

NEW BRUNSWICK CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

~ ENGLISH ~



The best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all that we do.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 3, Section 1

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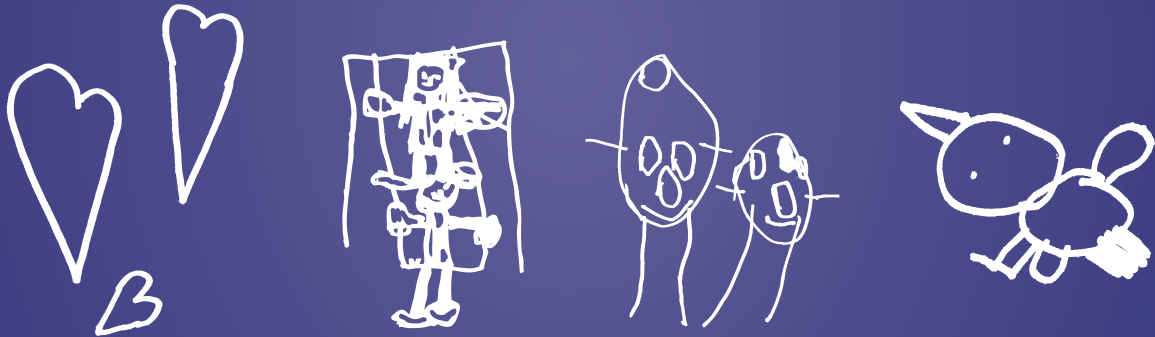


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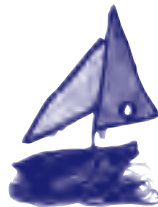
Presented to
The Department of Social Development

By
Early Childhood Research and Development Team
Early Childhood Centre
University of New Brunswick
Fredericton, New Brunswick

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Lauren



Felix



Francis



Laura

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UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Pam Whitty, Project Director, University of New Brunswick
Pam Nason, Project Director, University of New Brunswick
Kilby Adams, University of New Brunswick
Leslie Allan, Early Intervention Saint John Inc.
Emily Ashton, University of New Brunswick
Jan Ashton, University of New Brunswick
Kembubi Christie, University of New Brunswick
Anne Hunt, University of New Brunswick
Lisa LeBlanc, University of New Brunswick
Tina Peabody, University of New Brunswick
Sherry Rose, University of New Brunswick
Tara-Lynn Scheffel, University of New Brunswick
Kim Stewart, University of New Brunswick
Jar Yee Tan, University of New Brunswick
Leigh White, University of New Brunswick
Gillian Yeomans, University of New Brunswick

CURRICULUM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Cindy Dickie, Dept. of Wellness, Culture and Sport
Mary Ferris, Dept. of Education
Gerald Ingersoll, Dept. of Post-Secondary Education,
Training and Labour
Claudette Landry, Dept. of Health
Pam Nason, University of New Brunswick
Patricia Seely, Dept. of Social Development
John Serkiz, Dept. of Health
Marjolaine St. Pierre, Early Childhood Care and
Education New Brunswick (ECCENB)
Janet Towers, Early Childhood Care and
Education New Brunswick (ECCENB)
Robert Williston, Dept. of Post Secondary Education,
Training and Labour
Darlene Whitehouse-Sheenan, Dept. of Education
Pam Whitty, University of New Brunswick

JOINT CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Leona Bernard, University of Moncton
Rose-Marie Duguay, University of Moncton
Nicole Gervais, Dept. of Social Development
Diane Lutes, Dept. of Social Development
Pam Nason, University of New Brunswick
Patricia Seely, Dept. of Social Development
Pam Whitty, University of New Brunswick

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT TEAM AND WORKING GROUPS

Leslie Allan, Early Intervention Saint John Inc.
Robyn Baxter, Hampton Alliance for Lifelong Learning
Valerie Blythe, Chipman Family Resource Centre
Rachel Brown, Dept. of Social Development
Peggy Clement, Headstart, Big Cove First Nation
Beth Corey, Military Family Resource Centre
Jody Dallaire, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada
Cynthia Dempsey, Kids Korner Children's Centre/Rural Voices
Maureen Dignard, Little Angels Daycare/ECCENB
Cindy Dickie, Dept. of Wellness, Culture and Sport
Anna Fanjoy, University of New Brunswick
Dallas Guenther, University of New Brunswick
Shirley Ann Howe, The Children's Place Daycare
Anne Hunt, University of New Brunswick
Tammy Jones, RN, Moncton Hospital
Angela Legresley, MD, South-East Regional Health Authority
Katherine MacIntyre, Unicorn Children's Centre Inc.
Dixie Mitchell, New Brunswick Association for Community Living
Pam Nason, University of New Brunswick
Sherry Rose, University of New Brunswick
Marjolaine St-Pierre, Early Childhood Care and
Education New Brunswick (ECCENB)
Patricia Seely, Dept. of Social Development
Janice Slaney, Dept. of Social Development
Janet Towers, YMCA, Saint John
Leigh White, University of New Brunswick
Darlene Whitehouse-Sheehan, Dept. of Education
Pam Whitty, University of New Brunswick

REVIEWERS

Leslie Allan, Early Intervention Saint John Inc.
Karla Baxter-Vincent, NBCC, Saint John
Andrea Bear Nicholas, St. Thomas University
Michelle Demers, Woodstock Childcare Inc.
Cynthia Dempsey, Kids Korner Children's Centre
Susan Fraser, British Columbia
Josée LeBouthillier, University of New Brunswick
Linda Gould, Chatham Day Care Centre Inc.
Janet Towers, YMCA Saint John
Manju Varma-Joshi, Diversity Matters, Moncton

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PILOT SITES AND PARTICIPANTS

100 AKER WOODS DAYCARE,
SALISBURY
Tiffany Gladstone
Sherry Magennis
Claudia Ogilvie
Lillian Shaffer
Tiffany Yeomans
Roxanne Duncan, Director

CHATHAM DAY CARE CENTER INC.,
MIRAMICHI
Leisa Comeau
Jennifer Curtis
Stephanie Karasek
Jackie McGraw
Amy Savoy
Linda Gould, Director

FREDERICTON EARLY LEARNING CENTER INC.,
FREDERICTON
Debby Bulmer
Ronda Florian
Melinda Hernandez
Melissa Hernandez
Jill Merritt
Carla Flynn, Director

JUST KIDS PRESCHOOL CENTRE INC.,
MIRAMICHI
Melanie Allison
Donna Baisley
Dianne Benoit
Jenna Jardine
Debbie Pleadwell
Cheryl Coughlin, Director

KINGS COUNTY KIDS DAYCARE CENTRE,
SUSSEX
Erin Brewer
Gail Kierstead
Katie Parlee
Angela Thompson
Natalie Laurin, Director

PASSAMAQUODDY CHILDREN'S CENTRE INC.,
ST. ANDREWS
Jane Beckerton
Laura Hooper
Angela Scott
Catriona Wong
Patty Woolridge
Janet Tidd, Director
Inez Thomas-Cuyllle, Director

THE PRESCHOOL CENTRE ON CLARK ST. INC.,
FREDERICTON
Janice Bealieu
Charlotte Keays
Christina Saunders
Jennifer Thomason
Lois Aubin Vautour, Director

UNB CHILDREN'S CENTRE,
FREDERICTON
Gillian Bateman
Mollie Coombs
Leigh White
Sherry Rose, Director

UNICORN CHILDREN'S CENTRE INC.,
MONCTON
Shawnda Farquhar
Maria Gillis
Christa Kierstead
Anne McDougall
Kelly Trenholm
Lori LeBlanc, Director

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EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM.

EDITORS

Susan Fraser
Sabine Campbell
Rebecca Leaman

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Karen Ruet
Karen Clark
Pilot Site Participants
UNB Team Members

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Mandy Wright

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SECTION ONE

Vision

Purpose

Structure

In Children's Best Interests

Values-Based Curriculum Framework

Valuing Children

Valuing Cultures and Languages

Valuing Relationships

Valuing Environments



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VISION

Our vision is that all children will grow to their fullest potential with dignity, a sense of self-worth, and a zest for living and learning. It is a holistic vision that seeks to provide the environment and resources needed to support dynamic development in young children who are:

- o curious, courageous, and confident in their pursuit of knowledge and skills;
- o secure in their linguistic and cultural identities;
- o respectful of diversity; and
- o contributing to the development of a just and democratic society that nurtures connection and care for life on the earth.

In keeping with contemporary research and theory, the framework emphasizes responsive relationships, children's strengths, and engaging environments. It views children as confident, active learners whose learning, growth, and development are profoundly influenced by the quality of their relationships with people and their interactions with places and things.

Play is acknowledged in the framework as integral to children's learning and richly formative in their capacity for relationships. Early years educators in New Brunswick echo the views of their colleagues around the world in their belief that play must be accorded a key place in the lives of young children. Research and theory support the long-held contention that play is essential to quality of life in childhood and a primary means of understanding the world. Consequently, this curriculum framework articulates ways in which educators can maximize the potential of play for children's care and learning.

The *New Brunswick Curriculum Framework for Early Learning and Child Care — English* values and promotes children's experience of:

- o safe and caring environments where their emotional and physical health, positive self-identities, and sense of belonging are nurtured and protected;
- o open and flexible environments where playful exploration, problem-solving and creativity are encouraged and purposefully planned;
- o intellectually, socially and culturally engaging environment where their communicative practices, literacies, and literate identities are valued and supported;
- o socially inclusive and culturally sensitive environments in which consideration for others, inclusive, equitable, democratic and sustainable practices are enacted, and social responsibility is nurtured.

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VISION

The uniqueness of each child is implicitly integrated into the philosophy of early learning and child care that underlines the framework. By design, the curriculum will not merely accommodate, but actively honour the diversity of New Brunswick's children and their languages and heritages. This is a challenging and daunting task, one that requires a clear vision and a resourceful, collaborative, and creative approach to providing for our youngest citizens' full participation in the social and cultural life of their communities.



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PURPOSE

Throughout Canada and the world there is a growing recognition of the need to value and support the learning and child care of our youngest children. The *New Brunswick Curriculum Framework for Early Learning and Child Care — English* addresses this need by providing the foundation for an emergent and engaging curriculum for children from birth to five, one that will encourage optimum development in an atmosphere of trust, security, and respect. As such it seeks to:

- o Articulate common values, goals, and principles for early learning and child care that are open to ongoing input and change;
- o Identify essential areas of early learning and care and holistic pedagogies for young children;
- o Provide a supportive structure for educators as they co-construct curriculum with children, families, and communities at the local level;
- o Affirm exemplary practices while encouraging the ongoing dynamic development of diverse practice in the field;
- o Develop a shared professional language for discussion of early learning and child care policy and practice;
- o Contribute to ongoing questioning, discussions, and critical reflection about early learning and care in New Brunswick;
- o Prompt change by directing attention to questions about our agenda for children and the ways in which we respect children’s capacities, ideas and potentials.

Suited for home-based and centre-based care, the framework can be used as a source of information for parents, early childhood educators, and other professionals and paraprofessionals. It is intended to facilitate continuity of learning and care by connecting to diverse home practices, linking with other community-based programs and supports, and complementing the school curriculum.



STRUCTURE

In the *New Brunswick Curriculum Framework for Early Learning and Child Care – English*, you will find the following sections:

- o Section One describes the context and values from which the curriculum framework flows;
- o Section Two outlines four broad goals for early learning and care, which are subsequently expanded in Section Four;
- o Section Three addresses learning principles, documentation/assessment, and continuities/transitions;
- o Section Four is an expansion of each of the four broad goals to illustrate what's involved in learning, and the provisions and professional practices to support learning and care;
- o Section Five includes a literature review and bibliography that grounds the work in contemporary theory and practice;

The values, principles and broad goals outlined in the curriculum are interdependent and not intended for use in isolation. In practice they are in constant interplay, brought to life by communities of children and adults to constitute the curriculum as an organic whole in which early learning and care are always connected. Professional support documents further elaborate the framework in practice.



Miya

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IN CHILDREN'S BEST INTERESTS

The best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all that we do.

— United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 3, Section 1

The curriculum framework presented in this document recognizes early learning and care as inseparable in the lives of children. By placing children at the centre, their best interests form a primary consideration in all that we do.

Determining what is in children's best interests requires ongoing conversation, communication, and negotiation. Diverse families and communities may differ in what they believe to be best for their children, and the children themselves are entitled to a voice. As well, the interests of individual children always exist in fragile balance with the interests of the various groups to which they belong. Consequently, children's best interests must be understood in the context of their dynamic relationships with families, communities, languages, and cultures.

As children's first and most influential teachers, the families' own values, goals, and aspirations are integral to the curriculum for early learning and care. Educators and other professionals must work together with families in mutually respectful and harmonious ways to build cohesive communities that can assure children's well-being. We must honour diverse family circumstances, languages and cultures even as they celebrate the commonalities that bind them together.

Including all children

Throughout this document we have used the term children to refer to all children, regardless of race, religion, culture, language, social and economic status, gender, sexual orientation, or ability. The use of this inclusive term, without qualifiers, is deliberate. It resists the implication that particular ways of being in the world are "normal" while other ways are not.

Recognizing that each child embodies race, religion, culture, language, social and economic status, gender, sexual orientation, and ability in unique and dynamic ways, we also acknowledge that paying close attention to the sites of difference is requisite to ensuring equitable opportunities for all children. In so doing, we emphasize the need for a curriculum that is responsive to differences, with the capacity to provide additional support as required to ensure each child's right to full participation.¹

¹ Wayne MacKay, *A View from the Front Line* (GNB: Fredericton, 2005), <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/publications/mackay/MACKAYREPORTFINAL.pdf>.

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VALUES-BASED CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

In keeping with contemporary research on curriculum for early learning and care,² this curriculum framework is values-based. The values were arrived at through an extensive review of the literature,³ a process of broad consultation in New Brunswick,⁴ and extensive feedback from external reviewers. In the consultations, it was agreed that no single value should be privileged over another. As society changes, values shift. Making values explicit opens them to ongoing negotiation, critique, and change. In the context of a values-based curriculum, childhood as an age in its own right and children's rights figure prominently.

The Distinctiveness of Childhood

We value childhood as an age in its own right characterized by curiosity, rapid growth, vulnerability, and resilience and “todayness.” It is much more than simply preparation for the future. Curiosity sets in motion exploration, play, and communication as children’s primary ways of knowing about the world. Consequently, the need for protection and belonging is counterbalanced by the need for new experiences and openness to risk taking.*

*OECD, Country note – Early childhood education and care policy in Sweden (OECD: Paris, 1999), 34. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/52/31/2534972.pdf>.

Children’s Rights

We value the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, ratified by Canada in 1991, which recognizes children as citizens with rights for opportunities to reach their fullest potential: the right to be treated with dignity and respect, to be protected from harm, to exercise a voice, to engage in play and recreational activities, and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.†

†United Nations, Convention on the Rights of the Child (OHCHR: Geneva 1989), <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>.

Inclusiveness and Equity

We value diversities, and honour all individual, social, linguistic and cultural differences. We uphold the right of every child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life regardless of language, culture, race, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, or ability — and encourage the provision of negotiated and equitable opportunities for participation.

Compassion and Caring

We value compassion and an ethic of care as essential to nurturing the growth, development, and learning of young children, ensuring the rights of the most vulnerable members of our society and preserving the earth for future generations.

2 John Bennett, Curriculum issues in national policy-making (EECERA Conference: Malta, 2004); Jane Beach and Martha Friendly, Quality by Design (CRRU: Toronto, 2005); Monica Lysack, Review of international early childhood curricula: Lessons for Canada (Plan-it Quality Conference: Regina, 2005).

3 See Section Five of this document

4 During 2005-2006 in Bathurst, Miramichi, Saint John, Fredericton and Moncton. See www.unbf.ca/education/eccl/what/index.html for presentations relating to Early Learning and Care Symposium, October 2005.

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Living Democratically

We value the everyday enactment of democracy that gives children a voice in matters that concern them and provides opportunities to participate in making and questioning collective decisions.

Individuality and Independence

We value the unique personalities, talents, and abilities of every person. We value the capacity for independent action, individual accomplishment, and personal responsibility.

Social Responsibility

We value respect for fellow human beings and the responsibility of each, according to their ability, to contribute to the enhancement of interdependent communities, cultures, and sustainable futures. We value collective responsibility, solidarity, and collective action.

Communication

We value communication in all its forms, for its capacity to transmit feelings, language, and other cultural knowledge; to advance human thought; to develop human relations; and to enhance the distinctly human ability to reflect critically on the past and plan purposefully for the future.

Imagination, Creativity, and Play

We value imagination, creativity, and play for their capacity to produce a dynamic and innovative society. We value play and the arts as particularly fruitful ways for children to imagine new possibilities, explore novel ways of doing things, create unique ideas and products, and reinvent culture.

Aesthetics

We value beauty, pleasure, and desire in the growth of knowledge, understanding, judgment, and expression.

Spirituality

We value the child's right to a restorative spiritual space for enhancement of moral and ethical development.

Zest for Living and Learning

We value the zest for living and learning that embodies curiosity, playfulness, determination, persistence, pleasure in accomplishment, resilience, and the sheer joy of being alive.

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VALUING CHILDREN

How we view children and their capacity to learn is embedded in our collective understandings about childhood, children's relationships, and the material conditions of their lives. Beliefs about children and childhood are constructed and interpreted through social, economic, and cultural lenses. As such, expectations and opportunities for children differ from one culture to another, from one place to another, from one time to another.

In this framework, we acknowledge children as curious and communicative individuals in their own right: young citizens actively constructing, co-constructing and reconstructing their understanding of the world⁵ within various communities of learning.⁶ This image also presupposes children's rights to the basic necessities of life and the inclusion of their cultures and languages in everyday experiences.

Children begin learning at birth, and their experiences during the early years have critical consequences both in the present and for their own futures. To thrive as curious, confident, communicative people, they are entitled to nurturing relationships. They also are entitled to engaging and inclusive environments in which well-being is secured, exploration and play supported, home languages and literacies honoured and advanced, and respect for diversity promoted and practised.



5 The image of the child is a concept that been articulated and enacted in the Reggio Emilia early learning and care settings for infants, toddlers, and young children in Northern Italy. Reggio practices are embedded in the learning theories of John Dewey, Erik Erikson, Barbara Biber, Lev Vygotsky and Jean Piaget. See Susan Fraser, *Authentic Childhood* (Nelson College Indigenous: Toronto, 2006), 13-47, Chapter two: The image of the child. Also Lella Gandini and Carolyn Pope Edwards, *Bambini: the Italian Approach to Infant/Toddler Care* (Teachers College Press: New York, 2001), 49-54, Chapter four: The image of the child and the child's environment.

6 Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1979); James Gee, *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses* (Falmer Press: London, 1990); David Barton and Mary Hamilton, *Local Literacies* (Routledge: London, 1998).



VALUING CULTURES AND LANGUAGES

New Brunswick is home to the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, and Passamaquoddy Nations as well as established and recent immigrants from around the world. In the 2006 census⁷, 2.4% of New Brunswick's population identified themselves as aboriginal⁸ while visible minorities accounted for less than 1.5% of the total population. Visible minority and ethnocultural groups are, for the most part, small and geographically dispersed; in some parts of rural New Brunswick they are virtually absent. Where non-white children are present, it is highly possible that they may be the only visible minority in their centre or even in their community.

Officially a bilingual province, New Brunswick has a predominantly English-speaking population with a large French speaking minority (approximately one-third); 96% of the population counted English or French as their mother tongue in the 2006 census (Statistics Canada 2006). The indigenous languages of the region — Maliseet/Passamaquoddy and Mi'kmaq — have no official status in New Brunswick and, with a history of assimilation in monolingual schooling (English or French), have only a fragile and precarious existence.

Consequently, while New Brunswick's cultural mix offers exciting possibilities for cultivating intercultural sensitivities, harmonious relationships and dialogue between the English majority and the French minority, it presents enormous challenges for the cultivation of expansive world views and preservation of the linguistic and cultural identities of indigenous and visible minority children. However, a curriculum framework that upholds the principle of inclusion and seeks the best interests of all children must pursue these challenges vigorously.

The diversity of cultures in New Brunswick is rendered more complex by its socio-demographic diversity. With an almost equal split between rural and urban populations, a curriculum designed specifically for New Brunswick must embrace rural and urban lifeways by creating spaces for the inclusion of local knowledge, a sense of place, and the discussion of differences.

7 Canadian Council on Social Development, *Demographics of the Canadian population* (CCSD: Ottawa, 2005), <http://www.ccsd.ca/factsheets/demographics/>.

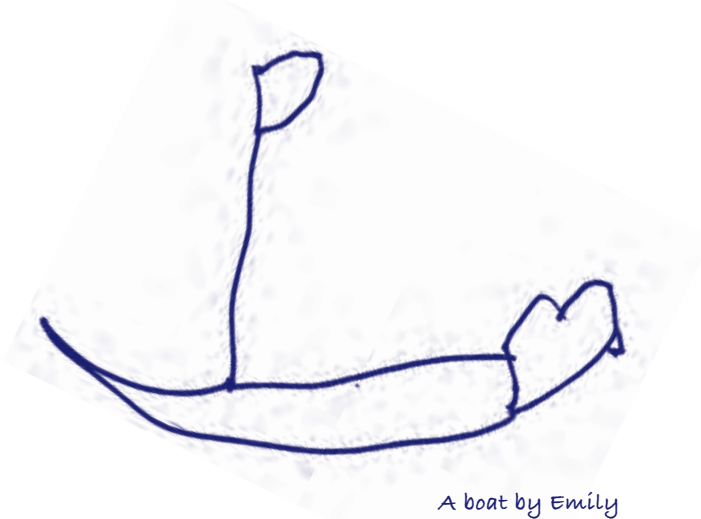
8 Included in the Aboriginal identity population are those persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group, that is, North American Indian, Métis or Inuit, and/or those who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian, as defined by the Indian Act of Canada, and/or those who reported they were members of an Indian band or First Nation. Statistics Canada, *2006 Census of Canada* (Statistics Canada: Ottawa, 2006), <http://www40.statcan.ca/l01/cst01/demo52a.htm>.



VALUING CULTURES AND LANGUAGES

Diverse family configurations add another layer of complexity to the cultural mix in New Brunswick. In addition, families may experience particular social and economic challenges as a consequence of factors such as recent immigration, low income, lone parenting, and social or geographic isolation.

We recognize that innovative approaches to the development and delivery of a curriculum for early learning and child care are required to ensure its responsiveness to diverse cultural, linguistic, and family circumstances. In this respect, other countries provide useful leads. In New Zealand, for example, the language rights of Maori children and the protection of Maori language and culture are sought through a bicultural curriculum and the practice of language nests which immerse children in their mother tongue from a very early age. Similarly, special measures have been taken to address the particular needs of children living in socially and economically depressed areas in many European and North American jurisdictions. Britain's Sure Start Program⁹ and Toronto's First Duty¹⁰ are prime examples of the capacity of "joined up" services to significantly enhance the life chances of children¹¹ — compelling evidence for a comprehensive approach that embeds a curriculum for early learning and child care in the larger spectrum of social services.



9 Sure Start, Early Excellence Centres (Sure Start: London, 2007), <http://www.surestart.gov.uk/research/evaluations/earlyexcellencecentres/>.

10 Toronto First Duty, Early learning and care for every child (Atkinson Centre: OISE/UT, 2005), http://www.toronto.ca/firstduty/indicators_oct2005.pdf.

11 Tony Bertram et al, Early excellence centre pilot program: Third annual report, 2001-2002 (Centre for Research in Early Childhood: Birmingham, 2004); Melhuish, Edwards et al, Sure Start national evaluation (NESS: London, 2007), <http://www.ness.bbk.ac.uk>.



VALUING RELATIONSHIPS

Children’s early learning and care is profoundly influenced by the quality of the relationships they experience. Relationships with the people, materials, and events in children’s various communities are interconnected and reciprocal. For the most part, children’s first relationships occur within a family setting. Their well-being, in the broadest sense of the term, will be intimately connected with the dynamic matrix of family relationships.¹²

Fostering Relationships Between Families and Early Childhood Educators

When children enter child care, consistent and trusting relationships between families and educators are critical to the well-being of both children and families. In many instances, a designated educator takes an active role in helping the child and parents settle in to a new environment.

Families — historically, the mothers — carry intimate knowledge of their children: knowledge that is invaluable to educators as they plan for continuities of learning and care for young children. As societal values shift, and with increasing support to parents, more fathers are involved in the care of young children. Educators at child care centres have a responsibility to cultivate strong reciprocal relationships with families.

Fostering Relationships Between Children and Educators

Deep, caring, enduring relationships between children and educators provide predictability and secure attachment in children’s lives. Forming warm and responsive relationships with children typically means respecting their emotional rhythms, listening carefully to their conversations, taking their suggestions for problem solving seriously, and following their lead in curriculum planning. Flexible educators respond to children’s interests, passions, and strengths; engage children in multiple forms of communication, creativity, and expression; and encourage joint endeavours where children and adults learn and play together.

12 Lella Gandini and Carolyn Pope Edwards, *Bambini*; Susan Fraser, *Authentic Childhood*; OECD, *Starting Strong: Curricula and Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education: Five Curriculum Outlines* (OECD: Paris, 2004), www.oecd.org/dataoecd/23/36/31672150.pdf; New South Wales, *Curriculum Framework for Children’s Services: The Practice of Relationships* (Office of Childcare: Ashfield, 2002), http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/DOCSWR/_assets/main/documents/childcare_framework.pdf.



VALUING RELATIONSHIPS

Fostering Peer Relationships

When children enter a child care setting, they enter an environment rich in potential friendships. Friendships among infants begin when children are as young as eight months, and from that time forward they are integral to children's learning and development.¹³ Educators play a key role in helping children successfully negotiate a range of social relations that both constitute and convey learning.

