PEI EARLY LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Relationships, Environments, Experiences

The Curriculum Framework
of the
Preschool Excellence Initiative

Prince Edward Island
CANADA

Education and Early
Childhood Development

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Prince Edward Island Early Learning Framework has been inspired and informed by work undertaken in other Canadian provinces, and other countries, including:
- Australia: Being, Belonging, Becoming
- British Columbia: The British Columbia Early Learning Framework
- Ireland: Creatchuraclam na Luath-Óige – The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework
- New Brunswick: New Brunswick Curriculum Framework for Early Learning and Child Care
- New Zealand: Te Whariki – The Curriculum for Early Childhood Education
- Ontario: Early Learning for Every Child Today
- Quebec: Accueillir la petite enfance: Le programme éducative des services de garde du Québec - Meeting Early Childhood Needs: Québec's Educational Program for Child Care Services
- Saskatchewan: Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide

The development of the Framework has also benefited from the thoughtful contributions of Directors of Early Years Centres in Prince Edward Island, who participated in provincial consultations and provided their feedback, ideas, and hopes for the new PEI Early Learning Framework (See Appendix 1). Their contributions were invaluable to the development of this document.

And finally, the members of the PEI Early Learning Framework Advisory Committee provided advice, direction, and support for the ongoing developmental work of this document (See Appendix 2). Their input will continue to advise the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development throughout the implementation of this early learning curriculum framework.

Prince Edward Island's
Early Learning Framework

Prince Edward Island's Early Learning Framework is a curriculum framework focused on children from infancy to school entry. The curriculum framework will be implemented in all Early Years Centres in Prince Edward Island.

The term "early learning" encompasses all of the activities, experiences, and interactions that young children are involved in that expand their physical, creative, emotional, social, language, and intellectual areas of development. During the early years, children's tremendous capacity to learn is enhanced when they experience nurturing environments, and are able to actively explore their worlds through play. Children expand their learning with every experience, every interaction, and every observation they make. In Early Years Centres, the learning environment is carefully and thoughtfully designed to encourage opportunities for creative investigation and exploration. In Early Years Centres, children are encouraged to make new discoveries, actively pursue their interests, ask questions, solve problems, and develop a lifelong love and excitement for learning.

The Prince Edward Island Early Learning Framework is specifically designed to provide consistency in methodological approaches and structure to the scope of learning in Early Years Centres. The Framework is also designed to allow and encourage Early Childhood Educators to design learning environments for children that are relevant to their communities, respectful of PEI's different cultures and languages, and that are appropriate for children with a wide range of abilities. Successful implementation of the curriculum framework will require – in addition to appropriate resources and physical environments – the involvement of early childhood educators with a strong foundation in early childhood education and development, and strong pedagogical leadership from directors of Early Years Centres.

PEI's Vision for Children

The image or vision of children and childhood has a strong influence on how families, educators, and communities relate to children, and the values that influence their relationships and environments.

In Prince Edward Island, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has adopted a Vision for Children as part of the province's Preschool Excellence Initiative. This vision has underpinned the development of the Early Learning Framework, and is intended to guide early childhood educators in their relationships with children:

Children in PEI are healthy and happy, curious and creative, playful and joyous. They are loved and respected, and are safe and secure in their families, homes and communities. Children are our collective responsibility. They are valued for who they are today, and as the future parents and leaders of tomorrow.

Theoretical Foundations

The PEI Early Learning Framework is a social-pedagogical approach to early childhood education. A social pedagogical approach is based on the understanding that learning in the early years is influenced by the quality of the child's interactions and relationships with adults and other children, and by the experiences that children have through their active play - rather than direct teaching of discrete skills. This approach takes the view that children are co-constructors of their own learning, and that children learn by making meaning of their every day experiences.

Social pedagogical approaches to early education are grounded in constructivist theories of children's learning. Constructivist theory has been strongly influenced and shaped by the developmental theories of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. Odom and Wolery (2003) note that this perspective includes "an understanding of the content of children's development, an appreciation of the importance of children's self-initiated actions on and interactions with the environment, and recognition of the critical role adults play as mediators of children's learning." (p. 164).

A constructivist approach in early childhood education implies:
- An understanding that each child is unique, and brings unique talents and abilities to the learning process
- A belief that children are shaped by their families, communities, and cultures
- That children must be actively engaged in their own learning
- That learning is viewed as an active and social process
- That adults/educators take the role of facilitator rather than adopting a didactic approach to teaching

The theoretical approach taken in the PEI Early Learning Framework is particularly influenced by the theories of Lev Vygotsky, Maria Montessori, and Loris Malagucci, the founder of the educational approach implemented in schools in the town of Reggio

Emilia, Italy. These theorists emphasize the value of complex socio-dramatic play in children's learning, the social-collaborative nature of early learning, the importance of scaffolding children's learning for optimal development, the key role of relationships and environments, and the importance of recognizing the child's role as an active agent in his/her own learning.

Contributions from these theorists to the practice of early childhood education have contributed to the scope and approach of the PEI Early Learning Framework both in their theories of child development and optimal conditions for early learning, and in their positions regarding the role of adults/educators. Such contributions include the theory of the "zone of proximal development" and the practice of scaffolding children's learning[1] (Vygotsky); the importance of observation, documentation, and following the child's lead (Montessori); and the importance of community and family influences on children's overall development and learning (Malagucci). These elements serve as a guide for early childhood educators in their observations and reflections of children's learning.

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[1]The "zone of proximal development" refers to the period between a time when a child is unable to understand a concept or perform a task, and the time when he/she is able to independently achieve success. While in the ZPD, the child is able to perform the task with assistance – and the educator's role is to "scaffold" children's abilities by literally building on what the child knows in order to assist the child to achieve success.

The Early Years Centre: An ecological early learning system

Influenced by the social-ecological theories of Uri Bronfenbrenner, the PEI Early Learning Framework considers each Early Years Centre as its own "ecological early learning system". Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory describes the mutual interactions or influences that occur between elements of related systems.

The environmental events that are the most immediate and potent in affecting a person's development are activities that are engaged in by others with that person or in her presence.
Uri Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development* (1979), page 6

In a similar fashion, researchers at the University of Prince Edward Island's (UPEI) Centre for Education Research have developed the RECD (Research in Early Childhood Development) framework. This model is based on Dr. Uri Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model of human development, and acknowledges that humans do not develop in isolation but in relation to their family and home, community, society and the world. The model developed at UPEI reflects a vision of childhood that recognizes that not only is the child impacted and influenced by his/her family, community, and society, but that the child's family, community, and society is also impacted by – and depends on – the child's optimal development.

The Early Learning Framework recognizes that each Early Years Centre is a system in itself – with children, educators, and parents interacting in significant and meaningful relationships on a daily basis. Therefore, the learning principles and learning goals must be viewed in relation to their impact on each and all of the key players within an Early Years Centre. In this framework, as each Learning Goal is presented and discussed, there are considerations outlined as to how the particular Learning Goal impacts children, educators and families.

At the same time, linkages with community, public policy regarding the Preschool Excellence Initiative, legislation and regulatory frameworks for early childhood education and care programs, provincial labour laws, local employers, and provincial family policy will all impact the nature and the quality of interactions and relationships within the ecological early learning system of the Early Years Centre.

An Early Learning Curriculum Framework

John Bennett (2005) notes that a curriculum framework may include a statement of the principles and values that should guide early childhood centres; a summary of program standards that parents may expect in the early childhood centre; an outline

concerning the broad goals that centres will pursue, a description of the attitudes, dispositions, skills and knowledge that children at different ages can be expected to attain across different developmental areas; and pedagogical guidelines outlining the processes through which children achieve the proposed outcomes. He states " ... a broad curricular framework will be strong on guiding principles and structural requirements, but flexible enough to allow practitioners to experiment with different methodological and pedagogical approaches, and to adapt overall goals to special needs children, and to local needs and circumstances." (Bennett, J., 2005, p.19)

In recent years, provincial and national early learning frameworks have built on the substantial body of evidence regarding children's early learning, and have adopted similar approaches to the development of curriculum frameworks for young children. For example, the government of Ontario's position regarding the intended application of its early learning framework "Early Learning for Every Child Today" (ELECT) notes:

> "The *Early Learning for Every Child Today* complements, rather than replaces, specific curricular and pedagogical approaches, early identification protocols and regulated requirements now in place in Ontario early childhood settings. It also provides direction for programs that do not have an explicit curriculum or consistent pedagogical approach. It features a continuum of developmental skills and a shared language that will support early childhood practitioners and caregivers as they work together across early childhood settings." (ELECT, 2006, p.4)

The PEI Early Learning Framework recognizes the multiple ways in which children learn, and provides educators with a system to examine and reflect on their philosophical approaches to early education. Educators are encouraged to adapt the learning environment and children's experiences to their particular communities, to the cultures and traditions of the families of the children in their programs, and to be inclusive of all children. The Early Learning Framework outlines a vision for children, learning principles, and learning goals for children from infancy to school entry. The Framework provides a consistent approach across all Early Years Centres, and a common language for communicating with parents and other educators. Each Early Years Centre, however, will be unique in how the goals and strategies are implemented in response to the particular community, the talents and skills of the educators, and the unique nature of the population of children and parents.

This Early Learning Framework has been written for directors and educators in Early Years Centres. At the same time, the principles and goals of the Early Learning Framework may be of interest to educators in different types of early childhood programs, and to parents. Figure 1 on the following page describes the linkages between elements of the Framework, and how the Framework supports PEI's Vision for the Child:

Figure 1: Overview of the PEI Early Learning Framework

PEI EARLY LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Vision for Children

Social – Ecological Early Learning System

Learning Goals and Objectives

Social and Personal Responsibility
- Self Regulation and Self Discipline
- Culture and Heritage
- Environmental Awareness and Care of the Earth

Expression and Communication
- Language and Literacies
- Creativity and the Arts
- Symbols and Representation

Exploration and Discovery
- Curious Investigation
- Problem Solving and Numeracy
- Reason, Logic, and Scientific Inquiry

Well Being
- Physical Health and Personal Safety
- A Sense of Identity and Self-Concept
- Emotional Health and Belonging

Strategies and Reflections

Learning Principles ◆ **Environment** ◆ **Experiences**

Relationships

Documentation ❖ **Narrative Assessment** ❖ **Early Learning Stories** ❖ **Early Learning Scale**

Kathleen Flanagan, 2011

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In addition to this introductory section (Section 1), this document includes:

- *Section 2: Learning Through Play* – a discussion of the complexity and value of children's play, and how it supports all aspects of learning in the early years

- *Section 3: The Role of the Early Childhood Educator* – an overview of the skills, attitudes, and knowledge that educators must integrate into their professional practice; considers the roles of those working as Directors and Educators, and includes a description of the Early Childhood Development Association's Code of Ethics for Early Childhood Educators

- *Section 4: Inclusion* – a description of the scope and importance of inclusive practice in early childhood education

- *Section 5: Learning Principles* – an outline of the key learning principles for the Early Years Framework, including the research and evidence that support these foundational directions

- *Section 6: Learning Goals and Objectives* – a presentation of the learning goals for children from infancy to school entry, with specific objectives for each goal

- *Section 7: Strategies and Reflections* – a further exploration of each objective for the Learning Goals, giving an outline of learning strategies that children may engage in and how educators may approach the objectives; specific examples are given for infants and toddlers and for preschool children; this section also presents reflective questions for educators as they examine their own practice

- *Section 8: Documentation and Assessment* – including Learning Stories and other assessment practices

- *Section 9: List of Acronyms and Glossary of Terms*

- *Section 10: Bibliography*

- *Appendices*

Children's Play

The role of play in early learning has often been misunderstood, and at times downplayed as unimportant for child development. In the past, there have been theorists who claim that play has no purpose, that it is frivolous, and therefore has no value other than to bring enjoyment to the person who is playing. Play was differentiated from "work", and was often considered as something that may be engaged in once the "real work" has been finished. Phrases common in everyday language such as "They're only playing" have often demeaned the nature and importance of play – although proverbs such as "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" hint at the importance of play in a child's development.

"You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than you can in a year of conversation."

Plato

Extensive research on the nature of children's play, however, has shed light on the intrinsic value of play for child development. The Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) notes that

"Theorists, regardless of their orientation, concur that play occupies a central role in children's lives. They also suggest that the absence of play is an obstacle to the development of healthy and creative individuals. Psycho-analysts believe that play is necessary for mastering emotional traumas or disturbances; psycho-socialists believe it is necessary for ego mastery and learning to live with everyday experiences; constructivists believe it is necessary for cognitive growth; maturationists believe it is necessary for competence building and for socializing functions in all cultures of the world; and neuroscientists believe it is necessary for emotional and physical health, motivation, and love of learning."

ACEI Position Statement

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There is now a growing consensus among researchers, neuroscientists, and educators regarding the key role of "play" in children's learning. Play is no longer seen to be in competition with academics, but rather as the basis for development of both cognitive skills (including language, reasoning, problem solving) and socially adaptive behaviours (including conflict resolution, mediation, negotiation, and role playing).

Definition and Types of Play

While there is consensus on the importance of play, the literature provides a range of suggested purposes and types of play. Stuart Brown (2010) argues that despite the varied definitions and descriptions of play, it is impossible to really understand what play is without knowing what play feels like – "if we leave the emotion of play out of the science, it's like throwing a dinner party and serving pictures of food" (Brown, 2010, p.21)

Smith and Pelligrini (2008) define and type children's play, and differentiate play from exploration, work, and games. While recognizing the many different "types" of play described in the literature (including but not limited to rough and tumble play, active play, pretend or fantasy play, imaginative play, super hero play, social play, narrative play, improvisation, body play or movement), other researchers have described specific elements of play that are common to all types, noting that play is enjoyable and fun, is undertaken for its own sake, with no particular goals, is usually spontaneous, involves active participation and engagement, may include an element of make believe, and is generally engrossing. (Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Berk and Singer, 2009; Smith and Pelligrini, 2008)

Bodrova and Leong (2010) note that "play is not a singular construct but rather a continuum of playful behaviours that children engage in...a distinct child-initiated activity with its own unique contributions to child development ... associated with the development of broader competencies such as theory of mind, symbolic representation, and self-regulation." (p. 1-2)

The Complexity of Play – A Recipe for Lifetime Success in Learning

Children's play is rich in its complexity. When children are engaged in play, and especially in socio-dramatic pretend play, they are creating their own meaningful fantasy worlds. During this type of play, children are able to re-construct and test out theories or concepts in a secure, safe manner where the child is in control of the situation. By assuming various roles and responsibilities in the play activity, the child is able to integrate the learning that comes from reviewing and re-thinking the experience

"Research on the brain demonstrates that play is a scaffold for development, a vehicle for increasing neural structures, and a means by which all children practice skills they will need in later life."

Position Statement, Association for Childhood Education International

Complex socio-dramatic play gives children opportunities for language development, conflict resolution, negotiation skills, social skills, problem solving, inquiry based learning, logic and reason, and opportunities to explore emotional responses to experiences. The ability to converse, explain, and think in stories helps children to develop the foundation for reading comprehension and indirectly prepares children for social studies, history, and an appreciation for literature.

Through play, children are able to transform their worlds. What may have been a boat can suddenly become a spaceship, or a train, or a bus. Roles undertaken in pretend play may also be transformed, and so the "mother" in the play activity may suddenly become the "baby", or the "truck driver" may suddenly become the "doctor". Children who are engrossed in their pretend play scenarios may demonstrate fluidity in their thinking that underscores the complexity of their thoughts and decisions.

As well as being able to transform the reality of the play props in their imaginations, children are also able to physically transform their worlds by moving chairs, piling up blocks, rolling balls – and so the actual activity of changing the play environment becomes a learning opportunity in physical matter - How heavy are the chairs? How

many children will need to help if we want to move this table? How can we keep the balls from rolling away? Why does that broom keep falling down? The same play activity may encompass social skills and cooperation - Why don't we ask Jonathan to help us? Do you think it will work if you hold the front end?

Children's play is representational, and allows children to develop pre-academic skills that provide a foundation for literacy and numeracy. When children pretend to fly like an eagle, or use blocks to build a fire station, they are learning to use one object for another – a skill that will help them to understand that numerals represent quantities, and that letters represent sounds and words.

When they play with blocks, water, clay, sand, and other objects that are freely formed and opened ended, children develop logical thinking. They learn pre-mathematical concepts such as classification, quantity, ordering, sets, and comparisons. As they play, they develop strategies to solve problems, and learn how to work in collaboration with others as a team. These opportunities to observe, experiment, and share their understandings form the basis for mathematical and scientific problem solving.

When children are engaged and are active agents in designing their own play activities, they develop a positive attitude toward learning. Children who are able to construct their play enjoy a sense of mastery in their environments, and are able to sustain their play with great concentration. The Early Childhood Educator's role is to continually observe children in their play, guide children when necessary, scaffold their learning, and adapt the learning environment to provide a rich source of inspiration for children's exploration and inquiry.

And finally, as children play and interact with each other, and as they learn to consider the opinions of others, and how to put forward their own ideas and perspectives, they begin to develop self-regulation. Stuart Shanker (2010) has described self-regulation as "the ability to stay calmly focused and alert.... The better a child can stay calmly focused and alert, the better he integrates the diverse information coming in from his different senses, assimilates it, and sequences his thoughts and actions." (p.4-5). Others have described it as "a deep, internal mechanism that enables children as well as adults to engage in mindful, intentional, and thoughtful behaviors." (Bodrova and Leong, 2008, p.1).

According to Lev Vygotsky, socio-dramatic play is a key contributor to the development of self-regulation in young children (Elias and Berk, 2001). Dramatic play contributes to self-regulation in that different imaginary play scenarios are governed by external social rules (e.g., if you are the teacher, you must think and act the way the teacher behaves; if you are the baby, your interactions with the other children will be different than if you are the father). As well, dramatic play encourages children to internalize the rules of the pretend scenario – and this helps children to regulate their own behaviours as well as to encourage their playmates to do the same (Barnett et al., 2008). Self-regulation is also enhanced when parents, caregivers, and early childhood

educators are sensitive and responsive to each child's temperament and sensitivities, which helps children to maintain a "calm and focused" state of being.

While the above provides a simple explanation of self-regulation, the concept itself is complex. Definitions of self-regulation may be considered from a range of perspectives, including temperament, emotional development, cognitive development, social development, and educational theory. (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004 as cited in Shanker, 2010). Self-regulation is a key aspect of "executive function" of the mind, and has been linked to the quality of both educational and health outcomes.

The discussion about play and self-regulation is continued in *Section 5: Learning Principles.*

ROLE OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR

The Role Of The Early Childhood Educator

In Prince Edward Island, legislative requirements require that both Directors and Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) in Early Years Centres hold post-secondary credentials in Early Childhood Education. Therefore, for the purposes of this discussion, the "Role of the Early Childhood Educator" will be considered from the perspective of those educators who are employed in positions where they work directly with children (ECEs), and from the perspective of those educators who are employed as Directors of Early Years Centres.

It should be noted that in Early Years Centres, all directors work either directly or indirectly with children by the nature of their position of employment. Both the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) and the Director are instrumental in developing positive relationships with children, with their families, and with the community. They play key roles in establishing the level of quality of the program, and in establishing the core values of the centre.

Directors

Research conducted in Canada and in the United States shows that the Director of an early childhood education and care centre sets the tone for all educators in the centre, and that the Director's experience, pedagogical leadership, and managerial skills contribute in a significant manner to the overall quality of the program.

In Canada, Occupational Standards have been developed to describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities of Directors of ECEC programs. (Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, 2009). The Occupational Standards were developed in consultation with directors of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) programs across Canada. The standards describe the role of the Director as one who:

- Participates in establishing or setting ECEC standards and goals, and developing policies, procedures, and best practices to ensure the care and nurturing of children

- May supervise early childhood educators, early childhood assistants, custodians, cooks and other support staff

- Develops ECEC programs; monitors and reports on children's progress; counsels, mentors, coaches, trains and motivates early childhood educators and other staff; administers record keeping, prepares budgets; develops and maintains relations with parents; manages facilities; and develops relations with the community

- May hire, evaluate and assist early childhood educators to improve their skills through creating a culture of life-long-learning

- Observes the programs in operation, assists with the development of child-

related activities, supports the development of mission statements, and sets performance goals and objectives for staff

- Meets with individual parents and/or family members to report on their child's progress, and advises on parenting and available additional resources for the family.

- Interacts with the community to promote ECEC programs, and participates in discussions and forums related to ECEC.

In Prince Edward Island, Directors of Early Years Centres have specific responsibilities related to the nature of the Early Years Centre designation. These include establishing and working with Parent Advisory Committees, providing data and collaborating in evaluation initiatives, participating in quality measurement assessment, and working with program advisors.

Early Childhood Educators

The quality of children's experiences in early childhood education and care programs depends on the quality of the relationship between the early childhood educator and the child. (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000) There is ample research to suggest that "formal education levels and recent, specialized training in child development have been found to be consistently associated with high quality interactions and children's development" in early childhood education settings. (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000, p. 316).

Even so, ECE's education must be considered as "part of a system of factors that contribute to teacher quality, which in turn is related to classroom quality and children's gains" (Early, Maxwell & Burchinal, 2007, p. 577) Ontario's 2009 Pascal Report reported on numerous research studies noting that "Reviews of American, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand studies consistently report that educator qualifications, adult-child ratios and group size influence educators' interactions with children and quality in public and private child care settings." (An Updated and Annotated Summary of Evidence: A Compendium To *With Our Best Future in Mind,* 2009, p. 22)

The Child Care Human Resources Sector Council has recently completed national consultations in Canada regarding occupational standards for early childhood educators. As with the standards established for directors, the occupational standards for ECEs outline the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to effectively fulfill the roles and responsibilities required of educators who work in quality early childhood education and care programs such as PEI's Early Years Centres.

Canada's Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators describe the role of the ECE as one who:

- Is responsible for the planning and delivery of inclusive play-based learning and care programs for children in order to promote the well-being and holistic development of children.

- Is responsible for the assessment of the programs and of the progress of children in the programs, as well as communicating with the parents or persons with legal custody of the children in the programs in order to improve the development of the children.

- Facilitates daily experiences that support and promote each child's physical, language, emotional, cognitive and creative development and behaviour while respecting inclusion principles and the diversity of the population.

- On a daily basis, completes a variety of health and safety procedures and comply with quality standards, current laws and regulations associated with a healthy and safe environment. ECEs follow health and safety practices to develop and maintain a safe environment for children by performing regular equipment and facilities inspections.

- Forms collaborative partnerships with children's families that honour the family's role as primary caregiver, and respects each family's composition, language and culture. ECEs also establish relationships with and use the resources of the children's communities to support the achievement of program objectives.

- Works as a member of a team to develop learning environments that support productive work, meet professional needs, recognize and capitalize on the strengths of fellow team members and provide mutual support, collaboration and assistance.

- Demonstrates professionalism by participating in ongoing professional development and learning, by following a Code of Ethics, maintaining required certifications and registrations, and respecting the rights of children and their families by maintaining confidentiality while maintaining appropriate records and documentation.

Code of Ethics

In Prince Edward Island, Directors and ECEs who are members of the Early Childhood Development Association of PEI have agreed on a Code of Ethics to guide their professional relationships and practice. The Code of Ethics outlines obligations to children, families, and personal and professional relationships with colleagues:

Obligation to Children

This code of ethics contains the principles to which members of the Early Childhood Development Association of Prince Edward Island adhere while working with children.

- An early childhood educator's first obligation is to the children in his/her care.
- The early childhood educator respects and accepts each child as they are; regardless of their race, creed, emotional or physical appearance.
- Early Childhood educators consider the child's interests, needs and abilities and utilize them to fulfill the child's potential.
- Early childhood educators create an environment that helps children develop self-confidence and trust in themselves and others.
- Early childhood educators facilitate the development of the whole child.
- The Early Childhood Educator has a moral and legal responsibility to report suspected cases of child abuse.

Obligation to Families

Families are of primary importance in children's development. The term family may include others, besides parents, who are responsibly involved with the child. Early Childhood Educators acknowledge a responsibility to collaborate with both the home and school.

