for own actions/behaviours. Show awareness and appreciation of roles of different people in the community. Understand and appreciate the importance of family as well as awareness of different kinds of families. Show increasing awareness and respect for natural surroundings and a consciousness for protecting the environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan a curriculum/programme that is responsive to the specific context of children's experiences. Help children to identify landmarks that will help them to find their way around the centre, neighbourhood and community. Provide at least one centre pet and encourage children to take turns in caring for it. Promote respect for life and living things by letting children help to build a bird feeder and hang it up. They can record the number and kinds of birds observed and learn to identify and recognise birds by significant characteristics. Use frequent opportunities (such as nature walks) to build children's awareness and knowledge of natural surroundings and natural events. Plan activities/sessions that help children to understand and respect food production and preparation. Teach conservation, e.g., importance of clean water, recycling.





A child who respects self, others and the environment.

Explain and reinforce the rules, consistently and fairly.



What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask questions to understand the actions of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show pleasure in experiencing nature in various ways. Talk about where they live, where other people live and what they do. Investigate and discuss similarities and differences in their environment. Ask questions about why things happen, how they work and suggest explanations. Ask peers to explain their behaviours, e.g., "Why are you crying?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite the children to plan and plant a flower bed or vegetable garden. Children will water plants daily and record growth. Inform parents and children on the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Encourage children to ask questions about things they do not understand or want to learn more about. Provide straightforward, factual answers to children's questions. Allow children to help develop various rules. Address issues of disrespect immediately (at the time of occurrence). If children want to share what they have written, encourage this, but don't force it – and ignore spelling!

INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES	INVOLVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	USEFUL SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practitioners frequently group children in competitive teams according to age, gender, or other ways that may diminish children's sense of being a part of the whole group. A sense of community is undermined by teachers' behaviours and techniques, e.g. encouraging behaviours such as "tattling", teasing, or other practices that create animosity among children. Teachers rarely use children's social relationships as a route to learning. The environment is disorderly, with little structure or predictability; children wander aimlessly without purpose or direction. The environment and materials provide too little variety, interest or choice for children. Bribing and threatening children to bring about positive behaviour change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage parents to reinforce and foster children's independence and sense of responsibility by allowing their children to do chores at home, such as tidying their room, personal and shared areas, setting and clearing the table, caring for their pets, watering plants, taking out the garbage, etc. Encourage and welcome parents' visits to the centre at all times. Schedule periodic conferences with each child's parents/guardians. Conferences may include the practitioner, parents/ caregivers and the child. Encourage and support home visits by the teachers. Invite parents and community members to be resource persons for various topics, themes, events. Encourage parents to use positive reinforcement and disciplinary techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage an "Adopt-a-Centre" or an "Adopt-a-Group" project with service clubs, groups, businesses, companies and workplaces in the community. Contact service clubs and other organisations (such as the Lions Club, the Rotary Club, Girl Guides/Cub Scouts, Red Cross, etc.) and invite them to sponsor and/or assist with extracurricular activities for the children. Contact environmental organisations that are local, national and international and request resources and materials available for use by the centre. Pictures, charts and posters are often available but not always presented appropriately for young children. Use such materials with discretion. Expose children to animals and the environment within the Centre, e.g., have a fish aquarium, turtles (indoors) or grow vegetables, observe insect and bird habitats (outdoors).



Teach children to be tolerant and to respect the views and opinions of others.



Supporting Diversity and Children with Special Needs

- As much as possible, children with disabilities and challenges should receive therapeutic or other services, within their regular (inclusive) group to maintain their sense of continuity and support their feeling of belonging and acceptance by the group.
- Culturally diverse and non-sexist activities and materials are provided to help individual children develop positive self-identity, to construct understanding of new concepts by building on prior knowledge and creating shared meaning, and to enrich the lives of all children with respectful acceptance and appreciation of differences and similarities.
- Books and pictures used in the centre include people of different races, ages and abilities and of both genders in various roles.



IN THE FIELD

Overcoming Challenges

Early childhood learning environments should be pleasant, comfortable places where both children and adults can feel inspired to engage in stimulating learning activities together. Many early childhood settings are not so privileged and might be disorganised and disorderly. For example, some communities in some countries might experience conflicts due to crime, political, social and ethnic conflicts. It is difficult to maintain orderly, peaceful and supportive child-centred environments in such situations.

In these types of settings, adults must make a special effort to plan and organise the learning environment so that children can feel protected, secure and have enriching experiences. Provide a range of materials that cater to children's different developmental levels as this will enable them to make choices that match their abilities. Provide quiet, comfortable spaces that individual children might use as needed, e.g., a large stove or refrigerator box with one side cut out for entrance and filled with soft comfortable cushions could become a place of comfort for a troubled child.

Children with disabilities/challenges/special learning needs are often separated from their peers for some activities but they should be allowed to stay with their group for most of the day.

It is often difficult to meet with busy parents. Consult with them to find out the best times to meet with them, be flexible.

Draw children's attention to their environment to help nurture an appreciation and respect for it. Show them clean, beautiful natural scenes and dirty, polluted sites (either while on a walk or in pictures). Discuss why and how a person should care for the environment.

What Really Works

- Show children ways to do things that don't hurt others.
- Support safe mobility and exploration.
- Plan flexible group activities.
- Provide opportunities for physical connection between children and adults throughout each day.
- Always model sharing as a voluntary action.
- Show children ways to do and say things that make others feel good.
- Show children alternative ways to meet their needs.
- Model respectful behaviour.
- Model caring behaviours about the centre's environment, inside and outside, and encourage the children to maintain caring behaviours at home and in their communities.

FIVE TO SEVEN

R

**espect for self, others
and the environment**



A child who respects self, others and the environment.



A child who respects self, others and the environment.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in activities and games with rules. Be responsible, productive members of a team; can engage effectively in co-operative learning. Understand things from the viewpoint of others but confidently holds own point of view. Show excitement and curiosity about the variety of people, business places, events and other activities that characterise their communities. They are curious about everything and everyone. Have a strong need for love, attention and affirmation from parents and teachers. Show understanding of good moral judgement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enjoy group and ring games. Enjoy going on field trips to places in their neighbourhoods and communities, such as shops/markets, factories and public buildings. They are keen to find out what goes on in each building or facility. Demonstrate that they care about the feelings and needs of others; express empathy, sympathy for others; comfort/console an injured or unhappy person. Express approval or disapproval of another's ideas and accept or consider suggestion from others and compromise when necessary. May enjoy "taking care of" and playing with younger children. Form friendships easily although these may change very rapidly. Identify and talk about behaviours they consider to be honest, fair and respectful. Recognise and resist inappropriate touching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise the curriculum and daily programme in such a way that it allows for themes to be studied as projects scheduled for blocks of "Integrated Studies" time., e.g., early science weather. Promote use of field trips, nature walks and visits from resource persons as regular forms of learning experiences. Include opportunities for role-playing problem situations and involving children in establishing and enforcing a few basic rules necessary for collaborative group efforts. Invite parents, resource persons and community members/helpers to share their experiences with the children. Encourage children to write about their experiences in their own forms of expression.



A child who respects self, others and the environment.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate, listen to and show respect to others (the elderly, those in authority, peers, etc.). • Recognise and relate appropriately to peers and others who are different from them in any way. • Demonstrate trust in self, authority and others. • Observe and appreciate special occasions (birthdays, Mothers' Day, Teachers' Day, etc.). • Recognise environmental pollution and show respect for keeping it clean. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the privacy of others and demand respect for their own privacy. • Are helpful to others in carrying out small chores, especially physically challenged peers. • Show concern for, discourage and report any form of vandalism or destruction of the environment. • Enjoy birthday parties, cake and gift-making with peers and family members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage positive peer group relationships by providing opportunities and support for small-group projects. Small groups help children develop social and conversational skills as well as problem solving and negotiating skills. • Have one or more group pet(s) and allow the children to take turns in providing care, and for taking home the pet(s) for weekends and holidays. • Encourage the children to take care of plants or a garden. • Make children aware of what makes their physical environment safe. • Encourage proper disposal and/or reuse of waste materials.





Allow children to identify health and safety hazards in their environment, such as trash heaps in their community, and to suggest how to eliminate them.

INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES	INVOLVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	USEFUL SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No effort is made to build a sense of the group as a community. Teachers emphasise the need for children to do their own work independently at all times rather than encourage co-operative projects or activities. Negative approach to classroom behaviour management, e.g., use of harsh words, scolding, finding fault; setting rules, shaming, comparing with others, etc. Teachers do not practice what they preach relative to care of the environment. Teachers do not model appropriate social behaviour. Rules are set but not explained. Practitioners do not make time for private conversations with children. Wasting water, improper waste disposal, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule periodic conferences with each child's parents. Conferences may include the practitioner, parents, and the child. Parents' visits to school are welcomed at all times, and at mutually convenient times in the classroom. Encourage and support home visits by practitioners. Arrange parent participation activities to accommodate parents' schedules. Call on relevant parents and members of the community to be resource persons for various topics, themes, events and activities. Include parents and other community members in celebrations of learning and achievement; respect cultural differences of families. Encourage parents to allow children to participate in community clean-up and beautification projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in an "Adopt-a-Centre" or an "Adopt-a-Group" project with groups, businesses, companies and work places in the school community. Contact Service Clubs to become involved in sponsoring and/or assisting with extracurricular activities for the children. Contact local, national and international environmental organisations to request resources and materials available for use by schools. Pictures, charts and posters are often available but not always presented appropriately for young children. Use discretion in their use. Invite zoo personnel, vets and environmental agencies to share on ways of caring for animals and the environment. Engage in collaborative rules; by setting rules with children, they are more likely to honour rules they help to set.



Supporting Diversity and Children with Special Needs

- What constitutes acceptable/proper behaviour for children may be defined differently in some communities than in others. To address these differences, parents and teachers can talk about the need to have certain behaviours in school. Engage in frequent parent-teacher conferences/conversations to ensure consistency between home and school.
- Parents can also help teachers understand how to help their children, both those who are gifted and those who are differently abled, to achieve certain goals or help the school modify the goals in light of cultural or developmental concerns.
- Try to ensure that adults (practitioners or volunteers) who speak the children's first language are available to assist/speak with the children.





IN THE FIELD

Overcoming Challenges

Managing children's behaviour appropriately and effectively is one of the main challenges faced by practitioners in early childhood settings. Some practitioners practice a "one size fits all" approach, which inevitably creates additional problems as children are individuals who respond differently to events and people in their environment.

Effective behaviour management must begin with understanding child development and what is normal behaviour at different ages and stages of development. It is also important to learn about each child's personal circumstances that might provide insight into the child's pattern of behaviour. Develop a relationship with the child's parents or guardians and jointly make plans for how to deal with particular behaviours being exhibited by the child. Consistency is key when efforts are being made to eliminate or reinforce a particular behaviour.

