

# Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum



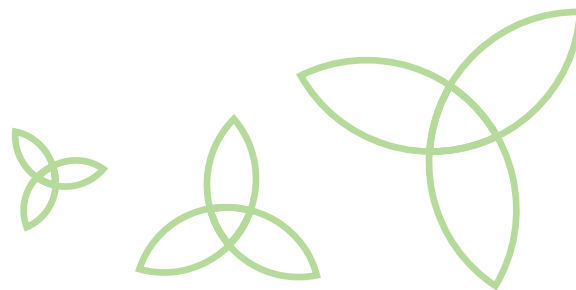
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# >> Contents

|                  |   |       |
|------------------|---|-------|
|                  | <b>Foreword</b>   | 4     |
| <b>Chapter 1</b> | <b>Introduction</b>   | 5-13  |
|                  | 1.1 Position of Pre-primary Education   | 6     |
|                  | 1.2 Core Value of Pre-primary Education – Child-centredness   | 8     |
|                  | 1.3 Aims of the Guide   | 10    |
|                  | 1.4 Basic Principles of the Pre-primary Education Curriculum  | 10    |
|                  | 1.5 Directions and Strategies for Curriculum Development  | 13    |
| <b>Chapter 2</b> | <b>Curriculum Framework</b>   | 15-36 |
|                  | 2.1 Aims of this Chapter  | 16    |
|                  | 2.2 Curriculum Goals  | 18    |
|                  | 2.3 Developmental Objectives for Young Children   | 18    |
|                  | 2.4 Learning Areas – What to learn?   | 21    |
|                  | 2.5 Learning Objectives and Principles of Teaching for<br>Different Learning Areas – What to learn? What to teach?          | 22    |
| <b>Chapter 3</b> | <b>Curriculum Planning</b>  | 37-42 |
|                  | 3.1 Self-evaluation – Conditions, strengths and limitations   | 38    |
|                  | 3.2 Knowing the Stakeholders Well – Children and parents  | 39    |
|                  | 3.3 Designing the Curriculum – Child-centred, comprehensive<br>and well-balanced, and adopting a play-based strategy        | 40    |
|                  | 3.4 Establishing Mechanisms for Curriculum Review and Monitoring  | 41    |
| <b>Chapter 4</b> | <b>Learning and Teaching</b>  | 43-56 |
|                  | 4.1 Key Factors in Learning and Teaching –<br>How to teach? How to learn?   | 44    |
|                  | 4.2 Approaches to Learning and Teaching –<br>Learning through play  | 51    |
|                  | 4.3 Catering for Special Needs and Learning Differences –<br>Respect children’s right to learn and tap their full potential | 54    |
|                  | 4.4 Making Use of Resources – Widen the learning space  | 56    |



## Chapter 5

### Assessment

57-65

- |     |   |    |
|-----|---|----|
| 5.1 | Purposes of Assessment – To promote learning and development                    | 59 |
| 5.2 | Principles of Implementing Assessment – How to assess?                          | 60 |
| 5.3 | Scope of Assessment – What to assess?   | 61 |
| 5.4 | Modes of Assessment – Who should assess?  | 63 |
| 5.5 | Records and Reports on the Progress of Children's Learning – Student Portfolios | 65 |

## Chapter 6

### Settling in and Transition to Primary

67-71

- |     |   |    |
|-----|---|----|
| 6.1 | Adaptation to School Life – From home to school   | 68 |
| 6.2 | Interface between Kindergarten and Primary School – From kindergarten to primary school | 70 |

## Chapter 7

### Home-School Co-operation

73-78

- |     |                                   |    |
|-----|-----------------------------------|----|
| 7.1 | Modes of Home-School Co-operation | 74 |
| 7.2 | Principles of Implementation      | 76 |
| 7.3 | References                        | 77 |

### Exemplars

79

### Appendices

80-100

- |             |   |    |
|-------------|---|----|
| Appendix 1: | Developmental Characteristics of Children from 0-2 Years Old                        | 80 |
| Appendix 2: | Developmental Characteristics of Children from 2-6 Years Old                        | 86 |
| Appendix 3: | Brief Descriptions and Examples of Basic Skills Applicable to Pre-primary Education | 93 |
| Appendix 4: | A Proposed Set of Values and Attitudes for Incorporation into the School Curriculum | 94 |
| Appendix 5: | A Study on Chinese Handwriting at the Kindergarten Level                            | 95 |
| Appendix 6: | Activity Plan and Review  | 97 |
| Appendix 7: | Life-wide Learning  | 98 |
| Appendix 8: | Children's Behaviours that Require Concern  | 99 |

### References

101-103

### Membership List

104




## >> Foreword

This Curriculum Guide is prepared by the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) of Hong Kong for Pre-primary Institutions serving children aged from 2 to 6. The Curriculum Development Council is an advisory body giving recommendations to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government on all matters relating to curriculum development for the school system from kindergarten to sixth form. Its membership includes heads of schools, practising teachers, parents, employers, academics from tertiary institutions, professionals from related fields or related bodies, representatives from the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority and the Vocational Training Council, as well as officers from the Education Bureau.

Pre-primary institutions are encouraged to adopt the recommendations set out in this Curriculum Guide, where appropriate and with due consideration of their own circumstances and needs, to achieve the pre-primary education objectives.



Comments and suggestions on the *Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum* are welcome and may be sent to the Secretary of the CDC Committee on Early Childhood Education by post, fax or email.



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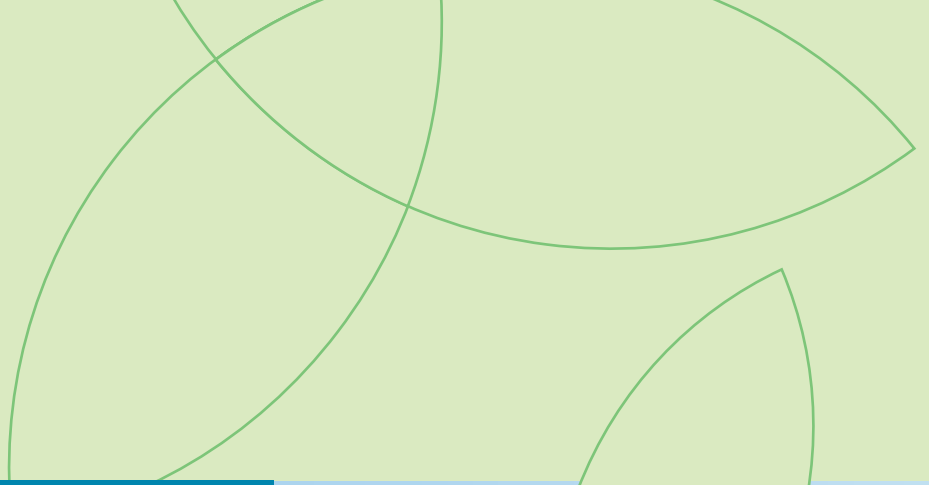
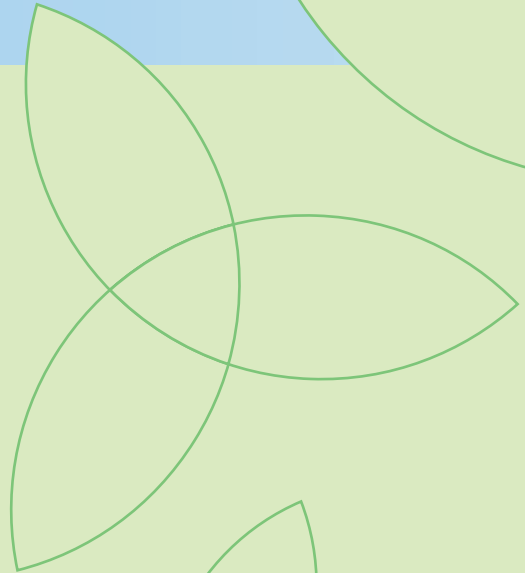
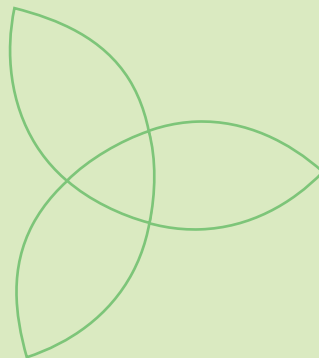
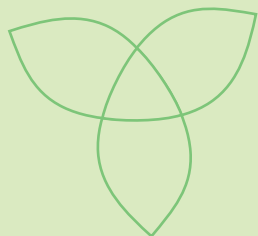
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Chapter 1

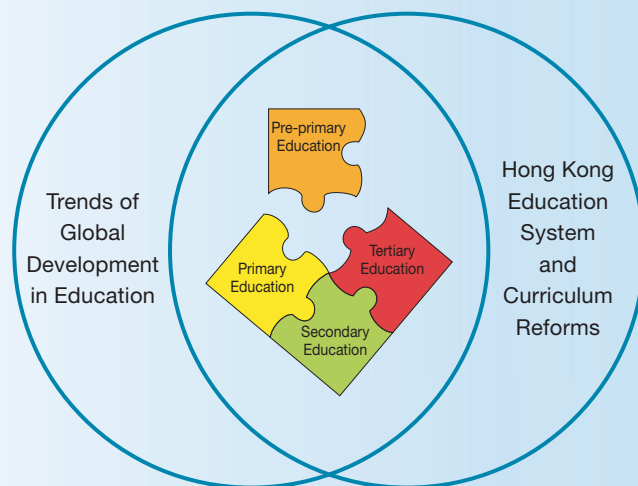
# Introduction



## Position of Pre-primary Education



Pre-primary education (Note<sup>1</sup>) is an important stage which lays the foundation for life-long learning and whole person development, and serves as the starting point of formal education. It articulates with primary, secondary and tertiary education to form an entire spectrum of education. *The Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum*, endorsed by the Curriculum Development Council of Hong Kong, has been in use since its publication in 1996. Following the latest developments in education in the world as well as the momentum of the Hong Kong education system and curriculum reforms at the beginning of this century, pre-primary education in Hong Kong has undergone significant changes.



### 1.1.1

#### Trends of Global Development in Early Childhood Education

##### Importance of early learning

Research into the human brain shows that the period from birth to the age of 8 is a critical phase for brain development and therefore the best time for learning. The influence of the external environment is crucial to brain development. If a safe and accepting environment with abundant sensory stimulation is available in early childhood, children will have positive brain development which is beneficial to their future learning.

According to the theory of multiple intelligences, there are many aspects of human intelligence and every individual has varied strengths. Pre-primary institutions should provide a diversified learning environment for children to develop their different potentials.



<sup>1</sup> Pre-primary education in Hong Kong refers to the stage of education before primary school for children.

Numerous studies on learning theory have shown that children learn gradually and construct knowledge with the assistance of adults. From the perspective of constructivist learning theory, children are active and self-motivated in their learning process. Teachers have to take up the roles of facilitator, motivator and supporter to help children learn and grow.

### 1.1.2

#### **Hong Kong Education System and Curriculum Reforms**

#### **Laying the foundation for life-long learning and whole person development**

*Learning for Life, Learning through Life: Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong*, published by the Hong Kong Education Commission in 2000, emphasised the importance of early childhood education as the foundation for life-long learning. It proposed initiatives for enhancing the professional standards of early childhood teachers, reinforcing quality assurance mechanisms, and improving the primary one admission system to prevent the tendency of inputting excessive anxiety in early childhood education. Subsequently, another curriculum reform paper, entitled *Learning to Learn - The Way Forward in Curriculum Development*, further elaborated on a learner-focused approach in the curriculum. Every student is capable of learning and should enjoy the basic and essential learning experiences. In this regard, the pre-primary curriculum should provide children with high quality and integrated pre-primary education and care service.

### 1.1.3

#### **The Ecology of Early Childhood Education in Hong Kong**

#### **Our strengths**

With increased in-service and pre-service training opportunities and upgraded academic qualifications of kindergarten teachers being required by the Government, the professional standards of Hong Kong kindergarten teachers are being systematically enhanced.

Following the reform of the primary one admission system, schools no longer enrol pupils on the basis of based on their ability. As a result, pre-primary institutions now have greater room to design their own curriculum and free children from unnecessary drilling and pressure. In addition, closer communication and co-ordination with primary schools help children adapt to primary school life.

In response to the recommendations on education reform, the Education Bureau has compiled a series of *Performance Indicators (Pre-primary Institutions)* as a tangible and effective tool for pre-primary institutions' self-evaluation and external review. Furthermore, the Working Party on Harmonisation of Pre-primary Services has also co-ordinated the establishment of kindergartens and child-care centres. All these measures will contribute to the evolution of a quality culture in pre-primary institutions.

With the impact of global educational trends, institutions and academics have begun to attach significance to scientific research. They have also actively experimented with innovative learning and teaching strategies, home-school co-operation and different modes of institutional administration, with a view to enhancing the overall quality of teaching and pre-primary education.

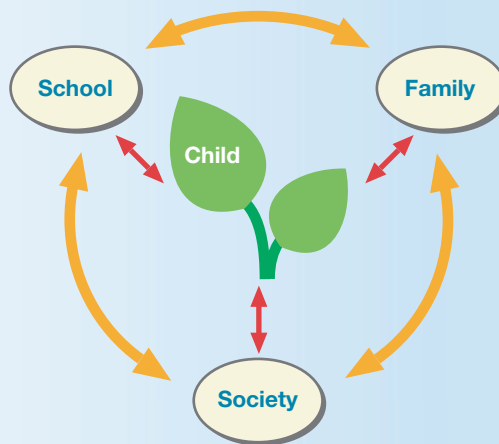
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### Core Value of Pre-primary Education

#### Child-centredness

Understanding and respecting children is an important principle of early childhood education.

Children's learning and development are mainly influenced by family, school and society. Under the major premise of understanding and respecting children, appropriate co-ordination among the three parties will enable children to develop their potential and lead them to a healthy life. By developing good learning habits and interest in learning, children will be well prepared for life-long learning.



#### 1.2.1

#### Children as Learners

Children are born to be learners and their development possesses specific patterns and characteristics.

Children's development possesses specific patterns and characteristics. We have come to understand children's characteristics and developmental needs from the perspective of child development psychology, as well as from the contexts of their families and social culture.

Children are at the core of the learning process. They are born to be learners and with the ability to construct knowledge. Their development and learning are greatly influenced by the people and things they encounter at home, at school and in society.



## 1.2.2

### Family Education

**Parents are children's first teachers as well as school's crucial partners for nurturing children.**

Families are the key setting in which children's characters are shaped. Children's development of personality, self-image, values and attitudes is greatly influenced by parents and other family members.

Parents' knowledge of early childhood education, expectations and parenting style may influence children's functioning in ways to be reflected later in life. These include, for instance, their self-care ability, social attitude and learning process in schools, as well as their compatibility with the community. Therefore, the family is an important pillar of children's development and family participation is essential for the success of early childhood education.

## 1.2.3

### School Education

**School is a miniature of society, and a bridge between family life and social life.**

Pre-primary institutions need to (i) understand children's family backgrounds, and establish partnership with parents and other key family members; (ii) understand the social environment and needs, and utilise community resources appropriately; (iii) grasp the current trends of early childhood education in order to define their mission and plan the curriculum. Pre-primary institutions should also provide children with care and appropriate learning opportunities which cater for children's developmental needs according to their potential, in order to stimulate their interest in learning and foster a balanced development in ethical, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic aspects. By these means, children will be well-prepared for life and become proactive, self-motivated and responsible citizens as well as life-long learners.

## 1.2.4

### Social Environment

**Social needs affect pre-primary education policies, whereas social culture affects parents' requirements for pre-primary education.**

Pre-primary institutions must observe the social environment in order to help children develop their potential and prepare for future learning. Prior to the establishment of a pre-primary institution, the sponsoring body should understand holistically the needs of society in mapping out strategies that conform to Government policy while adhering to the child-centred principle. Children are the leaders of tomorrow. The challenge ahead for early childhood education is how to proactively meet the demand for talent in our future society. In a co-operative and harmonious environment, society, family and school can work together to build a bright future for children.

## Aims of the Guide

### 1.3.1

This Guide aims at developing, for young children aged from 2 to 6, a curriculum framework which is focused on whole person development and life-long learning, under the guiding principles described in *Learning to Learn - The Way Forward in Curriculum Development* and in line with the directions of Hong Kong's educational reforms.

### 1.3.2

Every pre-primary institution has its own mission, resulting in different operation modes and teaching approaches in the curriculum adopted. The curriculum framework proposed by this Guide provides general directions for curriculum development for pre-primary practitioners: to widen the space for learning; to be child-centred; to respect individual differences; to promote motivation for learning and to care for children's needs. Pre-primary institutions need to formulate their own curriculum based on this Curriculum Guide and transform it into appropriate learning experiences for children.

### 1.3.3

Based on children's developmental abilities and needs as well as the needs of society, this Guide sets out, for pre-primary institutions' reference and adoption, the areas and objectives of learning and the principles of teaching.

## Basic Principles of the Pre-primary Education Curriculum

The Pre-primary education curriculum should be formulated according to the basic principles of "children's development" and "children's learning". Teachers' understanding of these two aspects will directly affect curriculum planning and arrangements for learning and teaching. Teachers can draw on these two sources of knowledge as the basis for educating children.

### 1.4.1

#### Children's Development

##### How do children develop?

*Children develop at varying rates, and have different interests and abilities. Teachers should understand and respect the unique developmental pattern of every child, in order to foster children's initiative in further developing and enhancing their knowledge and ability.*

- i. Children's development is mainly influenced by three factors: genetics, environment and education. While only limited change can be made to the genetic factor, the other two require good collaboration among the family, school and the whole of society in order to enable children to grow healthily.
- ii. There are common principles in children's growth and development. Pre-primary practitioners must understand the growing process of children and the developmental characteristics of different ages, so as to develop appropriate learning objectives and plan the curriculum according to children's needs. For teachers' reference, the appendix "Developmental Characteristics of Children" (Note<sup>2</sup>) in the Appendices of this Guide sets out the major developmental characteristics in physical, intellectual, linguistic, social and emotional aspects of children aged between 2 to 6. Moreover, a chart of the developmental characteristics of children from birth to the age of 2 has also been included in order to provide teachers with a comprehensive understanding of children's development.
- iii. A child's development is a gradual process. The developmental patterns of most children are congruent with their age. However, as growth rates differ, children also have different abilities and varying performance in different aspects. In addition, because of children's curiosity, self-motivation and ability to construct knowledge, their learning ability may, when given an appropriate environment in which to develop, even exceed the expectations of teachers. Therefore, when referring to the Appendices on children's developmental characteristics, teachers are advised to make flexible use of the information and draw relevant verification in light of their everyday observations, in order to provide appropriate and sufficient opportunities for children's development. As mentioned in the *Performance Indicators (Pre-primary Institutions): Domain on Children's Development*, it is not necessary to set out specific performance indicators for each age level.
- iv. Discrepancies are at times discerned among the requirements of society, the expectations of parents and the physical and mental development of children. If such discrepancies can be reduced to an acceptable level, education can function as a facilitating factor for development. Teachers' grasp of professional knowledge in the field of pre-primary education is necessary. In addition, a good mastery of basic knowledge of all areas of learning allows teachers to adapt to children's diverse learning needs and develop their multi-intelligence.



<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 for details

## 1.4.2

### How do Children Learn?

*“Learning by doing” , “Learning through play” ,*

*Interest is the driving force for learning;*

*Play is happy learning experience;*

*Sensory activities are the media of learning.*

*Observation, exploration, thinking and imagination are the essential learning approaches.*

*A sense of achievement reinforces further learning.*

- i. Children are active learners who are curious and interested in exploration. Given proper resources and adults’ assistance, children can construct knowledge on their own. A safe, comfortable, enjoyable and challenging environment is conducive to children’s learning.
- ii. Children’s learning is influenced by the factor of growth. They are not able to learn far beyond their ability. Children can learn well provided that the learning experience matches their development.
- iii. Children learn through their life experiences, sensory stimulation and interesting activities. Through play, they can learn in a self-motivated, committed, pleasurable, relaxing and effective manner.

## 1.4.3

Teachers need to be familiar with children’s development and learning, in order to:

- i. understand children’s behaviour;
- ii. have appropriate expectations and requirements towards children, which in turn helps them to formulate reasonable school rules and policies;
- iii. organise learning activities, taking into account the appropriate level of difficulty and meeting children’s interests, needs and abilities;
- iv. understand children’s individual differences, and both the generality and uniqueness of children’s development, in order to cater for each individual’s needs.