- Early childhood educators recognize the role of parents as primary caregivers and educators' roles as ones who are supportive to the family and the child.
- Early childhood educators respect the parents' knowledge of their child.
- Early childhood educators maintain confidentiality regarding knowledge obtained in the daily dealing with children.
- Early childhood educators maintain open communication with the child's family.
- Early childhood educators respect different family values and beliefs.

Obligation to One's Self and Colleagues

Early childhood educators often rely on a team approach. Good relations with co-workers are essential to achieve quality service. It is important to establish and maintain settings and relationships that support productive work and meet professional needs.

- Early childhood educators make continued efforts to improve professionally by actively pursuing knowledge regarding developments in the early childhood education field.

- Early childhood educators respect other colleagues as professionals.

- Early childhood educators share knowledge with colleagues.

- Early childhood educators maintain confidentiality about colleagues' views.

- Early childhood educators work in a climate of trust and confidence which empowers them to speak and act in the best interests of children.

INCLUSION

INCLUSION

In early childhood settings across Prince Edward Island, an increasing number of infants, toddlers, and preschool children from a variety of backgrounds – and with a range of abilities - learn and play together. The principle that all children have a right to learn and play has long been a value held by early childhood educators, and is referenced in the PEI Code of Ethics for early childhood educators. (See Section 3.)

In the PEI Early Learning Framework, inclusion refers to a respect and honour for personal, social, economic, cultural, religious, racial, and linguistic diversity.

The concept of inclusion is integral to each of the learning principles, to each of the learning goals, and to each of the objectives and strategies.

Inclusion, by the very nature of the concept, is not a unique and distinct aspect of the PEI Early Learning Framework – rather, the concept of personal and social inclusion is woven into all aspects of the framework. The concept of inclusion is integral to each of the learning principles, to each of the learning goals, and to each of the objectives and strategies. It is, by its nature, a key aspect of the quality of early childhood education in Prince Edward Island. Inclusive practice is woven throughout the PEI Early Learning Framework.

For the PEI Early Learning Framework:

> *Inclusion in early years centres embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability[2], race, culture, language, religion, family structure, or social/economic circumstances to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for all children and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential.[3]*

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[2] Children's abilities include a range of levels and types, and may represent developmental challenges, typically developing children, or children with exceptional talents.
[3] Adapted from the 2009 Joint Position Statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Inclusion implies not only a deep respect for all children and their families, but requires the same for early childhood educators, and the communities where early childhood programs are located. Successful approaches to inclusion do not only depend on positive attitudes. Early Childhood Educators and Directors play key roles in creating inclusive early childhood programs.

As noted in Section 3 (*Role of the Early Childhood Educator*), Canada's Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators (Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, 2006) identify that Directors of early childhood education and care programs must be able to:

- Develop culturally responsive practices
- Develop an inclusive and developmentally appropriate curriculum
- Observe and evaluate programs to ensure all children are included
- Engage staff in the provision of a quality, inclusive environment for all children.

In similar fashion, the 2010 Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators (as referenced in Section 3) state that ECEs are expected to "*facilitate daily experiences that support and promote each child's physical, language, emotional, cognitive, social and creative development and behaviour using applicable observation tools while respecting inclusion principles and diversity issues.*" The Standards also specify that ECEs be required to be able to develop inclusionary practices for program delivery; implement inclusionary practices into programs; implement an inclusive environment for children; and promote inclusion within the program.

The Occupational Standards also note that ECEs are required to know inclusion policies and procedures; principles of universal design and how they support inclusion of all children; different aspects of inclusion (e.g., cultural, general, sexual orientation, special needs); and a variety of diverse family compositions.

Canadian researchers Irwin, Lero, and Brophy (2000) have defined a "positive virtuous cycle" (see Figure 2) that is created by positive experiences with inclusion. They note that positive experiences with inclusion enable early childhood educators to develop stronger commitment to inclusion by providing understanding, learning opportunities, skill development, and more self-confidence.

The cycle itself draws on research regarding successful experiences with inclusion, and identifies some of the key supports needed, including the Director's leadership, and organizational supports within the centre. Subsequent research has confirmed that such elements have influenced the quality of inclusion in an early childhood centre. These elements include directors' and early childhood educators' knowledge and training about inclusion, their attitudes, and their access to a range of resources and supports. Examples of the types of supports needed include access to additional staff with appropriate qualifications, time for planning and consultation, support from resource consultants and specialists in the community, and parents' involvement. (Irwin, Lero, & Brophy, 2004).

Figure 2: Positive Virtuous Cycle (Irwin, Lero, and Brophy, 2000)

Effective infrastructure is in place
- physical environment is accessible
- financial and human resources allocated to support inclusion, adapt curriculum **C**

D **Director is a leader**
- effective in promoting on-going learning and collaboration

Director and staff have positive attitudes toward inclusion **B**

E **Organizational support within the centre:**
- Centre staff support each other
- Consideration given to staff needs, planning time, consultation
- Priority given to maintaining positive relationships with parents

EFFECTIVE INCLUSION AND POSITIVE MOMENTUM

Appropriate staff education and training

Stable, effective staff **A**

F Involvement of and effective collaboration with community professionals

A well functioning, high quality program

POSITIVE EFFECTS ON CHILDREN, PARENTS, STAFF AND CENTRE

G Staff feel more comfortable
Staff feel more confident, develop additional skills

Strengthened commitment to inclusion **I** as part of centre's mandate

H Staff and Director more committed to inclusion more accepting of a broader range of children

The City of Toronto's Children's Services Office has developed comprehensive guidelines for inclusion in early childhood programs. These guidelines suggest that inclusion can have long-term positive outcomes for children, families, and staff. The guidelines suggest that rather than focusing on the barriers or challenges presented, that staff re-frame their commitment to working with all children to:

1. Value the opportunity to acquire specific competencies for working with children with disabilities

2. Share the same value base and program vision as the other early childhood staff

3. Attend and participate in training in order to understand and become skilled at using strategies and techniques

4. Conduct regular observations, know the program and children well

5. Acquire skills for positioning, handling and feeding a child with special needs, in addition to using devices and equipment required by the child

6. Seek mentoring from experienced staff and professional resources, and act as a mentor to others

7. Respect parents as experts on their own children

8. Work to embed the children's individual objectives into the classroom activities and routines

9. Identify, implement and evaluate appropriate opportunities and strategies to allow children to interact without adult assistance

10. Build bridges between children with disabilities and their typically developing peers and help foster friendships.

The City of Toronto (2007) also describes benefits to children, staff, parents, and centres based on their experiences in providing inclusive programs for all children, including:

Benefits to the early childhood program
- All children and adults value acceptance and appreciate diversity
- All children benefit from program consultations that are provided by support agencies
- All staff benefit from enhanced training opportunities and broadened experiences.

Benefits for families
- Enhanced family support connections in their local community
- Greater opportunity to develop friendships with other parents
- Improved awareness and appreciation for diversity and individual differences

- Increase opportunities for seeing social justice in action.
- Gives children with special needs the opportunity to form friendships within their local community
- Develops empathy and an acceptance of individual differences.

Benefits for all children
- Access to early intervention services
- Allows children to attend local children's programs and schools in their neighbourhood

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Sample Centre Policies for Inclusion

- All children are welcome

- We support all children to reach their full potential

- We aim to include all children within our programs and services

- We believe that each child is unique, and in partnership with families we are committed to meeting the developmental/educational needs of all children

- Integration and inclusion are used to express the view that all people, including children with special needs, hold rights and responsibilities as equal and essential members of our community

- We are committed to the provision of service irrespective of abilities

- We are committed to working with community partners to enhance our ability to support children with special needs through training and consultation

- We ensure that all possible modifications are made to promote the full participation of all children

Source: Inclusion: Policy Development Guidelines for Early Learning and Child Care Programs. Children's Services, City of Toronto, 2007

All Early Years Centres in Prince Edward Island are accessible for children with diverse and exceptional needs. However, it is not enough that there is agreement to enroll children with diverse and exceptional needs, whether those needs are developmental, cultural, social, economic, or linguistic. In order to provide for inclusive experiences for all children, Early Years Centres develop their environments, plan for children's experiences, and facilitate relationships to ensure that all children and their families are able to be involved in all aspects of the centre's program.

Given what we now know about how young children learn, there is a great potential for socially inclusive and universally accessible ECEC programs to play a key role in "building a foundation of respect for diversity by capitalizing on children's receptivity to these ideas about diversity in the early years." (Friendly and Prabhu, 2010) Early childhood educators generally agree that programs rich in cultural diversity help children to develop broader language skills, increased cultural awareness, and instill a feeling of cultural pride in all children. Culturally diverse programs celebrate similarities as well as differences, and therefore help to build a sense of connection with the child's community.

LEARNING PRINCIPLES

LEARNING PRINCIPLES

Overview

Learning principles are statements that define our collective beliefs and understandings about how children learn. Learning principles are informed by the science of early childhood development, and are built upon our cultural and philosophical views of childhood itself. Learning principles influence how we understand, appreciate, and carry out our multiple roles in our families, as early childhood educators, as members of communities, governments, and society in supporting the learning and development of young children.

The PEI Early Learning Framework outlines inter-related learning principles in the areas of relationships, environments, and experiences. These principles do not stand alone, but rather are representative of a dynamic and integrated interplay of factors that impact children's learning and development. The Framework itself is built on a foundation of learning principles that are supported by research and evidence about how children learn and develop. Learning Principles are intended to state the theoretical rationale for practice of early childhood education.

The "Learning Principles" include Relationships, Environments, and Experiences. By integrating these principles into practice, a pedagogically sound approach is woven into practice. The principles are parts of a whole – they are not to be addressed selectively. Together, they form the basis for practice, and inform the Learning Goals and Objectives.

In this section, the description of the foundational learning principles includes reference to research literature supporting the inclusion of these three principles in the PEI Early Learning Framework.

LEARNING PRINCIPLES

Relationships

Environments

Experiences

RELATIONSHIPS

Children's learning is enhanced through strong, nurturing, secure, and positive relationships.

From birth, "parents and other regular caregivers in children's lives are 'active ingredients' of environmental influence…. Children grow and thrive in the context of close and dependable relationships that provide love and nurturance, security, responsive interaction, and encouragement for exploration." (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000, p.389) As children grow, the strength and stability of their early relationships allow them to have the confidence to develop relationships with other children and adults.

This confidence allows the child to begin to experiment with independence – so that he can satisfy his sense of curiosity, and feel the excitement of exploring his relationship with his environment.

An emphasis on children's relationships is consistent with PEI's Vision for Children, and demonstrates not only the ecological nature of children's development, but also the ecological nature of early learning environments. Children are inextricably linked to their families, communities, and society. The ecological nature of early learning environments suggests that children, families, early childhood educators, and government/policy makers are also linked in an ecological framework of support for early learning.

An ecological view of early learning implies a number of reciprocal relationships:

Relationships between and among children provide children with opportunities to express themselves and communicate, either through gestures and facial expressions or through their emerging language. Infants and toddlers are able to gain a sense of themselves and others, are able to practice strategies for engaging other children and begin to learn emerging social skills. Preschoolers, through both peer relationships and friendships, are able to practice their social and language skills, and learn about sharing, cooperation, and problem solving. Peers and friends have opportunities through their relationships to experience both conflict instigation and resolution. Friends learn to experience attachment, loyalty, and commitment. Through group activities, children are able to develop a sense of responsibility, and an appreciation of their role within the group. In mixed age groups of children, younger

children learn through their observations of older children; older children enhance their own understanding of concepts and social rules by re-framing these concepts in such a way as to inform and help the younger children. Through these types of activities, children have the opportunity to learn empathy, compassion, a sense of fairness, and friendship.

Relationships between children and their families are strengthened as early childhood educators interact with parents, provide support regarding information about child development, and emphasize children's strengths and abilities to parents.

Relationships between children and early childhood educators are key to the structure of early learning environments and experiences. Early Childhood Educators' observations of children help to enrich their relationships with children by creating a deeper understanding of the child's interests and abilities, and help the ECEs to create learning environments that respond to the unique nature of the children in the program. As well, ECEs enrich their own learning and depth of knowledge about early childhood development by reflecting on their relationships with the children in their program.

Relationships between families and early childhood educators not only strengthen the relationship between children and their families, but help to ensure that the nature and type of early learning program is responsive to the needs of the family. Ongoing reciprocal communication between parents and early childhood educators – including Directors of Early Years Centres – helps to ensure that parents understand – and are able to influence – the philosophy and goals that guide the nature of their children's experiences, and the quality of interactions and relationships with their children. Mutually respectful and responsive relationships between parents and educators contribute to the understanding of cultural priorities and strengthen children's personal identities.

Relationships between and among early childhood educators in Early Learning Centres are collaborative professional relationships that enrich the pedagogical experiences of educators, and strengthen their professional and personal commitment to the study of early childhood education and care. Directors

in Early Years Centre provide leadership in pedagogy and professional development. Their relationships with ECEs, and their observations of the interaction between ECEs and children and families help to shape planning for future directions of the programs they manage.

Relationships between and among Early Childhood Educators and community resources, including Kindergarten teachers, family resource centre programs, and other professionals who work with children in various capacities link the Early Years Centre to the community, and allow ECEs to make connections between home, EYCs and the community. These types of professional relationships allow for better integration of services for families, and allow professionals to work together on behalf of children who may benefit from a broad range of interventions and services. Linkages with Kindergarten classrooms and schools support transitions from Early Years Centres to school based programs. These types of collaboration helps to ensure that community based services are responsive to the needs of children and parents in the community.

Relationships between and among families, early childhood educators, community resources and policy makers and researchers contribute to the ongoing development of policy and programs that are responsive and relevant to children, families, educators, communities and the province. Ongoing research and evaluation helps to identify policies and practices that make a difference for children and families, strengthens accountability for public funding, and engages policy makers and government leaders in supporting initiatives that work.

Children's curiosity inspires them to interact with other people, and with things and places in their environments, virtually from birth. It is in the dance between children and other children and adults that language and culture are created and recreated from generation to generation. In this dance, children are sometimes the leaders, and adults the followers, and vice versa. Adults' responses to children's activities – whether they respond, the appropriateness of their responses, and the creativity of their responses – affect young children's early learning capacities and their growing sense of themselves as members of their communities. These interactions also give adults the opportunity to learn, grow, and change, and to cultivate a disposition that welcomes children's contributions.

British Columbia: Early Learning Framework

ENVIRONMENTS

Children's learning is enhanced in environments that are safe and secure, responsive to children's interests, spark curiosity and creativity, and that invite exploration, manipulation, and a sense of discovery.

In Reggio Emilia classrooms, the early learning environment is often referred to as "the third teacher". In Montessori classrooms, the term "prepared environment" is used to describe the learning environment. As in these types of programs, the environment in an Early Years Centre is part of a dynamic process that provides a mechanism to support communication between early childhood educators (ECEs), parents, and children and bring meaning to observations of children. The environment not only "teaches" children – it teaches early childhood educators and parents.

Figure 3: *The Early Years Environment* integrates the Reggio Emilia and Montessori visions of environment, and describes the communication between the learning environment, early childhood educators and parents, and young children. When children have the opportunity to experiment and make choices on their environments, ECEs have the opportunity to observe children, note their interests and activity choices, and study their experimentations. ECEs learn from these observations as they assess and make meaning of children's strengths, attitudes, and abilities. Parents are part of the process as they share their knowledge of their children with the educators, and participate in rich communication about their children's activities within the Early Years Centre. With this information, ECEs are able to design, adapt, and modify the learning environment so that it is responsive, inviting, and intriguing for the children, and builds on (scaffolds) children's learning.

Figure 3: The Early Years Environment

Thoughtfully planned learning environments that provide children with the emotional confidence of security, safety, warmth and love give children the confidence to explore, experiment, and develop friendships with other children. The role of the ECE is to ensure that the design of the learning environment corresponds to what we know about how children learn.

Young children learn holistically – they learn about their worlds by smelling, tasting, hearing, touching, and seeing – but they

"Children feel the world to make sense of it." (Greenman, 2007, p. 21)

also learn through social, emotional, and cognitive pathways. The environment is more than the physical layout of the indoor and outdoor play spaces, and more than the materials and objects selected for children's activities. Environments encompass time and space – and include schedules, routines, light, temperature, and expectations for different kinds of behaviours.

Cultural identities filter interpretations of the environment for children and parents. Culture influences thoughts about space, time, and order. In some cultures, the position of objects or the room arrangement may be important to cultural beliefs. Time, schedules, and transitions may seem natural to some children and parents, while others may find concepts such as "early" or "late" to be difficult to appreciate. Early Childhood Educators may not be able to accommodate all individual differences in the environment, but they need to be sensitive to these types of cultural implications.

Environments speak – and speak differently to each child. Large open spaces may be inviting and exciting for some children, but leave others feeling timid and uncertain. Small, cozy spaces may inspire confidence in some children, and leave others feeling anxious. ECEs constantly observe, revise, and adapt the environment to ensure that it "speaks" to children. This may be done at regular intervals based on reflections – or changes to the environment may happen in the middle of the day, as ECEs actively "listen" to what the learning environment is telling them.

Environments speak about our values for children, and about what we believe about early childhood education and care. Carefully planned environments are consistent with these values. If we value children's need for developing independent thought and action, then the environment needs to be created that allows for this – rather than one that perpetuates children's dependence on adult intervention.

The Environment in a Social-Ecological Early Learning System

The scale of tables, chairs, shelves, and materials for children to manipulate need to be child sized in order for children to be able to develop a sense of independence and mastery of their environment. For infants and toddlers, it is important to remember that their line of vision is not only close to the floor, but is also at a higher level, as adults often carry infants in their arms, or hold them in their laps for stories, songs, or conversations

The environment in an Early Years Centre must consider the dynamic system of early learning that is inherent to the program. Consideration must be given to the physical comfort needs of adults as well as children. Environments that provide for the educators in the centre and allow them to engage in team-work, in observations of children, and in group and individual play activities with children contribute to the overall quality of experiences for both educators and children. Environments that also welcome parents, provide space for parents to meet with educators and other parents, and space for parents to be able to visit and observe the children's program enhance the quality of the early years experience for children, parents, and their educators.

Natural Environments

Natural settings and materials provide excellent opportunities for educators to enrich the learning environment. Natural environments appeal to children's innate disposition toward sensorial learning. A natural playground area provides a wealth of sizes and shapes, colours and smells, textures and sounds. Natural outdoor spaces respond beautifully to children's explorations – children can poke and prod, turn leaves over, move twigs, follow an insect.

There is considerable evidence that concern for the environment is based on an affection for nature that only develops with autonomous, unmediated contact with it. In their early years, children's developmental tendency towards empathy with the natural world needs to be supported.... It is only by intimately knowing the wonder of nature's complexity in a particular place that [children develop] a full appreciation of the immense beauty of the planet as a whole.

Randy White & Vicki Stoecklin, 1998

Nature provides opportunities for children to learn new language, and to sort, match, and classify elements of the natural world including plants, insects, or birds. Children have endless opportunities to count, to measure, and to estimate. Children are able to observe science first hand, and experience water as it freezes, melts, and how water in puddles can evaporate. Children can estimate, and then measure, how quickly snow melts when you put it in a bucket indoors.

Natural outdoor environments allow children to witness the progression of seasonal changes. In Prince Edward Island, children are able to chart the change in colours of leaves, when and how quickly leaves fall, observe the effects of wind on trees, plants, and how rain and snow fall. They are able to understand the concepts of weather by experiencing cold winds and the warmth of the sun. Outdoor natural environments allow children to develop their motor abilities and coordination, by giving children hills to climb, and to roll down; by providing trees to climb, and space to run.

Natural materials are open-ended and encourage children to use them to represent their knowledge in new ways. Introducing rocks, shells, and plants in the classroom give children a knowledge and appreciation of the physical world around them. For educators, the world of natural materials provides an endless supply of new ideas and new concepts to include as they create learning environments for children.

It is important to remember that thoughtful and well-designed early childhood learning environments are not merely clean and safe rooms with access to an outdoor play area. Early Years Centres are comprehensive, complex, and active learning programs – providing for all aspects of children's development in a nurturing, warm, and caring atmosphere. An Early Years Centre includes children of multiple ages and abilities, different cultures, and different temperaments.

A well designed learning environment:
- "Speaks" to children, and allows for children's different personalities, temperaments, and learning styles
- Reflects the cultures and languages of the children and families involved in the program
- Represents the communities where children and families live
- Provides for physical development
- Is rich in language opportunities
- Allows for quiet spaces, active spaces
- Is proportionate to the ages and abilities of children – so that children can interact independently with the environment, and are able to control and manage their environments.

An environment is a living, changing system. More than the physical space, it includes the way time is structured and the roles we are expected to play. It conditions how we feel, think, and behave; and it dramatically affects the quality of our lives. The environment may work for us or against us as we conduct our lives.

Jim Greenman, *Caring Spaces, Learning Places*, p.1

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EXPERIENCES

"Early brain and child development research un-equivocally demonstrates that human development is powerfully affected by contextual surroundings and experiences. A child's day-to-day experiences affect the structural and functional development of his or her brain, including intelligence and personality. Experiences influence every child's development and learning, and these experiences can be positive or negative, with long-term consequences for the child, family, and society."

American Academy of Pediatrics (2005) Policy Statement: ***Quality Early Education and Child Care From Birth to Kindergarten.***

New developments in the science of early childhood development describe the body of evidence that has disproven the old idea that human genes are "set in stone", and an individual's genetic make-up is the sole determinant of how that person develops. Now, scientists have discovered that children's early experiences – and the environments where children have those experiences – can actually determine how genes get turned on and off, and whether some are expressed at all.

Scientists explain that a child inherits a set of genes from his parents – the structural genome, which may be compared to the hard drive of a computer. The structural genome determines what is possible, just like a computer. And like the hard drive of a computer, the structural genome needs an operating system to make it work. For humans, this is the "epigenome" – the "operating system" that determines how the structural genome will perform. This genetic operating system is built over time, and is based on the nature of early experiences in childhood.[4] Such experiences – whether good or bad – leave a chemical "signature" on the genes.

Research in both animals and humans shows that some epigenetic changes that occur in the fetus during pregnancy can be passed on to later generations, affecting the health and welfare of children, grandchildren, and their descendants.

Anway et.al., 2005; Champagne, 2010; Newhold et al, 2006.

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[4] Other factors such as nutrition and chemical exposure (toxins, drugs) may also affect the structure of the epigenome.

Given the enormous influence of early experiences on children's development, three learning principles are outlined related to children's experiences:

Children's development depends on warm, nurturing, caring and consistent experiences.

Directors and ECEs in Early Years Centres support these types of early experiences by:
- Maintaining consistent staff in the various groupings of children
- Encouraging staff to develop warm and caring relationships with children, and supportive partnerships with the children's parents
- Providing children with gentle and affectionate physical contact every day
- Guiding children's behaviours to support children's development of self-regulation, self-discipline, and conscience
- Providing all children with the daily necessities they require for healthy development
- Ensuring that all interactions with children – including verbal and non-verbal exchanges – are positive, caring, consistent and constructive.

Children are unique individuals. Their learning and development depend on experiences that account for their unique talents, abilities, personalities, and cultures.

Directors and ECEs in Early Years Centres provide these types of experiences for children when they:
- Provide for experiences for children that are inclusive for all children, regardless of developmental ability, culture, or linguistic differences
- Provide for experiences that celebrate cultural differences among children
- Provide for experiences that are relevant and representative of the communities where children live
- Develop pedagogical approaches that are designed specifically *for* the children, rather than coach children to adapt to a predetermined curriculum
- Interact with each child in a manner that recognizes each child's style of learning, personality and temperament, and with sensitivity to each child's emotional well-being and unique family circumstances
- Allow for ongoing reflection on the elements of the early learning curriculum

Children's learning is enhanced when they are active agents in planning and designing their own play based learning experiences.

Children develop their attitudes toward learning, skills, and knowledge by having first hand experiences that allow them to explore their ideas, build on their interests, discover and experience their environments, and enjoy warm and secure relationships

with children and adults in their every day environments. Children gain these types of experiences through play.

The science of early childhood development tells us that children's learning is enhanced when children are able to engage in activities that allow them to create their own scenarios, make up their own roles, and solve their own differences. The evidence, however, goes further – and there is agreement that such activities are actually essential to children's healthy development.