The school should discuss with parents the philosophical approach to discipline that guides the school's practices, e.g., no corporal punishment tolerated.

Review books and materials that are in your centre and that which comes through donations to ensure that they do not reflect stereotypes.

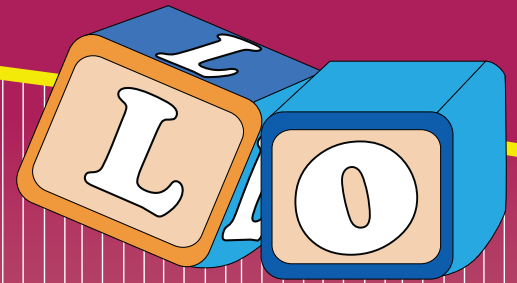
Teach children to be vigilant in keeping their environment clean, e.g., no littering rule with consequences; inspect outdoors for standing/stagnant water and trash, etc.

What Really Works

- A learning environment that is safe, comfortable and aesthetically pleasing with sufficient space so that the children are not crowded.
- Practitioners provide many daily opportunities for children to develop social skills, such as helping, co-operating, negotiating and talking through interpersonal problems with those involved. When children engage in antisocial behaviour, they intervene promptly and provide timely coaching in developing more acceptable social skills.
- Garden projects. If your Centre does not have the space, ask a parent who lives nearby or a community member to donate use of their space for a children's garden project, or use large pots, e.g., to grow peas.
- Water projects. Children think about ways to conserve water, to recycle, and to use it sparingly when washing their hands (e.g., not leaving the tap running as they use the soap).

In Barbados, the Sandwich project (a volunteer network that started in 1999) sought to change the lifestyle and habits of people of all ages by developing an awareness of the fragile nature of the marine and coastal environment. The important cause, protecting the beach, brought people together to monitor and enhance their beach environments, including young children. Through their participation, the children learn about climate change and sustainable development.

Resilience



A resilient child.

BIRTH TO THREE

Resilience



A resilient child.

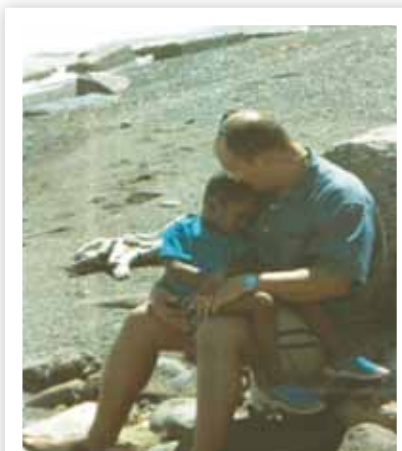


A resilient child.		
What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<p><i>From birth, young babies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display a preference for the people they like to be with and what they want to see, hear, touch and taste. • Show distinct differences in how they respond to people and the environment, e.g. easy going, outgoing, enthusiastic, slow to warm up, etc. • Gradually develop a spirit of independence. • Express through their body language, the desire and need to feel loved, safe and secure within caring and healthy relationships. 	<p><i>Young babies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy skin-to-skin contact. • Show pleasure by gurgling and cooing, and show discomfort by crying. • Cry in different tones to express different needs. • Respond to the different tones of voices around them. <p><i>Toddlers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display a strong sense of territory and possession. • Display a strong need for physical connection with familiar adults, but an equally strong need to be physically independent from adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for physical closeness, holding and touching. • Offer immediate response to infants' cues or signals for engagement or disengagement. • Plan adequate time and space to allow for independent movement of infants and toddlers. • Talk frequently and comfortably with infants and toddlers, to give them a sense of security and an opportunity to learn language. • Respond promptly and appropriately to infants' and toddlers' cries and vocalisations to assure them that these are understood.

A resilient child.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to explore what they can do on their own and what they can do if given support. Cry to communicate physical or emotional discomfort and "coo" to communicate pleasure. Venture out into exploratory activities that make them vulnerable in relation to keeping safe. Crave adult attention and affirmation to increase their confidence to do new and different things. As infants and toddlers develop their physical skills and become more mobile, their boundaries widen and they begin to make choices that can involve real risk. Young children develop an awareness of choices they can make and their consequences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From as early as 3 months, babies know the difference between their parents and strangers. Take things apart, empty things out and move from activity to activity to learn about the environment and their relationship to it. Demonstrate an emerging sense of curiosity about the people and situations in their environment. Begin to form friendships in play situations. Express their emotions physically; their sense of independence often leads to resistive behaviour e.g. "No!" Older toddlers are able to exhibit more impulse control and self-regulation in relation to others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide activities like rocking, walking, talking, gently rubbing and singing to help infants find comfort. Respond calmly to fussing infants with care and knowledge. Take time with daily activities, such as diaper changing, so adult and child can connect and strengthen their relationship. Show respect for infants by doing things with them and not to them. Observe carefully and watch for children's responses. Make conversations with infants natural and comfortable. This may take practice for some practitioners. Encourage the building of a special relationship between each infant and one adult at the centre.





A resilient child.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can develop relationships with key people, which help them to develop self-confidence, a belief in themselves and healthy self-esteem. • Respond positively to explanations and descriptions of what is going on in their world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>By 3 years</i>, verbalise their feelings more often and also express feelings in symbolic play. They are able to show empathic concern for others. • Show interest in solving problems. • Demonstrate curiosity about things in their environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin reading to infants and toddlers as soon as possible and make conversations about the stories. Especially during the first year of life, story reading and sharing stimulates the brain connections that promote language and eventual literacy. • Model acceptable social behaviours for toddlers to see. • Establish boundaries for toddlers that allow them to make choices safely. • Encourage parents and practitioners to ensure their safety, while not inhibiting their desire to take risks. • Constantly communicate to children what makes each one special.

INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES	INVOLVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	USEFUL SUPPORT AND RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempting to be playful, caregivers frighten, tease or upset young children with their unpredictable behaviours. • Caregivers are rough and inattentive. • Infants are wordlessly and sometimes abruptly moved about at the adults' convenience. • Caregivers are unpredictable and/or unresponsive. • Caregivers exhibit a lack of coping behaviours themselves and are unable to model the type of interactions with others that they want children to learn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform parents about how their baby or young child communicates needs. • Share with parents and other practitioners the specific interests and concerns of the babies/infants and toddlers being cared. Plan time to talk in depth. • Include parents and family members of the children when planning activities that will encourage children to learn that other people have different views from theirs. • Discuss with parents how each child responds to activities, caregivers/adults, peers. • Provide parent-education sessions for those who live in difficult circumstances, e.g., how to help children to cope with violence in their communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When in doubt, caregivers and practitioners must seek information, guidance and support from a medical professional, the child's parents or family member, parenting magazines, books and websites.





Supporting Diversity and Children with Special Needs

- Identify professionals who can provide appropriate consultation for children (and adults who care for them) who appear to be experiencing any form of stress, anxiety or trauma.
- In order to meet the needs of young infants and toddlers, caregivers and practitioners must be responsive to these children's needs and be knowledgeable about their development, including special needs (as outlined by professionals and parents).
- Intervene whenever any child takes a toy away from another regardless of that child's reaction. Consistency is necessary in establishing a peaceable environment (Levin, D.E., 2003).
- Build supportive and caring relationships with each child.
- Allow children to participate in regular activities as much as they are able.
- Let children feel that their ideas have value by listening attentively, taking them seriously, and responding accordingly.



IN THE FIELD

Overcoming Challenges

Many Caribbean children live in difficult circumstances, for example, dysfunctional families, absentee parents, violence torn communities, abusive caregivers. It is easy for caregivers to feel that there is little hope of such children achieving positive outcomes in their lives. Yet, emerging research studies on resilience in children show that children who experience such harsh life conditions can overcome adversity and make good of themselves. But this does not occur by chance.

The presence of at least one loving, caring, supportive adult in these children's lives, provides them with inner strength and resilience that helps them to cope with their challenges. Caregivers must pay special attention to these children and support them in various ways such as:

- Reaffirming the worth of each child;
- Encouraging the development of a warm, secure relationship with a caring adult;
- Providing opportunities for the child to make own decisions and choices without compromising safety;
- Giving child help, support and reassurance when this is needed; and
- Reinforcing the positive characteristics of each child.

Death, loss and grief present unique challenges for children. The range of reactions that they may display in response varies with each child, each moment. The emotional shock may cause the child to 'detatch', express explosive emotions. Practitioners can help by:

- Being a good listener. Allow the child to tell his/her story;
- Making no assumptions about how the child 'should' react. Each person understands and feels death in their own, unique way;
- Staying supportive. Grieving is a process, not an event, so adequate time must be allowed to grieve in the manner that works for that child. Some children need to deal with their emotional pain before resuming normal activities.

What Really Works

The Roving Caregivers is an innovative early childhood development intervention programme which operates in Jamaica, Grenada, St. Lucia and Dominica. In Jamaica, it serves over 2000 children aged birth to 36 months in 3 poor rural parishes. The programme is designed to promote the development, health and nutrition of disadvantaged children, the self-esteem and child rearing knowledge and practices of the mothers, as well as their income generating activities. School leavers are recruited to work in the areas in which they live. They are trained to visit homes and demonstrate and teach the mothers stimulation activities and child rearing practices (Powell, 2004).

Two recent studies conducted by Dr. Christine Powell, to compare the performance of R.C. programme children and a control group in basic school (preschool), revealed significantly higher developmental quotients in hand-eye coordination and performance scores, than those in the control group. The intervention was effective improving both the children's development and the mothers' knowledge of child development and child rearing (Powell, 2004. p. iv)

THREE TO FIVE

Resilience



A resilient child.



A resilient child.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a basic understanding of right and wrong. • Try new things and take risks. • Be assertive about their needs and desires; make their own decisions. • Learn to respect and care for their bodies; show awareness of objects, actions, situations that are potentially harmful to them. • Know and apply safety procedures to self and others. • Build strength, co-ordination, flexibility and endurance. • Organise other children and toys for pretend play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persevere in the demonstration of skills and completion of tasks. • Distinguish between good and bad health and nutrition habits. • Display determination to complete challenging tasks. • Act bossy and use various tactics for getting attention. • Attend to own personal needs with increasing competence. • Exercise caution in some potentially unsafe situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a safe, healthy environment and careful supervision. • Anticipate and avoid accidents or problems before they occur; model caution. • Guard children's safety while also encouraging children to do what they are capable of doing. • Provide opportunities for children to gain/display knowledge of good health and nutrition habits. • Support children's age-appropriate risk taking within safe boundaries. • Encourage children's efforts to succeed at challenging tasks by assisting them when necessary. • Help children to understand the concept of "consequences" for their actions.