## 1.4.4

This Guide provides directions and principles for the pre-primary education curriculum. It gives pre-primary practitioners sufficient room to bring their professional knowledge into full play, and enables them to design the curriculum according to children’s needs within an open and flexible framework.

## Directions and Strategies for Curriculum Development

Following the rising standard of professionalism in the field of pre-primary education, pre-primary institutions are encouraged to develop a curriculum tailored to their own needs. They are advised to use the fundamental concepts and principles set out in this Guide as a base, to follow the directions below, and to adopt appropriate strategies. The Education Bureau will also provide support, where appropriate.

### 1.5.1

In designing their curriculum, institutions have to take into account their background, characteristics and mission, as well as children's abilities and developmental needs, and be in line with the framework provided in Chapter 2 of this Guide. Institutions should also adopt appropriate teaching approaches and collaborate closely with parents.

### 1.5.2

Pre-primary institutions should develop children's learning abilities and potential through informal learning which is integrated, open, flexible and appropriate to catering for children's developmental needs and interests. Children's abilities should be developed through play activities that are inspiring and fun.

### 1.5.3

Pre-primary institutions should design appropriate learning activities in different learning areas to develop children's basic skills and foster the development of positive values and attitudes.

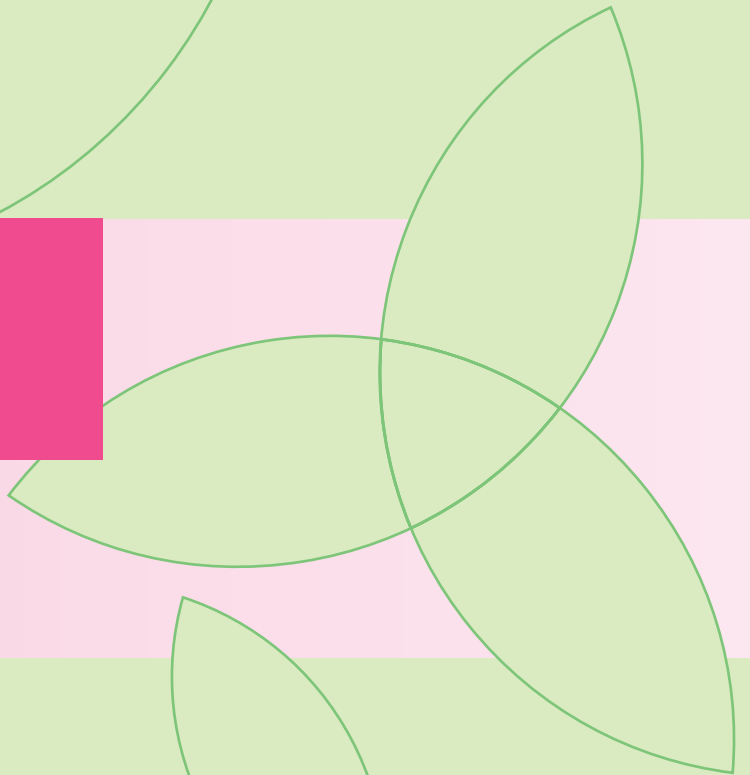
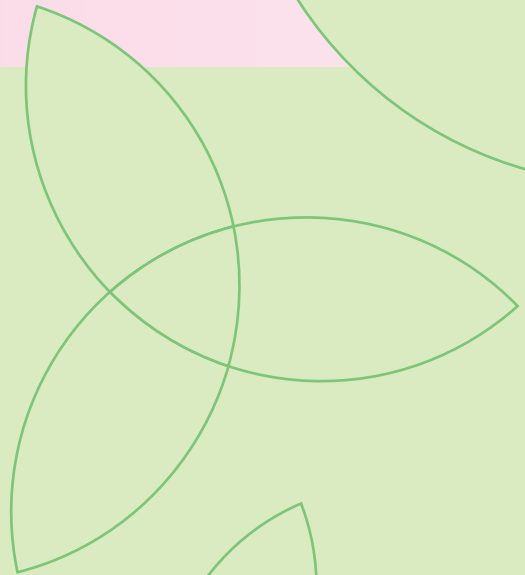
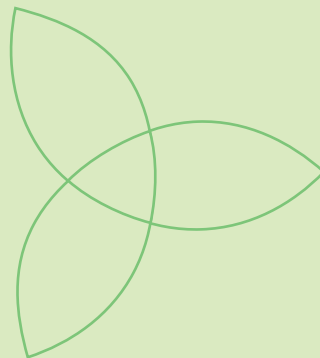
### 1.5.4

Pre-primary institutions and tertiary institutions should work together in experience sharing or the exchange of teaching and learning experiences for the benefit of the profession, by doing research or collaborative projects and collecting exemplars of good practice.



Chapter 2

# Curriculum Framework



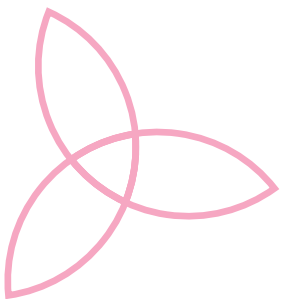
### Aims of this Chapter

The first Chapter of this Guide introduced the basic rationale of early childhood education and the key principles of the pre-primary curriculum. Based on this rationale and these principles, the present Chapter further sets out the pre-primary curriculum framework. This serves as an overall guideline for pre-primary institutions to develop their own curriculum, including the specific learning contents and learning and teaching strategies tailored for children of different ages, with a view to providing children with appropriate care and guidance.

The aim of early childhood education is to foster children's whole person development. In light of this, the core of the curriculum framework is the four developmental objectives for young children, namely "Physical Development", "Cognitive and Language Development", "Affective and Social Development" and "Aesthetic Development". These objectives need to be achieved through six learning areas, which are "Physical Fitness and Health", "Language", "Early Mathematics", "Science and Technology", "Self and Society" and "Arts".

All kinds of learning include the three key elements, namely "knowledge", "skills" and "attitudes", and these are also emphasised in the pre-primary curriculum. It should be noted, however, that in the early childhood stage, knowledge acquisition involves mainly the development of basic concepts, rather than the study of specific subjects. The above objectives and learning areas align with the curriculum goals of "Balanced Development" and "Learning to Learn".

Pre-primary institutions may refer to Chapter 3 – "Curriculum Planning" and Chapter 4 – "Learning and Teaching" for instructions on using this central framework in implementing their curricula. "Assessment" will then be discussed in Chapter 5.





# Pre-primary Curriculum Framework

## Goals

To nurture children to attain all-round development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics, so as to prepare them for life.  
To stimulate children's interest in learning and cultivate in them positive learning attitudes, in order to lay the foundation for their future learning.

## Developmental Objectives & Learning Areas for Children



Principles of Curriculum Planning

Appropriate Plan for Learning,  
Learning and Teaching Strategies and  
Assessment Appropriate to Children's  
Developmental Needs

Whole Person Development  
Pleasurable & Effective Learning

## Curriculum Goals

The overall aims of education set out by the Education Commission in 2000 are:

“To enable every person to attain all-round development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics according to his/her own attributes, so that he/she is capable of life-long learning, critical and exploratory thinking, innovating and adapting to change”

Since early childhood education is the foundation for whole person development and life-long learning, the curriculum goals of this stage are summarised as:

- To nurture children to attain all-round development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics, and to develop good habits, so as to prepare them for life; and
- To stimulate children’s interest in learning and cultivate in them positive learning attitudes, in order to lay the foundation for their future learning.

## Developmental Objectives for Young Children

With regard to children’s developmental needs, the objectives for the physical, cognitive and language, affective and social, and aesthetic development of children are described below. Pre-primary institutions should take into account the interrelations among these four domains as well as their own situations in curriculum planning.

### 2.3.1

#### Physical Development

Children use their five senses and their body to perceive and interact with the outside world. These serve also as tools to receive and deliver messages. Therefore, all learning and communication rely very much on body control ability, the development of gross and fine motor skills and the application of sensory ability. The following developmental objectives should be considered for pre-primary curriculum planning:

- i. To develop children’s sensory perception and abilities of concentration and observation.
- ii. To cultivate in children good habits, self-care ability and a healthy life-style.

- iii. To facilitate the development of children's gross and fine motor skills.
- iv. To enable children to understand the limits of their physical capability and develop awareness for self-protection.

### 2.3.2

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#### **Cognitive and Language Development**

The cognitive development of children begins in infancy. They construct knowledge of the world through physical activity and sensory experience. The sensory-perceptual ability of children, as well as the use of language and symbols, marks the beginning of the preliminary stage of children's learning. These abilities enable children to construct knowledge and develop their intelligence through real-life situations and experiences. The relevant developmental objectives of this domain include:

- i. to arouse and fulfill the curiosity of children, and to cultivate in them an inquisitive and proactive attitude towards things and people around them.
- ii. to develop children's simple logical concepts in mathematical literacy, so as to help them in analysis, reasoning, judgement and problem-solving.
- iii. to develop children's abilities in language and thinking.

### 2.3.3

---

#### **Affective and Social Development**

Everyone has his/her own thoughts, emotions, senses and imagination, which make an individual unique. These personal traits, together with other learning elements such as cognition, skills and attitudes, that an individual acquires in later learning, lead to a more comprehensive, whole person development.

The sensory-perceptual ability of children makes them inquisitive and active learners. If coupled with positive reinforcement, these attributes lead to pleasurable learning. Furthermore, the experience of social interaction gives them a sense of identity, self-confidence and self-esteem. It also encourages them to be more proactive and self-motivated in learning and in establishing social interaction with others. This developmental cycle is conducive to whole person development, which is the ultimate aim of education. The relevant developmental objectives of this domain include:

- i. to encourage and help children understand their thinking and emotions, and express their feelings and needs through appropriate use of language and non-linguistic means.
- ii. to help children develop a positive self-concept and build up self-esteem, self-confidence, a sense of achievement and an optimistic attitude.

- iii. to enrich children's life experiences and strengthen their interpersonal and communication skills.
- iv. to assist children to attain a balance between their personal interests and those of the community, to learn to establish good interpersonal relationships through negotiation and co-operation, and to accept basic social values and behavioural norms.
- v. to foster in children positive attitudes towards people and an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of individuals in the family, school, society and country.
- vi. to cultivate children's care for society, awareness with respect to environmental protection and respect for different cultures.

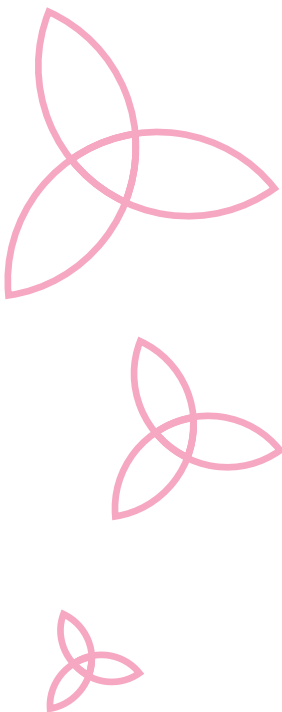
#### 2.3.4

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#### **Aesthetic Development**

Aesthetic sensitivity is cultivated through observation and feelings. Imagination is stimulated when one observes the environment with one's senses and compares the forms of different things. Children express their inner thoughts, feelings, emotions and imagination through the language of different media. The objectives of arts education for early childhood include:

- i. to allow children to explore different art media and symbols in an aesthetically rich and diversified environment.
- ii. to enrich children's sensory experiences and encourage them to express their thoughts and feelings.
- iii. to stimulate children's creative and imaginative powers, and encourage them to enjoy participating in creative works.
- iv. to enhance children's quality of life and foster their interests in life by guiding them to appreciate the surrounding environment.

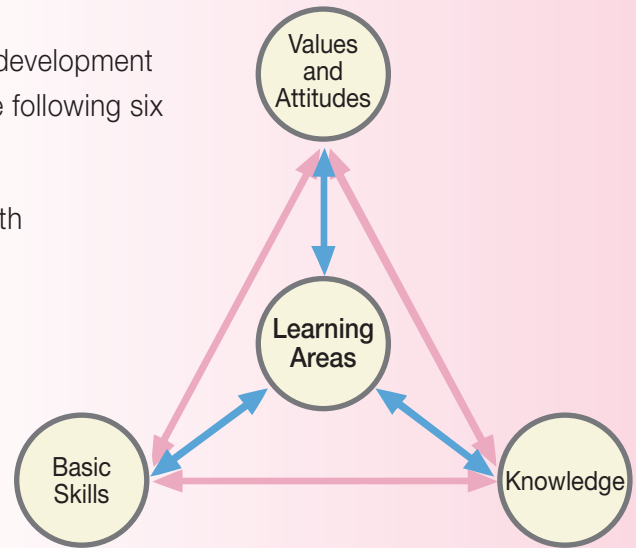


## Learning Areas

### What to learn?

The objectives of children's development can be achieved through the following six learning areas:

1. Physical Fitness and Health
2. Language
3. Early Mathematics
4. Science and Technology
5. Self and Society
6. Arts



The learning areas are components of the curriculum. They address developmental objectives for young children in different curriculum domains, and provide a framework for reviewing different learning elements. They are designed for the construction of knowledge and to provide children with contexts for the development and application of basic skills, values and attitudes. The classification into different learning areas is not intended to promote teaching by subjects or to prepare for this practice which will be adopted in primary schools. Rather, it is used as a means for providing easy reference for teachers in curriculum planning and review, and to ensure a comprehensive and balanced implementation. In terms of pre-primary curriculum planning, an integrated curriculum across different learning areas offers both education and care for young children. It also allows teachers greater flexibility in devising learning and teaching strategies. This enhances the comprehensiveness, flexibility and diversity of children's learning.

### 2.4.1

#### Knowledge

Knowledge refers to understanding of the world around us. It is generally acquired through memorization or comprehension of facts and information. Another effective way of acquiring knowledge is through organising and grouping together things or events with similar characteristics to form specific concepts. Teachers should take into consideration children's interests and comprehension abilities when deciding the teaching content and appropriate learning strategies.

## 2.4.2

### Basic skills

Children's basic skills can be developed through learning activities and experiences in different learning areas (Note<sup>3</sup>). These skills are fundamental to learning and living. They help children acquire and construct knowledge and can be applied in problem-solving. Pre-primary institutions should design a suitable learning environment in which children's abilities can be developed according to their developmental characteristics and learning features.

## 2.4.3

### Values and Attitudes

Values and attitudes are interrelated with each other – the former refer to standards of human behaviour and moral judgement, while the latter are essential personal qualities in dealing with people and situations. For example, courtesy, self-discipline, perseverance, respect and responsibility (Note<sup>4</sup>) are positive values and attitudes. Values and attitudes are developed through: (i) learning in school; (ii) family life and (iii) social contact. Therefore, when implementing the curriculum, pre-primary institutions should adopt suitable teaching materials and provide children with an appropriate learning environment and, whenever necessary, guidance. Teachers and those who have frequent contact with children should act as good examples for children. The collaborative efforts of pre-primary institutions and family are crucial in helping children develop positive values and attitudes.

## 2.5

### Learning Objectives and Principles of Teaching for Different Learning Areas

#### What to learn? What to teach?

All domains of children's development interact with each other. Similarly, the six learning areas are interrelated. In particular, there is a crucial link between language development and other learning areas, as most knowledge originates with language. Children use language in everyday life and during play activities. Language also plays an important role in creative work and social interaction. "Language is a key to full participation in life" (Note<sup>5</sup>) and also a key to knowledge acquisition.

The following learning objectives and principles of teaching for the learning areas cover the three basic elements, namely knowledge, skills and attitudes. In addition, these recommendations are prepared with reference to the professional knowledge of different subjects and based on the "Developmental Characteristics of Children" set out in Appendices 1 and 2.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 3

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 4

<sup>5</sup> Promoting pre-school language, p.26

## 2.5.1

### Physical Fitness and Health

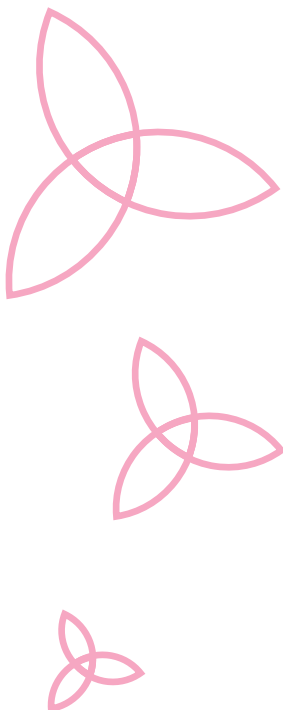
Strong physical fitness and good habits are the foundation of healthy growth. Children grow healthily by participating in activities structured in line with their physical and mental developmental needs, and by learning to maintain healthy practices throughout their lifetime.

Physical activities enable children to experience the capabilities of their body and develop a sense of space. Sensory experiences help children understand the relationship between themselves and the environment. Appropriate training helps children develop gross and fine motor skills and effectively develop their concentration and observation abilities. Most of all, their self-confidence is enhanced. As such, physical activities play an important role in children's learning.

Physical activities promote children's fitness, cultivate their will-power and enable them to channel their emotions. They can also improve children's adaptation to the environment. For older children, physical play in groups can further cultivate team spirit and help them learn the principle of fair play. As a result, interpersonal and social skills can be enhanced.

#### I. *Knowledge of Health*

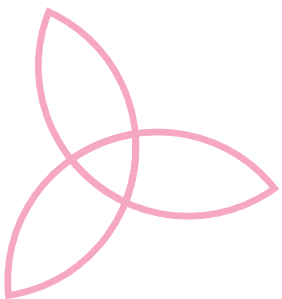
- i. Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to -
  - a. develop a healthy life-style by cultivating good habits and awareness in matters of personal and public hygiene;
  - b. develop self-care ability;
  - c. develop interest in and the habit of participating in physical activities; and
  - d. know how to protect themselves by understanding basic health and safety issues.
- ii. Principles of Teaching
  - a. Teachers should pay attention to children's health conditions when arranging teaching and learning activities. They should ensure that children are in good health, fit enough to do exercises, have no symptoms of infectious diseases and are suitable for participating in group activities.
  - b. Based on children's developmental characteristics and needs, teachers should design suitable activities for children to learn how to look after themselves and to acquire knowledge of self-care, hygiene, table manners, safety, etc.



- c. Teachers should set a good example by maintaining habits of good hygiene.
- d. Teachers should help children develop habits of good eating and good hygiene through daily routines at snack time and in toileting. Good habits should be part of their everyday living.
- e. Teachers should keep in touch with parents to learn about children's habits at home and guide children with patience in accordance with their abilities.
- f. Teachers should arouse children's awareness in matters of health and safety, and strengthen their ability of self-protection through daily activities, so as to reduce or prevent child abuse or sexual abuse.

## II. *Sensory Development*

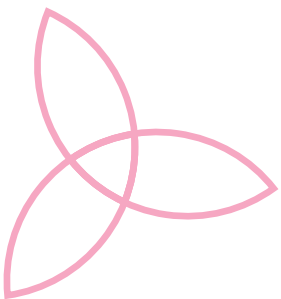
- i. Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to -
  - a. identify the functions of the five senses, i.e. sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch, and know more about their body;
  - b. concentrate, observe and co-ordinate their sensory functions in enhancing their sensitivity to the environment; and
  - c. use their sensory ability to explore and appreciate the environment.
- ii. Principles of Teaching
  - a. All activities involve the use of sensory functions. Teachers may help children understand their sensory functions through daily teaching arrangements. Teachers may also design special activities to help children experience the applications and know the importance of various sensory functions in everyday life.
  - b. Teachers should design activities which require the use of multiple sensory-perceptual abilities to help children learn to co-ordinate their sensory functions and use them appropriately.
  - c. Teachers should provide opportunities for children to experience nature and observe things around them, and give children sufficient stimulation in various situations to develop their sensory-perceptual ability.





### III. *Development of gross and fine motor skills*

- i. Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to -
  - a. identify the characteristics and functions of different parts of the body;
  - b. develop body co-ordination and sensory-perceptual abilities, as well as sensitivity to the environment;
  - c. develop good physique, sensory functions and physical competence;
  - d. develop will-power, confidence and courage; and
  - e. arouse awareness for their self-protection and learn the relevant skills.
- ii. Principles of Teaching
  - a. Teachers should develop children's fine motor skills in daily self-care routine.
  - b. Teachers should enable children to learn and master the skills and concepts of basic body actions, including balancing, moving and body control.
  - c. Teachers should adopt a variety of physical activities to help children learn the right postures, develop co-ordination, flexibility, sensitivity, strength, sense of rhythm, imagination and powers of imitation, co-ordinate their senses, and make good use of them to gain knowledge of space and direction.
  - d. Teachers should provide sufficient exercise time for children to develop their gross and fine motor skills.
  - e. Prolonged and intense exercise should be avoided to prevent exhaustion and avoid risk.
  - f. Flexibility should be exercised when designing the scope and content of activities, and factors such as time, season and venue (indoor and outdoor) should be duly considered. Space should be fully utilised to allow children to engage in physical activities with sufficient safety precautions.
  - g. Teachers should arrange gross and fine motor activities that also require the use of sensory functions to enable children to use their imagination and creativity in different activities with fun.