Scientists who study play, in animals and humans alike, are developing a consensus view that play is something more than a way for restless kids to work off steam; more than a way for chubby kids to burn off calories; more than a frivolous luxury. Play, in their view, is a central part of neurological growth and development — one important way that children build complex, skilled, responsive, socially adept and cognitively flexible brains.
Marantz Henig, 2008

It is through play that children at a very early age engage and interact in the world around them. Play allows children to create and explore pretend worlds where they are in command – where they can practice adult roles, act out and conquer their fears, and explore new ideas in safe and secure surroundings. These types of play experiences allow children to develop new skills and understandings of their world, and help to build self-confidence and resiliency.

Not all play experiences are alike. Sometimes, children's play is organized by adults and there may be a theme, rules, materials to be used, and a pre-planned structure. On the other hand, children's play may be un-directed – the type of playful experiences that emerge when children decide on their play theme, when they use open-ended materials to create the props they need, and through negotiation and cooperation they fashion the "rules of the game".

Un-directed play allows children to learn to share, to resolve disagreements, to mediate, and to learn how to advocate for their

own points of view. These types of experiences also allow children to learn to listen and take the perspective of others, to compromise, and to practice taking leadership roles. As a result, children are developing social competences, language and literacy skills, imagination, and creative thinking.

New developments in neuro-science suggest that this type of un-directed, imaginative (make-believe) play contributes to the development of self-regulation – an important aspect of executive functioning capabilities. Healthy self-regulation is considered to be a core element of healthy emotional development, and is related to the capacity to tolerate the sensations of distress that accompany an unmet need. Self-regulation is weak in infancy, but with appropriate responses from adults, the child learns that the feeling of discomfort will be taken care of by her mother, father, or caregiver. As infants and toddlers learn to respond appropriately to these inner cues, they become much more capable of tolerating the early signs of distress related to hunger, fatigue, or some other form of frustration.

As a child learns to tolerate this sense of anxiety, the child becomes less impulsive in his reactions, and more able to "self-regulate". By the time the child is a preschooler, the child is less likely to cry or act out if hungry, and more likely to be able to understand that snack time or meal time will happen soon, and be able to wait. At this age, a child is more likely to be able to participate in a group story time even when tired, as opposed to an infant or toddler who may cry or act out of frustration.

Pretending involves mental representation. A child's ability for joint planning and assigning roles during pretend play with other children is related to their level of theory of mind, or their ability to understand that others have beliefs, desires, and intentions that are different from one's own. The understanding that what one believes and what others believe may not be the same, is a critical element in the development of theory of mind that is acquired around four years of age (Astington, 1993).

Ontario *Early Learning for Every Child Today Curriculum Framework*

Self-regulation is sometimes compared to the ability to maintain a specific speed when driving a car. At times, the driver must accelerate – and at other times, must use the brakes. Experienced drivers do this effortlessly (merging on a highway, driving down a steep hill) but for new drivers, this requires concentration and effort, and may be stressful. This analogy describes the effort that children must put into their ability to self-regulate – the more developed this function is, the less energy a child must expend to "accelerate" or "slow down".

There are numerous studies that indicate that children who are able to self-regulate are more successful in later school years, and throughout their adult lives. Although intelligence is generally thought to play a key role in children's early academic achievement, aspects of children's self-regulation abilities—including the ability to alternately shift and focus attention and to inhibit impulsive responding—are uniquely related to early academic success and account for greater variation in early academic progress than do measures of intelligence. (Society for Research in Early Childhood Development, 2007)

Neuroscience now indicates that the part of the brain that controls self-regulation is the same part of the brain that is stimulated by imaginative play – through the development of the associated skills developed during this type of play, as described above.

Directors and ECEs in Early Years Centres are able to support children to be active agents in their own learning experiences by:

- Structuring the environment to allow for children to make their own choices for activities rather than concentrating on group lessons and group activities directed by adults

- Designing the environment to include open ended materials that invite a multitude of interpretations and representations for use

- Continually reflecting on their observations of children's play in the indoor and outdoor environments, and scaffolding on children's interests, strengths, and abilities

- Carefully interpreting when to intervene in children's play, and when to allow the play to be directed by the children – such interventions may be called for when children are not able to mediate in conflicts, or when the educator may be able to provide some thoughtful questions to extend children's thinking, or some materials needed to allow the children's plans to continue. The educator's decision about when, if, and how to intervene in children's play is an important on, as children may often end their play due to unwanted adult intervention.

- Engaging children in conversations to better understand their theories about how things work, and to use questioning techniques and strategies to probe children's thinking – recognizing that it is more valuable that children arrive at a solution than to offer one

- Documenting and analyzing children's interactions with the learning environment

- Maintaining close communication with parents in order to incorporate children's unique family, cultural, or community contexts into the learning environment

- Allowing children to document their own work in order to share with parents so that the children's activities and learned concepts may be extended in activities at home

The imitating and exploring play of infants and toddlers (and the underlying development and organization of the brain) evolve into symbolic thinking and the capacity for pretend or imaginative play. Pretend play is a form of communication that requires the pretenders to communicate with each other using language gestures and symbolic objects to tell and retell stories

Berk & Winsler, 1995

The over-arching concepts of Relationships, Environments, and Experiences underlie the learning principles for PEI's Early Learning Framework:

- *Children's learning is enhanced through strong, nurturing, secure, and positive relationships.*
- *Children's learning is enhanced in environments that are safe and secure, responsive to children's interests, spark curiosity and creativity, and that invite exploration, manipulation, and a sense of discovery.*
- *Children's development depends on warm, nurturing, caring and consistent experiences.*
- *Children are unique individuals. Their learning and development depend on experiences that account for their unique talents, abilities, personalities, and cultures.*
- *Children's learning is enhanced when they are active agents in planning and designing their own play based learning experiences.*

These principles underpin the Early Learning Framework's Goals, Objectives, and Strategies. They are a dynamic set of principles, in the sense that each one supports the intent of the other. The evidence that supports the principles provides a scientific base for the goals, objectives, and strategies of the Framework.

The scientific evidence on the significant developmental impacts of early experiences, caregiving relationships, and environmental threats is incontrovertible. Virtually every aspect of early human development, from the brain's evolving circuitry to the child's capacity for empathy, is affected by the environments and experiences that are encountered in a cumulative fashion, beginning early in the prenatal period and extending throughout the early childhood years. The science of early development is also clear about the specific importance of parenting and of regular caregiving relationships more generally. The question today is not whether early experience matters, but rather how early experiences shape individual development and contribute to children's continued movement along positive pathways.

From Neurons to Neighborhoods (2005)

LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Well-Being

Social and Personal Responsibility

Exploration and Discovery

Expression and Communication

LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

"Childhood has its own way of seeing, thinking, and feeling and nothing is more foolish than to try and substitute ours for theirs."

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)

Overview

The Learning Goals for children from infancy to four years old provide the basis for program planning and assessment in Early Years Centres in PEI. They are grounded in the PEI Vision for Children, which guides the early years system in Prince Edward Island. These goals represent our beliefs about the attitudes and skills that lay the foundation for children's learning and development. Implementation of the goals and the objectives is guided and supported by the Learning Principles: relationships, environments, and experiences.

As noted in Section 1, this vision presents an ecological view of children – as members of families, communities, and society. Our philosophical view of an ecological relationship between children and their families, communities, and environments leads to an understanding of an Early Years Centre as a social-ecological early learning system – with strong and healthy relationships between children, their parents, and the early childhood professionals involved in the program.

For this reason, the Learning Goals outlined in this framework are relevant to children, parents, and educators. The PEI Early Learning Framework is designed with the conviction that in order to truly facilitate children's development in these goal areas, the social-ecological learning system must address the same goals for parents and educators.

Each of the goal areas discusses this relevance. The Learning Objectives outlined are relevant to the children's program of learning in Early Years Centres. Following this section, the goals and objectives move from theory to practice in *Section 7: Strategies and Reflections*.

WELL-BEING

A sense of well-being is important for all human beings in all facets of their lives. A sense of well being results from the satisfaction of having basic needs met – for physical needs such as the needs for warmth, hunger, and physical safety. But well being also means that the human needs for tenderness, affection, and recognition from others are provided for.

For children, well being means that children feel confident and competent; they are happy and satisfied, and express attitudes of optimism, openness, curiosity and resilience. A sense of well being underpins children's capacity for learning – and allows children to seek out and engage others in expressive language, gives children the confidence to explore their environments, and supports the emotional health that strengthens self-regulation.

An Ecological Learning System

In an ecological model of an Early Years Centre, it is not possible to consider the well being of children without also considering the well being of their parents, and the well being of the early childhood professionals who, as a team, strive to provide for the children's well being every day. Therefore, the Early Learning Framework recognizes that Early Years Centres provide parents and families with a sense of well being when recognize that an early years learning framework is enhanced by strong partnerships with parents who are the first and strongest influences on children's learning and development.

Early Years Centres demonstrate this when they value parents' opinions and input through such avenues as Parent Advisory Committees and regular one on one parent/staff exchanges, encourage open communication with parents, and design their programs to reflect the needs, cultures, and languages of the children's families.

Early Childhood Educators enjoy a sense of well being when their opinions and ideas are valued and respected, and they have opportunities to influence the early learning environment. This is evident when they are able to practice their

profession in supportive environments with appropriate pedagogical leadership and direction; are fairly compensated according to their education, experience, and level of responsibility; and are able to pursue relevant professional development opportunities.

Learning Objectives

For purposes of children's learning and development, three objectives for the goal of Well Being are identified:

- Physical Health and Personal Safety

- Sense of Identity and Self-Concept

- Emotional Health and Belonging

These objectives, along with strategies and reflections, are explored in Section 7.

EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY

"And so we discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being."

Maria Montessori

From infancy, children have a natural curiosity about their world. Using all of their senses, young infants explore sounds, colours, shapes, and patterns. They listen to language, and touch everything they see – exploring to discover what it feels like, what it tastes like, does it move? Sensory stimulation - such as touch, vision, sound, pain, taste, smell, temperature and positioning (proprioception system) - affects the structure and function of the brain during early life. (Mustard and McCain, 1999)

The science of early childhood development tells us that from birth to three years old, children's brains are up to three times as active as the adult brain. Over 100 years ago, Montessori proposed that infants naturally "absorb" their environments in the first three years of life. Today, neuroscience tells us that seven hundred synapses are formed in the brain *every second* during the first year of life.

As children grow, some of the synapses formed during the early years are pruned away, as children grow to adapt to their environments and surroundings. But during the first six years, children continue to form new neural pathways, which become strengthened through continued sensory experiences and social interactions.

Human children develop through social interactions. Physical activity with each other and with adults builds an understanding of limits and the ability to monitor growing strength. Children develop problem-solving strategies from first-hand actions with objects in their world, and from exchanging points of view with other children and with adults. Children learn the tools of their culture, including literacy and numeracy, through their interactions with the environment and each other.

Early Years Study 2, Putting Science Into Action (2007)

A sense of exploration and discovery supports children in their learning. Rather than a concentrated focus on giving children "information and facts", instilling a sense of exploration and discovery gives children the tools, dispositions, and attitudes they need to learn throughout their early years, and to continue to pursue a lifetime of learning.

An Ecological Learning System

Within the ecological learning system in an Early Years Centre, parents too need to be supported to develop their own sense of exploration and discovery. As their children grow and develop, early childhood professionals make that learning visible to parents, so that parents are supported in their own discovery of their child's strengths, interests, and abilities, and may explore how this knowledge enhances their parenting approaches. Early Years Centres support parents in exploring their community's resources that may help them to encourage their children's quests for learning.

Early Years Centres also support parents to explore and learn about provincial systems (health, education, community services) that impact their family. Through Parent Advisory Committees, Early Years Centres give parents a mechanism to collaborate in their exploration and discovery of the type of learning and development that their children are involved in every day, and information that supports them in their parenting roles.

As key components of the ecological learning system, early childhood professionals grow in their knowledge and understanding of young children's development by cultivating a sense of exploration and discovery in their own professional development. Directors, ECEs and other early childhood practitioners need the opportunities to reflect on their observations of children and be able to deepen and broaden their theoretical knowledge. A strong value placed on the pursuit and exploration of new knowledge supports educators in this practice.

Early childhood professionals need to work in an early learning system that encourages and supports them to build on their knowledge and professional credentials. Early Years Centres support educators to continue to explore and discover new lessons in the science about early childhood development, and be able to apply those lessons to their practice.

Learning Objectives

For purposes of children's learning and development, three objectives for the goal of Exploration and Discovery are identified:

- Curious Investigation
- Problem Solving and Numeracy
- Reason, Logic, and Scientific Inquiry

These objectives, along with strategies and reflections, are explored in Section 7.

THE HUNDRED LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN

The child
is made of one hundred.
The child has
a hundred languages
a hundred hands
a hundred thoughts
a hundred ways of thinking
of playing, of speaking.
A hundred always a hundred
ways of listening
of marveling of loving
a hundred joys
for singing and understanding
a hundred worlds
to discover
a hundred worlds
to invent
a hundred worlds
to dream.
The child has
a hundred languages
(and a hundred hundred hundred
more)
but they steal ninety-nine.
The school and the culture
separate the head from the body.

They tell the child:
to think without hands
to do without head
to listen and not to speak
to understand without joy
to love and to marvel
only at Easter and at Christmas.
They tell the child:
to discover the world already there
and of the hundred
they steal ninety-nine.
They tell the child:
that work and play
reality and fantasy
science and imagination
sky and earth
reason and dream
are things
that do not belong together.
And thus they tell the child
that the hundred is not there.
The child says:
No way. The hundred is there.

Loris Malaguzzi
Founder of Reggio Emilia

There is overwhelming evidence to emphasize the importance of language – in all of its forms - as a foundation to all facets of human development and learning. From birth, children use a wide variety of means to express their needs, frustrations, joy, ideas, and thoughts to others. As parents and caregivers respond to babies' cries, infants learn that there is an aspect of social interaction and information exchange to their communications. For very young children, expression and communication are integrally linked to emotional and social development.

Children's expressions involve a range of behaviours, including smiling, crying, withdrawal, making gestures, showing excitement, singing, signing, dancing, drawing, and constructing. In the early years, children begin to develop attitudes and skills in the use of oral language – words, phrases, and narrative stories – and in written communication. These attitudes and skills are foundational to life-long success in learning.

In an Early Years Centre, children are encouraged to use their "hundred languages", and Early Childhood Educators are sensitive to their efforts, recognize and respect their expressions, and value children's experimentation with symbols, representations, and language for expression.

Children "communicate" when they construct with blocks, sculpt with clay, create drawing and paintings, use symbols to make pictures or to write words. Children who create pretend situations in their play use communication to negotiate with friends to decide on roles to play, props to use, or stories to recreate. Children use recollection and narrative discourse to re-tell stories or events. It is through their expression and communication that parents and educators learn about children's thinking, their ideas, and who they are.

Early Childhood Educators provide opportunities for children to be able to communicate their feelings, thoughts, and ideas through careful and thoughtful design of the environment, and the ECEs' own use of language and expression. ECEs are skilled at maintaining a special balance in their exchanges with children – to respond to children's expressions in ways that inspire children to continue their communication, rather than replacing children's language with their own.
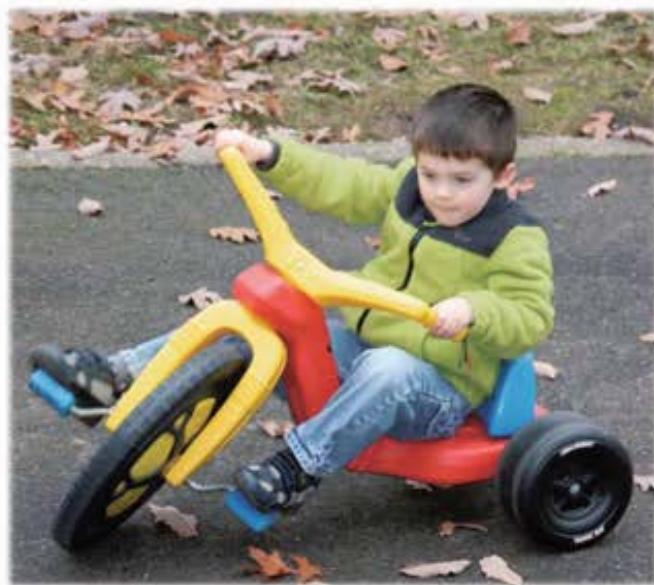
An Ecological Learning System

Parents and families' capacity for expression and communication is a key facet that contributes to their sense of partnership with and involvement in an Early Years Centre. Parents are able to pose questions and express their viewpoints and opinions through involvement in the Parent Advisory Committee, or by individual conversations with the Director and/or the Early Childhood Educators in their child's program. Parents may use multiple avenues for their expression and communication, and may convey their opinions through different behaviours and exchanges. It is important that Directors of Early Years Centres ensure that parents with diverse cultural backgrounds and/or first languages are accommodated to express and communicate their ideas and contributions to the program.

Early childhood professionals need to know that they have regular and consistent opportunities for expression and communication – with other early childhood educators, with the Director and/or management for the Early Years Centre, with parents, and with other professionals. Through reflective practice, educators are able to share their ideas with other educators, pose questions, collaborate in problem-solving and participate in development of new strategies for specific children, groups, or for the centre as a whole. As a key part of the provincial Early Years System, early childhood professionals' communications are an integral aspect of ongoing policy development.

Learning Objectives

For purposes of children's learning and development, three objectives for the goal of Expression and Communication are identified:

- Language and Literacies
- Creativity and the Arts
- Symbols and Representation

These objectives, along with strategies and reflections, are explored in Section 7.

SOCIAL AND PERSONAL 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.

New Brunswick Curriculum Framework for Early Learning and Child Care

Young infants begin to develop a sense of their own identity through their interactions with their parents and caregivers. As young children move through the toddler and preschool years, they develop an awareness of their family – including their relationships with brothers, sisters, grandparents, and others. Eventually, their sphere of awareness expands to include their communities, and the neighbours and others they interact with – their friends, their doctor, or the people who work at the grocery store.

An Early Years Centre represents the child's out-of-home community – and involves other children (and especially their friends), the adults in the centre, and to an extent, the parents of the other children. Many children in Early Years Centres know when "Anna's mother has arrived" or "David's father is here".

When guided by knowledgeable and skilled early childhood educators, children who participate in programs in Early Years Centres develop a sense of fairness and equity as members of the group. They learn to understand and treasure diversity, recognize the rhythms of different languages, and to appreciate their own and others' talents and limitations. Children participate in celebrations of family and community customs, and within that environment, begin to value their own unique family culture and traditions. These kinds of experiences help children to build a unique sense of identity, strengthen their emotional health, and help children to build the core skills of executive functioning, including self regulation.

Social and personal responsibility also extends beyond the Early Years Centre, and educators can introduce children to their responsibilities to the environment and the natural world. Children's participation in activities that promote a sense of responsibility for caring for the earth and all forms of life enables those children to establish a life-long attitude toward environmental awareness.

Cultural history

Prince Edward Island's history includes rich Mi'kmaq tradition. The Mi'kmaq occupation of Epekwitk, known today as the province of Prince Edward Island, dates

back thousands of years.

Key characteristics of learning in aboriginal cultures reflect the rich principles and values of the Mi'Kmaq culture itself. These include:

- Learning is holistic.
- Learning is a lifelong process.
- Learning is experiential in nature.
- Learning is rooted in Aboriginal languages and cultures.
- Learning is spiritually oriented.
- Learning is a communal activity, involving family, community and Elders.
- Learning is an integration of Aboriginal and Western knowledge.

An old Mi'Kmaq story describes how Glooscap, a Mi'kmaq creation figure, carefully and thoughtfully placed the territory of Epekwitk on the gentle laughing waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Glooscap then slept on a sandy beach, waking years later with a strong conviction to protect the integrity of this serene island, Prince Edward Island. He then devoted his time on earth to this task.

(Source: The Canadian Council on Learning (CCL, 2007, p. 5)

An Ecological System of Learning

Parental involvement in Early Years Centres provides them with an avenue for becoming involved not only in the child's program, but also in other community-based activities. When children are able to extend their experiences from the early childhood program to their own home, it allows children to feel recognized for their efforts, and validates their learning.

Opportunities to build connections and a sense of social responsibility in a community are especially important for families who are newcomers to Prince Edward Island, and whose customs and traditions may not be familiar to some. By building community connections through the Early Years Centre, parents and families who are new to PEI establish friendships, are able to share their own cultures and traditions, and are able to better understand the customs of the communities where they live. These types of opportunities help families to build social capital, a strong determinant of health.

Social and personal responsibility for early childhood professionals extends to the work they do in the Early Years Centre, and also to the provincial early years system. As professionals, early childhood educators are responsible for ethical decision making in their work with children, families, and with colleagues. They have a responsibility to respect the confidentiality of the children and families who participate in the program at their Early Years Centre. They understand the implications of sharing others' personal information through various social media.

Early Childhood Educators have a social and personal responsibility to support the best interests of children, and to be aware of their legal responsibilities to do so. They have a social, personal, and professional responsibility to the early childhood system, their profession, and to ongoing professional learning and inquiry.

Learning Objectives

For purposes of children's learning and development, three objectives for the goal of Social and Personal Responsibility are identified:

- Self Regulation and Self-Discipline
- Culture and Heritage
- Environmental Awareness and Care of the Earth

These objectives, along with strategies and reflections, are explored in Section 7.

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STRATEGIES

Strategies for supporting children's learning and development in the developmental domains identified by the PEI Early Learning Framework's Goals and objectives rely on the early childhood educator's professional judgment and the pedagogical leadership of the director in an Early Years Centre.

Children who participate in early childhood programs represent a range of developmental abilities, family backgrounds, cultural and linguistic diversity, and individual personalities and temperaments. Interpretation and implementation of the Early Learning Framework's goals will be guided by all of the above considerations. The goals and objectives outlined in the PEI Early Learning Framework are intended to unify and provide consistency to the curriculum in Early Years Centres, but the actual strategies and activities in each centre will – and should – appear to be different.

The strategies outlined in this chapter are organized according to each of the learning goals and their objectives. Examples described as "this is evident when…."and "Early Childhood Educators support this when they…." are presented for infants and toddlers (infants and two year olds), and for preschool children (three and four year olds).

These strategies however, are intended to illustrate the *range* of approaches that may be taken in an Early Years Centre. They should not be interpreted as a checklist, or a menu of activities that need to be implemented. It is only through the educator's reflective practice and the centre's careful team planning that program activities will be planned for children.

Early Years Centres are responsive to children and their families, and reflective of community cultures. Educators bring their specific talents and strengths to each program. Therefore, it is expected that each Early Years Centre will address the goals and objectives as outlined in this framework, but that each centre will use a unique blend of activities.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

One of the key roles for the early childhood educator is to develop expertise in reflective practice. This begins with careful and thoughtful observation of children and their interactions with each other, with the environment and with adults. Based on those observations, early childhood educators:

- Think about the child's experiences
- Analyze the child's approach to relationships, the learning environment, and her day to day experiences
- Draw on their own professional knowledge, principles, and experience to interpret the child's behaviours

Critical Reflection is the art of thinking deeply about our own fundamental beliefs, with the goal of understanding the various cultural and social forces and factors that shape our own sense of self.

British Columbia Early Learning Framework: From Theory to Practice

- Document their impressions to share with parents, to build the child's portfolio, and/or to continue to engage in their own professional reflections.

Reflections

In reflective practice, educators consider their observations of children, and then use those observations to challenge themselves on what they know about the child, what they believe about children, how they are informed by their professional knowledge – and to then find consistency and congruency in this analysis.

It is through this type of reflective practice that early childhood educators are able to examine and critique their beliefs about culture and diversity, and how those beliefs and values influence their views of a child's behaviours. Educators have a responsibility to learn about and be responsive to cultural and societal differences among the children they interact with, and to be sensitive to and able to recognize their own values and beliefs systems.

Reflective questioning is a challenging process that requires deep thought.   Reflective questions do not simply ask "how the day went".   Reflective questions probe the educator's values, assumptions, and professional knowledge. Critical reflection explores such questions as:

- How does my observation fit with my understanding of the child? Why do I think this about this child?

- Have I taken into account this child's unique familial or cultural background? How do I integrate my knowledge about his background into my reflections on his behaviours?

- How have I incorporated PEI's Vision of the Child into my practice, and into my analysis of my observations of this child?