A resilient child.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often exclude other children in play – best friends only. • Understand and respect rules – often ask permission; seek adult approval. • Express desire, sometimes, to get away and be alone. • Change the rules of games as they play; take turns and share (most of the time). • Show curiosity in their environment and world; discover new perspectives. • Display fear of the dark and monsters; begin to understand danger. • Have vivid imaginations and sometimes imagine playmates; have difficulty distinguishing between reality and fantasy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reveal personal concerns, experiences and questions during fantasy play and other activities in and out of the classroom. • Stand up in defence of their friends. • Engage in fairly complex pretend play. • Identify things that are dangerous. • Enjoy being made responsible for simple, manageable tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities to increase children's awareness and avoidance of dangerous, threatening objects and unacceptable/inappropriate actions of adults or peers toward them. • Provide opportunities for children to show responsibility for an activity. • Allocate extended periods of time for children to engage in play and project work activities. • Draw on children's curiosity and desire to make sense of their world to motivate them to become involved in community-oriented learning activities.



Use positive reinforcement in teaching children to always tell the truth.





SIGNALS OF INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES	INVOLVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	USEFUL SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional development opportunities for practitioners are fragmented or irrelevant to the needs of the particular group of children, and the emerging difficulties and challenges they face. Corporal punishment and other abusive strategies are applied to the management of children's behaviour in centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform parents and caregivers about what community resources are available to help their children learn self-protection strategies. Ask parents and members of the children's and school communities who work in areas related to coping skills, dispositions, survival, discernment and maintaining peace, to share their knowledge and work with the children. Disseminate information on disaster preparedness, fire safety, traffic safety, water safety, poison safety and personal safety to parents and caregivers in order to promote consistency of information and practice between centre and home. Inform parents of centre rules and disciplinary procedures and encourage them to support such at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practitioners can keep abreast of the many public awareness programmes being sponsored across the various Ministries, including Education, Health, Social Services, and Environment. Collect information in the form of brochures and pamphlets that are often available at no cost; call on resource persons who are willing to make themselves available for presentations (for example, for practitioners, PTAs, etc.). Health education resources and personnel are now available through the Internet and several school programmes and non-governmental agencies, to inform children about health/ personal safety, including substance abuse, HIV and AIDS and personal safety. Play "what if" games, e.g., "What if (event) were to happen, what should you do?" Use story books that show how characters, who children can identify with, handle situations in which they find themselves.

Supporting Diversity and Children with Special Needs

- In cases where children's condition of special needs have resulted from experience of environmental stress and violence, and where children's aggressive behaviour continually threatens others, practitioners should develop individualised behavioural plans based on observations that help them to identify environmental "triggers" and/or other factors associated with the behaviours. This plan includes motivation and intervention strategies that assist and support the child to develop self-control and appropriate social behaviours.
- Practitioners facilitate the development of social skills, self-control, and self-regulation in children by using positive guidance techniques, such as modelling and encouraging expected/ desirable behaviour, redirecting children to more acceptable activities, setting clear limits and intervening to enforce consequences for unacceptable, harmful behaviour and by rewarding/praising positive or corrective behaviours.
- Practice zero tolerance of derogatory remarks about anyone in the centre.





IN THE FIELD

Overcoming Challenges

- Across the region, many Early Childhood centres are located in volatile areas where relationships with and across communities do not allow peace maintenance. To help reduce children's risk:
 - Ask parents to inform you if the child has been exposed (as a victim or bystander);
 - Educate the children and their parents about the ways to reduce their risks by helping them to develop habits of thought and behaviour patterns that lead to effective, nonviolent problem-solving;
 - Engage in community activities designed to help reduce community violence, as well as collaborate and build partnerships with community organisations that can help.
- Fearful children can be supported by providing a stable environment, e.g., having consistency in the daily schedule; preparing children ahead of imminent changes such as transition times, going on field trips; providing many opportunities for acting out fears during socio-dramatic play.
- Do not hesitate to report suspected cases of abuse. Let the authorities investigate. You could save a life.
- In cases of trauma, loss and suspected emotional instability, refer the parents and the child to the respective local professional for consultation.

What Really Works

The Peace and Love in Schools (PALS) project in Jamaica provides teacher-training and teaching/learning resource materials to promote peaceful relationships in schools. Some of the violence/aggression prevention strategies applied are:

- Keep an eye on the children for signs of stress and anxiety.
- Be alert to any sudden changes in behaviour e.g., becoming more aggressive, or withdrawn, sleeping during activity time, overeating or appearing to eat nothing.
- Look ahead and anticipate incidents that might be stressful, challenging or difficult for the children and help them as much as possible to prepare for these, for example, moving to primary school, visit of the Nurse, or an approaching hurricane, etc. Talk well in advance about the events and any concerns the children might have.

FIVE TO SEVEN

Resilience



A resilient child.



A resilient child.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be particularly sensitive to losing in competitive activities. • Trust adults, often regarding most of them as parents. • Become increasingly independent and developing a conscience, yet still need supervision and the support of trusted adults. • Assume responsibility for short periods of time only and should not be expected to display adult levels of self-control and direction. • Gradually acquire attitudes and dispositions to learning and work, such as persistence, resourcefulness and initiative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are easily upset by criticism or failure. • Do not enjoy competition as they believe that children should compete against themselves, not against other children. • Tell on each other to get an adult's attention and to help understand rules. • May become upset when their behaviour or school work is criticised or ignored. • Reveal personal experiences, concerns, questions in play and other activities in and out of the classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group children in creative ways that will not only be of benefit to them in acquiring knowledge and skills, but also foster positive dispositions toward learning and school. • Encourage children to talk about their feelings while working with others in an activity, working on a project by themselves, or playing together. • Create opportunities in the classroom where current conditions to which these children are being exposed can be discussed, explained and understood. • Introduce and share with class stories and storybooks about various concerns and challenges. • Apply positive discipline techniques in handling children's anti-social behaviours.

A resilient child.

What children are expected to do	What we see children doing	What we can do to support children's development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take pride in being able to do things for themselves. However, they still need and want the assurance of an adult's presence. • Are curious about people and events around them • Can be affected by stress, or have bad or sad moods during times that might be difficult or challenging. • Can display signs of depression. Some causes of stress include arguments between parents and family members or parents going through separation or divorce, disagreements with friends, being teased too much, being overwhelmed by changes and transitions and school tests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show assertiveness in wanting to do things "on their own". • Show signs of distress and lack of interest when experiencing too much pressure of life events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make time to talk and listen carefully to the children about what is going on at school, home or with friends. • Practise good communication and reflective listening. Communication is vital during this school period as there is so much to discuss and negotiate when children are seeking information, explanations and understanding. • Wander around the classroom while the children are engaged in free play or organised activities and listen to their observations and conversations. What they do and say can be very revealing. • Establish an atmosphere of trust by always being prepared to listen and respond fairly to all involved. • Keep an eye on the children for signs of stress and anxiety. Be alert to any sudden changes in behaviour, becoming more aggressive, or withdrawn, sleeping in class, over-eating or appearing to eat nothing. • Look ahead and anticipate incidents that might be stressful, challenging or difficult for the children and help them as much as possible to prepare for these. Talk in advance about the events and concerns of the children.





INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES	INVOLVING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	USEFUL SUPPORT AND RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The daily programme is fragmented among many different groups and activities with little attempt by the teacher to communicate or coordinate successful transitions. • Great disparity in the expectations, teaching strategies, or academic demands from one grade to the next (such as the movement from preschool facilities to first grade) creates excessive stress and discontinuity for the children. • The classroom/school environment is unhealthy and/or unsafe. • Professional development opportunities for teachers are fragmented or irrelevant to the needs of the particular group of children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform parents and caregivers about what community resources are available to help their children learn self-protection strategies. • Parents and members of the children's and school communities involved in areas related to coping skills, dispositions, survival, discernment and maintaining peace, can be asked to share their knowledge and work with the children. • Information addressing questions of disaster preparedness, fire safety, traffic safety, water safety, poison safety and personal safety is to be disseminated to parents and care-givers in order to promote consistency of information and practice between school and home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are to keep abreast of the many public awareness programmes being sponsored across the various Ministries, including Education, Health, Social Services and Environment. Information in the form of brochures and pamphlets is often available at no cost, and resource persons are often willing to make themselves available for presentations (for example, for teaching staff, PTAs etc). • Members of service clubs, professional organisations and proactive groups will also make themselves available as resource persons for reference and classroom needs. • Health education resources are now available on the Internet and through several school programmes to inform children on substance abuse, HIV and AIDS, and community violence.

Supporting Diversity and Children with Special Needs

- For children with visual disabilities, the teacher will need to be attentive to lighting conditions and equipment choices. While other children can help the child with visual limitations, the teacher can also make sure that tactile information and cues are available.
- Children with auditory disabilities should be placed in front of the teacher so they can read lips and have the best opportunity for hearing directions. They may need individualised interpreters in order to follow more detailed directions and may need visual signals to supplement some auditory signals.
- Children with orthopaedic disabilities will need adapted/modified equipment.
- Teachers need to be familiar with some of the beliefs and practices of the represented ethnic communities in the class in order to better understand the challenges and difficulties being experienced by the children of the class.

Get involved in discussions, plans and systems that address the rights of young children. Ensure your concerns and suggestions are heard.





IN THE FIELD

Overcoming Challenges

Children who live in volatile communities are often very anxious in the group setting. They do not respond well to sudden changes in their daily routines. Transition times must be handled with sensitivity. Children must be given adequate notice when activities in the daily routines are about to change, or when there will be a change from the normal schedule.

- Give children five to ten minutes of notice time when one activity period is coming to an end.
- Always have the materials for the next activity ready so that children's wait time before the next activity is minimised.
- Engage children in songs, poems, finger plays during cleanup/transition periods.
- When transitioning to outdoor play, try sending children out in small groups at a time rather than have all children line up to go outside. This often leads to disorderly conduct.
- Encourage children to talk about frightening events and reassure them that adults are looking out for them.
- If space is limited, do not allow many children to play at once, split and rotate the group, giving equal time to all. Crowded play space leads to frustration, arguments and fighting.
- Use the Internet to source tips, guidelines and resources for dealing with various issues and needs at the centre.

What Really Works

Many early childhood centres provide activities in the classroom such as playing with puppets and masks, listening to stories, playing with toy medical equipment (or real equipment, if that is possible and appropriate).

Health care professionals and other related resource persons also help children understand and feel more positive about going to the doctor, nurse or dentist. Also, field trips to nearby public clinics or offices of health care professionals can be arranged for the same purpose. Teachers plan these trips very carefully and can sometimes be advised/assisted by librarians, public relations officers or education personnel at these places. Children are given specific tasks during their visit and can take along cameras and clipboards for recording observations.