- h. Teachers should pay attention to children's health. If children are found to be unfit for physical activities, they should be allowed to take a rest.

## 2.5.2

### Language

Children are born with innate powers of communication. Before they acquire language skills, they use body language or facial expressions to communicate with parents or caretakers. Early childhood is the golden period for language learning. There is a close relationship between the development of language ability and thinking. Children can learn and think effectively if they are proficient in language communication.

It is suggested that language learning should be facilitated naturally and based on life experience. Children can learn more effectively in meaningful and authentic situations. Thus, a pre-primary language curriculum should aim at creating a language-rich learning environment, in which children can develop their language proficiency through try-outs, exploration and interpersonal interaction.

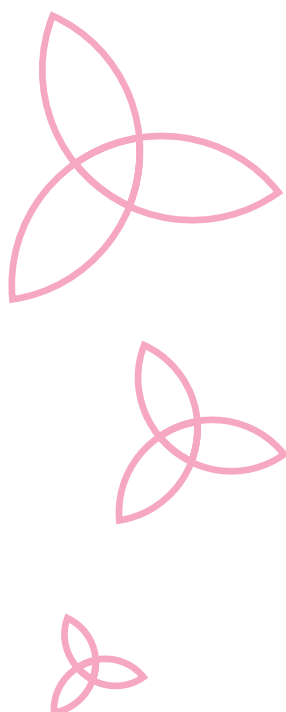
Teachers need to provide children with integrated language learning experience based on their language ability and developmental needs. In a meaningful language learning environment, children can practise the four language skills — listening, speaking, reading and writing. In doing so, children can be guided to use the spoken and written languages appropriately. Children's natural developmental sequence is that they acquire listening and speaking abilities before they learn how to read and write. To give teachers a better understanding of the developmental objectives in respect of children's basic language skills, the learning objectives and principles of teaching in listening, speaking, reading and writing are shown below.

Taking into account the local context of language learning, spoken language normally refers to the mother-tongue (Cantonese) and Putonghua, whereas there is only one type of written language. In this connection, institutions should arrange for teachers to attain the relevant language proficiency to facilitate suitable language learning opportunities for children. The following learning objectives and principles of teaching with respect to listening, speaking, reading and writing are applicable to both mother-tongue and Putonghua learning.

#### Listening and Speaking

##### I. *Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to -*

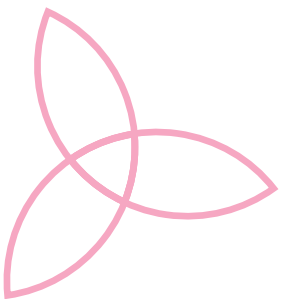
- a. listen to and understand conversations and stories which enrich their everyday vocabulary;



- b. use the vocabulary and short phrases they have learnt in order to express their ideas and needs;
- c. speak politely, clearly and fluently in dialogues with others;
- d. ask and answer questions, make simple inferences, solve problems and predict the outcomes of events; and
- e. share with others what they experience and encounter in everyday life.

## II. *Principles of Teaching*

- a. Listening and speaking skills are prerequisites for verbal communication. Teachers should motivate children by using everyday experiences and objects that interest them, and encourage them to listen, describe, report, ask questions and express opinions.
- b. Teachers should initiate casual conversations with children at appropriate moments such as during morning assembly, play time and snack time, and allow children to engage in conversation with others.
- c. When talking to children, teachers should use words and phrases easily understood by children, then gradually increase the choice of vocabulary as appropriate. They should also encourage children to accumulate and expand their vocabulary.
- d. Teachers should listen to children with patience, allow children sufficient time to think, and give feedback appropriately.
- e. Conversation should be carried out in a relaxed and pleasurable atmosphere. If children have any difficulty in expressing their ideas, teachers should give them guidance and encouragement to build up their confidence in speaking.
- f. Open-ended questions should be employed to stimulate children to develop their thinking ability.
- g. Children should be allowed to express different views and have different responses. Generally speaking, it is not necessary to insist on a consensus or definite answer.
- h. If teachers encounter errors in children's speech, they may demonstrate the right pronunciation or correct sentence structure in a friendly and natural manner during conversation with the children, to act as a model for their imitation.



- i. Listening to stories can develop children's abilities of concentration and imagination. During story-telling activities, children should be encouraged to raise questions and have discussion, so as to promote critical thinking skills. Children should also be encouraged to create stories verbally in order to develop creativity.

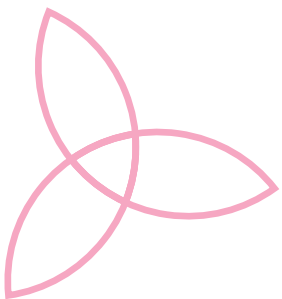
## Reading

### I. *Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to -*

- a. master preliminary reading techniques;
- b. develop interest in reading and form reading habits;
- c. understand stories;
- d. recognise common words and those they encounter in different learning themes in curriculum planning; and
- e. learn through reading.

### II. *Principles of Teaching*

- a. Teachers should organise reading activities through reading aloud, story-telling and play activities.
- b. Teachers should encourage children to read books and other printed text that interest them, such as posters, advertisements, magazines, pictures, etc.
- c. Teachers should provide children with quality books suitable for their age, ability and experience.
- d. Books provided for children can be either purchased or produced by teachers themselves.
- e. Books should be selected according to the following criteria:
  - the story should be interesting with a healthy theme;
  - the plot should be simple with repetitive sentence structures;
  - story should have simple and vivid characterisation which helps children understand the story, stimulates their imagination and satisfies their curiosity;
  - the illustrations should be simple, colourful and attractive; and
  - the language and vocabulary should be relevant to children's everyday life and reflect their interests.



## Writing (Note<sup>6</sup>)

### I. Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to -

- a. communicate with others using paper and pencils/pens by expressing what they see, hear and feel in the form of pictures or words;
- b. master fine motor skills and form a right-handed or left-handed habit through developing their sense of touch, eye-hand co-ordination, and knowledge of space and direction;
- c. enjoy reading aloud or sharing their scribbles or writings with others; and
- d. explore the use of different writing equipment.

### II. Principles of Teaching

- a. Teachers may make use of words in everyday life contexts to arouse children's interest in writing.
- b. Teachers should cultivate children's interest and ability in expressing their ideas and experiences through pictures and words.
- c. Teachers should not force children to write with pencils/pens if they are not ready. They can train their basic skills through a variety of play activities involving fine motor skills and eye-hand co-ordination. When children start to have writing practice, they should not be restricted to using lined paper or exercise books.
- d. Teachers should guide children to pay attention to characters/words, especially their structure, that appear in their surrounding environment. They may design a variety of play activities that deal with the structure of characters/words, such as strokes or components, to promote children's writing skills.
- e. Teachers should encourage children to build up their self-confidence by providing them with opportunities to share their writing with others.

## Second Language (English)

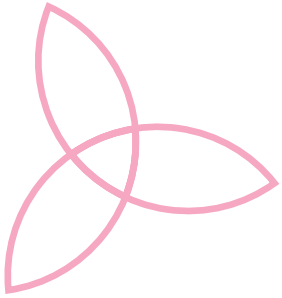
During early childhood, developing proficiency in the mother-tongue is of primary importance. Cantonese is most Hong Kong children's mother-tongue and should also be the medium used in pre-primary settings. However, more opportunities for learning other languages can enrich children's language experience and provide exposure and understanding of other cultures associated with the languages learnt.



<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 5

As models of language learning for children, teachers must speak with accurate pronunciation and use language correctly. Therefore, if children are to be introduced to English, teachers should possess good proficiency in spoken English and design an effective language environment according to children's abilities, interests and needs.

Generally speaking, most of the principles of teaching the mother-tongue are applicable to both the mother-tongue and the second language. Teachers can refer to the learning objectives and principles of teaching with regard to listening, speaking, reading and writing. Children can develop their strengths and grasp the basic skills in learning English, provided that an appropriate teaching approach is adopted.



### *I. Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to -*

- a. develop interest in learning English:
  - listen to and read stories and nursery rhymes; and
  - recognise and make use of vocabulary related to their everyday life or what interests them.
- b. listen to and understand simple conversations in everyday life; and
- c. sing or recite nursery rhymes and employ simple words used in everyday life.

### *II. Principles of Teaching*

- a. Teachers should cultivate children's interest in English and motivate them to learn by using authentic materials to create a language-rich and interesting environment.
- b. Teachers should let children learn through pleasurable activities such as singing nursery rhymes, play, story-telling, etc.
- c. Teachers should provide children with opportunities to listen to and speak in English through conversations, reading stories aloud and play.
- d. Language activities have to meet children's developmental needs. Any teaching approach that is overly bound by chosen texts or strenuous written exercises should be avoided. Rote-learning or dictation should not be adopted. Otherwise, children's interest in learning English will be weakened because of the pressure.

### Early Mathematics

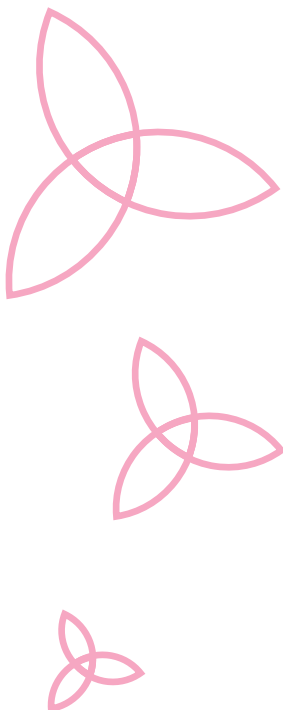
In everyday life, children have many opportunities to learn preliminary mathematical concepts. As children become better acquainted with the mathematical concepts in their everyday life experiences, they gradually build up a good foundation for cognitive development. Through a variety of activities such as hands-on experiment and play, they are also able to grasp basic mathematical concepts. These activities and experiences are essential for children to develop their interest, positive attitude, necessary communication skills and thinking abilities for learning mathematics.

#### I. *Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to -*

- a. develop interest in mathematics and cognitive ability through a variety of activities including play and experiment with objects, as well as everyday life experiences;
- b. apply simple preliminary mathematical concepts such as counting, ordering, sequencing, sorting, comparing, etc.;
- c. learn to identify the properties of objects such as their colour, size, weight, shape, etc., and build up basic concepts of space and time through a wide range of activities; and
- d. develop thinking and problem-solving abilities through activities and observation, analysis and discussion.

#### II. *Principles of Teaching*

- a. Teaching must correspond to children's development and thinking ability. Teachers should help children understand simple and basic mathematical language and foster their sensitivity to numbers and space with the use of real objects.
- b. Teachers should make use of every opportunity to introduce and consolidate mathematical concepts through play and learning activities. The introduction of mathematical concepts should be simple and tangible, concentrating on one attribute at a time and progressing gradually.
- c. The activities should be interesting and should match children's interests. Teachers should carefully select activities which are suitable for children. To promote children's learning interest and self-confidence, teachers can make use of real objects and encourage children's active participation.



- d. Thinking and language are closely related. The development of language and the formation of mathematical concepts are complementary to each other. Children should be encouraged to discuss the things they encounter in their everyday life. They should also be given opportunities to communicate among themselves and think from various perspectives.
- e. Teachers should provide opportunities for children to explore and discover ideas on their own. One-way teaching and repetitive drilling should be avoided for fear that it might weaken children's interest in learning mathematics and provoke resistance to learning in general.

#### 2.5.4

### Science and Technology

Natural phenomena and objects such as wind, rain, thunder, lightning, flowers, birds, worms and fish, which children encounter in their everyday life, can all be topics of natural science. These fascinating science topics are excellent learning material for children, who are curious by nature. Children will gain a deeper understanding of the things and phenomena around them, and experience the joy of science, through observation, exploration, questioning and verification. Many modern inventions, such as I.T. products (e.g. television, video recorders and computers), advanced means of transportation and objects that are easily accessible to children (e.g. electric fans and toys), are applications of science in everyday life. Through contact and manipulation, children can learn and experience the close relationship between science, technology and living. Under proper guidance, children will also develop their awareness of the environment and quality of life.

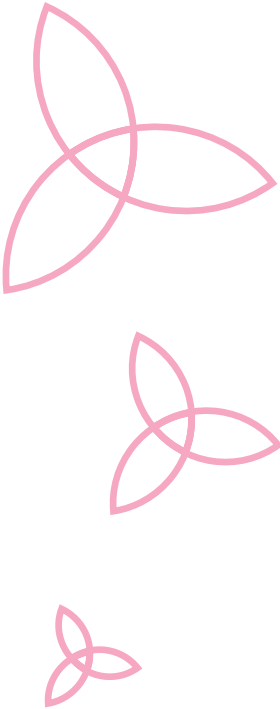
#### *I. Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to -*

- a. develop curiosity about the environment;
- b. gain interest in exploring the physical world;
- c. master basic exploration techniques such as observation, questioning and making assumptions;
- d. maintain an objective and open attitude;
- e. develop problem-solving ability;
- f. care for animals and plants, and develop concern for environmental protection;
- g. understand the relationship between humans and nature, and explore the relationship between technology and living; and
- h. have initial understanding of technology.



## II. Principles of Teaching

- a. Teachers should encourage children to be conscious of their surroundings and learn through observation, analysis and inference.
- b. When organising science activities, teachers should note the following points:
  - The learning activities which they arrange should be easy to observe, with immediate results and conspicuous changes. The procedures of the activities should be simple. Teachers should conduct trial experiments before asking children to do them, to ensure that the activities are feasible and safe, and can meet children's developmental needs and achieve the learning objectives.
  - Teachers should encourage children to try things out and learn from mistakes. The aim is to help children develop an inquisitive attitude, and the process of observation is far more important than the outcome. Therefore, teachers should not stick to any "standard answer" or disclose the result too early.
  - Teachers should encourage children to observe attentively during the activities and to report their observations afterwards. Children can share and discuss the outcome in groups or with the whole class. Meanwhile, the teacher can also help them make hypothesis, guess, ask questions and make records.
- c. Teachers should discuss the applications of technology (such as radios, telephones, computers, etc.) with children by relating them to their everyday life, so that they develop a basic understanding of the benefits brought about by technology to society as well as relevant concerns about using it.
- d. Time spent on using technological products (e.g. computers) as teaching aids should not be too long, so as not to hinder the overall teaching arrangements. Over-dependence on technology will deprive children of the opportunities to learn from reality.



### 2.5.5

#### Self and Society

Children's affective and social development begins with understanding their own emotions and the formation of their self-image, identifying family members and having contact with other communities. Through participating in activities, children gain experiences which enable them to understand the value of individuals, appropriate attitudes towards interpersonal relationships and other social skills.

Teachers and parents exert significant influence on children's personal and social development. Adults' behaviour, attitudes and values will directly or indirectly affect children's physical and mental development. A respectful, accommodating and safe environment is conducive to children's healthy physical and mental development. In addition, children can learn about the value of their existence and understand others' feelings and needs through interaction with peers. This will also enhance their interpersonal and communication skills.

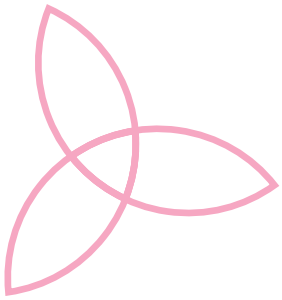
Social interaction is a source of learning. Children form their own values and ideas about social morality gradually, through internalising the behaviours, habits, thinking and language they encounter.

### *I. Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to -*

- a. know about themselves and appreciate their uniqueness, so as to enhance their self-concept;
- b. build up self-confidence and a sense of responsibility;
- c. understand and express their own needs and feelings;
- d. develop communication and interaction abilities and enjoy the pleasure of social life through cultivating proper attitudes towards people and the physical world;
- e. expand their social circle, understand themselves and the social environment, learn about the close relationship between themselves and society, and develop civic awareness; and
- f. develop national identity through an understanding of the Chinese culture.

### *II. Principles of Teaching*

- a. Children can understand their own abilities and strengths through various kinds of learning activities or free choice activities.
- b. Teachers should provide children with opportunities to make decisions on their own, so as to enhance their critical thinking skills, and self-confidence and independence.
- c. Children are encouraged to participate actively in group and class activities; and they should be given sufficient time and opportunities to interact with people and the environment, and to experience the social norms.



- d. Teachers should make good use of the natural environment and community resources to organise suitable activities which allow children to obtain first-hand experience and know more about society. This will also foster children's awareness with respect to environmental protection and appreciation of the cultural and historical features of the community.

### 2.5.6

#### Arts

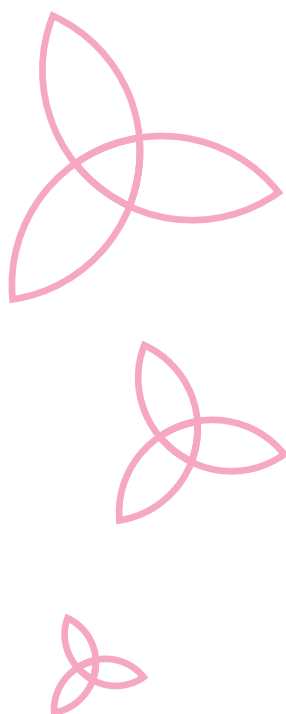
Arts can extend children's sensory experiences, and help them explore and perceive the world through different media. Children can also use their senses of sight, hearing and touch, as well as their body actions, to express their emotions and feelings, and to appreciate different things in the world around us. Through arts, which are also media of expression, children can communicate with others happily as this gives them a sense of satisfaction. The appreciation and creation of arts, as well as participation in interesting, balanced and diversified arts activities such as music, drama, dance and visual arts, can cultivate children's aesthetic sensitivity, imagination, creativity and communication skills. Children can have an enjoyable experience in art appreciation and performance, in turn, it will arouse their interest in arts and develop an attitude of life-long learning.

#### I. *Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to -*

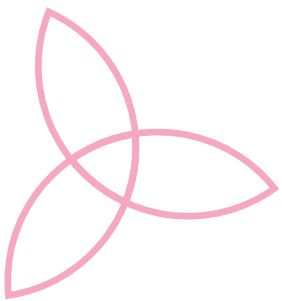
- a. enjoy the fun of different creative works through their senses and bodies;
- b. enhance their expression and powers of communication through imagination and association;
- c. express themselves through different media and materials;
- d. appreciate the beauty of nature and works of art;
- e. experience different cultures and develop diversified visions; and
- f. develop creativity.

#### II. *Principles of Teaching*

- a. In order to cultivate children's aesthetic sensitivity and appreciation capability, the teaching environment should have embrace a creative and artistic atmosphere. Children's artistic works can be used for classroom decoration.
- b. Diversified activities which focus on the learning process rather than the acquisition of skills and knowledge are recommended, as children will find them enjoyable.



- c. Teachers should encourage children to use different senses, especially their sense of touch, and their gross and fine motor skills to explore and try things out, so as to develop their creativity and enhance the fun of creative activities.
- d. Teachers should guide children to take the initiative to learn, and give them sufficient time and freedom to choose different art activities to express their life experiences, thoughts and feelings.
- e. More opportunities should be provided for children to appreciate diversified arts, so as to broaden their knowledge of art and cultivate their appreciation ability.