- How can I nurture and encourage contributions from this child's parents into this program, and his learning?

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

The following sections present each of the goals of the Early Learning Framework, the objectives for each goal, and strategies for achieving the objectives. For each strategy, there are some examples given to suggest the various observations that would indicate that children are developing the types of knowledge and abilities related to the strategies. As well, examples of early childhood teaching practice that support such learning are suggested. And for each of the goal areas, samples of reflective questions for educators are presented.

The suggestions presented however, are intended to stimulate discussion and planning. They are not to be viewed as a developmental checklist. They are not intended to be an exhaustive or complete list of evidence of learning, nor a complete description of elements of teaching or reflective practices. This is in keeping with the format and purpose of an early learning curriculum framework – which is intended to provide common language and common focus to the pedagogical practice in early childhood programs.

The wider the range of possibilities we offer children, the more intense will be their motivations and the richer their experiences. We must widen the range of topics and goals, the types of situations we offer and their degree of structure, the kinds and combinations of resources and materials, and the possible interactions with things, peers, and adults.

Loris Malaguzzi (1920-1994), Italian early education specialist, and founder of the Reggio Emilia schools.

Educators and Directors have a responsibility to refine the suggestions presented as they develop their practices based on the unique blend of talents and experiences among educators; children's ages, interests, and abilities; cultural and linguistic backgrounds of children and families; and the communities where they are located. The successful implementation of the PEI Early Learning Framework depends on leadership from the Director of the Early Years Centre, and a team of early childhood educators with post secondary credentials in an area of learning specific to early childhood education and care, and a commitment to ongoing professional development and learning.

WELL BEING

Physical Health and Personal Safety

Sense of Identity and Self Concept

Emotional Health and Belonging

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND PERSONAL SAFETY

In order for children to develop physical health and understand personal safety they need to have the appropriate space, time, and guidance to:

- Develop independence in personal care routines

- Develop healthy attitudes toward eating

- Develop small and large muscle strength, coordination, and agility

- Create a sense of personal safety, confidence in their ability to know when something is wrong, and the importance of seeking help if they are placed in situations of violence or danger.

Children develop independence in performing personal care routines.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Experience diapering and washing routines that are carried out in secure and caring ways, with adults speaking to and interacting with children with eye contact, soft conversation, and gentle physical contact ▪ Are supported in their attempts to develop toileting independence ▪ Learn to use a washcloth to clean their own face and hands ▪ Are able to recognize their coats, jackets, shoes, boots and other personal items ▪ Attempt manipulation of buttons, snaps, Velcro closings, and zippers.	▪ Are independent in toileting practices, and understand principles of hygiene ▪ Are respectful of other children's personal space and privacy ▪ Understand the importance of cleanliness and order in their environment ▪ Are able to use a toothbrush and remember to brush their teeth after meals ▪ Have mastered skills of manipulating buttons, zippers, snaps ▪ Continue to master dressing skills, such as lacing and tying shoes ▪ Develop independence in dressing themselves for outdoor play ▪ Are able to organize and maintain their personal belongings.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Approach diapering, toileting, and washing routines in a positive and cheerful manner, using a gentle tone of voice with children and allowing each child enough time to try personal care techniques on their own

▪ Providing each child with their own washcloths, toothbrush, and encouraging children to store their personal belongings in a designated place

▪ Allow enough time for children to put on outdoor clothing without adult intervention

▪ Organize the space to allow children with simple ways to keep track of their personal belongings, including shoes, mitts, hats, etc.

▪ Introduce activities that support and complement the fine motor skills required for mastery of skills involving buttoning, zippering, etc.

Children develop healthy attitudes toward eating.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Begin to show preferences for food by smiling, or turning away	▪ Experience a range of different foods, including foods that represent cultural heritage of their families or friends
▪ Are interested in the smell, feel, colour, shape, and sound of the food they are served	▪ Approach snack and meal time with a positive attitude
▪ Are willing to experiment with new foods	▪ Are able to identify a wide range of food items and state their preferences and priorities
▪ Show that they enjoy meal time and begin to understand the customs and traditions that are in place for meals	▪ Learn about where their food is grown, how it is produced and how it gets to the store
▪ Are able to drink from a cup	
▪ Begin to recognize and name different types of foods, e.g., banana, potato, cheese, bread, milk	▪ Understand the importance of not wasting food frivolously, but also understand the importance of not eating more food when they are already satiated
▪ Learn common expressions for expressing satisfaction with food, e.g., mmm, yummy	▪ Are able to differentiate between healthy and unhealthy food choices
▪ Eat for enjoyment and nourishment.	▪ Are able to explain how food nourishes them and keeps them healthy.

Educators support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Ensure that children have a variety of nutritious foods to choose from

▪ Allow children some choices in the foods they eat

▪ Hold infants during bottle feedings, and provide a soothing and caring environment during meal times

▪ Provide consistency in meal times and arrangements

▪ Introduce new foods one at a time

▪ Establish linkages with the community regarding places where food is grown and arrange for children to visit farms, dairies, etc.

▪ Incorporate suggestions from parents for new foods, especially to introduce foods that represent the unique cultures of the children's families.

Children develop small and large muscle strength, coordination, and agility.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Infants demonstrate normative progress in such accomplishments as raising head, rolling over, sitting, and crawling	▪ Demonstrates stronger skills at running, jumping, skipping, hopping
▪ Are able to follow an object or person with their eyes	▪ May be able to climb up a ladder
▪ Reach for and pick up small objects	▪ Can coordinate their movements to music, or simple patterning commands
▪ Try to pull themselves up to a standing position	▪ Can coordinate their hands and feet, e.g., clapping and marching, running and kicking a ball (as in soccer)
▪ Gain confidence in walking and demonstrate good balance	▪ Can throw a ball at a target
▪ Are able to run short distances	▪ Can catch a ball
▪ Demonstrate eye hand coordination, such as in eating with a spoon, or threading wooden spools on a string	▪ May coordinate the use of a stick or racket to push or hit a ball
▪ May be able to stand on one foot, may be able to jump in place	▪ Gain increasing control in using a crayon or pencil
▪ Begins to climb up and down stairs	▪ Demonstrate interpretive movements, such a moving their bodies like the wind, or like a fish
▪ Can manipulate riding toys by pushing their feet	▪ Demonstrate a refined pincer grasp
▪ Can begin to manipulate a paint brush or marker	▪ Are able to manipulate small objects, e.g., locks and keys, opening bottle tops, using clothespins
▪ Can turn the pages of a book	▪ Show ability to understand the limits of their physical abilities, and the confidence to test their limits within reason.
▪ Can pick up small beads	

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

- Arrange the physical layout of the environment to encourage children to feel safe and secure while they explore through movement
- Provide opportunities to scaffold children's fine and gross motor abilities
- Encourage children who may be timid and help adventurous children to assess risks
- Model healthy approaches to physical activity
- Build in physical movement to learning activities, as the kinetic movement helps children to learn using different parts of their brains
- Encourage children and other staff to maintain activity throughout the day.

Children create a sense of personal safety, confidence in their ability to know when something is wrong, and the importance of seeking help if they are placed in situations of violence or danger.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Begin to understand that there are elements of safety that need their attention, e.g., broken glass on the sidewalk, the need to hold on to the stair railing ▪ Understand that the adults in their environment are a source of security and comfort by showing how they can return to a calm state when comforted ▪ Begin to develop a sense of personal space, and how to respect the personal space of others ▪ Learn acceptable ways to interact with other children that are gentle and friendly, and that may be welcomed by others ▪ Learn that sometimes other children do not wish to have others near them.	▪ Can describe what to do in emergency situations (e.g., fire drill) ▪ Are able to explain the roles of fire fighter, police, ambulance, doctor, etc. ▪ Can identify areas of potential danger, e.g. hot stove, boiling water, open fires, wandering too far from home, going into a car with a stranger ▪ Understand that trusted adults can be counted on for protection and help when the child is faced with a problem or a dangerous situation ▪ Demonstrate their understanding of when it is appropriate to seek help and intervention in certain situations, e.g., another child is hurt, upset, ill ▪ Are able to articulate their own needs for personal space, and are able to convey those needs to other children and adults.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Interpret children's facial and body language, expressions, and behaviours in a manner that shows respect for the child's feelings

▪ Create an atmosphere of trust and security so that children understand that they can turn to the adults in the centre if they need help

▪ Ensure that each child feels safe and protected in situations of conflict

▪ Give positive feedback to children who alert adults to problem situations, or to children who voice concerns about specific situations

▪ Encourage children who appear to be upset to explore their emotions and to voice their concerns.

SENSE OF IDENTITY AND SELF CONCEPT

In order for children to develop a sense of identity and self-concept they need to have the appropriate space, time, and guidance to:

- Develop an understanding of "self" in relation to family, culture, community, and friends

- Develop a sense of their own personal identity, likes, and preferences

- Maintain their own identities while appreciating the perspective of others

- Become aware of their own strengths and abilities, likes and preferences, and unique talents

Children develop an understanding of "self" in relation to family, culture, community, and friends.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Initiate and maintain eye contact with other children and with adults	▪ Are able to identify their own space and belongings, and show respect for the space/belongings of other children
▪ Respond to non-verbal invitations from other children to engage in play activities	▪ Recognize and can name the members of their families, including extended family
▪ Participate in simple games such as "Peek a Boo"	▪ Become familiar with names of the other children and adults
▪ Begin to identify their own space, e.g., their crib/mat, their own coat hook, their boots/shoes	▪ Have opportunities to visit places in their community, e.g., farms, library, park, etc.
▪ Engage with others either through sounds or with eye contact	▪ Are able to tell others about common community places, including why one would go to the library, bakery, doctor's office, church, etc.
▪ Recognize other children and/or adults, and respond appropriately	▪ Are able to represent their understanding of themselves, their families, friends and community through their play.
▪ Can point to pictures of members of their family when prompted, i.e., Where's mommy? Where's Grandpa?	
▪ Begin to develop a sense of their own right to privacy and space.	

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Maintain consistent environments for children, so that they are able to develop relationships with familiar adults and children

▪ Speak directly to each child at their own physical level (i.e., bend or crouch down) in order to keep eye contact; and use gentle gestures of touch to redirect children to maintain eye contact

▪ Provide play environments that allow children to represent their knowledge of themselves, their families and communities

▪ Invite parents and other community members to the centre

▪ Utilize community resources for planning walks and excursions.

Children develop a sense of their own personal identity, likes and preferences.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Begin to indicate their preferences for different types of foods, toys, activities, etc. through their gestures, smiles, or other types of non-verbal communication ▪ Are able to respond to questions such as "Would you like some juice?" ▪ Are able to make choices when presented with more than one option, such as "Would you like to ride on the scooter or play on the slide?" ▪ Show gradually increasing ability to self identify in groups, such as the children who have a puppy at home, the children who sleep in a bed, the children who like apples, etc.	▪ Are able to introduce themselves to other children or adults by name ▪ Are increasingly able to describe themselves within the context of their families (e.g., I have a baby sister), their extended families, where they live, etc. ▪ Are increasingly able to verbalize their likes and dislikes with respect to food, activities, colours, books, holidays, etc. ▪ Begin to provide a rationale for their choices and preferences by explaining why they prefer apples to oranges, or winter to summer, etc. ▪ Begin to learn and appreciate the individual identities and personalities of others.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Give children opportunities to make choices and state/indicate preferences

▪ Respect the choices that children make by allowing children to follow through on their preferences, or by listening to their reasons for changing their minds

▪ Encourage children to think about their own individual reasons for their behaviours

▪ Design a learning environment that allows children to make choices about their activities

▪ Reflect back to children the processes used when they made a selection, for example, first we had a box of crayons, and then everyone thought about what would be the best colours to use for their pictures, etc.

▪ Model a sense of personal identity by frequently stating personal likes and dislikes, e.g., "My favourite colour is purple"; "I like to play in the snow", etc. thereby encouraging children to think about their own personal likes and dislikes.

Children maintain their own identities while appreciating the perspective of others.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
- Begin to develop the concept of turn taking and sharing - Are familiar with their own belongings and can identify what is theirs, including their parents, siblings – and understand that other children also have their own belongings and families - Begin to experience fewer frustrations when their don't get their own way - Demonstrate beginnings of empathy in their relationships with other children - Model empathy in plays situations, e.g., caring for dolls, pretending to be a puppy, etc. - Are able to identify and predict how others may feel in story books, e.g., "Do you think she's going to be happy? Why not?"	- Are able to predict and explain behavioural responses in stories; e.g., "Why is he afraid? Would you be afraid?" - Are able to negotiate with other children in complex dramatic play situations regarding roles and rules - Begin to demonstrate development of "theory of mind", which indicates that a child can predict how others might think in a particular situation, e.g., "Where do you think he will look first? Why would he do that? What could he be thinking?" - Are able to verbalize and explain their own thinking on a topic or situation, and also verbalize how this may be different from another's thinking, e.g., "I want to put the boats in the water table, but she wants to put the fish in because she thinks the boats go too fast."

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

- Provide consistent messages to children regarding their own individual rights within the group, and the rights of others
- Engage children in discussions about their own reactions to specific situations, and encourage children to share their predictions of how others may react and respond
- Provide guidance for children to "talk it out" when they are in disagreement with others
- Design the learning environment to support opportunities for children to develop "theory of mind"
- Provide children with positive feedback when they are able to explain another's point of view.

Children become aware of their own strengths, abilities, likes and preferences and unique talents.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Recognize their growing range of physical abilities (e.g., able to go up the stairs, able to move on the ride on toys, able to jump, reach the books) and show a sense of satisfaction in their accomplishments ▪ Show confidence in attempting to master new skills ▪ Demonstrate perseverance in trying new things, e.g., a new scooter, playing a new game of ball, etc. ▪ Begin to recognize and appreciate their limitations, e.g., not able to carry three balls at the same time; not yet able to open the door ▪ Begin to show an understanding of their strengths and talents by indicating a preference for specific types of activities, e.g., running, singing, dancing, tumbling, speaking, etc.	▪ Begin to recognize that there are many types of talents and abilities ▪ Begin to recognize that each child has a unique set of talents, and understand that they may not always be able to do the same things as other children ▪ Appreciate their own talents, and demonstrate them when possible ▪ Recognize strengths and talents in other children, recognize these during play activities, and may praise or comment other children for them ▪ Use their abilities to help other children who may not be able to accomplish the same results ▪ Refrain from ridiculing or teasing other children who may not be able to demonstrate the same level of skills.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

- Use scaffolding techniques to encourage children to master new skills and abilities

- Prepare the learning environment so that all children – regardless of their range of ability – are able to experience the satisfaction of success

- Provide a balance of opportunities for children to be in groups with other children with similar skills and abilities, as well as opportunities for children to be in groups with children of mixed ranges of abilities in order to foster the sense of cooperation among children

- Are sensitive to the need to celebrate each child's accomplishments and special talents by verbally recognizing areas of competency

- Recognize talents in all areas, including movement, visual arts, kindness, nurturing personalities, singing, memory, creative ideas, dance, running, climbing, etc.

EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND BELONGING

In order for children to develop emotional health and belonging they need to have the appropriate space, time, and guidance to:

- Develop trusting relationships with educators and other children

- Enjoy a sense of security and safety within the environment of the Early Years Centre

- Learn how to express their emotions and feelings in a comfortable and positive manner

- Be respectful of individual differences in others

Children develop trusting relationships with educators and other children.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
- Show evidence of emotions, including pleasure, discomfort, excitement, joy, fear, sadness, frustration, contentment, etc. - Demonstrate affection through hugs, smiles, kisses - Are able to be soothed by educators when they are upset - Demonstrate a sense of attachment to the educators in their group, and may begin to show a preference for some adults - Begin to show that they are able to self-regulate their own emotions, and are able to soothe themselves when upset - Are increasingly able to easily separate from family when arriving at the centre - Express joy and excitement at seeing educators and other children.	- Feel comfortable to express their emotions and/or frustrations to educators - Are able to respond positively to educator's attempts to explore reasons for discomfort or frustrations - Demonstrate increasing capacity for developing friendships with other children - Demonstrate evidence of appreciation of trusting relationships in their complex dramatic play - May begin to show preference for one educator over another as relationships become stronger - Are able to provide comfort to other children - Are comfortable in following direction from educators.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

- Consistently respond to each child's feeling of distress by providing comfort

- Relate to all children with a sense of respect, fairness, and warmth

- Acknowledge children's feelings by giving language to the child's expression. This allows the educator to demonstrate that language can describe feelings, and allows the child to know that their feelings are understood, with the security that there is a comforting response.

- Collaborate with parents and families in establishing appropriate responses to children's cues and behaviours, so that the child learns a shared pattern of response between the home and the centre

- Observe children to understand behavioural cues, and in order to respond appropriately to their needs.

Children enjoy a sense of security and safety within the environment of the Early Years Centre.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
• Are able to freely explore and move about in environments that encourage such movement and learning without needing constant reminders to be careful	• Are able to freely explore and move about in environments that encourage such movement and learning, and that are designed to protect children's safety in both indoor and outdoor environments
• Respond to comfort given by educators and are able to be soothed	• Recognize that they are able to seek help or guidance from the early childhood educators whenever they need it
• Are able to use all of their senses in their exploration and play, with security that all materials are non-toxic, clean, and purposefully chosen	• Represent attitudes and a sense of security in their dramatic play activities, and are able to model a nurturing and caring attitude toward others in their play
• Understand that there are responsive and responsible adults that are consistently available to them in times of discomfort	• Are able to calculate and consider risks in their play and movement, e.g., determining if they are ready to go down the slide, climb a tree, or able to pour some juice or water
• Enjoy obvious connections between their homes and the centre, such as blankets and soft toys from home in their cribs, pictures of their family members, etc.	• Share their confidence and security by reassuring others, including younger children, as they explore and try new things.
• Are able to observe friendly and collegial communication between their parents and the educators.	

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

• Ensure that the learning environment is carefully planned to encourage children's explorations without putting children at risk, and that the materials used are non-toxic, clean, and safe for each age group

• Consistently encourage children by giving positive verbal and non-verbal feedback

• Respond to each child's immediate needs for comfort and reassurance

• Collaborate with parents regarding appropriate responses to children so that both home and EYC give consistent messages.

Children learn how to express their emotions and feelings in a comfortable and positive manner

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
- Show emotional reactions, such as joy, distress, surprise, etc. - Begin to develop personal strategies to self-soothe during times of discomfort - Begin to show emerging abilities in emotional self regulation; child develops alternate expressions of emotional release that are socially acceptable - Seek out a dependable person for assistance when they are upset - Begin to associate non-verbal cues with emotion, e.g., are able to "show me a happy face" or "show me a sad face"; are able to recognize non-verbal cues in emotion from other children; are able to associate facial expressions with a range of emotions, e.g., happy, sad, surprised, worried, frightened.	- Are able to verbalize and explain their emotions and feelings to educators and/or other children - Show increasing ability in emotional self control; child develops alternate expressions of emotional release that are socially acceptable to the group, and may choose to remove him/herself from the activity as a strategy - Are able to explore their feelings and emotional responses through their dramatic play activities - Experiment with expression of emotions and feelings with other children and adults - Are able to discuss the feasibility of alternative approaches to handling emotional reactions to situations - Are able to engage in negotiation and conflict resolution with other children.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

- Give language to the child's emotions. This acknowledges children's feelings by giving legitimacy and importance to all of their emotions. This allows the educator to demonstrate that language can describe feelings, and allows the child to know that their feelings are understood, with the security that there is a comforting response.

- Facilitate discussion with children to explore alternative expressions of emotional responses to different situations

- Maintain regular contact with parents to explore how home and centre may collaborate in assisting children to develop their own personal emotional regulation strategies

- Reinforce appropriate expressions of emotion and model the same for children.

Children are respectful of individual differences in others.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Begin to show an interest in other children in the group ▪ Begin to develop an awareness that other children may have different perspectives and to give indication of an understanding of those differences ▪ Begins to demonstrate an awareness of their own individual traits and the traits in others ▪ Begin to show patience and tolerance when engaged in activities with children who may have different abilities, interests, ideas, or preferences ▪ Begin to show flexibility in their behaviours toward other children, and in being able to accept that in a group, everyone has the right to participate even if they do so in a different way.	▪ Begin to develop understanding that there are differences between / among children as well as similarities; begin to be able to describe what makes each child different, and what makes each child the same ▪ Begins to develop an appreciation for the differences between/among children, and is able to show that appreciation in social dramatic play activities, e.g., "Let's get David to help us with the biggest log because he's so strong" or "Maybe Shelley could help you with your zipper because she's really good at it." ▪ Develops a growing understanding and empathy for children with developmental challenges; explores ways to be able to offer assistance as required.

Educators support this learning when they, for example:

- Give language to children's observations of differences among children, such as "I see Matthew got his hair cut!", "I think red is Steven's favourite colour, and I think pink is Amy's favourite colour."

- Celebrate differences in children and adults through modeling such behaviours

- Share stories, food, and music from a variety of cultures

- Emphasize that despite some differences, children are all humans and share many of the same

- Encourage and facilitate children's attempts to express their own point of view when negotiating with others, while also recognizing other's rights to different ideas

- Model respect for differences in their behaviours toward children, other educators, community representatives, and parents.

REFLECTIONS

When focusing on practice related to the learning goal of Well Being, educators may wish to consider some of the following reflective questions. The examples suggested should not be considered as a "checklist" to determine the extent of one's reflective practice – they are merely suggestions to initiate further thinking:

- How does my practice reflect the Framework's vision for children and learning principles – have I considered the interaction between relationships, environment and experiences in my program plans and implementation?

- Have I been inclusive in how I have introduced materials and activities with the children? Have I considered each child's developmental abilities, and each child's cultural background?

- Was my approach to scaffolding children's skills and abilities effective? What should I have done differently?

- Are there particular children for whom I may want to focus some additional supports? Are there children for whom I may want to speak individually to parents to discuss their motor development?

- Are my own values in conflict with how I need to work with the children regarding personal safety issues? How should I reconcile any differences?

- Are there aspects of physical development where I might want to do more reading or research? Is this something I need to speak to the Director about, or discuss at a team/staff meeting?

- What did I learn from the children regarding aspects of their well being? How will I incorporate that learning into my practice?

- What have I learned from other educators and colleagues that may contribute to my ability to enhance the well-being of children? Have I shared any new observations or perspectives that I have gained with others?

- Are there any ethical concerns that have arisen through my work with this group of children? If so, what options are available to me to address these?

- Is there any additional support I need from the Director in order to strengthen my practice in this area?

- How have I involved parents and families in my efforts to address the goal of children's well being? Would I do anything differently?

EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY

Curious
Investigation

Problem
Solving and
Numeracy

Reason,
Logic, and
Scientific
Inquiry
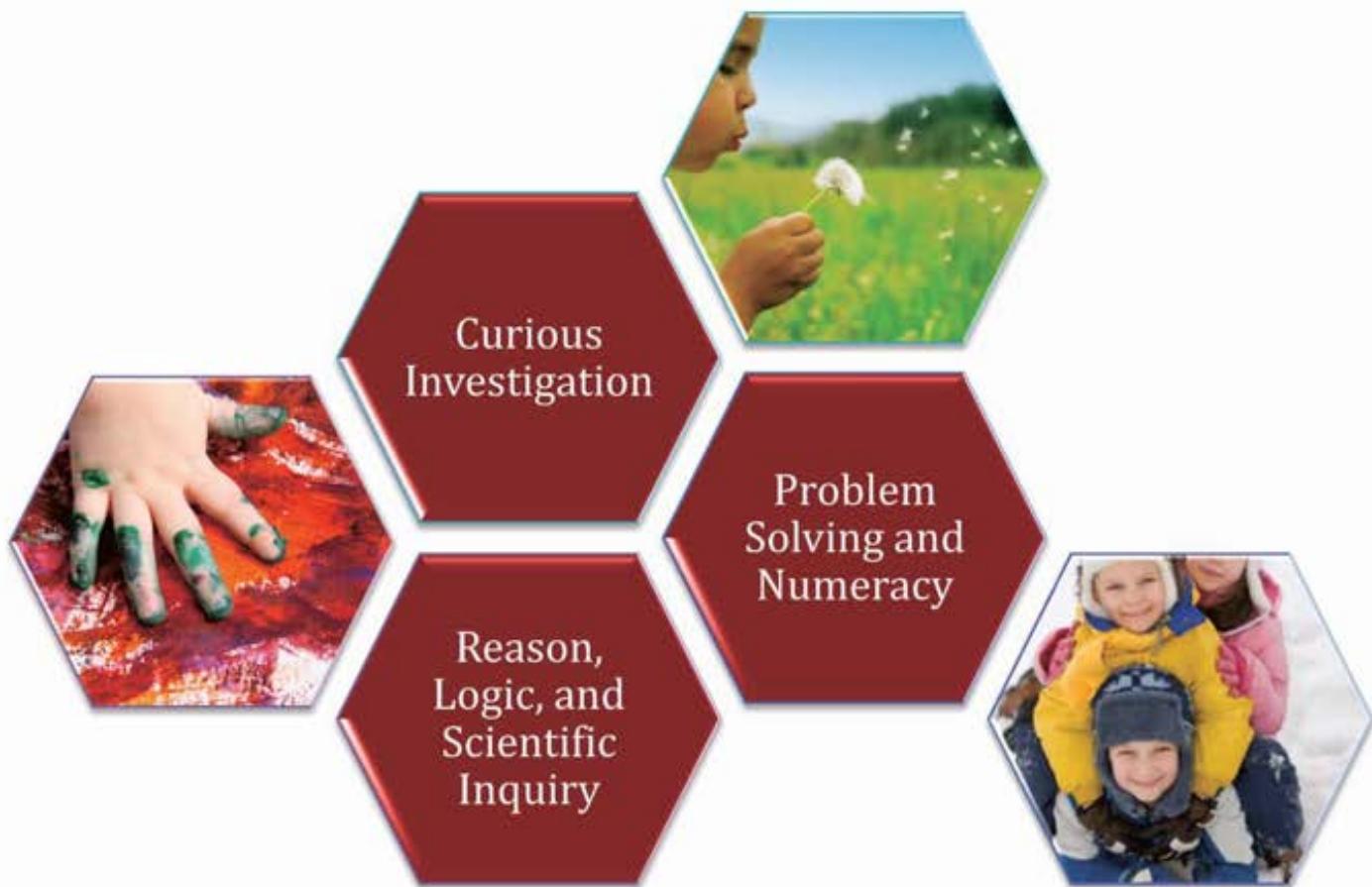
CURIOUS INVESTIGATION

In order for children to develop a learning disposition of curious investigation they need to have the appropriate space, time, and guidance to:

- Use their senses and bodies to investigate, explore, and develop understanding of their environment

- Incorporate investigation and exploration into their play activities

- Develop an ability to concentrate and persevere in their explorations and investigations

- Develop a sense of excitement about the world, and its endless possibilities for new discoveries

Children use their senses and bodies to investigate, explore, and develop an understanding of their environment.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Begin to reach for objects that are near them in order to touch, taste, smell, etc.	▪ Use their bodies to skip, crawl, hop, jump, and slide
▪ Enjoy a variety of types of food with different smells, tastes, and textures	▪ Use body movements to represent their play, e.g., crawl like a baby, slither like a snake, march in a parade
▪ Use their bodies to squeeze into small places, to roll on carpets, to crawl under tables	▪ Develop an awareness of what they can and can't do with their bodies
▪ Explore different ways to produce sounds, e.g., using their voices, walking on crunchy leaves, clapping	▪ Improve their strength and coordination skills through all types of play
▪ Experiment with objects found in the learning environment, such as soft animals, balls, manipulative materials that make sounds	▪ Make new observations about the natural environment, including behaviours of insects, birds, and animals; trees, flowers; clouds; weather patterns, etc.
▪ Are able to manipulate materials to produce a sound, or tone (cause and effect)	▪ Begin to see relationships among objects in their environment, both at the centre (indoor and outdoor), at home, and in the community
▪ Are eager to explore new things in the learning environment.	▪ Show initiative in wanting to find out about new things; seek information by asking thoughtful questions.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Design a learning environment that regularly introduces open ended materials that have a multitude of functions and that encourage investigation

▪ Design a learning environment that is full of different textures, sights, sounds and heights in order to appeal to all areas of a child's senses and open opportunities for different ways to respond with physical movement

▪ Scaffold children's learning activities to challenge them to use their bodies in different ways, including dance, creative movement, yoga, and interpretive movement.

▪ Involve parents and community members as part of the world of investigation for children.

Children incorporate investigation and exploration into their play activities.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Experiment with sounds, sights, touch, and taste in their play activities	▪ Return to previous activities and try new approaches
▪ Experiment with their food, e.g., pushing fingers into cheese, rub pudding on the dish, etc.	▪ Are able to transfer knowledge gained in one experience to an investigation in another activity
▪ Show evidence of the concept of object permanence by searching for things that are hidden from view, e.g., cover the ball with a blanket and ask, "Where is the ball?"	▪ Are able to verbalize and re-construct previous learning to think about how else to approach the activity
▪ Seek out objects and toys that are familiar, and try new ways to use them	▪ Are sensitive to changes in the outdoor environment, particularly with changes in seasons, and how changes in temperature and weather affect the sights, sounds, and textures
▪ Are observant and notice new materials, toys, etc. in the centre	▪ Engage in dramatic play activities that involve investigation of new ideas, new materials, and new concepts
▪ Enjoy games that challenge them to find out how things function, e.g., open doors, latches	▪ Incorporate development of charts, graphs, and similar measures to explore opinions, observations, etc.
▪ Enjoy stories and games with predictable outcomes.	

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Model a curious mind for the children – "I wonder what this is?"

▪ Give language to the process of decision-making: ``I wonder which block I should choose first so my tower won't fall down. Let me think what I can use to make this work.I know, I will put the two biggest ones together that will make it strong."

▪ Design a learning environment that regularly introduces open ended materials that have a multitude of functions and that encourage investigation

▪ Scaffold children's interests in the learning environment to encourage inquisitiveness

▪ Respond respectfully to children's questions, and encourage children to ask thoughtful questions to gather needed information

▪ Include sufficient time in activities – especially outdoor excursions – to allow children to stop, investigate, explore, and pursue their exploration without being hurried.

Children develop an ability to concentrate and persevere in their explorations and investigations.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Demonstrate increasing levels of concentration to a task, whether listening to a story or initiating an activity on their own	▪ Are increasingly able to plan ahead and estimate time and resources needed to complete an investigation or project
▪ Are increasingly able to persist in a task even when it appears to be difficult	▪ Begin to work collaboratively with peers as they explore their environments and/or their ideas; children share ideas verbally and negotiate a plan of action
▪ Return to an activity repeatedly until it is mastered; activities may then be repeated over and over as the child integrates the new learning and experiences the satisfaction of success	▪ Are able to deal with disappointment when something doesn't turn out as planned, and are able to think about another way to approach it with a positive approach
▪ Express delight and satisfaction in their accomplishments	▪ Are able to verbalize a summary of their ideas and approaches, and decide – often with guidance – what the next steps might be
▪ Begin to demonstrate the ability to experiment with alternative approaches if one course of action is not working, e.g., child will try different ways to get the ball over the fence, or to stack one block on another.	▪ Are increasingly able to persist in a task even when it appears to be difficult
	▪ Express delight and satisfaction in their accomplishments.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Allow children to repeat activities over and over rather than stepping in and completing a task for the child

▪ Use scaffolding and questioning techniques to prompt children to carry out new lines of investigation

▪ Arrange for space for children to be able to continue to work on a project over an extended period of time, rather than putting everything away at the end of the day

▪ Facilitate group efforts to carry out extended projects.

Children develop a sense of excitement about the world, and its endless possibilities for new discoveries.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
- Show a joyous excitement as they explore the indoor and outdoor learning environments - Are eager to try new things - Are observant, and respond positively to new activities, toys, or elements of their environments - Show an increasing interest in finding out what other children are doing, as well as his/her own explorations - Begins to participate in more cooperative play activities - Requires fewer interventions from adults to engage in activities in the centre - Begins to initiate more of his/her own play based activities out of interest and curiosity.	- Use their play activities to imagine, extend and explore their ideas - Participate with other children in complex pretend/dramatic play situations, using negotiation and compromise to collaboratively design their activities - Demonstrate leadership and initiative in creating new avenues for activity and discovery - Approach their play activities with enthusiasm, laughter, and joy - Engage in a positive manner with educators in constructing and suggesting new activities - Engage in silly play, making up language, sounds, and movements.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

- Model a joy of discovery and learning in all they do, expressing excitement at new discoveries, new challenges, and sharing that excitement with children and other educators

- Create an atmosphere in the learning environment that values new ideas and innovative ways to approach routines

- Appreciate children's inventiveness and spontaneity in their play, and allow for flexibility in the environment to accommodate this

- Understand when and how to allow children to engage in silly play that may get loud and boisterous.

PROBLEM SOLVING AND NUMERACY

In order for children to develop skills and abilities in problem solving and numeracy, they need to have the appropriate space, time, and guidance to:

- Understand the concept of quantity

- Recognize numeric symbols

- Demonstrate an understanding of the association and relationship of quantity and symbols

- Use mathematical concepts to solve questions and problems that arise during play

Children understand the concept of quantity

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Ask for "more" ▪ Play in sand or water and are able to indirectly absorb the concepts of more and less, full and empty ▪ Experience language from adults regarding concepts of quantity, to give language to the sensorial impressions they receive from the environment, e.g., "There is lots of snow in the yard by the tree; there are many children here today; here is one apple slice, and another… and now you have two apple slices." ▪ Participate in songs and finger plays that present concepts of quantity, e.g., five little buns in the bakers shop; five little pumpkins sitting on a gate ▪ Begin to show an understanding of temporal knowledge and sequencing, e.g., "We will have a snack when we return from our walk."	▪ Begin to show a more developed understanding of temporal knowledge, e.g., today, yesterday, tomorrow, later, after the winter, when you were a baby ▪ Are able to distinguish between size dimensions (representing quantities of measurement and/or degree) such as more/less, long/short, heavy/light, loud/soft, smooth/rough ▪ Are able to count objects but may not be yet able to recognize number symbols[1], e.g., able to put two crackers on each plate but do not recognize the figure "2" ▪ Understand that when objects are spread out, they represent the same quantity (conservation of number) ▪ Show proficiency at one to one correspondence – e.g., one napkin for each child; point to each object once in counting the total ▪ Are increasingly able to count to higher numbers; may often exaggerate quantities, e.g., "I want 14 scoops of ice cream."

Educators support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Provide many opportunities for children to indirectly absorb the concept of quantity, including numerical quantity; quantities of dimension, size, and shape; spatial relationships

▪ Focus on supporting children to develop concrete understanding of concepts of quantity before emphasizing the number symbols that represent those quantities.

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[1] In this document, the term "number symbol" is used to refer to the actual figure "1", "2", "3", and so on. Educators may also find reference to the terms "number figures", "numeric figures", or "numeric symbols" to describe the same thing, as these terms are often used interchangeably in curriculum literature.

Children recognize number symbols.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ At the infant toddler stage of development, recognition of numeric or alphabetic symbols is not a developmental characteristic. Children benefit from the opportunity to visually see such symbols in their environment, but at these ages, it is more appropriate that children have multiple opportunities to integrate the concepts of quantity as discussed previously.	▪ Are introduced to the figures/symbols representing numbers, e.g., 1, 2, 3, etc. ▪ Are able to name the number symbols from 1 to 9 ▪ Are able to name and recognize the symbol 0, and understand that 0 means nothing ▪ Recognize how number symbols are used in the centre, at home, and in the community and are able to describe those uses, e.g., in the car, on the highway, on the oven, on a clock, on the television, in books, etc. ▪ Are beginning to be able to reproduce numbers in writing ▪ May be able to recognize number symbols from 10 to 15[2]

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

- Utilize a variety of methods to introduce number symbols, recognizing that a number symbol is a shape similar to the shape of a letter, and that learning the names of the number symbols is a process

- Regularly direct children's attention to the use of number symbols in the learning environment, home, and community

- Utilize a variety of kinesthetic methods to encourage children to reproduce number symbols in writing, such as tracing numbers in sand, finger paint, etc., gluing confetti to a number shape, mosaics, painting

- Collaborate with parents during this learning process so that the concept of number recognition and the approach to learning to recognize numbers is also reinforced at home.

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[2] This skill is generally more relevant to children who are at the end of their pre-kindergarten year. Some research indicates that children may not master this skill until 5 years of age. The Early Years Evaluation (EYE) suggests recognition of number symbols up to 15 for children entering their kindergarten year.

Children demonstrate an understanding of the association and relationship of quantity and symbols.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ At the infant toddler stage of development, an expectation for children to understand the relationship between numerical symbols and associated quantities is not developmentally appropriate. Children at this age continue to benefit from the opportunity to visually see numerical symbols in their environment, but at these ages, it is more appropriate that children have multiple opportunities to integrate the concepts of quantity as discussed previously.	▪ Are able to match quantities of objects to written number symbols, e.g., two objects (beads, stones, sticks) to the number 2, etc. ▪ Are beginning to be able to associate number symbols with more abstract representations, e.g., will clap four times when the number four is shown ▪ Begin to understand that there is a hierarchy to the number symbols, and that each number represents a specific quantity; begins to understand that some numbers represent larger (or smaller) quantities ▪ Are able to demonstrate the association of quantities and number symbols in a wide variety of situations in both indoor and outdoor play, e.g., pretend to follow a recipe ▪ Utilize these skills in their dramatic and pretend play activities.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Provide many opportunities for children to practice the association of number symbols with quantities of objects and actions in all areas of the learning environment

▪ Provide children with concrete experiences for counting, creating sets, and associating numbers and quantities rather than pre-printed worksheets that do not allow for manipulation and visual representation of sets of numbers of objects

▪ Provide opportunities for children to gradually begin to deal in more abstract ways with numbers and quantities.

Children use mathematical concepts to solve questions and problems that arise during play

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
At this developmental age, children will continue to focus on aspects of quantity. However, they will be able to demonstrate an indirect understanding of some mathematical concepts such as one to one correspondence, aspects of quantity, and counting during play activities such as: • Are able to respond to "Can you bring me another block?" • Are able to "Get one more" • Are able to "Give one pillow to Daniel, and one pillow to Rachel" • Are able to understand concepts such as "again" and "another one" and "one more time" during play activities.	▪ Are able to follow mathematical directions without adult intervention in areas of indoor and outdoor learning environments, such as four children at the snack table; three children in the reading area; each child needs a helmet for a ride-on toy ▪ Participate in cooking activities, and with guidance, follow measurements in a recipe, e.g., "How many eggs do we need? Can you count them?" ▪ Utilize measurement and counting in construction activities ▪ Are able to explain their calculations when building forts, sand castles ▪ Are able to review their calculations and problem-solve alternative approaches ▪ Begin to show an understanding of mathematical calculations in their play, e.g., "We need two more chairs because there are four children."

Educators support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Encourage children to use mathematical reasoning and logic in problem solving

▪ Provide many opportunities for play experiences where children are challenged to use mathematical concepts to further their explorations

▪ Communicate with parents to demonstrate the learning that is taking place during various play activities, and encourage parents to facilitate the same types of activities at home, e.g., set the table for dinner, help with recipes, use a tape measure, count out money at a store.

REASON, LOGIC, AND SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY

In order for children to develop skills in reason, logic, and scientific inquiry, they need to have the appropriate space, time, and guidance to:

- Understand the process of cause and effect

- Make predictions during play

- Plan and carry out a series of actions

- Actively participate in projects based on a scientific method of inquiry

Children understand the process of cause and effect.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Understand that crying will bring a response from an adult, and that drinking from a bottle will ease hunger ▪ Begin to learn appropriate ways to self-soothe, e.g., a baby learns that the edge of his blanket feels smooth on his cheek ▪ Respond to games like peek a boo ▪ Use their increasingly developed fine motor skills to manipulate toys that have cause and effect results, e.g., hammer on a xylophone, or press a button for a beeping sound ▪ Progress from random actions that cause a resulting effect to playing with objects with the intention of causing the effect ▪ Begin to understand that they are active agents in their own environments and that they can, through their intentions, have some control ▪ Engage in more complex actions to cause an effect, e.g., pull the blanket to make the ball come closer.	▪ Build on their fine and gross motor skills during their play to experiment with different approaches to causing something to happen, e.g., rolling a ball to knock over a tall block; moving a magnet pulls metal clips ▪ Use the principles of cause and effect as a foundational principle to create and discover new things in the learning environment, e.g., mixing red and blue paints to make purple; planting seeds to grow flowers ▪ Are able to verbalize an understanding of the principle of cause and effect and apply it in abstract situations, e.g., 'If you don't use sunscreen you may get a burn; if it rains it will help the flowers to grow." ▪ Explain the process of cause and effect when children problem solve, e.g., "When you put the small blocks on the bottom, the wall fell down, and now I see you are going to use the biggest ones on the bottom and the small ones on top – let's see what happens."

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Give language to children's experiences with the process of cause and effect, such as "When you push the ball it rolls away!"

▪ Provide children with multiple opportunities to experience cause and effect in the indoor and outdoor learning environments, as the process of cause and effect underlies inquiry based learning

▪ Encourage children to problem solve by using the principles of cause and effect, e.g., "So what did you do first? And then what happened? What would happen if you did it in a different way?"

Children make predictions during play.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Enjoy a sense of consistency in care routines such a diaper changing, feeding, nap times – e.g., soft music is played in the nap room ▪ Establish a sense of rhythm and predictability to their day based on a consistent schedule of activities ▪ Understand that at the end of the day, their parents will come back to pick them up ▪ Begin to be able to respond to simple questions based on using their previous experiences to make predictions, e.g., "Joanne brought cupcakes and candles today – does that mean something special?"	▪ Build on their understanding of the process of cause and effect, and use that to form predictions about related events. For example, previous experience with a game of sink and float is used to predict whether new objects will sink or float ▪ Demonstrate theory of mind when they predict how another person will respond to a particular situation, e.g., "Do you think she will be surprised?" ▪ Are able to explain their thought processes used to form predictions, such as "We want to put all the trucks in a row because if the balls are in there, they will roll away." ▪ Experiment with their predictions in their play, e.g., "What if we put the car at the top of the slide?" "What will happen if we mix yellow and blue paint?"

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

- Maintain consistent and predictable schedules of activities during the day
- Give language to children's observations and predictions, e.g., "I see that you got your boots – you knew we were going to go outside!"
- Use books and stories to ask for children's predictions – "And what do you think will happen next?"
- Provide multiple opportunities for children to practice making predictions about themselves and other children, their families, the weather, story lines in books, a puppet show, etc.
- Communicate this type of learning to parents, so that parents can continue to reinforce this at home.

Children plan and carry out a series of actions.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
• Begin by learning to follow a series of actions either in every day routines or in their play activities. These types of experiences allow them to become familiar with sequencing, and to learn to follow more than one idea at a time.	• Are able to follow through on progressively more complex series of instructions
• Have some experiences in carrying out activities that call for more than one action, e.g., "Put the car inside the door and ring the bell."	• Design play activities that involve a number of facets or components, such as designing a road way, and then buildings for a town, and then driving cars while going on a vacation trip
• Are able to follow more than one stage commands, e.g., "Please get your book from the shelf and put it on the table."	• Are able to explain the process used to plan and carry out a complex play scenario
• Begin to demonstrate intentionality in their actions and behaviours, usually observed when children are manipulating open-ended toys and materials in the learning environment.	• Are able to collaborate with other children in planning complex play activities, negotiating roles and sequences of play
	• Show progress in carrying out a long series of steps to an activity from beginning to end.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

- Design the learning environment so that children are able to have the opportunities to plan and carry out play activities that involve multiple series of actions.

- Provide for children to be able to "save" their play activities and constructions, in order that they can continue their projects from one day to the next

- Facilitate a written sequence to accompany pictures of the activities that were planned, along with pictures and a description of how they were carried out. This provides a preparation for further inquiry based learning projects.

- Encourage children to provide narrative summaries of their plans and how they carried them out. These stories may be shared with other children, presented during a family/parent event, or shared with parents.

- Provide regular updates to parents regarding children's extended projects, as this makes learning come alive.

Children actively participate in projects based on a scientific method of inquiry.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
A scientific method of inquiry involves basic processes of observation and research, developing a hypothesis, experimentation, and conclusion. In early childhood classrooms, the process of the method is applicable to a wide variety of topics of interest, and may be carried out in very simple to more complex approaches. The emphasis is on developing an organized and logical approach to inquiry based learning that encourages children to wonder, experiment, and discover.	
• Listen to and observe adults wonder about a particular event or phenomenon. For example, "This drum can make lots of sounds. I'm going to tap it and listen – can you hear that? I wonder what will happen if I hit it with the drumstick – what do you think? Will it be soft like when I tap it? Do you think it will be loud? Let's try....Well, what happened? Was it soft? Was it loud? Now I know that when I tap it with my fingers it makes a soft sound, and when I hit it with the drumstick it makes a loud sound."	• Participate in group projects that seek to discover new learning about various phenomenon. Topics may include observations in nature ("When will the snow be gone?" "When will the flower bloom?" "Will the plant grow if we don't water it?") or processes among children, families, or communities. • Propose their own project outlines; may propose alternate hypotheses to test. • Understand and use the language of observation, hypothesis, experiment, and conclusion • Are able to match, classify, seriate, compare and contrast • Participate in writing up the process and their conclusions.

Educators support this learning when they, for example:

- Utilize a consistent approach to children's project based learning
- Communicate with parents to ensure that parents are familiar with the process of the investigation/project and can support children's thinking on the topic
- Involve community resources to support rich and varied investigations.

REFLECTIONS

When focusing on practice related to the learning goal of Exploration and Discovery, educators may wish to consider some of the following reflective questions. The examples suggested should not be considered as a "checklist" to determine the extent of one's reflective practice – they are merely suggestions to initiate further thinking:

- How does my practice reflect the Framework's vision for children and learning principles – have I considered the interaction between relationships, environment and experiences in my program plans and implementation?

- Have I been inclusive in how I have introduced materials and activities with the children? Have I considered each child's developmental abilities, and each child's cultural background?

- Are there innovative ideas that I should build on?

- Does our physical learning environment support learning dispositions toward exploration and discovery for both children and educators?

- Was my approach to scaffolding children's skills and abilities effective? What should I have done differently?

- Are there particular children for whom I may want to focus some additional supports? Are there children for whom I may want to speak individually to parents to discuss their motor development?

- Are there areas of learning where I might want to do more reading or research? Is this something I need to speak to the Director about, or discuss at a team/staff meeting?

- What did I learn from the children regarding their approaches to exploration and discovery? What have I learned from their families, or the community? Do I have a plan for incorporating that learning into my practice? If not, what kind of support do I need to make that happen?

- What have I learned from other educators and colleagues that may contribute to my ability to support children to explore and discover new ideas and new knowledge? Have I shared any new observations or perspectives that I have gained with others?

- Are there any ethical concerns that have arisen through my work with this group of children? If so, what options are available to me to address these?

- Is there any additional support I need from the Director in order to strengthen my practice?

EXPRESSION AND COMMUNICATION

Language and
Literacies

Creativity and
the Arts

Symbols and
Representation

LANGUAGE AND LITERACIES

In order for children to develop skills and knowledge in language and literacies they need to have the appropriate space, time, and guidance to:

- Use a variety of means to communicate their ideas, thoughts, and needs

- Use increasingly complex language structures in conversations and play

- Listen with understanding and engage in increasingly longer verbal conversational exchanges with other children and adults

- Develop a love of stories and books

Children use a variety of means to communicate their ideas, thoughts, and needs.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Make eye contact with adults and other children while listening, and when the child is vocalizing to adults or children	▪ Demonstrate increasing command of vocabulary and are able to identify their needs clearly
▪ Initiate communication with others through vocalizations and gestures	▪ May use pretend writing to convey messages – such as "writing" a restaurant order on a note during a play activity
▪ Are able to express their needs and wants through signs and gestures (in pre-language stage)	▪ May use art to convey a story
▪ Begin to use single words or sounds to represent their ideas	▪ May invent songs to tell a story or to express their feelings
▪ Express frustration when their ideas are not understood by others	▪ Use a range of facial expressions and vocal intonations while speaking
▪ Use appropriate voice intonations and facial expressions when asking questions	▪ Pretend to be reading a story, or reading a note
▪ Begin to use narratives to tell stories	▪ Are usually able to re-tell a sequence of events
▪ Initiate and respond to conversations with other children.	▪ Are able to think in stories, and able to re-tell a story with literal and beginning inferential comprehension.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Provide a learning environment rich in language opportunities

▪ Facilitate children's expressions in multi-modal approaches, recognizing the value of alternate forms of expression

▪ Provide opportunities for children to share their ideas, thoughts, and feelings with others, using many forms of expression

▪ Communicate with parents regarding the approaches taken so that learning is consistent at home

▪ Are sensitive to the needs of children who may be challenged in expressive communication, and ensure that activities are inclusive, and give all children a reasonable chance at success in communicating.