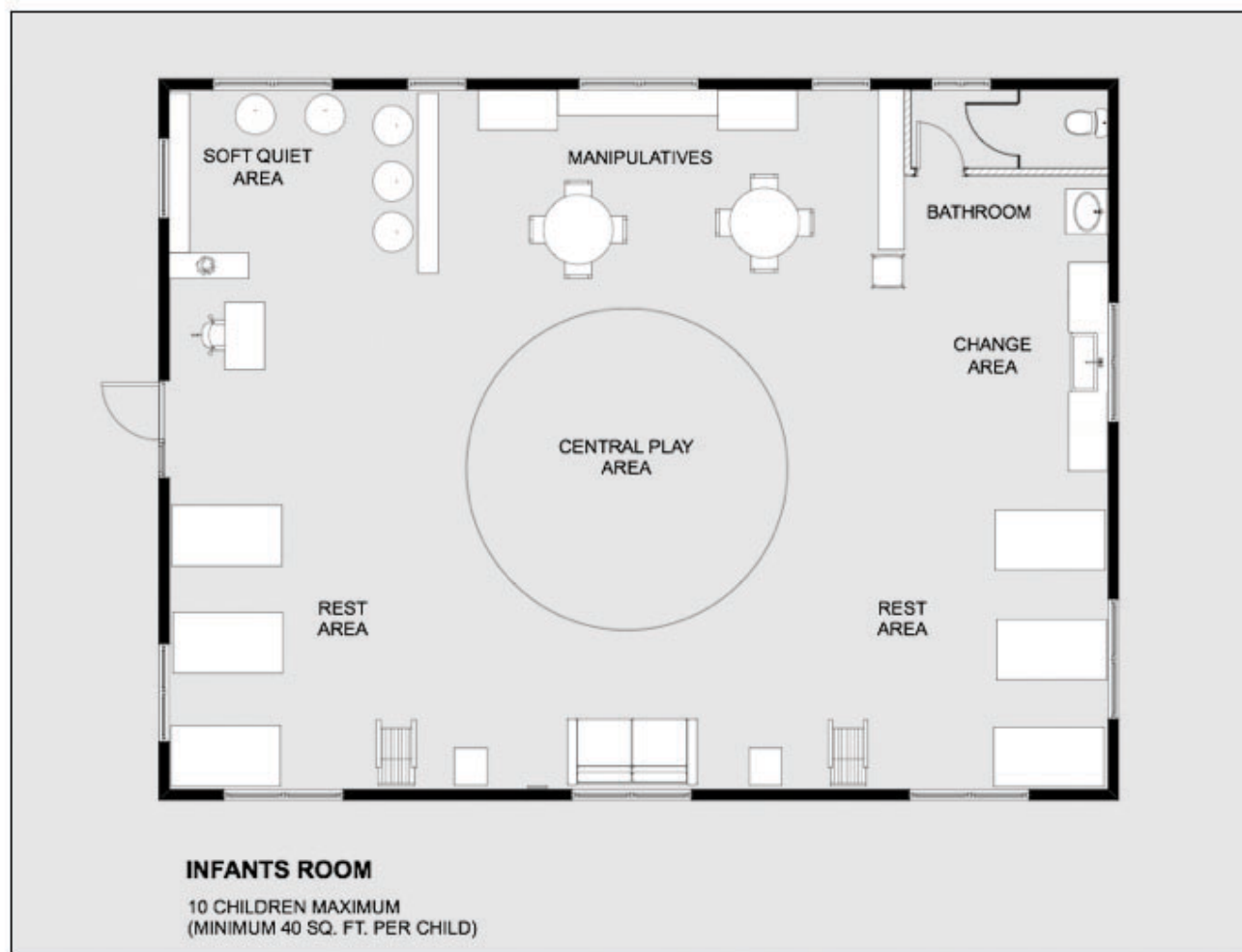
Children learn some simple first aid procedures and how to use the telephone to get help in an emergency.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX I

INFANTS PROPOSED ROOM LAYOUT





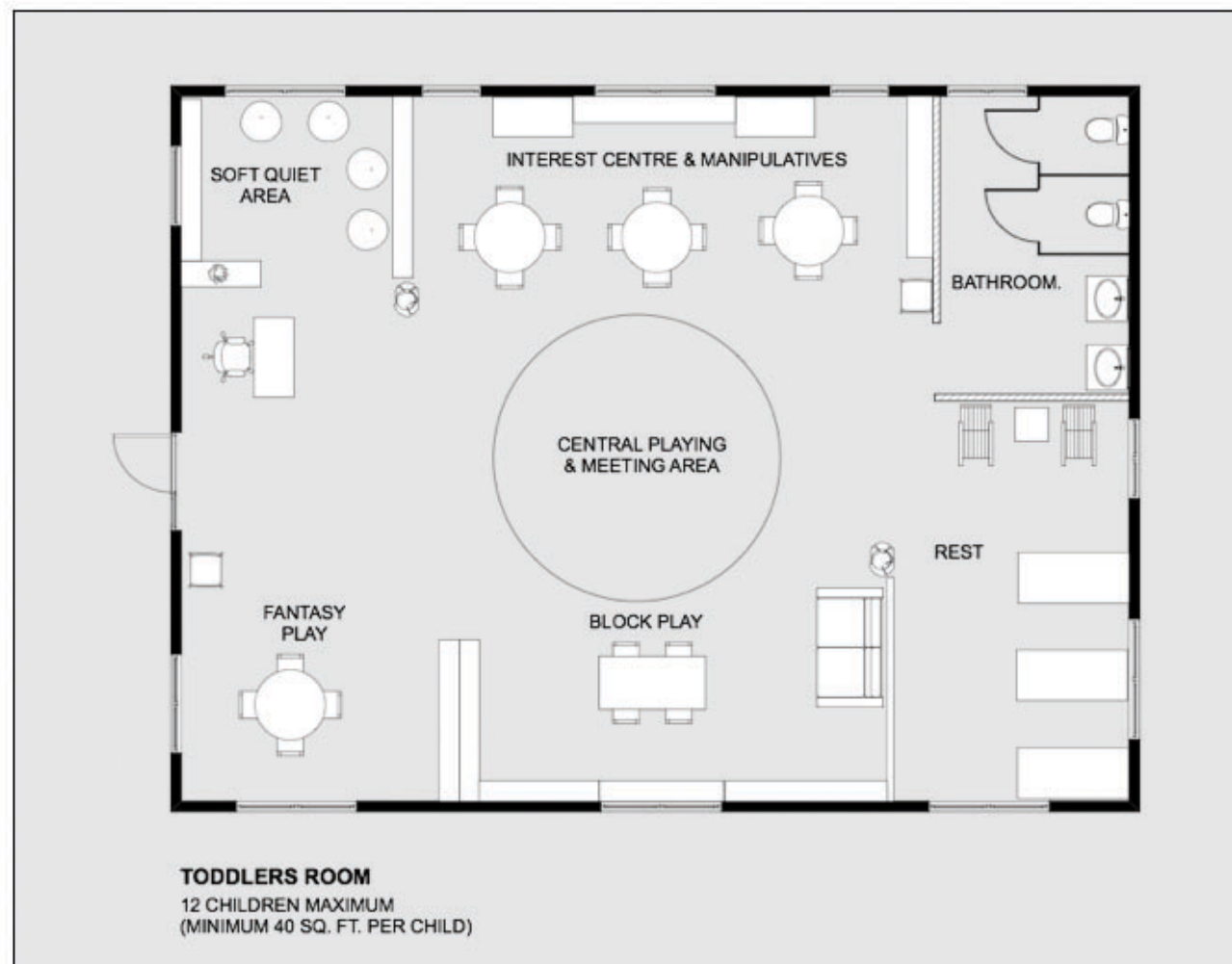
**INFANTS
PROPOSED
ROOM LAYOUT
(AERIAL VIEW)**

**INFANTS
ACTUAL
ROOM LAYOUT**



APPENDIX II

TODDLERS PROPOSED ROOM LAYOUT





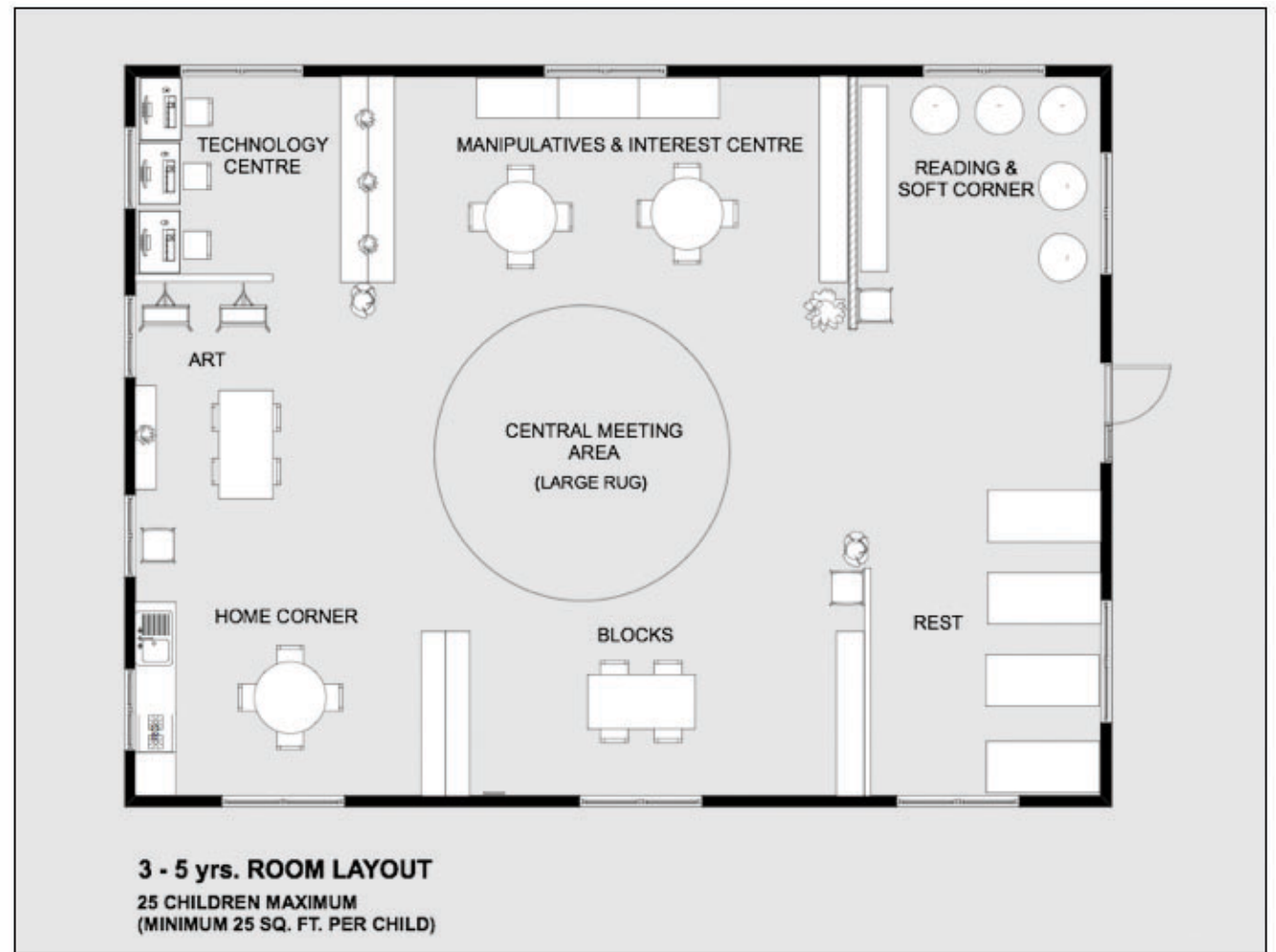
**TODDLERS
PROPOSED
ROOM LAYOUT
(AERIAL VIEW)**