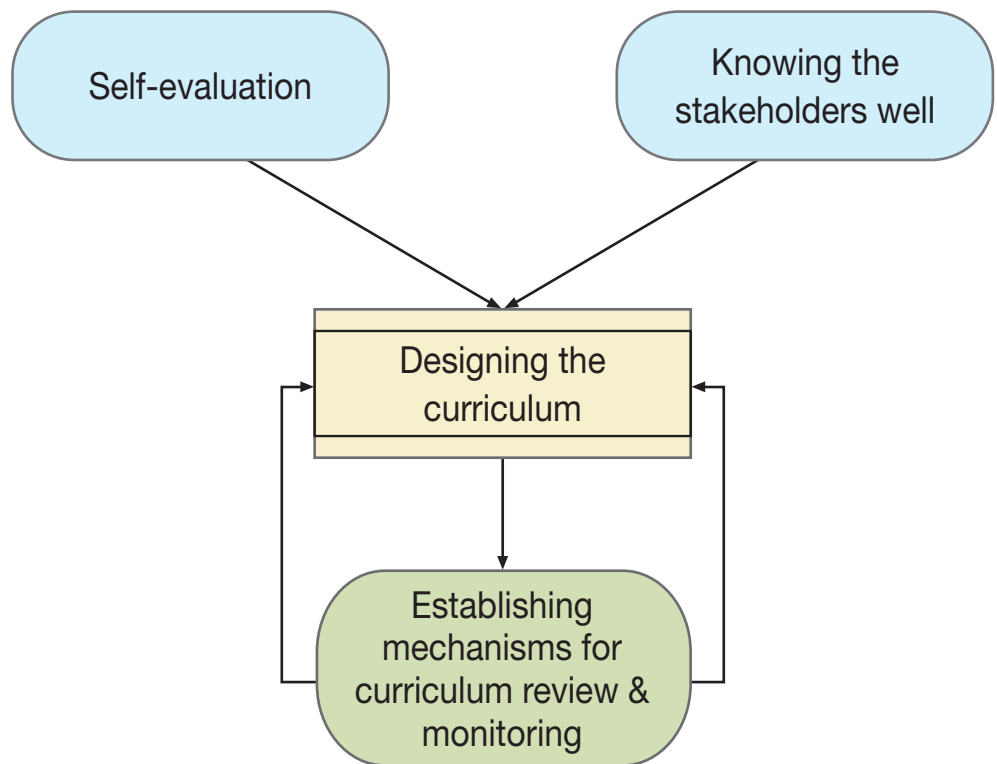
Chapter 3

# Curriculum Planning



# 3 >> Curriculum Planning

Pre-primary institutions can follow these four recommended steps when applying the pre-primary curriculum framework described in Chapter 2 to the task of curriculum planning: (i) conduct a self-evaluation, including an examination of conditions, strengths and limitations; (ii) know the stakeholders well, including children and parents; (iii) design the curriculum; and (iv) establish mechanisms for curriculum review and monitoring. These measures will ensure that children are provided with quality education and care services



## 3.1

### Self-evaluation

#### Conditions, strengths and limitations

Different sponsoring bodies have their own history and varied missions, teacher qualifications, leadership and community environment. They should examine their own conditions, and analyse their own strengths and limitations. Through systematic planning, the institutions develop their own curriculum to achieve the prescribed objectives. Pre-primary institutions can refer to the following items for reviewing their own situations (Note<sup>7</sup>):

- Institutional culture: including the historical background, mission,

<sup>7</sup> See Performance indicators (Pre-primary institutions): Support to Children and School Culture for details

educational goals, aspirations and beliefs of the institution, and the interpersonal relations within the institution and with external bodies, such as the relations among staff members, among children, between children and staff members, and the liaison with parents, external parties, etc.

- Administrative and management structure: the administrative system and developmental plans which are set up according to the mission and goal of the institution, including the deployment of financial, human and other resources, the establishment of evaluation mechanisms and the routine management.
- Staff management: including staff development and training, job allocation, appraisal of staff members, the co-ordination and communication system.
- Utilisation of resources: the allocation and utilisation of all resources within and outside the pre-primary institution, including institutional resources such as the setting, facilities, teaching aids, books, etc.; human resources such as teachers and parents; community resources such as parks, public libraries, etc.

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## 3.2

### Knowing the Stakeholders Well

#### Children and parents

The growth of children is closely related to their family environment. In order to co-ordinate children's school life with their family life, pre-primary institutions should understand children's family background and work closely with parents so as to adopt a consistent approach to guidance. The curriculum designed by the institution should cater for children's needs, as well as gain support and appropriate co-operation from parents.

Institutions may understand children better through interviews with their parents, and through observation and analysis of contacts with children. Throughout the process, the institution may know more about children's family structure, position among siblings, health conditions, aptitude, temperament and developmental abilities (including intelligence, language competence, social skills, etc.).

Parents are both the key partners and human resources of a pre-primary institution. Through different communication channels such as home visits, contacts during class or after school and other forms of communication, an institution may establish a close relationship for home-school collaboration, and understand parents' expectations towards the institution and their educational expectations for their children.

## Designing the Curriculum

### Child-centred, comprehensive and well-balanced, and adopting a play-based strategy

Pre-primary institutions should adopt the following principles for designing the curriculum:

#### 3.3.1

##### Be child-centred

All children are capable of learning. The curriculum should be designed with a child-centred approach and from the children's perspective. It should be geared to meet their abilities, needs, learning styles, experiences and interests.

i. *Meet children's developmental needs and abilities*

When designing the curriculum, institutions should identify children's best learning moments to meet their developmental needs and abilities, and provide them with sufficient space for a balanced development.

ii. *Relate to children's experiences and interests*

Children's previous experiences influence their present learning. Curriculum planning should therefore be based on children's experiences and should be related to the environment in which they live. In addition, the contents of the curriculum should be of interest to children, so that they are self-motivated and ready to take an active role in learning.

#### 3.3.2

##### Be comprehensive and well-balanced

i. *Cater for children's holistic development in the cognitive, language, physical, affective, social and aesthetic aspects*

Cognitive, language, physical, affective, social and aesthetic developments are interrelated and interwoven. Therefore, in the process of curriculum planning, due consideration should be given to children's overall development, so that individual developmental needs will be met in a comprehensive and well-balanced manner.

ii. *Foster children's knowledge, skills and attitudes in different learning areas*

A pre-primary curriculum should take into account all six learning areas and the relevant concepts, skills and attitudes.



### 3.3.3

#### **Adopt play as a learning strategy**

Children are fond of play, which enables them to enjoy the freedom and fun of sharing and working with others. They learn effectively in a pleasurable atmosphere. Play is also one of the most effective ways of learning, since it enables them to express their inner feelings and explore the real world. Therefore, pre-primary institutions should incorporate play activities into different learning areas and plan the curriculum through an integrated approach.

## 3.4

### **Establishing Mechanisms for Curriculum Review and Monitoring**

Unpredictable changes may occur when pre-primary institutions are implementing the curriculum, for example, a sudden change of weather, an unexpected event in the community, children's learning differences, feedback from parents, etc. In such cases, the institutions must respond immediately by adjusting the curriculum to meet the needs of that particular situation, so as to provide children with the most appropriate learning experiences. Mechanisms must be established to collect feedback from children, teachers and parents for reviewing and monitoring the implementation of the curriculum.

#### 3.4.1

##### **Children**

Throughout the process of observation, record-keeping and analysis of children's daily learning performance, teachers may make use of portfolios (Note<sup>8</sup>) which include the items achieved and those needing for further development, the difficulties that children encountered and their learning attitudes. Adjustments should be made to the curriculum and support should be provided to children wherever appropriate.

#### 3.4.2

##### **Teachers**

It is necessary for teachers to keep reviewing whether the arrangement and implementation of activities have met the pre-set learning objectives; whether the content meets children's needs; and whether the teaching approaches stimulate children's learning interest. Teachers are encouraged to exchange their teaching experiences and share exemplars with peers, and work as a team to solve problems encountered. Teachers may refer to Appendix 6 to plan the activities and formulate proper review mechanisms for their own institutions.

#### 3.4.3

##### **Parents**

As parents have close contact with their children, they know clearly what children do at home. The information provided by parents is useful for teachers



<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 5

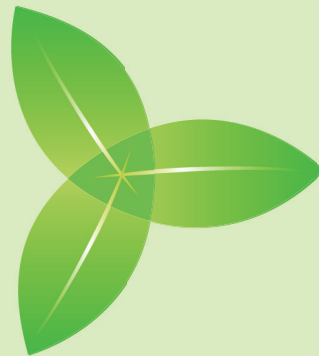
to have a better understanding of the children. In return, teachers may keep parents informed of how children behave in school through interviews and elaboration on children's portfolios. These are also channels for teachers to obtain parents' feedback.

Curriculum leaders of pre-primary institutions should exercise their professional knowledge to make good use of feedback from children, teachers and parents. The curriculum should then be reviewed and adjusted to provide children with the most suitable education and care.



Chapter 4

# Learning and Teaching



While an ideal curriculum is based on the principles of curriculum planning mentioned in Chapter 3, other key factors, such as the role of teachers, the learning environment and timetabling, also contribute to the success of curriculum implementation. The expected teaching objectives can only be achieved by adopting appropriate learning and teaching strategies.

## 4.1

## Key Factors in Learning and Teaching

### 4.1.1

#### The Role of Teachers

#### How to teach? How to learn?

The frontline practitioners play a crucial role in actualising the principles of early childhood education in the children's learning process. Teachers are the implementors of the curriculum. As such, their mastery of the curriculum concepts and their attitudes and skills in planning and conducting the activities affect directly the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. As the curriculum implementors, teachers should also consider play, learning, and care as a whole, as these are inter-related in the holistic development of children.

In view of the changing social situations, teachers should be knowledgeable and have ability in mastering new concepts and skills, in order to satisfy the needs of children who are highly inquisitive, creative and imaginative. When guiding children to become life-long learners, teachers must set themselves as good models by ever improving and enriching themselves in the pursuit of knowledge. They must also have the awareness, ability and attitude to support life-long learning.

With the implementation of curriculum reform, the role of teachers has changed. Teachers not only transmit knowledge, but also help children construct knowledge. In addition to implementing the existing curriculum, they must play an active role in developing the curriculum for their institutions.

The following points will help teachers to review their own important role:

i. *Pay attention to the children's physical and mental health and habits*

Besides understanding children's developmental characteristics at different stages, teachers must also be aware of the health conditions, personalities, habits, experiences and abilities of every child, so that they can provide proper care and guidance according to children's individual needs.

ii. *Establish good relationships with children*

Teachers should adopt a caring, accommodating and open attitude towards children. They should listen to children patiently and encourage them to express their feelings, raise questions and voice their opinions. When conducting activities, teachers should use simple and clear language, open-ended questions and simple instructions to facilitate children's understanding of the learning content. Furthermore, teachers may praise, encourage and comfort children by suitable use of eye contact, smile, facial expression and other kinds of body language. When children feel respected and accepted, they will be more confident and motivated to make new attempts in the learning process.

iii. *Set a good model for children*

Children tend to learn by imitation. Teachers' words and behaviours affect directly or indirectly the learning and development of children. Teachers' life attitudes and behaviours, including personal hygiene, etiquette and manners, as well as their values such as caring, friendliness, willingness to share and eagerness to help others, become good models for young children. Teachers must set themselves as examples and live up to these positive values and attitudes. In turn, children will learn from teachers, and the educational objective of whole person development will be achieved.

iv. *Enrich children's learning experiences*

Teachers must be well prepared before conducting activities. This includes activity planning, collecting teaching materials, setting the environment for learning and preparing learning aids, so that children can learn in an enriched environment. When conducting project learning, teachers provide not only a suitable environment and the appropriate resources, but also opportunities for children to be active learners. Children are encouraged to interact with and learn from their peers. In response to possible changes in the learning environment or the interests of children, teachers should make good use of every opportunity to provide proper guidance in order to enrich children's learning experiences.



v. *Create a pleasurable learning atmosphere*

Teachers should be optimistic, amiable and humorous. During activities, they must be observant, pay attention to children's reactions and give appropriate responses, so as to create a pleasurable learning atmosphere that will enhance children's initiative and active involvement in learning. Such pleasurable learning experiences are conducive to the children's healthy development.

vi. *Promote the overall co-operation of staff in the institution*

The concerted efforts of staff of every position in a pre-primary institution contribute to the smooth implementation of the pre-primary curriculum. To improve the overall co-ordination work in a pre-primary institution, it is necessary for teachers to have mutual understanding and be collaborative through various communication channels such as meetings, newsletters and daily dialogues. It is desirable for the principal and teachers to share their working experiences, joys and sorrows, in order to help to establish a mutually supportive institutional culture. Teachers should also attach importance to professional development through continuous study, and strengthen their communication and co-operation with other teachers and fellow educators. This will help promote effective co-ordination within a pre-primary institution and foster the achievement of the aims of early childhood education.

#### 4.1.2

### The Learning Environment

A well-designed and richly decorated learning environment not only creates a relaxed and pleasurable atmosphere, but also promotes effective learning for young children. Teachers should pay attention to properly setting up the classroom with the help of a comprehensive and detailed plan of how the classroom can best be arranged. For instance, the use of space, passages between tables and chairs, the separation of "quiet" and "active" activity corners, the design of display boards and the overall layout should be in line with the teaching themes and children's learning needs. These arrangements aim at providing an environment with adequate space for free movement and easy access to toys and learning materials, and serve the purpose of stimulating children to learn.

i. *Safety and health*

Pre-primary institutions should observe the safety regulations and health guidelines issued by the Government (Note<sup>9</sup>) to ensure that children learn in a safe and healthy environment. The floor surface must be flat and non-slippery. All exits and staircases are to be kept free from obstruction.



<sup>9</sup> "Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable in Child Care Centres/Kindergartens/Schools" and "Operation Manual for Pre-primary Institutions"

Furniture and equipment should not have protruding corners, nails or splinters. All toys and articles used should be non-toxic and free from lead. Broken articles should be repaired or discarded. First aid kits should be easily accessible. To prevent accidents, children's safety should always be the top priority when designing the classroom layout and planning the activities.

## ii. *Arrangement of the environment*

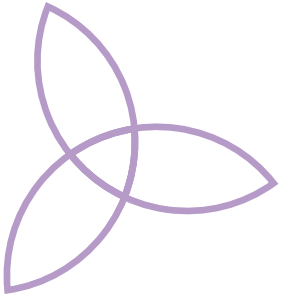
Classrooms should be spacious and have adequate lighting, good ventilation, enough space for activities and appropriate facilities. It is advisable to paint the wall with a soft colour to give a natural and comfortable feeling. The use of bright coloured paints, on the other hand, can arouse children's pleasurable feelings. Walls which are within easy reach of children can be covered with plastic boards or ceramic tiles to facilitate easy cleaning or the display of children's work. The floor surface must be kept clean and dry at all times. The materials used for covering the floor should be of a more durable nature, easy to clean, able to absorb sound and suitable for sitting on, for example, rubber tiles, rubber mats, etc. In addition, mirrors should be installed in suitable places or on walls to offer children more opportunities to examine their own images.

## iii. *Layout of activity centres*

To prepare an activity centre which caters for children's interests, pre-primary institutions must observe specified requirements in size and capacity. "Active" and "quiet" activity corners should be separated to avoid groups of children disturbing each other. In order to enhance children's interest in learning, interest corners, toys and facilities for creative activities should be diversified and changed periodically according to the developmental needs of children. Toys should be provided in the activity centres for individual or group activities. For reading and in family corners, soft mats or cushions can be placed to create a cozy environment for children. An individual child should also be allowed to have a quiet place to calm down his/her emotions when necessary. All in all, teachers must be flexible in using activity spaces.

## iv. *Arrangement of furniture*

The height of classroom furniture or partitioning boards should be adjusted to children's height. The furniture should not be centralised in one specific spot but be appropriately placed. Toy cabinets and arts racks should be stable and safe, and equipped with locking wheels so that they can be easily moved and used as partitions. The backs of cabinets can also be



used for the display of children's work. It is advisable to arrange tables and chairs flexibly in groups to facilitate more interaction among children.

#### v. *Decoration in the environment*

The layout of the classroom can be periodically changed according to the curriculum plan so as to give children a fresh impression all the time. This will provide children with more opportunities and serve as a means of arousing their interest in learning. There should be display boards and strings for displaying children's work. Display of children's work can serve as an encouragement to children in general rather than just a means of exhibiting a small number of outstanding items. Every child should have a chance to exhibit his/her work, or help in mounting displays and arranging decorations under safe conditions. Exhibits should be changed periodically and displayed at children's eye level. In addition, well-placed potted plants can beautify the classroom as well as enable children to learn more about plants.

### 4.1.3

#### **Arrangement of Activities and Timetabling**

Beginning at birth, no matter where and when, children learn through making sense of every experience in every minute and second. Hence the arrangements in institutions will have direct or indirect effects on children's learning. To help children achieve a balanced development, institutions should avoid subject teaching or mere delivery of academic knowledge. When organising the timetable, the use of time should be flexible and appropriate activities should be arranged to meet the developmental needs of children, especially for 2- or 3-year-olds. Generally speaking, the younger the children:

- the more physical activities they need to acquire an understanding of their surroundings;
- the more self-motivated activities they need to learn the skills of self-control and self-care;
- the more real and concrete objects they need in the course of learning and exploration;
- the more freedom they need for making their own choices. If fewer rules are imposed, there is more space for learning and growth; and
- the less suitable it is for them to participate in competitions and activities that require a long waiting time.

Below are some principles for pre-primary institutions to consider in the overall planning, design and use of timetables:



i. *Arrange balanced activities*

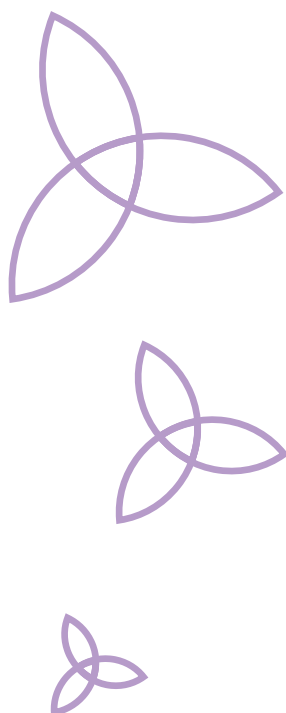
A pre-primary curriculum generally includes the following five kinds of activities:

- indoor and outdoor activities;
- gross and fine motor activities;
- “quiet” and “active” activities;
- individual, group and class activities; and
- activities initiated by children and organised by teachers.

Teachers should organise different but well-balanced activities based on realistic conditions which suit children’s learning progress, so as to make learning more effective. The table below sets out the recommended activities and schedules for full-day and half-day kindergartens and child care centres. Pre-primary institutions are advised to make reference to it.

### Recommended Activities and Schedules

| Activities  | Appropriate Time Allocation (minutes) |          |
|---|---------------------------------------|----------|
|   | Full-day                              | Half-day |
| Welcoming / Whole-class Activities (health inspections, conversation and sharing of everyday life experiences)                  | 15-30                                 | 15-30    |
| Free Choice Activities (e.g. play involving construction, creation, exploration, manipulation, social interaction and language) | 95-145                                | 75-95    |
| Physical Fitness/Music/Arts   | 60-105                                | 45-60    |
| *Toilet Time  | *40-60                                | *20-30   |
| Meals (tidying up, lunch time, snack time )   | 60                                    | 15-20    |
| **Afternoon Nap / Break   | *80-105                               | —        |
| Tidying-up Activities and Getting Ready to Go Home (conclusion of the day’s activities, conversation and nursery rhymes)        | 20-30                                 | 10-15    |



- \* This can be adjusted based on the needs of specific children and the toilet facilities in an institution.
- \*\* Soft music or story-telling may help children fall asleep. If children cannot fall asleep, or wake up earlier than expected, teachers may arrange “quiet” activities for them instead of forcing them to take a short nap.

ii. ***Provide opportunities for children to explore independently and develop social relationships***

Children are self-centred, active and curious. But they have a short attention span. They need to learn about and experience social life, and learn the proper ways of dealing with people and handling problems. Teachers may allocate time for group learning and play, prepare a relaxed learning environment, and provide children with opportunities to explore individually or play in groups. Children should be allowed to move freely and happily, and exercise a degree of choice in choosing different activities. They may also be allowed to stay alone in one activity corner to read stories or play with toys, or they can chat with friends or participate in creative and play activities with other children.

iii. ***Motivate children to learn and provide them with opportunities to explore and investigate***

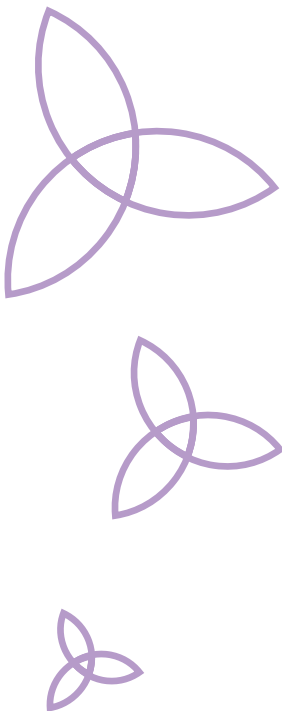
Children can learn effectively through their sensory perception and personal experiences. The schedule should include a variety of activities, such as art and music activities and life skills training, so that children can gain tangible experiences through observation, try-outs and practice in order to satisfy their inquisitive mind and build up their self-confidence.

iv. ***Plan various activities to suit children’s abilities and interests***

The aim is to plan for children’s activities that suit their interests and individual needs. As such, the amount of time allocated for various activities should be adjusted flexibly. Younger children require more time for meals and washing their hands, because their self-care ability is not yet developed. Moreover, as children’s concentration span is short, the duration of activities that call for a high degree of concentration, such as listening to stories or music, should be kept as short as possible. Children should be given enough time and resources to take part in various group learning and free choice activities.

v. ***Allocate enough time for exploratory activities***

Children should be given enough time for participating in exploration



activities. At the end of an activity, they should also be given time to re-visit what they have learnt with teachers (with the help of activity records, teachers may re-visit the activities with children individually or in the entire group). In doing so, children and teachers can talk and listen to each other. A time for dialogue can stimulate children to think, and encourages self-evaluation and reflection.

