Teacher’s Handbook for Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) in Swaziland

JANUARY 2013
This handbook has been developed to guide Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) teachers at ECCE centres to adhere to quality standards of ECCE education in Swaziland. It builds on current curriculum and guidelines for ECCE set by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), and includes evidence-based best practice approaches supporting ECCE.

This handbook provides an overview of early childhood development. It also presents information and strategies for providing children ages 3 to 6 years with the foundation they need to grow and thrive physically, mentally, emotionally and socially, and to succeed in later learning. Suggested activities can and should be adapted or enhanced by ECCE teachers, all of whom bring their own unique experiences, ideas and creativity to their classrooms.

This handbook can also be used by other ECCE actors and organizations working to strengthen ECCE interventions and engage communities in supporting ECCE to ensure their children have a strong start at happy, healthy and productive lives.

Disclaimer:

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The drawings in this handbook were done by Leah Jones.

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This handbook was designed with teachers, for teachers. It is intended to be a daily resource guide to support teachers in their daily work of organizing their Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) centres to best support children’s early learning and development.

Use this handbook along with the Ministry of Education and Training’s (MoET) Manual for Caregivers. These two documents work together to give you the tools you need to succeed. In this handbook, you will find all of the Themes and Sub-Themes, descriptions of and ideas for each Learning Area, and tools for daily planning. With a little practice, you will be able to find all sorts of new ideas and gain clear direction for your day-to-day activities.

**HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK**

**KEY POINTS FOR SUCCESS**

- Plan ahead: **Use the Lesson Plan templates** to organize each day – a written plan will make your day go much easier.
- Know the day’s theme and sub-themes, but remember that these themes do NOT have to direct every activity that the children or you do. **Themes give a focus and inspiration** for the day.
- Use the Morning and Closing Rings every day.
- **Children learn by playing!** Play can look a lot of different ways. Encourage play and exploration.
- Allow enough time in each Learning Area.
- Remember that **much of early learning is child-led**. Encourage children to play, explore and experiment on their own. The Fantasy and Block areas should be child-led. As a teacher, you only need to provide interesting materials for these areas, then step back and let the children play!
- **Encourage your community to get involved** at your ECCE centre. Let them know what you are doing and invite them to help in ways that they can.
- Be creative! Have fun!
1. What is ECCE?

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), as defined by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) of Swaziland’s Caregiver Guide, is the support given to children between the ages of 0-8 years to stimulate and develop their physical, mental, emotional and social skills so they can grow and thrive. Providing children with a strong ECCE foundation is the responsibility of family, community, government, school, culture and society as a whole.

The first eight years of a child’s life form the foundation for all later development. Thus, paying close attention to the broad range of a child’s holistic needs is important and can help to prevent problems later in life. Best practices in ECCE recognize the full spectrum, or range, of children’s needs as equally important. For example, love and care from parents/caregivers nurtures a child’s emotional growth so he or she is able to have healthy interactions with other children and adults. Nutrition is equally critical; a well-nourished child is able to grow physically and mentally—to participate and concentrate in class and be physically active.

Good ECCE practices link all developmental domains—physical, cognitive, social/emotional and language—and challenges a child to think and stretch their learning and skills. For this reason, instead of just pointing to fruits and asking a child to name them, better ECCE practice might involve showing the child several fruits and asking them to think of others that are not shown. This causes them to think critically and come up with their own answers—and is more fun!

2. Why is ECCE important?

ECCE is essential for children because it helps a child develop the following:

- Healthy physical growth and abilities through play and other developmental activities
- Good social habits as an individual and as a member of society

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**NOT JUST FUN AND GAMES!**

Teaching a child to throw a ball has many benefits beyond being fun. This simple activity promotes:

- Physical development, using many muscles, and building eye-hand coordination
- Social/emotional development, interacting and communicating with another person
- Language as they talk to each other
- Cognitive development, learning to predict where the ball will come to and connecting all the other domains of development in this one activity
School readiness: A child that is ready for school:

⇒ Is socially and emotionally healthy, confident and able to build friendships with peers
⇒ Can tackle challenging tasks and persist in solving problems
⇒ Has good language skills and communicates well
⇒ Is attentive, listens to instructions and follows directions
⇒ Is less likely to repeat classes, require special services, or drop out of school

Moral values development

Imagination and creativity, self-reliance and critical thinking power

3. Child Development: From 3 to 6 years (pre-school years)¹

It is important to remember that every child is unique and her development will happen on her own individual timetable. Child development milestones are meant to give you an approximate idea of when to expect to see certain things happening and in what order they will generally happen. There is often considerable variation in the timing of development between two perfectly normal, typically developing children.

As you become familiar with what kinds of things children at certain ages are likely to be doing, and as you practice your observation skills, you may notice a child whose level of development does not match her age. Sometimes this will be due to perfectly normal variations in each child’s development. Slight delays in any learning area, or even across learning areas, are probably not a cause for concern if the child seems generally healthy and continues to progress at a reasonable rate in her overall development.

However, a child who appears to have noticeable delays across all of the learning areas, or significant delays in one particular learning area, or who appears to have stopped growing or developing physically, is cause for concern. She may have health concerns, a disability, or special needs that will need to be addressed and supported for her to develop to her full potential. It is recommended that you work closely with her caregivers to refer her to a health care provider; the families can get specific information and resources so that they can best support their child’s development.

The table on the next page shows some of the skills, or developmental milestones, we can expect to see in children from 3 to 6 years of age.

¹Excerpted from UNESCO Asia, Parenting Education Handbook and India’s ICDS Trainers Manual.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Domain</th>
<th>3-4 years</th>
<th>4-5 years</th>
<th>5-6 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHYSICAL</td>
<td>◊ Walks alone, climbs and runs  ◊ Catches and throws ball with two hands  ◊ Scribbles if given a pencil or crayon and uses whole arm movement  ◊ Mostly able to feed themselves and tries to undress themselves  ◊ Tears and shapes paper with a shape in mind  ◊ Draws simple human figures  ◊ Moves body, arms and legs in rhythm</td>
<td>◊ Walks, runs, climbs, kicks and jumps easily  ◊ Catches bouncing ball  ◊ Throws ball easily  ◊ Uses make-believe objects in play  ◊ Feeds him/herself  ◊ Washes and dries hands; brushes teeth with some help  ◊ Gains bladder control  ◊ Uses the toilet or latrine without help and washes hands  ◊ Cuts paper along lines  ◊ Draws simple human figures</td>
<td>◊ Can stop running suddenly  ◊ Throws ball with one hand  ◊ Hops on one foot  ◊ Assembles 7-15 puzzle pieces  ◊ Dresses without help  ◊ Holds a crayon or pencil between the thumb and first two fingers  ◊ Uses either the right or left hand most of the time  ◊ Constructs buildings, bridges and other structures with blocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>◊ Listens to stories and rhymes  ◊ Follows simple instructions  ◊ Speaks clearly  ◊ Asks questions  ◊ Recognizes alphabet letters  ◊ Uses number, colour and shape words  ◊ Describes simple pictures</td>
<td>◊ Listens attentively to stories and makes comments  ◊ Follows and responds to simple instructions  ◊ Speaks clearly with proper pronunciation  ◊ Asks a variety of questions  ◊ Recognizes own name in writing  ◊ Recites rhymes and sings simple songs  ◊ Matches words with pictures</td>
<td>◊ Listens to and can retell stories  ◊ Speaks in sentences and uses many different words  ◊ Narrates daily life events  ◊ Asks ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions  ◊ Recognizes names of family members and friends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1: Developmental Milestones**
**Table 1: Development Milestones (continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Domain</th>
<th>3-4 years</th>
<th>4-5 years</th>
<th>5-6 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL</strong></td>
<td>Imitates the behaviour of others</td>
<td>Participates and takes initiative in all activities</td>
<td>Relates well with adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relates to other children and adults</td>
<td>Relates well with other children and adults</td>
<td>Is friends with a number of other children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expresses emotions freely</td>
<td>Expresses and can identify basic feelings</td>
<td>Expresses feelings appropriate to situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cooperates with others</td>
<td>Maintains personal cleanliness</td>
<td>Shows empathy towards feelings of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoys playing with others</td>
<td>Helps and cooperates with others</td>
<td>Follows rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helps others</td>
<td></td>
<td>Takes initiative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COGNITIVE/INTELLECTUAL**