**TODDLERS
ACTUAL
ROOM LAYOUT**



APPENDIX III

3-5 YEARS OLDS PROPOSED ROOM LAYOUT



**3-5 YEARS OLDS
PROPOSED
ROOM LAYOUT
(AERIAL VIEW)**

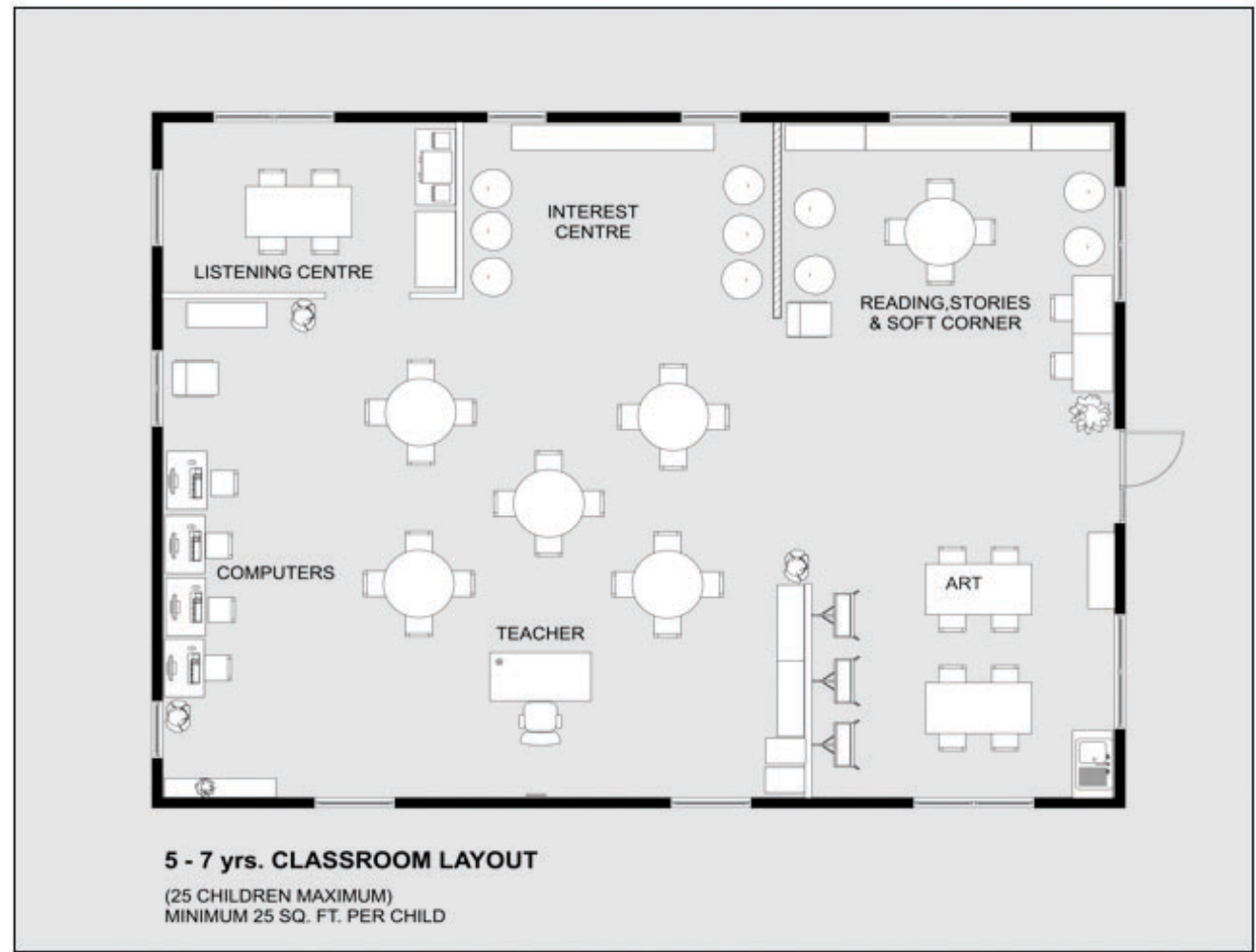


**3-5 YEARS OLDS
ACTUAL
ROOM LAYOUT**



APPENDIX IV

**5-7 YEARS OLDS
PROPOSED
ROOM LAYOUT**





**5-7 YEARS OLDS
PROPOSED
ROOM LAYOUT
(AERIAL VIEW)**

**5-7 YEARS OLDS
ACTUAL
ROOM LAYOUT**



Useful Tips for Teachers/Practitioners

1. SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S FREE CHOICE

In many early childhood settings in the Caribbean, young children can be found engaging in a variety of activities throughout the day. However, on closer observation, we often realize that the majority of these activities are planned and directed by the teacher/practitioner. These activities are described as “teacher/practitioner centred” or “teacher/practitioner-directed”. While teacher/practitioner directed activity has an important role to play in children's learning, it should never become the dominant approach for planning teaching and learning activities in early childhood settings.

We know from the work of child psychologists that children are naturally oriented to explore, manipulate, investigate and discover knowledge on their own. They also have their own individual and independent interests. Children in a group are unlikely to all want to do the same activity at the same time throughout an entire day. Children need to have the opportunity to exercise freedom of choice at times during the day. Allocating time for free play allows children to choose where, with whom, and what they want to play or become engaged with. Activities that are derived from children's preferences and interests are described as “child-centred” or child-initiated” and are usually those that children enjoy most and look forward to each day because they can choose freely what they want to do.

Freedom to choose helps children to develop self-confidence as they learn that their own preferences are valid and important and that it is “O.K.” to have different desires and to pursue different interests from others. Freedom to choose also helps children to learn

to demonstrate respect, tolerance toward others and to appreciate that others have the right to think, feel, and choose differently from them. Freedom to choose helps children to develop their own decision-making skills.

While free play period is based on the principle of children's free choice, adults must always be conscious of other opportunities in a programme day when children can be allowed freedom to make their own choices, very often about simple matters e.g. choosing an unusual colour for an item (a blue banana).

Tips for encouraging children to exercise freedom of choice

Planning the Learning environment

Teachers/Practitioners can set up indoor and outdoor learning centres as appropriate for the space available. The most commonly found centres are: blocks, housekeeping and dress up, sand, water, art and construction, table top manipulatives, books & writing, computer, science, mathematics among others

During periods allocated for learning centre play, children can be encouraged to decide where they want to play first, and where next, thus choosing their own sequence of activities from the outset. Many early childhood programmes in the Caribbean use a rotation flow pattern to organise learning centre play periods. This is important to avoid chaotic scenes with too many children rushing to the same centre at the same time. In the rotation approach, children come to understand that at some point during the day they will be able to share in the different experiences provided.

Children can discuss their preferences with the teacher during circle time or plan-do-review sessions. Some teachers/practitioners use a colour-coded card system to help children make choices. For example, children will learn that they can choose the card that represents the centre they want to play in. However, they will also learn that if only five children can be comfortably accommodated in a particular learning centre and the five cards have already been taken, they will have to wait a turn to use this centre but can choose another centre in the meanwhile. The colour-coded card system also helps children to develop self-organising skills.

In situations where space is too limited to provide a range of centres, teachers/practitioners can make use of large storage boxes containing various activities that can be moved to different locations indoors or outdoors. Children are allowed to choose their own sequence of play with the different "containerized" centres.

Facilitating children's free choice

There will be several other opportunities throughout the day when children can be encouraged to exercise choice. Teachers must always be aware of these opportunities, for example choice of colours to use in art activities, choice of books to look at and "read," choice of table top games and puzzles to work with, choice of a play partner(s) for a special activity and so on.

Children should be supported when they make choices that are unusual and different from what others generally choose. This helps to develop respect and tolerance for diversity.

The teacher/practitioner should encourage each child to try out new activities on a regular basis. However, when materials are being offered for children to make choices, it is important not to offer too much or too little to choose from at a time. Too much to choose from will leave the child over stimulated, confused and frustrated, as the natural tendency is to want to choose all at the same time and this results in the

child "flitting" from one activity to another unable to settle down with any one for any meaningful period of time. Too little to choose from is also frustrating as this can create tension between children who have to wait too long to get their turn to use a particular item. If a child always chooses the same activity day after day, the teacher can remove that activity for a while and introduce others that the child is encouraged to try out. Activity centres can be rotated periodically in these situations.

The basic principle underlying children's free choice is that if the child's desire will have no detrimental effect on self or others in the particular situation, then the child should be allowed the freedom to choose. For example, if a child draws a fruit and wants to use a non-traditional colour to paint it, Why not? The outcome causes harm to no one. Similarly, if a child insists on wearing his/her socks inside out on one particular day, the outcome causes harm to no one, so again, Why not? Too often adults end up in confrontational situations with children because they insist on them doing things as they (adults) want them to be done. If adults perpetually limit children's freedom to choose and insist on directing the "what", "when" and "how" of all their activities, children will never be able to satisfactorily practice making decisions for themselves with confidence.

2. MANAGING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR

Any group of preschool children is made up of individuals with their own personality characteristics and patterns of behaviour, largely influenced by the families and environments from which they come. When these individuals meet in one group, the teacher/practitioner has to plan very carefully how to manage the different behaviours that will emerge in due course and how to respond appropriately and sensitively to individual children's needs without violating the rights of others in the group.

The challenging task of managing children's behaviour must begin with having a knowledge and deep understanding of typical age related behaviour patterns in young children. Also important is knowledge of each child's home background and personal circumstances. Each child is likely to build his/her own special bond and relationship with the class teacher/practitioner and several studies have shown that positive teacher/child relationship is a significant factor in effectively managing children's behaviour.

The behaviour management strategies used should not be aimed at having children behave for fear of externally imposed punishment, but rather at providing the type of positive guidance and support that enable them to learn how to regulate their own behaviour and actions because of their intrinsic desire to do so. Such guidance can also help children to learn to use conflict resolution skills to deal with emerging problems appropriately. The teacher/practitioner should also model the kind of behaviour that children are expected to display. Also important is the recognition that good classroom and behaviour management requires careful planning which takes into consideration all the programme elements that can influence how children behave.