## 4.2

### Approaches to Learning and Teaching

#### Learning through play

In the course of learning, children's active participation is pivotal to the effectiveness of learning. The "child-centred" concept is a key element of the learning and teaching strategies in early childhood education. With respect to the need for different learning and teaching strategies, teachers should no longer play a dominant role in the learning activities, but engage in various roles such as that of facilitator, information provider, learning assessor, etc. When organising learning activities, teachers should adopt a life-wide learning strategy (Note<sup>10</sup>), i.e., make use not only of resources available in the setting but also from the community to provide children with a rich environment for learning.

No matter which learning and teaching strategy is adopted, play is an indispensable and important tool for facilitating children's learning. It helps children know their surroundings and experience the joy of co-operating and sharing with others. Through play, children can develop their physical, intellectual, social, creative and thinking abilities. Play is also considered to be the best activity for promoting children's physical and mental development.

#### 4.2.1

#### Key Elements for Play

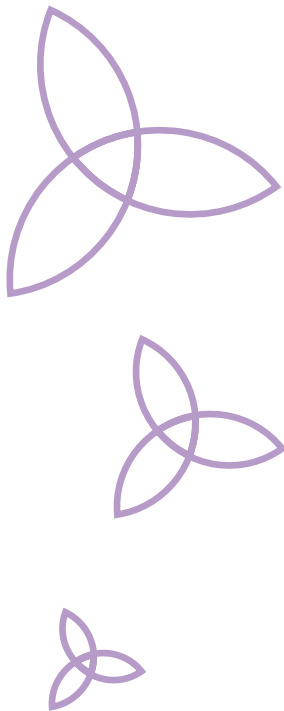
##### i. Toys

Toys have a direct bearing on the types of play and children's interest in playing. For example, toy blocks can stimulate children to engage in construction play; dolls in the family corner can lead children to carry out imaginative play. When pre-primary institutions choose toys, they should cater for the needs of children's physical and mental development. Below are some principles to be considered:

- The required skills must match the children's abilities: if a game is too difficult, children will stop trying, as they get frustrated with not knowing how to play the game. If a game is too easy, they will not find it challenging enough and become disengaged.



<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 7.



- The texture of materials (smooth, rough, hard, soft, etc.) should suit the requirements of different kinds of plays. Generally speaking, soft and smooth materials are more suitable for children.
- The number of toys should be appropriate. Children cannot handle too many toys at a time. They may easily get distracted with too many toys and this will result in a waste of resources and defeat the purpose. However, if the number of toys is not adequate, children's needs may not be satisfied.
- Toys should be arranged systematically and easily accessible to children in order to arouse their interest and motivation for learning. The orderly arrangement of toys can encourage children to form the habit of putting the toys back in order after playing.
- Toys must be safe. Small articles are dangerous, as children may put them into their mouths or noses; fragile items are easily broken and children may get hurt. Teachers should check all toys regularly and repair the damaged ones immediately to ensure safety.

## ii. *Playmates*

Teachers may organise the children to play in large groups, small groups or on their own. Teachers may consider forming different groups by age. Children can learn to communicate and co-operate with peers; or teachers can arrange for children of different ages to be in a group, so that older children can help and thus learn to take care of the younger ones, while the younger ones can learn from the older ones and widen their vision for learning.

## iii. *Environment*

- Indoor and outdoor environment: enclosed or open space can be used to organise different kinds of activities.
- A spacious area is suitable for play requiring vigorous movement, whereas a limited space is appropriate for quiet play with little movement.

## iv. *Time arrangement*

- Time for play should be appropriately structured: different kinds of play require different time and effort from children. Activities such as building blocks, family corner or role-play require a longer time to achieve their purposes. Children should be given enough time to enjoy the fun of play and learn effectively.
- "Active" and "quiet" play should be well-balanced: teachers should

consider striking a good balance between “active” and “quiet” play. For example, they should organise “quiet” play such as story-telling to calm children down after an exhausting game.

#### 4.2.2

### Play and Children’s Development

Play is an indispensable part of children’s growth, and children’s development affects their ability to play. Following the development of their thinking ability, gross and fine motor skills and social ability, children can take part in more complicated play of different kinds. For example, with the development of their social ability, children will proceed from being able to take part in “solitary play” at the beginning to “parallel play”, “associative play” and “co-operative play” subsequently; with the development of their cognitive ability, the types of play that children can join will also progress from “functional play” to “constructive play”, “make-believe play” and “games with rules” .

Suitable play not only enables children to express their emotions and gain pleasurable experience, but also promotes their learning and growth. Therefore, play and children’s development are interrelated. Teachers have to make good use of play as a major element for constructing the curriculum.

#### 4.2.3

### Role of Teachers during Play

- i. Provider: Teachers should arrange the place, time and materials necessary for the play.
- ii. Observer: Teachers should observe children’s performance at play objectively and understand the process of children’s play.
- iii. Participant: Teachers should encourage children to act freely and should also understand their feelings from the children’s point of view. If teachers find that children do not take any initiative to participate in play, they should join in and offer support. In addition, teachers’ participation can arouse children’s interest in play and encourage them to participate more actively.
- iv. Intervener: When providing materials and setting up the environment for play activities, teachers must consider the relationship between the level of difficulty of the activities and children’s current development and characteristics. To meet their individual needs, teachers may intervene in an indirect and interesting way, and finish the game without spoiling children’s confidence and interest.
- v. Inspirer: Play is fun by nature. The fundamental principle of play is to stimulate thinking and enable children to express themselves freely. Teachers should seize every opportunity to encourage children’s creativity and imagination.

## Catering for Special Needs and Learning Differences

### Respect children's right to learn and tap their full potential

Throughout the process of children's development, they may have different needs of varying degrees at different stages. Parents and teachers must pay special attention and be able to identify such needs and differences, and render particular care and support to the children.

In a broad sense, children with special needs include: (i) children who are hyperactive or introverted; (ii) gifted children or children with special performance in their intelligence and physical abilities; (iii) children who are inarticulate, clumsy in action or have visual or hearing impairment or difficulties in reading, writing or learning. Children with these characteristics have different needs, some of which demand special attention.

Teachers need sound and professional knowledge to identify children with special needs. They should learn to communicate and co-operate with their colleagues, supervisors and parents, and refer special cases for further professional advice. For details, please refer to the "Manual on Support Services for Children with Special Educational Needs in General Schools", published by the former Education Department in 2001, and Appendix 8.

With respect to children identified as having special educational needs and enrolled in the Integrated Programme in pre-primary institutions, teachers should follow the Implementation Handbook, respect those children, offer them equal opportunities for education and explore their ability and potential, so that the children can overcome or reduce their congenital restrictions. Teachers should help the children achieve the best development through a well-planned guidance and training programme.

#### 4.3.1

### Learning Differences and Children's Development

There are inevitably some individual differences in children's learning performance and development. Since all children are unique individuals, they may have different cognitive and affective development, learning styles, abilities, motives and needs, interests and potential. Sometimes children may have difficulties with their learning but normally these are only temporary. There is no need for teachers and parents to be over anxious. In fact, individual differences in a class may not always result in a negative effect. If they are handled properly, they may be helpful to children's learning.

### Strategies for Catering for Learning Differences

Pre-primary institutions should formulate strategies to handle learning differences, which should include strategies for handling general problems in learning and growth, and identifying and following up on children with special educational needs. Before taking any action, teachers should communicate with the parents to understand the nature of the problem. Appropriate measures should be taken without delay. If the institutions cannot solve the problem on their own, they may, with the parents' consent, seek help from medical professionals (maternal and child health centres or registered doctors) or social workers.

#### i. *Identify children's starting point*

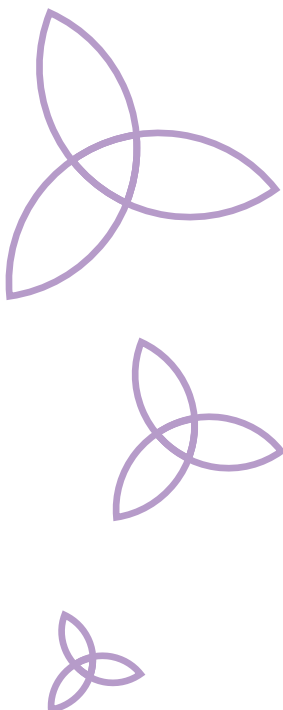
Before schooling, pre-primary institutions should get to know children's situations of learning and development. From information given by parents, institutions can learn more about children's general abilities and performance. The institutions should then use this information to design an appropriate curriculum for the children with special needs. If the children still cannot adapt to the setting, the institutions should discuss with the parents and decide whether referral services are needed.

#### ii. *Pay attention to learning differences*

Teachers should pay attention to children's daily performance and growth, and set up a "portfolio" for each child to record their development and learning progress, which can then serve the purpose of assessment. If the learning and teaching strategies are found to be the factor leading to learning differences, teachers will need to make appropriate adjustment. If the learning difference is an individual problem, teachers will need to communicate with the children and their parents to formulate appropriate strategies and arrange referral services in a timely manner. In the case of children with outstanding performance in learning, teachers should give them appropriate encouragement and sufficient support to develop their potential to their utmost. Teachers should accept learning differences among children rather than demanding standard performance from children.

#### iii. *Make variations in learning content*

Through different types of play and learning activities that cover different learning areas with flexibility, teachers may help children develop their basic skills and cultivate positive values and attitudes. Teachers may also make use of objects that interest children to provide them with exploratory learning opportunities. Children's motivation and attitude towards learning can be enhanced.

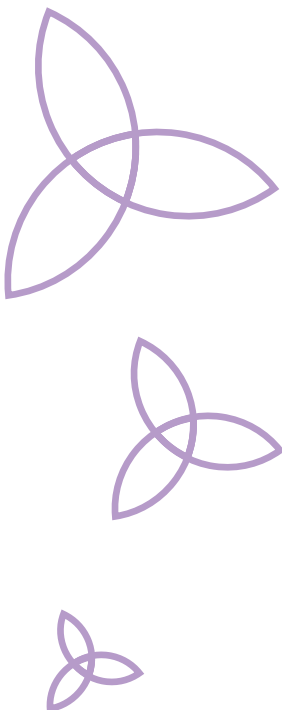


#### iv. *Adjust teaching approaches*

- Instead of following rigidly arrangements provided by the teaching kits and requiring children to finish specific learning activities within a certain period of time, teachers should select topics according to children's interests and adjust the pace of learning and teaching according to children's abilities.
- Teachers should show encouragement and appreciation to children to build up their self-confidence and arouse their motivation for learning.
- Teachers may change the ways of grouping, such as arranging children with different abilities or of different ages in one group, to let them help and co-operate with each other. This will also allow children with special needs to improve with the help of their peers. Schools should create a harmonious environment in which children can learn to respect and accept children with special needs.

## 4.4

### Making Use of Resources



#### Widen the learning space

Learning and teaching resources generally refer to teaching kits, IT software, audio-visual teaching materials, books, and teaching materials produced by the Government and educational organisations, which are available in bookstores. Nevertheless, since we emphasise that children learn through observation as well as manipulating objects found in an environment full of sensory stimulation, things in nature, such as flowers, birds, insects, fishes, trees and fallen leaves in the park, are considered to be good learning resources. Teachers should make flexible use of resources depending on children's learning needs and they should not rely too much on the available teaching kits or realia. Teachers should also avoid using too complicated teaching materials, which the children may not understand. Otherwise, learning effectiveness will be hampered. If possible, teachers may try to design and develop learning materials by themselves.

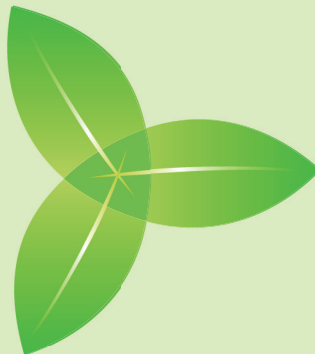
When selecting learning and teaching resources, pre-primary institutions should consider the following:

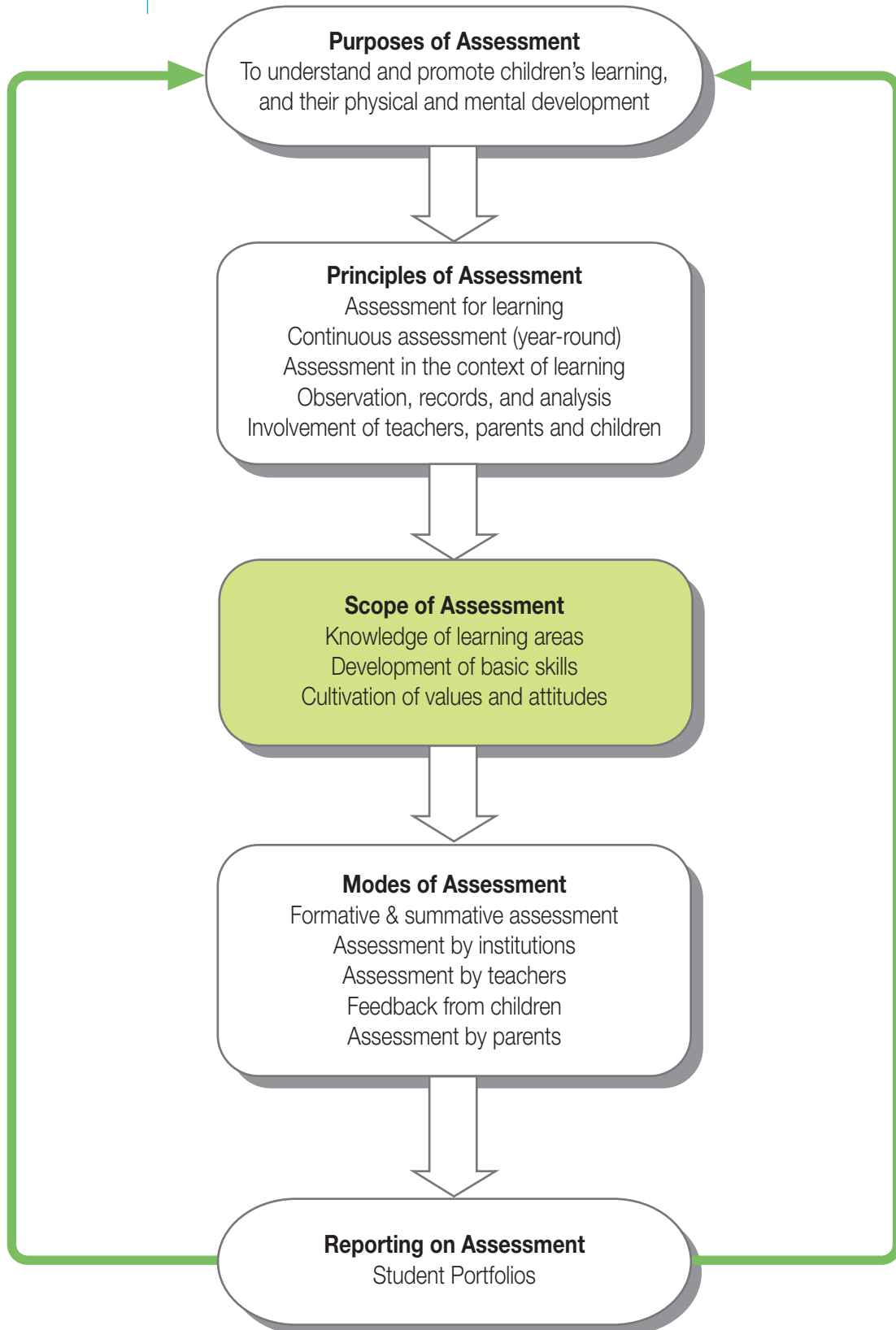
- ensuring compatibility with their own curriculum plan;
- setting clear and definite objectives;
- stimulating children's learning interest;
- encouraging children to participate in learning;
- ensuring user-friendliness for teachers; and
- making full use of community resources for life-wide learning.



Chapter 5

# Assessment





## Purposes of Assessment

### To promote learning, and physical and mental development

Assessment is a significant component of the curriculum and an indispensable constituent of the learning and teaching process. This Chapter aims to describe the principles of assessment for children's learning, for pre-primary institutions' reference. Information obtained through assessment provides teachers with helpful hints to improve the learning and teaching arrangements and enables curriculum leaders to review the overall curriculum planning of their institutions. After the appropriate adjustments, it will ultimately result in a better and more effective learning development for children. This Chapter emphasises that assessment aims to:

#### I. *enable teachers, when arranging the teaching and learning activities, to*

- understand children's learning progress as well as physical and mental development;
- identify children with special educational needs as early as possible and provide them with appropriate guidance and care;
- keep parents informed about their children's life in the institutions and their learning progress, in order to strengthen home-school collaboration and ensure that children are provided with the most suitable education; and
- review and revise learning and teaching strategies as appropriate, to meet children's developmental needs.

#### II. *enable institutions, when conducting overall curriculum planning, to*

- understand the overall progress and effectiveness of curriculum implementation;
- support teachers in solving the problems and difficulties encountered in teaching; and
- understand their human resource needs, so as to support their ongoing curriculum development.

#### III. *enable children, when learning, to*

- understand their own learning performance and progress;
- know what to learn and what to do; and



- cultivate interest in learning with the assistance and encouragement of teachers and parents.

#### IV. *enable parents, when collaborating with schools to nurture children, to*

- understand their children's learning progress in school;
- enhance their understanding of the growth of their children;
- establish reasonable expectations towards their children; and
- understand the institutions' learning and teaching arrangements and co-operate with teachers, with a view to providing children with the best education.

In Chapter 3, the respective principles of planning and reviewing the overall curriculum were introduced for pre-primary institutions. With respect to children's learning, teachers can refer to Chapter 4 for reviewing everyday teaching effectiveness. During the process of reviewing and setting the assessment mechanisms, pre-primary institutions may refer to *Performance Indicators (Pre-primary Institutions)*.

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## 5.2

### Principles of Implementing Assessment

#### How to assess?

##### 5.2.1

Examinations, no matter whether oral or written, can only assess children's partial and fragmented knowledge. Rather than reflecting a comprehensive picture of the performance and overall development of children, examinations impose unnecessary pressure on children and are completely ill-fitted for the stage of early childhood.

##### 5.2.2

The assessment of children's learning development should be conducted in an authentic learning environment. Teachers should analyse children's abilities and performance objectively, based on observation and recording. The information so obtained not only reflects children's learning process and progress, but can also be used to improve learning and teaching strategies and review the overall curriculum development. In order to ensure that the information for assessment is comprehensive and accurate, it is advisable for

pre-primary institutions to collect information on children's learning abilities and developmental performance from multiple sources, for instance, from teachers and parents, and arrange sharing and discussion at suitable times.

### 5.2.3

Through self-evaluation, children can get a clearer picture of their own learning, as well as foster their eagerness in participation, interest in learning and self-confidence. To enable children to benefit from self-evaluation, teachers should be aware whether sufficient and appropriate opportunities are given for children to participate, and should be receptive to children's views.

### 5.2.4

Here are some underlying principles for assessing children:

- Assessment needs to address the curriculum objectives and children's developmental needs. Assessment should not be conducted solely for its own sake.
- Observation, recording and analysis should be adopted for assessing children's performance in an authentic learning environment, instead of giving oral tests or open-book tests.
- Continuous assessment throughout the whole school year is recommended.
- Teachers should show recognition and appreciation of children's achievements, as well as identify areas in which the potential of the children is yet to be developed, and render guidance and support accordingly.
- Teachers should inform parents of the assessment results in a systematic and positive manner, to enhance parents' understanding of their children.