Children use increasingly complex language structures in conversations and play.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
- Progress from using babbling sounds to words to phrases - Begins to use proper pronouns, e.g., uses "I" instead of "me" (e.g., "me want that") - May demonstrate understanding of the grammatical concept, but not yet have the proper words to use. For example, "I is tired", or "He "telled" me." (for he told me; child is aware that past tense is needed but does not yet have the proper words to use) - Begin to put phrases together into simple sentences - Begin to ask questions - Recognize that younger children speak "baby talk", and may use babbling in play activities.	- Begin to use descriptive words including adjectives and adverbs appropriately - Demonstrate increasing ability to use expressions that are grammatically correct including accurate tenses of verbs, use of pronouns and verbs, and including complex structures, e.g., "I was eating, I am tired, he is talking, we are finished, etc." Children may still use inaccurate pronouns in sentences, e.g., "Me and her are going to have snack now." or "Him and me were using the blocks first." - May use "baby talk" when playing role of baby in dramatic play - Are able to use language to ask questions, express emotions, and to make persuasive arguments - Are able to use language to negotiate and resolve conflicts.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

- Model appropriate uses of language for children by speaking in full grammatically correct sentences, and repeating children's comments or questions as full sentences, e.g., "Oh, I see that the truck is stuck in the gate. Would you like some help to move it?"

- Provide for many opportunities for children to experience rich language from other children, stories and songs, and other adults

- Collaborate with parents and speech language professionals for consistent approaches for language development for children experiencing challenges or delays

- Include a variety of alternate communication approaches for children who do not have verbal language.

Children listen with understanding and engage in increasingly longer verbal conversational exchanges with other children and adults.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Enjoy interactive games such as pat-a-cake	▪ Are increasingly able to carry out multi-step commands
▪ Make efforts to communicate with adults and other children through babbling and gestures	▪ Are able to listen, comprehend, and re-tell stories; use extensive narration in their dramatic play activities
▪ Communicate with intention, such as waving good bye	▪ Are able to narrate the sequence of events to others after a class trip, special event, or after a family vacation
▪ Respond by actions to simple questions, e.g., "Where is Susie?""Touch your head.""Let's sit down."	▪ Use many language props in dramatic play, e.g., taking orders in a restaurant, sending notes to school with their babies, writing a prescription from the doctor, giving someone a bill for their new shoes
▪ Respond to questions that require a verbal exchange, e.g., "What is this?""Would you like juice or water today?"	▪ Demonstrate increasing comfort in speaking to a group, interviewing a guest, and/or supporting their opinion during a discussion
▪ Converse in one on one conversations with educators and/or other children by exchanging ideas, comments, and questions	▪ Understands and uses language specific to the gender, culture, and age group
▪ Participate in group conversations that are facilitated by the educator	▪ Uses appropriate voice inflections and facial expressions when telling a story.
▪ Participate in singing songs and performing finger plays.	

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Encourage children's use of language by engaging them in conversations, and using questioning techniques that avoid simple "yes/no" answers in order to allow children to be creative in their responses

▪ Plan for activities that will group children based on a variety of levels of language skills, so that children will learn from each other

▪ Practice and model good listening skills with children, parents, and other educators

▪ Plan for inclusionary practice for children who may be timid to speak in a group, or who may have challenges in language development.

Children develop a love of stories and books.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Maintain a focus on the educator's face during story time ▪ Show preference for particular stories or books ▪ Are able to point to objects in a picture book when asked, e.g., "Where is the puppy?" ▪ Demonstrate through their facial expressions and excitement that they understand the emotions of the storyteller, e.g., sad face when something goes wrong for the character in the story ▪ Look forward to story time as an enjoyable part of the day; may ask for stories to be read at other times of the day ▪ Enjoy seeing pictures of themselves and family members in hand made story books.	▪ Understand that in addition to stories in print, there is a rich history of narrative story telling ▪ Listen attentively to stories either narrated or from printed stories ▪ Understand that there is a wide variety of printed media including books, magazines, posters, signs, letters ▪ Are able to connect events in stories to their own lives; may identify with a character in a story ▪ Use storytelling and books in their dramatic play, and may pretend to be reading a story to a class ▪ Read stories on their own, and may read aloud to themselves, re-telling the story from memory ▪ Make their own books with illustrations and their own story line ▪ Begin to understand the roles of and differences between an author, illustrator, publisher.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Thoughtfully select children's literature for the early learning environment, with consideration given to the ages, abilities, and cultures of the children

▪ Invite parents and/or other community members to visit the centre, tell stories, or read story books to the children

▪ Recommend books to parents that are appropriate to the age group, and may be relevant to recent class projects

▪ Encourage children to produce their own story books.

CREATIVITY AND THE ARTS

In order for children to develop knowledge and appreciation of creativity and the arts they need to have the appropriate space, time, and guidance to:

- Use various media to create their own artistic expressions

- Engage in various types of artistic expression, including visual arts, music, drama and dance

- Have opportunities to experience creative art forms from different cultures

- Have opportunities to experience art in the child's community and province.

Children use various media to create their own artistic expressions.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Use play dough as a sensory experience ▪ Begin to use play dough with some intention, e.g., understand that it can be molded into various shapes, even though they may not be able to do it themselves ▪ Use crayons or markers on paper, and understand that these may be used to make lines, shapes, and are represented in different colours ▪ Are able to observe older children's visual art creations, e.g., paintings, collages ▪ Indicate preferences for colours, patterns, and pictures ▪ Develop an understanding that drawings that they produce are their own, and begin to take pride in their productions.	▪ Experiment with different techniques using art media, including paint, draw, colour, glue, mold, trace, stencil, rubbings, printing ▪ Use different techniques to produce different types of visual arts, including drawings, portraits, collages, murals ▪ Produce two and three dimensional art using different types of media, e.g., clay, play dough, gluing collages, wood construction ▪ Work collaboratively with other children to produce group projects, e.g., murals ▪ Illustrate stories with original art; incorporate photography in their visual arts ▪ Incorporate natural materials into art projects, including pine cones, leaves, twigs, flower petals ▪ Display their works of art, and are able to explain the ideas represented in their art.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

- Provide a range of materials for children to use to create

- Are flexible in their approaches, and open to suggestions from children for new ways to use artistic media

- Allow children to produce their own works of art, rather than using pre-packaged colouring books or reproduced sheets

- Ensure that all materials used are non-toxic to children

- Incorporate production of visual arts into all areas of the curriculum framework.

Children engage in various types of artistic expression, including visual arts, music, drama and dance.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Have opportunities to experiment with different types of visual art techniques and media – (See previous section) ▪ Listen to music, and are encouraged to join in singing with educators and other children ▪ Enjoy participating in finger plays ▪ Respond to music and singing though physical movement (dance) ▪ Participate in music by clapping ▪ Enjoy puppet shows, and will respond to puppets ▪ Have opportunities to use simple rhythm instruments ▪ Recognize seasonal songs, e.g., Christmas songs.	▪ Have opportunities to experiment with musical notes, including matching sounds, comparing and contrasting different notes and tones ▪ Are able to identify different types of musical instruments (guitar, piano, drums, etc) ▪ Are able to classify types of musical instruments, e.g., string instruments, percussion ▪ Are able to keep the beat by clapping, using rhythm instruments, interpretive dance; are able to recognize patterns in music and steps in dance ▪ Participate in puppet shows, dramatic play, and group variety shows ▪ Participate in making costumes for different types of plays, musical events, Christmas concert, etc.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Involve families and communities to the centre in order to enrich the early learning environment with musical instruments, and live performances

▪ Share words to songs with families so that parents and siblings can sing with the children

▪ Integrate other areas of the curriculum framework with the arts, e.g., singing about numbers; using musical bells for matching, contrasting and comparing, patterning

▪ Plan for inclusive events so that all children are able to participate in the arts

▪ Honour children's efforts by displaying their art, inviting others to see their puppet shows, singing for parents, and other demonstrations of the children's accomplishments.

Children have opportunities to experience creative art forms from different cultures.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Are able to experience learning environments that are rich in colour, sounds, and textures ▪ Are able to see a connection between what is familiar in their homes and what they experience in the early years centre ▪ Have access to soft toys that are representative of the cultures of the children in the centre and of cultures from around the world ▪ Listen to music from different cultures ▪ Participate in celebrations of different cultural events that are held at the centre.	▪ Are able to distinguish between different types of art forms based on cultural characteristics ▪ Learn about holidays and celebrations in other countries, and are able to experience how different cultures express celebrations through their art by participating in celebrations at the centre ▪ Become familiar with a variety of art forms and artistic techniques from different periods of history ▪ Demonstrate preferences for different types of visual arts, music, dance, drama and costumes from different countries and cultures ▪ Understand their own cultural backgrounds and how art is expressed in their family traditions.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Plan activities so that the cultures of the children in the centre are reflected in all forms of art

▪ Ensure that the cultures of Prince Edward Island are reflected in the materials, books, and songs used in the early years centre

▪ Engage with parents to collaborate on how to reflect and represent different aspects of cultural art forms

▪ Collaborate with community partners to enrich the opportunities for children to experience different cultural art forms

▪ Celebrate cultural events with the children by involving music, dance, and culinary arts from the relevant countries.

Children have opportunities to experience art in the child's community and province.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:

For all children:

- Are able to experience music and song from Prince Edward Island, the Maritimes, and Canada

- Are able to experience music and song from the cultures represented in Prince Edward Island (including Irish, Scottish, Acadian, Aboriginal, Muslim, Jewish, Lebanese, Asian, etc.)[1]

- Are surrounded by visual arts using materials native to Prince Edward Island, such as red clay, sand, sea shells

- Are able to visually experience art, stories, toys, and native dress specific to the Mi'kmaq culture on Prince Edward Island

- Become increasingly familiar with art and architecture in their communities, and aware of stained glass art in churches, architectural features and patterns on buildings, the visual beauty of shorelines, landscaping in parks and gardens, etc.

	- Use materials that are natural/native to Prince Edward Island in their production of visual arts, including such materials as red clay, sand, leaves, sea shells
	- Understand that Prince Edward Island has a rich arts culture in the Mi'kmaq tradition, and can identify aboriginal art
	- Are able to recall and describe artful expressions they have seen or experienced in their communities, and use these images in their own art.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

- Value, respect, and represent Island culture in the learning environment.

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[1] In March 2011, the PEI Government announced that Islanders represent 78 different cultures. The PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada provides information and resources about the different cultures represented in Prince Edward Island. www.peianc.com

SYMBOLS AND REPRESENTATION

In order for children to develop knowledge of symbols and representation, they need to have the appropriate space, time, and guidance to:

- Begin to develop an awareness of the symbols and sounds of their language

- Begin to understand that written words and symbols are used to indicate the names of objects, and to express ideas and thought

- Demonstrate increasing frequency and complexity in attempts to represent thoughts, ideas, and objects during their play

- Be able to collect and organize information

Children begin to develop an awareness of the symbols and sounds of their language.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Participate in finger plays, where a finger or hand or gesture is used to represent a thought or a character in the song, e.g. itsy bitsy spider, tom thumb, etc.	▪ Develop an understanding that numerals are symbols that represent quantities, and that letters are symbols that represent sounds
▪ Begin to understand that one finger means "one", two fingers means "two", and that these symbols of number represent their age (or next birthday)	▪ Develop an understanding that there are symbols that represent important messages, such as symbol for poison or danger
▪ Begin to understand that symbolic gestures have meaning, e.g., wave goodbye, blow a kiss	▪ Appreciate that symbols are used throughout the community, and begin to identify symbols for stop (stop sign, red light), go (green light), crosswalk, etc.
▪ Begin to use symbolic gestures with intention	▪ Become competent at identifying the names and phonetic sounds of the letters of the alphabet
▪ Understand that there is a sign that represents their name (as on a coat hook, in boots, etc.)	▪ Become competent at reproducing numbers and letters; are able to recognize and reproduce both upper and lower case letters
▪ Begin to understand that some words sound the same as they listen to words in songs and finger plays.	▪ Are able to identify and think of words that rhyme.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Incorporate the use of signs and symbols throughout the learning environment

▪ Use a carefully designed sequence of activities to introduce names of numbers, and names and sounds of letters

▪ Differentiate for children that the name of the letter is different from the sound of the letter

▪ Provide children with many opportunities for both pretend writing and for reproducing the symbols of letters and numbers.

Children begin to understand that written words and symbols are used to indicate the names of objects, and to express ideas and thought.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Are indirectly beginning to understand that words have meaning by their observations of educators reading and writing notes to their parents, reading stories, placing signs in the room and on coat hooks, labeling boots and shoes, etc. ▪ Observe/listen to educators indicating the child's name on the coat hook, on her crib, etc. ▪ Dictate messages to their parents, siblings, and other family members and the educator writes the message on paper, e.g., "Who is this picture for? Mommy's birthday? What would you like to say… Happy Birthday? Okay, let's write that on the picture. I love you? Okay, let's write that too." ▪ May understand that there is a sound to the beginning of his/her name.	▪ Are increasingly aware of the importance of words, symbols, and their value in communication of ideas and information ▪ Are able to recognize their name, and words used to label common objects in the learning environment ▪ Are able to recognize words commonly used in the community, e.g., stop, enter, exit ▪ Are beginning to be able to "sound out" some words using phonetic sounds ▪ Are able to write their names, and other common words, e.g., I love you, mommy, daddy, etc. ▪ Use pretend writing in their play activities, demonstrating an understanding that words are used to convey meaning.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Enrich the environment with examples of printed words to convey information for parents, identify names of objects, to describe/tell the story of a picture, and other uses of language

▪ Provide opportunities for children to use their knowledge of sounds of letters to practice "reading" simple phonetic words

▪ Provide plenty of materials for pretend writing

▪ Encourage children to either dictate or write their own words for messages to parents and family members.

Children demonstrate increasing frequency and complexity in attempts to represent thoughts, ideas, and objects during their play.

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Begin to demonstrate some symbolic play activity, e.g., will pretend to be sipping tea from a tea cup; pretend to eat something off a plate at a tea party	▪ Will often pretend to be someone else, e.g., "I am Amy today."
▪ Are able to identify pictures of family members in photos	▪ Develop dramatic play activities with a plot and roles for a number of children
▪ Are able to identify objects in books, e.g., show me the giraffe	▪ Incorporate characters and stories into their drawings, and create two and three dimensional art projects using clay, wood, and other materials
▪ Begin to be able to recall representations found in books, e.g., "Where is the little girl with the flowers in her hair?"	▪ Will gather props and other materials to support the story line in their dramatic play events
▪ Are able to perform actions in a song, e.g., "This is the way we wash our face, etc."	▪ Are able to interpret music through dance; are able to represent emotions through dance and creative movement
▪ May pretend to represent animals during play, e.g., crawl like a puppy	▪ Are able to represent animals (fly like an eagle, swim like a fish) or other children (curl up like a baby) and often delight in repeating such representations
▪ May pretend to take on another role during play time, e.g., "I am the mommy."	▪ Are able to represent past experiences through their artwork, e.g., drawing to describe their trip to the circus.

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Participate in pretend play situations with children and scaffold the child's representational competency

▪ Encourage children to represent their knowledge through art, music, and dramatic play

▪ Provide the materials and props that children need to be able to represent their knowledge and ideas.

Children are able to collect and organize information

This may be evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Begin to respond to questions such as "Show me your nose; show me your eyes; show me your mouth."	▪ Are able to sort, match, compare and contrast, classify and seriate a wide variety of objects
▪ Are able to point to pictures in a photo album and identify "Where is Mommy? Where is Daddy? Where is your sister Chloe? Where is your brother Michael?"	▪ Are able to collect pine cones, shells on the beach, leaves, etc. from the outdoor environment
▪ Observe educators making lists of names of children, list of things to take to the park, etc.	▪ Are able to create single classifications, such as making a list of all the children who have blue eyes; a list of all the children who like chocolate ice cream
▪ Are able to sort toys, such as "Would you put this with the books?""Would you put this block in the block wagon?"	▪ Are able to collect information about multiple data sets, such as the number of votes for the best ice cream flavour – chocolate, vanilla, or strawberry; with guidance, are then able to organize that information into graphs and other charts.
▪ May organize objects with similar characteristics, e.g. line up all the dolls.	

Educators may support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Encourage children to explore problems and conduct investigations by collecting data, as this stage of research is part of the scientific method of inquiry.

▪ Provide children with the materials they need to collect and organize data, such as baskets for collecting and organizing shells, pine cones, and other materials from the outdoor environment; clipboards and paper for doing surveys among the children;

▪ Collaborate with families and community partners to assist with the collection and organization of information, e.g., family ancestry of children in the centre (Irish, German, French, etc.); places in the community that are wheelchair accessible

▪ Give language to the children's efforts at collecting and organizing information or objects, particularly for younger children in order to encourage them to continue with their investigations.

REFLECTIONS

When focusing on practice related to the learning goal of Expression and Communication, educators may wish to consider some of the following reflective questions. The examples suggested should not be considered as a "checklist" to determine the extent of one's reflective practice – they are merely suggestions to initiate further thinking:

- How does my practice reflect the Framework's vision for children and learning principles – have I considered the interaction between relationships, environment and experiences in my program plans and implementation?

- Have I been inclusive in how I have introduced materials and activities with the children? Have I considered each child's developmental abilities, and each child's cultural background?

- Are there innovative ideas that I should build on?

- Does our daily schedule of activities and physical learning environment facilitate communication and rich language development with the children and educators?

- Was my approach to scaffolding children's skills and abilities effective? What should I have done differently?

- Are there particular children for whom I may want to focus some additional supports? Are there children for whom I may need to do more formal speech and language assessment? Are there children who may need to be referred for hearing tests?

- Are there children in our centre who are learning to speak English or French for the first time? What do I need to do to support this?

- Are there areas of learning where I might want to do more reading or research? Is this something I need to speak to the Director about, or discuss at a team/staff meeting?

- What did I learn from the children regarding their approaches to creative arts? Have I had any insights into particular children that I didn't have before? How can I use this lesson to enhance my practice?

- What have I learned from their families, or the community? Do I have a plan for incorporating that learning into my practice? If not, what kind of support do I need to make that happen?

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- What have I learned from other educators and colleagues that may contribute to my practice? Have I shared any new observations or perspectives that I have gained with others?

- Are there any ethical concerns that have arisen through my work with this group of children? If so, what options are available to me to address these?

- Is there a need for our centre to have in-service training in sign language or alternate communication systems/devices?

- Do I need some help from the Director regarding my communication with parents? Are there parents of children who do not speak English/French? What resources can I draw on so that I can involve those parents, and communicate with them more effectively?

- Am I satisfied with the selection of children's literature from our local library? If not, what suggestions would I make, and how do I go about doing this?

- Have I changed my perspective about how children acquire and use language for communication? If so, what insights have I gained?

SOCIAL AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Self Regulation and Self Discipline

Culture and Heritage

Environmental Awareness and Care of the Earth

SELF REGULATION AND SELF-DISCIPLINE

In order for children to develop self-regulation and self-discipline, they need to have the appropriate space, time, and guidance to:

- Develop an understanding and sense of responsibility for their actions

- Develop the ability to understand the world from the perspective of others – Theory of Mind

- Be able to identify, recognize, and self-regulate their emotions

- Be able to demonstrate a sense of self-discipline

Children develop an understanding and sense of responsibility for their actions.

This is evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
- Demonstrate an increasing awareness that they are able to make things happen (e.g., when she cries the adults respond, when he pulls a child's hair the other child cries) but still has a limited sense of consequences or responsibility for his actions - Begins to notice that his behaviour may affect the comfort level of others; educators may explain "Suzie is sad when you take her doll away." - May begin to show some self-conscious emotions, e.g., embarrassment, pride, guilt - May begin to express their feelings and responses to situations in pretend play situations.	- Are able, with help from trusted adults, to analyze a situation and understand how they behaviours either caused specific reactions in others, may have put themselves in danger, or were not in keeping with previous agreements, e.g., "Do you think that it was a good idea to climb over the fence and run away from the yard?" - Are able to incorporate a sense of personal and social responsibility in their dramatic/pretend play situations; often a play event will re-enact a real life event in the child's life - Are able to see how they have hurt or annoyed another person and can find a way to help that person feel better - Feel a sense of pride when they have done something to make another person feel happy, e.g., make a card for the teacher, have a painting ready for their parents.

Educators support this learning when they, for example:

- Give language to the consequences of children's behaviours, e.g., "When you throw your cup off the tray, it makes a mess on the floor."

- Take the time to discuss consequences of actions and behaviours, and use the experience as an opportunity for learning rather than punishment

- Acknowledge positive behaviours and how acts of kindness and compassion are appreciated by other children or adults

- Acknowledge children's emotions in all situations, so that the child feels supported and validated, e.g., "I know that you were upset when your mom left this morning but that wasn't Jason's fault, was it?"

Children develop "Theory of Mind" – the ability to understand the world from the perspective of others.

This is evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Begin to notice stress in other children, and may make attempts to comfort the others by giving hugs, bringing a favourite soft toy or blanket, etc. (development of empathy) ▪ Begin to notice that their behaviour may affect the comfort level of others ▪ In some simple situations, may be able to take the point of view of others; educators may explain, "It makes Steven sad when you bite him." ▪ May begin to use some language to help with regulation of emotions and emergence of perspective taking ▪ May begin to express their feelings and responses to situations in pretend play situations.	▪ Begin to recognize the rights of others ▪ Show an awareness of personal feelings and the feelings of others ▪ Begin to identify "self" in relation to others ▪ Are able to describe their ideas and emotions, and to recognize that other people/children also have ideas and emotions, and that these may differ ▪ Begin to adapt their behaviour to take others' perspectives into consideration, e.g., "We shouldn't play on the slide because Nancy doesn't like to be up so high – let's go to the swings instead." ▪ Will take steps to correct an injustice to themselves or to another child; may take the role of negotiator in a dispute between other children ▪ Are able to predict how another child will react, e.g., "He will be so surprised because he doesn't know that we are going to the park."

Educators support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Respond to children's efforts to communicate their feelings and emotions, as this reinforces the concept that a child's behaviour may have an effect on others

▪ Give language to the consequences of the child's behavior on others

▪ Ask children for their interpretation of previous events, as this gives other children an opportunity to hear different perspectives/descriptions of the same activity.

Children are able to identify, recognize, and self-regulate their emotions.

This is evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:[1]	Preschool children:
- Are able to be calmed when they are comforted by familiar educators - Learn to comfort themselves by cuddling with a blanket, a familiar/favourite soft toy, sucking on their fingers, thumb - Are able to recover from over-stimulation or stressful events more quickly - Show a preference for being held by familiar people when they are upset - Begin to distinguish people they know from strangers.	- Are increasingly able to maintain attention for longer periods of time - Are able to identify when they need some quiet or "alone" time, and negotiate this with educators - Begin to give language to what they are feeling, and to problem solve with trusted adults as to how to handle a situation - See themselves as competent and capable of self-direction - Are increasingly able to handle minor frustrations, and can rationalize alternative approaches that take others' perspectives into consideration - Recognize their feelings and begin to develop a repertoire of strategies to deal with emotions.

Educators support this learning when they, for example:

- Are sensitive to emerging emotional development in very young children

- Encourage children to make decisions about their activities

- Give language to children's emotional reactions, in order that children will be able to describe their feelings

- Facilitate discussions with children about their emotional responses

- Acknowledge children's feelings, thereby giving children a sense of security in that they are understood, and accepted by those they trust.

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[1] Adapted from Early Learning for Every Child Today (Ontario)

Children are able to demonstrate a sense of self-discipline.