Several factors contribute to effective management of children's behaviour, among these: the physical arrangement of the space, observing closely what children

are doing and how they are interacting with each other, the quality of the teacher's relationship with children, how rules and expectations are established, the level of consistency and fairness in dealing with challenging behaviour and more.

Useful tips for managing children's behaviour effectively

Prevent negative behaviour: this is obviously not a strategy that is always possible, however, the teacher/practitioner can apply certain measures to reduce possible conflicts that might arise among the children. The first preventive measure is to ensure that the arrangement of the physical space allows children to move easily about without disrupting each others' activities. It is also important to provide a quiet area to which an upset child can retreat for a while until able to rejoin the group. Secondly, plan activities that engage the interest of children throughout the day. Engaged and busy children are seldom disruptive. When children are bored because there is too much idle time, they will become difficult to manage. Teacher/practitioners should therefore minimize times when children sit and wait with nothing to do e.g. waiting for lunch to be served. If children have to wait to have their lunches delivered from another location, the teacher/practitioner can engage them in songs, stories, finger plays and action rhymes until the lunch arrives.

Set behavioural expectations: even with young children, rules and expectations for behaviour should be established with their involvement. The teacher/practitioner can discuss with children the various guidelines for behaviour when the group first comes together. Children will be more committed to keeping the rules they help to set, rather than those that are imposed by adults without discussion and negotiation. Once the rules are agreed on, they should be written up and displayed on the walls of the room. Children will need to be reminded regularly about the agreed expectations until these are fully assimilated and more regularly reflected in their own behaviour. It is a useful strategy to discuss

with children what they will be doing and how they are expected to behave. For example, going on a walk around the community, would be discussed beforehand and clear expectations set for how children will walk to ensure safety and how they will behave when they arrive at their destination. Children must know also what sanctions will be imposed on those who fail to adhere to what has been agreed. This approach can also apply to children's use of the sand box, water play area and other play centres generally.

Keep a positive focus: too often we tell children what they "cannot" or "should not" do. This suggests that more often than not, our attention is drawn to the "wrong" things we see them doing which logically leads to frequent admonishments. Focusing on the negative behaviours will send messages to the children that in order to gain the teacher/practitioner's attention they have to behave poorly. It is a much better approach for the teacher/practitioner to observe children continuously and commend them for the good behaviours they display. For instance a child who is trying to fix a puzzle with quiet determination should be commended on the ability to be so focused and attentive, "Andre, you are showing such patience in fixing that puzzle. This is really grown-up behaviour and it makes me feel so proud of you." It might be helpful for the teacher/practitioner to create a list of positive behaviours for which children should be commended and constantly look out for opportunities to commend children on these behaviours.

Another example: Leah has been playing with some table top toys and now wants to play with the large blocks. She asks the teacher/practitioner if she can go play with the large blocks. Teacher/practitioner notices that Leah has not yet put away the table top toys. The teacher/practitioner could respond in two ways:

1. "No Leah because you have not put away the toys that you were playing with".

2. Yes Leah, after you have put away all the table top toys you may go and play with the blocks".

Which answer sends the more positive message? Teacher/practitioners must make an effort to think about the verbal responses that they give to children on a daily basis and ensure that they send more positive messages than negative ones in their interactions with children.

Ignore negative behaviour: in spite of all the planning that a teacher/practitioner does to effectively manage children's behaviour, several instances of bad behaviour are likely to arise on a daily basis. There will be instances where the child's behaviour threatens the safety of others and in such cases, the child must be promptly removed from the situation and provided with help to overcome the problem behaviour elsewhere. In many instances however, children exhibit annoying, attention-getting behaviour that are not harmful to anyone e.g. making undesirable sounds that are annoying. Such behaviours must be ignored consistently so that the child gradually gets the message that the teacher/practitioner's attention will not be forthcoming until the behaviour ceases.

Give praise and commendation: when praising or commending children for good behaviour, the teacher/practitioner should avoid using phrases such as "good boy" or "good girl." Instead, focus on the activity and let the child know why it is worthy of commendation. For example, a child goes over and offers help to his friend who is struggling to tie his shoe laces. It is very tempting and easy for the teacher/practitioner to say, "John you are such a nice boy." However, John would find it more helpful and rewarding if the teacher/practitioner said, "John, I really like how you went over to help Kevin tie his shoe laces. You are a real friend because friends are kind and helpful to each other".

Another important tip when giving praise is always to address children by their names, Betty, Debbie, Ann, Fred, Bobby etc. rather than use terms such as, "sweetheart" "darling" and the like. Children love to hear their names called especially when linked to a positive behaviour or deed. Focusing on the positive approach will help to significantly reduce the instances of negative behaviour.

Be consistent: once the rules and expectations for behaviour have been agreed on, all staff should discuss how violation of these will be dealt with. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of being consistent in responding to violation of the rules and expectations. All staff should respond to children's misbehaviour using consistent approaches. If the agreed on sanctions are not consistently applied by all concerned, children will become confused and might not take them seriously.

Be Fair: it is very important to "keep a close eye" or continuously observe children interacting with each other. This allows the teacher to note children's behaviour patterns and to see when conflicts arise. The teacher will be better able to ascertain what actually took place in the interaction and be guided by that knowledge to deal fairly with those involved. It must be acknowledged however, that the teacher will not be able to see everything that occurs between children at all times throughout the day. If conflict occurs between children and the teacher is unaware of what occurred all effort should be made to listen to the children's stories and ask them to help to determine how the matter should be resolved.

Match the punishment to the behaviour: if a child must be sanctioned for a particular antisocial behaviour this must be done immediately following its occurrence. The punishment should be appropriately matched to the behaviour and an explanation given to the child as to why the sanction is being applied. Taking away privileges is one strategy that can be effectively used. A child who misbehaves and is denied play in his favourite place or with a favourite toy as a consequence,

might think twice about exhibiting that behaviour again if he knows that he will be deprived of something that is special to him or her.

Deprivation of food and corporal punishment should never be included in behaviour management strategies.

Respect each child: children must always be treated with respect especially when sanctions are being applied. The child must be told that it is the behaviour that is not liked rather than the person. Speak with children about their behaviour in a calm but resolute manner and refrain from shouting at children as a means of curbing their negative behaviour.

3. TIPS FOR BUILDING SECURE RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

Healthy child development is firmly rooted in the building of sound, trusting relationships between the child and others in the environment. As Erik Erikson suggests, building trust in a child's earliest years provides a basis for the development of self-assurance, self confidence and a positive view of self. Children thrive best in the context of warm, secure relationships with parents, guardians, caregivers and others. This is particularly important during the first year of life. When the infant's needs are adequately and consistently met, he begins to realize that the world is a reliable and predictable place that he can trust. The more the infant is exposed to warm, supportive relationships, the more likely it is that the architecture of the developing brain will be healthy thus increasing the child's capacity for healthy learning, healthy living and prosocial behaviour. Children have to experience a strong sense of security and trust in the relationships they have with others, before they develop the desire to become independent. Secure infants are likely to become preschoolers with better language ability, problem-solving skills, social-emotional competence, curiosity, sense of independence and self reliance. Secure infants also demonstrate greater readiness in adjusting to preschool, are more likely to achieve academic success and engage in self-regulatory behaviour

Although the home is the first and most influential environment that the child experiences, many infants are cared for in early childhood group settings like day care centres when parents have to work outside the home. The teacher/ caregiver therefore has a special role to play in helping young children build secure relationships with others. These adults have to continue the parenting support for the child outside the home setting. In centres where relationship building is seen as important, infants are organized in a way that allows a particular caregiver to be the consistent primary adult who interacts with an assigned

group of children. The children are able to develop strong attachment and trust in the particular caregiver. Some centres go a step further by allowing the same caregiver to move with her assigned group of children over a three year period.

The tips provided below suggest ways in which adults (caregivers and teachers) in group settings can help children to develop a sense of trust and security in relationships, thus laying a sound foundation for their ongoing healthy development.

Tips for relationship building

Infants & Toddlers

- A desirable practice in group care of infants/toddlers is to assign a particular main caregiver to each small group of infants (group size consistent with the local standards). In some centres caregivers move with their group over a three year period. While it is understandable that the infants/toddlers will have to interact with other caregivers at some point during the day, the main caregiver spends the most time with her assigned group thus encouraging increased emotional attachment and bonding with the children.
- When infants/toddlers show signs of distress or need, caregivers respond promptly, consistently and predictably. Adults make every effort to comfort children by holding them, rocking and patting them gently to relieve their distress.
- Adults always ensure that children are adequately and appropriately fed and are regularly changed to prevent chafing and rashes, and to increase children's feelings of comfort.

- Adults verbally interact with children while feeding or changing them, using gentle tones and maintaining eye contact; in interaction, adults should avoid "baby talk" and use normal speech in addressing infants and toddlers.
- Adults regularly engage in various types of games with infants and toddlers, e.g. sound games, visual games, texture games etc; adults provide mirrors for children to see themselves and respond to their own images.
- Adults remain in close proximity to infants and toddlers during play sessions. This gives the children a feeling of security. Often children will attempt to go off on their own but will keep returning to the adult to be reassured before wandering off again. Establishing this feeling of trust and security prepares children to become increasingly independent as they develop.