## 5.3

### Scope of Assessment

#### What to assess?

The core purpose of the curriculum framework suggested by this Guide is to achieve four objectives for children's development through six learning areas. As such, the assessment should focus on measuring children's development and learning. The points below show four domains in which children's developmental abilities and performance are examined upon completion of the pre-primary stage. Teachers may refer to the *Performance Indicators (Pre-primary Institutions): Domain of Children's Development* jointly prepared by the Education Bureau and the Social Welfare Department.

Upon completion of the pre-primary curriculum, children should be able to:

### Physical development

- a. have good eating and personal and public hygiene habits, possess self-care ability, and maintain a routine and an orderly life;
- b. demonstrate safety awareness and a sense of self-protection;
- c. co-ordinate and manipulate the gross and fine motor skills;
- d. observe and explore the surroundings using the sensory functions of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch;

### Cognitive and Language Development

#### *Cognitive*

- a. show curiosity about the surrounding environment and things around them;
- b. develop interest and initiative in exploring the outside world;
- c. sort, compare, match and arrange things, and identify their shapes and positions;
- d. use simple mathematical concepts in everyday life, such as counting, measurement, time, space, etc.;
- e. make simple judgments, analysis and inferences using acquired concepts or experiences;
- f. understand things from different perspectives; try, explore and express their views, ask questions, and propose solutions to issues in everyday life;

#### *Language*

- a. listen attentively, understand the content of what they have heard, and express themselves in appropriate language;
- b. know how to use language to communicate with others and share life experiences and feelings;
- c. have a grasp of reading skills, enjoy reading, and understand simple books, general words and symbols;
- d. know how to use different writing media to express and record personal thoughts and life experiences in drawings or words;



### Affective and social development

- a. take care of themselves, lead an orderly life, and conduct daily activities independently;
- b. express themselves properly and control their emotions;
- c. accept others, appreciate themselves and recognise their own value;
- d. take up responsibilities, have confidence in finishing activities or tasks, and be responsible for their own actions;
- e. understand their own role in the family, school and society; understand the rights and duties of an individual when he/she is in different groups; and understand the relationship between themselves and their country;

### Aesthetic development

- a. demonstrate interest in arts activities such as music, dancing, drawing and drama, and use these different forms of art as the media of creation, communication and expression;
- b. use different materials and techniques to conduct creative activities;
- c. acquire satisfaction and joy through observation and appreciation of their surroundings in the process of creation;
- d. appreciate works of art of different cultures and forms, and identify the basic elements of the works;
- e. know how to work with others to share resources and workload, to finish a creation and finally to celebrate success.



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5.4

## Modes of Assessment

### Who should assess?

Pre-primary institutions should adopt formative and summative assessment methods in a flexible manner. Assessment of children's learning and development should be conducted continuously throughout the year and reported to parents. Although the assessment is conducted mainly by teachers, children and parents also play important roles in the assessment process. Only with the participation of all three parties can the findings of assessment effectively reflect reality.

#### 5.4.1

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##### **Assessment by teachers**

Based on the institutions' curriculum and the teaching and learning plan, teachers set the objectives of assessment and its specific content, and select the appropriate assessment tools, such as behaviour checklists, anecdotal records and brief records of conversations with children. Teachers can assess children's learning and development in the institutions through everyday observation, records and analysis.

#### 5.4.2

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##### **Feedback from children**

Under the guidance and assistance of teachers, children may reflect on their learning and growth. For example, children may make use of a simple behaviour checklist designed by the teacher and see if there is any item which can be recorded as one of the abilities they have accomplished (such as putting on clothes, taking the initiative to tidy up toys, etc.). Teachers may also guide children to select their own items of works, such as sculptures, drawings, stories or records of story-telling, etc., as subjects of conversation with teachers in small groups, or for expressing their own views with their peers regarding their work. This enables children to recall and consolidate what they have learnt, reflect on what they have done, and share their feelings with others.

#### 5.4.3

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##### **Assessment by parents**

Parents have the most intimate contact with their children, so they have a better understanding of them. When school begins, pre-primary institutions may ask parents for information about the children, including children's photographs, height and weight records, and performance and abilities in general. Afterwards, parents should collaborate with the institutions and observe children's daily behaviour at home. If necessary, parents should provide teachers with relevant information and exchange views on ways to help enhance children's learning.

#### 5.4.4

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##### **Assessment by institutions**

Pre-primary institutions should have a good grasp of the feedback from children, parents and teachers, and assess the overall implementation of the curriculum from the following perspectives: (i) whether the curriculum is in line with the sponsoring body's mission and expectations of early childhood education; (ii) whether the curriculum addresses social changes and needs; (iii) the difficulties encountered by teachers in curriculum implementation and the support they need. On the basis of the above findings, institutions should make necessary adjustments to the curriculum and the allocation of resources. Pre-primary institutions should decide whether the parents' expectations and the social trends are in conformity with the principles of early childhood education.



If any deviation is detected, it is necessary for the institution to take it into account. For example, if parents or social expectations place undue emphasis on the transmission of subject knowledge and drilling of academic skills, the institution should adhere to a child-centred approach which matches the children's developmental needs.

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## 5.5

### Records and Reports on the Progress of Children's Learning

#### Student Portfolios

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##### 5.5.1

Children's growth and development is a continuous process. At different stages, there are important milestones marking their development. Therefore, it is necessary for parents and teachers to record important information as evidence of children's growth. A portfolio is a systematic record of such important information, not an assessment tool. The portfolio may be passed to new teachers for their reference and follow-up action when the children are promoted to higher grades, or handed over to parents for retention when the children leave the kindergarten, so that it can serve as a reference for the primary school teachers if necessary.

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##### 5.5.2

When pre-primary institutions intend to keep children's learning records by using portfolios, they should have an overall plan to ensure that adequate training is provided for teachers, that parents understand and recognise the relevant concepts, and that the relevant facilities in the institutions are adequate. Continuous reviews should be conducted, and the views of parents and feedback from children should be collected throughout the process of implementation. Dialogues and listening are the most important and effective tools for collaboration among children, parents and teachers. If necessary, strategies may be adjusted or revised to achieve the intended objectives.



Chapter 6

# Settling in and Transition to Primary



## >> Settling in and Transition to Primary

From kindergarten to primary school, children have to cope with various changes and challenges in different educational stages. When children first join a kindergarten, there may be some behavioural problems caused by anxiety, such as reluctance to go to school or reverting behaviours. Nevertheless, these challenges, if handled in an appropriate manner, can be regarded as precious opportunities for children, allowing them to learn not only how to solve problems but also how to develop confidence in response to the changing environment. These experiences will lay a good foundation for their future learning and promote their interest in life-long learning. As such, pre-primary institutions and parents should work together to help children undergo the transition period.

### 6.1

#### Adaptation to School Life

##### From home to school

That children live with their family members from birth ensures the development of a trusting and intimate relationship. Children's admission to a pre-primary institution marks the beginning of schooling, which means to children the first, albeit short, separation from their families. It requires an effort on their part to learn to get along with teachers and fellow children in unfamiliar circumstances. As this is a rather big challenge for young children, pre-primary institutions should collaborate with parents to help children adapt to life in the institutions.

##### 6.1.1

#### Whole school involvement

Assisting new entrants is not necessarily a task restricted to class teachers or teachers concerned. Instead, to help new entrants adapt to the new environment requires the involvement of the entire staff in formulating and implementing the relevant measures. Through co-operation and co-ordination, the principal, teachers and other staff should make children feel accepted and cared for, so that a good relationship is established between the children and the institution.

##### 6.1.2

#### Continuous process

Before the start of a school year, pre-primary institutions may obtain through the parents information about the new entrants' living habits, family

background and health conditions, so as to design an appropriate adaptation programme. The length of the adaptation period may vary with individuals. Pre-primary institutions should evaluate children's needs continuously and conduct the related programmes with flexibility. In the case of children who enrol after the commencement of the school year, pre-primary institutions should also assist them in adapting to life in the institutions and make flexible arrangements depending on actual needs.

### 6.1.3

#### Contribution of parents

Parents' co-operation and support are very important. Pre-primary institutions may engage parents through a variety of activities, such as gatherings for parents, seminars, talks, etc. By briefing parents on the arrangements for a new school year and sharing information about parental education, pre-primary institutions encourage parents to work closely with them in order to support the healthy and happy development of children at this critical stage of their growth.

##### i. *Gatherings for parents*

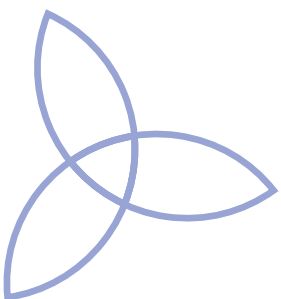
Parents are invited to have an orientation meeting prior to the commencement of the school year, so that they can get an idea of the new environment and teachers. Institutions should provide parents with information about the institutions' mission, learning environment, curriculum modes, detailed arrangements for the new school year, problems commonly encountered by new entrants, and the relevant solutions. Institutions should also listen to parents' views, know their concerns, and enhance communication between the two parties in order to get children prepared for the start of school.

##### ii. *Parental education*

Teachers should brief parents on children's developmental characteristics and learning needs, in order to help them better understand the initial problems encountered by children in school, and introduce the corresponding solutions to parents, so as to prevent their over-anxiety.

##### iii. *Individual communication*

Teachers may communicate with parents, whenever possible, at times when parents bring their children to and pick them up from the pre-primary institutions. Teachers may also make use of home visits to learn more about children's behaviour, family background and the attitudes of parents. Effective communication with parents will help to solve problems.



## 6.1.4

### Arrangements for enhancing adaptation

- i. Pre-primary institutions should plan special programmes to be conducted on the first school day and at the beginning of the school year. These programmes allow parents to accompany children in class and the frequency should be gradually reduced depending on children's needs. In this way, children can gradually adapt to short separation from family members, and parents can also learn more about the institutions.
- ii. Teachers should first and foremost take care of children's emotions. They should also provide children with enough support for learning and get along with children through trust, so as to help them adapt to the new environment as soon as possible.
- iii. Children should be guided to progressively learn the school norms and get along with their peers.
- iv. Teachers should offer children a welcoming environment to let them feel that school life is an extension of family life. The kind attitude of staff in the institutions helps foster a sense of security in children and lets them learn peacefully in a new environment.

## 6.2

### Interface between Kindergarten and Primary School

#### From kindergarten to primary school

#### 6.2.1

The learning mode in kindergartens is different from that in primary schools and the ecological environments are also different. During their early days in primary schools, children may need to cope with various adaptation problems. To help children adapt in the transition period, kindergartens and primary schools should communicate with each other well in advance. Parents should be well-prepared to help children deal with the psychological and emotional frustrations that may emerge in a new stage of learning. When preparing children for the transition, they may make reference to the *Helping Children to Adapt to Their New Primary School Life* and the *Basic Education Curriculum Guide* (Chapter 9) edited by the Curriculum Development Institute.

#### 6.2.2

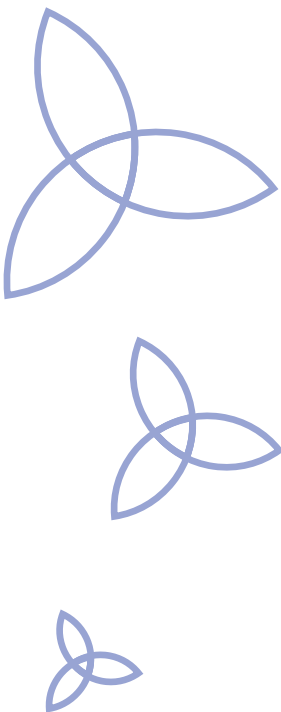
Kindergarten and primary education are different in terms of the learning environment and curriculum modes. Since the learning experiences of children in kindergartens are being useful to them in helping them develop an interest

in learning and acquire basic learning abilities, they lay a good foundation for formal education. Helping children complete the kindergarten curriculum is a crucial task to facilitate the interface between kindergarten and primary school. It is desirable for upper kindergarten teachers to make reference to the primary school curriculum. However, they are not encouraged to teach the primary curriculum in kindergartens, for this may exert undue pressure on preschool children.

### 6.2.3

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To help children adapt to their new learning life, primary one teachers should know the pre-primary curriculum in order to design a transition programme catering for the children's needs. In order to review and adjust the adaptation measures, it is advisable for kindergartens to keep close contact with primary schools, so that they can keep abreast of the latest developments of the primary curriculum. Experience of the alumni in adaptation to primary school life might be helpful in this respect. Moreover, subject to the parents' consent, kindergartens may also provide primary schools with children's kindergarten learning records, so that primary teachers can know more about the children and adjust the programme accordingly, in order to help children adapt smoothly to primary school life.







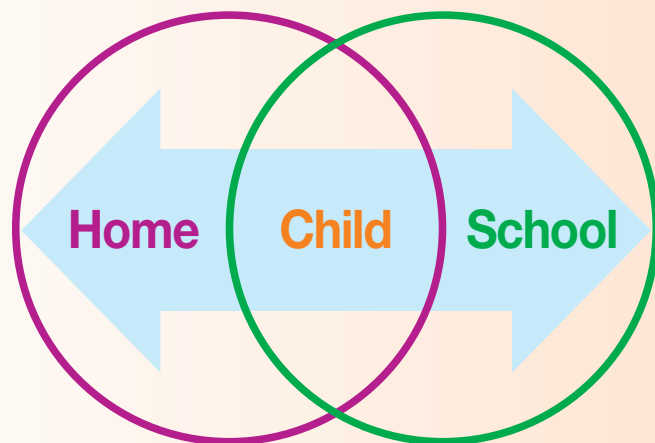
Chapter 7

# Home-School Co-operation



## >> Home-School Co-operation

Children's growth is closely related to their surrounding environment. Children's roles may change when they are associated with the changing environment. Children have to adjust to these roles and the environment, in order to construct a more complicated system for social recognition. Families and schools differ greatly from each other in both structure and nature. The parties concerned have different requirements and expectations for children. To cope with the shift of roles required on their part, children need to learn how to adapt to the new ecological environment, whether it be in kindergarten or primary school. In the previous Chapter entitled *Settling in and Transition to Primary*, ways were suggested of helping children to make a smooth transition by means of tripartite collaboration among parents, kindergartens and primary schools. This Chapter will further elaborate on the modes of home-school co-operation and the issues to be considered.



Both families and schools play very critical roles in educating and socialising children. Good home-school communication can help children familiarise themselves with the school culture. This will also have a positive and significant effect on children's personal growth. Home-school co-operation is therefore a very important issue.

### 7.1

#### Modes of Home-School Co-operation

As families, schools and their respective concerns keep evolving in our changing society, it is necessary for both parties to combine their efforts in meeting the challenges found in educating our future generation. The curriculum reform in recent years has also placed emphasis on this aspect.

Home-school co-operation has changed from a previous school-oriented approach to a partnership mode. In light of their respective circumstances, pre-primary institutions may adopt different modes of collaborating with parents to help children in their growth and learning. Here are some suggestions for home-school co-operation modes that pre-primary institutions may make reference to and adopt according to their practical needs.

### 7.1.1

#### **Establishing communication channels**

Pre-primary institutions and parents should establish effective communication channels to improve their mutual understanding and gather information about children's lives both at home and at school. This will enable both parties to help comprehensively the growth and learning of children.

### 7.1.2

#### **Parental education**

Pre-primary institutions may help parents to understand:

- children's developmental characteristics and needs;
- parents' roles and responsibilities;
- parenting skills; and
- skills and strategies for assisting children in their learning and facilitating their growth (including solutions to problems in adapting to school life and the interface between kindergarten and primary school).

This will create a safe, pleasurable and welcoming environment for children's development in the setting and at home, through parental education activities or everyday communication.

### 7.1.3

#### **Encouraging participation in voluntary work**

Pre-primary institutions may encourage parents' participation in their school activities, for example, by providing help in school outings, organising library books or participating in community services. This serves a dual purpose: providing extra human resources for the institutions and also fostering in parents a sense of belonging to the institutions.

### 7.1.4

#### **Guiding children in home study**

Pre-primary institutions should keep parents informed of the progress of curriculum implementation, and let them understand the teaching strategies and teaching content adopted by teachers. With parents' support and engagement in children's learning activities at school, such as reading, collecting materials, making sculpture and painting, the parent-child relationship is improved. With a better understanding of their children, parents can formulate reasonable expectations towards their children, making learning more consistent, interesting and effective.

### 7.1.5

#### **Parental involvement in school administration**

Parents are the stakeholders as well as the key partners of pre-primary institutions. Their opinions are helpful to institutions in improving their administrative measures and curriculum planning. As such, pre-primary institutions should encourage and help parents to communicate and exchange views with other parents, and support each other. It is advisable for an institution to capitalise on home-school co-operation as a channel for parents to express their views and to try to involve them in the administration of the institution. Hence, the development of the institution can be directed to meet the needs of children and parents.

### 7.1.6

#### **Involvement of the community**

It is advisable for pre-primary institutions to co-operate with different organisations in their respective districts and make use of the abundant community resources to provide support for children's learning.

## 7.2

### **Principles of Implementation**

Pre-primary institutions should pay attention to the following when implementing home-school co-operation:

#### 7.2.1

##### **Communication approaches**

Pre-primary institutions may choose from a variety of approaches to communicate with parents: through one-way or two-way communication, regularly or irregularly, on a large or small scale. Different approaches fulfill the different functions. Pre-primary institutions may choose the appropriate approaches according to their needs in communicating with parents. Effective communication is the foundation for all types of co-operation. The most important factor in establishing effective communication is sincerity. If the parents feel that their views are being understood, accepted and considered seriously, a trusting relationship will be built.

#### 7.2.2

##### **Knowing parents' needs**

In a diversified society like Hong Kong, there are many types of families, such as families with both parents working, single-parent families arising from divorce, and newly-arrived families. They have different expectations of their children, varied beliefs about early childhood education, and different expectations towards the institutions. Parents' working hours and educational background will directly affect their involvement in the activities of the institutions. In order to introduce parental involvement for the development of home-school collaboration, it is advisable for pre-primary institutions to engage parents by planning various types of activities to meet their needs.

### 7.2.3

#### **Understanding the different roles of parents and teachers**

The relationship between parents and children is life-long and intimate. Parents' expectations towards their children, which are usually subjective, are influenced by their own experiences of growth. However, the relationship between teachers and children is a temporary one, and surely not as intimate as the former. As pre-primary education professionals, teachers should understand children's developmental needs and learn through daily contact and observation. They should then formulate reasonable requirements and expectations towards the children. With respect to the guidance given to children, teachers should have sufficient knowledge of parents' preferences and expectations. They should also explain patiently to parents the institution's educational policy and the children's needs, with a view to enhancing parents' understanding and recognition of the institution's mission and approach. It is important for parents and pre-primary institutions to communicate adequately, so as to eliminate any conflicting views on early childhood education and forge ahead for a harmonious and co-operative relationship.

### 7.2.4

#### **Multi-dimensional collaboration**

Every pre-primary institution has its own educational mission, environmental resources, and level of teacher training and development. When planning home-school co-operation activities, pre-primary institutions should consider not only the needs of children and parents, but also their own conditions, and should make good use of community resources to improve on the less satisfactory areas. For example, they may invite professionals, such as pre-primary education specialists, social workers and psychologists, to conduct parental education seminars; encourage and render support to teachers to take relevant training courses offered by professional organisations or the community; and introduce relevant information on community resources to parents to arouse their interest in joining a related project of their own choice and ultimately benefit the institutions through the collaborative use of resources.

## 7.3

### **References**

In recent years, pre-primary institutions have been actively seeking ways to promote effective home-school co-operation and there have been many successful cases. Among them, projects funded by the Quality Education Fund have been uploaded to the Quality Education Fund Cyber Resource Centre (<http://qrcr.qef.org.hk/>) as reference material for schools.

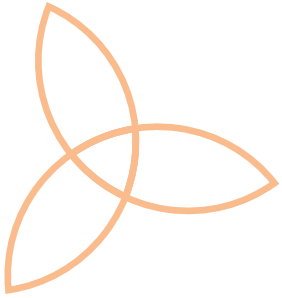
In addition, the Education Bureau, Hong Kong Education City, universities and voluntary social service organisations provide reference resources and offer related courses on parental education. Pre-primary institutions may provide parents with relevant information to encourage parental involvement.

Education Bureau, Hong Kong

<http://www.edb.gov.hk>

Hong Kong Education City Parents' Corner

<http://www.hkedcity.net/parent/>





## > > Exemplars

In order to facilitate pre-primary practitioners' better understanding of the concepts and recommendations included in this Guide (including the compilation of the content for the learning areas and the activity plan and review), the Ad Hoc Committee of the Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum has collected a number of exemplars on different learning areas from local pre-primary institutions for all practitioners' reference.