Fostering Professional and Community Relationships

Educators working with young children need designated reflective time with each other to develop collegial relationships that encourage:

- o An appreciation of each other's learning and teaching approach;
- o Engagement in thoughtful daily and long-term planning;
- o Participation in professional growth and development activities;
- o Consultation and collaboration with other professionals and paraprofessionals;
- o Participation in community initiatives and capacity building;
- o Opportunities to exchange, share, and advocate with members of the community.



¹³ Judith Dunn, *The Beginnings of Social Understanding* (Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1988).



VALUING RELATIONSHIPS

Challenges in Relationships

Challenges in relationships are often linked to differences in beliefs and values about early learning, child care, and family structure. Successful communication between families and educators can open the door for families, early childhood educators, and other professionals to work together as partners. When families and educators do not share a common language, class, or culture, for example, communication may be more challenging. Careful listening and sensitive communication are always vital, but even more so when families and professionals have differing perspectives on the optimal conditions for early learning and development. To assist with building strong, trusting relationships, it may be helpful to:

- o Become aware of one's own biases and beliefs — how they might differ from others and possibly interfere with communication;
- o Emphasize commonalities and shared goals;
- o Practise skills for supporting conversation — especially empathetic listening;
- o Use documentation of children's learning to inform families, peers and professionals about children's daily learning and living experiences;
- o Value each other's wisdom;
- o View conflict as a possible pathway to alternative possibilities.¹⁴



¹⁴ Sherry Rose, *Communication to build relationships* (DFCS: Fredericton, 2006).



VALUING ENVIRONMENTS

Environments for early learning and care are comprised of social, physical, and psychological elements. People, places, and things all have a profound influence on health and well-being, particularly in the early years when children are most vulnerable to environmental influences. Environments that are beautiful, joyful and rich in opportunities for sensory stimulation, social interaction, language, exploration, manipulation, and representation will enhance healthy development and learning, and increase children's potential.¹⁵

Quality environments for early learning and care are carefully organized to reflect the fundamental values and goals of the curriculum, to produce optimal learning and development. Recognized as an essential component of early learning, the physical environment is often referred to as "the third teacher."¹⁶

Purposeful Environmental Design

The emphasis on environment as "the third teacher" casts educators in the role of purposeful design/planners, who must take into account the strengths, interests, and desires of the particular children they serve. With the support of thoughtful educators, even very young children can claim ownership to their immediate environments, and take responsibility for maintaining, modifying, and renewing them.

Educators constantly mediate between the child and the multiple environments in which the child dwells by stepping in, or deliberately stepping back, to ensure that curiosity is sustained, friendships promoted, spirits uplifted, rights protected, home and community experience honoured, safety ensured, language developed, and the learning potential of every child is maximized.

It is therefore essential that every child's active engagement¹⁷ is supported within environments that are:

¹⁵ OECD, *Starting Strong*. In each of the five exemplary curricula, the environment is recognized as a key component of children's learning. Also Thelma Harms, Richard Clifford, and Debby Cryer, *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale* (Teachers College Press: New York, 2004), and *Infant/toddler Environment Rating Scale* (College Press: New York, 2003).

¹⁶ Susan Fraser, *Authentic Childhood*, 52-76, Chapter three: The environment as third teacher.

¹⁷ See the ten action points for teachers outlined by Ferre Laevers, *Experiential Education* (Centre for Experiential Education: Leuven, 2003). Also New South Wales, *Curriculum Framework for Children's Services*.



VALUING ENVIRONMENTS

- o Equipped with materials that promote joy and pleasure in learning and that challenge children to think — sand, earth, and water; blocks; modelling materials, paints, and “beautiful stuff” for construction; collage, drawing, and writing materials; toys and games; picture books and other print materials; scientific, mathematical, and household tools;¹⁸
- o Communication-rich, for language growth and development;
- o Developmentally and culturally appropriate;¹⁹
- o Aesthetically inviting and engaging;²⁰
- o Conducive to playful exploration;²¹
- o Supportive of varied physical activity, indoors and out, on a daily basis;²²
- o Responsive to children’s changing, interests, abilities, and desires, and capitalizing on their strengths.²³
- o Responsive to children’s independent initiation of activity, ideas, transitions, and routines;²⁴
- o Considerate of children’s differences;
- o Ensuring equitable access to material and social worlds;²⁵
- o Mindful of individuals’ home environments and groups’ collective pasts that impact on their present-day consciousness;
- o Supportive of large and small group collaborations;
- o Reflective of seasonal and cultural events;²⁶
- o Connected to the broader natural and constructed environments, the local community, cultural life, and the arts.²⁷

18 These materials are understood as essential to early learning, in early childhood curriculum documents, professional and academic literature.

19 NAEYC, Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs (NAEYC: Washington, 1996), <http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/daptoc.asp>; Jessica Ball and Alan Pence, Beyond developmentally appropriate practice: Developing community and culturally appropriate practice, *Young Children* 54, 3 (1999); Sally Lubeck, The politics of developmentally appropriate practice: Exploring issue of culture, class, and curriculum (Teachers College Press: New York, 1994).

20 Carolyn Edwards, Leila Gandini, and George Foreman, *The Hundred Languages of Children* (Ablex: Greenwich, 1998).

21 *Young Children* (May 2004) focuses on play. Also Walter Drew and Baji Rankin, Promoting creativity for life using open-ended materials, *Young Children* 59, 4 (1998).

22 Cindy Dickie, Active Kids Toolkit (GNB: Fredericton, 2006), <http://www.gnb.ca/0131/akja-e.asp>. Also *Young Children* (March 2004) focuses on health and safety.

23 NAEYC, Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs.

24 Elinor Goldschmied and Sonia Jackson, *People under Three: Young Children in Day Care* (Routledge: London, 2004).

25 New Brunswick Association for Community Living, Quality inclusive childcare: Opening the Door to Quality Childcare and Development program (GNB: Fredericton), http://www.nbacl.nb.ca/english/programs/early_childcare.asp.

26 Louise Derman Sparkes, *The Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children* (NAEYC: Washington, 1989).

27 *Young Children* (July 2004) focuses on the arts; Online and print resources for exploring the creative arts with young children, *Young Children: Beyond the Journal* (NAEYC: Washington, 2004), <http://www.journal.naeyc.org/btj/200407/resources.asp>.

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Elizabeth

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SECTION TWO

Goals for Early Learning And Care

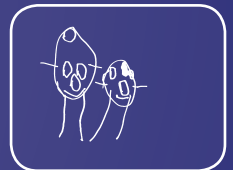
WELL-BEING



PLAY AND PLAYFULNESS



COMMUNICATION AND LITERACIES



DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



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SECTION TWO

Goals for Early Learning And Care

WELL-BEING

Children experience safe and caring environments where their emotional and physical health, positive identities, and sense of belonging are nurtured and protected.



PLAY AND PLAYFULNESS

Children experience open and flexible environments where playful exploration, problem solving and creativity are encouraged and purposefully planned.



COMMUNICATION AND LITERACIES

Children experience intellectually, socially and culturally engaging environments where their communicative practices, languages, literacies, and literate identities are valued and supported.



DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Children experience socially inclusive and culturally sensitive environments in which consideration for others, inclusive, equitable, democratic and sustainable practices are enacted, and social responsibility is nurtured.



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A jet ski with smoke coming out of it by Declan

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WELL~BEING



Children experience safe and caring environments where their emotional and physical health, positive identities, and sense of belonging are nurtured and protected.

EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND POSITIVE IDENTITIES

BELONGING

PHYSICAL HEALTH

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WELL~BEING

Well-being is important to all human beings. For young children and their families, a positive sense of well-being is nurtured through participation in an environment that is consistent and where respectful, responsive relationships and community connections are valued.

Children actively co-construct their identities in relation to the people, places, and things within the various communities to which they belong. Communities that support persistence, perseverance, and pleasure promote a zest for living and learning.

Children have the right to feel safe. When provided with the space and freedom to take healthy risks, their willingness to do so reflects a sense of security, self-confidence, courage, and body strength. Over time, participation

in healthy risk taking builds the skills, knowledge, and resolve that will sustain them as they face new pleasures and challenges.

This goal has three facets:

- Emotional Health and Positive Identities
- Belonging
- Physical Health



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EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND POSITIVE IDENTITIES

Children’s identities are shaped throughout their lifelong negotiations within personal, social, and cultural landscapes. Learning requires that adults treat children with respect, show compassion, and honour established relationships while encouraging new ones.

Children develop a sense of other

- Supporting, encouraging, and listening to others
- Caring for others
- Experiencing trust and compassion with children and adults
- Learning constructive ways to negotiate a range of relationships

Children develop a sense of self

- Developing recognition of self
- Co-constructing their identities
- Experiencing growing self-confidence, self-respect, and ability to take initiative
- Growing in their capacity to express feelings, concerns, and needs
- Pursuing interests, passions, and strengths
- Being curious and questioning
- Persevering and persisting



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For Reflection

How does your conception of childhood and what it means to be a child influence your responses to the different identities children take on? Describe how your responses to a child's gestures, facial expressions, play patterns, verbal expressions, and work helped to increase a child's belief in herself or himself.

How do people and policies at your centre honour children's initiatives through thoughtful planning, documentation, and/or responses? Think about how your centre builds upon children's interests.

How do you provide access to materials for children? Think about shelving, displays, containers, and open-ended materials. How often are materials changed or added to? Which materials are not used, and why? Who uses the materials, and what are the patterns of usage?

In what ways does your centre build upon dispositions of optimism, joy, and a zest for living and learning? Think about positive self-talk, problem solving, curiosity, humour, contribution, accomplishment, and care.



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BELONGING

Children and their families have the right to experience social recognition and acceptance, and to see themselves reflected in their learning communities. Learning requires secure and consistent relationships, the affirmation of social and cultural practices, and opportunities to form connections with new people and places.

Children develop a sense of place

- Negotiating new spaces
- Identifying, creating and using personal landmarks
- Becoming familiar with the sights, sounds, rhythms, and routines of new situations
- Generating a shared repertoire of narratives and memories
- Making connections between the centre, home, and broader communities

Children build respectful and responsive relationships

- Developing cherished as well as casual friendships
- Forming close relationships with a range of adults
- Growing in their awareness that their actions contribute to the well-being of others
- Participating in group initiatives



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BELONGING

For Reflection

How do you support children in new situations? Think about children's moments of anxiety and their responses to new situations. How do you plan for welcoming new children? How do you plan for room changes, field trips, or walks?

In what ways are family contributions invited and honoured within the centre? Think about contributions of materials, interests, time, and cultural knowledge.

How does your centre build relationships of trust between people? Think about adult/adult, adult/child and child/child relationships. How does the centre's space reflect the lives of the children, their families, and the educators?

How do you encourage the participation of every child? Think about children's friendships, patterns of exclusion, activity choices, gender, race, and class. How are children's contributions to your site invited and accepted? Think about toys, stories, cultural artifacts, ideas, questions, and children's theory building.



It was last year and it was sunny
and I went out to play by Jordan



PHYSICAL HEALTH

Children experience a safe and nurturing environment where healthy eating, daily physical activity, and safety—indoors and out—are practised. Learning requires that children have time, space, and encouragement to practise personal care skills; to enjoy familiar and unfamiliar foods; to develop food tastes and prepare food; to move, play, and challenge their physical capacities.

Children take responsibility for personal care

- Growing independence in self-care routines
- Learning about individual differences in self-care practices
- Helping others with personal care

Children learn about food and nutrition

- Understanding the relationship between food and their bodies
- Building confidence to try new foods
- Exploring a range of cultural practices of eating and sharing food
- Making decisions about food consumption, preparation, serving, and clean-up routines

Children explore body and movement

- Participating in a variety of physical activities, indoors and out
- Learning about their bodies in space
- Increasing bodily awareness, control, strength, agility, and large motor coordination
- Increasing fine motor capacities
- Knowing and stretching physical limits
- Releasing and restoring energy in outdoor places



PHYSICAL HEALTH

For Reflection

How do people and policies at your centre work within food safety standards to include practices around food from a variety of homes? Think about Canada's Food Guide in various languages or other models such as a vegetarian food guide.

What experiences are provided at your site to promote children's active engagement both indoors and out? How do you plan for age and physical capacities? Think about access to play in the outdoors, what materials are rotated through outdoor areas, and what activities are available in the outdoors.

Discuss the implications of using food for curricular activities — for example pasta or rice for collage materials. What messages might this convey about food? What non-food materials might be substituted?

How do you address children's comments and questions about individual or family differences in self-care routines? Think about learning about families' practices, having open discussions, and taking what children say seriously.

How do you infuse daily chores and errands with vigorous physical activity?



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Ryanna

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PLAY AND PLAYFULNESS

Children experience open and flexible environments where playful exploration, problem solving and creativity are encouraged and purposefully planned.

IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY

PLAYFUL EXPLORATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

DIZZY PLAY



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PLAY AND PLAYFULNESS

At play, children are empowered to learn on their own terms, in their own ways, and in their own time; this freedom is what distinguishes play from other activities. Play allows children to take the initiative, to test their physical and mental limits, and to explore positions of power and questions about good and evil. In play, children use words and symbols to transform the world around them, creating worlds where they can act “as if” rather than “as is.” Play is a pleasurable and highly motivating context in which children can explore possibilities and solve problems that are beyond their reach in ordinary life.

Early childhood communities that acknowledge the educative and developmental potential of play make provisions for a range of different kinds of play: playful exploration and heuristic play, for children to learn about the physical properties of materials and rules of thumb for problem solving; constructional play, for them to invent new connections as they design and create with mud, sand, twigs, cardboard, and blocks; socio-dramatic play, so that they can take up cultural roles and practices, play out their hopes fears and dreams, test relations of power, and imaginatively explore new possibilities; board games and word games, songs and rhymes that require deep concentration or just invite fooling around with language in order to take possession of it; games of courage and chance; outdoor play that exercises

the muscles, lungs, heart, and mind — running, jumping, digging, swinging, rolling, and strolling; and shouting and squeaking and twirling and swirling — dizzy play for the pure pleasure of being on the edge and sharing the joy of laughter and life with others.

This goal has three facets:

- Imagination and Creativity
- Playful Exploration and Problem Solving
- Dizzy Play



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Felix

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IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY

Through play, children invent symbols to explore relations of power, truth, and beauty as they move between the world as it is and the worlds they create. In these possible worlds, children have the liberty to push the boundaries and explore who they are as members of communities engaged with age-old issues such as good and evil. Learning to be imaginative and creative requires open and flexible environments, rich in materials and role models that reflect the cultural life of their communities — the songs, crafts, languages and artifacts — and opportunities for children to invent their own cultural forms and symbols; to explore unique and innovative approaches to understanding their worlds.

Children develop dispositions for flexible and fluid thinking

- Seeing people, places, and things in new ways
- Expressing unique and imaginative ideas



Children invent symbols and develop systems of representation

- Making up their own words, marks, and movements
- Negotiating the meaning of symbols with others
- Taking up and reshaping cultural experiences
- Developing awareness of the imagined and ordinary worlds they move between as they play

Children create imaginary scenarios in which they explore new possibilities and take possession of their worlds

- Creating social spaces and shared narratives
- Creating alternative systems of power
- Coping with emotional pressure



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IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY

For Reflection

What open-ended materials are available in the spaces where children play? Think about materials that can be used in a number of ways: construction materials such as blocks, sand, cardboard, and wood; art materials such as crayons, paints, glue and “beautiful stuff”; and props for dramatic play.

How does your site’s scheduling promote or interfere with time to play and create? Think about flexible scheduling. Think about time allotted to play, routines, and adult-directed activities.

How do you support and value the worlds and fantasies that children create? Think about ways in which fantasy and imagination can be extended for children and documented to illustrate their value.

How do you make use of and reflect the community around you to engage, model, and develop children’s creativity, imagination, and play interests? Think about: musicians, local artists and artisans, families’ expertise, and cultural contributions.



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PLAYFUL EXPLORATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Using all their senses, children explore the physical and social worlds around them. In the process they refine their senses, test their personal capacities, and construct knowledge about people, places, and things. At play, children learn to make their thinking visible, build theories about how the world works, and practise skills and dispositions for inquiry, negotiation, and problem solving. This learning requires support for involvement in various types of play — exploratory, heuristic, imaginative, language and literate, constructive, and physical; access to a wide variety of materials and equipment; and adventuresome, playful, and persistent role models who actively engage children in processes of playful exploration, investigation, and problem solving.

Children learn about the properties of objects

- Playfully exploring and investigating the properties of objects
- Experimenting with action and reaction, cause and effect
- Creating patterns and relationships — sorting and matching, sizing and ordering, sequencing and grouping
- Developing a vocabulary to describe similarities and differences, patterns and relationships

Children test their limits

- Testing their powers of observation and sensory discrimination
- Testing strength, speed, agility, and control over movement

Children learn to negotiate the complexities of joint undertakings

- Negotiating rules of time, space, and roles
- Making collective plans and decisions about the directions of their play
- Developing a sense of fair play

Children learn to employ creative approaches to identifying and working out practical problems

- Developing sustained, shared thinking
- Raising questions and making hypotheses about how and why things happen
- Choosing from a range of materials, tools, and languages to investigate, experiment, and make their thinking visible
- Creating imagined worlds in which they can explore possibilities and test alternative solutions



PLAYFUL EXPLORATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

For Reflection

How do you provide ways for children to explore on their own, with peers, or with adults? Think about materials to act upon for cause and effect, open-ended materials for in-depth investigations, and children's own interests or questions.

Do children have access to a variety of games, both competitive and cooperative, that challenge thinking and encourage social relations? Think about peek-a-boo games, aiming games, chasing, hiding, and guessing games.

How do adults model problem solving behaviours? Think about talking through situations such as dividing materials fairly, fixing a broken toy, working out turn-taking for special activities or favourite playthings.



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DIZZY PLAY

Children's play sometimes erupts suddenly in loud, boisterous, physical bursts. This kind of play is exhilarating and infectious, creating communities through shared laughter. Children love to twirl until they are too dizzy to stand up, laugh with others over nothing in particular, babble nonsense words in a riotous conversation, put their pants on their head or their jacket on their legs, and perform for their friends. They revel in their power to turn the world upside down, playfully confident that they can restore it. Educators recognize and accept this kind of play, valuing it for what it provides for the children: a release of physical energy, a sense of power, and often an expression of pure joy. It also requires tolerance, as this can be a noisy and seemingly senseless activity. Educators, aware of the resilience of children, must also assure that they are safe as they push their physical limits.

Children take pleasure in being on the edge

- Engaging in rough and tumble play
- Experiencing exhilarating physical release
- Playing at games of disrupting and restoring order

Children take pleasure in sharing the joy of laughter

- Making nonsense
- Clowning and physical humour



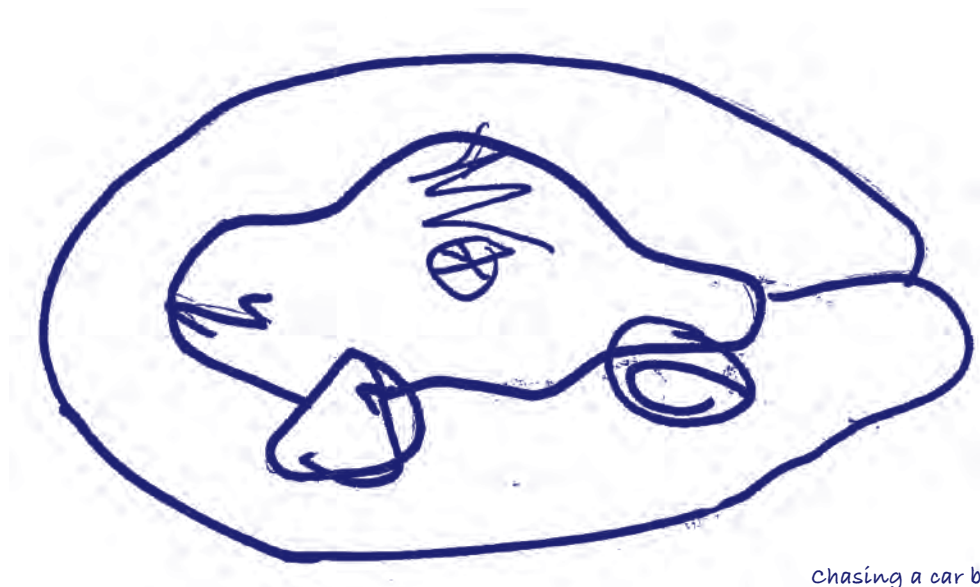
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DIZZY PLAY

For Reflection

How do you value and respond to rowdy, physical dizzy play? What is your comfort level and how does this affect the allowances you make for this type of play? Think about times when children's joy has been infectious, for example, sliding down hills, dancing barefoot, or singing at the top of their lungs.



Chasing a car by Chase

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Penguin

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COMMUNICATION AND LITERACIES

Children experience intellectually, socially and culturally engaging environments where their communicative practices, languages, literacies, and literate identities are valued and supported.

COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES

MULTIMODAL LITERACIES

LITERATE IDENTITIES
WITH/IN COMMUNITIES



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COMMUNICATION AND LITERACIES

Children communicate right from birth. Sounds, silences, pauses, gestures, movement, eye contact, and body language — our first modes of communication — stay with us throughout our lifetimes. Children interpret and re-invent their worlds using multiple forms of communication and representation.

Children learn to express, represent, and interpret their feelings, ideas, and questions through speaking, listening, reading, writing, dancing, singing, drawing, moving, and constructing. They learn these wide-ranging literate practices through their interactions with others and within particular social and cultural contexts.

What it means to be literate changes over time and place, and within and across cultures. In the twenty-first century, technological innovations are shifting the meaning of being literate from a dominant focus on language and print to a multimodal literacies approach. Multimodal literacies involve the simultaneous use of the modes of image, print, gaze, gesture, movement, speech, and/or sound effects.

Reading picture books, fiction and nonfiction, is one of the most accessible and popular multimodal forms of literacy engagement. Other forms include, singing, painting, dramatic play, block-building, photography, television, and computers.

Through their participation in various communities, children contribute to changes in what it means to be literate. This is because they are active rather than passive learners in the process of making sense of their worlds. They both influence and are influenced by language and literacy practices in their homes, neighbourhoods, and wider communities. Children's personal, social, and literate identities are co-constructed in their interactions with others, and by the expectations held by others for example, gendered expectations. Children's creations and productions tell us who they think they are and who they might like to be.

This goal has three facets:

- Communicative Practices
- Multimodal Literacies
- Literate Identities
With/In Communities





Penguin by Julien



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COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES

Multiple ways of communicating begin at birth. Infants, toddlers, and young children use a variety of ways — or modes — such as gaze, touch, gesture, mark making, movement, speech, image, and sound effects to communicate. These multiple modes help children to form relationships, to grow in their understanding of the conventions of language, and to extend ideas and take action. Learning requires numerous ongoing and varied opportunities for children to engage with others in responsive and reciprocal relationships, immersed in an environment that is rich in language, joy, and playfulness.

Children form relationships through communicative practices

- Recognizing and responding to human presence and touch
- Becoming attuned to rhyme, rhythm, pitch, tone, and vibrations
- Practising and playing with sounds
- Initiating and responding to gestural and visual languages

Children learn conventions of their languages

- Growing in their implicit understanding of the conventions of language
- Growing in their understanding of vocabulary
- Developing confidence in using language(s)
- Growing in their understanding of how others use language(s)
- Experiencing and developing diverse linguistic repertoires

Children extend ideas and take actions using language

- Using language to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas
- Using language to make friends, share materials, structure, negotiate, and create imaginary worlds
- Using language to ask for help or information, argue, persuade, clarify, celebrate, or instruct



COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES

For Reflection

Consider the different spaces needed to communicate with infants, toddlers, and young children at their physical level. Think about soft spaces with blankets where adults and infants can interact with materials and each other using all their senses.

Are adults engaged in playful conversations with children during routines such as eating or clean-up times? Think about the use of humour, tone, and tact in everyday conversations, and the ways in which children learn, through modelling and imitation of these aspects of non-verbal language. Think about extending children's understandings of conventions through modelling rather than correcting. Think about the range of vocabulary you model for children through conversations, books, songs, poems, and chants.

When children use formal modes of communication, such as Braille, Sign Language, or pictograph, how are they included in the classroom community and what opportunities exist for their peers to engage in reciprocal communication? Think about incorporating symbols from a child's pictorial communication board into the classroom routines for all children.

How do adults value and incorporate the languages of the children's families within your centre and the larger community? For example, think about how the home languages of your children's families are incorporated in the centre through speakers, books, images, songs, visitors, and field trips. Think about the range of languages valued and spoken by your families — how are these valued and made verbal and visible in your centre? Recognize that bilingual and multilingual children switch languages and express ideas differently in different languages.



MULTIMODAL LITERACIES

Children make use of various sign systems as they construct meaning through multiple modes of image, print, gaze, gesture, movement, and speech, often using these modes simultaneously. Language, art, mathematics, music, and drama are unique sign systems that each have primary symbols — for example, language uses the alphabet; art uses line, colour, shape, and pattern; mathematics uses numbers; music uses notational marks; and drama emphasizes gesture, posture, and speech. Learning requires that children are acknowledged as participants in literate communities that integrate a range of symbols from language, art, mathematics, music, and drama. Using talk, alphabet and numeric print, dance, gesture, action, music, image, sculpture, graphing, map-making, and construction block-building, they make meaning and communicate.

Children explore a variety of sign systems

- Becoming familiar with the sign systems of language, music, math, art, and drama
- Engaging in multiple forms of representation
- Transforming knowledge from one mode to another

Multimodal meaning making

- Engaging with the symbols and practices of language
- Engaging with the symbols and practices of music
- Engaging with the symbols and practices of math
- Engaging with the symbols and practices of art
- Engaging with the symbols and practices of drama



For Reflection

What accessible resources and sustained interactive time do children have on a daily basis to support their integrative symbol use within the five sign systems? Think about children's access to tools for mark-making in a range of areas in the room, props for shaping and extending dramatic play, a range of books, musical instruments, magazines, pictures, charts, labels, number games name tags, signs, notes, videos. How are materials cared for, displayed, changed for novelty, and transported from one area to another? How are home languages of all children valued in spoken and printed form?