- Says his/her name and age
- Points to familiar objects or pictures when these are named
- Differentiates objects by colour, shape and size
- Listens to and can identify sounds they hear
- Follows simple instructions
- Identifies missing part of a picture
- Puts 3 piece puzzle together
- Asks and answers questions
- Classifies objects into different groups
- Completes a simple task and does not give up
- Counts 5-10 objects
- Understands opposites (e.g. fat/thin, tall/short)
- Concentrates on activity for 10-15 minutes
- Puts 5 piece puzzle together
- Observes changes in nature
- Asks a variety of questions
- Solves problems in daily life
- Counts to 20
- Puts 10-12 piece puzzle together

**WARNING SIGNS**

- Does not respond to other people or children
- Difficulty keeping balance when walking
- Lack of appetite
- Unexplained changes in behaviour
- Unable to understand simple messages
- Little interest in playing
- Left out of other children’s play
- Frequently falls
- Difficulty manipulating small objects
- Unable to speak using several words
- Little interest in food
- Unable to make friends
- Fear, anger or violence when playing with others
- Difficulty using crayons and pencils
- Uses speech that cannot be understood

**Developmental Domain**

- 3-4 years
- 4-5 years
- 5-6 years
Comparing the child’s progress to the developmental milestones for each stage will help caregivers to see if the child is falling behind, meeting, or exceeding their developmental milestones.

Young children’s growth and development will vary according to their individual nature, their sex, living conditions, family organisation, care arrangements and services provided by government and civil society. It is important to ensure that children always have appropriate nutritional support; a healthy, safe, clean and enriched environment; and protection, love and nurturing. Good care is the best preventative measure against disabilities and developmental delays.

Age-appropriate tasks help children get a feeling of success and build their confidence; when activities are appropriate to the age and stage of development, children enjoy learning. ECCE teachers need to focus on learning by doing, encourage interactions and relationships and offer a wide variety of creative and fun activities.

4. How Do Pre-school Aged Children Learn?

Preschool aged children have an inherent urge to learn, but they learn differently from the way older children and adults do. During the early childhood learning period they begin to trust others outside the family. They gain independence, self-control, and learn to take initiative and assert themselves in socially acceptable ways. It is often through play that they discover their surroundings and learn various skills. ECCE teachers should give children the opportunity to work on their own development—with the guidance of an adult.

Preschool aged children learn:
- Through play
- By manipulating objects
- By exploring the world around them
- By experimenting
- Through trial and error
- By asking questions
- By observing and imitating others

The age and level of development of children is important in selecting activities. Selecting activities that are stimulating and developmentally appropriate for classrooms with children ranging from age three to six can be challenging, but it is important to remember that children have a way of making activities developmentally appropriate for themselves. For example, while playing with blocks, a three year old may stack several blocks on top of each
other to make a tower; a six year old will build more complex structures. This is done without the prompting of a teacher. Thus, playing with blocks is an equally appropriate activity for both a three and a six year old.

Some activities will be better suited to younger children while others will clearly work better with older children. Many activities can be either simplified or made more challenging for younger or older children. For example, during an art activity, a younger child may be guided to tear sheets of paper and glue them together, while an older child can be guided to tear them into certain shapes and glue them together to make a scene or picture.

**Child-Led vs. Teacher-Led Activities**

The daily schedule should allow time for both child-led and teacher-led activities throughout the day. Teacher-led areas are often the book and educational learning areas. Child-led activities should include the discovery, fantasy, blocks, art and outdoor play learning areas.

**One of the most important things you can do to support young children’s development is to support their play.**

Through play, children explore the physical and social world, interacting with materials and people in ways that allow them to construct knowledge. Through experimentation, problem solving, social interaction, and pretending, young children make sense of the world. Play is self-directed, and children create their own worlds to explore. Teachers can create opportunities for play by providing time, space, and materials, and by introducing children to ideas, games and activities that children can make their own. The teachers should be in close contact, monitoring the children’s activities and engaging with children when it is appropriate—but not when it is disruptive to the child’s thought-process or experience. Often, the best way for a teacher to guide play is to simply be an observer.

**Why Is Play So Important?**

- Allows children to learn at their own speed
- Helps children to try out different ways of doing things
- Stimulates the child’s imagination
- Can provide a sense of achievement
- Helps children observe, listen and communicate
- Provides a way for children to express their emotions
- Helps children develop gross (big) muscles (e.g. through jumping, running and climbing)

**REMEMBER!**

One of the most important things you can do is support children’s play. Children naturally want to play. Through play they discover their surroundings and learn skills while manipulating things in their environment. That is why play is sometimes called “children’s work.”

-MoET Caregivers Guide
Develops children’s eye/hand coordination (e.g. through catching, pouring and cutting)
Helps children follow rules and work with one another

**How Can Teachers Support Children’s Need to Play?**

- Valuing and respecting children’s need to play
- Providing suitable materials and toys that are available
- Fostering children’s curiosity
- Encouraging creative, cooperative and imaginative play
- Offering new experiences in play
- Not putting pressure on children to learn something before they are ready

During playtime, caregivers must ensure the child’s safety and that the child has the best learning opportunities and is enjoying himself/herself. Caregivers can provide materials for play and guide and encourage children, but at the same time, allow them to discover things on their own. In these years, children are also developing more control over their emotions. They have more social skills and enjoy playing with other children. Encouraging play in these years is important because it supports learning in all areas of development.

### 5. Types of Play

**Sensory Play**

Sensory play develops the five senses: sight, touch, taste, smell and hearing. The use of sensory materials allows children the opportunity for hands-on and self-directed play.

**How does sensory play LOOK?** Playing, moulding, building, pouring, stacking, shaking, mixing, touching, smelling, tasting and any other way children can explore.

**What can you USE?** Sensory materials can include almost anything! Children especially enjoy slimy, wet, messy materials. You can use clay, water, sand, clean mud, or homemade play-dough, using bowls, dishes, tubs, or bottles. Or, collect pebbles, grains, things that are bumpy, soft, coarse, furry or cold – work with children to explore the differences. If put into a bag or a box, can children recognize them without seeing them? Can children taste or smell different things, like apples, mangos, or bananas and identify what they are without seeing them? Can you tell the difference in smell between a fire burning, versus a herd of goats? What are the different sounds children hear during the day versus the night, when they are inside versus outside? Go around and practice listening, what do you hear now, what don’t you hear that you like or dislike?
What are some ideas you have for Sensory Play?

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

**Fantasy Play**

Fantasy play gives children the opportunity to act out new experiences, to imagine themselves as actors in new roles. It stimulates the imagination. You do not need materials, but it is easy to use anything you might have around that is safe for children.

**How does fantasy play LOOK?** Fantasy play is playing house, acting like doctors and nurses, being a superhero, imitating their favourite animal, pretending to do day-to-day activities - like go to the market or prepare a meal - or using building blocks to create a bus or an entire village. Role playing is great fun and can be done in many ways. The children can be the actors, or they can create puppets or finger puppets to act out different scenes. Props such as tables and chairs covered with sheets can transform into castles or beautiful houses. Dressing up in adult clothes or making signs to hang around a room can turn a classroom into a market one day, or the health clinic the next day. There are just as many ways to use your imagination outdoors…if not more! Every stone can turn into a new found piece of treasure, fallen logs can turn into the seats on a bus, and the trees and vegetation can turn into wild jungles to be explored.
Constructive Play

Constructive play provides an opportunity for children to build, sort and arrange new materials, allowing them to create new things and new experiences. In this type of play, children begin with open exploration. As they mature and develop, they will become more organized and will work toward a goal, such as, “If the clay/mud is drier, I can build it higher, but how high can I build it so it is still strong? How will it change if I add water to it?”