This is evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Begin to notice that their behaviour may affect the comfort level of others ▪ Learn to comfort themselves by cuddling with a blanket, a familiar/favourite soft toy, sucking on their fingers, thumb; may use language to ask for what they need, e.g., "I want my blanket." ▪ Begin to integrate and behave according to acceptable boundaries; may be able to verbalize the "rule" while still crossing the line, e.g., spinning the roll of toilet paper while saying "No,no, don't spin the paper" ▪ Understand the meaning and power of the word "No"; may use this to claim mastery of a situation, or to comment on their own behaviour (saying "no" while spilling their juice.	▪ Are increasingly able to manage their own behaviour in a variety of different situations ▪ Are increasingly able to use language to describe their thought processes as they regulate their own behaviours ▪ Are often able to provide guidance to other children, e.g., "We shouldn't mix all those paints together because then we will only have brown." ▪ Will initiate their own activities with minimal guidance from adults ▪ Will make sure they follow routines and meet expectations, e.g. will have their coat, mitts, etc. on before going outdoors to play ▪ See themselves as competent and capable of self-direction.

Educators support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Provide children with a balance of direction and autonomy so that they are able to gain a sense of agency in their behaviour, and recognize when they have been successful

▪ View children as competent, active agents in their own learning situations

▪ Avoid substituting hard and fast rules for listening to children's perspectives on situations

▪ Collaborate with parents regarding approaches to self discipline in order to maintain a continuity between home and the centre.

CULTURE AND HERITAGE

In order for children to develop an awareness and appreciation for their culture and heritage, and the culture and heritage of others, they need to have the appropriate space, time, and guidance to:

- Develop a sense of personal respect for themselves and for others

- Develop a sense of identity with the culture and heritage of their family, their community, and Prince Edward Island

- Develop an awareness and appreciation for other cultures and languages of the world

Children develop a sense of personal respect for themselves and for others.

This is evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Begin to show interest in the other children and adults, and express their pleasure in interactions ▪ Demonstrate empathy for other children ▪ May attempt to soothe another child by giving hugs, or giving the child a blanket or soft toy ▪ Develop an understanding of personal ownership, and the rights of other children to own their blankets, toys, personal space as well as the right of the child to his/her own space ▪ Show pleasure when they have done something that makes another child or adult happy ▪ Become self conscious when they have done something to make another child upset.	▪ Are able to verbalize and explain their feelings and perspectives ▪ Demonstrate the principle of self respect and respect for others in their dramatic/pretend play activities ▪ May intervene if they sense that another child is not being treated fairly ▪ Are able to "talk it out" with other children when there is a disagreement ▪ Are able to understand that other children may have different viewpoints or perspectives ▪ Are able to explain their own perspectives and opinions, even if there are others who disagree with them ▪ Are able to reflect on their behaviours and actions and then describe how that may have been perceived by others; may require guidance from adults.

Educators support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Model a sense of self respect and respect for the children, families, and other educators

▪ Give language to children's actions and behaviours, and provide guidance to children who are attempting to describe their feelings

▪ Emphasize that each child has a right to his/her own opinions, but that not everyone needs to hold the same opinions

▪ Facilitate children to problem solve and reach consensus

▪ Collaborate with parents to ensure consistent approaches and messages between home and the centre.

Children develop a sense of identity with the culture and heritage of their family, their community, and Prince Edward Island.

This is evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Are able to experience their communities through walks, outdoor play, and visits to the centre from community representatives	▪ Are able to experience their communities through walks, outdoor play, and visits to the centre from community representatives
▪ Play with toys that are appropriate to their community, e.g., fishing boats, farm machinery	▪ Understand that Prince Edward Island has a flower, a bird, a flag, and a song (the Island Hymn)
▪ Listen to music that is reflective of the culture of Prince Edward Island	▪ Can identify the flag of PEI, the Acadian flag, and the flag of Canada
▪ Are familiar with listening to "Oh Canada".	▪ Incorporate aspects of the local culture in their pretend play activities, e.g., going to catch some lobster
	▪ Are familiar with the sights and sounds of the maritime provinces
	▪ Learn about and are able to re-tell stories about the history of Prince Edward Island.

Educators support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Involve families in planning for events and celebrations, including birthdays and other family holidays based on culture and heritage

▪ Invite members of the community to visit the centre and speak to the children, e.g., inviting an RCMP officer in full dress, inviting someone from the Mi'Kmaq community or an Aboriginal reserve to demonstrate aspects of culture

▪ Use images of Prince Edward Island in art work, flags, story books, puzzles

▪ Provide puzzles and toys that reflect life on Prince Edward Island, e.g., farm animals and machinery, fishing boats, car ferry boats

▪ Use local products and explain to children that the food was grown at a local farm, the flowers were grown in the community, etc.

▪ Ensure that all children have opportunities to showcase their own unique heritage.

Children develop an awareness and appreciation for other cultures and languages of the world.

This is evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
- Have opportunities to hear songs in different languages - Hear familiar phrases in other languages, especially if the child's first language is other than the dominant language of the early childhood centre - Are able to participate in events that celebrate other cultures - Listen to stories of children who live in other parts of Canada (e.g., North) or who live in other countries.	- Are able to find Canada on a map/globe, and demonstrate an interest and capacity to learn names of other countries around the world; may recognize and name flags of other countries - Are able to identify their own family's heritage - Learn simple words and phrases in other languages - Are able to identify natural habitats of wild animals - Listen to and re-tell stories of children who live in other parts of Canada (e.g., North) or who live in other countries; are able to give content to pictures in books that depict children's lives in other places around the world.

Educators support this learning when they, for example:

- Embed culture and heritage in all parts of the early learning curriculum framework, e.g. use toy lobsters for counting games, make flags of other countries as art activities, follow a recipe for a food dish from another country, learn songs and finger plays in other languages, use native costumes in the dress up area

- Invite representatives from other countries to visit the centre and speak with the children about life in another part of the world

- Enrich the learning environment with materials from around the world.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND CARE OF THE EARTH

In order for children to develop a sense of environmental awareness and a disposition toward care of the earth, they need to have the appropriate space, time, and guidance to:

- Begin to develop a sense of responsibility for taking care of the environment in their homes, the early years centre, and in the community

- Begin to develop an awareness of the earth as a planet, and its relationship to other planets, the sun, moon, and stars

- Develop an awareness of the wonders of nature and an appreciation for their role in taking care of the earth

Children begin to develop a sense of responsibility for taking care of the environment in their homes, the early years centre, and in the community.

This is evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
- Begin to learn to pick things up from the floor, use wastebaskets - Begin to develop some awareness of the concepts of wasting food, water - Appreciate the beauty of flowers and plants in the outdoor environment - Are able to identify common plants (tree, bush, flower), weather (rain, wind, snow) and animals - Understand the concept of clean and tidy, and their role in keeping the centre clean and tidy.	- Follow a recycling plan in the centre during both indoor and outdoor activities, using PEI's system of waste, compost, and blue bags - Notice and comment on any litter in the streets, park, etc. - Become sensitive to and avoid unnecessary waste, e.g., in using consumable supplies in the centre, in wasting food, water, gas for cars - Are able to identify and speak about good environmental practices in stories, pictures, or their own observations - Incorporate environmental awareness in pretend play activities - Understand the interdependence of a nature, e.g., trees/plants give oxygen, rainfall provides clean water - Understand where their food comes from.

Educators support this learning when they, for example:

- Model good environmental practices with other educators and adults
- Provide children with opportunities to care for their environment, both indoor and outdoor
- Utilize natural materials in the learning environment
- Include books and stories that demonstrate good environmental practices; discuss community events such as roadside clean up
- Design outdoor garden areas where children can plant flowers, herbs, vegetables; maintain indoor plants, and assist children to root plants and start seeds.

Children begin to develop an awareness of the earth as a planet, and its relationship to other planets, the sun, moon, and stars.

This is evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
• Listen to songs and finger plays that include reference to sun, moon, stars	• Understand that they need sunscreen and hats when they are in the sun
• Begin to develop an awareness of the sun, clouds, wind – and how each feels on their skin when they are outside	• Understand that we live on the earth, and that the earth is a planet in the solar system
• Listen to stories that include references to the earth, sun, moon, and stars	• Are familiar with the solar system and the Milky Way Galaxy; are able to name the planets in the solar system
• Recognize pictures of the sun or stars in story books, and can point to pictures of the sun/stars/moon when prompted	• Incorporate references to space in their pretend play, e.g., build a rocket ship from blocks that will take them to the moon
• May begin to include the sun in their drawings	• Experience books and stories that depict space travel, and the solar system
• Begin to use vocabulary related to earth, sun, etc.	• Understand that the sun heats the earth; understands that the sun can heat their bodies, can melt ice, etc.
• May recall feeling snow, rain, etc. on previous occasions and are able to tell the story.	• Are able to describe experiences in seeing the moon and stars at night.

Educators support this learning when they, for example:

- Provide materials and activities to bring alive the concept of earth as a planet, including art materials to create three dimensional structures of the solar system
- Include books and songs that reference the earth as a planet
- Provide props for pretend play that allow children to develop activities that reflect the earth, sun, stars
- Collaborate with parents, so that parents are able to provide children with experiences in seeing the night sky.

Children develop an awareness of the wonders of nature and an appreciation for their role in taking care of the earth.

This is evident when, for example:

Infants / Toddlers:	Preschool children:
▪ Enjoy being outdoors and discovering the sights and sounds of nature, including crunching of leaves, pine cones, coldness of snow, etc.	▪ Enjoy being outdoors and discovering the sights and sounds of nature, including crunching of leaves, pine cones, coldness of snow, etc.
▪ May participate in small group projects such as planting seeds, gathering leaves in the fall	▪ Are able to hear and feel the rain, catch snowflakes falling, feel the wind in their hair, etc.
▪ Are able to hear and feel the rain, catch snowflakes falling, feel the wind in their hair, etc.	▪ Participate in group projects to plant gardens, make snowballs, gather leaves and pinecones
▪ Are able to observe butterflies, insects, birds	▪ Are aware of community members who work in forestry, farming, gardening
▪ Begin to learn the names of animals	▪ Are able to identify different types of insects, e.g., ant, fly, moth; enjoy exploring with a magnifying glass to find insects
▪ Use their senses to explore the outdoor environment	▪ Incorporate a sense of nature and the environment in their pretend play
▪ Begin to understand that snow is cold, rocks are hard, flowers are smooth and soft, etc.	▪ Are able to re-tell stories of experiencing thunder, lightning, snowstorms.

Educators support this learning when they, for example:

▪ Emphasize the role of nature in the early learning curriculum framework

▪ Make nature visible to the children by planting gardens, hanging bird feeders in windows, collecting rocks and shells, visiting parks, lakes, etc.

▪ Invite parents/community members to visit with the children to explain their work in caring for the environment.

REFLECTIONS

When focusing on practice related to the learning goal of Social and Personal Responsibility, educators may wish to consider some of the following reflective questions. The examples suggested should not be considered as a "checklist" to determine the extent of one's reflective practice – they are merely suggestions to initiate further thinking:

- How does my practice reflect the Framework's vision for children and learning principles – have I considered the interaction between relationships, environment and experiences in my program plans and implementation?

- Have I been inclusive in how I have introduced materials and activities with the children? Have I considered each child's developmental abilities, and each child's cultural background?

- Are there innovative ideas that I've read about recently that I should build on?

- Does our daily schedule of activities and physical learning environment facilitate the development of social and personal responsibility with the children and educators? What are the most effective things we do?

- Are there particular children for whom I may want to focus some additional supports?

- Are there areas of learning where I might want to do more reading or research? Is this something I need to speak to the Director about, or discuss at a team/staff meeting?

- What have I learned about the impact of cultural values on how children learn? Have I had any insights into particular children that I didn't have before? How can I use this lesson to enhance my practice?

- What have I learned from their families, or the community? Do I have a plan for incorporating that learning into my practice? If not, what kind of support do I need to make that happen?

- What have I learned from other educators and colleagues that may contribute to my practice? Have I shared any new observations or perspectives that I have gained with others?

- Are there any ethical concerns that have arisen through my work with this group of children? Have there been any conflicts with families about any of our practices? If so, what options are available to me to address these?

- Are we being effective in reaching out to parents and families who have recently moved to Prince Edward Island? Have our efforts been successful? Are there some approaches that we will never do again? Why not? What did we learn?

- Do I need some help from the Director regarding my communication with parents? Are there parents of children who do not speak English/French? What resources can I draw on so that I can involve those parents, and communicate with them more effectively?

- Am I satisfied with the selection of children's literature from our local library? If not, what suggestions would I make, and how do I go about doing this?

DOCUMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

Assessment is the tail that wags the curriculum dog. If we want to see real curriculum reform, we must simultaneously achieve reform of assessment practices.

<div align="right">Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992, p. 29</div>

The PEI Early Learning Curriculum Framework is a social pedagogical framework that is designed to respond to uniqueness of the children in the program – respecting their cultures, abilities, and interests. Learning is to be co-constructed with children, with parents, and with communities. Early Years Centres in Prince Edward Island will use the Early Learning Framework to shape their activities and experiences based on a set of common learning principles, learning goals, objectives and strategies.

Assessment is a key activity in Early Years Centres, as it helps educators plan for program activities that are relevant to the children in the program. Assessment also informs educators' reflections on their practice, and can be used to identify areas of potential professional development.

In the context of the Early Learning Framework, the issue of assessment practice is two fold:

- How will educators assess children's learning and development?
- How will the Early Years Centre and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development assess how well the early learning framework is being implemented?

Children's Learning and Development

The Learning Goals for children from infancy to four years old provide the basis for program planning and assessment in Early Years Centres in PEI. They are grounded in the PEI Vision for Children, which guides the early years system in Prince Edward Island. These goals represent our beliefs about the attitudes and skills that lay the foundation for children's learning and development. Implementation of the goals and the objectives is guided and supported by the Learning Principles: relationships, environments, and experiences.

Assessment in the early years can be challenging. Early development is rapid, may be episodic, and can be strongly influenced by the child's experiences, the type of environment, and how the child is feeling on that particular day. There is evidence that it is particularly difficult to assess children's cognitive abilities before 6 years of age, using standardized assessments. Young children do not often understand the

expectations placed on them, and test scores can be highly influenced by the child's emotional state on the day of testing.

For these reasons, early childhood educators typically use authentic or performance based assessment strategies in order to gain a comprehensive picture of the child's learning and development. Authentic assessment is less formal than standardized assessment, and has the potential to be more culturally sensitive and relevant. Authentic assessment may engage or evaluate children "on tasks that are personally meaningful, take place in real life contexts, and are grounded in naturally occurring instructional activities. They offer multiple ways of evaluating students' learning, as well as their motivation, achievement, and attitudes."(NIEER, 2004)

Examples of Authentic Assessment Strategies

Observation of individual children or groups of children

Interviews with children or parents

Concept mapping of individual groups or children

Journals kept by students or teachers

Performance Assessment tasks

Open-ended questions or problems

Drawings

Photos

Artwork

Portfolios

Narrative Descriptions / Learning Stories

Audio and/or video tapes

Work samples from any content area showing growth and progress over time

Work samples with rubric for analysis

Approaches to authentic assessment need to be guided by the learning principles, goals, and objectives as outlined in the PEI Early Learning Framework. In other words, strategies used to obtain authentic assessment need to be considered within the context of Well Being, Exploration and Discovery, Expression and Communication, and Social and Personal Responsibility. Critical reflection on the part of educators in Early Years Centres must be reflective of and relevant to the Early Learning Framework, thereby providing consistency in all Early Years Centres.

Observation

Prince Edward Island's Integrated Kindergarten Curriculum describes observation as the "... *collecting and recording of information from what is seen, heard, and told. Over time, educators will make systematic observations to capture an accurate picture of the development of the whole child.*"(p.165)

Thoughtful observation is continuous – it begins when a child arrives in the morning and continues throughout the day. Educators observe his day, including how the child says good bye to his mother; how he greets and begins to play with other children; who he plays with and who he avoids; what he likes to eat; what

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kinds of experiences evoke joy, and what makes him sad; what does he say to other children, or to the adults; what happens when he is in a group, and what happens when he is alone; is he energetic throughout the day or does his energy ebb and flow; and what is that he wants to tell his parent about at the end of the day? Objectivity is the key to good observational techniques. Educators will reflect on their observations at a later time, and will analyze their observations based on their knowledge of the child, and their professional interpretation of what they see. But when they record their observations, their notes will reflect what the child does and says, what the educator sees – in other words, observational notes must "record" the event as it happens without insertion of interpretation or value laden commentary.

Educators will develop their own techniques for recording observations – and these may include writing notes of anecdotal stories of events and exchanges that happen throughout the day, collecting samples of children's work to use in a portfolio, and using digital cameras for photos and video recordings. It is important that educators develop the techniques that work best for them, based on their own style of organizing and recording, and their work throughout the day.

Observing and interpreting what children do and why they do it probes the connection between thinking and questioning, and shows or makes visible the way children are making meaning of their learning of their interaction with the world.

British Columbia Early Learning Framework:
From Theory to Practice

Observation as an assessment technique allows educator to monitor children's activities without interrupting the natural flow of play. Observation takes time, and educators need to be supported in the centres to complete this type of assessment. The value of child observation is that educators are able to see an integrated example of different types of development, in that one observation session may give indication of the child's social, intellectual, and physical development all at once.

Portfolios

One of the most effective tools for presenting children's learning and development over time is the construction of portfolios. According to the PEI Integrated Kindergarten Curriculum, *"The portfolio is an authentic record of assessment and evaluation that shows children's growth and learning. It is a method of organizing and storing data for each child. It is a purposeful collection that provides a continuous record of the child's progress, compiled over an extended period of time. Children must be an active participant in determining what best demonstrates their growth and abilities."* (p.166)

Children's involvement in selecting materials for inclusion in the portfolio is a

valuable strategy that provides insight into the child's reflection on her own learning. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) notes that "Conversations with children about their portfolios engage them in the evaluation process and escalate their desire to demonstrate their increasing knowledge and skills. Sharing portfolios with parents can help teachers connect school activities to the home and involve parents in their children's early education." (NIEER, 2004, p.7) Portfolios may include art projects, samples of writing, photos, learning stories, lists of books read, conference notes, anecdotal notes, and other relevant information that tells the story of the child's growth and development. Portfolios provide a comprehensive picture of the child's progress over a period of time. The content of the portfolio provides a non-threatening way to communicate with parents about the child's learning. The portfolio allows educators and the parents to focus on what the child can do, his strengths, interests, accomplishments and abilities.

Learning Stories and Narrative Descriptions

"Learning stories capture the context of the learning environment that appears to be enabling or constraining learning. Learning stories are not the same as case studies or running records about children – they are narratives or stories and they need to be a good tale."

Susan Hill, 2009

The concept of learning stories as a form of assessment in early childhood settings grew out of the efforts in New Zealand to establish a new type of assessment practice that was consistent with the values and principles set out in that country's new early learning curriculum "Te Whariki". The new curriculum was based on four key principles:
* The early childhood curriculum empowers the child to learn and grow
* The early childhood curriculum reflects the holistic way that children learn and grow
* The wider world of family and community is an integral part of the early childhood curriculum
* Children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places, and things

With a strong belief that a different curriculum called for a different approach to assessment, the assessment framework is based on the same set of four principles. It is noted that "this is not a school curriculum, based on subject knowledge and school-based skills. It is an early childhood curriculum, based on belonging, well-being, exploration, communication, and contribution." (Podmore & Carr, AARE – NZARE Conference on Research in Education, Melbourne, 1 December, 1999)

As a result, the "learning story" framework was established, based on a set of five

broadly based behaviours that typically develop as a sequence within a particular type of activity. Practitioners in a range of early childhood settings developed a number of observable criteria for each of these five behaviours. Podmore and Carr (1999) note that the resulting "Learning Story framework for assessment" describes the contribution that early childhood experience makes to life-long learning – in other words dispositions about learning. The researchers note:

…children acquiring robust dispositions to learn - to find an interest here, to be involved and attentive, to tackle and perservere with difficulty and uncertainty, to express their ideas, and to take some responsibility in joint and group endeavours. The project identifies these as five key learning dispositions, combined together to form Learning Stories, and describes the process whereby children construct their own learning environments in order to strengthen and confirm their dispositions. These learning dispositions occur in a context, and are associated with skills and knowledge.… One of the main conclusions of the project was that if early childhood practitioners and teachers recognize and document this learning, they can more effectively direct its pathway. (Podmore and Carr: Paper presented at the AARE – NZARE Conference on Research in Education, Melbourne, 1 December, 1999)

Based on their research, the New Zealand researchers (Carr, et al, 2002) agreed on a four-part assessment process of:

- Describing: highlighting the learning to assess
- Documenting: gathering evidence, for a range of audiences
- Discussing: with the child, the family, or another educator
- Deciding: based on the evidence, planning what to do next

The Learning Stories approach has been taken up in many countries and here in Canada, in a number of provinces. New Brunswick and New Zealand describe "learning stories" as part of the assessment and documentation process. British Columbia refers to "pedagogical narration"; Saskatchewan, Reggio Emilia and Sweden refer to "pedagogical documentation"; Australia describes the process as "action research".

A Systematic and Organized Approach

As the process used to develop and document New Zealand's Learning Stories approach to assessment indicates, strategies employed for authentic assessment must be reliable and valid. Anecdotal comments made on sticky notes are not sufficient in themselves to document and provide evidence for assessment of children's learning and development. As NIEER (2004) notes, these types of notes "do not offer criteria against which to judge the developmental value of children's activities or provide evidence of reliability or validity." These notes may, however, be part of a planned assessment approach, and provide documentation that contributes to an overall assessment strategy.

The Early Learning Scale - Documenting and Assessing Children's Developmental Progress

As noted above, "authentic" or "performance-based" assessment is the most appropriate approach to measuring children's developmental progress. This type of assessment is more likely to be able to give evidence of children's abilities and skills in every day real life situations. The approach also enables educators to measure children's progress by comparing their behaviours and abilities to themselves, as opposed to a standardized developmental check- list.

The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) has recently developed the "Early Learning Scale" (ELS), an observation-based authentic/performance assessment that provides educators with a comprehensive, standards-based assessment system. NIEER notes:

> *Performance-based assessments are necessary because children change from situation to situation and day to day. Performance assessments are able to capture children's skills and knowledge in real life over time. This type of assessment system also compares children to themselves, is comprehensive and focuses on strengths and interests, which differs greatly from standardized tests. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, this assessment approach informs teaching and can be easily used to communicate with parents or caregivers in a meaningful way about their child's growth and development during the preschool years. (Ayers, Frede, and Young, 2010, p.3)*

Educators using the Early Learning Scale collect their data through observation and samples of the child's work, such as those items that would be collected in a student portfolio. Data is then analyzed using research-based benchmarks and assigned a score on a 5-point continuum[1]. Educators are then able to communicate with parents regarding their child's individual progress, and are also able to use the data and

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[1] A 5 point continuum is also known as a Likert Scale – this is the same type of scale that is used in other assessment tools such as the ECERS-R (Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale – Revised).

findings to plan for and prepare learning activities and the learning environment knowing that they are specifically focusing on the children in their centre.