How does the social experience gained from peer interaction contribute to multimodal literacy engagement and production? Think about how ideas, thoughts and experiences, songs, dance, block building, poems, letters, lists, and jokes are shared with children. How are pleasure, curiosity, and persistence modelled and honoured?

Ensure that the methods your centre uses for documenting children's language and literacy growth within the five sign systems honours their knowledge, skills, and playful exploration. Think about how adults and children honour children's invention of stories, songs, games, poems, maps, 3-D structures, and drama. How does that documentation inform your responses to children's learning in individual and collective ways?

How do parents and adults share their collective knowledge about children's growth in language and literacies across the sign systems of language, art, mathematics, music, and drama?



Skateboarding by Ethan

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LITERATE IDENTITIES WITH/IN COMMUNITIES

Using language and literacies, children figure out ways of holding on to, exploring, and transforming their experiences and identities. Children are systematic observers, imitators, listeners, speakers, readers, authors, illustrators, inventors, actors, performers, dancers, builders, music and art makers. Learning requires that educators listen for and learn the range of experiences children bring with them, to ensure that children have opportunities to use their knowledge as they access multiple texts from a range of sources. While creating and using texts with children, educators raise questions to explore multiple interpretations, assumptions, and biases.

Children co-construct a range of literate identities

- Creating texts reflective of family, local, and global literacies
- Learning various local literacy practices within a range of communities
- Learning the uniqueness and similarities of their family's literacies and those of others

Children engage critically in the literacy practices of popular culture

- Transporting and transforming the literacies of popular culture from home into the centre
- Exploring various identities and characters embedded in popular culture
- Growing in their capacity to ask critical questions

Children use the literacy tools of digital technologies.

- Representing their experiences with technologies in everyday life
- Accessing and using digital technologies



For Reflection

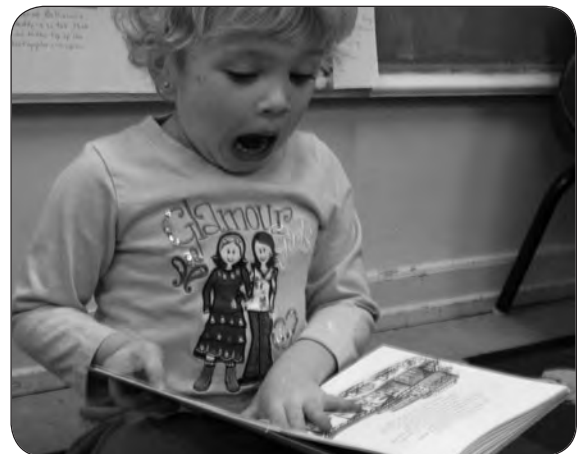
Become knowledgeable about the artistic and cultural life of your children, their families, your community and beyond. Think about your own participation in events and communities — do you communicate your excitement and interest to the children and build upon theirs?

Explore media representation by asking questions that challenge representations, such as, “What toys do you think both boys and girls would like to play with?”

How do you record and honour children’s thoughts, feelings, and inventiveness through multiple forms of documentation? Think about the use of camera and tape recorder in conjunction with writing down what children say. Think about putting their words into print, captioning their paintings, drawings, or three-dimensional constructions. Extend conversations by naming, using keywords, explaining and talking about objects and events, and discussing the recent past and near future.

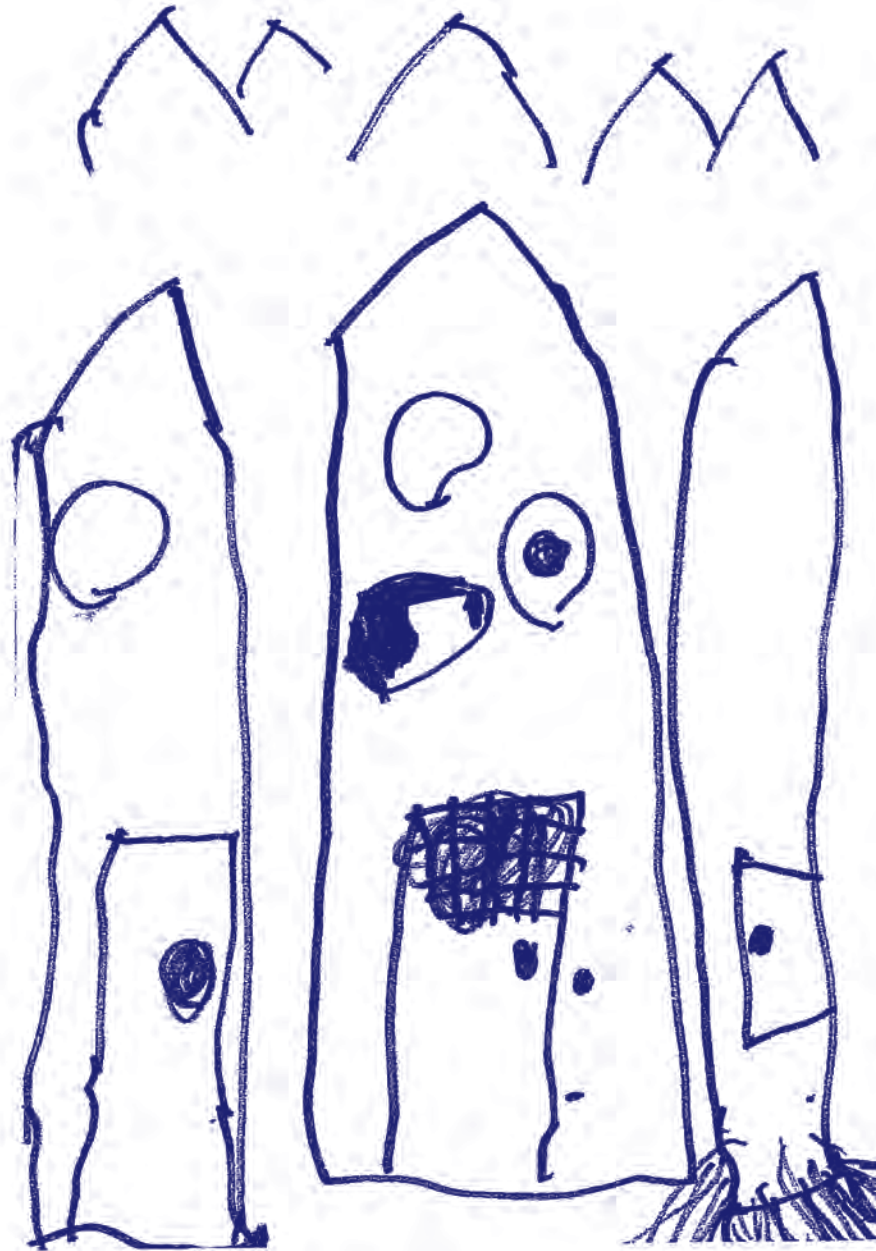
What new technologies are available for use in your centre? How is this technology used to document children’s learning as a way to communicate thinking, interests, and growth between home and centre? How do teachers, families and children use technologies in and beyond the centre?

Investigate with your families to find out their child’s favourite characters from TV, books, oral storytelling, music, sports, place of worship, cultural holidays, and/or family members. Think about how taking on these different identities informs children’s literate play.



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Three Rocketships by Bradan

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DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Children experience socially inclusive and culturally sensitive environments in which consideration for others, inclusive, equitable, democratic and sustainable practices are enacted, and social responsibility is nurtured.

INCLUSIVENESS AND EQUITY

DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES

SUSTAINABLE FUTURES



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DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Membership in communities involves interdependency. It is as simple and as complicated as this: we need to take care of each other, and we need to take care of the natural and constructed world around us. When children engage in respectful, responsive, and reciprocal relationships guided by sensitive and knowledgeable adults, they grow in their understanding of interdependency.

We live in a democratic country. Ideally, early childhood communities reflect the democratic values of inclusiveness and equity. All children and families have equal rights to a voice in decision making; differences and dissent make valued contributions to the group. With the inclusion of diverse heritages, histories, and customs, democratic principles are honoured, opportunities to learn from each other are enriched, and possibilities for living peacefully together are enhanced.

As children practise living with heart and spirit as well as with mind, they require caring adults who listen responsively to what they have to say. They learn to find their voices, to speak freely, and to hear the voices of others as they engage in matters that concern them.

Cultivating an understanding of interdependency and the practice of compassionate care moves beyond the boundaries of local contexts and extends to global citizenship, appreciating biodiversity and environmental responsibility. This involves learning in and about the natural world, and learning how to act in environmentally responsible ways to become good stewards of the earth.

This goal has three facets:

- Inclusiveness and Equity
- Democratic Practices
- Sustainable Futures



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INCLUSIVENESS AND EQUITY

All children, regardless of race, religion, age, linguistic heritage, social and economic status, gender, or ability are entitled to inclusion in everyday activities and routines. When inclusiveness and equity are practised, children come to appreciate their physical characteristics and their gendered, racialized, linguistic and cultural identities. They become sensitive to the effects of poverty and begin to contribute to local and global initiatives that address it. Learning requires inclusive and equitable environments where children work and play within diverse groups, and engage in meaningful, respectful interactions with people, materials, and content that embody diversity.

Children appreciate their own distinctiveness and that of others

- Learning about their cultural heritages and those of other families within the centre and the broader society
- Becoming knowledgeable and confident in their various identities, including cultural, racial, physical, spiritual, linguistic, gender, and socioeconomic

Children engage in practices that respect diversity

- Forming positive, inclusive relationships with all children
- Learning about differences, including cultural, racial, physical, spiritual, linguistic, gender, social, and economic
- Learning about and engaging with communities representative of New Brunswick society
- Learning about and participating in helping projects — locally and globally

Children raise questions and act to change inequitable practices that exclude or discriminate

- Recognizing and challenging inequitable practices and situations
- Negotiating equitable solutions to problems arising from differences
- Standing up for themselves and others in a fair manner



INCLUSIVENESS AND EQUITY

For Reflection

How do children respond to people who are different from them — linguistically, culturally, racially, emotionally, physically, intellectually, socially, and economically? Think about the reasons children give for excluding peers (language, skin colour, gender, or possessions). Think about how children react to unfamiliar foods, clothing, behaviours and languages.



How do you find out about sites and opportunities for learning outside the centre — locally and globally? Think about local museums, places of worship, soup kitchens, shelters, small businesses, farms, small factories. Think about global projects that could have local connections.



How do you challenge negative stereotypical language and exclusive practices amongst children? Think about how children talk with each other in describing differences. How do they invite or prevent access to different play areas? Think about how adults notice, record, and involve children in discussions about access. Think about how you respond when particular children monopolize particular areas, or if particular children are regularly excluded.



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DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES

Children grow in the understanding of their roles as responsible citizens as they participate daily in communities where their voices are heard and their contributions valued, and where they learn to value the contributions of others. Learning requires that educators assure children equitable opportunities and fair procedures and processes, while participating in the making, following, questioning and re-working of rules, rituals, and procedures in their everyday world.

Children learn to be responsible and responsive members of the community

- Showing sympathy and empathy for others
- Giving help, comfort, and encouragement, and valuing others' contributions
- Respecting the materials, equipment, and spaces shared with others

Children practice democratic decision-making, making choices in matters that affect them

- Beginning to understand their rights and responsibilities, and those of others
- Voicing their preferences and opinions, and developing an awareness of other points of view
- Questioning, co-constructing, and reworking rules and procedures

Children practise fairness and social justice

- Voicing and negotiating their understandings of fairness and unfairness
- Identifying issues and becoming socially active in their local communities



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DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES

For Reflection

Are children supported as they initiate and maintain relationships with each other and the adults in their everyday worlds? Think about ways to facilitate friendships and collaborations.

Do educators encourage and support children who act with empathy and sympathy? Think about children who reach out to victims, practise kindness and inclusiveness, and show concern for the well-being of others.

Are the contributions of each child valued and is appreciation shown for many views? Think about how you listen and respond to all children.

How do adults model empathy, sympathy, a sense of fair play, and curiosity about difference? Think about opportunities that exist during dramatic play or outdoor play, or during conversations or storybook reading time.

In what ways are families and the local community involved in decisions regarding the programs, procedures, and policies? Think about community cultural practices, local livelihoods, and history.

How are children engaged in decision making in matters that concern them, such as the establishment of rules, rituals, routines, and processes? Think about the day-to-day opportunities for children to “have a say” in such things as eating, napping, and sharing.

Does the setting ensure equitable access to materials and social worlds for children? Think about race, class, gender, age, and family background. Do educators challenge behaviours that exclude or discriminate?

Think about ways that you help children to work through problems and return them to the community as contributive members.



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SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

Children's affinity to nature, of which they are part, provides a basis for understanding and questioning the place of humankind in nature and for developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to contribute to the development of sustainable futures. This learning requires children's involvement with caring, compassionate, and courageous role models who actively support their first-hand engagement with the natural and constructed world and their participation in environmentally and socially responsible communities.

Children develop a sense of wonder and appreciation for the natural world

- Bringing all their senses to exploring nature
- Taking pleasure in natural beauty
- Connecting to and respecting the natural world

Children learn to recognize and record patterns and relationships in nature

- Noticing regularity, repetition, and changes in nature
- Learning to systematically observe, name, and record natural phenomena
- Raising questions about changes, connections, and causes, and undertaking first-hand investigations

Children develop a sense of appreciation for human creativity and innovation

- Bringing all their senses to exploring the constructed world
- Learning to appreciate beauty, creativity and innovation in art, architecture, and technologies
- Exploring the mechanical advantage of tools and machinery
- Designing and evaluating technological solutions

Children learn about natural resource development and manufacturing

- Making connections between raw materials and finished products
- Developing an appreciation for the work of others
- Learning that different approaches to resource development and production have different impacts

Children learn environmentally and socially responsible practices

- Reducing consumption
- Reusing and recycling
- Participating in care of plants and domestic animals, and stewardship of local plant, insect, and animal life
- Participating in local restoration and regeneration projects



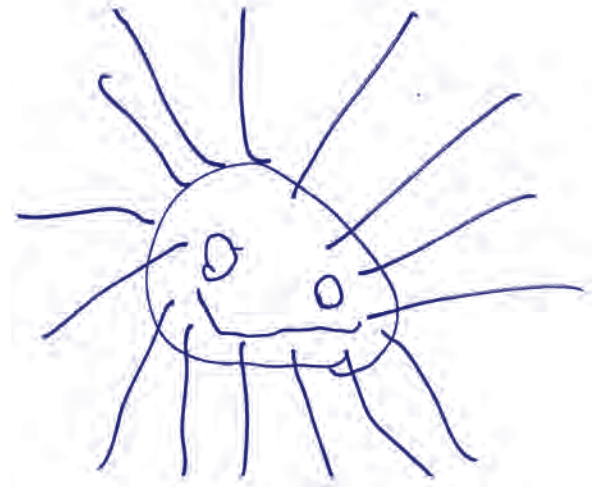
For Reflection

How are children supported in exploring natural and wild spaces? Think about how to ensure access, celebrate the joy of being outdoors, and help children focus all their senses.

In what ways do your policies and practices contribute to sustainable futures? Think about energy and waste reduction, recycling, composting, and environmentally safe cleaning products.

How can you support children in the creation of their own sustainable futures? Think about their influence and control; for example, taking care of animals and plants, planting vegetable and flower gardens in their own playgrounds and communities, or exploring possible solutions to environmental problems in their imaginations — in literature or at play.

How do you provide children with opportunities for first-hand learning about natural resource development and manufacturing? Think about crafts, farming, fishing, forestry, mining, tourism, and manufacturing operations that you might visit in your locality, and/or workers who might visit your centre. Consider how the involvement of parents can work to enhance children's learning about local resource development and manufacture.



Jadon





A fish getting away from a bird by Laura

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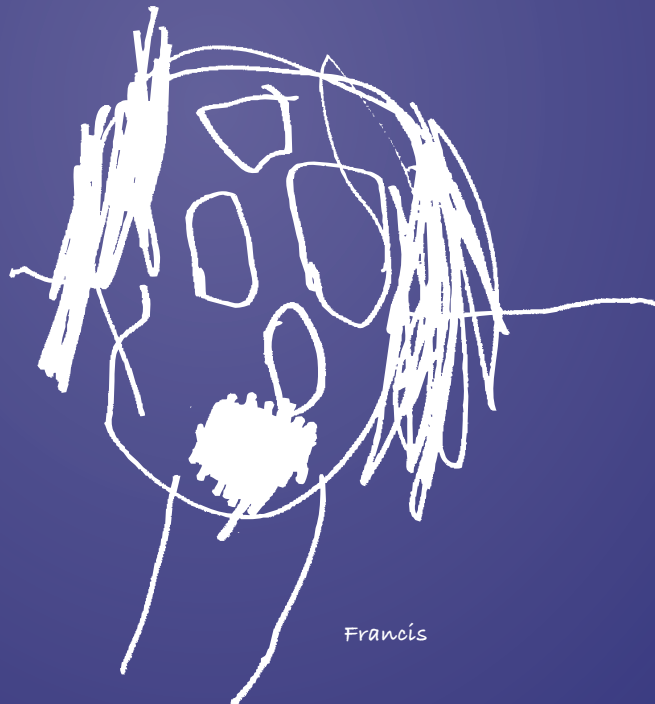


SECTION THREE

Learning Principles and Implications

Documentation and Assessment

Continuities and Transitions



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LEARNING PRINCIPLES AND IMPLICATIONS

Beliefs about learning have particular implications for the teaching, caring, and assessment practices of educators. The following principles are pedagogically sound for young children, and, though this is not an exhaustive list, these principles about learning and their implications for teaching are commonly understood as central to promoting the healthy development and joyful learning of young children.

Children thrive when they are nurtured in close, caring, and consistent relationships.²⁸

- o Designated educators interact daily with the child and the family to provide for continuity of caring.
- o Physical contact and affection that are respectful of cultural norms are part of every child's day.
- o Educators show a sincere interest in what children are doing and thinking, and in making their thinking visible.
- o Guidance is consistent; flexible routines mark the rhythm of the day.
- o Educators adopt a positive, tactful, and sensitive tone for verbal and physical interactions.
- o Self-regulation and self-discipline are encouraged.

Children are unique individuals who learn and develop at different rates and in different ways.²⁹

- o Curriculum is shaped to each individual child's interests, abilities, and vulnerabilities, and capitalizes on their strengths.
- o A rich variety of materials, strategies, and teaching approaches is employed.
- o Environments are designed to meet a wide range of abilities, interests, and enthusiasms.
- o Environments and interactions are adapted to ensure the inclusion of all children.

28 Mary Ainsworth, Object relations, dependency and attachment: A theoretical review of the infant-mother relationship, *Child Development* 40 (1969); John Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss, Vol. 1: Attachment* (Hogarth: London, 1969); Jay Belsky, Kate Rosenberger, and Keith Crnic, The origins of attachment security (Analytic: Hillsdale, 1995); Jean Mercer, *Understanding Attachment: Parenting, Child Care, and Emotional Development* (Praeger: Westport, 2005).

29 NAEYC, *Early Years Are Learning Years* (NAEYC: Washington, 2006), www.naeyc.org/resources/eyly.



LEARNING PRINCIPLES AND IMPLICATIONS

All aspects of children's development and learning are interrelated and interdependent.³⁰

- o Holistic learning, such as a project approach or structured play, engages the child as a person with physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and ethical aspects, simultaneously, in dynamic interplay.
- o Authentic everyday experiences are used as the basis for learning to foster the integration of knowledge.
- o When focusing their teaching on one area, educators are conscious of how this particular teachable moment implicates other areas of learning.

Children are agents in their own learning, actively building their knowledge, skills, dispositions, and feelings through first-hand experiences and reciprocal relationships with the people and things in their environment.³¹

- o Careful preparation of the physical environment ensures that children have access to a wide range of materials and the flexibility to use them in ways that are personally significant.
- o Children are encouraged to initiate their own learning.
- o Educators take their lead from children and build on their prior knowledge in order to ensure personally engaging and socially significant learning experiences.
- o Educators encourage children to generate theories about the way things work. They refrain from imposing their own understanding of the world on children, recognizing that refinement of understanding is a process requiring time and the active engagement of the learner.
- o Educators are aware that similar experiences do not necessarily result in similar learning. Consequently, they observe and document what individuals and groups of children do, to determine what they are learning and how that learning can be fruitfully extended.

³⁰ Lillian Katz and Sylvia Chard, *Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach* (Ablex: Stamford, 2002).

³¹ Joce Nuttall, *Weaving Te Whāriki: Aotearoa New Zealand's Early Childhood Curriculum Document in Theory and Practice* (New Zealand Council for Educational Research: Wellington, 2003).



LEARNING PRINCIPLES AND IMPLICATIONS

Children belong to multiple learning communities, and their learning is profoundly influenced by the relationships within and among these communities.³²

- o The inherently social nature of learning is recognized when educators purposefully plan for and support children's interactions with other children in large and small groups and with adults.
- o Educators help children make their thinking visible so that ideas and feelings can be shared and thus extended.
- o Communities of children within the centre interact regularly with children from other age groups.
- o Educators are conscious of the way in which their teaching and care relates to the other learning communities to which children belong.
- o People from various learning communities are invited to bring local knowledge into the centre, and children are regularly taken out into the community.

Learning and development are nested within particular social and cultural contexts.³³

- o Educators respect different social and cultural values and practices as they plan the learning environment and interact with parents and children.
- o Educators are aware of their own social and cultural biases, and take steps to ensure that these do not result in marginalizing any children or their families.
- o Ideas and beliefs are open to discussion.
- o Multiple perspectives are solicited, and social, linguistic and cultural diversity are honoured.
- o Educators encourage children to present and discuss different identities.



32 Lev S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1978); Heather B. Weiss, *Preparing Educators to Involve Families: From Theory to Practice* (Sage: London, 2005).

33 Janet Gonzalez-Mena, *Multicultural Issues in Child Care* (Mayfield: Mountain View, 1993); Louise Derman-Sparks, *Anti-bias Curriculum*; Nadia S. Hall, *The Affective Curriculum: Teaching the Anti-Bias Approach to Young Children* (Nelson Canada: Toronto, 1995).

LEARNING PRINCIPLES AND IMPLICATIONS

Multiple languages play a central role in mediating thought and learning.³⁴

- o Oral language, signs, symbols, and written language are deliberately embedded into every aspect of the physical and social environment.
- o Children are encouraged to experiment with their mother tongue and other languages — particularly French, the aboriginal languages of the region, and languages that are spoken by their classmates and locally.
- o Language play, including songs, rhymes, jingles, and chants, is part of the daily routine.
- o Educators are responsive to each child's language level and act as language providers and role models to stimulate and extend children's language.
- o Educators make provisions for children to express themselves and make their ideas visible with a wide variety of materials and languages, such as music, dance, and the visual arts.
- o Educators provide, and access additional support when needed, for alternative or augmentative communication.
- o Educators access additional language support for ESL and aboriginal children.



³⁴ Lev S. Vygotsky, *Thought and Language* (MIT Press: Cambridge, 1962); James V. Wertsch, *Culture, Communication, and Cognition: Vygotskian Perspectives* (Cambridge University Press: New York, 1985); Marian R. Whitehead, *Language and Literacy in the Early Years* (Sage: London, 2004).



DOCUMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

The purpose of documentation and assessment is to focus the educators', children's, and parents' attention on what individual children and groups of children are learning within a particular setting.

Narrative assessment illustrates, describes, and interprets the learning of individual children or groups of children through careful listening, photographs, observations, anecdotal records, and multimodal learning stories such as those developed in conjunction with *Te Whāriki* — the New Zealand Curriculum.³⁵ This form of assessment builds community and links children's learning to curricular goals and future planning.³⁶

Normative assessment is typically an individual assessment that locates an individual's development in relation to age-group norms, such as developmental milestones. This form of assessment must be used carefully and thoughtfully,³⁷ keeping in mind that all norms are socially and culturally biased.

Drawing upon narrative and normative assessment provides differing perspectives and insights into children's learning and curriculum planning.

Children

Documentation and assessment provide a focus on individuals or small groups of children in relation to the goals, values, and learning principles of the New Brunswick curriculum; they emphasize a strengths-based approach.

Documentation and assessment activities are intended to

- o enhance, celebrate, and contribute to children's well-being, relationships, and learning;
- o illustrate and enhance children's interests, passions, and strengths;
- o contribute to authentic family and community involvement in children's everyday life;
- o reflect multiple viewpoints, including children's perspectives on their experiences and learning;
- o provide information for planning learning experiences for individual children and groups;
- o create an enduring record of children's learning and living experiences; and
- o relate clearly to the values, goals, and learning principles of the curriculum framework.

35 Ministry of Education, New Zealand, *Te Whāriki* (Learning Media Education: Wellington, 1996); Ministry of Education, New Zealand, *Kei Tua o te Pae, Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars* (Learning Media: Wellington, 2005).

36 Ministry of Education, New Zealand, *Te Whāriki*; Ministry of Education, New Zealand, *Kei Tua o te Pae, Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars*.

37 Catherine Scott-Little, Sharon Kagan, and Victoria Frelow, Creating the conditions for success with early learning standards, *Early Childhood Research and Practice* 5, 2 (2003), <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v5n2/little.html>.



DOCUMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

Documentation and assessment activities include:

- o Listening to children;
- o Recording children's conversations;
- o Conversing with children to learn about their theories;
- o Observing children as they learn individually and in groups;
- o Keeping anecdotal notes on individual and group learning;
- o Displaying children's work and words;
- o Annotating children's art work;
- o Annotating photographs of children in the process of learning;
- o Creating learning story portfolios or albums of learning events;
- o Exploring, encouraging, and recording children's questions and theories;
- o Creating and displaying project webs;
- o Communicating with home through conversations and notes;
- o Communicating through daily invitational family information boards;
- o Collecting and preserving samples of children's work over time;
- o Describing the intensity and duration of children's engagement as an indicator of learning.



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DOCUMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

Educators

Educators are responsible for mediating healthy relationships with children, colleagues, parents, professionals, and other adults. In the context of these relationships with children and their families, educators document, plan, and assess children's learning. In addition, educators plan the use of time, space, and materials within particular environments.

It is important that educators are aware of the importance that various cultures attach to different types of assessments and be able to discuss these beliefs with parents. Also, in some cultures, the educator's opinion is very strongly respected and educators need to be aware that their viewpoints can be powerful determinants of what parents do with their children.

Record keeping, assessment, and evaluation are intensive processes requiring considerable non-contact time to effectively serve their designated purposes. The creation of time and space for educators' reflection is vital to increasing the quality of early learning and care. Laevers' *Ten Action Points for Teachers*³⁸ and the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Revised (ECERS- R)*³⁹ are among a number of tools that can facilitate reflective planning.

Centres

Physical Setting

The critical importance of the environment as "the third teacher" is described elsewhere in this document. Purposeful planning of children's spaces is a key component of both children's learning and the documentation and assessment of their learning. It requires thoughtful and ongoing assessment of space and materials in relation to the particular strengths, vulnerabilities, and interests of particular individuals and groups of children.

38 Ferre Laevers, *Experiential Education: Making care and education more effective through wellbeing and involvement* (Centre for Experiential Education: Leuven, 2003)
<http://www.leadersdesktop.sa.edu.au/leadership/files/links/ExperientialEducationIntro.doc>.

39 Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford, and Debby Cryer, *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale*.



DOCUMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

The *ECERS-R* and its companion tools⁴⁰ are also used to assess child care environments. These environmental scans have been implemented in New Brunswick through the Opening the Door to Quality Child Care and Development Project, hosted by the New Brunswick Association for Community Living and funded by the New Brunswick Government.⁴¹

The Province of New Brunswick approves and monitors environments for early learning and child care through administration of The Family Services Act, Regulation 83-85 and Child Daycare Facilities Operator Standards.

Record Keeping/Monitoring

The Province of New Brunswick prescribes the protocol for monitoring the health and safety of individual children and communicating this information to parents. Provincial guidelines for menu and program also elicit indicators of the experiences to which each group of children (but not necessarily each individual) has been exposed.

Program and System

Information is gathered and analyzed periodically to ensure that programs and systems are functioning as designed, and to generate input into new directions and designs. Participatory evaluation models ensure that evaluation is done with the participants, not imposed on them; the most ethically defensible and comprehensive picture is generated when multiple perspectives are included.



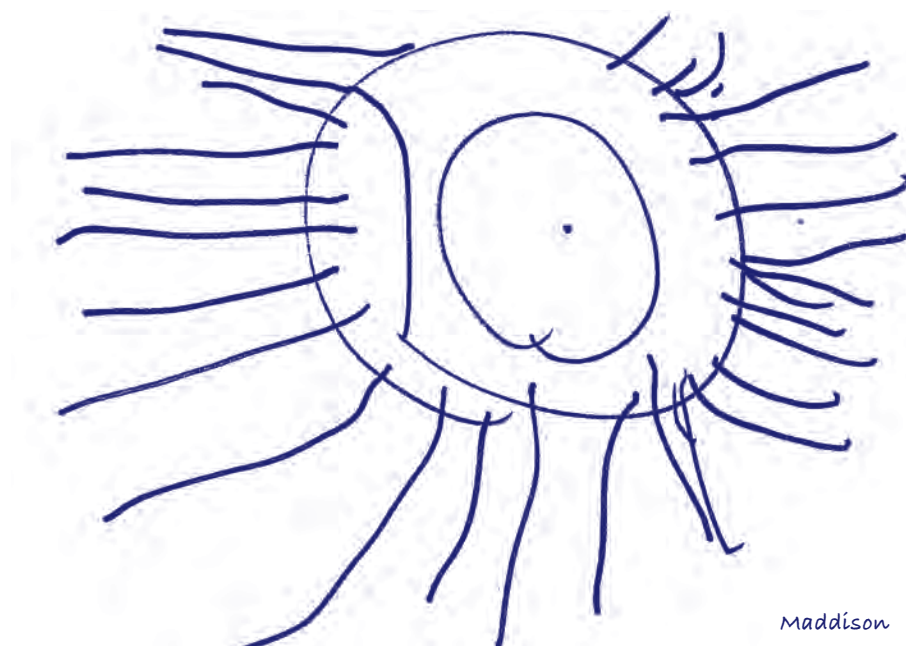
⁴⁰ *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition* (Teachers College Press: New York, 2003), *Family Child Care Environment Rating Scales, Revised Edition* (Teachers College Press: New York, 2007), and *School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale* (Teachers College Press: New York, 1996).

⁴¹ New Brunswick Association for Community Living, Quality inclusive childcare: Opening the Door to Quality Childcare and Development program (GNB: Fredericton), http://www.nbacl.nb.ca/english/programs/early_childcare.asp.



CONTINUITIES AND TRANSITIONS

Transitions are part of everyday life for infants, toddlers, and young children and require adjustments to different environments and different people, often several times a day. These transitions, referred to as “horizontal transitions,” act as a backdrop for larger “vertical transitions” such as the move from home to child care and/or child care to school.⁴² The innovative research of scholars such as Stig Bröstrom has integrated the views of young children into the conversation on transitions, and a growing body of evidence is prompting policies aimed at smoothing both vertical⁴³ and horizontal transitions⁴⁴ to provide for enhanced continuities in learning.⁴⁵



Maddison

42 Stig Bröstrom and Judith Wagner, eds. *Early Childhood Education in Five Nordic Countries: Perspectives on the Transition from Preschool to School* (Systime Academic: Aarhus, 2003).

43 For example, policies to facilitate the seamless or 'wraparound day'.

44 For example, in the Swedish curriculum the formal designation of the principal to facilitate transitions between pre-school and school.

45 First Duty programs in Toronto facilitate both vertical and horizontal transitions by offering a range of early childhood programs and services, child care, pre-school and early elementary school on the same site.



CONTINUITIES AND TRANSITIONS

Typically, transition policies and procedures attempt to offset the fragmentation of children's lives by addressing the fractured landscape of institutions in which they participate. They strive for coherence and continuity of learning and care by

- o Acknowledging the diverse contributions the child and family bring from their
 - social circumstances
 - cultural and linguistic heritages
 - physical environments
- o Honouring these contributions and using them to
 - establish routines
 - nourish a sense of belonging for the child and family
 - create responsive curricular experiences
- o Enabling educators to share knowledge about rules, routines, and expectations in their respective communities of practice through
 - designated administrative responsibility
 - educator visits to each other's sites
 - job swapping and shadowing⁴⁶
- o Providing for supportive relationships in the new setting through
 - open door policies for families and educators
 - joint teaching during transition periods
- o Creating new possibilities for coherence in learning and care, through
 - a series of open questions and ongoing discussions about curricular and pedagogical continuities.



⁴⁶ Practiced in the Martenscroft Early Excellence Centre, Manchester, England to familiarize professionals with each others' work, particularly when children and their families are being served by a number of different professionals.



CONTINUITIES AND TRANSITIONS

Transitioning: Home to Centre, Centre to School

When children enter child care, consistent and trusting relationships between families and educators are critical to the well-being of children and their families. In Canada, researcher and educator Susan Fraser⁴⁷ has examined the concept of relational teaching. In relationships with families, Fraser makes several suggestions to build and sustain respectful relationships. These include: making families feel welcome; allowing for a lengthy transition time so parents and children have time to form relationships with educators; communicating clear expectations about the program and parental participation; informing parents of their child's daily experiences and learnings through documentation and/or daily messages; listening and communicating honestly with parents; planning creative ways to involve families; and accepting differences in value systems of families. In many early learning and care programs the primary-caregiver practice is a successful way to implement these strategies. In both child care centres and schools, the practices of looping and multi-age grouping contribute to respectful and long-term relationships between families and educators.

