

# FACTFILE: GCE HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN



### Promoting positive development in early year settings

#### Students should be able to:

- Analyse different types of strategies staff in the particular setting can use to promote physical, intellectual, emotional and social development for the child of the chosen age, for example by:
  - organising activities; and
  - encouraging interaction



### Course Content

A large number of children spend a substantial amount of their time in an early years setting. For pre-school children this may be to enable their parents to work. Many children aged three are given the opportunity to attend a nursery and then they progress to primary education. Children develop rapidly during this period and it is essential they are given opportunities to develop physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially.

Staff within an early years setting have the responsibility to provide a range of activities and use different strategies to promote this development.

Early years settings include the home of a child minder, crèches, parent and toddler groups, nurseries and schools.

#### Home of a child minder

Child minders use a range of strategies to promote the development of the children they are caring for. A range of age-related activities are offered and may include outdoor play, for example slides, climbing frames, ride on toys, play houses, ball pits and sand and water tables. Taking part in these activities will promote the children's development in various ways such as developing gross motor skills and co-ordination, increasing independence, sharing, co-operation and learning about the seasons. Indoor play may include stacking toys, board games, dressing up clothes, lots of books and musical instruments.



Child minders may also take children on trips, for example to the zoo, a farm, an indoor play area, beach or to a forest park.

### Activity 1

**Research the range of strategies a child minder may use and complete a table showing how each may promote the physical, intellectual, emotional and social development of children. Some examples have been included in the section above.**

### Play Groups

A playgroup refers to the regular meeting of a group of preschool children at a particular place such as a church hall or community centre. Playgroups are usually organised by a committee of parents for their children and others in the community to take part in supervised creative and social play.

Play also allows children to relax and let off steam, and is important in encouraging the development of the imagination, developing motor skills and teaching self-expression.

At playgroup, as well as lots of discussion throughout the day, children are encouraged by staff to talk about their experiences within the setting. When appropriate, the staff sit with the children during activities, asking open questions and introducing language related to the activity. This helps children to extend and develop their language further and supports them in their use of more complex sentences and vocabulary.

The regular use of songs, stories and rhymes promotes confidence and fluency in language.

Children are given opportunities to develop personal and social skills in a variety of ways;

- sitting with staff at mealtimes in small groups;
- assisting with setting the table;
- staff encouraging children to take the needs of others into account by passing things to each other and helping others to serve themselves;
- staff encouraging children to develop independence and learn personal hygiene in the bathroom and when dressing and undressing either to go into the garden, to prepare for a physical activity, or when playing with the dressing-up clothes;
- holding discussion periods at key times of the day when staff and children share experiences. This promotes the child's confidence in developing talking and listening skills;
- staff encouraging children to put forward their own views and to respect those of others;
- staff providing drama, role-play and 'small world' activities on a daily basis in order to promote imaginative skills and to help children recognise and deal with emotions such as love, excitement, frustration, fear and anger;
- staff providing group games regularly in order to encourage turn taking and a respect for the needs of others;
- using books that explore emotions, for example using them to help children understand and express their own feelings; and
- staff encouraging the children to take time to look through books, complete puzzles, or simply spend time with an adult in a quiet space to talk through how they are feeling.



**Activity 2**

Visit a playgroup in your area for a session and note the range of strategies in place to promote the development of children. Present your findings to your class in a short presentation and discuss how development may be promoted.

**Crèches**

Crèches generally only provide care for children for a short period of time usually two to three hours. Crèches may be found in shopping centres, large stores, leisure and sports facilities, children's centres and adult education colleges. As crèches are usually quite small and the care provided is for a short period of time a small range of activities may be available.



These may include a range of age-appropriate toys, creative activities such as dressing up costumes and soft play areas including the very popular 'ball pool'.

Playing in a ball pool aids children's development by developing their gross and fine motor skills as they jump and move around and throw balls. It may also develop their social skills as they may be playing and communicating with other children.

Intellectual development may be enhanced as the children will learn colours. As the balls massage the body relaxation is encouraged and the children's confidence and self-esteem may increase.

**Activity 3**

There is an increasing number of crèches especially in large stores and shopping centres.

In groups discuss the crèches you are aware of and how they promote the development of children.

**Nurseries**

There are two main types of nursery:

- private nurseries can be quite small and some are part of a large chain. They offer all day care to pre-school children.

Many also offer after school care. Fees are charged at a commercial rate, though some children will have places funded by their local trust. Some nurseries are also run by the voluntary sector on a not-for-profit basis.

- Department of Education nurseries or nursery schools are often part of a primary school and three and four year children attend usually on a sessional basis, for example morning or afternoon. They are run by a qualified teacher.

In private nurseries children are often cared for in different rooms for example 0–2 years room, toddler room and pre-school room. This enables staff to use strategies for the developmental stage of the children. Children aged 1–3 years will have the opportunity to take part in sensory, water, indoor and outdoor play. They may also have music time when they play with simple musical instruments such as tambourines, bells, shakers and other instruments. Nursery rhymes and story time are usually daily activities. Staff may also take children out for walks, especially if the nursery is located in the countryside or near a park. All these activities promote the development of the children.





