

FACTFILE: GCSE HOME ECONOMICS: Child Development



Child Development

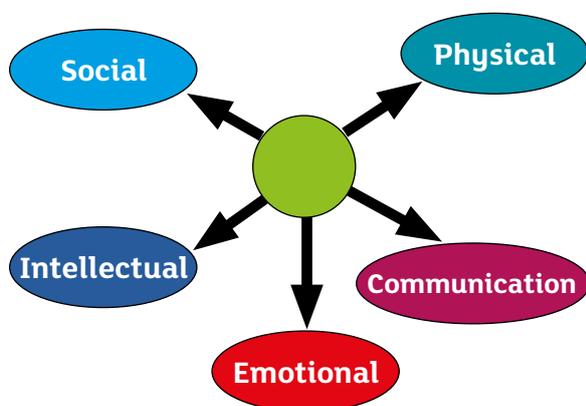
Learning Outcomes

Students should be able to:

- Discuss the following factors influencing Child Development
 - A nurturing environment
 - Positive role models
 - The value of education as perceived by the child's family
 - Age-appropriate experiences
 - Passing on family traditions

Child Development

The five areas of development can be represented by the word SPICE – social, physical, intellectual, communication and emotional. These are inter-related, closely linked and all areas impact on the overall development of the child.



The same sequence and pattern of development can be seen in most children. The stages which most 'normal' or 'average' children are expected to achieve by a certain chronological age are known as milestones. Children with disabilities may progress differently. Development can be negatively influenced by illness, anxiety and neglect or positively influenced by stimulation, encouragement and the opportunity to explore.

No two children are exactly alike, and each can be recognised as an individual with his or her own unique appearance and character personality. The way a child grows and develops depends on three main factors:

- The **genes** inherited from the parents
- The **environment** in which the child grows up
- The **child's** health.

Each child differs from all others because each (except identical twins) has a different set of genes, each has a different environment, and each has a different health record. From the moment of conception onwards, these factors interact continuously to produce a person who is unlike anyone else.

Group Activity

List all the factors that may impact on a child's development.

Share and discuss your answers with the rest of the class.

A Nurturing Environment

All children should experience a nurturing environment. This means the child should experience a caring, kind and sympathetic home environment, always being cherished and valued. This environment should also provide boundaries and the child should experience discipline that is firm, consistent and fair with a positive attitude to developing the child's learning. These values should also be transmitted through any carers who look after the child.

Home Conditions

The influences of family and home on a child's development include:

- the place where the child lives
- who looks after the child
- whether or not the child is loved and wanted
- the child's companions
- whether the child is encouraged to learn, or is ignored, or is prevented from learning by over protection.

The results of these influences are unpredictable, and they help to produce a rich variety of personalities. The home should be safe and caring and free from abuse and neglect.

Positive Role Models

Parents and carers have a duty of care to be good role models in the home. Children should experience good manners and good guidance as they learn many social skills from the significant adults in their lives. Parents and carers should portray positive lifestyle choices in relation to food, drugs, alcohol and smoking. Children who spend much time in a smoky atmosphere may be more prone to lung disorders, such as asthma and bronchitis, than children who do not live in a smoky environment.

The Value of Education

Development will be affected by the family's attitude towards education, the availability and use made of different types of pre-school groups, and the teachers and pupils the child meets throughout school life. The adults in the first years of a child's life should encourage a love of books and reading. Providing rich learning experiences by spending quality time together and engaging in games



and activities can help equip a child with valuable literacy, numeracy and pre-school skills.

Age appropriate experiences

Human development research indicates that there are universal, predictable sequences of growth and change that occur in children during the first nine years of life. These predictable changes occur in all domains of development – social, physical, intellectual, communication and emotional. Knowledge of typical development of children within the age span provides a framework from which parents and carers can plan appropriate experiences. Young children should have age appropriate activities, experiences and skills for their current age and stage of development. It is important young children do not experience inappropriate violence or conflict.

Passing on Family Traditions

Traditions are stories, beliefs, rituals and customs that are passed from one generation to the next. Keeping traditions for the holidays as well as the ordinary days help teach children the things their family values. Being a part of the special things a family does, helps children to have that sense of belonging. Traditions give security, providing a sense of continuity and routine that children



can depend on year after year. Such activities help promote healthy relationships between the generations when they are enjoyed and anticipated by everyone. Children will remember the special experiences of family traditions more than toys and gifts.

Group Activity

Consider the ways in which parents and carers can promote a positive environment for young children.