The exemplars, which are compiled according to Appendix 6: Activity Plan and Review, aim at demonstrating how to design the content for the learning areas, facilitate assessment, and record children's learning process.

These exemplars show the sensitive planning and actual experiences of the respective schools and teachers. However, the exemplars do not perfectly or necessarily apply to every institution and situation. Practitioners can make reference to them whenever necessary. For easy updating and further supplementation, the exemplars are to be uploaded to the web page of the Education Bureau (Note<sup>1</sup>).

This sharing platform is a good start for pre-primary practitioners to share teaching experiences. All practitioners are welcome to make use of this platform for continuous updating of the pre-primary curriculum.



## Developmental Characteristics of Children from 0 to 2 Years Old

| Age          | Physical   | Intellectual  | Language   | Social and emotional  |
|--------------|--|---|--|---|
| 0 to 1 month | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Move with jerky, mostly unco-ordinated arm thrusting and leg kicking.</li> <li>2. Lift head briefly when lying on his tummy but cannot support head without assistance.</li> <li>3. Keep hands fisted most of the time but can reflexively grasp whatever is placed in his hand.</li> <li>4. Bring hands within range of the mouth and eyes.</li> <li>5. Startled by sudden noises and movements.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Show preference for human face and high-contrasted patterns e.g. Black-and-white patterns.</li> <li>2. Focus best at near, about 8 to 10 inches.</li> <li>3. Follow human face or large attractive objects briefly.</li> <li>4. Recognize the scent of mother.</li> <li>5. Distinguish certain smells, e.g. the scent of his mother and breast milk.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pay attention to human voice especially high-pitched ones.</li> <li>2. Soothed by mother's voice and soft music.</li> <li>3. Respond to sound by blinking, jerking of limbs, or "freezing" of his own activity.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Smile unselectively at first and then in response to social stimulation.</li> <li>2. Sensitive to touch, holding, stroking and rocking lightly. Cuddling will calm the baby down.</li> <li>3. Dislike rough and abrupt handling.</li> </ol> |



| <b>Age</b>    | <b>Physical</b>  | <b>Intellectual</b>   | <b>Language</b>   | <b>Social and emotional</b>   |
|---------------|--|---|---|---|
| 1 to 3 months | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Move with smoother and more controlled body motions.</li> <li>2. Straighten out legs and kick with greater force.</li> <li>3. Lift head and chest when lying on his tummy and support his body with both forearms.</li> <li>4. Keep head up fairly steadily when held in sitting position.</li> <li>5. Keep hands open most of the time.</li> <li>6. Grasp rattle placed in his palm.</li> <li>7. Bring his hand to his mouth and suck.</li> <li>8. Bring both hands together and plays with own fingers.</li> <li>9. Try to hit at dangling objects with his body or arms.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore surroundings with his eyes.</li> <li>2. Look intently at human faces, especially mother's face.</li> <li>3. Recognize and visually follow familiar people at distance (several feet away).</li> <li>4. Move his head and turn his eyes from side to side to follow moving objects.</li> <li>5. Look and play with his own hands.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Start to imitate some sounds.</li> <li>2. Start cooing or vocalizing with different sound e.g. "Ah", "Ooh".</li> <li>3. Turn his head to the direction of sound, such as mother's voice.</li> <li>4. Listen to music.</li> <li>5. Smile at familiar voices, especially mother's voice.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use social smile as means of communication, especially with familiar persons.</li> <li>2. Imitate mother's facial expressions directed towards him.</li> <li>3. Communicate his feelings and needs by crying, cooing, different facial expressions and body movements.</li> <li>4. Frolic when played with and may cry when playing stops.</li> </ol> |

| <b>Age</b>    | <b>Physical</b>  | <b>Intellectual</b>  | <b>Language</b>   | <b>Social and emotional</b>   |
|---------------|--|--|---|---|
| 4 to 7 months | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Roll over from tummy to back and reverse.</li> <li>2. Push up his head and body with hands when lying on his tummy.</li> <li>3. Sit with support of his hands or even free his arms for short while.</li> <li>4. Support full weight of his body when being held upright.</li> <li>5. Reach out and grasp objects.</li> <li>6. Explore objects held with both hands.</li> <li>7. Transfer object from one hand to the other.</li> <li>8. Rake small objects with fingers and pick them up with fingers and thumb together.</li> <li>9. Play with his feet and even put them into his mouth.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Show interest in colourful pictures.</li> <li>2. Readily recognize familiar persons at a distance (several feet away).</li> <li>3. Follow objects with quick and smooth eye movements.</li> <li>4. Fixate and follow tiny objects (e.g. chocolate beans) at near (about 12 to 15 inches).</li> <li>5. Enjoy making sound with toys (e.g. rattle) and objects (e.g. keys) repeatedly.</li> <li>6. Enjoy playing "peek-a-boo".</li> <li>7. Find partially hidden objects.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respond to people calling him.</li> <li>2. Distinguish emotional tone of voice.</li> <li>3. Babble chains of consonants like "bah-bah", "da-da".</li> <li>4. Imitate different sounds made by adult.</li> <li>5. Turn head readily in response to mother's voice across the room.</li> <li>6. Localize the source of soft noise produced on either side.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Show strong preference for mother or caretaker.</li> <li>2. Start to develop stranger anxiety.</li> <li>3. Show interest in his own image in the mirror.</li> </ol> |

| Age            | Physical  | Intellectual   | Language   | Social and emotional  |
|----------------|---|--|--|---|
| 8 to 12 months | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Get to sitting position without assistance.</li> <li>2. Sit well on the floor and can turn his body around to both sides without falling.</li> <li>3. Get from sitting to crawling or prone position.</li> <li>4. Creep on tummy, or crawl on hands and knees, or shuffle on bottom.</li> <li>5. Lower self from standing to sitting or squatting position while holding onto furniture.</li> <li>6. Pull self up to standing. Cruise around holding onto furniture.</li> <li>7. Stand with support and may stand alone momentarily.</li> <li>8. Walk when hands held by adult or may take a few steps on his own.</li> <li>9. Poke with index fingers.</li> <li>10. Pick up tiny objects using thumb and index finger (like pincers).</li> <li>11. Take objects out and put into containers.</li> <li>12. Release objects voluntarily.</li> <li>13. Deliberately drop toys repeatedly for adult to pick up.</li> <li>14. Finger feed (i.e. feeds himself using fingers to hold his food).</li> <li>15. Help in dressing by holding out arms and legs.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore objects in many different ways (shaking, banging, throwing and dropping).</li> <li>2. Find hidden toys easily.</li> <li>3. Understand the correct use of daily objects (e.g. comb for combing hair).</li> <li>4. Start engaging in make-believe play with household objects (e.g. Babbling into the telephone).</li> <li>5. Maintain relatively short attention span.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pay increasing attention to speech.</li> <li>2. Make his wants known by gestures, pointing with index fingers or even words.</li> <li>3. Understand "No".</li> <li>4. Respond to simple situational commands e.g. Wave "bye-bye", "give mummy".</li> <li>5. Shake head for "No".</li> <li>6. Vocalize long babbles (long strings of syllables) or jargon (speech-like vocalizations).</li> <li>7. Try to imitate words.</li> <li>8. Speak 1 to 2 words spontaneously in a meaningful way like "ma-ma" or "da-da".</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appear shy or anxious with strangers, show distress when parents leave.</li> <li>2. Show preference for certain persons and toys.</li> <li>3. Test out parental response to his behaviors.</li> <li>4. Enjoy imitating other's action in his play.</li> </ol> |

| <b>Age</b>        | <b>Physical</b>  | <b>Intellectual</b>   | <b>Language</b>  | <b>Social and emotional</b>  |
|-------------------|--|---|--|--|
| 1 year to 2 years | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use walking as the usual means of mobility by around 18 months, although he may look unsteady on his legs.</li> <li>2. Walk alone well by 2 years.</li> <li>3. Squat down to pick up object from the floor without falling.</li> <li>4. Walk with quick steps or even run.</li> <li>5. Carry or pull along toys while walking.</li> <li>6. Climb up and down furniture without assistance.</li> <li>7. Walk up and down stairs holding onto support.</li> <li>8. Try to kick ball.</li> <li>9. Build towers of four or more bricks/ blocks.</li> <li>10. Turn several pages of book at a time but cannot turn page by page.</li> <li>11. Turn knobs and unscrew bottle cap.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Begin to sort objects by shapes and sizes.</li> <li>2. Enjoy pretend play, initially involving only himself (e.g. feeding himself with a spoon), then gradually involving others (e.g. feeding Mummy or a doll).</li> <li>3. Start learning to solve problems with trial and error.</li> <li>4. Able to identify himself and his family members in the mirror or from a picture.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Point to body parts in response to naming.</li> <li>2. Recognize names of familiar people and objects.</li> <li>3. Follow simple instructions like “give me the ball” without gestured cues.</li> <li>4. Say single words, first mainly nouns and then verbs.</li> <li>5. Start combining words e.g. “Mummy eat”, “want cookies” .</li> <li>6. Understand the meaning of “not allowed”.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Being self-centred.</li> <li>2. Enjoy watching and being around other children, usually older ones.</li> <li>3. Show possessiveness and compete for toys.</li> <li>4. Use gestures (e.g. pointing) or speech to show his needs and to direct your attention to his interest.</li> <li>5. Learn to play with others in an interactive way (towards the latter half of this period).</li> <li>6. Imitate behaviours and activities of others, especially adults and older kids.</li> </ol> |

| <b>Age</b>        | <b>Physical</b>  | <b>Intellectual</b> | <b>Language</b>  | <b>Social and emotional</b>   |
|-------------------|--|---------------------|--|---|
| 1 year to 2 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Put pegs into holes.</li> <li>13. Scribble with crayon.</li> <li>14. Able to drink with a sucking tube.</li> <li>15. Try feeding self with spoon and drinking from cup.</li> <li>16. Able to take off shoes.</li> <li>17. Able to pick up small objects like pins, threads, dried grapes, etc.</li> <li>18. Able to screw off a cap or turn a door knob.</li> <li>19. Show tendency to use one hand.</li> </ul> |                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Use one word to stand for collective meaning like: "mi-mi" refers to all animals with four-feet, "car" refers to all kinds of vehicles.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Start indicating toilet needs.</li> </ul> |

Source: Family Health Service, Department of Health, "Happy Parenting!"

## ■■■ Developmental Characteristics of Children from 2 to 6 Years Old ■■■

| Age          | Physical   | Intellectual   | Language   | Social and emotional  |
|--------------|--|--|--|---|
| 2 to 3 years | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to walk at their own will, pull and push objects or step backwards.</li> <li>2. Need to rest both feet on one step in mounting a flight of stairs.</li> <li>3. Gradually able to kick a ball.</li> <li>4. Gradually able to throw a ball into a basket.</li> <li>5. Gradually able to ride a tricycle.</li> <li>6. Able to jump from a flight of stairs, but prone to injury.</li> <li>7. Able to unwrap sweets.</li> <li>8. Able to turn pages of a book.</li> <li>9. Able to pile up pieces of toy bricks.</li> <li>10. Able to thread big beads.</li> <li>11. Try folding papers and using scissors.</li> <li>12. Know how to play with clay with their hands.</li> <li>13. Gradually able to draw lines, circles, etc.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Begin to show memory, like remembering there are sweets in the refrigerator, or looking for their favourite toys.</li> <li>2. Begin to learn matching by colours, shapes, objects and sizes.</li> <li>3. With repeated attempts, able to put five rings onto a stick in sequence of their sizes.</li> <li>4. Begin to know their own names.</li> <li>5. Know about the names and functions of some body parts.</li> <li>6. Able to identify daily necessities by their senses.</li> <li>7. Perform role play like imitating a doctor/teacher, etc.</li> <li>8. Able to assemble puzzles of three to five pieces.</li> <li>9. Begin to understand the meaning of number one and two.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to follow instructions to find an object.</li> <li>2. Able to name each body part.</li> <li>3. Able to understand common nouns, verbs and adjectives.</li> <li>4. Able to express their wishes with limited words and short sentences.</li> <li>5. Try singing nursery rhymes by imitation.</li> <li>6. Know to ask with "what".</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Begin to show preference for food.</li> <li>2. Know how to express the need for toileting.</li> <li>3. Able to go to toilet on their own under prompting.</li> <li>4. Wetting sometimes still occurs in day time.</li> <li>5. With adults' assistance, able to wash hands, put on/pull down their pants, take off their clothes, shoes and socks.</li> <li>6. Not yet ready to share toys with peers.</li> <li>7. Able to take turns with peers under instruction by adults.</li> <li>8. Easy to get jealous towards peers who take away adults' attention from them.</li> <li>9. Like to be praised, have preference for beautiful clothes.</li> <li>10. Easy to lose temper when frustrated, yet also easy to forget about unhappy experience when attention is distracted.</li> <li>11. Like to follow routines, dislike changes.</li> </ol> |

| Age          | Physical  | Intellectual   | Language   | Social and emotional  |
|--------------|---|--|--|---|
| 3 to 4 years | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to go up to the slide and climbing frame.</li> <li>2. Able to ride a tricycle.</li> <li>3. Able to kick a slowly moving ball.</li> <li>4. Able to catch a big ball being thrown to them.</li> <li>5. Able to walk upstairs with alternate foot.</li> <li>6. Able to walk along a line or on footprints.</li> <li>7. Able to cross legs when sitting.</li> <li>8. Able to hammer wooden blocks.</li> <li>9. Use scissors to cut paper strips.</li> <li>10. Use fingers to glue things.</li> <li>11. Able to build up a pillar of nine pieces of toy bricks.</li> <li>12. Use three pieces of wood to make a bridge.</li> <li>13. Begin to hold a pencil properly to do drawing.</li> <li>14. Try to fill colour in a random manner.</li> <li>15. Able to draw a cross and inclined line by imitation.</li> <li>16. Able to screw on a cap.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to put five rings onto a stick in sequence of their sizes upon two attempts.</li> <li>2. Able to match three to four colours and identify their names.</li> <li>3. Able to distinguish between two objects by their sizes, length, texture, hardness.</li> <li>4. Begin to understand the concept of sequence, and able to make pattern with toy bricks or beads according to sequence.</li> <li>5. Begin to know how to classify and match objects like food, clothes, and able to associate objects according to their uses, such as shoes with socks and cups with plates.</li> <li>6. Able to recall three numbers just heard.</li> <li>7. Able to find two objects by memory.</li> <li>8. Know their own names, sex and age.</li> <li>9. Able to differentiate male and female.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to understand some rather abstract words like “same/different”, “open/close”, “top/bottom” and “in/out”.</li> <li>2. Understand the meaning of “pretending”.</li> <li>3. Pay attention when hearing stories, like to ask adults to repeat telling their favourite stories.</li> <li>4. Begin to give a chronological account of incidents that happened in the past.</li> <li>5. Able to describe with appropriate actions and voices.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Begin to expand their social lives and interests outside their families and enjoy outdoor activities.</li> <li>2. Able to play with toys alone without adults’ company.</li> <li>3. Able to eat with a spoon.</li> <li>4. Able to get water from a bottle.</li> <li>5. Understand that they have to clean their mouths after meals.</li> <li>6. Able to go to toilet on their own in day time, wetting seldom happens.</li> <li>7. Know how to put on and pull down their trousers.</li> <li>8. Able to wash hands with soap, though adult assistance in drying their hands is still required.</li> <li>9. Barely manage to dress and undress their loose outer clothes.</li> <li>10. Able to undo big buttons.</li> <li>11. Try putting clothes on hangers.</li> <li>12. Begin to understand the concept of danger, and know that they should not approach fire, boiling water, etc.</li> <li>13. Will not walk out to the middle of a road when going out.</li> </ol> |

| Age          | Physical | Intellectual   | Language   | Social and emotional   |
|--------------|----------|--|--|--|
| 3 to 4 years |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Able to draw a person with head and some body parts.</li> <li>11. Able to assemble puzzles of six pieces.</li> <li>12. Able to recite from one to ten.</li> <li>13. Able to count from one to three or four.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Know how to control the volume and speed when speaking.</li> <li>7. Able to use words like “here”, “there”, “you and me”, etc.</li> <li>8. Mainly use nouns, verbs and sometimes adjectives in speech.</li> <li>9. Begin to ask with “what”, “where” and “who”.</li> <li>10. Able to sing nursery rhymes together with actions, though the pronunciation is still not clear, people (including strangers) can understand their words pretty well.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. Like to join games led by adults, able to follow rules of games.</li> <li>15. Will take turns when playing toys.</li> <li>16. Know what belongs to them and what does not.</li> <li>17. Know that they should care for younger children and are willing to share toys with others.</li> <li>18. Able to accept adults’ advice, regard parents as authority and obey orders.</li> <li>19. Begin to learn to show courtesy, able to say “please” and “thank you” as told.</li> <li>20. Know how to call “grandmother” and “grandfather”.</li> </ul> |



| Age          | Physical  | Intellectual   | Language  | Social and emotional  |
|--------------|---|--|---|---|
| 4 to 5 years | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to jump forward and backward successively, with one foot and while running.</li> <li>2. Able to throw and catch bean bags.</li> <li>3. Walk on a balance beam.</li> <li>4. Able to throw balls.</li> <li>5. Able to pick up objects on the ground while running.</li> <li>6. When swimming, able to walk on shallow water or float on floater.</li> <li>7. Play confidently with slides, climbing frames and swings.</li> <li>8. Begin to do simple paper cutting and pasting.</li> <li>9. Able to cut simple pattern.</li> <li>10. Able to thread beads.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Begin to understand the concept of time, able to tell what they usually do in the morning, afternoon and evening.</li> <li>2. Begin to understand position and speed, e.g. able to distinguish front and back, fast and slow, middle and the first and the last, etc.</li> <li>3. Pay attention to their environment, able to point out the missing part in a picture.</li> <li>4. Able to point out what is inconsistent in a picture.</li> <li>5. Able to identify things and events by sound.</li> <li>6. Able to imitate voices of animals.</li> <li>7. Able to distinguish between living things (e.g. cat, dog, tree) and non-living things (e.g. toy, cup and plate).</li> <li>8. Able to place furniture in the appropriate room.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Begin to understand the difference between “past” and “present”.</li> <li>2. Able to speak fairly fluently and clearly.</li> <li>3. Begin to express themselves with complex or much longer sentences.</li> <li>4. Able to talk about experiences in everyday life.</li> <li>5. Able to tell stories from pictures.</li> <li>6. Able to use words like “because- therefore”, “some”, “several”, “many” appropriately in conversation.</li> <li>8. Able to tell the colour of a particular object, like: banana is yellow.</li> <li>9. Able to talk about people of different occupations and their responsibilities.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Begin to dress and undress, clean their noses, wash and dry their hands by themselves.</li> <li>2. Learn how to brush their teeth and eat with chopsticks.</li> <li>3. Able to help cleaning up the dining table after meals.</li> <li>4. Able to clean up dirt with a piece of cloth.</li> <li>5. Able to get up to the toilet at night, no more wetting.</li> <li>6. Able to be self-disciplined and stay within a confined area even without adults’ supervision.</li> <li>7. Willing to observe rules of the games when playing with other children.</li> <li>8. Able to take care of younger children and small animals and console their companion when they feel unhappy.</li> </ol> |

| Age          | Physical   | Intellectual   | Language  | Social and emotional   |
|--------------|--|--|---|--|
| 4 to 5 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Able to construct a small tower with six pieces of toy bricks by imitation.</li> <li>12. Able to draw simple pictures such as people, houses, trees, vehicles, etc.</li> <li>13. Able to fold a piece of paper along an inclined line.</li> <li>14. Able to stick several pieces of plasticine together.</li> <li>15. Able to draw quadrilaterals.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Able to point out a different type of object.</li> <li>10. Able to recall four things in a picture just seen.</li> <li>11. Able to follow order to perform three actions in succession.</li> <li>12. Able to tell which of the three things just seen are missing.</li> <li>13. Able to recite from one to twenty, count from one to ten or follow instructions to show one to five things.</li> <li>14. Able to draw a man with head, body, limbs and features of the face.</li> <li>15. Able to assemble puzzles of eight pieces.</li> <li>16. Able to identify simple and common signs, like road signs and shop plates.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Like asking for explanations of things they don't understand.</li> <li>11. Begin to ask with "why", "when", "how", etc.</li> <li>12. Able to read simple words.</li> <li>13. Able to use opposite/ complementary words and sentences.</li> <li>14. Able to solve simple quizzes like: "I have four legs, a tail, like to eat fish, can catch mouse, who am I?".</li> <li>15. Able to single out a word of different nature: e.g. "cow, goat, dog, car".</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Have vague concepts of right and wrong, only know that they will be punished for bad behaviour and will be praised for good behaviour.</li> <li>10. Know how to say "thank you", "sorry".</li> <li>11. Able to get along with strangers in conversation and without timidity.</li> <li>12. Able to receive telephone calls and help adults do simple tasks at home.</li> </ul> |