Starting school involves a major transition for children and their families, a transition which often inspires excitement and apprehension simultaneously. Children encounter major changes as they move from home- and centre-based settings to school; for instance, they may leave an environment with a small group of children and low child-adult ratios and move to a larger group with higher child-adult ratios and often same-age groupings. Other changes may entail larger facilities, a more closely prescribed schedule, and more directed learning; additionally, the majority of children will travel to and from school by bus. Hopes are that children, their families, and educators meet this new adventure with confidence, curiosity, an ability to communicate, respect for the contributions of others, and a desire to make contributions to their communities.

~~~~~  
47 Susan Fraser, *Authentic Childhood*.



## CONTINUITIES AND TRANSITIONS

### *Pedagogical Continuities*

Research indicates that children in socially interactive classrooms develop enhanced interaction skills and demonstrate fewer stress behaviours than children in more didactic settings. Implementation of curricula that are linguistically and culturally responsive to children and their families will create continuities to ease their transition to school.<sup>48</sup> Initiatives to connect home, school, and community based programs, and collaborations between child care and school educators, are also critical to smoothing transitions and ensuring continuities of experience for young children.<sup>49</sup>

### *Children's Success at School*

Children's success at school is influenced by a confluence of conditions that are created and sustained by the combination of federal and provincial policies, community resources, and family income. These factors shape the time parents have available to their children, the level of parental stress, and parenting practices.<sup>50</sup> In addition, the quality of early learning and care that the children experience prior to school-entry age tangibly influences school achievement and readiness to engage in a spectrum of school activities with ease and pleasure.<sup>51</sup>



A kid out in the sun by Ethan

48 Stacey York, *Roots and Wings: Affirming Culture in Early Childhood Programs* (Red Leaf: St. Paul, 2003).

49 Nancy S. Fontaine, Linda Dee Torre, and Rolf Grafwallner, Effects of quality early care on school readiness skills of children, *Early Childhood Development and Care* 176 (2006); Chris Ferguson and Lacy Wood, Easing the transition from PreK to Kindergarten (SEDL: Austin, 2005); Gina Browne et al, *When the Bough Breaks: Provider-Initiated Comprehensive Care* (McMaster University: Hamilton, 1998).

50 Gillian Doherty, *Zero to Six: The Basis for School Readiness* (HRDC: Hull, 1997); Sharon Kagan, Readiness 2000: Rethinking rhetoric and responsibility, *Phi Delta Kappan* 72, 4 (1990).

51 Anna Riggall and Caroline Sharp, The structure of primary education: England and other countries, *The Primary Review Interim Reports: Research Survey 9/1* (University of Cambridge: Cambridge, 2008), [http://www.primaryreview.org.uk/Downloads/Int\\_Reps/6.Curriculum-assessment/Primary\\_Review\\_RS\\_9-report\\_Primary\\_education\\_structure\\_080208.pdf](http://www.primaryreview.org.uk/Downloads/Int_Reps/6.Curriculum-assessment/Primary_Review_RS_9-report_Primary_education_structure_080208.pdf).



## CONTINUITIES AND TRANSITIONS

### *School Readiness*

Historically, the concept of school readiness has often been associated with a narrow range of recall skills such as reciting the alphabet, counting to ten, and naming basic colours.<sup>52</sup> We now understand that although decontextualizing such skills outside of a broad and balanced curriculum may result in short term gains, in the long run such an approach is likely to cause poorer academic functioning in the elementary years, and higher rates of early school leaving.<sup>53</sup> In recognition of the need for a more comprehensive view of school readiness, the concept of school readiness has been replaced by readiness to learn.<sup>54</sup>

Readiness to learn addresses two broad categories of learning — the social and the intellectual. Socially, in the years prior to school, children need to experience successful interactions with a group of peers, so that they acquire social skills including taking turns, making compromises, and approaching unfamiliar children.<sup>55</sup> Intellectually, children benefit from opportunities for rich hands-on experiences, contextualized interactions with signs and symbols used in their culture, meaningful conversations, and cooperative play with peers who are likely to start school with them. There is ample evidence that children who have had opportunities to engage with peers prior to school entry, and who can enter school together with these peers, will make a smoother transition to kindergarten.<sup>56</sup> Although much of the emphasis on school readiness is placed upon individual children being prepared for school, when understood with reciprocal relationships in mind, the term *school readiness* invites schools to be ready for children and their families.

52 Heather Biggar and Peter Pizzolongo, School readiness: More than the ABCs, *Young Children* 59, 3 (2004); Douglas Powell, *Enabling Young Children to Succeed in School* (American Educational Research: Washington, 1995).

53 Gillian Doherty, *Zero to Six: The Basis for School Readiness*; Kelly Maxwell and Susan Eller, Research in review: Children's transition to kindergarten, *Young Children* 49, 6 (1994).

54 Lilian Katz, *Readiness: Children and schools* (ERIC: Champaign, 1991).

55 Lilian Katz, *Readiness: Children and schools*, 2.

56 Kelly Maxwell and Susan Eller, Research in review: Children's transition to kindergarten, *Young Children* 49, 6 (1994).



# CONTINUITIES AND TRANSITIONS

*Children’s experiences during the early years have critical consequences both in the present and for their own futures (page 8).*

## NB K-12 CURRICULUM OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK: ESSENTIAL GRADUATION LEARNINGS

### **Aesthetic Expression (1)**

Graduates will be able to respond with critical awareness to various forms of the arts and be able to express themselves through the arts.

### **Citizenship (2)**

Graduates will be able to assess social, cultural, economic and environmental interdependence in local and global contexts

### **Communication (3)**

Graduates will be able to use the listening, speaking, viewing, reading and writing modes of language(s) and mathematical and scientific concepts and symbols to think, learn and communicate effectively.

### **Personal Development (4)**

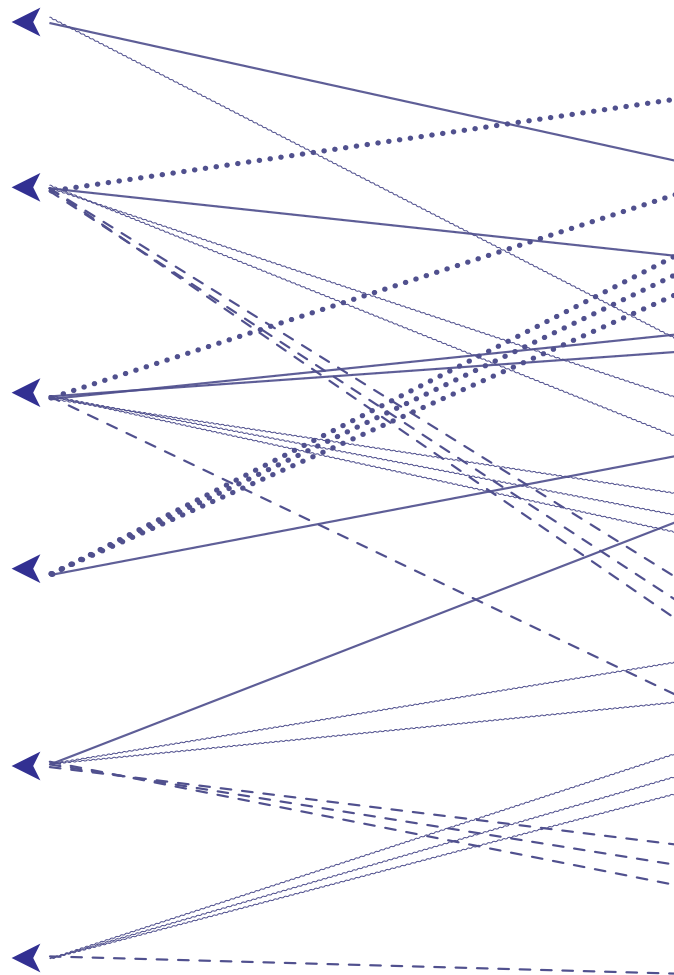
Graduates will be able to continue to learn and to pursue an active, healthy lifestyle.

### **Problem Solving (5)**

Graduates will be able to use the strategies and processes needed to solve a variety of problems, including those requiring language and mathematical concepts.

### **Technological Competence (6)**

Graduates will be able to use a variety of technologies, demonstrate an understanding of technological applications, and apply appropriate technologies for solving problems.



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# CONTINUITIES AND TRANSITIONS

## EARLY LEARNING & CHILD CARE:

ENGLISH CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR NB

### WELL-BEING

*Children experience safe and caring environments where their emotional and physical health, positive identities, and sense of belonging are nurtured and protected.*

- o Emotional Health and Positive Identities (4)
- o Belonging (2,3,4)
- o Physical Health (4)

### PLAY AND PLAYFULNESS

*Children experience open and flexible environments where playful exploration, problem solving and creativity are encouraged and purposefully planned.*

- o Imagination and Creativity (1,3)
- o Playful Exploration and Problem Solving (2,3,5)
- o Dizzy Play (4)

### COMMUNICATION AND LITERACIES

*Children experience intellectually, socially and culturally engaging environments where their communicative practices, languages, literacies, and literate identities are valued and supported.*

- o Communicative Practices (2,3,5,6)
- o Multimodal Literacies (1,3,6)
- o Literate Identities with/in Communities (2,3,5,6)

### DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

*Children experience socially inclusive and culturally sensitive environments in which consideration for others, inclusive, equitable, democratic and sustainable practices are enacted, and social responsibility is nurtured.*

- o Inclusiveness and Equity (2,5)
- o Democratic Practices (2,3,5)
- o Sustainable Futures (2,5,6)

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# SECTION FOUR

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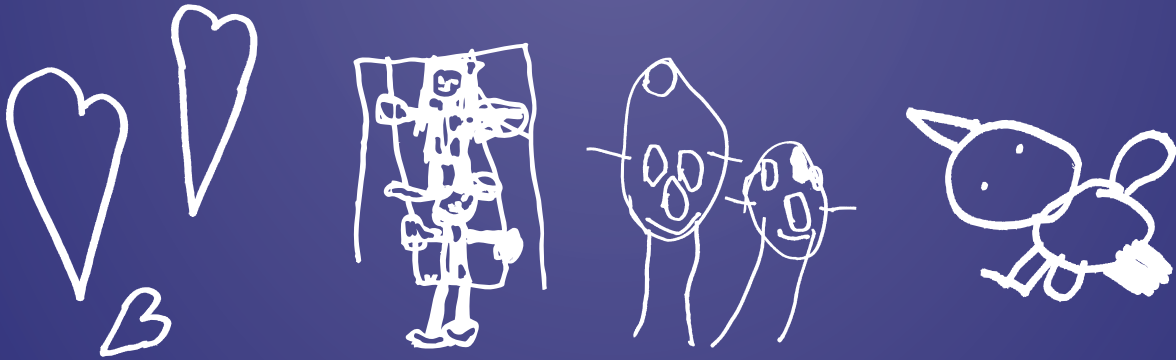
## EXPANDED GOALS FOR EARLY LEARNING AND CARE

Well-Being

Play and Playfulness

Communication and Literacies

Diversity and Social Responsibility



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## EXPANSION OF



# WELL-BEING

*Children experience safe and caring environments where their emotional and physical health, positive identities, and sense of belonging are nurtured and protected.*

### EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND POSITIVE IDENTITIES

**Children develop a sense of self.**

**Children develop a sense of other.**

### BELONGING

**Children develop a sense of place.**

**Children build respectful and responsive relationships.**

### PHYSICAL HEALTH

**Children take responsibility for personal care.**

**Children learn about food and nutrition.**

**Children explore body and movement.**



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## EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND POSITIVE IDENTITIES

### Children develop a sense of self.

*Educators take care to listen, model problem solving, and support children's initiatives.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Developing recognition of self

Mikayla (15 months) crawls over to the mirror placed at floor level, points at herself in the mirror, laughs, and reaches out to her reflection. *100 Aker Woods Daycare*

Co-constructing their identities

Andy (4 years) says to his educator as he is cleaning up, "I'm good at this, aren't I?" His educator responds, "Yes, you are."

Experiencing growing self-confidence, self-respect, and ability to take initiative

Leisa notices that Liam (2 years) fills up his water glass on this own. She acknowledges his accomplishment by saying, "I noticed you poured that water yourself." *Chatham Day Care Centre Inc.*

Growing in their capacity to express feelings, concerns, and needs

Joseph (4 years) struggles with complex, noisy group activities. He learns the strategy to remove himself to a quiet space in the classroom and return when he is ready. *UNB Children's Centre*

Pursuing interests, passions, and strengths

After capturing a ladybug to be the classroom pet, Sophia (3 years) asks Jennifer, her educator, to read a book about ladybugs. Sophia then goes over to the bookshelf and starts to pull out other books about bugs. *The Preschool Centre on Clark St.*

Being curious and questioning

Fascinated with sharks, Bruce (4 years) draws them, paints them, reads books about them, and searches the Internet with help from his educator.



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

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Document, photograph, and share stories about and with the children.

Honour children's feelings and concerns with thoughtful responses.

Model and encourage awareness and acceptance of a range of identities.

Listen and draw attention to children's initiatives.

Plan an environment that offers accessibility and choice.

Listen to and name children's feelings and emotional reactions.

Explore the consequences of children's actions and develop strategies together for responding to challenges. Ask questions like, "How do you think they feel?" "How did you decide who gets to play?"

Respect children's and families' ways of expressing feelings, concerns, and needs.

Join in children's wonderment, affirm children's questioning, and plan with their curiosity in mind.

Share your joys and pleasures in life with the children.

Ask "I wonder" questions. For example: "I wonder how long a shark lives?" "What's the biggest thing a shark can eat?"

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## EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND POSITIVE IDENTITIES

### Children develop a sense of self.

*Educators take care to listen, model problem solving, and support children's initiatives.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

##### Persevering and persisting

Molly (3 years) is struggling with putting a puzzle together. She tells the educator, "Gail, this puzzle is making me frustrated." Gail asks, "Would you like some help?" "No," she says, "I'll walk away from it for a minute. Okay?" Gail says, "That is a great way to solve the problem." Molly leaves the puzzle table and goes to look at a book for about one minute, then back to the puzzle and asks, "Gail, can you help?" Gail puts one piece in for her and she finishes the puzzle. *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*



First day I went out in my backyard  
and my hands were behind my back  
by olivia



Encourage tasks and activities that are challenging.

Stand by and offer help with encouraging words and new materials.

Be prepared to wait; model persistence and perseverance in your relationships with children and materials.

### *For Reflection*

Reflect upon your reactions to children's behaviour. What strategies do you draw upon to address issues of conflict and disagreement between children? Who do these help and who might they harm? Think about how you model perseverance and persistence.

In what ways are individual children's expressions of feelings, ideas, or concerns encouraged and supported? Think about time to listen, space to listen, and ways to encourage self-expression. Ask yourself if you are helping them to learn to take initiative.

Think about how varied cultural backgrounds influence feelings and beliefs about touch and personal space. Think about the kinds of touch children experience in your program. What is your own level of comfort with touch?

Recall specific examples of how you invite children to actively set their learning goals, persist in pursuing them, share their strengths and interests, celebrate their accomplishments, and persevere to solve challenges they encounter. In what ways does your planning reflect the interests and passions of the children?





## EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND POSITIVE IDENTITIES

### Children develop a sense of other.

*Educators nurture a sense of community connectedness while celebrating the unique qualities of each child..*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Supporting, encouraging, and listening to others

Lola (4 years) picks up *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* to read to the class. The children listen closely as Lola retells the story. After Lola finishes, Laura (4 years) exclaims, "You're a really good reader, Lola." *UNB Children's Centre*

Caring for others

Olivia (3 years) is new to the group and still gets teary-eyed from time to time. Three children notice her tears one morning. They approach her, give her a hug, and say, "Our mummies and daddies are at work, but they'll come back later." *The Preschool Centre on Clark St.*

Experiencing trust and compassion with children and adults

Gillian (15 months) is anxious in her first days in the infant room. Being in a group with other children is new to her. Jennifer, her educator, keeps her close as she assures her of the actions of the other infants. *Chatham Day Care Centre Inc.*

Learning constructive ways to negotiate a range of relationships

Austin (4 years) is very upset after drop-off time. His educator takes him outside to his favourite place and sits in the sand with him and listens to him. Later, together, his educator and guardian plan strategies to support Austin's transitions. *UNB Children's Centre*



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

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Listen carefully to children's communication.

Reflect children's words and gestures back to them - to clarify your understanding.

Draw children's attention to what others are trying to say.

Invite children to express their point of view.

Model care for children, colleagues, and families.

Ask children: "What can we do to help your friend?" "How do you think he's feeling today?" "I wonder what made her sad?"

Promote an optimistic outlook by maintaining a calm and positive disposition.

Communicate in consistent, respectful ways.

Attend to relationships; encourage multi-age or sibling interactions; describe, out loud, how children might be feeling.

Bring children together and help them find ways to solve problems; invite children to offer their own ideas. For example, "Is there something we could do differently?" "What if we...?"

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## EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND POSITIVE IDENTITIES

### Children develop a sense of other.

*Educators take care to listen, model problem solving, and support children's initiatives.*

### *For Reflection*

In what ways does your centre build upon dispositions of optimism, joy, and a zest for living and learning? Think about positive self-talk, problem solving, curiosity, humour, contributions, accomplishments, and care.

How do you support children in new situations and new relationships? Think about the children's moments of anxiety, change, and responses to new people, places, and activities. How do you plan for welcoming new children and their families? Think about how you invite other children to participate in this process.

In what ways do you encourage children to think about how their actions affect other people, places, and things in their environments? How do you acknowledge the contributions children make? How do children acknowledge each other's contributions?



*Me and my friend Jessica by Nicole*

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Lana



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## BELONGING

### Children develop a sense of place.

*Educators support children's connections to environments within the centre and local community.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Negotiating new spaces

On Julie's (3 years) first day at the centre, the children take her on a tour, pointing out where she can hang her coat, keep her artwork, and wash her hands.

Identifying, creating, and using personal landmarks

The children (3 years) are on their daily morning walk with their educator, Jane, and a visitor. As they turn the corner, one child points out the tower of the local church: "Look there's the castle."  
*Passamaquoddy Children's Centre Inc.*

Becoming familiar with the sights, sounds, rhythms, and routines of new situations

Children in the four-year-old classroom hear voices in the hall. The arrival of the after-schoolers signals that it is almost time for parents to come. One child says, "There are the big girls. Our mummies are coming soon" *Just Kids Preschool Centre Inc.*

Generating a shared repertoire of narratives and memories

Months after the centre's trip to the beach, Carl and Daisy (4 years) play lifeguard and search for shells in the sandbox.

Making connections between the centre, home, and broader communities

After being out on a walk around town, Jason (4 years) is in the book corner looking at a brochure of the town. "Hey, we saw that on our walk, right Angela?" Jason points out all the places he saw.  
*Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

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Create an inviting, warm environment. Attach children's names to personal spaces such as clothes hooks or cubbyholes. Label places in the centre using words and symbols. Maintain and revisit routines and procedures while the new child adjusts to the centre.

Visit places outside the centre to help children become familiar with the community. Point out landmarks such as local businesses, familiar buildings, and natural items such as boulders or trees. Listen to children as they notice and name features of the surrounding sites.

Draw attention to predictable sounds and sights of the centre.

Comfort children through unexpected events and offer explanations for new sounds or changes that might take a child by surprise.

Be close by when children enter new situations.

Build upon shared events by writing group stories and providing related props for dramatic play.

Help to make connections between events by comments such as "Do you remember when...?" and "This reminds me of...".

Weave home practices into the everyday of the centre; for example, home languages, foods, child rearing practices, faiths, sleeping routines, patterns of physical contact, freedom of movement, and emotional expression.

Accept children's contributions from home into the centre.

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## BELONGING

### Children develop a sense of place.

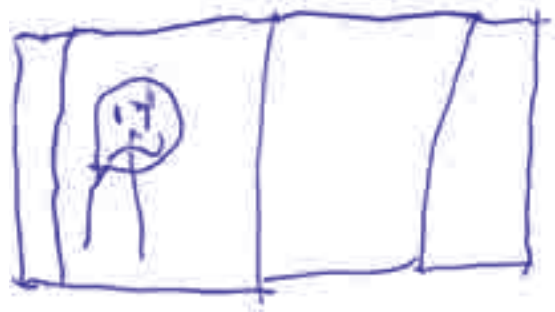
*Educators support children's connections to environments within the centre and local community.*

### *For Reflection*

Each centre is situated in its own unique community. How do you help children to identify with the area surrounding the centre? Think about identifying and visiting local businesses, parks, and familiar landmarks. Think about community members who can participate in the centre or whom the children can visit.

How are daily routines made familiar to the children and how is their participation encouraged? How are changes in routines handled? Think about clean-up, diapering and dressing for outdoor play.

In what ways do you affirm families' connection to the centre? Think about how families see themselves reflected at the centre — through artifacts from home, favourite recipes, family pictures and stories. How do you invite families to share hobbies and talents? How welcoming are your entry ways and your arrival and departure routines?



*It's me playing at the play park by Hudson*



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## BELONGING

### Children build respectful and responsive relationships.

*Educators provide time and spaces for children to develop and maintain relationships*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Developing cherished as well as casual friendships

"I like everyone in our class," states Julie (4 years). "But Isaac is my best friend," she adds, while talking to her educator.

Forming close relationships with a range of adults

After Tommy's fourth birthday he moves from Mildred's room to a new group in the centre. Every time something especially exciting happens, Tommy returns to share the stories with Mildred.

Growing in their awareness that their actions contribute to the well-being of others

Children in the four-year-old room take pleasure in pushing the infants on the swings. The infants respond to the interactions with spontaneous, contagious laughter. *100 Aker Woods Daycare*

Participating in group initiatives

Claire (3 years) exclaims, "Let's have a parade," and begins to march. Her friends see her and join in. A line of children makes its way through the classroom. The educator, noticing their excitement, pulls out the rhythm instruments and hands them out as the children march by.

### *For Reflection*

What opportunities does your centre provide for children to develop friendships across ages? How do the centre's policies and procedures support and/or limit such multi-age interactions?

and outdoor activities, on-site and beyond-site relationships. Think about scheduling, physical space, staffing ratios, indoor and outdoor activities.

How do you provide space, time, freedom, and support for children to develop friendships? Think about indoor

How do you encourage the participation of every child? Think about children's friendships, patterns of exclusion, activity choices, gender, race, and class.

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## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Allow children private social spaces to make and sustain friendships within their own and other age groups.

Let families know about their children's friendships so that they can choose to extend them beyond the centre.

Acknowledge and maintain the special bonds that form between children and adults within the centre.

Provide for multi-age groupings in which caregivers get to know all the children.

Consider following a group of children through their daycare experience.

Provide spaces for children to work together and learn from one another.

Model appreciation of others with positive talk; encourage children to listen, support, celebrate, question, and care for other children; talk through and point out how their actions affect others.

Be open to unplanned changes in scheduling.

Build upon children's spontaneous and recurring activities; be playful in following their lead.

Be aware of how each child participates within the centre community.

How are children's contributions to your centre invited and accepted? Think about toys, stories, cultural artifacts, ideas, questions, and children's theory building.

time and space for authentic and personal communications, and consider relationships between families, between educators, and between educators and families.

How do educators and families learn from and about each other at your centre? Think about how you ensure

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## PHYSICAL HEALTH

### Children take responsibility for personal care.

*Educators provide access, time, and encouragement as children undertake self-care practices.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Growing independence in self-care routines

When asked if he would like a snack today, Pierre (4 years) says he is not hungry. At the same time, Emma (4 years) requests a second helping of cheese and crackers. The educator recognizes the capabilities of children to make their own decisions.

Learning about individual differences in self-care practices

Everyone knows Kyla (3 years) is allergic to juice. One day, her educator, Jennifer, accidentally sets juice in front of her and Emma (3 years) says, "Jennifer, Kyla can't drink juice. It makes her tummy sick, right?" *The Preschool Centre on Clark St.*

Helping others with personal care

Sam (3 years) becomes very anxious when the fire bell rings. His close friend Mary (4 years) takes his hand. She whispers softly to him as they leave the building, "It's just a practice. You will be all right."



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## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Offer gentle encouragement and reminders about self-care routines.

Allow children to actively participate in making decisions about food consumption, rest time, alone time, toileting routines.

Recognize that children are curious about individual differences.

Talk with children and families to determine their health routine practices.

Model and practise a range of self-care routines.

Acknowledge children's accomplishments with statements such as, "I noticed you put on your own coat today."

Review procedures, such as fire drills, regularly.



## *For Reflection*

What beliefs do you hold about children's participation in self-care routines? Think about snack time, dressing, toileting, sleeping, diapering. How might your beliefs shape the practices in your centre? How do these practices inhibit or encourage children to take initiative?

In what ways are children encouraged to help themselves? In what ways are children encouraged to help others? Think about your responses to children's requests for help. Think about access to supplies, peer helping, and contributions to procedures.

How do you address children's comments and questions about individual or family differences in self-care routines? Think about learning about families' practices, having open discussions, and taking what children say seriously.

How are government health and safety regulations made visible in your centre and within centre policies? How do you negotiate these regulations as you plan for learning? Think about access to required posted information and responsibility for the management of regulatory information.

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## PHYSICAL HEALTH

### Children learn about food and nutrition.

*Educators honour individual and cultural food practices, and provide children with a range of nutritious foods that are new, familiar, and local.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Understanding the relationship between food and their bodies

Jane (2 years) says "thirsty". She walks over to her cubbie to get her sippy cup, takes a drink, and puts her cup back for next time.

Building confidence to try new foods

The first time tacos are on the menu, Jack (3 years) prepares his but then hesitates to eat it. His educator, Christa, sits beside him and speaks of how tasty the hamburger meat is on her taco. Jack tastes some from his plate, smiles, and says, "I like it." *Unicorn Children's Centre Inc.*

Exploring a range of cultural practices of eating and sharing foods

Rémi's mom comes into the four-year-old room to make sushi with the children. She models how to roll the rice and seaweed, stands by to help the children as they make their own, and then sits to eat with the children who want to taste this new food. *UNB Children's Centre*

Making decisions about food consumption, preparation, serving, and clean-up routines

Jayne (3 years) arrives late one morning and brings her breakfast with her. She sits at the table and eats her breakfast. At snack time, Jayme refuses a snack, declaring, "I'm not hungry, I already ate." *Unicorn Children's Centre Inc.*



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Model healthy food habits, and discuss how food provides energy and keeps our bodies healthy.

Be sensitive to children's identification of thirst and hunger; allow access to water and other drinks as appropriate.

Encourage and model risk taking with new foods.

Invite families and other community members to share the ways they prepare, serve, and eat foods.

Consider children's likes and dislikes, health conditions, and cultural practices.

Be flexible with snack scheduling.

Provide food when children are hungry and respect their awareness of fullness.

Expect children to share responsibility for preparation and clean-up routines.

## *For Reflection*

How can you become more familiar with the food practices and preferences of children and their families? How might such insights influence your practice? Think about regional favourites, traditional practices, and dietary choices.

How are children included in food preparation and serving? Think about developing safe routines so children can participate regularly in food preparation. Think about children's questions, potential learnings, and discussions about food — cooking, shopping, and growing.

How does your centre encourage and balance families' contributions for snacks and meals with government standards for food and nutrition? Think about the time, space, and supplies necessary to work with families to prepare foods on site.



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## PHYSICAL HEALTH

### Children explore body and movement.

*Educators challenge children's physical limits throughout planned and open activities.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Participating in a variety of physical activities, indoors and out

"Are you hungry Shawnda?", some of the four-year-old children on the playground ask. "No, not really," their educator replies, "but, wait a minute — my stomach is starting to growl." The children excitedly squeal and run in the opposite direction. *Unicorn Children's Centre Inc.*

Learning about their bodies in space

Evan (2 years) stands at the edge of a puddle preparing to take a leap. He pauses while watching his friend Gerry jump over the same puddle. Evan then launches himself over the muddy water.

Increasing bodily awareness, control, strength, agility, and large muscle coordination

After discovering a giant snowball on the playground, Rémi (4 years) decides to move it with help from his educator, Leigh. He exerts great effort trying to push the snowball that is "taller and fatter" than he. He calls on his friends for help. *UNB Children's Centre*

Increasing fine motor capacities

Jessie (10 months) sits in her high chair carefully picking up her Cheerio's one at a time.

Knowing and stretching physical limits

Sarah (3 years) stares at the monkey bars for a long time. With great concentration and effort she climbs up the first three rungs and back down again. "Look, Daddy, look. I did it. I climbed up by myself."

Releasing and restoring energy in outdoor places

The children (4 years) excitedly talk about last night's storm. Hearing their delight, their educators rearrange the day's schedule so that everyone can romp in the snow.



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

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Provide all children with opportunities for vigorous daily physical activity, both indoors and out.

Participate with children and model a positive disposition toward physical activity.

Encourage children to explore play spaces and take risks to move in new or challenging ways.

Acknowledge children's efforts and provide materials to assist them in their explorations.

Provide for daily vigorous physical activity and encourage children to participate in a range of large motor activities such as games of chase, climbing, throwing, catching, and running.

Play games familiar to you, and new ones made up by the children.

Provide interesting and age appropriate materials for children to use and explore.

Encourage daily activities such as buttoning, snapping, tying, cutting, and grasping; and recognize that these activities require time and practice.

Provide children the space to try new things.

Support, encourage, and guide child-initiated healthy risk taking.

When outside, model and join in children's free movement: run, chase, dance, and spin with them.

Be outdoors daily, in a range of weather conditions.

Take walks together around the centre or local community.

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## PHYSICAL HEALTH

### Children explore body and movement.

*Educators challenge children's physical limits throughout planned and open activities.*

#### *For Reflection*

How do policies at your centre promote or prevent exploration of natural spaces, healthy risk-taking, and quality outdoor activity? Think about regulations regarding going off site, weather-related policies, and schedule restrictions.

In outdoor/indoor areas collect examples of children's healthy risk taking. Think about conversations, gestures, facial expressions, body movement, patterns of action, and social relationships. Think about how you support children's initiatives in outdoor and indoor spaces.

How do you discover the interests, hobbies, and activities of families and staff after centre hours? How are such interests and activities explored in your centre?

Think about where you played outdoors as a child. Who did you play with? What did you do? What materials were available? What risks did you take? How might this experience inform your planning for outdoor participation?

How do you involve children in decisions about safety and appropriateness of play space equipment and materials? Think about issues of inclusion, gender, and age appropriateness.



*Flying outside by Lauren*





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EXPANSION OF



# PLAY AND PLAYFULNESS

*Children experience open and flexible environments where playful exploration, problem solving and creativity are encouraged and purposefully planned.*



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## EXPANSION OF



# PLAY AND PLAYFULNESS

*Children experience open and flexible environments where playful exploration, problem solving and creativity are encouraged and purposefully planned.*

### IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY

**Children develop dispositions for flexible and fluid thinking.**

**Children invent symbols and develop systems of representation.**

**Children create imaginary scenarios in which they explore new possibilities and take possession of their worlds.**

### PLAYFUL EXPLORATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

**Children learn about the properties of objects.**

**Children test their limits.**

**Children learn to negotiate the complexities of joint undertakings.**

**Children learn to employ creative approaches to identifying and working out practical problems.**

### DIZZY PLAY

**Children take pleasure in being on the edge.**

**Children take pleasure in sharing the joy of laughter.**

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## IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY

### Children develop dispositions for flexible and fluid thinking.

*Educators encourage children to find different ways of doing things and honour unique and novel responses.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Seeing people, places, and things in new ways

After hearing the story about Santa bringing a puppy for Christmas, two boys (4 years) re-enact the plot using the mailbox from the dramatic play area as a chimney. *Passamaquaddy Children's Centre Inc.*

Expressing unique and imaginative ideas

Brendan (4 years) says, "I'm painting the sky green... the frogs are going to invade." The educator supports Brendan's ideas in responding: "I think green is a good colour for a froggy invasion."