The Early Learning Scale includes measurable items in math/science, social emotional/social studies, and language arts/literacy. The items that are included are measurable (i.e., are able to be observed and objectively measured), the skills are those that develop on a continuum, and are those that are "critical to present an future learning". (Riley-Ayers, Stevenson-Garcia, Frede & Brenneman, in press)

Within each of the three domains described above, the Early Learning Scale identifies a series of items for measurement:

> *Domain: Math/Science*
>
>> *Item 1: Number and Numerical Operations*
>>
>> *Item 2: Geometry and Measurement*
>>
>> *Item 3: Observation and Classification*
>>
>> *Item 4: Scientific Inquiry*
>
> *Domain: Social Emotional/Social Studies*
>
>> *Item 5: Self-regulation*
>>
>> *Item 6: Play*
>
> *Domain: Language Arts Literacy*
>
>> *Item 7: Oral Language*
>>
>> *Item 8: Phonological Awareness*
>>
>> *Item 9: Print Awareness*
>>
>> *Item 10: Writing*
>
> Source: Riley-Ayers, Stevenson-Garcia, Frede & Brenneman, (in press)

The approach to assessment taken in the Early Learning Scale is consistent with the philosophical approach of the PEI Early Learning Framework. The Early Learning Scale, however, focuses only on three domains, and does not provide a continuum for assessment in all of the areas of learning and development as identified in the Learning Goals. However, educators must consider whether it is appropriate – at the preschool level – to assess all areas of development according to a continuum. Ayers, Frede and Jung (2010) explain:

> *The Early Learning Scale does not provide a continuum for the arts and physical development. At the preschool level, standards dictate children should begin to explore and develop an appreciation for the arts. However, a child's appreciation of something is difficult to observe and not appropriate to place on a continuum. Additionally, physical development is usually best assessed using a checklist*

rather than a continuum. The two domains are included because of their importance for teachers to notice and intervene when concerns arise. So, we provide the research base and a location to collect evidence, but these areas are not scored on the continuum. (Ayers, Frede and Jung, 2010, p.3)

As the PEI Early Learning Framework is implemented in Early Years Centres across the province, the availability of assessment and documentation data will contribute to:

- Monitoring developmental progress for individual children
- Documentation of practices for monitoring adherence to the implementation requirements of the PEI Early Learning Framework
- Ongoing evaluation of the Early Learning Framework
- Ongoing evaluation of the Preschool Excellence Initiative

ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY OF TERMS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACEI: Association for Childhood Education International

CCHRSC: Child Care Human Resources Sector Council

DEECD: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

ECD: Early Childhood Development

ECDA: Early Childhood Development Association

ECE: Early Childhood Educator

ECEC: Early Childhood Education and Care

ECEs: Early Childhood Educators

ELECT: Early Learning for Every Child Today (Ontario)

ELS: Early Learning Scale

EYC: Early Years Centre

NAEYC: National Association for the Education of Young Children

NIEER: National Institute for Early Education Research

PEI: Preschool Excellence Initiative

PEI: Prince Edward Island

RECD: Research in Early Childhood Development

UPEI: University of Prince Edward Island

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

GLOSSARYOF COMMON TERMS

Active learning environment: an active learning environment in which children are encouraged to explore and interact with the environment to make (or construct) meaning and knowledge through their experiences, social interactions and negotiations with others. In an active learning environment, educators play a crucial role of encouraging children to discover deeper meanings and make connections among ideas and between concepts, processes and representations. This requires educators to be engaged with children's emotions and thinking. *(Adapted from South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability (SACSA) Framework, General Introduction, p. 10 & 11).*

Adult: any person 18 years of age or older who may be involved with young children, including parents, extended family, early childhood educators, caregivers, service providers, volunteers, and community members

Agency: the capacity to be able to make choices and decisions, to influence events and to have an impact on one's world

Belonging: the experience of security, inclusion, respect and competence in a group setting

Bridges: a program of the PEI Department of Education and Early Childhood Development that provides on-site program consultation and support to Early Years Centres and Kindergarten programs across the province. Bridges staff regularly measure and assess quality in Early Years Centres using standardized quality assessment tools.

Certification: the regulatory process that recognizes qualifications of early childhood educators.

Child assessment: the process of noticing children's learning and development, recognizing its significance, and responding in ways that foster learning. It means documenting some of what children can do and how they do it in order to make learning visible. (Ministry of Education, New Zealand)

Child/Children with special needs: any child who displays challenges in learning and functioning in one or more areas of development and increased vulnerability to environmental and non-environmental stresses (Allen et al, 2006), and who may require additional assistance, planning or support

Child/Children: infants, toddlers and three to five year olds, unless otherwise stated

Co-construct: the learning process that takes place as children interact with educators and other children as they work together in partnership

Cognition: the construction of knowledge, learning strategies and ways of thinking and reasoning that enable children to learn about themselves, others and the world they live in.

Communities: social or cultural groups or networks that share a common purpose, heritage, rights and responsibilities and/or other bonds. 'Communities' is used variously to refer, for example, to the community within an early childhood settings, local neighbourhoods, geographic, spiritual, and/or cultural communities, and the broader Prince Edward Island society.

Community participation: taking an active role in contributing to communities

Critical reflection: reflective practices that focus on implications for equity and social justice

Culturally responsive practice: one that reflects and celebrates our pluralist society and allows children to develop and learn while experiencing a sense of belonging and respect

Culture: the understandings, patterns of behaviour, practices and values shared by a group of people. Taken collectively, these shared understandings help groups of people make sense of their worlds and communicate with one another. Culture is a group's accepted values, traditions, and lifestyles that guide the way people lead their day-to-day lives. Children and families may identify as belonging to more than one culture.

Curriculum: in the early childhood setting curriculum means 'all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development'. [adapted from Te Whariki]. Curriculum includes the sum total of experiences, activities and events that occur within an inclusive environment designed to foster children's well-being, learning, and development. (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, Te Whariki, Early Childhood Curriculum, 1996, p. 99) In early childhood settings, this implies collaboration between

early childhood professionals, children, and parents.

DEECD: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (PEI)

Development: a description of the relatively stable and predictable sequences of growth and change toward greater complexity, organization and internalization that occur at varying and unique rates, patterns and timing, as a result of interactions between biological maturation and environmental influences, including relationships, experiences, social and cultural backgrounds (NAEYC, 1987)

Developmental difficulties/challenges: Any single or cluster of behaviours, learning problems or challenges that could interfere with children's optimal development (McCain & Mustard, 1999)

Dispositions: enduring habits of mind and actions, and tendencies to respond in characteristic ways to situations, for example, maintaining an optimistic outlook, being willing to persevere, approaching new experiences with confidence

Diversity: differences and uniqueness that each child brings to the early learning setting including values and beliefs, culture and ethnicity, language, ability, education, life experiences, socio-economic status, spirituality, gender, age, and sexual orientation

Documentation: the collection of learning stories, observations, language samples, children's drawing and early attempts at writing, etc. for the purpose of demonstrating and sharing evidence of development and learning with parents and others

Domain of development (Developmental domain): a broad area or dimension of development, including social, emotional, language, cognition, and physical - each of which is equally important to the child's learning, health and well being

Early Childhood Development (ECD): the growth that takes place from birth until age six.

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC): professional practice which includes the assessment and promotion of the well-being and holistic development of children through the planning and delivery of inclusive play-based learning and care programs within the context of diverse family, school and community groups (College of ECE)

Early childhood educator (ECE):an early childhood practitioner who has an Early Childhood Education credential from a postsecondary institution. In PEI, legislative requirements define different levels of certification for early childhood educators, depending on the type of post-secondary credential.

Early Childhood Practitioner: an adult who works in the field of ECEC

Early Childhood Professional: a more general term used to describe a person with specialized education, training, and/or experience in supporting children's learning

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and/or development in the early years. An early childhood professional may be a licensed early childhood educator and/or a person with other specialized training in promoting children's physical, social, and/or emotional health, development, and well-being. (See also: *Early Years Professional*)

Early childhood settings: all programs that provide early learning and care to more than 5 children under 12 years of age for a continuous period including Early Years Centre, private child care centres, kindergarten, family child care, nursery schools, preschool programs, and preschool early intervention group. Depending on the age group, the provider's children may or may not be included for determining the appropriate number of staff. See also: *Early Childhood Education and Care.*

Early identification and intervention– refers to screening and other approaches to identify the early signs or symptoms of a problem with health or child development, as well as the services provided to help correct or resolve the problem. Problems that are identified and responded to early are less likely to have a long-term impact on a child's development.

Early learning: the emerging and expanding of young children's physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and creative capabilities from birth to school entry. It is a natural, holistic and exploratory process that young children engage in from birth and that lays the foundation for later learning, whether formal or informal. Early learning is part of and related to early childhood development.

Early learning and care - see early childhood settings.

Early learning environment– an environment focused on relationships between children, parents and early childhood professionals that provides care, nurturing and education as a complex and coherent whole, with the goals of holistic development and overall well-being. It includes schedules, routines, physical environment, interactions, materials, activities and experiences.

Early Years Centre: a licensed early childhood education and care program that has been designated by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development as meeting exceptional criteria. In Early Years Centres, parent fees are regulated, all staff must meet specified levels of ECE certification, parent advisory committee's work with centre directors and a provincial wage grid defines wages and benefits for all staff. All Early Years Centres are mandated to follow the PEI Early Learning Framework in their curriculum/pedagogical approaches.

Early years professional: a more general term used to describe a person with specialized education, training, and/or experience in supporting children's learning and/or development in the early years. An early years professional may be a licensed early childhood educator and/or a person with other specialized training in promoting children's physical, social, and/or emotional health, development, and well-being. (See also: Early Childhood Professional)

ECERS – Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale: A quality measurement tool using a seven point Likert Scale to determine levels of program quality in early childhood programs

ECERS – R: the revised version of the above quality measurement tool

Emotional Well-being- the degree to which children feel at ease, act spontaneously, show vitality and self-confidence, indicating their basic needs have been satisfied

Empathy: an awareness of and responsiveness to the emotions of others, that develops into the ability to understand and feel concern for the feelings and needs of others

Environment: any physical space where young children spend their lives and engage in early learning, such as a home, playground, child care centre, community centre or other public place, and natural settings. The environment can also refer to the organization of any one of these settings.

Evaluation: the process of reviewing early childhood settings and programs for evidence of practices which support the PEI Early Learning Framework, quality and effectiveness of programs across the province, using a common set of criteria, in order to make decisions about the impact of the framework and the need for change.

Evidence-based Practice: the delivery of high quality early learning and care programs based on the best empirical evidence available, in conjunction with professional judgment.

Experiences: what children actually do with or gain from the programs that early childhood professionals provide for them. Traditionally called activities, but experiences are broader. They are occasions for learning.

Guidance: strategies used to support children's self-control and development of empathy and social competence, while preserving each child's sense of worth, autonomy, positive inclusion in the group and trust in the educator.

High risk: a term used in early identification and intervention programs to describe a situation where, based on the results of a complete assessment and professional judgment, there is a serious risk that a child may not reach his/her potential and that the family may benefit from more intensive support.

Holistic: a holistic approach to early learning encompasses the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and creative development of a child. A holistic approach focuses on the development of the whole child, rather than only concentrating on individual components.

Inclusion: involves taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in curriculum decision-making processes. The intent is to

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ensure that all children's experiences are recognized and valued. The intent is also to ensure that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to value difference.

Inclusive practice: practice which is based on the belief that all individuals have equal worth and rights, and which actively promotes acceptance and participation of all children and families in their programs, providing differential and appropriate learning support according to individual strengths, needs and background

Indicators: behaviours or comments that are markers of what a child knows or does that show a particular skill is emerging, being practiced, or elaborated.

Infants: children who are 0 - 24 months old.

Inquiry: the process of exploring, observing, gathering information, discovery of patterns and relationships in order to understand the environment

Intentional teaching: involves educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions. Intentional teaching is the opposite of teaching by rote or continuing with traditions simply because things have 'always' been done that way.

Interactions: experiential exchanges between individuals (adult-child; child-child; adult-adult) that support and enable the child's learning and skill development.

Learning: the process of adapting to new experiences and environments, and actively building new understanding from these new experiences upon the foundation of existing development and knowledge.

Learning framework: a guide that provides general goals or outcomes for children's learning and how they might be attained. It also provides a scaffold to assist early childhood settings to develop their own, more detailed curriculum.

Learning goal: a skill, knowledge or a disposition that can be actively promoted by adults in children's environments. Children can play an active role in shaping learning goals as they develop.

Learning Outcome: a skill, knowledge or disposition that educators can actively promote in early childhood settings, in collaboration with children and families.

Learning relationships: relationships that further children's learning and development. Both the adult and the child have intent to learn from each other.

Learning story/stories: a means of documenting children's learning and development in action, through descriptions of actual unique experiences. Learning stories depict early childhood practice and the active involvement of adults and children in learning, showing how development and learning are integrated in programs and how content is meaningful to children, and reflecting community and individual cultural, and linguistic diversity.

Learning: a natural process of exploration that children engage in from birth as they expand their intellectual, physical, social, emotional and creative capacities. Early learning is closely linked to early development.

Literacies: a broad term used to describe the development of the physical, emotional, social, creative, linguistic and intellectual means of communication among young children. It includes using a range of expressive mediums to communicate one's own thoughts and experiences, as well as to communicate with and understand others.

Literacy: reading, writing and oral language abilities consisting of the following components: acquiring vocabulary and language, phonological awareness, knowledge of print, knowledge of letters and words, comprehension of meaning, awareness of story-telling, books and other texts and seeing literacy as a source of knowledge, information and pleasure. In the early years literacy includes a range of modes of communication including music, movement, dance, story-telling, visual arts, media and drama, as well as talking, reading and writing.

Monitoring: identification and measurement of child outcomes at community and provincial levels, through the use of various tools, such as the Early Development Instrument. Monitoring may also refer to the identification and measurement of aspects of quality in Early Years Centres using standardized quality assessment measures.

Narrative: an aspect of literacy that involves describing, sequencing and telling of ideas, events or stories.

Numeracy: broadly includes understandings about numbers, patterns, measurement, spatial awareness and data as well as mathematical thinking, reasoning and counting.

Observation: the ongoing process of watching, listening and being attuned to children's behaviour, emotional state, interests and abilities and patterns of development, in order to meet the needs of children, and evaluate children's development and learning.

Parent participation: the range of strategies, actions, interactions and relationships in which parents engage on behalf of children's well-being and learning.

Parents:the person(s) primarily responsible for the day-day care of children and taking on commonly understood parenting role, including biological or adoptive parents, step-parents, legal guardians, or extended family – grandparents, aunts or uncles, etc.

Partnership: a relationship between families and service providers based on mutual trust and respect that are sensitive to family culture, values, language and composition.

Pedagogy: the understanding of how learning takes place and the philosophy and practice that supports that understanding of learning. Pedagogy involves early childhood educators' professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision- making, teaching and learning.

Philosophy: a statement outlining the fundamental beliefs, values and ideals that are important to individuals involved in Early Childhood Education – directors/supervisors, practitioners, parents, families and community. A philosophy identifies what is special about (and fundamental to) the program, and is the basis for decisions about the way the program is managed and about its direction in the future

Play: a naturally occurring, freely chosen and non-literal activity in which children are intrinsically motivated, characterized by imagination, exploration, delight, capriciousness and a sense of wonder, that reflects the unique experience of children, and through which children express their ideas and feelings, and come to understand themselves, others and their world.

Play-based learning: a context for learning through which children organize and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people, objects and representations.

Play-based pedagogy: an educational approach which builds upon children's natural inclination to make sense of the world through play, where early childhood practitioners participate in play, guiding children's planning, decision-making and communications, and extending children's explorations with narrative, novelty and challenges.

Portfolio: a means of documenting a child's learning over time. Portfolios may contain samples of artwork, writing, retellings of favourite stories, math work or any other collected evidence of the child's learning and development. Both adults and children choose items for inclusion in portfolios.

Pre-school aged children: children who are three to five years old.

Pretend play: freely chosen involvement with people, materials and the environment, which reflects children's perceptions, inspirations, imagination and creativity.

Professional expertise: knowledge and pedagogy, based in observation and reflection, considered in relation to current theories, research and evidence- based practice, leading to best practices.

Program standards: indicators of quality in early learning and care programs whose success has been demonstrated by research, describing the human resources, supports, activities, and methodology needed to promote children's learning (Shore, Bodrova & Leong, 2004). These include characteristics such as staff qualifications, group size, ratio, environment, materials and supports available to children and families (Shore et al, 2004) in order to create optimal learning environments and

equitable outcomes.

Projects: in-depth investigations that include community field trips, community experts and relevant artifacts from home and community to promote learning.

Quality: components of early learning and care programs whose success has been demonstrated by research to contribute to optimal learning environments and equitable outcomes, including human resources, staff qualifications, group size, ratio, supports, methodology, environment, materials, interactions, activities, and child and family supports. Quality must always consider the perspective, and experiences of the child.

Reflective practice: the systematic, reflective, collaborative process used by early childhood professionals to plan, evaluate, make decisions and create and implement change through consideration of relevant literature, current practice, learning environments, observations of children's development, behavior, social interactions, learning, and knowledge of families

Reflexivity: children's growing awareness of the ways that their experiences, interests and beliefs shape their understanding

Responsive relationships: positive and beneficial interactions between adults and children that occur when adults observe and read children's signals and communication, and then respond with understanding to give the children a feeling of being cared for and cared about.

Scaffold: the educators' decisions and actions that build on children's existing knowledge and skills to enhance their learning. "Scaffolding" is a process involving the provision of opportunities for play and interaction that relate to children's experiences and support from educators to help children move beyond their current levels of understanding and abilities

Screening: a process of identifying special needs or delays in development, using observation or specifically designed tools for the purpose of referral to specialized services

Self Regulation: the ability to monitor and control emotions, behaviour and attention

Skills: specific processes, abilities, and competencies that exist within each domain of development, and form the foundation pathways for learning and health that emerge early and are elaborated over time.

Social inclusion: a philosophy and practice that values all forms of differences, and encourages a sense of belonging for all children and families

Special Need: a physical, emotional, cognitive, or behavioural condition that may require additional or specific types of support to help a child participate in early learning, and to attain typical developmental goals. Supporting individual children's

special needs may require adaptations to the physical environment and/or individualized strategies to foster a child's learning. Special needs may encompass delayed or gifted abilities.

Spiritual: refers to a range of human experiences including a sense of awe and wonder, and an exploration of *being* and knowing

Temperament: an innate tendency to respond to the world in a particular way. For example, some children are naturally more sensitive or adaptable than others. Children's temperaments may affect their learning and the way adults support them to learn.

Texts: things that we read, view and listen to and that we create in order to share meaning. Texts can be print-based, such as books, magazines and posters or screen-based, for example internet sites and DVDs. Many texts are multimodal, integrating images, written words and/or sound.

Theory of Mind: the awareness or understanding of how one's thoughts and feelings influence one's behaviour, and the understanding that other people also have thoughts and feelings that affect their behaviour.

Transitions: the process of moving between home and childhood setting, between a range of different early childhood settings, or from childhood setting to full-time school. Transition may also refer to the process of moving from one activity to another during the flow of activities in an early childhood education and care program, e.g., indoor to outdoor activities.

Well-being: a state of physical, social, or emotional comfort. *Sound well-being results from the satisfaction of basic needs - the need for tenderness and affection; security and clarity; social recognition; to feel competent; physical needs and for meaning in life*[9]. It includes happiness and satisfaction, effective social functioning and the dispositions of optimism, openness, curiosity and resilience.

Whole child:a view of development as a holistic, complex and interrelated process that includes the domains of emotional, social, cognitive, communication, language and physical learning, growth and well-being

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[9]Definition adapted by the Australia's Early Learning Framework (Being, Belonging, Becoming) from Laevers, F. (Ed.) (1994). Defining and assessing quality in early childhood education. *Studia Paedagogica.* Leuven: Leuven University Press.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

The following Prince Edward Island Early Years Centres participated in the ongoing consultations during the development of the PEI Early Learning Framework:

Bright Futures Child Development Centre

CHANCES Early Learning Centres

Child Development Centre (Holland College)

Creative Childcare Centre

Down to Earth Childcare Centre

Dreams Unlimited Childcare Centre

Eastern Kings Early Learning Academy

Fun Times Early Education and Childcare Centre

Garderie Educative Cornwall Child Education Centre

Just For You Children's Centre

Little Blessings Childcare Centre

Little Wonders Childcare Centre

Milestones Early Childhood Development Centre

Montessori Children's Centre

Parkdale Sherwood HEADSTART

Rainbow Early Childhood Centre

Tiny Tots Childcare Centre

Tyne Valley Playschool

YMCA of Prince Edward Island Creative Learning Centre

APPENDIX 2

Members of the Early Learning Framework Advisory Committee

Alice Taylor, Early Childhood Education Specialist, President of the Early Childhood Development Association

Angie Cormier, Collège Acadie of Î.-P.-É.

Anne Miller, Eastern Kings Early Learning Academy

Cathy McCormack, Co-chair, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Colette Richard, Le Jardin Des Étoiles

Elizabeth Jeffery, Little Wonders Childcare Centre

Francine Bernard, Co-chair, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Gabriela Sanchez, University of Prince Edward Island, (alternate-Martha Gabriel)

Holly Moses, Holland College, (alternate-Susan Ashley)

June Scott, YMCA of Prince Edward Island Creative Learning Centre

Marlene Loo, Rainbow Early Childhood Centre

APPENDIX 3

SUMMARY OF LEARNING GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

The following presents each of the Learning Goals of the PEI Early Learning Framework, accompanied by all of the associated objectives and strategies. The information contained in this appendix in provided as an easy reference for Directors and Educators in Early Years Centres.

The Learning Goals, Objectives, and Strategies are fully discussed in Sections 6 and 7 of the Early Learning Framework.

LEARNING GOAL: WELL BEING	
OBJECTIVES	**STRATEGIES**
Physical Health and Personal Safety	Children develop independence in personal care routines
	Children develop healthy attitudes toward eating
	Children develop small and large muscle strength, coordination, and agility
	Children create a sense of personal safety, confidence in their ability to know when something is wrong, and the importance of seeking help if they are placed in situations of violence or danger
Sense of Identity and Self Concept	Children develop an understanding of "self" in relation to family, culture, community, and friends
	Children develop a sense of their own personal identity, likes and preferences
	Children maintain their own identities while appreciating the perspective of others
	Children become aware of their own strengths and abilities, likes and preferences and unique talents
Emotional Health and Belonging	Children develop trusting relationships with educators and other children
	Children enjoy a sense of security and safety within the environment of the Early Years Centre
	Children learn how to express their emotions and feelings in a comfortable and positive manner
	Children are respectful of individual differences in others

LEARNING GOAL: EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES
Curious Investigation	Children use their senses and bodies to investigate, explore, and develop understanding of their environment
	Children incorporate investigation and exploration into their play activities
	Children develop an ability to concentrate and persevere in their explorations and investigations
	Children develop a sense of excitement about the world, and its endless possibilities for new discoveries
Problem Solving and Numeracy	Children understand concept of quantity
	Children recognize numeric symbols
	Children demonstrate an understanding of the association and relationship of quantity and symbols
	Children use mathematical concepts to solve questions and problems that arise during play
Reason, Logic, and Scientific Inquiry	Children understand the process of cause and effect
	Children make predictions during play
	Children are able to plan and carry out a series of actions
	Children actively participate in projects based on scientific method of inquiry

LEARNING GOAL: EXPRESSION AND COMMUNICATION	
OBJECTIVES	**STRATEGIES**
Language and Literacies	Children use a variety of means to communicate their ideas, thoughts, and needs
	Children use increasingly complex language structures in conversations and play
	Children listen with understanding and engage in increasingly longer verbal conversational exchanges with other children and adults
	Children develop a love of stories and books
Creativity and the Arts	Children use various media to create their own artistic expression
	Children engage in various types of artistic expression, including visual arts, music, drama and dance
	Children have opportunities to experience creative art forms from different cultures
	Children have opportunities to experience art in the child's community and province
Symbols and Representation	Children begin to develop an awareness of the symbols and sounds of their language
	Children begin to understand that written words and symbols are used to indicate the names of objects, and to express ideas and thoughts
	Children demonstrate increasing frequency and complexity in attempts to represent thoughts, ideas, and objects during their play
	Children are able to collect and organize information

LEARNING GOAL: SOCIAL AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY	
OBJECTIVES	**STRATEGIES**
Self Regulation and Self Discipline	Children develop an understanding and sense of responsibility for their actions
	Children begin to develop the ability to understand the world from the perspective of others
	Children are able to identify , recognize and self-regulate their emotions
	Children are able to demonstrate a sense of self-discipline
Culture and Heritage	Children develop a sense of personal respect for themselves and for others
	Children develop sense of identity with the cultures and heritage of their family, their community, and Prince Edward Island
	Children develop an awareness and appreciation of other cultures and languages of the world
Environmental Awareness and Care of the Earth	Children begin to develop a sense of responsibility for taking care of the environment in their homes, early years centre, and community
	Children begin to develop an awareness of the earth as a planet, and its relationship to other planets, sun, moon, and stars
	Children begin to develop an awareness of the wonders of nature and an appreciation for their role in taking care of the earth