Preschoolers

To support the building of secure and trusting relationships with children, adults:

- make an effort to promote positive interactions between themselves and children as well as between children and their peers
- are respectful to children and address them by their correct names
- provide guidance and assistance to children consistently in helping them to adjust e.g., to the new programme and setting, new teachers, new peers, new activities and schedules. Adults provide special individual attention to children who are experiencing difficulty separating from their families (parents or guardians)
- observe children closely to determine how they are coping and make efforts to individualise the curriculum to ensure that frustration and/or boredom are minimised

- commend and praise children when they demonstrate pro-social behaviours, and when they try to do things on their own; children enjoy being positively acknowledged as they care about adults approval of them.
- express high expectations of the children by making them feel that they are capable of taking on and completing tasks successfully
- avoid making comments that result in children feeling that they are not loved; when children are admonished for antisocial behaviour, the focus is on the undesirable behaviour rather than on the child as a person.
- involve parents in the centre activities and try to build a mutually supportive relationship with them. Children's sense of trust and security increase when parents and caregivers share a positive relationship
- create opportunities to interact with parent(s) and children together; help parents learn new ways of strengthening the bond with their children and gaining confidence in their own parenting skills
- identify each child's positive qualities and share this information with parents; maintain a portfolio for each child that documents developmental progress. Children feel special when they know that records of their progress are being kept for them to share with others.
- make every effort to strengthen relationships with parents and show respect for their child rearing preferences.
- engage in regular parent-teacher/practitioner conferences to amicably discuss various matters concerning the child as well as differences in expectations that may exist between the centre and the home
- engage in actions that reinforce the belief that children's sense of trust and security are enhanced by mutually supportive relationships between parents and centre staff.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE FOR INFANT/TODDLER PROGRAMME AND DAILY ROUTINES

Adapted from the Early Childhood Curriculum by kind permission of the Early Childhood Commission, Jamaica

TIME	ACTIVITIES/DAILY ROUTINES
AM	
7:30 – 9:00	Arrival, greetings, free play: children arrive and adults greet them warmly, calling them by name; children are encouraged to play freely indoors or outdoors with materials/toys of their choice. Adults provide continuous supervision, taking care to attend to individual children's toileting, diaper changing and hand-washing needs.
9:00 – 9:30	Breakfast and transition to outdoor play: at mealtimes, children's independence is encouraged by allowing them to feed themselves as best they can. Adults encourage children's verbal skills by engaging them in conversation during meal times. Children are encouraged to put their playthings away before going outdoors for play.
9:30 – 10:00	Outdoor Play: a variety of outdoor play equipment (some made from recycled items) is always provided to support children's development of gross motor skills. Adults encourage children to learn new skills and practice ones that they enjoy. Outdoor play periods are adequately supervised at all times.
10:00 – 11:30	Guided Play (indoor or outdoor depending on type of activity): adults involve children in specific activities aimed at developing perceptual skills (seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching) and fine and gross motor coordination; adults observe children's performance closely to detect possible signs of developmental delays. Adults provide the necessary support to help children strengthen their abilities in the different developmental areas. Individual toileting, diaper changing and hand-washing needs are continuously attended to. Simple songs and action rhymes are used to effect a smooth and orderly transition in preparing for lunch time.
11:30 – 12:30	Lunch: during lunch, adults engage in conversation with children that help them to learn about foods, good hygiene practices, and acceptable mealtime behaviour. Adults attend to individual children's toileting, diapering, hand-washing needs in preparation for naptime.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE FOR INFANT/TODDLER PROGRAMME AND DAILY ROUTINES (Cont'd)

Adapted from the Early Childhood Curriculum by kind permission of the Early Childhood Commission, Jamaica

TIME	ACTIVITIES/DAILY ROUTINES
PM	
12:30 – 2:15	Nap Time: adults provide soothing, soft music to create a quiet, peaceful ambience for children to rest or sleep. Children will awaken at different times and are encouraged to respect other's need to continue their rest, by engaging quietly with a toy or appropriate book. Adults attend to individual children's toileting, diapering and hand-washing needs as they transition to a period of outdoor play.
2:15 – 3:00	Outdoor Play: a variety of outdoor play equipment (some made from recycled items) is always provided to support children's development of gross motor skills. Outdoor play periods are adequately supervised at all times. Individual children's toileting, diapering, hand washing needs are met as they transition to snack.
3:00 – 3:30	Snack: adults provide, or encourage parents to supply, healthy snack choices; children's independence is encouraged by adults, allowing them to feed themselves as best they can. Adults encourage children's verbal skills by engaging them in conversation during meal times and gradual transition to free play.
3:30 – 4:00	Indoor or Outdoor Play: at this time of the day, adults involve children in creative activities such as music, movement, songs, story sharing, and story-telling.
4:00 – 5:00	Free Play, Departure: children play freely with manipulatives and engage in creative activities while waiting for departure; individual children's toileting, diapering and hand washing needs are continually addressed; as parents or guardians collect children, caregivers share information about the child and say reassuring goodbyes to each child.

SAMPLE PROGRAMME ACTIVITY SCHEDULE FOR 3 – 5 YEAR OLDS

Adapted from the Early Childhood Curriculum by kind permission of the Early Childhood Commission, Jamaica

TIME	ACTIVITIES/DAILY ROUTINES
AM	
7:30 – 8:30	Arrival, greetings, free play: children arrive, adults greet them warmly; they engage in free play, mainly indoors, where they may choose to work with table top activities, look at books, play with blocks, puzzles, shop or dress up corner, etc.
8:30 – 8:40	Clean-up and Transition to Devotion: children put away toys, etc., while singing special songs, e.g., Clean up, Clean up; they can also do toileting and hand washing as needed, then move to Devotion area.
8:40 – 9:00	Devotion: children participate in devotion exercise; this should not be a long session; the emphasis should be on character development and building positive values and attitudes through sharing of appropriate stories (drawn from different world religions) about, caring, sharing, kindness, honesty, etc., singing appropriate songs/choruses.
9:00 – 9:05	Transition to Circle Time: activities as for other transition times.
9:05 – 9:20	Circle Time/Group Time: as a whole group session, this is a good time to introduce new concepts to all the children, for further follow-up in small group or individual activity; various strategies are appropriate such as show and tell, story, picture discussion and other such activities.
9:20 – 9:40	Transition from Group to Juice/Snack time: this is a good time to focus on cleanliness, e.g., children washing and drying hands, being kind and courteous to each other, sharing information about healthy foods, etc.; adults should sit with the children and have these conversations with them.
9:40 – 9:45	Transition to Guided Activity period: children move into skill building sessions.
9:45 – 11:00	Guided Learning/ Creative Activity Time: during this period children continue to engage in skill building activities to reinforce concepts and skills already learned or are introduced to new ones; grouping is appropriate for this session as the emphasis is on small group or individual child activity; e.g., one group is engaged in a numeracy development activity, another group in a literacy development activity, while another group is involved in an art/construction activity. Groups eventually rotate and experience all activities. This might carry over into the afternoon Guided Activity session.
11:00 – 11:05	Transition to Outdoor Play: children clean up and go outdoors.
11:05 – 11:50	Outdoor Play: during outdoor play, adults should encourage children to engage in active gross motor activities to help develop mastery in body control; adults should always be present to supervise children's play; adults should also use this time to question children about various things in order to make them think critically and stretch their minds and their creative imagination.

SAMPLE PROGRAMME ACTIVITY SCHEDULE FOR 3 – 5 YEAR OLDS (cont'd)

TIME	ACTIVITIES/DAILY ROUTINES
PM	
11:50 – 12:00	Transition to Lunch: children move from the outdoor play area to the bathrooms to wash their hands and sit down for lunch.
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch time: adults should sit and eat with children in the classroom as much as possible. Children should not be allowed to sit idly waiting before lunch is served. Engage them in short stories, finger plays, etc. until lunch arrives. Lunch time provides the opportunity to help children learn good table manners and use the social graces. It is also a good time to talk with children about healthy foods and good health practices.
1:00 – 1:05	Transition to Rest time: children wash hands, toilet and prepare for the rest period.
1:05 – 1:45	Rest time: it is a good practice to play quiet soothing music at this time to help children rest and relax in preparation for the afternoon session.
1:45 – 2:15	Free play: children engage in free play as they get up from their rest.
2:15 – 3:00	Guided Learning Activity: as for the morning session; children can complete activities carried over from morning; this afternoon session is a good time for completing carry over tasks from the morning session and/or engage in other creative activities, e.g., singing and musical experiences.
3:00 – 3:30	Story time: before departure – children get the opportunity to develop language and communication skills by talking and telling their own stories, asking and answering questions and listening to stories.
3:30	Departure: children and adults take leave of each other in a warm and reassuring way.
3:30 – 5:30	(For longer programmes) Free Activity: children who participate in full day programmes can at this time engage in quiet free play indoor or more active play outdoor until their parents/guardians arrive.

MORE IDEAS

from

Early Learning Environments Around the Caribbean



STATEMENTS

MISSION STATEMENTS

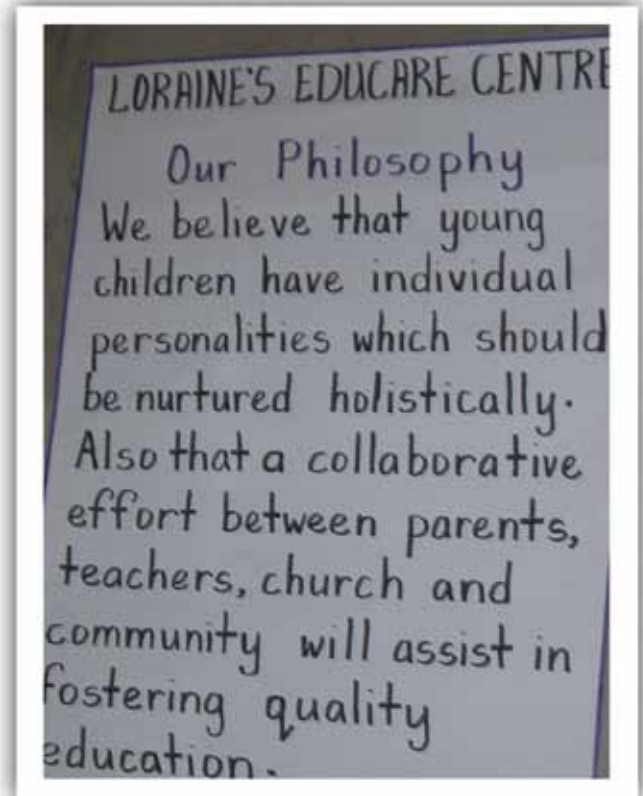
A PHILOSOPHICAL STATEMENT



BARBADOS

To work in collaboration with other persons, agencies and government institutions to impact positively on the lives of children and the families of children with exceptionalities, through the education of young children, their parents, teachers and the community.

JAMAICA



TRINIDAD

PROGRAMME SCHEDULES



A handwritten daily schedule for Trinidad, titled "Daily Schedule" in pink. It lists activities and times from 7:30 to 3:30.

Time	Activity
7:30 - 8:00	Free Play Indoor/Outdoor
8:00 - 8:30	General Class Assembly
8:30 - 9:15	Structured Activities
9:15 - 9:45	Child Initiated Programme
9:45 - 10:15	Fruit Time
10:15 - 10:45	Structured Activities
10:45 - 11:15	Child Initiated Programme
11:15 - 11:45	Physical Development
11:45 - 12:30	Lunch Time
12:30 - 1:00	Rest Time
1:00 - 2:15	Extra Curricular Activity
2:15 - 3:30	Circle Time Recall Dismissal

TRINIDAD



A classroom rules and preschool daily schedule for Bahamas. It includes five rules and a detailed daily schedule from 8:00 to 4:00.

Classroom Rules

- I will use a quiet voice in my classroom.
- I will listen when others are speaking.
- I will use my hand to ask an answer or question.
- I will be kind to others.
- I will keep my classroom clean.