How does constructive play LOOK? Constructive play is building and using different materials to create something new, such as placing blocks, rocks, beans, or clay forms inside a box to represent their homes. Often constructive play overlaps with imaginative play to create entire stories and dramas around the physical creations. Children can work out their questions and problems and explore new ideas while building something physical and using their imagination to interact with what they create and with the adults and children around them as they include them in their stories.

What are some ideas you have for Constructive Play?

_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________

6. Characteristics of a Quality ECCE Teacher

Choosing to become a pre-school teacher offers many challenges and rewards every day, because the children are growing and changing every day. The most successful teacher will have these characteristics:

1. **Passion** for helping children learn. Children will pick up on this care and commitment and will be more excited about learning.

2. **High energy** to work effectively with all the children under their care requiring equal amounts of quality care and attention.

3. **Sense of humour** to make learning fun for the children (and the teacher or caregiver!).

4. **Attentiveness** to be able to closely observe students and their developmental progress, especially to recognize and reduce the negative impact of disorders and learning disabilities.

5. **Flexibility** and openness to learning from the children, just as they are learning from the teacher.

6. **Patience** with the short attention spans and varied behaviour of children. Effective caregivers are gentle and affirming to children.
who are frustrated, tired, upset, or misbehaving.

7. **Integrity** keeps a teacher true and honest to his/her feelings and convictions. Children can be very good judges of character. They can sense if a teacher is being honest and they respond accordingly.

8. **Creativity** to teach children with different learning styles and the ability to use few material resources to teach children. Creative techniques include storytelling, songs and unique art forms enjoyable to young learners.

9. **Accepting** and **protective** of all children, no matter their background, appearance, religion, gender, economic background, HIV status, or any other issue. Caregivers/teachers must treat all children under their care with respect, dignity and love. Each child must feel loved and accepted irrespective of their religious or social background. Children with special needs must also be treated with dignity and respect.

**ECCE Boosters**

Beyond the positive characteristics of the teachers, other factors that support children’s early learning and development include:

- Effective and comprehensive teacher training on ECCE
- Age-appropriate activities for children
- Anticipating children’s responses to various activities according to their age and stage of development
- Clear understanding that the foundation for all other learning and development takes place during the 0-8 years phase
- Harmonious and supportive relationship between the community, parents/guardians (both men and women), government, and the centre for all around care that is consistent and promotes healthy child development
- Parent workshops on the importance of ECCE

**ECCE Barriers**

The following are possible barriers to effective ECCE:

- Little understanding of ECCE, particularly aspects of child development
- No application or inconsistent application of recommended ECCE practices
- Concentration on one area of development over another area of development
- Habitual learning that does not support creativity, movement, play or new and original ideas
♦ Lack of community and parental participation in and support of ECCE
♦ Insufficient play and learning materials

7. Understanding and Managing Behaviour

Children are not born knowing the difference between right and wrong or the rules and expectations of their families and cultures. Children gradually learn these things from their parents and other adults around them. Children behave differently at different ages. Childhood is the time when behaviours are developed that range from what is considered ‘normal’ to those that suggest problems. Children misbehave from time to time and this can be very distressing to the teacher. There are many reasons for a child’s misbehaviour and many ways for caregivers to help the child improve.

Difficult behaviour may include:

♦ Using bad language
♦ Behaving aggressively or violent
♦ Destroying property
♦ Lying
♦ Stealing
♦ Refusing to cooperate with necessary tasks such as getting dressed, or participating in learning activities

Inappropriate behaviour can either be intentional or unintentional. An example of unintentional misbehaviour is children accidentally hurting each other during a game. An example of intentional misbehaviour is a child stealing another’s food. It can be difficult to understand the difference so as to come up with effective solutions and interventions.

It is also important to remember that sometimes causes of intentional misbehaviour are not the child’s fault. Problems and worries at home—such as when a caregiver is sick, absent, or suffers from abuse, for example—have a significant impact on a child’s behaviour at school. Sometimes the causes of misbehaviour are easy to see, other times they are hidden.

Whatever the case, the most important thing to do is to be patient. Children often communicate their feelings through their behaviour. Thus, understanding the reasons for the way a child is behaving will help the parent/caregiver bring about change. Avoid losing your temper and remember that love is more persuasive than punishment. Children are influenced and learn more from observation than they do from listening to what is said to them.

Strategies for Behaviour Management

BE AWARE: If you notice a child’s behaviour change or that they are misbehaving try to identify if there is a problem at home. If there is a problem, try to support the caregiver by
offering a referral to external support and by making a referral yourself if the child is in danger of abuse or neglect.

**BE A ROLE MODEL:** Teachers/caregivers should model exemplary behaviour for children, e.g. receiving with both hands, saying thank you and please, sharing and being patient. Many behaviours that children exhibit are copied from adults. Hence, it is important to maintain calm even in anger/frustration. If you yell and scream, the child may not understand what it is that he/she has done wrong, and will learn that yelling is the way to solve frustrations and react when things do not go their way. Sit the child down and calmly and clearly explain to them why that behaviour is wrong and why it is important that it is not repeated.

**ESTABLISH ROUTINES AND BE CONSISTENT:** Children need the security of regular routines and events in a stable environment. Routine helps children know what to expect next. Abrupt changes in the program can cause anxiety, leading to undesirable behaviour. Routines are important to guiding children to manage change, develop control and guide positive behaviour.

**GIVE CHILDREN INDEPENDENCE AND CHOICES:** Children get told what to do and how to do it throughout the day, every single day. Giving a little room for them to make certain age-appropriate choices allows them to relax and develop independence that everybody wants at times. Unsafe, destructive, dishonest, or rude behaviour must be corrected and children must learn what limits are, however, leave some reasonable choices to the children.

This will ease up the frustration of dependence. For example, ask them how to share with others, what story or song they would like, and what game they would like to play.

**REWARD GOOD BEHAVIOUR:** When a child has done something good, reward her immediately. Positive reinforcement gives children goals to work towards instead of focusing on negative consequences to avoid. This sets a more positive and healthy tone for the caregiver - child relationship.

**Simple ways to reward a child:**

- A smile
- A pat on the shoulder
- A high five
- Clapping of hands
- Earning a star on their chart/personal portfolio

**8. Children with Special Needs**

These are groups of children who have extra challenges or difficulties related to their development. A child with a special need is one who is unlike the average child. He may
suffer from special physical, mental or emotional disadvantages, or a condition that imposes certain restrictions in his life. These things may affect a child’s self-confidence and may cause them to develop many serious long-term social and behavioural problems. It is important to keep these children in mind because they may need extra help or support. If they are accepted and treated with respect they grow up and develop to the best of their ability.

A child’s physical or mental disability is often accompanied by strengths and capabilities, and teachers should always be helping the child to identify these and feel pride in them, so he or she can grow into a healthy, happy, confident adult.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that the children in her care appreciate that, unique as we all are, and though we may be different from each other, we are all human beings that need each other from time to time.

**Children may have special needs because of any of the following:**

**Physical Disability**

Some children may need to be in wheelchairs, use crutches, or have difficulty walking because of spiral, muscular or bone difficulties, for example. Other children may have sensory challenges such as difficulty hearing or seeing. The caregiver will need to find creative, but safe ways to involve these children in physical play as they may not be able to keep up with the rest of the children. ECCE centres should have a provision to allow for easy access and movement into and around the centre for children with physical difficulties.

**Abuse or Neglect**

According to the World Health Organization, child abuse is the physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, neglect and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, development or dignity. Children may be sexually, physically, or emotionally abused or neglected. Teachers need to refer them to specialists for counselling and follow up on reporting and referrals to police or local officials if a child is in immediate danger. These children might not have many friends because they often keep to themselves, or may act in ways that make them hard to like and this keeps them isolated. Providing love, protection and care are the most important things you can do as a teacher.
**Grief and Loss**

Grief is deep or intense sorrow caused especially by the death of somebody. Grieving is the word used to describe the thoughts and feelings we have when someone has died. The illness and death of a parent or a loved one is always shocking and traumatising for a child and leaves a child feeling extremely vulnerable. When someone close to the child dies, the child’s behaviour may change for the worse. He/she will experience grief and though every child will experience this differently, they will often express feelings like sadness, depression, fear, or anger. These feelings will come and go, sometime for a very long time, though they will lessen over time. It may affect a child’s concentration and learning.