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## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Encourage multiple solutions, explanations, and strategies; acknowledge each child's contributions. Ask questions like "What do you think?" and, "Is there another way to do that?"

Honour and applaud children's imaginative ideas and productions.

Provide materials, time, and an accepting atmosphere for children to create.

Listen respectfully, model openness to new ideas, and encourage children to consider alternative ways of thinking.

## *For Reflection*

Do you take time to play with open-ended materials as a way of exploring your own creativity? Think about how the children may view and represent their world.

Think about cultural notions of play. What do you consider play? What do families in your centre think about play? How do children view play?



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## IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY

### Children invent symbols and develop systems of representation.

*Educators encourage children as they represent their experiences in their own way.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Making up their own words, marks, and movements

Kathleen (4 years) is getting ready for a special visitor. She cuts out small rectangle shapes and writes various marks and lines on them, then uses stickers to fasten the "name tags" to everyone's shirt. *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*

Negotiating the meaning of symbols with others

Lana (3 years) draws three circles in the dirt outside. She then says to the group around her, "This is a stop light, when I point here you have to stop cause it is red. This is green, and this is yellow. Green means you can go and yellow is the same as red, you stop." *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*

Taking up and reshaping cultural experiences

Late in the spring, several four-year-olds gather bags and "pack a lunch" as they set out "fiddleheading" on the playground.

Developing awareness of the imagined and ordinary worlds they move between as they play

Jadon (4 years) is playing with the train set. He places a barrier on the tracks but another child drives a train through the barrier. "You can't do that!" says Jadon. "You can't do that on the real train tracks. That might cause an accident." He replaces the barrier. *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Provide rich and open-ended materials for children to define in their own ways.

Model flexible and playful use of language, materials, and props.

Recognize and respond to children's symbol-making.

Accept and make use of children's invented symbols to extend their thinking, both within the play scenario and beyond.

Be aware of the culture, customs, and rituals of the community; provide props specific to those customs and rituals.

Develop your own techniques for talking with children; encourage them to think about extending and elaborating their play.

## *For Reflection*

When children share their symbol-making systems (mark making/storytelling/symbolic representation) how do you honour their systems? How would you encourage children to share their systems with other children and families? How do you document their process?

Are materials and props in your room easily accessible to children? Do children select their own materials. Think about the variety/range of materials available. Can children transport materials from one area to another? Consider how often you change and rotate materials throughout your room.



## IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY

**Children create imaginary scenarios in which to explore new possibilities and take possession of their worlds.**

*Educators play along, and provide ideas, materials and information for children to enrich their imaginary play.*

### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Creating social spaces and shared narratives

Sherry, Ron, and Jose (4 years) pretend part of the block corner is a rocket ship. Sherry says, "We're going to the moon. Right? Put the food there, Ron," and starts the countdown, "10, 9, 8 ..."

Creating alternative systems of power

Spencer (3 years) begins to imitate the educator's role at circle time. He picks up two blocks and taps them together. "Sit down with me, come here," he says to his friend and passes him two sticks. He then sings ABC's using the sticks as rhythm sticks. "Okay, now you pick one," he says. His friend says, "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." Spencer gathers up the rhythm sticks and says, "Don't need them for that one," and does the actions with the song. *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*

Coping with emotional pressure

Preparations for a new baby in David's family involved talk about David's role as the "big brother." Not long after the baby is home from the hospital, David (3 years) takes on the role of baby in the dramatic play area, babbling, crying, and demanding attention.



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## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Provide spaces for children to spend time together, meet each other on their own terms, form social groups, and define roles.

Give children opportunities to explore relations of power, to feel a sense of control, and to work out fears, hopes and dreams related to central ideas of good and evil.

Understand that children are working through complex life situations when they play; support the development that takes place as they do so.

Observe and document these play scenarios to inform planning and assessment, and help to facilitate conversations with families.

## *For Reflection*

How do you inspire children and enhance their imaginative potential? Think about materials that inspire. What experiences and role models have been sources of inspiration recently for the children's play and art work in your centre?

How do you intervene when fantasy play (e.g. superhero play) is disruptive? For example — do you enter as a character? Do you change the tone of play by dropping your voice to a whisper as you enter the play? Do you redirect or refocus the play by inviting children to draw, paint, or scribe superhero stories?

How do you create spaces and time to connect with families? How do the lives of families enter imaginary play? As the educator, how do you share play scenarios with families to gain insight into children working through complex life situations?



Laura

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## PLAYFUL EXPLORATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

### Children learn about the properties of objects.

*Educators provide a wide variety of materials and help children with the language to theorize, describe and articulate their actions on objects.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Playfully exploring and investigating the properties of objects

Anil (18 months) takes everything out of his treasure basket and begins to shake, bang, bite, and roll the various items.  
*Passamaquoddy Children's Centre Inc.*

Experimenting with action and reaction, cause and effect

Catherine (2 years) is pushing a toy truck across the room. It bumps into a balloon. She watches the impact of the truck on the balloon and tries different speeds to see what the impact will be. *Just Kids Daycare Centre Inc.*

Creating patterns and relationships — sorting and matching, sizing and ordering, sequencing and grouping

Rachel (2 years) is playing with the elephant toys. She lines them all up smallest to biggest, then knocks them over and says, "Oooooohhhh." She then stands them up again from smallest to biggest. *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*

Developing a vocabulary to describe similarities and differences, patterns and relationships

Olivia (4 years) is painting at the easel. She turns to Katie (the educator) and says, "Look! Look, look, look! I made peach... like inside a peach." Katie asks her how she made that colour. "Well you see, it's just white and orange." Katie then asks her if she can make any other colours. "Yes, I can make green, purple and brown.... Cool!" *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Provide a wide variety of natural and manufactured materials that children can safely explore and manipulate on their own terms.

Organize materials so that they are accessible to children.

Quietly stand by ready to help children and respond to their initiations.

Provide materials that children can manipulate in a variety of ways; encourage them to find out “what will happen if...”

Help children find ways of recording cause and effect; encourage them to theorize about how things work and experiment to test out their theories.

Provide construction, art materials and board games that prompt children to group and regroup.

Respond when children notice similarities and differences.

Provide containers for sorting and organizing materials.

Involve children in labelling shelves and containers with pictures and print so they can sort and match as they put things away.

Use teachable moments to provide specific language in the context of children’s activities: language of similarity and difference, spatial and temporal relations, number, texture, tone, and volume.



## PLAYFUL EXPLORATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

**Children learn about the properties of objects.**

*Educators provide a wide variety of materials and help children with the language to theorize, describe and articulate their actions on objects.*

### *For Reflection*

How do you support children in language development through their play? Think about restating and extending children's responses using precise language to name things; consciously expand children's vocabularies.

Walk about your room with children's eye level in mind. How do you support children's access to spaces, objects, and materials? What is available to children to manipulate and investigate?



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## PLAYFUL EXPLORATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

### Children test their limits.

*Educators provide safe spaces for children to test and contest their growing capacities.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

Testing their powers of observation and sensory discrimination

Testing strength, speed, agility and control over movement

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

As Zack and June (4 years) play *Concentration* they become increasingly adept at remembering where their opponent has placed a matching card.

While sitting on a spinning toy, Maddison (3 years) has trouble getting it going. She lies on her belly and tries to push with her hands but the mat is too slippery. "I need sticky stuff," she says and gets a piece of fruit that has Velcro on it. She lies down again and uses the Velcro to grip the mat, spinning herself faster and faster. *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*



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## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Provide variety in sights, sounds, tastes, textures, and smells.

Encourage children to look, listen, smell, touch, and taste, and to make comparisons using all their senses.

Provide toys, equipment, and spaces that safely challenge the physical capacities of children; provide encouragement and applaud their efforts; participate with them.

### *For Reflection*

How does your environment encourage healthy risk taking? Where do children run, climb, and jump? Think about the distinction between challenging and hazardous environments.

In what ways do children challenge each other to test their limits? How do children support each other through these challenges? During this process, consider your role and your influence in balancing safety with courage. Help children to make decisions about participation.



Hammerhead by Sam

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## PLAYFUL EXPLORATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

### Children learn to negotiate the complexities of joint undertakings.

*Educators provide materials, observe and revisit experiences to discuss what works and what does not.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Negotiating rules of time, space, and roles

Jan (3 years) and Louise (3 years) are playing house. They both want to be mommy. Jan says, "We'll both be the mommy," and then, "We'll have two mommies."

Making collective plans and decisions about the directions of their play

A group of children decide to drain a big puddle in their outdoor play area. James (4 years) says, "We can dig rivers." Ron (4 years) and Ye (4 years) respond with "Yeah!" and take up their shovels.

Developing a sense of fair play



When Alyssa (4 years) arrives one morning she is visibly sad to see her mom leave. She goes over to the playdough table but one of the children says, "This is full — see four friends!" Vanessa (3 years) speaks up, "She can be with me and have some of my room." She gives some playdough to Alyssa as she moves over to make room.  
*Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*

During the hello song, Ryan (18 months) points to everyone and says their names to make sure that they each get a verse sung about them. *Passamaquoddy Children's Centre Inc.*

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## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Recognize that through play children learn the language of negotiation and the function of rules.

Listen and intervene only if children clearly need new strategies or emotional support.

Help children revisit their play experiences.

Respect children's right to shape their own agendas; appreciate that their plans may be vague and are often in the process of being refined or revised.

Help children articulate their intentions and strategies — verbally, or with pictures, print, gestures, or other forms of symbolic representation.

Encourage children to notice what others are doing and how they may be feeling.

Provide time for children to act independently of adult guidance, yet help them carry through with rules for fair play if needed.

## *For Reflection*

Examine your own beliefs about competition and cooperation. Where do these fit in the play environment? Consider cultural notions underlying these concepts.

Consider your interactions with children who are negotiating conflict during play. How do body language, facial expressions, and physical responses help children? How do you encourage them to reflect on their behaviour? How do you model rules of fair play to solve their problems?



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## PLAYFUL EXPLORATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

### Children learn to employ creative approaches to identifying and working out practical problems.

*Educators step back to allow time for children to work things out, providing materials and perspectives when necessary.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Developing sustained, shared thinking

Several four-years-olds work together to build "the tallest building ever" from straws and connectors. As Leigh, the educator approaches, she wonders out loud how they could make it as tall as she is. *UNB Children's Centre*

Raising questions and making hypotheses about how and why things happen

Jason (4 years) is making sand castles with his educator, Joanne. When his castle does not stay together he questions, "Why didn't mine work?" "Let's do it again," he suggests. He watches as Joanne puts the sand in the pail, then says, "You pushed yours down." He packs his down and tries the castle again. "I did it, I needed to push it down." *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*

Choosing from a range of materials, tools, and languages to investigate, experiment, and make their thinking visible

Blaine (4 years) says, "Let's make a crane train." Angela, his educator, asks, "How could we do that and what would we need?" "I will show you," he says and goes to the easel. He proceeds to paint a detailed picture of a crane train before telling Angela all about it. Together they decide to collect materials to build their very own crane train. *Kings County Kids Daycare*

Creating imagined worlds in which they can explore possibilities and test alternative solutions

Jesse (4 years) and Amy (4 years) build a dinosaur den for themselves after being excluded by the boys. In their den, play is much quieter and involves mommy dinosaurs taking care of their children.



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

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Interject new ideas and document learning so that children can revisit and reflect on their thinking.

Use picture books, videos, and field trips to connect children's ideas and narratives to those of others.

Encourage children to devise their own ways of using materials and to find the answers to their questions through their own actions.

Make a range of materials readily available and allow children to choose what they think will work best.

Encourage children to reproduce their ideas through more than one medium.

Listen to children's ideas and suggest possibilities for alternative solutions.

Include open-ended materials that lend themselves to symbolizing any number of different things.

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## PLAYFUL EXPLORATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

**Children learn to employ creative approaches to identifying and working out practical problems.**

*Educators step back to allow time for children to work things out, providing materials and perspectives when necessary.*

### *For Reflection*

How do you help children to seek multiple solutions to the problems they encounter? Think about *how* questions and *why* questions that promote children's theory building in order to extend and deepen their understanding.

How do you promote and extend children's thinking at play? Think about how to follow their lead, ground your language in what they are doing/saying, and provide materials, books, and experiences that enable them to extend their thinking and play.

How does your centre provide for constructive play activities? Think about blocks, for both in and out of doors, and other building materials such as wood and nails, cardboard boxes and glue.



*A poodle going on the swing by Amy*





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## DIZZY PLAY

### Children take pleasure in being on the edge.

*Educators recognize, value, and provide safe spaces for dizzy play.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Engaging in rough and tumble play

Anne (4 years) and Billy (3 years) wrestle together on the floor, laughing and panting with exertion. Billy shouts "Ding!" and the wrestlers return to their corners.

Experiencing exhilarating physical release

Liam (3 years) begins spinning round and round. Soon several other children are doing the same thing. As they become too dizzy to stand up, they fall one by one. When their worlds stop turning they get to their feet and start spinning all over again. *Chatham Daycare Centre Inc.*

Playing at games of disrupting and restoring order

Maya (4 years) and Teddy (4 years) are playing in the block corner where they build a wall with blocks. As soon as it is completed they run their toy cars into it and together say, "Bang!" They then rebuild and crash, rebuild and crash, whooping each time the blocks come tumbling down.



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Recognize that rough and tumble play differs from fighting because there is no intent to harm.

Look for facial expressions and unclenched fists as signs for distinguishing rough and tumble play from aggressive play.

Ensure access to soft surfaces.

Recognize that energy bursts, such as spinning, rolling, running, and shouting, are part of the healthy development of children and also an expression of their zest for living.

Ensure opportunities, both indoors and out, for children to move freely and safely.

Recognize that noisy and chaotic play differs from aggressive acts such as knocking down another child's structure without their consent.

Observe interactions between players, looking for implied "rules" and listening for language of negotiation to help identify the activity as a game.

Determine when the play is getting out of control and help children restore order and calm themselves.

## *For Reflection*

How do you value and respond to rowdy, physical dizzy play? What is your comfort level and how does this affect allowances you make for children? Are there differing beliefs about this kind of play in your centre? Have you, or adults you know, played in these ways with children? Think about chasing, tossing, singing nonsense songs.

Have the educators at your center discussed dizzy play? What do you value about dizzy play? Are some spaces, equipment, and materials more appropriate than others for dizzy play? Consider families' perspectives of dizzy play and how this connects with the centre's practices.



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## DIZZY PLAY

### Children take pleasure in sharing the joy of laughter.

*Educators laugh with the children and participate in the spontaneity of dizzy play.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

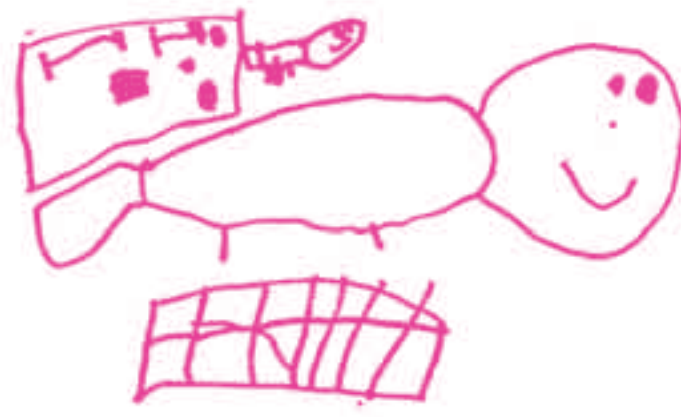
#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

##### Making nonsense

Shawnda and her four-year-olds are singing the greeting song. As the children respond, some say their names in funny voices and others use made-up names like Spaghetti, Pickles, and Meatballs. Shawnda joins in with the fun and laughter. *Unicorn Children's Centre Inc.*

##### Clowning and physical humour

Lane (2 years) wants to wash the bus. He asks Tammy, the educator, "Wash bus?" Tammy says, "Go ahead. What else would you like to wash?" Lane takes the face cloth and says, "Hair" as he puts the face cloth on his head. "Silly Lane, is your hair dirty?" asks Tammy. "NO WAY!" says Lane. *Chatham Day Care Centre Inc.*



*Pogo dreaming by Myah*



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Recognize that fun is found in the disorder children impose on the language; although these episodes may be trying, they are usually short lived, as children are likely to restore the order that they have disrupted.

Understand that children often learn about social conventions through the process of deliberately misrepresenting/ misunderstanding them as a way to elicit laughter from others.

Recognize that children may cover up their mistakes by repeating them in exaggerated form.

### *For Reflection*

How do you use nonsense language in books, songs, and poems to evoke laughter? Do children chime in, learn the rhythms of the language, and add spontaneous words and laughter? Does the nonsense language continue during play and create more moments for laughter?

Laughing with, rather than laughing at, others is an important concept for children to learn. How do you encourage laughing together in your centre?





Me and my friends by Natalie

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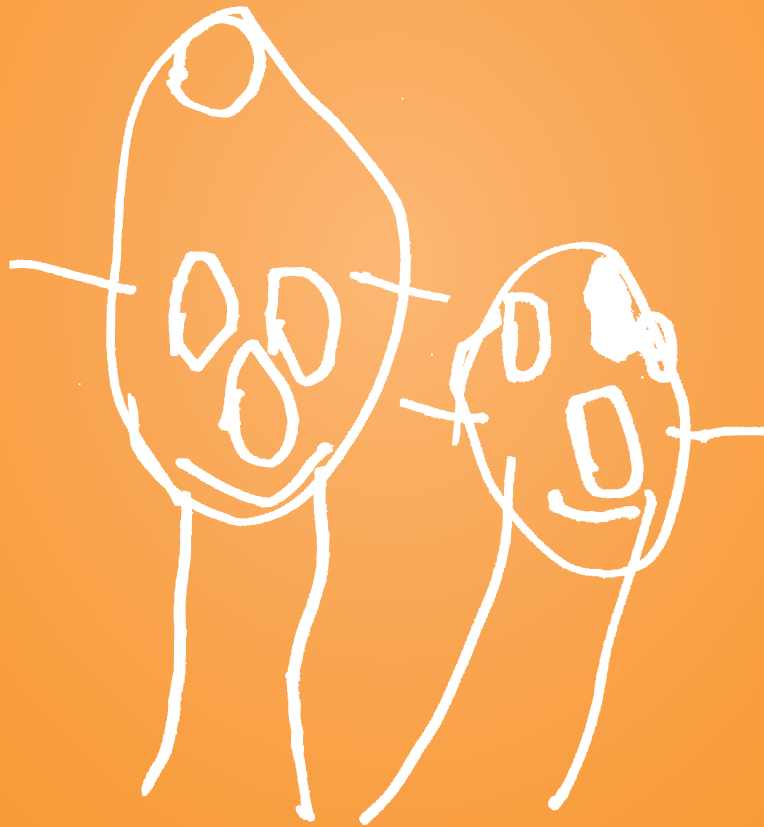


EXPANSION OF



# COMMUNICATION AND LITERACIES

*Children experience intellectually, socially and culturally engaging environments where their communicative practices, languages, literacies, and literate identities are valued and supported.*



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## COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES

### Children form relationships through communicative practices.

*Educators initiate and reciprocate playful and conversational verbal and nonverbal communication throughout the day.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Recognizing and responding to human presence and touch

Jason (3 months) coos in response to his educator as she smiles at him during diaper changing.

Becoming attuned to rhyme, rhythm, pitch, tone, and vibrations

Gavin (18 months) and his mother sing a lullaby together. The educator notices this and within the week, asks other families to share their favourite lullabies. The next month, the educator puts together a song book for all the children to take home.

Practicing and playing with sounds

Katie (14 months) sitting in her infant seat, repeats, "Ba, ba, ba, ba, ba." Her educator responds with "Baa Baa Black Sheep..."

Ray (2 years) is rinsing a toy bowl beside his educator who is washing up the dishes. Together they chant in a sing-song voice, "Rinse, rinse, rinse the dishes."

Initiating and responding to gestural and visual languages

Janet (4 years) is a non-verbal child who communicates through her personalized communication board. When the educator notices two of Janet's peers' curiosity about the pictoboard, she ensures that Janet's pictorial representations are extended to the signage in the classroom.

During circle time, Cheyenne (3 years) takes her PECS card that has 'Itsy Bitsy' on it and hands it to Gail, her educator. The group then sings Itsy Bitsy Spider quite loudly and with great animation. *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

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Cradle, rock, and hold babies close, in a secure manner.

Sing, coo, and read with infants, toddlers, and young children daily.

Communicate visually and verbally at children's physical level. Babies recognize human face and voice from birth.

Make eye contact and talk through routines.

Take on different tones, playfully exaggerate speech, become a character, deepen your voice.

Draw attention to a range of sounds in the environment: birds, cars, ocean waves, rain, wind blowing through the leaves.

Imitate children's playful noise-making as they explore and make their own sounds.

Combine singing and chanting with touch while playing finger games, sharing poems, or playing reciprocal games such as peek-a-boo.

Share lullabies, songs, chants, poetry, finger and action rhymes.

Communicate with children through gestures, facial expressions, and touch.

Join in with children's communicative efforts; use a questioning tone to speak what you think they are saying.

Use gestural and non-verbal cues to support children's communication.



## COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES

**Children form relationships through communicative practices.**

*Educators initiate and reciprocate playful and conversational verbal and nonverbal communication throughout the day.*

### *For Reflection*

Consider the different spaces needed to communicate with infants, toddlers, and young children at their physical level. Think about soft spaces with blankets where adults and infants can interact in a visual, aural, and tactile way with materials and each other.

How do educators add to their repertoires of playful games, finger rhymes, poems, and songs for and with infants, toddlers, and children? Think about the places of planned daily reading/singing times and times of spontaneous singing, counting, reading, and chanting.

Are adults engaged in playful conversations with children during routines such as feeding or clean-up times? Think about the use of humour, tone, and tact in everyday conversations, and the ways in which children learn through modelling and imitation of non-verbal language. Think about extending children's understandings of conventions through modelling rather than correcting. Think about the range of vocabulary you model for children through conversations, books, songs, poems, and chants.

When Braille, Sign Language, or pictographs are used, how are they introduced to the classroom community and what opportunities exist for their use in reciprocal communication amongst peers? Think about incorporating symbols from a child's pictorial communication board into the classroom routines for all children.



*Olivia*





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## COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES

### Children learn conventions of their languages.

*Educators provide an environment rich with conversation and language of home, books, songs, poems, jokes, instructions, recipes, slogans, measurement, movement, and number.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Growing in their implicit understanding of the conventions of language

While everyone is washing up for lunch, one of the children asks if they can be the leader. "We don't have a leader, we are all going to go together," Angela, the educator, replies. Vanessa (4 years) speaks up quietly, "Could I just be the one in front?" *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*

Growing in their understanding of vocabulary

The word enormous comes up in a conversation but not everyone knows what it means and we have lots of great guesses. Jadon (4 years) describes it as, "it is bigger than the biggest thing." We spend the afternoon finding things that are big, bigger, and enormous. *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*

Developing confidence in using language(s)

Rylee (22 months) is starting to name all the animals. She tries them all — she calls rhinoceros "rhinal." *Passamaquoddy Children's Centre Inc.*

Growing in their understanding of how others use language(s)

Lane (2 years) is playing in the bear cave. "What does a bear say?" asks his educator, Jennifer.  
"Roar!" replies Lane.  
"Let's be bears. I'm going to get you. Roar!"  
"Roar!" replies Lane.  
*Chatham Day Care Center Inc.*



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Be aware of the nature of language growth and development, as well as the progression of speech and other formal communication systems.

Share songs, stories, and jokes, both familiar and new, on a daily basis to expose children to sounds, words, sentences, and story structures.

Playfully emphasize nouns and action verbs as children begin to talk.

Use descriptive words to name and describe objects, people, and actions.

Use children's names frequently.

Stress important words in a sentence; slow down speech.

Provide a range of interesting experiences for babies and toddlers; allow time for them to explore independently; talk about what they are exploring; use specific language in context.

Accept their approximations and model conventional pronunciation and grammar.

Ask thoughtful questions, reflect children's words back to them, and use silent pauses and respectful listening.

Listen carefully to how children use language differently; record children's imaginative, creative, and functional uses of language to explore this range of ways they use language.

Incorporate children's imaginative, creative and functional uses of languages into the everyday curriculum.

Expose children to the multiple ways others use language; help them to understand particular ways of using languages.



## COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES

### Children learn the conventions of languages.

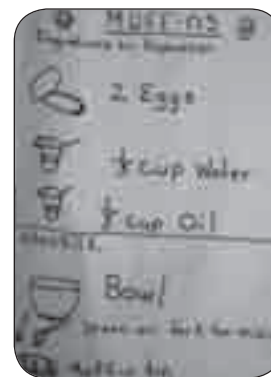
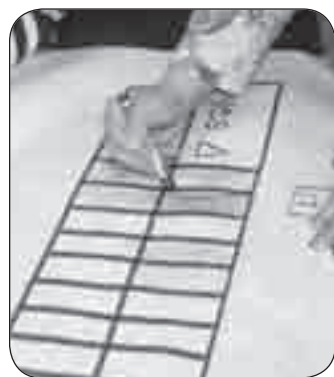
Educators provide an environment rich with conversation and language of home, books, songs, poems, jokes, instructions, recipes, slogans, measurement, movement and number.

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

Experiencing and developing diverse linguistic repertoires

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Diego (4 years) and his mom speak Spanish at home. When she tells the educator this, she is invited to help add Spanish signs to the art shelf, house corner, washroom, and reading corner. The next day Diego asks, "What does that say?" "That's the Spanish word for door." Diego teaches his educator how to say, *puerta*.



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## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Learn languages with and from the children.

Work with families to establish shared goals to support children's full linguistic repertoires; learn what languages children speak and hear at home; weave these languages into your daily curriculum; determine if translations of written communications are desired.

### *For Reflection*

How do adults value and incorporate the home and heritage languages of the children's families within your centre and the larger community? Think about the range of languages spoken by your families — how are their languages and communicative practices valued, and made verbal and visible in your centre through speakers, books, images, songs, visitors, and field trips? Recognize that bilingual and multilingual children switch languages, and express ideas differently in different languages.



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## COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES

### Children extend ideas and take actions using language.

*Educators provide opportunities for children to initiate discussions, explanations, demonstrations, ask questions, share ideas, lead problem solving, negotiate relationships, invent imaginary worlds, and tell stories.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Using language to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas

"Why don't you come over and play with me, buddy?" calls Chris (4 years) to his friend Jonathan.

Mingi (16 months) watches four-year-olds drawing. He crosses the room to an educator and growls deeply at her. She crouches down and takes him by the hand. He leads her to the table and points to the tiger Bilal has drawn, and growls one more time. "Oh you like Bilal's tiger! Grrr. Tigers growl."

*UNB Children's Centre*

Using language to make friends, share materials, structure, negotiate, and create imaginary worlds

Sally (4 years) tiptoes around the room chanting, "Alice and I do not like raw vegetables." Alice (4 years) jumps up and adamantly calls out, "I do so love raw vegetables." Her educator is working nearby, preparing fresh veggies. "That's great, Alice, we have some broccoli and carrots for today's snack." *UNB Children's Centre*

Using language to ask for help or information, argue, persuade, clarify, celebrate, or instruct

Kareem (4 years) explains his thinking as to why crocodiles survived when dinosaurs did not. "They lived because they swam deep under water." His educator says, "I didn't know that — was that all of the dinosaurs, or just some of them?"



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Demonstrate interest and respect for children as conversational partners and encourage taking turns in conversations.

Ensure children's access to a range of materials as they make choices and negotiate play and social relations.

Model problem-solving talk with children; talk about issues of friendship and access that may be occurring in children's lives.

Encourage children to express their thoughts and feelings to each other.

Build upon children's initiatives to communicate, sing, enjoy a book, ask a question, or tell a story.

Participate in the delight and pleasure of songs, gestural communication, and explorations.

Support children's attempts to communicate their intentions, efforts, inventions, discoveries, friendships, and problem solving; help them make intentions clear, elaborate, and be specific; be aware of the choices they make and bring models of their creations forward.

Listen carefully and support children's efforts to investigate their ideas, feelings, and questions; talk about texts, events, ideas, feelings, and questions; record and honour children's words, thoughts, and ideas through multiple forms of documentation.

Collect resources to build and expand upon children's expressed interests.



## COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES

### Children extend ideas and take actions using language.

*Educators provide opportunities for children to initiate discussions, explanations, demonstrations, ask questions, share ideas, lead problem solving, negotiate relationships, invent imaginary worlds, and tell stories.*

### *For Reflection*

How do adults affirm and extend children's language and thinking? Think about the use of paraphrasing, restating the child's ideas, describing, wondering; and open-ended questions such as, "Tell me about your building, painting, game, etc." or "Can you tell me how you solved that problem?" "What could we do next?"

Consider the ways you initiate communication and respond to nonverbal children. Think about how you ensure augmentative communication, for example — pictoboards or Braille — within the centre community.

How do you model problem solving strategies throughout the day in all activities? Think about questions such as: "I wonder how else we could do this; do you have another idea?" "Does that idea work for you?" "Can we change the rules so everyone could play?"

How do you record and honour children's thoughts, feelings, and inventiveness through multiple forms of documentation? Think about the use of camera and tape recorder in conjunction with writing down what children say. Think about writing down their speech to caption their paintings, drawings, or three-dimensional constructions. Extend conversations by naming, using keywords, explaining and talking about objects and events, and discussing the recent past and near future.



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## MULTIMODAL LITERACIES

### Children explore a variety of sign systems.

*Educators provide a range of materials for children to simultaneously use the sign systems of language, music, math, art and/or drama.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Becoming familiar with the sign systems of language, music, math, art, and drama

Samantha (4 years) collects scissors, masking tape, ribbons, buttons, and paper from the shelves in the studio space of her centre. "I am going to make a magic crown." Later in the day she plays princess with her friends in the house corner, wearing her magical crown.