| Age          | Physical   | Intellectual  | Language   | Social and emotional  |
|--------------|--|---|--|---|
| 5 to 6 years | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to hold a ball while running, kick a moving ball or play ball with a racket.</li> <li>2. Able to play on their own on a swing.</li> <li>3. Able to climb a string-ladder.</li> <li>4. Able to run well by their toes swiftly and take quick bends.</li> <li>5. Able to walk up and down stairs alone with alternate foot.</li> <li>6. Able to fast run a distance of fifty feet, without feeling tired.</li> <li>7. Able to nail with a hammer.</li> <li>8. Able to hold objects weighing over ten pounds.</li> <li>9. Able to fill colour in an assigned area when paying attention.</li> <li>10. Able to sharpen pencils with a sharpener.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to put things of different length, height, width and size in correct order easily.</li> <li>2. Able to name different colours and shapes of common objects.</li> <li>3. Able to draw a rhombus and a triangle by imitation.</li> <li>4. Able to play simple puzzle games.</li> <li>5. Able to recall five numbers just seen or heard.</li> <li>6. Able to tell the general contents of pictures just seen.</li> <li>7. Able to repeat three acts from a story just heard.</li> <li>8. Able to count from one to twenty, write from one to ten.</li> <li>9. Able to place one to five in terms of quantity in correct sequence.</li> <li>10. Able to tell the order and position of an object. (e.g. the first, the second).</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grammar and structure of children's language are more or less the same as adults.</li> <li>2. Able to communicate with family members or peers without difficulty.</li> <li>3. Able to speak up in turn without digressing from the subject.</li> <li>4. Able to give a logical account of what has happened recently.</li> <li>5. Able to use words like "although", "however", "but", though sometimes inappropriately.</li> <li>6. Begin to understand the difference of "yesterday", "today" and "tomorrow" .</li> <li>7. Understand words like in/out, far/near, bottom/top, enter/leave, start/end, etc.</li> <li>8. Able to talk back, protest or even scold others when frustrated.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to set up dining utensils for meal.</li> <li>2. Able to eat and pick up food with chopsticks.</li> <li>3. Know how to choose suitable clothes.</li> <li>4. Able to comb their hair.</li> <li>5. If trained, able to clean up themselves after going to the toilet.</li> <li>6. Able to do simple housework, like tidying up their own clothes.</li> <li>7. Able to turn on/off television and select their favourite programmes.</li> <li>8. Know how to cross the road carefully.</li> <li>9. Know how to ask for help when losing their way.</li> <li>10. Able to tell their own home telephone number and address.</li> </ol> |

| <b>Age</b>   | <b>Physical</b>   | <b>Intellectual</b>   | <b>Language</b>  | <b>Social and emotional</b>  |
|--------------|---|---|--|--|
| 5 to 6 years | 11. Able to draw straight lines with a ruler.<br>12. Able to erase with an eraser without tearing the paper.<br>13. Able to cut out a pattern from a book.<br>14. Able to fold a piece of paper into half and then further half.<br>15. Able to put small beans into a bottle.<br>16. Able to thread shoelaces.<br>17. Able to follow instructions to construct a three-step stair with big square toy bricks.<br>18. Able to construct a stair with ten pieces of toy bricks by imitation. | 11. Able to tell immediately the quantity of four or below.<br>12. Understand the difference between “half of a piece” and “one full piece”.<br>13. Able to show the exact quantity of a given number of ten or below.<br>14. Able to do simple mathematical addition and subtraction.<br>15. Able to read and understand ten of commonly used words. | 9. Able to express feelings with appropriate words.<br>10. Able to describe a picture.<br>11. Use different adjectives to describe a person or an object.<br>12. Able to tell their own date of birth.<br>13. Able to briefly describe four seasons.<br>14. Begin to understand the concept of calendar and time.<br>15. Able to tell the year, month, day and week. Able to tell the time (e.g. 3 o'clock, 4 o'clock) by looking at a clock, but depending on whether they are given the chance to learn. | 11. Able to play games which require co-operation with several peers, understand the principle of fair play and the need to follow group decisions, also able to explain rules of the game to other children.<br>12. Begin to choose companions that they like.<br>13. Able to play competitive games like chess.<br>14. Able to use public toilets alone if required. |

Note: The above information is resourced from **“Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum (1996)”**. In designing the curriculum, pre-primary educators are advised to use the information with flexibility and draw relevant verifications in light of their everyday observations.

## Brief Descriptions and Examples of Basic Skills Applicable to Pre-primary Education

|                                 | <b>Brief Description<br/>Applicable to Pre-primary<br/>Education</b>  | <b>Example</b>  |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Self-management skills          | Abilities of handling one's emotions, conforming to rules and planning one's own time and approach for activities.                                | Manage to go to toilet, pack up school bag and tidy up things after activities.   |
| Communication skills            | Verbal and non-verbal (body language such as gesture, facial expression and expression of the eyes) communication abilities.                      | Able to voice out one's thoughts and needs to fellow children or teachers.  |
| Collaboration skills            | Abilities of expressing one's own opinion or making contributions, co-operating with others and completing a job or task.                         | Participate actively in discussion during small group activities, work together with fellow children to complete a job.                     |
| Analysis skills                 | Abilities of analysing and comparing information in hand, understanding its meaning and making judgments.   | Able to analyse and make judgments while listening to stories, or able to raise questions and respond to questions appropriately.           |
| Creativity                      | Abilities of proposing original ideas, responding to different circumstances, and thinking and appreciating things from various perspectives.     | Able to use imagination in musical, dancing, imaginative play and story-telling activities, and express oneself and create in various ways. |
| Use of information media skills | Abilities of learning to search for information from children's books, newspapers, audio-visual learning materials and other information media.   | Able to select appropriate books or other reference materials to enhance one's understanding of a certain issue.                            |
| Numeracy skills                 | Abilities of using pre-mathematical concepts such as counting, sorting, etc.  | Able to use simple diagrams or charts for sorting activities.   |
| Problem-solving skills          | Abilities of using thinking to solve problems.  | Able to identify substitutes to finish a task if one lacks a certain tool during research and study activities.                             |
| Study skills                    | Abilities of adopting learning strategies such as collecting, understanding, organising and applying information to the study of specific topics. | Able to search, sort and summarize information acquired according to the selected topic when doing a project.                               |

# A Proposed Set of Values and Attitudes for Incorporation into the School Curriculum

| Core Values: Personal  | Sustaining Values: Personal   | Core Values: Social   | Sustaining Values: Social   | Attitudes  |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ sanctity of life</li> <li>■ truth</li> <li>■ aesthetics</li> <li>■ honesty</li> <li>■ human dignity</li> <li>■ rationality</li> <li>■ creativity</li> <li>■ courage</li> <li>■ liberty</li> <li>■ affectivity</li> <li>■ individuality</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ self-esteem</li> <li>■ self-reflection</li> <li>■ self-discipline</li> <li>■ self-cultivation</li> <li>■ principled morality</li> <li>■ self-determination</li> <li>■ openness</li> <li>■ independence</li> <li>■ enterprise</li> <li>■ integrity</li> <li>■ simplicity</li> <li>■ sensitivity</li> <li>■ modesty</li> <li>■ perseverance</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ equality</li> <li>■ kindness</li> <li>■ benevolence</li> <li>■ love</li> <li>■ freedom</li> <li>■ common good</li> <li>■ mutuality</li> <li>■ justice</li> <li>■ trust</li> <li>■ interdependence</li> <li>■ sustainability</li> <li>■ betterment of human kind</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ plurality</li> <li>■ due process of law</li> <li>■ democracy</li> <li>■ freedom and liberty</li> <li>■ common will</li> <li>■ patriotism</li> <li>■ tolerance</li> <li>■ equal opportunities</li> <li>■ culture and civilisation heritage</li> <li>■ human rights and responsibilities</li> <li>■ rationality</li> <li>■ sense of belonging</li> <li>■ solidarity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ optimistic</li> <li>■ participatory</li> <li>■ critical</li> <li>■ creative</li> <li>■ appreciative</li> <li>■ empathetic</li> <li>■ caring and concerned</li> <li>■ positive</li> <li>■ confident</li> <li>■ cooperative</li> <li>■ responsibilities</li> <li>■ adaptable to changes</li> <li>■ open-minded</li> <li>■ with a respect for                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ self</li> <li>■ life</li> <li>■ quality and excellence</li> <li>■ evidence</li> <li>■ fair play</li> <li>■ rule of law</li> <li>■ different ways of life, beliefs and opinions</li> <li>■ the environment</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ with a desire to learn</li> <li>■ diligent</li> <li>■ committed to core and sustaining values</li> </ul> |

Values may be defined as those qualities that an individual or society considers important as principles for conduct and that are intrinsically worthwhile. Values are fundamental to the formation of attitudes, which in turn affect the acquisition and application of the values. They may be broadly categorized as core and sustaining values. An elaboration of these terms is provided below:

“Values constitute the foundation of one’s attitudes and beliefs, which subsequently influence one’s behaviour and way of life. Values can vary across societies, as different social and economic conditions in different geographical locations may lead to different value emphases. However, across societies, we can also identify certain values that are commonly or universally emphasised. The emergence of these universal values illustrates the common concerns of human societies, the basic qualities for human existence, the common elements in human civilisation, and also the common characteristics of human nature... We call these universal values core values.” And sustaining values are “other values that are also important at an instrumental level, being regarded as important or helpful for sustaining the core values.”

(Extracted from Learning to Learn: Life-long Learning and Whole-person Development (2001) Appendix II)

# A Study on Chinese Handwriting at the Kindergarten Level

The Curriculum Development Council endorsed in 1996 the report on a study of Chinese Handwriting at the kindergarten level. The study was conducted by performing one-to-one tests on 97 children in 26 kindergartens at the beginning of the nursery class level, at the end of the nursery class level, at the end of the lower kindergarten level and at the end of the upper kindergarten level. The report includes the following recommendations:

## I. Principles on writing readiness at different levels

### 1. Nursery class (3-4 years old)

- i. Kindergarten teachers are advised not to expect children to write at nursery classes.
- ii. In view of the fact that children's writing readiness should be developed before they are asked to write, kindergarten teachers should foster the development of pre-writing related skills such as fine motor skills, eye-hand co-ordination and concepts of orientations through the following activities:
  - a. eye-hand co-ordination: including activities like threading beads or straws, putting different-sized beans into a large box by hand or by spoon, ball bouncing, hammering bench, marble shooting, building of blocks, doing puzzles, colouring, cutting and pasting, doing mazes, rolling and catching plastic hoops and finger puppets, etc.
  - b. development of fine motor skills: including activities like playing with blocks or plastic pieces, doing puzzles, playing with playdough or plasticine, threading, screwing on the caps of different sized bottles, sand play, drawing pictures, finger painting, fitting and inlaying pictures, and piling, etc.
  - c. using a writing instrument: including activities like drawing of straight lines, slanting lines or circles, etc.
  - d. development of orientation: including activities like arranging pictures in the correct order, driving of toy cars, drawing routes of vehicles, etc.
- iii. Kindergarten teachers should give more guidance to children in developing correct writing posture as the majority of children had incorrect writing postures at nursery classes.


### 2. Lower kindergarten class (4-5 years old)

Kindergarten teachers should be more aware of children's individual differences in writing readiness. They should observe carefully the indicators of writing readiness and assign writing or pre-writing activities accordingly.

### 3. Upper kindergarten class (5-6 years old)

Kindergarten teachers may introduce writing at this level since most of the children already possess writing readiness.

## II. General principles on selecting suitable Chinese characters for kindergarten children

1. It is suggested that when kindergarten teachers ask children to write Chinese characters, they should focus on choosing the Chinese characters with mainly vertical and horizontal strokes.
2. Kindergarten teachers are advised to teach children how to identify the different parts of a Chinese character before they actually learn to write a Chinese character. They are advised to choose those Chinese characters with fewer strokes and simple components as these characters are easier to write.
3. Kindergarten teachers should be aware of the fact that writing Chinese characters with the strokes at the correct positions is not easy for most children.
4. Teachers should not be too demanding if children cannot write the stroke types  correctly. If children have to write Chinese characters with these strokes, more guidance from their teachers is needed.
5. More guidance should be given to children of lower kindergarten class to get the correct balance and proportion. More guidance should also be given to children at the upper kindergarten class to write Chinese characters precisely in terms of strokes and shapes.



## Activity Plan and Review

|   |   | *Remarks         |
|---|---|------------------|
| 1. Name of Activity:  |   |                  |
| 2. Domain:  | (Physical Fitness and Health, Language, Early Mathematics, Science and Technology, Self and Society, Arts, Adaptation to School Life and Interface between Kindergarten and Primary School, Home-School Co-operation, etc.) |                  |
| 3. Children's age / level:  | (Understand children's developmental needs)   | Guide Appendix 2 |
| 4. Number of children:  |   |                  |
| 5. Teacher-child ratio:   |   |                  |
| 6. Duration / Number of Session / Grouping for Activity:  | (Frequency and opportunities for children's participation)  |                  |
| 7. Introduction:<br>(Background and philosophy of the activity plan and their relationship with the entire curriculum of the institution)   |   |                  |
| 8. Learning Objectives:<br>(Refer to the learning objectives listed under the learning domains and match children's developmental objectives)   |   | Guide Chapter 2  |
| 9. Preparation before the Activity:<br>i. Venue:<br>ii. Materials / Teaching Materials:   |   | Guide Chapter 4  |
| 10. During the Activity:<br>i. Stimulation:<br>ii. Process:<br>iii. Results:  |   | Guide Chapter 4  |
| 11. Evaluation and Records:<br>i. Learning effectiveness: (Review whether the learning objectives have been achieved after the activity)<br>ii. Information required for collating children's learning portfolio: (What kinds of information need to be collected for providing evidence of children's learning situation?)<br>iii. Extended activities: (To be developed as extended learning experiences in future) |   | Guide Chapter 5  |
| 12. Reflection on Teaching and Learning:<br>i. Comparing the activity plan with the practical implementation<br>ii. Understanding children's needs and abilities<br>iii. Examining the appropriateness of curriculum content and planning teaching activities based on children's feedback  |   | Guide Chapter 4  |

\* The related parts of the Guide or other references.



## **I. Aims of life-wide learning and its implications**

The environment plays an important role in the growth and learning of children. An enriched environment with abundant resources can stimulate their learning. Outside the classroom, the surrounding environment provides children with broad learning space and precious learning opportunities. Hence, “life-wide learning” is a supporting learning mode to pre-primary curriculum development. For example, children can obtain first-hand experience to appreciate and know the growth and appearance of different animals and plants in a natural environment, a park or the countryside. A visit to the Science Museum can enhance children’s knowledge of science and arouse their interest in learning about scientific topics through manipulating objects and exploration.

## **II. Points to be noted in life-wide learning**

The pre-primary institution should note the following when organising life-wide learning activities for children:

1. The activity should correspond with the curriculum; the life-wide learning experience of children should also be consistent with the learning objectives.
2. The institution should make good use of community resources and facilities in the vicinity as much as possible, such as different types of shops, scenic spots and historical sites, parks, nature trails, museums, etc.
3. Teachers should make good preparations, such as planning the activity content, liaising with relevant department and site inspection, in order to ensure the safety of children and the smooth implementation of the activity.
4. Parents’ participation should be encouraged. As such, apart from assisting with the activity, parents can also get better acquainted with the school personnel and other parents, and have further understanding of their children’s learning.

## Children's Behaviours that Require Concern

| Age      | Behaviours   |
|----------|--|
| 1 month  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Seldom moves his arms or legs.</li> <li>2. Appears excessively floppy or stiff.</li> <li>3. Does not blink to bright light.</li> <li>4. Does not focus or follow your face briefly at near.</li> <li>5. Does not respond to loud noises.</li> </ol>  |
| 3 months | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appears floppy or too stiff on handling.</li> <li>2. Does not move much and not support his head temporarily.</li> <li>3. Keeps his hands fisted all the time and does not hold rattle put in his hand.</li> <li>4. Does not look at his own hands.</li> <li>5. Does not follow moving objects with his eyes at near.</li> <li>6. Does not respond to loud noise.</li> <li>7. Does not make any sound.</li> <li>8. Does not smile in response to your voice or face.</li> </ol>  |
| 7 months | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does not move much or move asymmetrically.</li> <li>2. Does not support his head well in sitting position.</li> <li>3. Does not bear some weight on legs when being held up.</li> <li>4. Does not reach and grasp objects.</li> <li>5. Does not visually follow objects at near and far distance.</li> <li>6. Has one or both eyes consistently turn in or out (i.e. squinting).</li> <li>7. Does not respond to calling.</li> <li>8. Does not turn head to locate sound.</li> <li>9. Does not show affection to the person(s) who care for him.</li> <li>10. Does not vocalize.</li> </ol>          |
| 9 months | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does not sit alone.</li> </ol>   |
| 1 year   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does not stand holding onto furniture.</li> <li>2. Does not cruise along furniture.</li> <li>3. Does not walk when led by hands.</li> <li>4. Does not pull himself up from sitting position.</li> <li>5. Has not developed pincer grasp.</li> <li>6. Does not search for hidden object.</li> <li>7. Does not respond to calling of his name.</li> <li>8. Does not respond to command with gestured cues e.g. wave "bye-bye", "clap your hands".</li> <li>9. Does not use gestures or pointing to indicate needs.</li> <li>10. Does not babble.</li> <li>11. Appears not hear or see well.</li> </ol> |

| <b>Age</b> | <b>Behaviours</b>   |
|------------|---|
| 1.5 years  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cannot walk alone.</li> <li>2. Does not play meaningfully but still engage in throwing and mouthing of objects.</li> </ol>  |
| 2 years    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Still being unsteady (after walking for 6 months or so).</li> <li>2. Unable to identify common household objects and body parts.</li> <li>3. Does not follow simple instructions.</li> <li>4. Does not speak single words.</li> <li>5. Does not use gestures or speech to direct your attention to his interest.</li> <li>6. Does not show any pretend play.</li> <li>7. Does not show interest or understanding to what you have taught.</li> <li>8. Appears not hear or see well.</li> </ol>  |
| 3 years    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Falls frequently or has difficulty with stairs.</li> <li>2. Appears clumsy in manipulating small objects e.g. unwrap paper from a candy.</li> <li>3. Fails to understand simple instructions e.g. "put the coat into the room".</li> <li>4. Fails to communicate in 2-3 words phrases (e.g. "drink juice", "want the ball").</li> <li>5. Shows no interest in other children.</li> <li>6. Does not participate in pretend play.</li> <li>7. Shows extreme difficulty in separating from mother in most situations.</li> </ol>   |
| 4 years    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appears clumsy in movement or manipulating simple tools such as spoons, forks, etc.</li> <li>2. Has difficulty in following verbal instructions.</li> <li>3. Does not speak in sentences.</li> <li>4. Has unclear speech and difficulty in being understood.</li> <li>5. Shows excessive or persistent aggressive behaviour.</li> <li>6. Still clings and cries excessively whenever you (or the main caregiver) leaves him.</li> <li>7. Shows no interest in interactive games with others.</li> <li>8. Ignores other children and prefers playing on his own.</li> <li>9. Appears not to see or hear well.</li> <li>10. Has learning or behaviour problem at school.</li> </ol>   |
| 5 years    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Shows excessively aggressive behaviour.</li> <li>2. Is excessively timid, fearful, or emotionally labile.</li> <li>3. Is easily distracted and inattentive when compared to others in class.</li> <li>4. Shows little interest in other children and not joining in games.</li> <li>5. Cannot follow instructions at home or in school.</li> <li>6. Cannot relate simple events.</li> <li>7. Cannot speak in sentences.</li> <li>8. Has unclear speech.</li> <li>9. Shows definite problem in learning concepts.</li> <li>10. Appears clumsy in movement.</li> <li>11. Appear clumsy in pencil skill or in using simple tools.</li> <li>12. Does not see or hear well.</li> <li>13. Has any other learning or behaviour problem at school.</li> </ol> |

Source: Family Health Service, Department of Health, "Happy Parenting!"

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