The teacher in such a situation needs to be very patient and understand that children will often act out feelings and emotions that they cannot put into words. Be sure to listen and watch for non-verbal cues to better understand what the child is feeling. It is important for caregivers and teachers to be patient and sensitive to the child’s needs. If you notice the child isolating themselves, you may want to gently encourage—but not force—them to play with other children.

**Learning Disorders**

Learning disabilities are the manifestations of other underlying difficulties in cognitive skills. Some children will not be able to memorise things. These memory difficulties may hinder performance in reading, writing and mathematics. Oftentimes, children facing such challenges are then said to be slow learners and are often discriminated by other children and sometimes by the teachers themselves. It is very important that these children be given the necessary attention they need to be in sync with the rest of the class. It is also important to hold all children and adults at your ECCE centre to high standards of respect and non-discrimination of all children.

**Albinism**

Albinism is an inherited physical condition that is present at birth and may be found in all clans. It could also be accompanied by skin and eye problems, such as poor vision or crossed or “lazy” eyes. Children with albinism may experience stigma and bad treatment from peers because of their unusual appearance and the trouble they have with reading due to their eyes moving quickly from side to side involuntarily. As these children may either be farsighted or near-sighted, they will need to access the services of eye specialists who may then guide the teacher on how best to assist the child not to feel isolated by the classroom arrangements. Some people misunderstand albinism, but people with albinism have grown to be leaders in government and communities.
**Gifted Children**

Gifted or talented children also have special needs. They learn quickly and easily, have a good memory and show high curiosity and interest in things. They display independence beyond their age or may show particular advancement in specific areas. These children may quickly get bored with certain activities because of their speed in grasping concepts and developing various skills. To support these children, the teacher must always have extra materials and activities to keep them stimulated and interested, also so they do not disrupt the rest of the class as a result of boredom. A gifted child’s emotional and social development must be carefully monitored as he may not be readily accepted by other children.

**Children with special needs** may become so self-conscious of their weaknesses or strengths that it becomes difficult for them to form and maintain healthy relationships with their peers. They may come to believe that they are not ‘normal’ and that others will not like them. They are prone to being called bad names and being ridiculed, which leads to depression, poor self-worth, isolation and hesitancy to initiate contact with others. Children with special needs have the same rights as every other child, and have capabilities and strengths and potential just like every other child. They may require more patience, creativity and understanding, and more care and positive reinforcement, even when it comes to very small things.

As ECCE teachers, you have an opportunity to positively affect the life of one child with special needs, but also to influence how the rest of the children in your class—and even parents, communities and child protection actors—grow to understand and accept that everyone deserves to be valued. In this way, meaningful change for children with special needs is within our reach.

**9. Identifying and Addressing Health & Protection Issues**

As an ECCE teacher, one of your main roles is to keep children safe and to pay attention to their overall health and well-being. Since the children are under your care for much of the day, this is a big job! It is important to maintain an environment in which children can have a safe experience (see Section B: Keeping Children Safe) and to watch out for health and/or nutrition problems or issues, for instance ringworm or malnutrition, that children may be experiencing or at risk of experiencing. ECCE teachers are also well positioned to provide age-appropriate information to children and parents to prevent future health problems from occurring and to help them lead healthy lives both in and out of school.

While you will inevitably have to manage health related issues in your role, it is also important to acknowledge that health is a specialised field and caution must be used when handling such issues. To ensure you are able to appropriately attend to children’s health needs and promote healthy lifestyles among children and parents, it is advised that you initiate and maintain strong relationships with nearby healthcare workers (e.g., rural health motivators, clinic/hospital personnel, community caregivers and even the school’s health department). You will need to
Helping children to access services from these providers as they will also assist in the promotion of healthy lifestyles, in particular, ensuring children have proper nutrition, which is important for the prevention of both communicable and non-communicable (e.g., diabetes) disease.

Parents face many different barriers in accessing health services for their children; it often is not enough to just make a referral to a health provider. Follow-up is needed to ensure that the child actually obtains the service and can access the treatment, medication, or follow-up care they need. Making and following up on referrals is indeed a big responsibility, but one that enables the ECCE teacher to have a significant impact on a child’s health and development.

**First Aid**

It is ideal that all ECCE centres have a standard First aid kit at their disposal. It is important for teachers to be trained on using the first aid materials so they can use the kits safely. In the absence of the kits however, it is recommended that the teacher keep plaster/bandages and

### MAINTAINING HYGENIC PRACTICES IN YOUR CENTRE

Helping children to maintain good hygiene is another part of keeping children safe. This list includes some pointers on how teachers can help children to maintain good hygiene and cleanliness:

- Clean classrooms and all indoor areas daily, removing all dust to avoid allergic reactions.
- Ensure children have access to safe drinking water.
- Keep adequate amounts of water on hand so that proper hand washing requirements can be met (i.e., washing with clean, running, soapy water and rinsing hands afterwards).
- Remind children to wash hands each time they finish using the toilet, as well as before and after eating.
- Ensure cooked meals are prepared and served in a clean environment and that they are well-balanced. Once prepared, all food should be kept covered until it is ready to be served.
- Encourage parents to send their children to the centre clean, with teeth brushed. Children’s hair should be clean and well-combed to limit incidents of lice, which is common among children.
- Keep toilet facilities clean and safe for children to use (i.e., they must be a safe size and height).
- Teach children to cover their mouths with the inside of their elbows when sneezing or coughing.
- Ensure that all waste is properly disposed of in waste bins (for indoor trash), which are covered in black refuse bags. Bins must be emptied outdoors and trash thoroughly burned in a refuse pit. The refuse pit must be shallow enough so as not to be a hazard to the children.
gloves for covering children’s cuts and stopping bleeding in a hygienic way. As indicated above, it is advised that centres establish strong linkages and working relationships with healthcare workers in their communities to ensure that emergencies are handled in a safe and appropriate manner.

You may come across many signs and symptoms of health-related issues facing children. Here, we focus on a few broad issues for which mechanisms can be adopted in your centre to help mitigate the impact on children.

**Communicable Diseases**

Communicable diseases are diseases that can be passed to a person either through direct contact (with another person or with the bodily fluids of another person) or through indirect contact (for instance, a worm or mosquito carrying the disease). To help reduce the spread of communicable disease among children, it is important to ensure that all children registered in the centre have an up-to-date immunization card. Using the cards, the teacher should keep track of those children who are due for their immunization and encourage parents to take their child to the clinic to be immunized. Certain hygiene practices can also help to mitigate the transmission of some communicable diseases.

**HIV and AIDS**

Given that Swaziland is a country with an extremely high HIV prevalence rate—currently the highest in the world—you will be working on a daily basis with parents and children that are living with and/or affected by HIV in one way or another. You may be helping HIV-positive children to adhere to medication regimes and live healthy (i.e., proper nutrition); helping children cope with the fear and grief of having a parent who is living with HIV or AIDS; encouraging parents to get their children tested and/or to be tested themselves; equipping children with age-appropriate information and confidence building that will help them make good decisions about their health later in life; and/or helping to make arrangements for children who lose a parent/guardian to AIDS. Staying up to date on the most recent HIV and AIDS-related information from health personnel will be important to your ability to navigate these roles.

To get you started, look at the following basic principles. These can help you to keep children safe and healthy while they are under your care.

- **HIV is a preventable infection.** Caution must be taken to protect all children from infection during play. You can do this by supervising children’s activities so that you can monitor/eliminate any exchange of body fluids, especially blood. **Remember, HIV is only transmitted through the exchange of body fluids, including blood, semen, vaginal fluids and breast milk.** HIV is not transmitted through regular contact, such as touching, hugging, or holding hands with someone.

- **HIV is a manageable infection.** Some children under your care may be HIV-positive and already taking Antiretroviral Therapy (ART). The teacher should play a role in ensur-
ing that the child adheres to his/her treatment regime if the child needs to take medication during school hours.

♦ Again, it is important to **maintain healthy relationships with healthcare workers** who should be consulted if a child is experiencing illnesses or having trouble taking/adhering to medication regimes for any reason.

♦ **Stigma** and discrimination associated with children living with and/or affected by HIV and AIDS is damaging to children. It is important to ensure elimination of any discrimination of the child from his peers or other adults within the centre. Children must be taught that people living with HIV or AIDS are just like other people and have rights just like other people.

**Protection Issues**

Child abuse (physical, sexual and emotional) is a growing problem in Swaziland. Child abuse results in actual or potential harm to a child’s health, development, or dignity and can have lifelong effects on children’s physical and mental health. Given your constant contact with children and their parents, you are in a good position to help detect cases of abuse and neglect among children, address protection issues with parents/guardians and help ensure children get the help and attention they need. See Annex 4 for more information on the signs and symptoms of child abuse.

Most child abuse cases go unreported in Swaziland. This occurs for many reasons. Sometimes a child is bribed or threatened not to tell, or the child fears reporting the incident. Teachers and children must both know that abuse should always be reported. If you suspect that a child under your care is being abused, it is critical that you report the incident/situation to a community police officer or regular police officer, social worker, Rural Health Motivator, or Lihlombe lekukhalela. Particularly for sexual abuse cases, the child must also receive medical attention as quickly as possible as they may be at risk of HIV and sexually transmitted infection. Medical treatment includes testing for HIV and other STIs, as well as getting Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) within 72 hours to fight against possible HIV infection.
I. Organising the Environment

**How Does A Child-Friendly Classroom Look?**

- Furniture and materials should be suitable sizes. The charts on the wall should be at the child’s eye level.
- Displays of the children’s art work give children pride in themselves while offering good decoration for the classroom.
- Hanging and window mobiles should be displayed in the classroom according to the weekly theme.
- Daily routine chart should be displayed for the teacher to follow easily and may include pictures or images for the children to follow along.
- The furniture used should be movable to easily put carpets down for story time.
- Clean and organized.
- Have some mats/sponges/mattresses in case the children want to sleep.
- There must be a storeroom cupboard to keep their materials.

**How Does The Outdoor Area Look?**

- Be well fenced with a lockable gate at the centre.
- Have a safe playground with stones and any other dangerous objects removed.
- Have a vegetable garden (if there is space and enough supplies...communities can help!)
- Have hand-washing facilities, either a tap or water tank strategically placed near the toilets to ensure that children do not forget to wash their hands after toilet usage and before meals.
- Have safe and clean drinking and cooking water.
- Have necessary outdoor play materials, e.g., swings, balls, jungle gym, tyres, tunnels, merry go around, climbers, sand pit and where possible trees for shade. All these help the children to exercise their body muscles. It is nice for these to be painted in bright primary colours.

Always supervise while children are playing, for safety and managing squabbles between the children.
Keeping Children Safe

Children will often spend a better part of their day at the centre and therefore their safety becomes the responsibility of the teacher. It is important to ensure that children are always supervised, whether they are playing indoors/outdoors, going through the learning centres, playing/learning about potentially dangerous items such as plants, fruits, vegetables, or animals. All workers in the centre must possess certain key characteristics, abilities and ideally should have training in first aid. Knowledge of how to conduct a referral to aid in protection issues is another important criterion, as well as awareness of health issues that children face or may face, as described in Section B. Understanding early childhood development and safety should be top priority.

Here are some important tips for teachers to remember to ensure that the centre is safe and secure for children:

♦ Ensure that the class is user friendly to all children. It should be a safe environment without anything that might scare the children (e.g., spiders, snakes, etc.).
♦ Maintaining daily routines, such as starting each day with a song or a prayer, and following a predictable schedule of activities helps children feel safe and secure.
♦ Reassure children who have emotional challenges or who have difficulty separating from their parents. Let them know that it is your job to keep them safe while they are at school.
♦ Ensure a caring and supportive environment.
♦ Children should be warned to stay away from the cooking fires.
♦ Supervise children both inside and out.
♦ Maintain good hygiene standards in the centre, including in classrooms, washrooms, kitchens, outdoor areas, etc. (see box on page 20).

2. Planning Your Day

The teacher will need to devote time each day to plan the day’s activities. When you arrive early to the ECCE centre to prepare, the community sees professionalism and commitment, and you benefit from feeling organized and focused.

Each day you need to create a daily program that will support the day’s agenda and the current theme. As the teacher, you should have these pieces planned ahead of the children’s arrival:

♦ The day’s theme and learning objectives
♦ A Bible verse, story or song to begin the Morning Ring
♦ A creative idea for how you will handle transitions between activities
♦ Different resources out and available in the different learning areas
3. What Are Learning Areas?

Organizing Learning Areas

Swaziland’s MoET advocates and recommends the thematic approach to learning for all ECCE centres in the country with the children applying each theme throughout a series of seven learning areas. Learning areas allow children to explore various aspects of the theme using a variety of materials. Each learning area should be adequately supplied with toys and materials that encourage play and exploration. Some learning areas work better when child led, such as Fantasy or Blocks, while others like the Educational Area are better directed by the teacher. Learning areas promote self-directed learning and develop independence in children, allowing for child-centred ‘learning’ rather than teacher-centred ‘teaching’.

**REMEMBER!**

The best ECCE centres are hands-on and “child-centred” rather than “teacher-centred” to allow for play and exploration, independence, and self-direction by the child.
4. What Are Themes?

Themes are ideas or topics that provide a focus for learning and exploration. A theme offers a way to organize learning through all of the day’s activities. See the Sample Lesson plan in Annex 2 for ideas of how to apply a theme.

How Do We Use Themes?

Themes give the teacher and the students an inspiration that will guide some of their classroom activities. Themes create consistency, a pattern that runs through each learning area and throughout the day. Children begin to see that many topics are interconnected, that most subjects overlap and fit together. They give a focus that helps children gain confidence in one area.

Invite the children to have some control over their learning and activities. When introducing the day’s theme, ask the children what the theme makes them think of and what they would like to learn about it. Use their ideas to fill in part of the daily plan.

Keep in mind that themes do not have to be used to direct every activity or every learning area. Some areas are better left for the children to explore on their own, though after talking about the theme, it may show up in their self-led play. Remember, young children learn best by ‘doing’ rather than by being ‘taught.’ Later on in the guide are some examples of themes that could be used to guide the learning process.

5. Transitions

6. Transitions are all those times during the day when children change from one activity to another, or when they leave home and come to school. It can be a time of chaos and therefore can cause a lot of stress, but if you are thoughtful and creative, it can instead be a fun and creative time that helps create routines and patterns.

How Do We Use Transitions?

Think of transitions as another opportunity to play and carry on a message or theme of the day. If the theme for the day is ‘Myself and My Family,’ the children could move from one activity to another as if they were their grandma, or like their baby sister. Or if the theme is ‘Transportation,’ they can imitate trucks and pretend to drive themselves to each new activity for the day. Have the children come up with new ideas each day. Make it fun!
6. Morning and Closing Ring

The morning ring begins the day, and the closing ring ends each day. This activity sets the tone and focus for each day, while also providing continuity between days. By engaging children in a short review of the day before, either around the theme, what they did, or what they liked best, a daily pattern is set to support greater learning.

Activities may include: children reciting rhymes or verses, singing, or listening to a story that can introduce the day’s theme. This is also the time for the teacher to assess how each child is feeling and if he/she is ready for the day. Going around in a circle, each child may identify how they are feeling, using a Feelings Chart with illustrations for basic emotions such as happy, sad, mad, or glad. A child who has not slept well, eaten breakfast, or been bathed will be easily noticeable during this time and interventions can be taken early to remedy these challenges. The daily skills such as identifying the day of the week, the current weather, classroom news, or introducing different letters, numbers, colours, or shapes can be presented.

Feelings

Young children have many of the same feelings that adults have. By learning to identify what they are feeling, children can better understand themselves and others. Often when young children are upset, frustrated, or sad, they act out and are often considered naughty. Once children are able to say that they are “mad” or “sad,” they can begin to talk about it and this creates new ways for them to express it. Beware though, the middle of a child’s tantrum is not the time to ask them to identify their feelings. When the tantrum is over and they have calmed down, you may ask what feelings they had before they got so upset.

Encourage children to identify how they feel daily during morning ring and closing ring. During the day, teachers can notice a child smiling and say to the child, “I see you are smiling, are you happy playing with the blocks?” Or point out the expressions of characters in books and ask, “What do you think she is feeling? Why would she feel that way?” This will build social and interpersonal skills.
7. Learning Areas

**Learning Area: DISCOVERY**

In this learning area, children have the opportunity to discover different things about different objects. They sort, count and classify objects and get to experience new textures and materials. Be creative with the materials and objects you place in the discovery area. Nearly any object or material can become a great discovery activity. Try to use activities that incorporate all of the senses—sight, touch, smell, hearing and taste.

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**IDEAS**

- Large and small objects
- Short and long objects
- Heavy and light objects
- Soft and hard objects
- Fast and slow objects
- Loud and quiet objects
- Natural and man-made objects
- Different colours
- Counting
- Taste
- Smell
- Temperature

⇒ Relates to Pre Science and Pre Math

⇒ **Reference for Discovery Activities:** MoET’s Caring for Children: Manual for Caregivers (Pages 79 - 89 and 90 – 105)

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**Additional Discovery Activities:**

- Tins for sorting, stacking and classifying
- Feely boxes for guessing the objects by examining textures
- Different foods for tasting and smelling
- Experimenting with rolling things on tilted boards of different lengths and heights
- Sensory tubs to explore textures like sand, beans, water and other available materials
- Leaves, sticks and rocks for sorting and classifying
- Experimenting with different temperatures of water
- Sorting games with beads or other small objects into small containers
- Musical instruments for differentiating sounds
- Sorting games with sticks, straws or other short and long objects
- Stringing beads onto yarn or other material

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**Can you think of other discovery activities? List them here.**

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25 SECTION B: SETTING THE SCENE
**Learning Area: FANTASY**

In this learning area, children have the opportunity to use their imagination to role play. You can encourage children to role play situations incorporating the current lesson theme by placing certain types of items in the fantasy area. For example, if the theme is health, you may choose to fill the fantasy area with stethoscopes, thermometers, bandages and other medical items. Be sure to allow children to also explore their own ideas and use their imaginations too. Dramatic play enhances a child’s problem solving and cooperation skills as well as helping them prepare for real-life problems.

⇒ **This area is child-led** (see page 11 of this handbook)

⇒ **Reference for Fantasy Activities:** MoET’s Caring for Children: Manual for Caregivers (Pages 23, 24, 26 and 58).

**IDEAS**

- Who are you pretending to be?
- How do you know how that person behaves?
- What types of things does that person usually have with them?
- Where do you usually see that person in the community?
- Where did you learn to take care of that baby doll?
- Who does most of the cooking in your home?

**Additional Fantasy Activities:**

- Dolls, clothing and supplies for diapering and feeding the dolls
- Plates, cups, utensils, stoves and pretend food
- Dress up clothes and props for role playing
- Imitating people or animals by pretending to crawl like a baby or slither like a snake
- Preparing a skit or play

- Charades where children act out a word or pretend to be something and the other children guess what it is
- Puppets
- Castles out of sheets and blankets
- Doll houses and figurines

**Can you think of other discovery activities? List them here.**
**Learning Area: BLOCKS**

In this learning area, children’s creativity is stimulated and they may manipulate the various blocks into any object of their desire. They enhance their construction and improvisation skills. Blocks help children develop motor skills and hand-eye coordination, spatial skills and problem-solving skills.

⇒ **This area is child-led** *(see page 11 of this handbook)*

⇒ **Reference for Block Activities:** MoET’s Caring for Children: Manual for Caregivers (Page 21).

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**IDEAS**

- Stacking
- Types of structures
- Balancing
- Shapes of blocks
- Counting
- Comparing
- Materials
- Colours
- Boxes

Additional Block Activities:

- Blocks of different shapes, sizes and colours
- Blocks of different textures, e.g., wooden, plastic, foam, etc.
- Stimulate pretend play with character toys and other accessories

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Can you think of other block activities? List them here.

___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
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SECTION B: SETTING THE SCENE
Learning Area: BOOKS

In this learning area, children are introduced to the world of reading. Reading to children helps develop their language skills, as well as listening and social skills by learning to sit in a group. Children improve their communication skills, logical thinking skills and enhance their ability to concentrate. They can imagine and create their own stories or follow-up to the stories they hear or read.


Additional Book Activities:

♦ Picture books
♦ Magazines
♦ Reading books
♦ Newspapers

Can you think of other book activities? List them here.
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

IDEAS

♦ What book did we read yesterday?
♦ What happened in the story we read yesterday?
♦ What do you think will happen next in the story?
♦ Photographs versus illustrations
♦ Make your own picture story
♦ What did you like most about the story?
♦ What do you think the story is about based on the book’s cover?
♦ Do you recognize any letters in the title?
♦ Explain who the author, editor and illustrator are and what those words mean
♦ Ask the children to talk about the book after reading it
♦ How did the book make you feel?
♦ What would happen if....?
Learning Area: EDUCATIONAL

In this learning area, children begin to develop their reading, writing and math skills. Before children can read and write, they need to be prepared. In this learning area, the teacher takes a more active role in guiding the children through activities. Teachers should be mindful of the children’s ages and development and try to make activities as appropriate as possible. For example, a three year old may practice singing the alphabet in a group with one teacher while the older children practice tracing letters and sounding them out with another.

**IDEAS**

- The difference in sounds of letters and words
- The shapes of letters and numbers
- Words that rhyme or sound similar
- Shapes that are similar and different
- Do you remember...?
- State the days of the week
- Draw different shapes
- Name different colours
- Poems and songs

⇒ This area is mostly teacher-led (see page 11 of this handbook).

⇒ This area relates to Pre Reading and Pre Writing, as well as Pre-Math


Additional Educational Activities:

- Singing the alphabet
- Pointing out letters and making their sounds
- Tracing letters and numbers
- Copying patterns
- Counting small objects like rocks or body parts like fingers
- Singing songs and repeating sounds
- Memory games like turning photos upside down and trying to remember where each picture is

- Assembling puzzles
- Pointing out letters and words in books as you read them to the class
- Shape matching games
- Looking at the clock and talking about how we know what time it is
- Stacking and balancing
- Sorting
- Serration

Can you think of other educational activities? List them here.

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
Learning Area: ART

In this learning area, children develop and sharpen their creativity through exploring different types of art and materials. Through drawing, cutting, painting, tearing, pasting, colouring, splattering, scribbling, printing and tracing, they develop small muscles and sharpen hand-eye coordination.

⇒ Reference for Art Activities:

Additional Art Activities:

♦ Colouring pictures
♦ Creating an art gallery of children’s work
♦ Painting with brushes or fingers
♦ Making collages with natural materials like leaves and grass
♦ Egg shell mosaics
♦ Texture rubbings
♦ Drawing
♦ Cutting and pasting
♦ Making gifts like cards or necklaces
♦ Folding paper to make shapes
♦ Moulding with clay
♦ Creating things from free materials like banana fibres, stones and flowers
♦ Tracing children’s hands and other objects onto paper

Can you think of other art activities? List them here.

___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

IDEAS

♦ Textures of materials
♦ Colours
♦ Shapes
♦ Students share their artwork with the group
♦ Sharing art with the community
♦ Using art to tell a story
Learning Area: OUTDOOR PLAY

In this learning area, children enjoy a variety of games that serve to strengthen their gross motor skills and may involve games, songs and story-telling. Children learn to work together, take turns and explore the environment around them. Gross motor development is essential for children to later develop fine motor skills that are crucial for success in school.

⇒ This area is mostly child-led (see page 11 of this handbook).

⇒ Reference for Outdoor Play Activities: MoET’s Caring for Children: Manual for Caregivers (Pages 21, 125, 130-133).

Additional Outdoor Play Activities:

- Jumping
- Running
- Hopping
- Climbing
- Games like ‘tag’
- Swinging
- Sliding
- Swings
- Slides
- Jungle Gym
- Merry Go Round
- Tires
- Trees with branches for climbing
- Rocks
- Punching bags
- Ring Around the Rosie
- Skipping
- Hopscotch
- Ball games
- Racing

Can you think of other outdoor play activities? List them here.

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
8. Sample Tools

### Daily Program

(post in classroom)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30 – 7:45</td>
<td>Teacher arrives and plans for the day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:45 – 8:00</td>
<td>Children arrive, greetings and free play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 – 8:15</td>
<td>Prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:15 – 8:30</td>
<td>Toilet routine and hand washing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 – 9:00</td>
<td>Morning Ring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Song or Devotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Today is............</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is the weather like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>News reports and feeling identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daily Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review of yesterday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce theme – gather ideas to plan activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 – 10:30</td>
<td>Learning Areas (rotating every 15 - 30 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 – 11:00</td>
<td>Hand washing / Snack time / toileting / hand washing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 – 11:45</td>
<td>Free play – supervised by teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 – 12:15</td>
<td>Story time, rhymes, songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15 – 12:45</td>
<td>Tidying up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45 – 1:00</td>
<td>Closing ring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Being a teacher to young children of various ages and family backgrounds demands a lot of creativity. The completed Lesson Plan is just an example of how to use the theme, while also allowing for child-directed learning and a variety of activities.
### Sample Lesson Plan

**Date:** 25/6/12

**Theme:** Myself

**Sub-theme:** My family

#### Today’s Objectives:

1. Name family members and relationships
2. Talk about roles in family

#### Morning Ring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song or Devotion</th>
<th>Song for today: ------------ Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bible story for today:</td>
<td>Esau and Jacob, Joseph and his brothers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Greetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greetings</th>
<th>Discussion of how each person feels today.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Review of yesterday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review of yesterday</th>
<th>What do you remember from yesterday?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What did you like best?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you have any questions from yesterday?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Introduce Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduce Theme</th>
<th>Ask children what today’s theme makes them think of.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What ideas does the group have about how to use the theme today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fill in today’s plan with everyone’s ideas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Transitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transitions</th>
<th>Ask children how they want to transition today? Maybe the theme will inspire them!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Discovery Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discovery Area</th>
<th>Musical instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sensory tub, feely bag or sand play</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Fantasy Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fantasy Area</th>
<th>Puppets, about family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dolls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Block Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block Area</th>
<th>Free play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Book Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Area</th>
<th>Picture books about family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Magazines, find pictures of things you like</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Education Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Area</th>
<th>Tracing letters in their name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Puzzles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Art Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art Area</th>
<th>Finger paint yourself</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cut out pictures in magazines/newspapers of different families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Free art discovery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Outdoor Play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outdoor Play</th>
<th>Free play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group games</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Closing Ring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closing Ring</th>
<th>Story time, rhymes and songs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gather together and ask children what they learned today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What was their favourite part?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goodbye for today!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Everyday should allow time for activities that are:

- child-led and teacher-led
- quiet and interactive
- individual and group
- indoor and outdoor
- drama, storytelling, music and/or movement
9. Themes

Theme: MYSELF

Learning about Myself focuses on helping the child learn about their own identity and how they fit into the world around them, as well as learning about their body.

Objectives:

♦ Able to introduce self to other people, give their names, surnames, and age
♦ Able to say where they live and who they live with
♦ Can identify family members by their name and their relationship
♦ Can say what their favourite things are, e.g., animals, food, games
♦ Recognize their own image and name different parts of their face and body
♦ Learn different ways to take care of their bodies and be healthy
♦ Begin to understand that they can use their senses – sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste – to identify things and to tell the difference between things
♦ Able to name things found in their homes and in specific rooms of the home
♦ Can identify different pieces of clothing and know what to wear and when, e.g. sleep wear, church wear, etc.
♦ Can talk about their school, friends, teacher
### Theme: ENVIRONMENT

Learning about Environment builds a child’s understanding of the world around them, how they fit into this world and good practices to take care of their surroundings. Also, children will learn about animals and plants.

#### Objectives:

- Knows the name of things around them
- Understands that some things around them are living and others are not, e.g., a goat vs. a bicycle
- Will learn to put waste in its proper place
- Able to say some things that make water polluted, or dirty
- Point out different plants in their environment and know some of their names
- Identify edible plants, e.g., fruits and vegetables
- Understand that different plants have different uses
- Know that eating fruits and vegetables helps make children stronger and smarter
- Know the difference between domestic and non-domestic animals
- Know what domestic animals eat and ways to care for them
- Match animals to the products they give, e.g., cows give milk
- Recognize ways in which different animals can be dangerous
- Understand the value of animals
Themes for Daily Planning (Environment):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme:</th>
<th>Environment: Stars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Song:</td>
<td><em>Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion:</td>
<td>When do stars come out? When can we no longer see them? What replaces them in the morning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition:</td>
<td>We’re shooting stars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning Area Suggestions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discovery:</th>
<th>Explore loud and quiet objects. What would be best for night time? What would be best for day time?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy:</td>
<td>Make a tent out of blankets and pretend to be camping under the stars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block:</td>
<td>Free play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book:</td>
<td>A book about day and night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education:</td>
<td>Trace stars on paper with pencils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art:</td>
<td>Teacher gives pre-cut stars to students to decorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor:</td>
<td>Free play</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme: TRANSPORTATION

Learning about Transportation raises a child’s awareness of all the different ways they can travel from place to place, going by land, air or over water.

Objectives:
- List different ways that people get from one place to another
- Children will learn and practice safety on the road

Land Transport
- Buses
- Cars
- Trucks
- Bicycles
- Donkeys
- Horses
- Trains
- Lift (elevator)

Air Transport
- Aeroplanes
- Helicopter
- Spacecraft
- Parachutes

Safety Precautions
- Crossing the road
- Fastening a seat belt
- Safe swimming
- Safety clothes

Water Transport
- Ships
- Boats
- Yachts
Themes for Daily Planning (Transportation):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme:</th>
<th>Transportation: Trains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Song:</td>
<td><em>Mbombo</em>la we <em>Stimela</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion:</td>
<td>What are other means of transportation? What’s your favourite way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition:</td>
<td>We’re all trains using our arms like wheels on the tracks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning Area Suggestions:

| Discovery: | Build a train track with found materials |
| Fantasy:   | Pretend you’re the train conductor or a passenger packing for a train trip |
| Block:     | Building railroad tracks and using blocks as trains |
| Book:      | A book about trains like “The Little Engine that Could” |
| Education: | Puzzles |
| Art:       | Put a toy train or picture of a train in the middle of the table for inspiration for children to paint |
| Outdoor:   | Free play |

**Theme: SAFETY**

Learning about Safety will help children stay healthy and secure.

**Objectives:**

- Know that some substances they may find at home are poisonous and dangerous
- List the good uses of both fire and water, and the dangers of each
- Identify road safety indicators and what they mean, e.g., using zebra crossing, traffic lights, overhead bridge
- Know that they should never go anywhere with a stranger or adult they do not know
- Name things that they can wear for protection, warmth or safety
Themes for Daily Planning (Safety):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Safety: Roads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Song</td>
<td><em>The Wheels on the Bus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>How to be safe around a bus or car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>We’re cars, watch out for each other’s bodies and honk your horn if you get too close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Area Suggestions:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovery</td>
<td>Put different objects in a basket and have children identify where they would find those on a car. i.e., a piece of rubber, something metal, fabric, smooth glass, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>Police officers directing traffic and pedestrians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block</td>
<td>Use blocks to build roads, cars and tunnels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book</td>
<td>A book about transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Ask children how they stay safe near roads, give ideas and present scenarios. Ask them what they would do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Use clay to make roads and cars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor</td>
<td>Red Light, Green Light game or if tyres are available, play on them and talk about how they work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme: NUTRITION

Learning about Nutrition will help children know the best foods for making their bodies strong and healthy. Children must be taught about the three food groups and how each of the different foods contributes to their growth.

Objectives:
- Learn about the different food groups
- Name foods that give them energy and build their health
- Name foods that are considered unhealthy or less nutritious food
- Practice good eating and hygiene habits
Theme: COMMUNICATION

Learning about Communication is important to everything we do, every day! There are many different ways to communicate, from talking to your friend who is next to you, to using the phone, internet, or post office to talk or send messages to people far away. And we communicate even more than we say or write because our bodies and expressions are telling stories too.

Objectives:

♦ Be able to talk about current events in the classroom, e.g., yesterday we all went to the market for a field trip
♦ Name different ways to communicate and have basic understanding of how to use each
♦ Identify the meaning of basic facial expressions and body postures

---

Themes for Daily Planning (Nutrition):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme:</th>
<th>Nutrition: Fruit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Song:</td>
<td>I Like to Eat, Eat, Eat Apples and Bananas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion:</td>
<td>What are your favourite fruits? Can you think of different types of fruits? i.e., Melons, citrus, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition:</td>
<td>We’re slipping on banana peels as we walk to the learning areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning Area Suggestions:

| Discovery: | Texture exploration by touching different fruits (smooth banana, rough litchis, etc.) |
| Fantasy:   | Grocery store |
| Block:     | Colourful blocks can represent fruits and vegetables |
| Book:      | Book about colours (ask children to name foods that are each colour) |
| Education: | Group together fruits that are similar shapes |
| Art:       | Use banana fibres to make art |
| Outdoor:   | Walk to the market and point out what fruits children see |
Themes for Daily Planning (Communication):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme:</th>
<th>Communication: Feelings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Song:</td>
<td><em>If You’re Happy and You Know It</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion:</td>
<td>Name feelings and examples of when we feel them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition:</td>
<td><em>We’re really sad and stroll our way over to the learning areas</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Learning Area Suggestions:**

- **Discovery:** Smelling- how do you feel about different scents?
- **Fantasy:** A drama about a happy event like a wedding
- **Block:** Free play
- **Book:** A book about feelings
- **Education:** Rhyming words with names of feelings
- **Art:** Drawing self-portraits
- **Outdoor:** Charades with facial expressions and body gestures
1. Community Participation

It is important to involve the parents of the children in the activities of the centre. When parents are kept abreast of what is happening, they are more likely to be supportive and helpful. The relationship between parents and teachers is important. The parents, churches and the wider community value their children and when they have a positive understanding of the importance of ECCE, they will frequently want to offer greater support. They have many resources that could be of use to the centre, such as skills and materials that they could offer, e.g., helping with the garden, maintaining the grounds, fixing things or contributing practical or play items such as vegetables for meals or for play, firewood, tins, newspapers, and cardboard boxes.

Each community, rich or poor, has a lot that it can offer for the stimulation of their children’s growth and development. Participation of the community also enhances and solidifies their ownership of the centre and their role and responsibility for supporting the early learning, nutrition, health and the safety of the children. Family and community involvement has also been shown to improve the transition from pre-school to primary school both for the parents and the child.

2. Community-Based Activities

The community can be involved in a number of activities at the centre:

- Toy making using ‘waste’ and locally available materials that each parent/community member can bring to the community recycle centre
- Fun days where the children can do performances and entry fees collected at the door
- Speech and prize giving day
- Culture and heritage day; children are taught about their culture and history as a country, the different surnames, story-telling by older members
- Sports day
- Managing the school garden
- Regular update meetings to community leadership on progress of the centre
- Orientation for parents of new children prior to school’s opening so they get a feel of what their children will be doing during school hours
- Skills day where children can be taught various skills by community members such as hand washing, cleaning, polishing shoes, collection of firewood, etc.
- Open day for parent/teacher interaction and discussion of child’s progress. When teachers/caregivers show that ECCE is serious business, the parents will, from that early age, take their children’s learning seriously.
♦ Parent Networks where parents can get together once a term to have short discussions and lessons on various parenting issues and get reassurance about themselves as parents (parents do not always know what they are doing and it helps for another to say “You’re on the right track.”)

♦ Appointment/Election of a school committee that will be responsible for the management and effective running of the centre

♦ The old adage will always remain true; “It takes a whole village to raise a child”
Annex 1: Child Protection Form

Consultant/Visitor Statement of Commitment to Bantwana World Education Child Protection Policy

I, ________________________________________________________________, have read and understand this Child Protection Policy. I respect Bantwana World Education’s values and beliefs in relation to child protection. While visiting the Bantwana World Education program, I agree to:

- Behave in accordance with the Child Protection Code of Conduct when around children.
- Abide by the standards in relation to communications (imagery and text) around children
- Respect the confidentiality of the children I meet by not photographing them without permission or discussing them or anything about their situation with anyone outside of the organization.
- Immediately report any concerns that a child is being abused to a staff member so that further investigations can take place within the organizations guidelines and procedures.

Name: ____________________________________________________________

Job Title & Organization:
______________________________________________________________

Purpose of Visit:
______________________________________________________________

Signature: ____________________________ Date: __________
**Annex 2: Blank Lesson Plan**

Date: ________________________________

Theme: _________________________ Sub Theme: ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Today’s Objectives:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morning Ring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Song or Devotion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible story for today:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Greetings</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review of yesterday</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduce Theme</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transitions</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discovery Area</th>
<th>Fantasy Area</th>
<th>Block Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Area</th>
<th>Education Area</th>
<th>Art Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outdoor Play</th>
<th><strong>Art Area</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Everyday should allow time for activities that are:
- child-led and teacher-led
- quiet and interactive
- individual and group
- indoor and outdoor
- drama, storytelling, music and/or movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closing Ring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gather together and ask children what they learned today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was favourite part?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodbye for today!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Annex 3: Theme Chart

The theme chart serves as a guideline for the teacher on what should be covered at regular intervals. It hangs in the class next to the *Daily Program* and can be changed monthly or termly depending on the length of the theme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (Monthly)</th>
<th>Sub Theme (Weekly)</th>
<th>Sub-Sub Theme (Daily)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g., Animals</td>
<td>Domestic Animals</td>
<td>Animal coverings, what they eat, their use to people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Water Animals</td>
<td>Animal coverings, what they eat, their use to people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 4: Recognizing Child Abuse or Neglect

Abuse can seriously harm the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of children. Teachers can sometimes recognize signs of child abuse and help stop the cycle. The following is a list of signs of child abuse that children of all ages may experience.

**Physical Abuse** may result in:
- Injury
- Bruises
- Fire Burns
- Bite marks
- Swellings

**Neglect and Abandonment** may result in:
- Lack of basic needs
- Absenteeism from school leading to poor performance and drop out
- Child left alone without adult supervision
- Disturbed growth
- Poor health
- Lack of concentration
- Involvement in risky behaviours
- Lack of help for physical or medical problems

**Defilement and/or Sexual Abuse** may result in:
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Alcohol use
- Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) or symptoms of STIs
- Self harm
- Swellings
- Suicide attempts
- Low confidence
- Aggressiveness
- Attention-seeking behaviour, e.g., rowdiness, naughtiness in class

**Emotional (Psychological) Abuse** may result in:
- Aggressiveness
- Low confidence
- Suicide attempts
- Loneliness
- Mood swings

**REMEMBER!**

Some signs of abuse appear as physical marks on the body, while others are hard to see and have more to do with behaviour and emotions. For example, some abused or neglected children:
- Show changes in behaviour or school performance
- Are consistently fearful of others
- Use drugs and alcohol
- Have learning problems or difficulty concentrating
REFERENCES


The Bantwana Initiative (‘children’ in Zulu) is dedicated to helping children made vulnerable —and their caregivers—to access the full range of support and comprehensive care needed to grow into healthy adults. Bantwana works to build the abilities, skills and networks of communities and local organizations at the frontlines of providing care and support to vulnerable children, particularly those made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS and poverty.

Bantwana is an initiative of World Education, Inc., a nonprofit organization founded in 1951, dedicated to improving the lives of the poor through education and economic and social development programs.