Saying nursery rhymes can help promote intellectual development in numerous ways. When children hear nursery rhymes they hear new words and saying the rhyme gives children practice in pitch, volume and language. They help children to learn phonic skills which is one of the main ways schools teach reading. Nursery rhymes expand a child's imagination and help them understand sequencing. Singing nursery rhymes is a good group activity which allows all children to join in and increases their confidence giving them a sense of belonging and aiding emotional development.

#### Activity 4

**Research a nursery and in groups discuss how the strategies used promote the development of the children.**

Children aged 3–4 years who attend a nursery either in a school or in the private sector follow Curricular Guidance for Pre-School Education provided by The Department of Education. Teachers and staff in the nursery are expected to provide children with opportunities, through play and other experiences to develop learning associated with;

- the arts
- early mathematical experiences
- personal, social and emotional development
- physical development and movement
- the world around us.

A wide range of activities are provided and these are usually based around a theme for example 'people who help us' or 'travel'. These activities include art and design activities, music activities, mathematical experiences (e.g. looking at different shapes, sequencing and numbers), stories, rhymes, pictures, drama, physical play and numerous others.



Painting is a popular activity in nurseries and it promotes the physical development of children by encouraging eye-hand co-ordination and fine motor skills. Social development is fostered as children learn to share, to interact with others and be responsible for cleaning up when working with each other in the art area. By painting children may be able to represent experiences they cannot talk about and if praise and encouragement is given for the painting then self-esteem will increase, boosting emotional development. Intellectual development is enhanced as children will learn about colours and shapes.

### Primary School

When children move on to primary school at the age of 4–5 their teachers will follow The Foundation Stage statutory curriculum as set out by The Department of Education for two years (primary one and two). This is divided into the following areas of learning;

- religious education
- language and literacy
- mathematics and numeracy
- the arts
- the world around us
- personal development and mutual understanding
- physical development and movement

Teachers will organise a wide range of activities to promote learning and development in the above areas. Well planned play activities provide opportunities for learning to take place. Play activities may include outdoor play, sand and water play, dressing up, role play, painting, jigsaws, art activities and indoor play with a range of suitable toys. Drama and music activities will also be organised. The teacher will also organise activities to promote personal development and mutual understanding and one of the most frequently used

is circle time. This is a time when the whole class sits in a circle either on the floor or on chairs. A range of activities can take place in circle time, ranging from discussions about good and not so good things going on in the class such as sorting out problems like bullying, to simple themes such as 'my favourite TV programme this week'. In circle time each child has the opportunity to speak without interruption. This activity promotes emotional development by encouraging children to express their feelings and it helps build a sense of trust and belonging. It also teaches children to respect others.

Activities to encourage reading and writing are also planned and most children are given the opportunity to go on school trips.

At the end of primary two children will follow the Key Stage 1 curriculum for two years (primary three and four)

The areas of learning are the same and children continue to increase their knowledge and understanding and develop skills. A varied range of strategies are planned by the teacher to encourage development. The children should experience enjoyable and challenging activities. Water and sand play may be one of the activities planned. Consider how this may promote intellectual development in particular mathematics and numeracy. Children will learn about volume and capacity as they fill empty containers. They will learn that the amount of water stays the same whether the container is short and wide or tall and thin.

### Activity 5

**In groups recall the range of activities you took part in primary three and four and discuss how they promoted your development. If you are unable to remember and you have younger siblings, relations or neighbours ask them about the activities they experienced.**

## Children with special needs

Many children in early years settings may have special educational needs which may affect their development. A child who has dyslexia may experience difficulty reading and writing, a child with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder may have poor concentration levels, a child may have a physical disability, a sight or hearing impairment or lack the ability to socialise and have difficulty making friends.

On the other hand a child may be gifted or not have English as their first language. Staff within the setting may have to implement additional strategies to promote the development of the children.

Listed below are some strategies that a teacher may use with primary one to four children.

- referring a child to the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) for assessment
- drawing up a record of concern or individualised education plan (IEP) for the child.
- referring a child to outside agencies for example a speech and language therapist for additional support.
- seating children at the front of a classroom
- providing clear oral instructions
- providing a pictorial timetable
- labelling common classroom objects in a child's native language as well as English
- organising a 'buddy' system
- keeping activities short
- providing work in a quiet area
- organising small group work
- placing children in groups for example for reading
- giving a child targets and rewards
- modifying worksheets
- encouraging children to take part in activities
- requesting the support of a classroom assistant
- providing written and pictorial instructions
- establishing a rotating system of helpers
- giving praise and encouragement
- liaising and working closely with parents and carers
- providing extended activities and additional work
- waiting longer for a response from a child
- giving children a sense of responsibility
- adjusting time to match attention span
- providing a time for completion of activities for example placing a timer on a child's desk; and
- explaining rules/responsibilities clearly

### Activity 6

**In groups discuss how the above strategies may support children with special educational needs.**