Engaging in multiple forms of representation

In the block corner, Miriam (4 years) represents her sink overflowing at home. When she finishes the structure, she gathers up markers and paper, adding details from the incident that she could not represent with blocks — such as her mom standing with hands on hips, and water flowing over the edge of the kitchen sink.

*UNB Children's Centre*

Rachel (2 years) is playing with the Jack-in-the-box toy. She says to her educator, "Sing, Gail, sing." "All around the mulberry bush..." sings Gail. Rachel cranks the handle and exclaims, "Pop goes the Weasel!" *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*



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## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Ensure access to a rich range of materials, for example — paint, markers, blocks, musical instruments, dress-up clothes, puppets, clay, sand, water, treasure baskets, and found objects.

Ask children to share their thinking about their block buildings, playdough sculptures, songs, dances, mark making, painting, and socio-dramatic play.

Ensure that children have access to a range of tools and media in all learning areas, indoors and out.

Help parents appreciate their children’s multimodal symbol use by documenting the ways children integrate the symbols of different sign systems.

Converse with children about their works-in-process to help make their thinking visible; listen for the connections and comparisons that children make, and build upon these.



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## MULTIMODAL LITERACIES

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*Educators provide a range of materials for children to simultaneously use the sign systems of language, music, math, art and/or drama.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Transforming knowledge from one mode to another

A group of three-year-old children on the playground excitedly begin to talk about what a squirrel is doing. The educators, Christa and Maria, record their talk and take photos of the children watching the squirrel. Later they ask the children what they know about squirrels and create a list. The educators make a plan to bring in books to extend their interest. *Unicorn Children's Centre Inc.*

The educator, Jill, works with a small group of four-year-olds to build a papier-mâché dragon. One of the boys says, "I would like to make up a story of a dragon." Jill writes down his story and then a group of children perform it as a play. *UNB Children's Centre*

Hannah-Jo (3 years) builds a ferry out of blocks and drives about 20 different vehicles onto her ferry taking care to line them up in rows. She discovers one of her vehicles matches a picture in a book she read. *Unicorn Children's Centre Inc.*



*Airplane by Grayson*

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## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Talk with children about their processes as they build, construct, sculpt, play, sing, dance, draw, paint, or make music.

Tell and retell stories with children - their own and traditional tales.

Listen for children's thinking and build upon their theories, questions, and connections.

### *For Reflection*

What resources and sustained time do children have on a daily basis to support their growth in symbol-use within the five sign systems? Think about children's access to tools for mark-making in a range of areas in the room, props for shaping and extending dramatic play, a range of books, musical instruments, magazines, pictures, charts, labels, number play name tags, signs, notes, videos. How are home languages of all children valued in spoken and printed form?

How does the social experience gained from peer interaction contribute to multimodal literacy engagement and production? Think about how you provide for children to share ideas, thoughts and experiences, songs, dance, block building, poems, letters, lists, and jokes. How are pleasure, curiosity, and persistence modelled and honoured?

How are materials cared for, displayed, changed for novelty, and transported from one area to another? Think about how you support children in their use of mixed media (or multiple representational forms) to share ideas, thoughts and experiences, songs, dance, block-building, poems, letters, lists, and jokes with each other.



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## MULTIMODAL LITERACIES

### Children engage in multimodal meaning making.

*Educators ensure that children have access to the symbols and literacy practices of language, music, math, art, drama, and new technologies; they value and extend children's literate processes, products, and productions.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Engaging with the symbols and practices of language

Lee (2 years) visits his four-year-old brother's class often. He joins the older children at the writing table creating his own marks with scribbles and circles.

Adam (4 years) walks into the room early in the morning. He is wearing a bright red sweatshirt with CANADA printed across it. His friend George calls out loud, "Canada."

Anjali (3 years) runs over to his educator, Angie, saying, "Look Angie, look Angie, I made an A. Can you take a picture?" She had taken the music sticks and used them to create an "A" for her name. Angie takes a photograph of it to add to Anjali's collection of learning stories. *Passamaquoddy Children's Centre Inc.*

Given a large print alphabet puzzle to use with her three-year-olds, the educator, Angie, sets it in the corner to see what the children will do with it. Not ten minutes later, all six children are putting it together. They shout out letters for their own names and cooperate to find the right pieces for each letter. Angie decides to take the learning further and play a game with them. Each takes a turn finding every letter in their names while jumping from piece to piece to spell them out. By the end of the hour, five of the six children can spell their names and recognize letters from other children's names. *Passamaquoddy Children's Centre Inc.*



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

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Foreground **reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing,** and **representing** in daily experiences.

Ensure exposure to a range of texts, signs, labels, and images that are posted in children's environments — on clothes, footwear, toys, in picture books, directions, poems, songs, signs, maps, information, and story books.

Provide children with mark-making tools such as markers, crayons, chalk, pens, and pencils.

Help children recognize their names and talk in print by creating text with and for children: sing name songs; provide a name card for each child; write down their dictated stories; caption their drawings and paintings; record their poems or songs; write notes, lists, and recipes.

Encourage children to use letters from known words, such as their names, and to invent their own spellings.

Recognize that children's marks are meaningful; ask them to read their marks to you.



## MULTIMODAL LITERACIES

### Multimodal meaning making.

*Educators ensure that children have access to the symbols and literacy practices of language, music, math, art, drama and new technologies and they value and extend children's literate processes, products and productions.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Engaging with symbols and practices of music

The three and four-year-olds march their way to the playground beating their hand-made drums in time to their steps.

"Listen, listen, I have a new song, " Yahya (4 years) says as he proceeds to sing a story about dinosaurs. His educator, Mollie, overhears him singing and writes down his song on chart paper. At group time, Yahya teaches his new song to his friends. *UNB Children's Centre*

Engaging with symbols and practices of math

The children are invited to draw their eyes and place the colour on a bar graph with help from their educator. "But my eyes are blue-green," Alexis (4 years) states, and an extra category is added to the graph.

Mitchell (4 years) and Ahmed (4 years) help their educator, Jill, to hang up class mailboxes. They discover that there are only 18 mailboxes for the 20 children in the class. Jill provides the two boys with a class list and shows them how to check off names to find out which names are missing. *UNB Children's Centre*



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Foreground **singing, movement, music, and music-making** in everyday experiences.

Ensure that children learn a wide range of songs, chants, and finger rhymes to use in times of transition, planned groups, and spontaneous use.

Join children's spontaneous sounds, song making, and dance.

Experiment with various forms of songs: marches, lullabies, classical, folk, country — including songs from home.

Explore children's sounds and movements when inventing shakers and drums; invite them to plan their own designs and predict what kinds of sounds their materials will make.

Explore percussive instruments such as tambourines, triangles, bells and small drums.

Foreground **number, shape and spatial relations, measurement, graphing, patterning, and sorting** in daily experiences.

Encourage number recognition and representation through meaningful counting and number experiences: child's age, number of steps to door, numbers in the environment, graphing, measuring ingredients, and distributing food during snack time.

Encourage children to predict possibilities and engage in simple data collecting, tallying, and graphing to answer the questions they raise.

Engage children in the language of shape and spatial relations in everyday activities: over, under, beside, between; turns, slides, cylinders, squares, and cubes; furthest, nearest, etc.

Invite children to engage in patterning, matching, sorting, and collecting objects using personal and other rules; help them to recognize shapes and patterns in the environment.



## MULTIMODAL LITERACIES

### Children engage in multimodal meaning making.

*Educators ensure that children have access to the symbols and literacy practices of language, music, math, art, drama and new technologies and they value and extend children's literate processes, products and productions.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Engaging with symbols and practices of art

Sarah (2 years) explores painting outside. Using the paintbrush in small circular strokes, she carefully spreads orange paint onto both of her cheeks.

Hannah-Jo (3 years) creates a collection of cut-outs. Maria, her educator, provides a large piece of paper for her to mount her paper cut-outs. Hannah Jo's description of each creation is printed on the paper. *Unicorn Children's Centre Inc.*

Engaging with symbols and practices of drama

Jayme (3 years) is reading the picture book, *It looked like Spilt Milk*. Christa, her educator, listens to her as she rereads the book over and over, playfully recreating the story. Jayme then retells the story by moving felt pieces on a handmade felt board. *Unicorn Children's Centre Inc.*



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## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Foreground the artistic language of **colour, line, space, texture, shape, and pattern** in daily experiences.

Ensure children are exposed to a variety of artistic forms. Explore and create paintings, drawings, printmaking, rubbings, sculpting, block building, map making, collage — being sure to include both 2-D and 3-D creations. Talk about how patterns, shapes, lines, textures, and colours appear in everyday objects, both natural and constructed.

Model the language of product and process specific to the artistic tools used: paint, paintbrushes, pencils, garlic presses, rolling pins, cookie cutters. Talk about how materials change as a result of children's actions upon them.

Display children's work with care; talk with children and adults about their art products and processes.

Provide a playful space for children to act out their stories and explore the use of **speech, posture, and gesture** in performance.

Encourage dramatic play, puppet play, and felt board play, as avenues for re-telling stories and creating action games, verbal and non-verbal.

Invite children to dictate their stories as you write their words on the page.

Adapt the dramatic play areas of the room to link to children's daily experiences such as restaurant play, doctor's office, and going camping.



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## MULTIMODAL LITERACIES

### Children engage in multimodal meaning making.

*Educators ensure that children have access to the symbols and literacy practices of language, music, math, art, drama and new technologies, and they value and extend children's literate processes, products and productions.*

### For Reflection

What methods does your centre have for documenting children's language and literacy growth within the five sign systems? How does that documentation inform your responses to children's learning in individual and collective ways? Think about how adults and children honour children's invention of stories, songs, poems, maps, 3-D structures, and drama.



How are children supported in their multimodal literacy learning? Think about how you help children connect and extend talk, mark making, constructions, performances, and reading. How do parents and educators share their collective knowledge about language and literacy growth in which children use more than one sign system at once?



Ensure that the methods your centre uses for documenting children's language and literacy growth within the five sign systems honour their knowledge, skills, and playful exploration. Think about how adults and children honour children's invention of stories, songs, games, poems, maps, 3-D structures, and drama. How does that documentation inform your responses to children's learning in individual and collective ways?



They are exercising by Hannah-Jo

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## LITERATE IDENTITIES WITH/IN COMMUNITIES

### Children co-construct a range of literate identities.

*Educators ensure children's rights to participate in, create and critique the products and practices of a range of communities.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Creating texts reflective of family, local, and global literacies

The two-year-olds come into their room and notice a recipe hung at their table. "Yeah, we cook today," calls Hallie. *Just Kids Preschool Centre Inc.*

Vénel joins the group of four-year-olds. His mother lets the educators know that she volunteers for Healing Hands for Haiti. The educators invite her to talk with the children. Through a bake sale and penny collections, they raise money for musical instruments for children living in an orphanage in Haiti. *UNB Children's Centre*

Learning various local literacy practices within a range of communities

On a local outing the three-year-old children stop to watch the local clam diggers. Angie, their educator introduces the children to the man in the truck who weighs and buys the fresh clams. *Passamaquoddy Children's Centre Inc.*

Learning the uniqueness and similarities of their family's literacies and those of others

During community outings, Tammy and Leisa notice the two-year-olds' interest in trucks. Tammy invites her husband to bring in his transport truck for the children to tour. *Chatham Day Care Center Inc.*

Leisa notices the two-year-olds are fascinated by vehicles. She invites parents to share vehicle pictures from home. She prepares a photo album for children and their families to read and reread, ensuring every child's family is represented. *Chatham Day Care Center Inc.*



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Connect children's interests to local events and practices that they may not know about or could investigate deeply first hand.

Involve children in the literacies and tools of cooking, cleaning, carpentry, and gardening, including related print, pictures, and electronic media.

Plan for children to take part in community events where they can experience the language, art, music, math, and drama of groups of people within their communities. For example, consider: How do people weigh and measure in the community? What kind of dramatic or musical events take place? How do people practice spirituality?

Plan first-hand connections with adults in the community who share the children's passions and interests.

Respect children's responses when their family's languages and literacy practices are shared in the centre.

Recognize and include cultural products from the linguistic, artistic, dramatic, musical, and mathematical lives of diverse families. For example, invite families to share favorite stories, songs, spiritual practices, lullabies, books, recipes, rhymes, hobbies, celebrations, holidays, work, games and pastimes.



## LITERATE IDENTITIES WITH/IN COMMUNITIES

**Children co-construct a range of literate identities.**

*Educators ensure children's rights to participate in, create and critique the products and practices of a range of communities.*

### *For Reflection*

Become knowledgeable about the artistic and cultural life of your children, their families, your community, and beyond. Think about your own participation in events and communities — do you convey your excitement and interest to the children and build upon theirs?

Think about how you recognize children as readers, writers, musicians, artists, performers, and mathematicians in their own right in their daily lives. Documenting with photographs and drawings is a way of showing that children's representations are taken seriously while honouring the many identities of children and their families.



Laura

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## LITERATE IDENTITIES WITH/IN COMMUNITIES

### Children engage critically in the literacy practices of popular culture.

*Educators are informed about children's popular culture and support children's initiative to use this knowledge in a range of literacy practices and events.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Transporting and transforming the literacies of popular culture from home into the centre

A well-set-up science area and a Spiderman T-shirt set a spider study into motion in the three-year-old room. Interest is strong with four children wearing Spiderman shirts. *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*

Exploring various identities and characters embedded in popular culture

Noticing that the children are still engaging in dress-up play after Halloween, the educators purchase a variety of costumes on sale. The children play at being princesses, knights, princes, dragons, pirates, and Transformers for extended periods of time. Soon children dictate stories and illustrate their own books with their favourite characters. Fairy tales from the library extend the children's explorations of these characters. *UNB Children's Centre*

Growing in their capacity to ask critical questions about stereotypes represented in popular culture

Educators talk with a group of three and four-year-olds about what mommies and/or daddies do. The educators make a list and the children compare their list with the images in the picture books in the room, discovering that their list is broader than the images in the picture books.



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Learn about and engage in children's media and popular culture experiences from home.

Listen for the range of media interests that individual children experience in their home lives.

Acknowledge and build upon the media characters that children include in play and talk.

Document how children represent media and popular culture experiences in their play and talk.

Model and invite children to raise and explore cultural questions. For example, what do boys play with? What do girls play with? What makes a bad guy?

## *For Reflection*

Ask your families about children's favourite characters from TV, books, videos, video games and comics, and music or sport celebrities. Think about how taking on these different identities inform children's literate play, and can be extended to incorporate other sign systems.

Explore media representation by asking questions that challenge representations, such as, "What toys do you think both boys and girls would like to play with?" Or, "How come you think that only boys can be Ninjas?"



Mia



She is skating by Amelia

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## LITERATE IDENTITIES WITH/IN COMMUNITIES

### Children use the literacy tools of digital technologies.

*Educators are aware and supportive of children's growing knowledge of digital technologies.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Representing their experiences with technologies in everyday life

David (4 years) loves art. He asks to have the middle cut out of a paper plate. He then writes his name on the plate, holds it up to his face and says, "Say cheese!" He takes his educator's picture and has his taken as well. *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*

Hannah-Jo (3 years) is walking back and forth with a toy cell phone to her ear. She babbles in a conversational tone, pausing for the imagined speaker on the other end. *Unicorn Children's Centre Inc.*

Charlee (3 years) and Aidan (3 years) are playing a colour recognition game when instantly they begin using the coloured cards for telephones. Aidan signals that the cards are now telephones with, "Oh, hi Charlee, how are you today?" They carry on a conversation that lasts for ten minutes. *Passamaquoddy Children's Centre Inc.*

Accessing and using digital technologies

Noticing the children's interest in the camera, Leigh, their educator, teaches the children how to put the camera strap over their head and invites them to take their own photos to be put into a classroom book. The children describe the printed photos and Leigh records their words. *UNB Children's Centre*

"Can you take a close up picture of my building? I want you to take it from this side," Zack (4 years) directs his educator. *UNB Children's Centre*



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

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Recognize that children encounter digital literacies in their daily lives: they watch DVDs, play CDs and video games, send emails, use and play at using cell phones, MP3 players, iPods, and cameras.

Observe and learn how children respond to technological innovations. For example, how do they represent their digital experiences through play, art making, performance, numbers, and letters?

Involve children in the use of digital cameras, tape recorders, and computers as a way to document their learning, create texts, and explore web sites and CD Roms.

Produce media artifacts and documentation panels with children, such as digital photos of their buildings, paintings, play, or mathematical explorations.

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## LITERATE IDENTITIES WITH/IN COMMUNITIES

**Children use the literacy tools of digital technologies.**

*Educators are aware and supportive of children's growing knowledge of digital technologies.*

### *For Reflection*

What new technologies are available for use in your centre? How is this technology used to document children's learning, as a way to communicate thinking, interests and growth between home and centre?

How do educators, families, and children use technologies in and beyond the centre? Think about access to a range of cultural experiences and economic wealth.



Blaine

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EXPANSION OF

# DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



*Children experience socially inclusive and culturally sensitive environments in which consideration for others, inclusive, equitable, democratic and sustainable practices are enacted, and social responsibility is nurtured.*



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## EXPANSION OF



# DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

*Children experience socially inclusive and culturally sensitive environments in which consideration for others, inclusive, equitable, democratic and sustainable practices are enacted, and social responsibility is nurtured.*

### INCLUSIVENESS AND EQUITY

**Children appreciate their own distinctiveness and that of others.**

**Children engage in practices that respect diversity.**

**Children raise questions and act to change inequitable practices that exclude or discriminate.**

### DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES

**Children learn to be responsible and responsive members of the community.**

**Children practice democratic decision-making, making choices in matters that affect them.**

**Children practice fairness and social justice.**

### SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

**Children develop a sense of wonder and appreciation for the natural world.**

**Children learn to recognize and record patterns and relationships in nature.**

**Children develop a sense of appreciation for human creativity and innovation.**

**Children learn about natural resource development and manufacturing.**

**Children learn environmentally and socially responsible practices.**

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## INCLUSIVENESS AND EQUITY

### Children appreciate their own distinctiveness and that of others.

*Educators become aware of their own assumptions around differences within and across culture, race, gender, spirituality, ability, and socio-economic circumstances. They examine their practices to ensure inclusiveness and equity for children and their families.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Learning about their cultural heritages and those of other families in the centre and broader society

In Celebration of *Eid-UI Fitr*, Bilal (4 years), his sister, and their mother come to the centre to share this celebration with classmates. They come dressed in traditional clothing. Bilal's shoes are called *khussas*. The children are very interested, and Regan (4 years) is overheard saying, "I wish I had shoes like that." *UNB Children's Centre*

Becoming knowledgeable and confident in their various identities, including cultural, physical, racial, spiritual, linguistic, gender, social, and economic

When a group of four-year-olds realize that they attend different places of worship, Kimmy, the educator gathers stories from different faiths. Over the next several weeks, they visit different places of worship. *UNB Children's Centre*



Kaylee



My Mom by Asia



Michael



Liam



Eric



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Use culturally sensitive materials, activities, and documentation displays for children and their families to learn about their various cultural traditions, objects, practices, and celebrations.

Listen seriously to children's observations and comments about differences in skin, colour, gender, and family structure, and engage in ongoing conversations about similarities and differences.



### *For Reflection*

How do adults learn about and incorporate differing family values and practices into everyday routines at the centre? Think about how routines and practices such as eating and sleeping habits, discipline, play and learning differ between homes and the centre. How are home and centre practices discussed and adapted to ensure comfort and continuities for children?

How are centre policies supportive of families of all backgrounds and configurations? For example, think about how communication is addressed and how information forms invite families to tell the centre about family culture and parenting practices.

How do adults intervene when children are being disrespectful of others? Think about the assistance or comfort offered to the person targeted by the discriminatory act. Think about the opportunities provided for each child to explain what happened and to come up with respectful, alternative language and actions.

What opportunities exist for children to notice, think, and talk about differences and similarities? Think about responses to children's questions about physical, social, and cultural differences. How are dispositions of respect and curiosity modelled? Is time provided for children to talk with each other and with adults, to figure out respectful ways to interact?

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## INCLUSIVENESS AND EQUITY

### Children engage in practices that respect diversity.

*Educators ensure that materials and people representing the linguistic and cultural communities of New Brunswick and broader world are present in the children's daily lives.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Forming positive, inclusive relationships with all children

During lunch, children from different rooms eat together while interacting with old friends and developing new friendships. *100 Aker Woods Daycare*

Learning about differences including cultural, racial, physical, gender, spiritual, linguistic, social, and economic

At snack time Sam (4 years) says Jack's skin is the colour of chocolate milk. His educator talks about differences of skin colour, and adds multicultural skin-tone markers to the drawing-writing centre.

Learning about and engaging with communities representative of New Brunswick society (First Nations, English and French; established immigrant families, and new Canadians)

The educator knows that none of the children's families are members of the local fishing community so she arranges for her three-year-olds to visit the local fish plant.

Learning about, and participating in, projects that help others – locally and globally

It's Christmas and the children bring mittens to donate to charity. Mia (4 years) brings in several pairs. "This one is big," she says, "so Mommies can have some too." She proudly hangs them up on the centre's mitten tree. When the children walk to the depot to put the mittens into the collection basket, they talk with their educators about how it feels to help people, and how it would feel if they didn't have mittens themselves. *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Organize time, space, tasks, and materials to ensure opportunities for all children to engage with peers in diverse groupings, e.g. gender, race, class, age, linguistic, physical, and abilities.

Consider the images, books, videos, and artwork displayed around your room and the ways in which they represent difference.

Include markers and construction paper that reflect multiple choices for skin colour.

Invite parents, individuals, and groups that contribute to community life into the centre.

Include images, books, videos, and artwork representative of a range of cultural-linguistic groups residing in New Brunswick.

Encourage children to bring their personal experiences of social justice to discussions and help them plan for action in local and global projects.

## *For Reflection*

Do adults take care to avoid singling out children? Think about whether differences are considered all the time, rather than in relation to single, special events. How do you integrate rather than isolate multicultural aspects of learning?

How might adults at the centre build relationships with the community? Think about possible volunteers — students, retirees? Are there local artists, not-for-profit staff, business people, community activists, etc., who might want to establish closer ties with an early childhood centre?

How do adults ensure that multicultural events are integral to the curriculum rather than provided as add-ons? Think about whether educators are familiar with different religious customs and observances. Do adults provide alternative views on national, and/or provincial holidays?

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## INCLUSIVENESS AND EQUITY

### Children raise questions and act to change inequitable practices that exclude or discriminate.

*Educators take children's questions, comments and actions about difference seriously and help children to engage in inclusive and equitable practices.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Recognizing and challenging inequitable practices and situations

After story time, Sally (4 years) and Jonathan (4 years) head over to the block corner. The educator, knowing that they have been there every day and that other children would like an opportunity, asks them for their second choice.

Negotiating equitable solutions to problems that arise from differences, including cultural, racial, spiritual, physical, linguistic, developmental, gender, social, and economic

Bonnie (4 years) enters the block corner and Paul (4 years) says, "You can't come in here we are playing Ninjas." Bonnie replies, "Girls can be Ninjas too," and begins to play.

Standing up for themselves and others in a fair manner

Chris (2 years) is playing with a toy and Carol (2 years) grabs the toy from him. "No, Carol," says Chris, and puts his hand up and says, "Stop!"



Me and my ponytail by MacKenzie



Me with a shooting star



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Observe and listen carefully to help children identify and rectify inequalities; challenge and name behaviours that exclude and discriminate; help children to work through their problems and return to the group as contributing members.

Challenge children's stereotypes. For example, introduce them to children's books that portray males and females in non-traditional roles.

Encourage children to be assertive in speaking up for themselves and others.

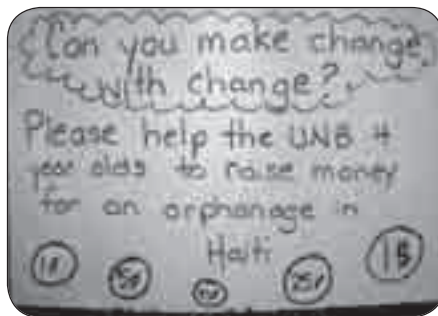
Ensure equitable access to materials and social groupings for all children in the centre.

## *For Reflection*

How do you learn about children's assumptions about social and cultural differences and how are these assumptions affirmed, extended, challenged? Think about how children's assumptions can be uncovered through the use of role playing and children's literature.

Are daily routines, curricula, and practices in the setting reviewed regularly, and revised and/or adapted to be more inclusive of all children?

How do you ensure that documentation of children's learning is recorded in multiple ways? Think about whether developmental milestones are used to marginalize and label particular children and if so, how this can be corrected.



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## DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES

### Children learn to be responsible and responsive members of the community.

*Educators use everyday experiences to model caring, helping, and respecting, and they name acts of kindness.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Showing sympathy and empathy for others

Robert (5 years) and Cassidy (4 years) are playing in the kitchen centre when Cassidy trips over a doll on the floor. Robert goes right over to her and helps her up. "Are you alright?" he asks. "Yep," Cassidy says, as they continue with their play. *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*

Giving help, comfort, and encouragement, and valuing others' contributions

Lane (2 years) is playing in the water washing the trucks. He is having lots of fun until "Ooh, ooh" says Lane. The truck's wheel fell off. Kionna hears what Lane says and comes right over. "What happen?" she asks. Lane replies, "Broke." Kionna says, "Me fix!" She puts out her hand and takes the tire to get a closer look. Kionna then asks Lane for the truck. "Me fix it." *Chatham Day Care Center Inc.*

Respecting the materials, equipment and spaces shared with others

A group of four-year-olds have made a stable out of a large cardboard box. They are concerned about leaving it in the play space they share with the afternoon class. They decide to leave a note inviting the afternoon children to use it but to follow the rule they made, "Only two at a time in the stable." *UNB Children's Centre*



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Support children as they initiate and maintain relationships, practise kindness and inclusiveness, reach out to help victims, and show concern for the well-being of others.

Model asking for and giving help, comfort, and encouragement.

Celebrate children's initiative to support one another.

Invite children's support for each other through words, touch, and actions.

Maintain an environment that is orderly, with materials in good repair and arranged in such a way that children can help each other find and put them away.



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## DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES

**Children learn to be responsible and responsive members of the community.**

*Educators use everyday experiences to model caring, helping, and respecting, and they name acts of kindness.*

### *For Reflection*

Are children supported as they initiate and maintain relationships with each other and the adults in their everyday worlds? Think about ways to facilitate friendships and collaborations.

Do educators encourage and support children who act with empathy and sympathy? Think about children who reach out to victims, practise kindness, inclusiveness, and show concern for the well-being of others.

Are the contributions of each child valued, and is appreciation shown for many views? Think about how you listen and respond to all children.

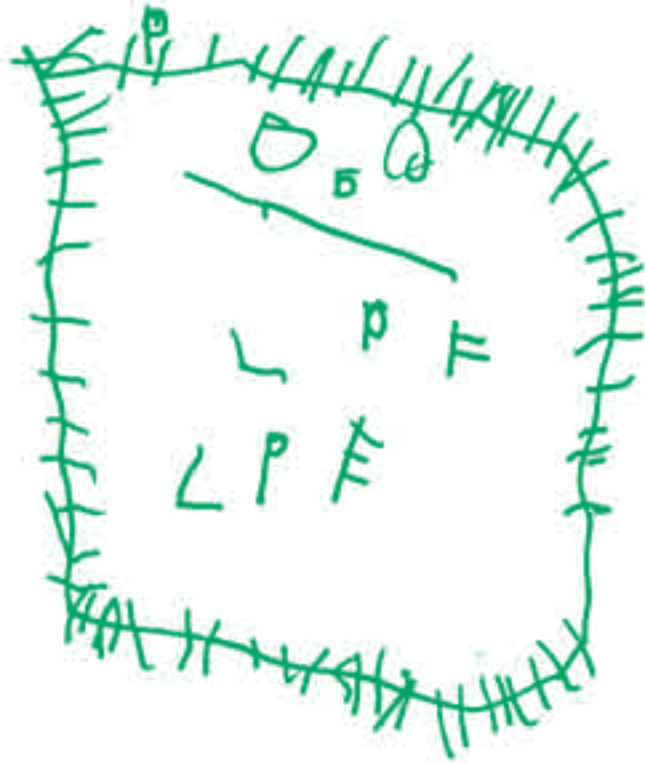
How do adults model empathy, sympathy, a sense of fair play, and curiosity about difference? Think about opportunities that exist during dramatic play or outdoor play, or during conversations or storybook reading time.



*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle by Sam*

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Lana



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## DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES

**Children practice democratic decision-making, making choices in matters that affect them.**

*Educators provide a forum for all voices and model listening as well as speaking.*

### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Beginning to understand their rights and responsibilities, and those of others

John (4 years) is upset as he tells his educator that Meg (4 years) has knocked down his building. His educator asks, "Have you talked to Meg to tell her how you feel?" John shakes his head, "No," but with the educator's support, returns to talk to Meg. Meg listens to what John is saying and then says, "I thought you were through playing with the blocks and I wanted a turn."

Voicing their preferences and opinions, and developing an awareness of others' points of view

Patty asks the infants and toddlers, "Do you want to sing a song?" or, "Do you want to sing the frog song?" Ryan and Alaynna say, "Frog". With action songs, some of them start doing the hand actions of the songs they want to sing. They say "Hello" to ask for the Hello song. *Passamaquoddy Children's Centre Inc.*

Questioning, co-constructing, and reworking rules and procedures

Michael (4 years) and Jadon (4 years) are playing in the two-person spot when Isaac (4 years) asks if he can play too. "No, two people, you can't play here," Michael answers. Ryanna (4 years) speaks up and asks Angela, the educator, "Can we try three people today so that Isaac can play too?" Angela says, "We can try it and see how it works out." This is now the rule for the centre on a regular basis. *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Provide strategies and a safe environment for all children to express their ideas; support face-to-face conversations and remind children there may be many more than “two sides to every story.”

Reframe situations of conflict as possibilities for learning; for example, invite group discussion or re-enact situations.

Pay attention to gesture, vocalizations, movements, words, and facial expressions. Even the very youngest children have something to say.

Look to children’s drawings and the roles they take on in dramatic play as a way to uncover children’s voices.

Help children practise listening to what others have to say.

Use everyday situations involving sharing, access, and responsibilities to build discussions, elicit ideas, and reach decisions regarding rules and procedures; revisit decisions to see how they are working out.

## *For Reflection*

How do educators listen to children, including those who are non-verbal? Think about facial expressions, movements, and tone of utterances as part of listening.

How are beliefs and practices re-examined in response to differing perspectives? Think about colleagues, local customs, families, and popular culture.

In what ways are families and the local community involved in decisions regarding the programs, procedures, and policies? Think about community cultural practices, local livelihoods and history.

How are children engaged in decision making in matters that concern them, such as the establishment of rules, rituals, routines, and processes? Think about the day-to-day opportunities for children to “have a say” in such things as eating, napping, and sharing.



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## DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES

### Children practice fairness and social justice.

*Educators help children to understand other points of view and to act in support of those who need help.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Voicing and negotiating their understandings of fairness and unfairness

Lana (3 years) is upstairs for a visit to the preschool room when she notices some toys she hasn't had the opportunity to use. "Hey," she says, "How come that's never downstairs? I want to play with that too!" Katie, her educator, asks her what we should do. "I think we have to take it downstairs too... after I have a turn here."  
*Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*

Identifying issues and becoming socially active in their local communities

A group of four-year-olds and their families collect food for the local food bank during the month of January because supplies are often low. *UNB Children's Centre*



Blaine



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Listen to and support children as they practise fairness and question unfairness; observe their interactions to ensure fairness.

Encourage children to bring their personal experiences of social injustice to discussions and help them plan for local action.

Use literature to discuss social issues such as homelessness and poverty.

### *For Reflection*

Does the setting ensure equitable access to materials and social worlds for children? Think about race, class, gender, age, and family background.

Do educators challenge behaviours that exclude or discriminate?



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## SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

### Children develop a sense of wonder and appreciation for the natural world.

*Educators provide outdoor time and access to the natural world and wild places, and share in the joy at being outside.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Bringing all their senses to exploring nature — plants, animals, people, landscapes, weather and habitat

The children at Passamaquoddy spend a lot of time on the beach in good weather, beach-combing, throwing rocks in the water, telling stories about what could be under the ocean, counting boats and buoys, and generally taking great pleasure in this outdoor environment. *Passamaquoddy Children's Centre Inc.*

Taking pleasure in natural beauty

Maddison (3 years) and Vanessa (4 years) are going outside. The yard is full of snow and icy surfaces. Maddison exclaims, "Hey look over there, the stuff is sparkling!" Vanessa responds, "Yeah, it looks shiny but it's ice. Let's try to get some." The girls try to scrape off the ice and capture the sparkles. *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*

Connecting to and respecting the natural world

While out walking the children count the bird nests in the trees. "I think we should try to reach one and take it back to show Erin," says Alyssa (4 years). "No! That is somebody's house!" says Jadon (4 years). "We have to leave it and let them come back cause they went away for the winter." The children decide to leave it and recreate one back at the centre. *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Affirm and encourage children's sensory exploration; focus attention on details in nature and talk about sensations as children experience them; share in the pleasure of their discovery.

Talk with children about what they find to be beautiful or not, and help them to share their beautiful finds with others through sketches, maps, and collections.

Ensure children have contact with adults who value and are curious about nature.

Locate natural and wild spaces in the vicinity to explore and discuss.

Model and require respectful behaviour towards the natural environment, explaining to children why this respect is important.

## *For Reflection*

How will you model a sense of wonder for nature and wild places? Think about places in your locality where children can explore the natural world, and your own level of comfort and discomfort with various aspects of the natural world.

Who could you invite from the community to help children develop a sense of wonder and appreciation for the natural world? Think about gardeners, biologists, conservationists, artists, farmers...



*A ladybug by Adam*



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## SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

### Children learn to recognize and record patterns and relationships in nature.

*Educators revisit natural and wild places with children to observe nature over time, providing tools and resources for recording ongoing investigations.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Noticing regularity, repetition and changes in nature

Robert (5 years) says to his educator, "Hey, Angela, look. I can reach! I'm getting bigger. I was eating my vegetables." He reaches to the top of the mantel where he couldn't reach before. He then goes to the walls and windows and says, "I can reach this too. See how far? I got bigger." Robert seems very proud of himself. Angela takes him to the growth chart to measure how much he has grown since the fall. Other children join them to be measured. *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*

Learning to systematically observe, name, and record natural phenomena

The children (3 and 4 years) are keenly interested in the growth of an Amaryllis, marking it carefully each day on a stick their educator has set in the pot alongside the plant.

Raising questions about changes, connections, and causes, and undertaking first-hand investigations

During a circle time discussion about snow, water, and ice, Angela, the educator asks, "How do you think snow is made?" Jason (4 years) quickly says, "The snow comes down 'cause the clouds are breaking up. The clouds suck up water so the snow gets warm again." Angela suggests they bring in some snow to melt, to figure out how the clouds suck up the water. *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Encourage children to look for patterns in nature by providing time, tools, and safe places for children to observe and explore.

Encourage children to look, listen, touch, taste and smell as they carefully observe nature.

Assist children in recording their observations with the use of pictures, photographs, tape recorders, sketch pads, charts and maps; encourage children to share these recordings with others and use for later reflection.

Challenge children to investigate answers to the questions they raise; solicit and respect their ideas and theories, and encourage them to further their investigations by offering your own.

## *For Reflection*

How do you support children's investigations into the natural world? Think about experiences, information books, and videos that cultivate children's curiosity and tools that enable them to collect and record information.

What role models do your children have for systematic investigation of the natural world? Think about experts in your community — biological, earth, and environmental scientists — and multi-media materials.



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## SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

### **Children develop a sense of appreciation for human creativity and innovation.**

*Educators provide opportunities for children to explore the constructed world and prompt discussions about function and beauty.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Bringing all their senses to exploring the constructed world

During a project on doors, Regan (3 years) and Marie (4 years) check out the hinges on a church door on their daily walk. Their educator, Leigh, encourages them to look closely at the way the hinges are fastened to the door. *UNB Children's Centre*

Learning to appreciate beauty, creativity and innovation in art, architecture, and technologies

Knowing that a child's family is building a new house, the educator, Maria, takes the class on a tour around town to photograph new buildings and construction sites. Maria then posts the pictures in the block corner. *Unicorn Children's Centre Inc.*

Exploring the mechanical advantage of tools and machinery

Peter (2 years) is fascinated by the three-hole punch. With support from his educator he is learning to lean on the lever hard enough to make holes.

Designing and evaluating technological solutions

Roberta (3 years) uses a dump truck in the sandbox to make a hill, carefully grading a road and testing it out with a small car.



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Focus children's attention on the details of the constructed world around them; encourage sensory exploration and share in the pleasure of their discoveries.

Expose children to a range of architectural and art forms; talk with them about what they find interesting, beautiful, or ugly about a particular event or artifact; help them record what they see by using photographs, sketches, diagrams, and maps; share their findings and opinions.

Provide access to tools and mechanical devices that children can safely use in their play, such as staplers and hand-operated eggbeaters.

Introduce tools that children can use in supervised activities, such as woodworking.

Visit sites where large machinery is used so that children can observe the impacts.

Provide books and play props that replicate large machines, such as dump trucks for sand play.

Provide a range of natural and manufactured materials for children to use in their constructions and help them choose appropriate materials for a task.

Encourage children to plan and talk about their designs, and to replicate them in more than one medium: for example, draw, then build or photograph a block building.

## *For Reflection*

How do you encourage children to think about goodness of fit? Think about helping them to choose the best material for the job from a selection of materials; discuss the advantages of using one tool, material or object, or taking one approach over another



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## SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

### Children learn about natural resource development and manufacturing.

*Educators cultivate interest in the local development of natural resources*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Making connections between raw materials and finished products

On a visit to a local farm, Robert (3 years) and Emily (3 years) watch the cows being milked. Emily says, "So that's where milk comes from!"

Developing an appreciation for the work of others

While at the orchard, one of the workers takes a group of three-year-old children on the wagon. She explains the process of growing apples and operating the orchard. The children explore and taste different foods, such as sweet potatoes, squash, corn, apples, and pumpkins.

*Unicorn Children's Centre Inc.*

Learning that different approaches to resource development and production have different impacts

A year after beginning to compost their garbage, Jill, the educator, and the four-year-olds use the compost to plant their seeds in the spring. *UNB Children's Centre*



## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Take children to local sites of manufacturing and processing; comment on “raw materials” being changed or packaged in the “production line.”

Help children to represent their visits to manufacturing and processing sites using maps, drawings, tally charts, graphs, photographs, and print.

Provide and read information and story books that show and tell how things are made.

Invite workers from a range of local industries to show and tell what they do.

Model and require a respectful stance to work/workers.

Provide resources and experiences that enable children to make comparisons between methods of food production and resource development.

## *For Reflection*

How do children have opportunities for first-hand learning about natural resource development? Think about local crafts, fishing, hunting, farming, forestry, mining, tourism, and manufacturing industries.

How can you help children understand different approaches to resource development? Think about how natural resources were developed locally in the past, and how they are developed in other locations.

Think about inviting grandparents, elderly people, historians, archivists, and people who practice sustainable techniques to show and tell the children about them.



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## SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

### Children learn environmentally and socially responsible practices.

*Educators provide opportunities for children to participate in communities that engage in environmentally friendly practices.*

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LEARNING

#### SAMPLE NARRATIVES

Reducing consumption

When Sid (4 years) is finished washing his hands, he leaves the water on. Vanessa (4 years) says, "That's not very nice, you should turn off the water." She turns off the water and says, "We have to save some water and not waste it or we will not have any left for other people." *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*

Reusing and recycling

While making snack together, the children empty a couple of boxes. As the educator, Angela, starts to take the boxes to the garbage, Jason (4 years) says, "Hey, we can put those in the art centre." *Kings County Kids Daycare Centre*

Participating in the care of plants and domestic animals, and stewardship of local plant, insect, and animal life

Amy (3 years) notices that the bird feeder is empty and asks her educator to help refill it.

Participating in local restoration and regeneration projects

Angela (3 years) helps dig the centre's garden ready for the "butterfly and bird plants." Jan (9 months) watches from her stroller.



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## SUGGESTED PROVISIONS AND PRACTICES

Inform, model, and remind each other about energy and water conservation.

Use recycled toys and paper, and discuss consumption issues such as excessively packaged products.

Collect waste materials for collage and construction: paper off-cuts, sawdust, old materials, as well as other beautiful stuff.

Make provisions for children's involvement in centre-based and community recycling programs.

Model respect for living things and support children in their efforts to care for them.

Collaborate with community experts to restore a local habitat; ensure that children's interests, ideas, and strengths are considered so that they can make a significant contribution.

Revisit restoration sites often to document changes with drawings, paintings, tally charts, graphs, and photographs.

## *For Reflection*

How do you address children's questions about environmental degradation, pollution, and endangered species? Think about involving local experts such as scientists and environmentalists, and using picture books and multi-media resources.

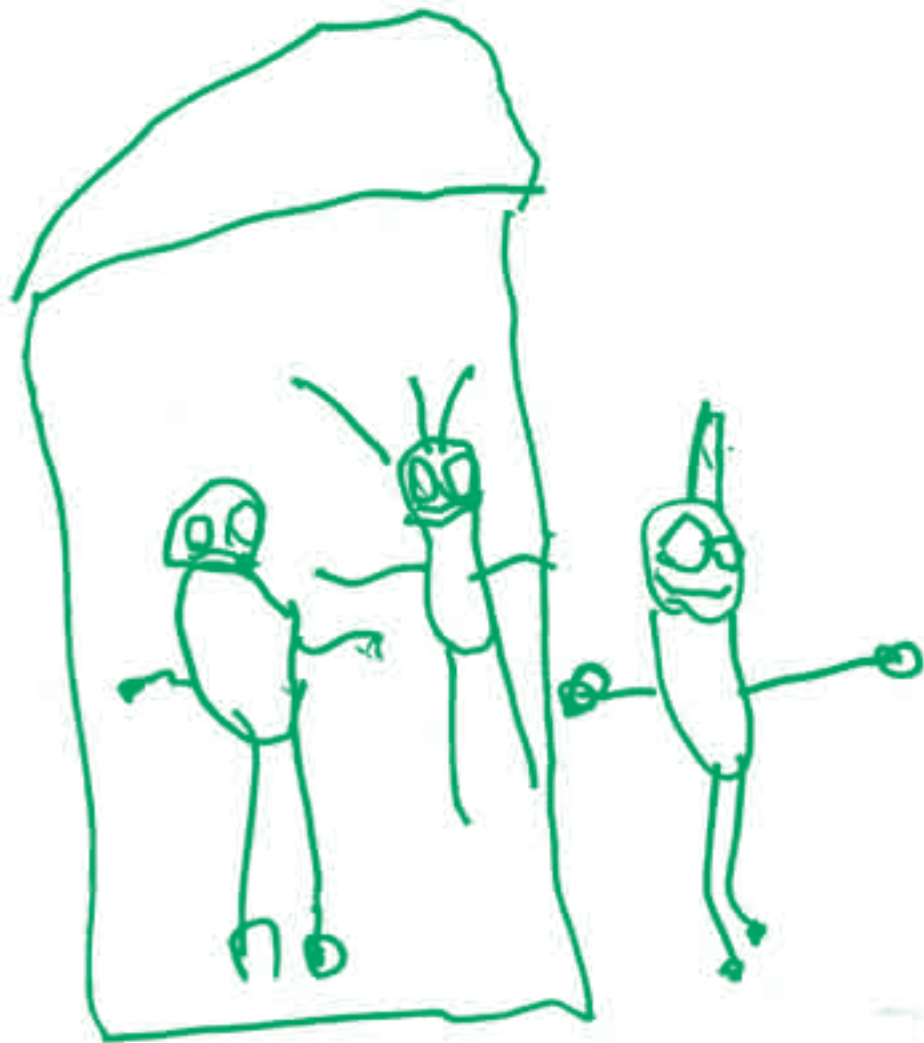
How can you include diverse viewpoints about sustainable futures? Think about how your own beliefs are affected by your particular local and cultural beliefs.

How do you involve children in the care of animal and plant life? Think about daily responsibilities, such as watering houseplants, tending gardens, and feeding domestic animals, and community projects, such as habitat restoration for birds and butterflies.



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## SECTION FIVE

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Defining Exemplary Curricula

Bibliography



Laura

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# DEFINING EXEMPLARY CURRICULA

## *Current Context for Early Learning and Care*

Since May 2005, the New Brunswick Department of Social Development has been working with the Early Childhood Centre at the University of New Brunswick to develop this curriculum framework for infants, toddlers, and young children aged three and four. Ideally, the framework is suited for use in home and centre-based childcare. It also is intended to serve as a source of information about children’s learning and care for parents, and for staff in other programs and services designed for young children and their families.

Given the current emphasis, worldwide, on early childhood policies, programs, and practices, there is an extensive body of literature about what constitutes exemplary curricula for infants, toddlers, and young children.<sup>57</sup> Drawing upon the work of numerous researchers and curriculum developers, a common international theme for curriculum development focuses upon broad based learning goals and the cultural and social contexts of children’s lives as the means to exemplary practices.

## *Contemporary Research and Theory*

John Bennett has reviewed practices, policies, and curriculum from more than twenty countries for the OECD. He and his research team specifically contrast a social pedagogical approach with a pre-primary approach.<sup>58</sup> The pre-primary approach focuses on preparing children for school, often neglecting the complexity of children’s daily experiences and social interactions. A social pedagogical approach recognizes the context of children’s learning and the importance of attending to the todayness of children’s lives and their diverse personal, social, and cultural experiences. A curriculum grounded in this approach has the simultaneous effect of promoting overall well-being and capacity for learning.

57 For detailed references see Bibliography.

58 OECD, *Starting Strong*; OECD, *Starting Strong II*.

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Canadian discussions about appropriate curricula for early learning and care have taken place in the *Interaction* journal<sup>59</sup> published by the Canadian Child Care Federation. *Interaction*, a highly accessible Canadian Early Learning and Care publication, presented several exemplary curriculum frameworks including *Te Whāriki* developed in New Zealand; Reggio Emilia emerging out of Italy; High Scope from the United States; Experiential Education (EXE) from Flanders, and the Swedish preschool curriculum. Not surprisingly, these curricula have also been commended and researched in numerous publications in the academic literature.<sup>60</sup> Exemplary curricula also include the New South Wales curriculum, *The Practice of Relationships; the Tasmanian curriculum* referred to as *Essential Connections: A Guide to Young Children's Learning*; and the Finnish curriculum, *National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education in Finland*. All of these emphasize the diverse personal, social, and cultural contexts of children's lives, and the importance of warm, caring relationships for children's well-being and early learning.

Finnish researcher Eeva Hujala<sup>61</sup> proposes a curriculum model based on such a contextual orientation of children's learning. Within this model, there are three overarching components to address when developing curricula for infants, toddlers, and young children. These include a conception of children as active participants in their own learning, the quality of the children's interactions with others, and the role of the teacher as the designer of an active growth environment for children. These components can be found in many contemporary curricula recognized as exemplary.

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59 Crossman, Lana, ed, *What's new in Curriculum*, *Interaction* 18, 4 (2005), <http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca/publications/documents/Winter%202005%20Eng.pdf>.

60 OECD, *Starting Strong*.

61 Eeva Hujala, The curriculum for early learning in the context in society, *International Journal of Early Years Education* 10, 2 (2002).



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### *Conception of Children as Active Participants:*

- o The Swedish curriculum is conceived as a values and norms based curriculum. Democracy and opportunities for democratic actions on the part of the child, as well as opportunities for the child to have influence are an integral part of the learning process. Children's learning is connected explicitly to the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the adults and the norms and values of the Swedish society.<sup>62</sup>
- o All the exemplary curricula reviewed hold that the children actively construct their own learning. Experiential Education (EXE), a model of education developed and researched in Flanders, found that effective learning for young children takes place by attending to the child's well-being and involvement. EXE theory and practice suggest that the most valuable way to assess the quality of any educational setting is to focus on two dimensions; the degree of the child's emotional well-being and the level of involvement.<sup>63</sup>



*Snowman girl by Morgan*

62 Swedish National Agency for Education, *Childcare in Sweden* (Skolverket: Stockholm, 2005), [www.skolverket.se/sb/d/354/a/944](http://www.skolverket.se/sb/d/354/a/944).

63 OECD. *OECD Country Note - Early childhood education and care policy in the Flemish community of Belgium*, (OECD: Paris, 2000), <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/47/40/2479277.pdf>.



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### *Teacher-Child and Child-Child Interactions*

- o Through the practice of attentive listening to young children at play, the Reggio Emilia teachers — early childhood educators collaborating with art educators — co-construct curriculum with the young children in their educational care. This research and thinking indicate that young children communicate more easily through graphic representation and sustained dramatic play than through print. Dramatic play and the arts play a large role in the literary practices of young children.
- o The Leuven Involvement Scale (associated with EXE) assesses the child's level of involvement with his or her environment. Action strategies serve as a self-evaluation tool for teachers to assess how successfully they engage the child's interests. This Flanders model, highly researched and extensively implemented in Belgium, also serves as the foundation for research, structure, and programming in the Early Education Excellence Centres in the United Kingdom.<sup>64</sup> Laevers proposes that the quality of a child's activity can be recognized by concentration and persistence and is characterized by motivation, fascination, and implication.<sup>65</sup>
- o In a study reported by Bengt-Erik Andersson,<sup>66</sup> the quality of the interactions of the staff with the children was found significantly improved when the staff had time to meet and discuss the goals of the curriculum in relation to the learning of the children. The Swedish curriculum goals, in this case, serve as a self-evaluation guide for actively involving children in developing collective attitudes.

64 Christine Pascal and Tony Bertram, *The education of the young child and their teachers in Europe* (ERIC: Washington, 1992); Christine Pascal and Tony Bertram, *The education of the young child and their teachers in Europe*, *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 1, 2 (1993); Christine Pascal and Tony Bertram, *The Effective Early Learning Project* (EECERA Conference: Helsinki, 1999); Elaine Dupree, Tony Bertram, and Christine Pascal, *Listening to children's perspectives of their early childhood setting* (European Conference on Quality in Early Childhood Settings: Alkmaar, 2001).

65 Ferre Laevers, *Defining and Assessing quality in early childhood education* (Leuven University Press: Leuven, 1994).

66 Bengt-Erik Andersson, *What is a good day care?* (Plan-it Quality Conference: Regina, 2005).



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- o There is an emerging body of research on child-child interactions, conceived in the literature as pro-social behaviour, friendships, playful actions, and togetherness.<sup>67</sup> Children are believed to begin to form friendships as infants. Activity, not just proximity to other children, is a crucial condition for children to begin developing friendships, and social-emotional learning that occurs when engaging with a range of playmates.<sup>68</sup>

### *Teacher as Designer of the “Active Growth Environment”*

- o In the Reggio Emilia approach, the environment is carefully planned. In her book *Authentic Childhood*, Susan Fraser writes: “Creating an environment that acts as a third teacher supports the perspective that knowledge is constructed not in isolation but within the social group.”<sup>69</sup>
- o Documentation of the children’s activities demonstrates and facilitates further co-construction of curricula and learning, and the concept of the environment as a third teacher. Parent and community involvement are key features of this approach.<sup>70</sup>
- o The American High/Scope Curriculum, designed in the 1960s for children and families marginalized by mainstream society, requires that teachers systematically create ‘key experiences’ for children from a set of guiding principles and practices. These experiences include sustained activities in creative representation, language and literacy, creative and social relations, movement and music, and logical reasoning.<sup>71</sup>

67 Eileen Ledger, Anne B. Smith, and Peter Rich, Friendships over the transition from early childhood centre to school, *International Journal of Early Years Education* 8, 1 (2000); Sofia Vgitiidou, Peer culture and friendship relationships as contexts for the development of young children’s pro-social behaviour, *International Journal of Early Years Education* 9, 2 (2001); Ulf Janson, Togetherness and diversity in pre-school play, *International Journal of Early Years Education* 9, 2 (2001).

68 Judith Dunn, *The Beginnings of Social Understandings*.

69 Susan Fraser, *Authentic Childhood*, 55.

70 Hugh Foot et al, Pre-school education: Parents’ preferences, knowledge and expectations, *International Journal of Early Years Education* 8, 3 (2000); Hugh Foot et al, Parental participation and partnership in pre-school provision, *International Journal of Early Years Education* 10, 1 (2002); Liz Brooker, Learning how to learn: Parental ethnotheories and young children’s preparation for school, *International Journal of Early Years Education* 11, 2 (2003); Carol R. Keyes, A way of thinking about parent/teacher partnerships for teachers, *International Journal of Early Years Education* 10, 3 (2002); Maggie Robson and Kathy Hunt, An innovative approach to involving parents in the education of their early year’s children, *International Journal of Early Years Education* 7, 2 (1999).

71 High/Scope, Curriculum (High/Scope: Ypsilanti, 2008), <http://secure.highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=1>.



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- o The Tasmanian curriculum for young children incorporates a values and purposes based approach with essential learnings and outcomes. Rather than being somewhat subject based as is High/Scope, the Tasmanian curriculum proposes essential learning categories: communication, personal learning, social responsibility, and world futures. Thinking is considered to be the all-encompassing category.<sup>72</sup>
- o The *Te Whāriki* curriculum is based upon an integration of principles and learnings strands and examples of experiences for children. Outcomes and questions for teacher reflection are an integral part of the curriculum framework, the role of the teacher in the design of the social and physical environment is key.<sup>73</sup>
- o The work of Laevers and Moons presents an inventory of ten types of initiatives by the educator that facilitates children's well-being and involvement.<sup>74</sup>



Seanna

72 Department of Education, Tasmania, *Framework 1 & 2 overview, Essential Learnings Framework* (Department of Education: Tasmania, 2004), <http://www.itag.education.tas.gov.au/references.htm#ELresources>.

73 Ministry of Education, New Zealand, *Te Whāriki: Early Childhood Curriculum* (Learning Media Education: Wellington, 1996), [www.minedu.govt.nz/web/downloadable/dl3567\\_v1/whariki.pdf](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/web/downloadable/dl3567_v1/whariki.pdf).

74 Ferre Laevers, *The project Experiential Education: Concepts and experiences at the level of context, process and outcome* (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven: Leuven, 1999), [www.ecd.govt.nz/publications/convention/Laevers.pdf](http://www.ecd.govt.nz/publications/convention/Laevers.pdf).

## DEFINING EXEMPLARY CURRICULA

### *Curriculum Issues*

John Bennett<sup>75</sup> suggests that current conceptions of curriculum for young children include:

- o Statement of principles and values to guide staff working with infants, toddlers, and young children.
- o Short outline of content and outputs of the dispositions, values, knowledge, and skills that children can be expected to learn at different ages and across broad developmental goals.
- o Pedagogical guidelines outlining the process through which children learn.
- o A summary of program standards, that is, how curriculum can be supported by structural quality features such as ratio and qualifications.

In common with other contemporary curriculum scholars, Bennett's conception assumes that the official curriculum document be a curriculum framework that enables early childhood educators to structure daily learning experiences responsive to children's individual, social, and cultural experiences.

The importance of a carefully planned environment and the relationship between environment and quality of curriculum enactment is pervasive in all the literature reviewed. Perhaps the environmental scales most familiar to people in the field are the ECERS-R and ITERS-R scales developed by Harms, Cryer, and Clifford.<sup>76</sup> These scales have been utilized and adapted in Canada through the *You Bet I Care* study.<sup>77</sup> The ECERS scales have also been adapted in Sweden by Mona Andersson<sup>78</sup> to assess the environment and the quality of the interactions. These scales provide a key starting point for discussions on high quality physical and social environments for infants, toddlers, and young children.

75 John Bennett, *Starting Strong: The persistent division between care and education*, *Journal of Early Childhood Research* 1 (2003).

76 Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford, and Debby Cryer, *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition*; Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford, and Debby Cryer, *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition*.

77 Gillian Doherty et al, *You Bet I Care!* (University of Guelph: Guelph, 2000).

78 Mona Andersson, *The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) as a tool in evaluating and improving quality in preschools* (Stockholm Institute of Education Press: Stockholm, 1999).



## DEFINING EXEMPLARY CURRICULA

### *Related Issues*

#### *The expansion of literacy practices*

Concerns about the push for literacy, narrowly defined, have raised the issue of how we define literacy in the early years. Envisioning a broad and balanced curriculum calls for a reconceptualization of literacies that includes a range of embedded communication practices — multimodal literacies, and the hundred languages of children,<sup>79</sup> and the expressive arts.

#### *Quality outdoor environments in home and centre based care*

Concerns about well being for children and adults have led to a serious examination of opportunities for exercise and the development of positive attitudes towards outdoor recreation. There is a call for playground development, accessible community programs, and an increased valuing of outdoor play and being in the outdoors.

#### *The need for inclusion/responses to diversity*

Concerns about the marginalization of children with special needs, aboriginal children, children living in poverty, children of rural, immigrant, and refugee families have raised issues of how we define inclusion. In order to practice inclusivity, there is a call for a critical re-thinking of the language and practices of curricula.

#### *Relative roles and responsibilities of parents and practitioners*

Concerns about parents in the workforce, absentee parents, and the professionalization of child-rearing, raise questions about the relative roles and responsibilities of parents and caregivers. To honour diverse parental knowledge and circumstances, and the professional knowledge of early childhood practitioners, there is a call for a range of practices to enable parent-professional collaboration.

79 Carolyn Edwards, Lella Gandini, and George Forman, eds, *The Hundred Languages of Children: The Reggio Emilia Approach Advanced Reflections* (Ablex Publishing: Greenwich, 1998).



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### *Co-construction of professional development with early childhood educators*

Concerns about the status and structure of early childhood education and care have raised questions about the educational opportunities and qualifications of early childhood educators. With all stakeholders, there is a need to address the devaluing of educators and their work with children in order to co-construct flexible and diverse professional possibilities.

### *Integration of services*

Concerns about fragmentation of children's experiences have raised the issue of the need for integrated and seamless services for children and families. In order to provide a more coherent and continuous experience, there is a call for inter-sectoral collaboration and consultation.



A man in a spaceship





## DEFINING EXEMPLARY CURRICULA

### *In Closing*

The development of a curriculum framework that is potentially usable for parents and all family and child organizations — including child care centres, family daycare, family resource centres, early learning centres, children centres, and early intervention — requires extensive, ongoing consultation at all levels and across all constituencies.

The implications following from the literature suggest the need to contextualize curriculum work within the current child and family policy environment and to examine and re-examine exemplary curriculum models and frameworks. Given the complexity and long-term nature of the curriculum development process, there is a need to coordinate the development phase of the curriculum framework with a strategic plan for the long term.



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Self-portrait



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