Preschool Daily Schedule

8:00 - 8:15	Arrival and Greeting
8:15 - 8:30	Circle Time
8:30 - 9:00	Story Time
9:00 - 9:30	Art and Craft
9:30 - 10:00	Music and Movement
10:00 - 10:30	Snack Time
10:30 - 11:00	Free Play
11:00 - 11:30	Story Time
11:30 - 12:00	Circle Time
12:00 - 12:30	Lunch Time
12:30 - 1:00	Rest Time
1:00 - 1:30	Free Play
1:30 - 2:00	Story Time
2:00 - 2:30	Circle Time
2:30 - 3:00	Free Play
3:00 - 3:30	Story Time
3:30 - 4:00	Circle Time

BAHAMAS



A time table for Guyana, showing learning sessions from 8:00 to 12:00 for Monday through Friday.

TIME	LEARNING SESSIONS	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:00 - 8:30	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
8:30 - 8:55	ASSEMBLY	ASSEMBLY	ASSEMBLY	ASSEMBLY	ASSEMBLY	ASSEMBLY
8:55 - 9:30	LARGE GROUP	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
9:30 - 10:00	SMALL GROUP	Art	Art	Art	Art	Art
10:00 - 10:30	OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES	Outdoor	Outdoor	Outdoor	Outdoor	Outdoor
10:30 - 11:00	CHOICE TIME	Choice	Choice	Choice	Choice	Choice
11:00 - 11:30	PRE-DISMISSAL	Pre-dismissal	Pre-dismissal	Pre-dismissal	Pre-dismissal	Pre-dismissal
11:30 - 12:00	DISMISSAL	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal

GUYANA

HELPFUL RULES



BARBADOS



BARBADOS

KEY ELEMENTS FOR AN ECCE CENTRE



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

CLASSROOM LAYOUT & LEARNING CENTRES

Indoor Layout



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Home Centre



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Science Centre



BAHAMAS

Farm Centre



JAMAICA

FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO



BAHAMAS

Mirror



Easel - Chalkboard



Easel - Painting Side



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Sandbox



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Puppet Theatre



BARBADOS

Water Play



SURINAME

PLAY & LEARNING MATERIALS

Sorting Trays



JAMAICA

Matching Activity



JAMAICA

Counting Activity



JAMAICA



HAITI

Stacking Materials



JAMAICA

Alphabet Cards



JAMAICA

Musical Instruments



JAMAICA

Papier-Mache Fruits & Vegetables



JAMAICA

Animal Dominoes



JAMAICA

Animal Hopscotch



JAMAICA

Puzzles



JAMAICA



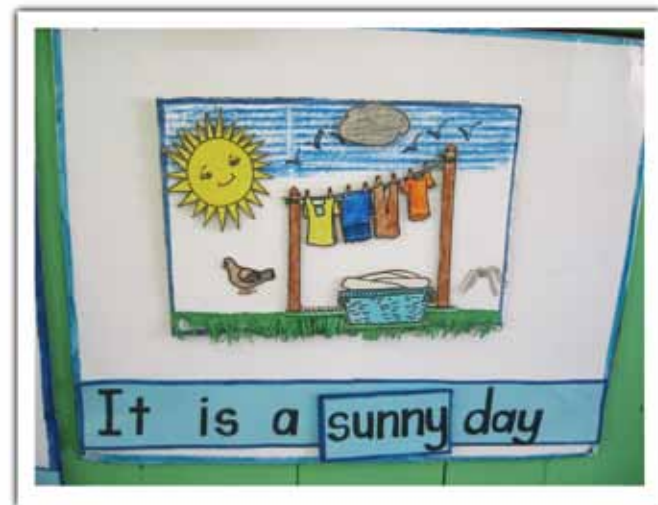
JAMAICA

Identifying Differences



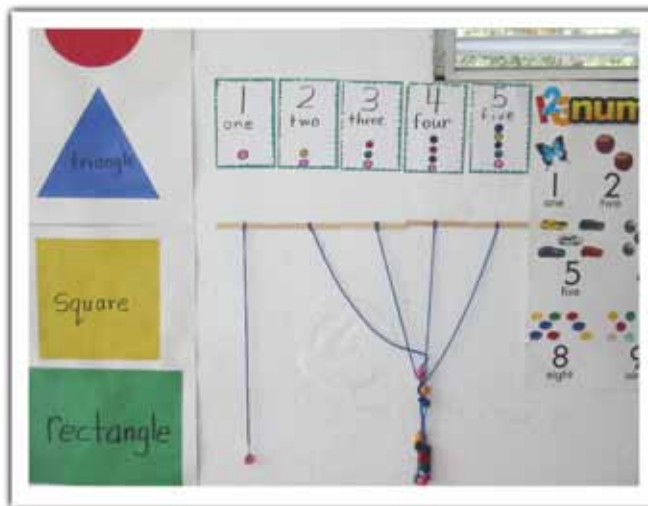
SURINAME

Weather Chart



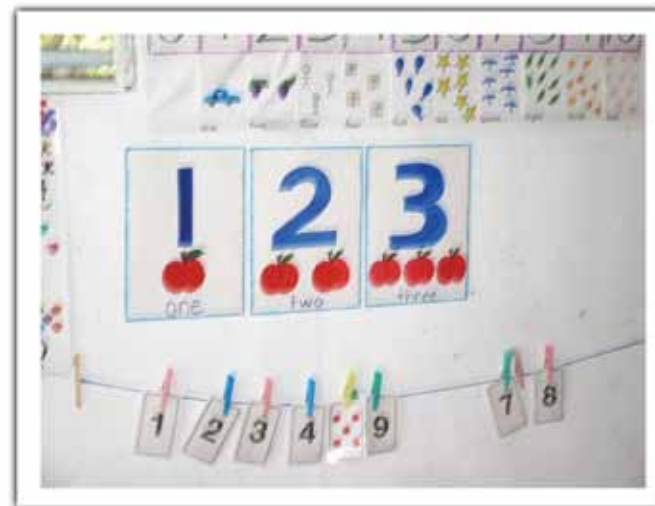
SURINAME

Shapes and Number Identification



BELIZE

Counting



BELIZE

Caribbean ECD Standards at a Glance

- 1. Space is organised for the child's learning:** The group size does not exceed 30 children in one space; adult to child ratios are safe; staff are adequately trained, meet and organise cooperatively; space is arranged so that children can see their interests reflected in the organisation (such as displays of work), access and choose learning resources in at least two or three designated areas (such as reading materials, home 'corner', drawing materials), work, interact and play with one or two friends in small groups for at least some of the time.
- 2. Care and Learning activities are scheduled:** Adults plan and provide at least two or three scheduled activities each day, indoors and outdoors, to develop children's emotional, moral, physical, emotional and intellectual capabilities, social relationships, and comprehensive understanding of what is right and wrong.
- 3. Care-givers and educators are suitable:** Adults providing care and learning experiences for children are supervised, competent in their work, warm and welcoming in their interactions with children.
- 4. Environment is safe and appropriate:** Premises are safe, secure, ventilated, well lit, serviced by a phone and suitable for access and use by children; children's toilet facilities are sanitary; adults have space separate from the children for preparations, meeting parents, breaks from work, storage of personal items and washroom facilities.
- 5. Furniture and equipment is sufficient:** child sized furniture and equipment for routine care, play and learning is sturdy and well maintained.
- 6. Health and Safety is practiced:** No major hazards prevent children's safe play indoors and outdoors; preparations are made for authorised administration of medicines, care in the case of sudden illnesses, accidents and emergencies, including fire; basic first aid is practiced by at least one adult; children and adults wash hands after toileting and before handling food; children have time and space to rest scheduled appropriately.
- 7. Food and drink is nutritious:** Children are provided with a balanced intake of food, complying with dietary and religious requirements; parents guided to provide acceptable snacks; running potable water provided on site.

- 8. Interactions and behaviours are positive:** Adults listen to children, interact with them warmly, demonstrate and praise positive behaviours, manage challenging behaviours in a way that promote children's understanding and development; corporal punishment or humiliating treatment of children is not practiced.
- 9. Parents are informed about what their children are doing:** Conversations with parents occur regularly and informally about their children to engage interest in how they develop.
- 10. Special needs are anticipated:** Adults are aware that some children will have special needs; are proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when a child comes to the service; and include children in ongoing activities with other children as far as possible.
- 11. Documentation is maintained:** Records needed for children's welfare and development are maintained and kept secure and confidential; these are shared with the individual children's parents; registers, procedures for admission and finances, accounts, and other records needed for the efficient and safe management of the service are set up and maintained.
- 12. Additional standards are practiced for babies and children under two years old:** Adults must have specific preparation for care of babies; the group size and adult child ratios are appropriate for their safety and care; toys and activities are appropriate for their age and provide a variety of language and sensory activities both indoors and outdoors; children have a consistent adult to interact with at frequent intervals throughout the day; separate arrangements are made for their feeding, rest and toileting; information is exchanged with parents on a daily basis about their changing developmental and care needs and routines.

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Learning Outcomes for Early Childhood Development in the Caribbean

HOW LEARNING OUTCOMES ARE ACHIEVED

LEARNING OUTCOMES



WELLNESS

A child who is healthy, strong and well adjusted.

1. Physical health and holistic development are promoted.
2. Emotional well-being is nurtured.
3. Sense of belonging and being affirmed is fostered.
4. Protection and safety of self and others is understood and practiced.
5. Ability to assume responsibility for own actions and behaviour is encouraged.
6. Awareness of own preferences, potential, abilities and limitations is encouraged.



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

A child who is an effective communicator.

1. Verbal and non-verbal communication skills are developed.
2. Receptive language skills and expression of information, thoughts and ideas are developed.
3. Creative and expressive skills are encouraged.
4. Emergent literacy and oracy are supported.



VALUING CULTURE

A child who values culture.

1. Awareness of and appreciation for own and other cultures are emphasized.
2. Appreciation for local, national and international cultural forms is encouraged.
3. Pride in national and regional identity is promoted.



INTELLECTUAL EMPOWERMENT

A child who is a critical thinker and independent learner.

1. Equitable opportunities for learning, irrespective of gender, ability, age, faith, ethnicity or background are provided.
2. The importance of play for meaningful creative learning is recognised and promoted.
3. An awareness of using gathered information to solve problems, reason and gain understanding of events and experience is promoted.



RESPECT FOR SELF, OTHERS & THE ENVIRONMENT

A child who respects self, others and the environment.

1. Knowledge of the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour is supported.
2. The ability to express empathy for others is encouraged.
3. Ability to understand and appreciate the views and feelings of others is fostered.
4. Building relationships, connecting links, interacting with family and others are promoted.
5. Showing love and acceptance of others is encouraged.
6. Caring for and protecting the environment are promoted.
7. Making sense of the living, physical, and materials worlds is developed.



RESILIENCE

A resilient child.

1. Addressing difficulties, challenges and conflicts using a range of appropriate and acceptable social and coping skills is promoted.
2. Dispositions of persistence, willingness to complete an unpleasant or challenging task or take calculated risks and perseverance are encouraged.
3. Knowledge and skills in self-protection and the protection of others are demonstrated.

IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD