



**ProChil**  
**project**

***ProChil: Curriculum for  
Early Childcare  
Professionals***



*ProChil: Professional Childcare in European Nurseries*

*The project is co-financed by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union under the registration number: 2017-1-CZ01-KA202-035558.*

## Contents

Contents .....	1
Introduction.....	3
1 The Pedagogical Work of an ECEC professional .....	4
1.1 Becoming an ECEC professional .....	4
1.2 ECEC conceptual framework: definitions, scope and methodology .....	9
1.3 Referring to the pedagogical approaches to Early Childhood Education and Care .....	11
1.4 Important theorists in the modern ECEC .....	12
1.5 References and reading suggestions .....	13
2 The developmental stages of a child and its socialization .....	16
2.1 The secure base - Attachment.....	16
2.2 The development of cognition - Piaget .....	17
2.3 Speech and Language development.....	19
2.4 Motor development .....	21
2.5 The role of play in development .....	23
2.6 Types of Play.....	25
2.7 The development of social skills.....	26
2.8 Moral development.....	28
2.9 Reference.....	29
3 Pedagogical approaches based on Montessori system of education .....	31
3.1 Maria Montessori .....	31
3.2 The Montessori principles and concepts.....	31
3.3 Montessori teacher .....	34
3.4 Learning areas .....	34
3.5 Conclusion .....	35
4 Specific educational situations and approach to children with special needs.....	36
4.1 Adaptation to the day care.....	36
4.2 Working with emotions and self-esteem .....	39
4.3 Children in need of special care .....	41
4.4 Children with another mother language .....	46
5 Guiding children towards hygiene habits.....	50
5.1 Tooth brushing .....	50
5.2 Self-care activity .....	51

5.3	Daily routine of the child .....	51
6	Application of the healthy lifestyle principles according to the age of the child .....	53
6.1	Food and nutrition.....	53
6.2	Practical application - food.....	61
6.3	Physical activity .....	62
6.4	Practical application - physical activity.....	66
6.5	Rest.....	68
6.6	Practical application - rest.....	69
6.7	References and reading suggestions .....	70

## Introduction

The early years of life are pivotal for setting children on a positive learning trajectory.

Both research and experience have shown that when children have strong, dependable relationships with caring adults and quality early learning experiences, they are more likely to be ready for success in school.

The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (1989), *European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights* (1996) and many national legal instruments, all affirm the rights of the child and the need for quality early childhood education.

**Valuing children's rights necessitates high quality pedagogy based on respect for children and their abilities. Reflection on our practice, our values, beliefs and the learning theories upon which we base our practices is critical to improving pedagogy.**

Reflecting on children's rights indicates a need for critical reflection and inquiry, collaboration and critical dialogue with peers as some of the basic tenets of improving practice.

The value of families, schools, and communities working together is reinforced in the examples that are shared. **It honors the diversity of children and presents strategies to make sure that every child has appropriate experiences to develop and grow in every imaginable way.**

Being clear about the shared values has enabled the ProChil team to create this curriculum in spite of different educational systems in different countries and despite the different pedagogical approaches being used by the different teams.

The curriculum comprises of six chapters and three Annexes:

1. The Pedagogical Work of an ECEC professional (by MBM Training and Development Centre, UK)
2. The Developmental Stages of a Child and its Socialization (by Paizontas/Playing, GR)
3. Pedagogical Approaches based on Montessori System of Education (by Montessori mateřská škola a klub Kladno, CZ)
4. Specific Educational Situations and Approach to Children with Special Needs (by Brudhammar Forskola, S)
5. Guiding Children towards Hygiene Habits (by Montessori mateřská škola a klub Kladno, CZ)
6. Application of the Healthy Lifestyle Principles according to the Age of the Child (by Asisttel, ES)

Annex 1: Born to socialize methodology (by Karel de Grote University College, B)

Annex 2: Worksheets for testing the acquired knowledge

Annex 3: Learning Activities for face to face learning

The curriculum is completed by the online learning module which can be accessed through [prochill.moodlecloud.com](http://prochill.moodlecloud.com). More information can be found at [familyandjob.eu/prochil-project/](http://familyandjob.eu/prochil-project/).

# 1 The Pedagogical Work of an ECEC professional

In accordance with the principles defined in the Introduction of the curriculum, this module offers theoretical inputs that will help you:

- Understand how learning experiences support all types of learners and children from all backgrounds
- Understand the role of physical and emotional environment that helps children reach their fullest potential
- Know how to assess children and how to use your findings to shape learning opportunities
- Recognize ways to build relationships with families to create strong home-school partnerships
- Know where to turn for additional resources and support

## 1.1 Becoming an ECEC professional

### What does it take?

In order to qualify for an Early Childhood Educator and Caregiver you will need to develop core knowledge of how a child develops, learns and behaves. You will also learn various teaching approaches and strategies to engage a child, such as learning through play.

Some of the subjects you need to learn include:

- Child Development
- Expression Through Art, Drama, Science & Mathematics
- Health, Safety & Nutrition
- Infant & Toddler Care
- Language & Literacy
- Learning & Play
- Professional & Communication Skills
- Programme Planning & Implementation
- Internship or practical training, to get hands-on experience working with children in ECEC environment.

As early childhood educators draw upon a range of perspectives in their work they also need to be familiar with:

- Developmental theories that focus on describing and understanding the processes of change in children's learning and development over time
- Socio-cultural theories that emphasise the central role that families and cultural groups play in children's learning and the importance of respectful relationships and provide insight into social and cultural contexts of learning and development
- Socio-behaviourist theories that focus on the role of experiences in shaping children's behaviour
- Critical theories that invite early childhood educators to challenge assumptions about curriculum, and consider how their decisions may affect children differently
- Post-Structuralist theories that offer insights into issues of power, equity and social justice in early childhood settings.

Drawing on a range of perspectives and theories can challenge traditional ways of seeing children, teaching and learning, and encourage educators, as individuals and with colleagues, to:

- investigate why they act in the ways that they do
- discuss and debate theories to identify strengths and limitations
- recognise how the theories and beliefs that they use to make sense of their work enable but also limit their actions and thoughts
- consider the consequences of their actions for children's experiences
- find new ways of working fairly and justly.

In a nutshell, before you proceed to becoming an ECEC professional, make sure that:<sup>1</sup>

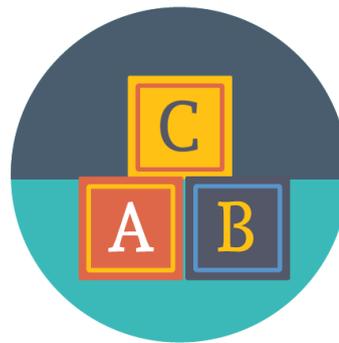
## WHY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



You absolutely LOVE  
being around children



You understand the importance  
of helping young minds develop



You have a passion  
for teaching & learning

### **You absolutely LOVE being around children**

Do you find yourself gravitating to children all the time? Love spending your days with them, feeling energised and enthusiastic at the end of the day instead of collapsing out of pure exhaustion? If you are **passionate about children** and want to play an active role in one of the most crucial periods of their life, Early Childhood Education might just be the right path for you!

### **You understand the importance of helping young minds develop**

The children are our future, and nothing is more critical than the first eight years of their life. At this stage, their minds develop so rapidly that it's important that they are **surrounded by a positive environment** to help them achieve future success.

### **You have a passion for teaching and learning**

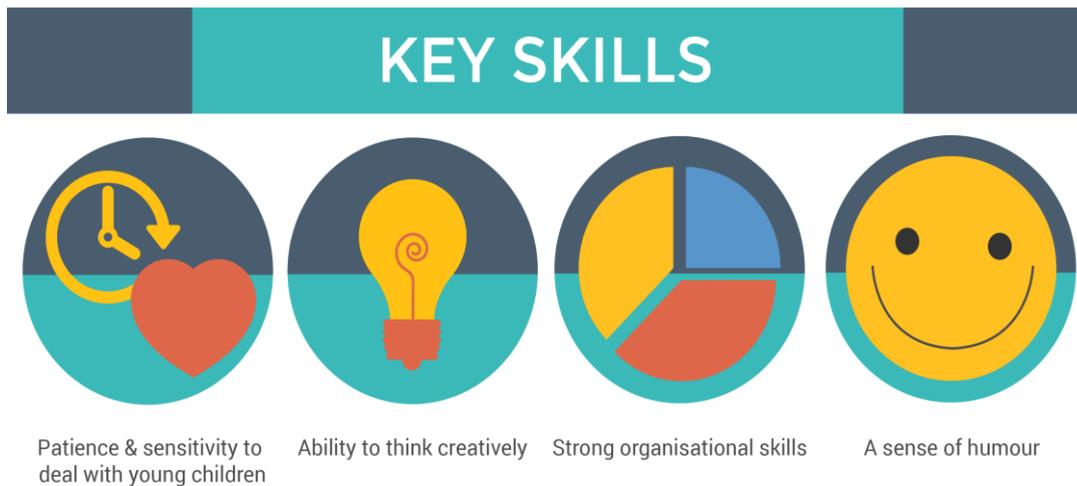
Early Childhood Education and Care isn't only about teaching; **it's about learning too!** As an early childhood educator and caregiver, you will be constantly learning new teaching methods and developing innovative

---

<sup>1</sup> All infographics are courtesy of EduAdvisor, <https://eduadvisor.my/articles/ultimate-guide-early-childhood-education-infographic>

lesson plans to engage young children. **Learning is a lifelong process**, and in order to inspire young children with the love of learning, you must also display a passion for learning too!

Apart from the devotion to the path of an ECEC professional, you will need the following skills:



### Patience and sensitivity to deal with young children

Young children can be emotional, loud and irrational. Remember that this is likely the first time they are interacting with people outside their family, so you will need to be **sensitive to their needs and have the patience** to deal with tantrums and conflicts with other children. As an early childhood educator, you will be guiding young children to behave in a socially acceptable manner and manage their emotions, and this may require lots of patience!

### Ability to think creatively

Teaching young children isn't like teaching students in primary or secondary school. Young children can get easily distracted, so you must be able to **think creatively to come up with engaging lessons that can hold their attention and interest**. Whether it's arts & crafts, language learning or math & science, you will need to be constantly on your toes and thinking of new and interesting ways to make learning fun and educational for young children.

### Strong organisational skills

While it may look like it, a preschool isn't a free-for-all playhouse. Managing a classroom of young, rowdy kids **requires more organisational skills than you think**. You will need to come to class prepared with lesson plans and setting up the right environment with various props and interactive materials, not to mention being prepared for any spills and accidents that may happen along the way. There are many things to juggle, and you must be prepared for it all!

### A sense of humour

Teaching is a serious job, but **learning should always be fun!** Young children respond well to simple visual and verbal humour, so you need to be spontaneous and create laughable moments. Whether it's a making up silly rhymes, doing a funny dance or teaching kids to take life less seriously if mishaps happen, you need to be able to **find joy in laughing and sharing their laughter**, even if the joke is on you!

### What does it give and what groups of skills will you help children to develop?

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

ECE helps a child learn how to interact with others and manage their emotions



**Example:**

- 
**Recognise** and talk about their **feelings**
- 
 Take turns, share and play with **others**
- 
**Obey** and **respect** simple rules

Early childhood is a unique period when the structure of the rapidly growing brain is organised through a child's early care experiences. This development includes the social and emotional skills essential for mental health and life success.

Humans are fundamentally social creatures. We live in families and communities and actively seek connections with others. One of our key roles as educators is to help children to relate to others in positive and collaborative ways. Alongside this sense of togetherness, it is also important to help children develop a sense of themselves as individuals—with their own skills, strengths, likes and dislikes.

On the other hand, for young children mental health is about social, emotional and behavioural wellbeing. When experiencing good mental health, they can learn, using positive interactions with their families and others, to:

- understand, regulate and express emotion
- form close, secure, satisfying relationships
- explore and discover the environment and the world around them.

ECEC services support social and emotional development and mental health when educators:

- build positive relationships with children and families
- design and organise the environment
- plan a daily schedule and implement daily routines
- establish the 'rules' in collaboration with children and families
- provide experiences that promote children's engagement
- individualise experiences to meet the needs of each child
- provide encouragement and precise feedback to children.

## FINE & GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

ECE ensures physical developmental milestones are met, from large body movement to smaller muscles of the hands.



**Example:**

-  **Learn** to graduate from big crayons to pencils
-  **Cut and paste** simple shapes
-  **Jump, balance, throw & catch**

Fine motor skills are essential for performing everyday skills as outlined above as well academic skills. Without the ability to complete those everyday tasks, a child’s self-esteem can suffer, their academic performance is compromised and their play options are very limited. They are also unable to develop appropriate independence in ‘life’ skills (such as getting dressed and feeding themselves) which in turn has social implications not only within the family but also within peer relationships.

## SELF-CARE & INDEPENDENCE

ECE helps a child learn to plan and organise his tasks to be more independent.



**Example:**

-  **Clean up** toys after play
-  **Get dressed** independently
-  **Pack bag** for school

Childhood is a time of increasing independence. As children grow and develop they become more capable in doing things for themselves, to express themselves and to explore their world independently. A focus on independence is sometimes criticised for promoting an individualistic, ‘all about me’ attitude. If we only focus on individualism, then this may be the case. But if we place ‘independence’ within the wider context of community, then we help children to recognize the value of thinking about yourself as well as others.

Independence contributes to the development of self-esteem, identity and wellbeing. Doing something for yourself produces a powerful sense of achievement and success. When children have opportunities to make choices, to attempt tasks for themselves, and to take on increasing responsibilities, their sense of themselves as competent members of society grows.

**CREATIVITY & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

ECE exposes young children to creative experiences to foster mental growth & creative problem-solving.



**Example:**

- Use music, dance, arts & craft to **express ideas**
- Engage** in storytelling & imaginative play
- Develop good character **traits & values**

Like intelligence or beauty, creativity is a trait that is seen as rare and inherent, a trait that is intuitive and cannot be taught; the works that are produced by those with creativity are awesome and unattainable. However, if children are given the proper opportunities to practice and develop their creativity, as with any muscle in the human body, the trait will become stronger and feel more natural.

Personal development of children is best encouraged by giving children a voice. When children have a say in what is going on around them, they start to develop the sense that their ideas and opinions matter.

As educators we can encourage children’s sense of agency by welcoming and responding thoughtfully and respectfully to their questions and ideas and, where possible, incorporating their ideas and suggestions when we plan and implement experiences.

Allowing the children to voice their feelings and thoughts on what goes on means sharing some of our power and control, but it also helps to promote a more positive, open and cooperative dynamic between adults and children.

Vital ways of listening to and honouring children’s voices include using children’s interests as the basis for our programs; responding to children’s criticisms or comments; and allowing children to help make decisions that affect them.

## 1.2 ECEC conceptual framework: definitions, scope and methodology

### Early childhood

In international publications the term “early childhood” refers to the period preceding the age of compulsory schooling, which differs from country to country: 5 years old (United Kingdom), 6 years old (United States of America, France, Italy and Germany) or 7 years old (Sweden and Netherlands). According to international research, what “early childhood” refers to may therefore cover a variety of notions, since early schooling (5, 6 or 7 years) may be included or excluded.

For the purpose of determining the nature of the approaches to early childhood education (rather than the policies of early childhood), the difference is important. In the former case, cognitive learning (reading, writing and arithmetic) lies at the heart of the discussions, whereas in the latter, earlier learning subjects,

linked to social, cognitive and emotional development, as conceived in a global or “holistic” manner, are at the centre of educational concerns (UNESCO Early Childhood, 2002).

### Pedagogy

Pedagogy relates to the “how”, or practice of educating. It refers to, “that set of instructional techniques and strategies which enable learning to take place and provide opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions within a particular social and material context. It refers to the interactive process between teacher and learner and to the learning environment” (Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2002).

It concerns the “how” of adult and child interaction, whilst recognizing that how children learn and develop at this stage is not just subject to *what is intended to be taught*, but it is also of particular importance *how it is facilitated*.

### Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

Early Childhood Education refers to education for infants, toddlers and young children.

Early Childhood Education focuses on developing a child’s cognitive and learning skill (e.g. attention, memory, thinking), motor skill (e.g. balance, gripping things) and social-emotional growth (e.g. making friends, sharing toys, understanding good & bad behaviour).

In general, Early Childhood Education comprises of:

- Infant / Baby: 0 to 1 years
- Toddler: 1 to 2 years
- Pre-school: 3 to 4 years
- Kindergarten: 5 to 6 years
- Middle school: 7 to 8 years

These early years of a child’s life are absolutely critical. Since a child is like a blank canvas, the surrounding environment can significantly impact the growth and development of a child.

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**



**“It refers to education for infants, toddlers & young children”**

Focuses on developing a child's cognitive & learning skill, motor skill, and social-emotional growth.

Comprises of:

<b>Infant / Baby</b>	0 to 1 years
<b>Toddler</b>	1 to 2 years
<b>Pre-school</b>	3 to 4 years
<b>Kindergarten</b>	5 to 6 years
<b>Middle School</b>	7 to 8 years

The ECEC *pedagogy* essentially refers to the holistic nature of early childhood educators’ professional practice (especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships), curriculum decision-

making, teaching and learning. When educators establish respectful and caring relationships with children and families, they are able to work together to construct curriculum and learning experiences relevant to children in their local context. These experiences gradually expand children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

International studies recognise that children's capabilities are shaped by the quality and range of early experiences and interactions in both the home and ECEC environment. Experiences of young children in ECEC settings are defined by process quality.

Process quality refers to the nature of the pedagogical interactions between ECEC staff and children, as well as interactions between peers, and with their environment. Research has shown these interactions and experiences are one of the most significant factors explaining the effects of care and early education on children's learning and development.

### **1.3 Referring to the pedagogical approaches to Early Childhood Education and Care**

It is possible to speak of an "approach" when there is a corpus of knowledge and values, collectively assumed and transmitted, concerning the care and education of young children, as is the case in all traditional societies

Professional research in early childhood education pedagogy can lead to new thinking that has consequences for the children and their families, the profession, the preschool, and policy making.

Educators making connections with children, families and each other through positive relationships and contextual curriculum decision making to guide their teaching and learning.

Pedagogy will look different in different contexts and rightly so. Early childhood educators learn both from and with children as researchers together. This is the research, which – followed by reflections, documentation and learning – eventually shapes each educator's pedagogical approach.

Pedagogical practices are culturally and contextually situated and therefore change with each and every child and family.

Nurturing, respectful relationships (DECD Early Learning and Quality Reform 2013) require:

- allowing children to 'just be' – respecting children's timing and rhythms, valuing childhood as an important part of life, recognizing the security in belonging and the excitement in becoming
- educators engaged in shared, sustained talking time – sitting and playing with children for extended periods...talking, laughing, listening, observing, connecting and learning together, both individually and in groups
- culturally competent educators with passion and enthusiasm
- responsiveness to children's rights, ideas, interests, strengths and culture
- children, parents, educators and communities working together as partners to maximise learning
- children choosing what they engage and play with, when and for how long

- high expectations – encouraging, supporting and challenging children’s learning environments that reflect and respect attitudes and the joys, delights and culture of communities.

## 1.4 Important theorists in the modern ECEC

### Mary Ainsworth and John Bowlby

Ainsworth & Bowlby (Bretherton, I. 1992). formed the basis of attachment theory. Bowlby conceptualized the theory that a child’s tie to the mother and the disruption (separation) plays a major role in the child’s development.

Ainsworth tested Bowlby’s ideas and further developed attachment theory to prove children who have a strong attachment to their caregivers have a secure base as infants to explore the world. Infants know they have a safe place to return, and thus develop, through learning experiences, expectations that their caregivers will be responsive to their needs.

These early relationships or attachments with caregivers influence a child’s social relationships throughout childhood and adult life.

### Erik Erikson

Erikson (Munley, 1975) looked at development across the lifespan.

Each of his eight stages of development includes conflicts to be resolved by balancing contrasting extremes (e.g., trust-mistrust) at a given life stage.

From infancy to death, all include the ongoing development of ego identity. Ego identity (or sense of individuality) continues to grow and is constantly changing due to new experiences.

The formation of identity begins in childhood, is acute during adolescence and continues throughout life. He believed that social experience is formational to the ego experience, and that conflict can help propel growth forward. Four of Erikson’s stages take place in early childhood (birth to 8):

- Trust vs. Mistrust;
- Autonomy vs. Doubt;
- Initiative vs. Guilt;
- Industry vs. Inferiority.

### Friedrich Froebel

Froebel (Fröbel, 1899) is credited with recognizing the significance of the child’s activity in learning. He coined the word kindergarten and founded the Play and Activity Institute focusing on preschool child education.

Froebel designed and manufactured play materials, known as Froebel’s Gifts, to advocate the importance of free play.

He believed play, through holding, examining and manipulating well-designed (pedagogical) objects, provides children a “mirror of life” teaching self-discipline and respect for law and order. His gifts which were blocks (a cube, sphere & cylinder) and six coloured worsted balls attached to a string were intended to teach a child to connect to their environment, simultaneously creating a bond between the adult and the child who played together.

## **Maria Montessori**

Maria Montessori (Montessori; George, 1964) believed that children learn through constructivist play, or a discovery model and spontaneous child-directed exploration. She believed that children need independence and freedom within limits for movement and exploration so that they can engage in their own uninterrupted work.

As such, Montessori believed that children should be free to learn within a “prepared environment,” tailored to children at different ages, and in mixed age groupings.

There should be student choice of activity, with materials that promote independence from a prescribed range of options selected and facilitated by the teacher.

## **Jean Piaget**

Piaget (Campbell, 2002) considered children to be “little scientists” and said that they are able to construct their knowledge and understanding of their work through their experiences. Piaget tied children’s development to their learning. He believed that there are four distinct stages of development: the sensorimotor stage (birth to age two); the preoperational stage (age two to about age seven); the concrete operational stage (age seven to age eleven); and the formal operational stage (adolescence and adulthood).

Piaget believed that as children develop, they pass through stages of assimilation when they add new knowledge to their experiences, and accommodation when they are changing or advancing their thinking in light of the new information.

## **Lev Vygotsky**

Like Piaget, Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978) believed that children learn through experience.

Unlike Piaget, Vygotsky put forth the notion that “learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing”. In other words, he believed that culture shaped cognitive development. Vygotsky placed emphasis on social factors— parents, caregivers, peers, and the culture at large – as the greatest influence on attention, sensation, perception, memory and, eventually, higher order functions.

Vygotsky believed cognitive function and intellectual adaption to be socially and culturally determined until children developed their own “mental tools”.

Vygotsky believed that the role of educators is to provide scaffolded learning experiences for students that are within their zones of proximal development, thereby encouraging and advancing their individual learning.

## **1.5 References and reading suggestions**

- Berthelsen, D. Brownlee J. and Johansson E. (eds) 2009, Participatory learning in the early years. Research and pedagogy. Routledge: London.
- Bowman, B., Donovan, M.S., & S. Burns, Eds. (2000). Eager to Learn: Educating Our Pre-schoolers. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.
- Bredekamp, S. Effective Practices in Early Childhood Education: Building a Foundation. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. (2011).
- Bretherton, I. (1992). The origins of attachment theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. *Developmental Psychology*, 28(5), 759-775.

- Bruce, T. (2011) *Early Childhood Education*. 4th edition. Oxon. Hodder Education
- Claxton, G. (2008). *What's the Point of School? Rediscovering the Heart of Education*, Oneworld
- Copple, C., & S. Bredekamp, eds. (2009). *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8*. 3rd edition. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Core Knowledge Foundation (2000), Retrieved on September 30<sup>th</sup> 2018 from [http://www.coreknowledge.org.uk/CoreKnowledgeUK\\_mission\\_vision\\_history.pdf](http://www.coreknowledge.org.uk/CoreKnowledgeUK_mission_vision_history.pdf)
- Cross, C.T., Woods, T.A., & H. Schweingruber, Eds. (2009). *Mathematics Learning in Early Childhood: Paths toward Excellence and Equity*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.
- Diamond, K.E., Justice, L.M., Siegler, R.S., & Snyder, P.A. (2013). *Synthesis of IES Research on Early Intervention and Early Childhood Education*. (NCSER 2013-3001). Washington, DC: National Center for Special Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved on September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018 from <http://ies.ed.gov/>
- DECD Early Learning and Quality Reform, (2013). *Early Years Learning Framework. Perspectives on Pedagogy*. Retrieved on September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018 from [https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net691/f/perspectives\\_on\\_pedagogy\\_early\\_years\\_learning\\_framework.pdf?v=1456704111](https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net691/f/perspectives_on_pedagogy_early_years_learning_framework.pdf?v=1456704111).
- Fröbel, Friedrich, (1899). *Friedrich Froebel's Education by development : the second part of the Pedagogics of the kindergarten*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Joseph McVicker Hunt. *American Psychologist*, 47(8), 1050-1051; *Early Psychological Development and Experience*. Worcester, MA: Clark University; Uzgiris, I. C.
- J. McV. Hunt (1975). *Assessment in Infancy*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Holman, E.B. (1992). *Laying the Foundation for School Success: Recommendations for Improving Early Learning Programs*. Baltimore, MD: Maryland State Department of Education.
- Hunt, J. McV. (1961). *Intelligence and Experience*. New York: Ronald Press.
- Munley, P. H. (1975). Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development and vocational behaviour. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 22(4), 314-319.
- National Institute for Literacy. (2008). *Developing Early Literacy Report of the National Early Literacy Panel*. Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.
- Robert Campbell (2002), *The Jean Piaget Archives, Jean Piaget's Genetic Epistemology: Appreciation and Critique by extensive summary of work and biography*.
- Shonkoff, J.P. & D. Phillips, eds. (2000). *From Neurons to Neighbourhoods: The Science of Early Child Development*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.
- Snow, C., and S.B. Van Hemel, Eds. (2008). *Early Childhood Assessment: Why, What and How*.
- 12 Craft, A. (2008) *Creativity and Possibility in the Early Years*. Retrieved on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 from: [www.tactyc.org.uk/pdfs/Reflection-craft.pdf](http://www.tactyc.org.uk/pdfs/Reflection-craft.pdf)
- Hedges, H. and Cullen, J. (2005). *Subject knowledge in early childhood curriculum and pedagogy: beliefs and practices*. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* 6 Knight, S. 2009. *Forest Schools and Outdoor learning in the Early Years*. London. Sage Publication
- Leach and Moon (2008) *The Power of Pedagogy*. London. Sage Publications
- Maria Montessori; Anne E George (1964). *The Montessori Method*, New York: Schocken Books, *Introduction of Montessori to America*.
- Mary Hohmann, David P. Weikart (1995). *Educating Young Children: Active Learning Practices for Preschool and Child Care Programs*, High/Scope Press.

- Moyles, J., Adams, S. and Musgrove, A. (2002). Ideas and practices on education of children; SPEEL: The Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning Research Report 363, London: DfES.
- Petrie, P , Boddy, J ,Cameron C, Heptinstall E, McQuail S, Simon A and Wigfall V. (2009). Pedagogy – a holistic, personal approach to work with children and young people. Across services. University of London, Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education. Retrieved on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 from [http://eprints.ioe.ac.uk/58/1/may\\_18\\_09\\_Ped\\_BRIEFING\\_PAPER\\_JB\\_PP\\_.pdf](http://eprints.ioe.ac.uk/58/1/may_18_09_Ped_BRIEFING_PAPER_JB_PP_.pdf)
- Siraj-Blatchford, J. & Siraj-Blatchford, I. (1998). Learning through making in the early years. In J. S. Smith & E. W. L. Norman (Eds.), IDATER 98: International Conference on Design and Technology Educational Research and Curriculum Development (pp. 32-36). Leicestershire, United Kingdom: Loughborough University.
- Siraj-Blatchford, I., Sylva, K., Muttock, S., Gilden, R. and Bell, D. (2002). Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY). DfES Research Report 356. London, DfES, HMSO.
- Siraj-Blatchford, I. (2007). Creativity, Communication and Collaboration: The Identification of Pedagogic Progression in Sustained Shared Thinking, Asia-Pacific Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education, Vol. 1, No. 2
- Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I. and Taggart, B. (eds) (2010). Early Childhood Matters: Evidence from the effective pre-school and primary education project (EPPE). London: Routledge.
- Taylor ,J. and Woods, M. (2005). Early childhood Studies. A Holistic Introduction. London. Hodder Arnold.
- Trawick-Smith, J. (2013). Early Childhood Development: A Multicultural Perspective. Upper Saddle River.
- UNESCO Policy Briefs on Early Childhood, (2002), Early Childhood and Family Education Section UNESCO, Paris.
- Veale, F. Early Years for level 4 & 5, (2013). London: Hodders.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (1998). *Understanding by design*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

## 2 The developmental stages of a child and its socialization

### 2.1 The secure base - Attachment

Attachment is an emotional bond with another person. According to Bowlby the earliest bonds formed by children with their caregivers have a tremendous impact that continues throughout life. Bowlby's attachment theory is an environmental theory as it explains individual differences in attachment patterns (attachment types) by individual variations in caregivers' behaviour.

The central theme of attachment theory is that primary caregivers who are available and responsive to an infant's needs allow the child to develop a sense of security. The infant knows that the caregiver is present and dependable, which creates a secure base for the child to then explore the world.

Bowlby's **attachment theory** suggested that children are born with an innate need to form attachments. Such attachments aid in survival by ensuring that the child receives care and protection. Not only that, but these attachments are characterized by clear behavioral and motivational patterns. In other words, both children and caregivers engage in behaviors designed to ensure proximity. Children strive to stay close and connected to their caregivers who in turn provide safe haven and a secure base for exploration.

Mary Ainsworth described three major styles of attachment: **secure attachment, ambivalent-insecure attachment, and avoidant-insecure attachment**. Main and Solomon (1986) added a fourth attachment style called **disorganized-insecure attachment** based on their own research.

A number of studies since that time have supported Ainsworth's attachment styles and have indicated that attachment styles also have an impact on behaviors later in life.

The four patterns of attachment:

- **Secure attachment:** Secure attachment is marked by distress when separated from caregivers and joy when the caregiver returns. These children feel secure and able to depend on their adult caregivers. When the adult leaves, the child may be upset but he or she feels assured that the parent or caregiver will return. When frightened, securely attached children will seek comfort from caregivers. These children know their parent or caregiver will provide comfort and reassurance, so they are comfortable seeking them out in times of need.
- **Ambivalent-insecure attachment:** Ambivalently attached children usually become very distressed when a parent leaves. Ambivalent attachment could be the result of poor maternal availability. These children cannot depend on their mother (or caregiver) to be there when the child is in need.
- **Avoidant-insecure attachment:** Children with an avoidant attachment tend to avoid parents or caregivers. When offered a choice, these children will show no preference between a caregiver and a complete stranger. Research has suggested that this attachment style might be a result of abusive or neglectful caregivers. Children who are punished for relying on a caregiver will learn to avoid seeking help in the future.
- **Disorganized attachment:** Children with a disorganized attachment often display a confusing mix of behavior and may seem disoriented, dazed, or confused. Children may both avoid or resist the parent. Some researchers believe that the lack of a clear attachment pattern is likely linked to inconsistent behavior from caregivers. In disorganized attachment parents may serve as both a source of comfort and a source of fear, leading to disorganized behavior.

## Implications

- Children who are secure in their attachments more freely explore their environment and are able to learn with confidence, while children who are insecure are more likely to struggle in being confident and learning about their surroundings.
- Children who are secure tend to be more popular with peers and exhibit more positive social interaction with other kids, while children who are insecure seem more at risk for hostile, anti-social or difficult relationships with other children.
- Children who are secure tend to be more emotionally stable and able to express and manage their feelings well, while children who are insecure are more likely to be emotionally unstable and have difficulty in expressing and managing feelings.
- Children who are secure demonstrate greater ability to handle stress and help others handle stress, while children who are insecure are more likely to struggle when stressed, act out in unhealthy ways and be insensitive to others who are stressed.

## 2.2 The development of cognition - Piaget

Piaget (1936) was the first psychologist to make a systematic study of cognitive development.

Before Piaget's work, the common belief in psychology was that children are less competent thinkers than adults. Piaget showed that young children think in very different ways compared to adults.

According to Piaget, children are born with a very basic mental structure on which all subsequent learning and knowledge are based.

Piaget focused on the child's active role in the understanding of the world and they act much like little scientists as they perform experiments, make observations, and learn about the world. He believes that the child's world is different from the adult's words and that the perception of the world varies according to the age of the child. He was interested on the way children solve problems and not on how they feel and not on their motives and preferences.

Based on his research he developed a theory of cognitive development. He suggests that children move through four different stages of mental development.

- Sensorimotor stage: birth to 2 years
- Preoperational stage: ages 2 to 7
- Concrete operational stage: ages 7 to 11
- Formal operational stage: ages 12 and up

### ***The Sensorimotor stage (birth to 2 years old)***

The stage is named sensorimotor because the child build his/her knowledge of the world based on his/her immediate sensory perceptions and motor activities.

Major Characteristics and Developmental Changes:

- The infant knows the world through their movements and sensations.
- Children learn about the world through basic actions such as sucking, grasping, looking, and listening.

- Infants learn that things continue to exist even though they cannot be seen (object permanence).
- They are separate beings from the people and objects around them.
- They realize that their actions can cause things to happen in the world around them.

The cognitive development that occurs during this period takes place over a relatively short period of time and involves a great deal of growth. Children not only learn how to perform physical actions such as crawling and walking, they also learn a great deal about language from the people with whom they interact.

Piaget believed that developing object constancy, the understanding that objects continue to exist even when they cannot be seen, was an important element at this point of development. By learning that objects are separate and distinct entities and that they have an existence of their own outside of individual perception, children are then able to begin to attach names and words to objects.

### **The Preoperational Stage (2 to 7 Years old)**

This stage is called Preoperational because young children start to think about things symbolically. This is the ability to make one thing - a word or an object - stand for something other than itself.

Major Characteristics and Developmental Changes:

- Children begin to think symbolically and learn to use words and pictures to represent objects.
- Children at this stage tend to be egocentric and struggle to see things from the perspective of others.
- While they are getting better with language and thinking, they still tend to think about things in very concrete terms.
- The foundations of language development may have been laid during the previous stage, but it is the emergence of language that is one of the major hallmarks of the preoperational stage of development. Children become much more skilled at pretend play during this stage of development, yet still think very concretely about the world around them.

At this stage, kids learn through pretend play but still struggle with logic and taking the point of view of other people. They also often struggle with understanding the idea of constancy.

For example, a researcher might take a lump of clay, divide it into two equal pieces, and then give a child the choice between two pieces of clay to play with. One piece of clay is rolled into a compact ball while the other is smashed into a flat pancake shape. Since the flat shape *looks* larger, the preoperational child will likely choose that piece even though the two pieces are exactly the same size.

Children should not be taught certain concepts until they have reached the appropriate stage of cognitive development.

Learning should be child-centered and accomplished through active discovery learning. The role of the teacher is to facilitate learning, rather than direct tuition.

Stage	Description	Some specific achievements
<b>SENSORIMOTOR</b> Birth to 18 months Motor activities and sensory impressions from which mental operations are later derived	The infant learns to differentiate himself/herself from the external world; he/she learns that objects exist even when they are not visible; time and space come to exist independently of her own actions; he/she gains some appreciation of cause and effect, past and future.	If an object is hidden, the infant will search for it. The infant can make detours and retrace his/her steps to reach a goal.
<b>PREOPERATIONAL OR SYMBOLIC</b> 18 months. to 7 years old. Representation, mental imagery, use of speech	The child becomes able to represent something with something else - in speech, play, gestures, and mental pictures. Egocentrism declines as the child becomes more able to take other people's perspectives into account.	The child can represent, draw, or describe his/her path to a goal.

### 2.3 Speech and Language development

Infants start learning in the womb, where they hear and respond to familiar voices. The fastest learning occurs from ages 2 to 5 years.

Speech and language milestones help tell whether a child is developing as expected. Milestones are certain skills, such as babbling, saying "mama" or "dada," or putting two words together. Usually, a child needs to master one milestone before reaching the next.

*ProChil tip:*  
 Keep in mind that the age at which children reach milestones varies from child to child. Some children, especially girls, are advanced. Others develop more slowly.

Babies usually start cooing at around 2 months and are babbling by about 6 months. A child usually speaks in gibberish, called jargon, by the first birthday. At 15 to 18 months, a typical toddler understands much more than he or she is able to put into words. Starting around 18 months, many children have a burst in talking. By 24 months, children tend to use at least 50 words and are also starting to use two-word phrases.

Age	Receptive language	Expressive language
1-year-olds (12 months to 24 months)	Learn that words have meaning. Usually recognize the names of family members and familiar objects. Understand simple statements such as "all gone" and "give me." Between 1 and 2 years, understand simple requests such as "give daddy the ball." By 18 months, know the names of people, body parts, and objects.	Use gestures, such as pointing. Babble less than babies do. Often make one- or two-syllable sounds that stand for items they want, such as "baba" for "bottle," and point to things they want. Between 12 months and 18 months of age, may use their own language, sometimes called jargon that is a mix of made-up words and understandable words. Between 1 and 2 years, usually can say between 20 and 50 words that are intelligible to family members.
2-year-olds (24 months to 36 months)	Know the name of at least seven body parts. Increase their understanding of object names. Follow simple requests (such as "put the	Continue to learn and use gestures. Sometimes talk a lot, although some are quiet. Usually can name some body parts (such as

	<p>book on the table").</p> <p>When asked, point to a picture of something named (such as "Where is the cow?" or "Show me the airplane.")</p>	<p>arms and legs), favourite toys, and familiar objects (such as cats and dogs).</p> <p>Use pronouns like "me" and "you," but they often get them mixed up.</p> <p>Can make phrases, such as "no bottle" or "want cookie."</p> <p>By age 3, usually can say between 150 to 200 words. Strangers can understand them about 75% of the time.</p>
3-year-olds	<p>Follow two-part requests, such as "put your pyjamas in the hamper and your slippers in the closet."</p> <p>Learn new words quickly; know most common object names.</p> <p>Understand the concept of "two."</p> <p>Understand gender differences.</p> <p>Know their own full name.</p>	<p>Begin correctly using plurals, pronouns, and prepositions more consistently.</p> <p>Frequently ask "why" and "what."</p> <p>Often use complete sentences of 3 to 4 words.</p>
4-year-olds	<p>Know the names of colours.</p> <p>Understand the difference between things that are the same and things that are different, such as the difference between children and grown-ups.</p> <p>Can follow three-step instructions, such as "Go to the sink, wash your hands, and dry them on the towel."</p>	<p>Use the past tense of words.</p> <p>Use sentences of 5 to 6 words.</p> <p>Can describe something that has happened to them or tell a short story.</p> <p>Can speak clearly enough to be intelligible to strangers almost all of the time.</p>
5-year-olds	<p>Understand relationships between objects, such as "the girl who is playing ball" and "the boy who is jumping rope."</p>	<p>Usually can carry on a conversation with another person.</p> <p>Often call people (or objects) by their relationship to others, such as "Bobby's mom" instead of "Mrs. Smith."</p> <p>Can define words such as "spoon" and "cat."</p>

What are the best ways to encourage a child's language development?

- There are many ways to draw attention to language at home. Making language the focus of everyday life can make a big difference in a child's development. Some ways to help a child's speech and language development in the home and community are:
- Use lots of facial expressions.
- Spend time with the child.
- Be at his/her eye level (even when it is on the floor).
- Follow the child's lead.
- Find out what the child is interested in doing, and do it with them.
- Talk about the things the child is playing with. Example: "That is such a big ball! You are rolling the ball across the floor!"
- Use language that is grammatically correct- not "baby talk."
- Ask the child questions that are just a little bit challenging. Example: ask questions during book-reading or during morning and night-time routines.

## 2.4 Motor development

Motor development, refers to the process of a child learning how to use the muscles in the body to move. A child's motor development falls into two categories: fine motor and gross motor.

Gross motor skills involve the coordination of large muscle movements, such as in the arms, legs and trunk. Examples of gross motor skills include: crawling, running, jumping, throwing a ball

Fine motor skills refer to small muscle movements including the movements of the hands and the face. Examples of fine motor skills include holding a pencil to write, buttoning a shirt, and turning pages of a book.

The following tables include some indicators on the progression of motor development, for both gross and fine motor skills.

Age	Milestones – fine motor development
6 – 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reaches, grasps, puts object in mouth</li> <li>Controlled release of objects</li> <li>Static Pincer grasp (thumb and one finger)</li> <li>Picks things up with pincer grasp (thumb and one finger)</li> <li>Transfers objects from one hand to another</li> <li>Drops and picks up toys</li> </ul>
1 -2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Builds tower of three small blocks</li> <li>Puts four rings on stick</li> <li>Places five pegs in pegboard</li> <li>Turns pages two or three of a book at a time</li> <li>Scribbles</li> <li>Turns knobs</li> <li>Paints with whole arm movement, shifts hands, makes strokes</li> <li>Self-feeds with minimal assistance</li> <li>Able to use signing to communicate</li> <li>Brings spoon to mouth</li> <li>Holds and drinks from cup independently</li> </ul>
2- 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strings four large beads</li> <li>Turns single pages of a book</li> <li>Snips with scissors</li> <li>Holds crayon with thumb and fingers (not fist)</li> <li>Uses one hand consistently in most activities</li> <li>Imitates circular, vertical, and horizontal strokes</li> <li>Paints with some wrist action, makes dots, lines, circular strokes</li> <li>Rolls, pounds, squeezes, and pulls playdough</li> <li>Eats without assistance</li> </ul>
3 – 4 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Builds tower of nine small blocks</li> <li>Copies circle</li> <li>Imitates cross</li> <li>Manipulates clay material (rolls balls, makes snakes, cookies)</li> <li>Uses non-dominant hand to assist and stabilise the use of objects</li> <li>Snips paper using scissors</li> </ul>

4 -5 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cuts on line continuously</li> <li>Copies cross</li> <li>Copies square</li> <li>Writes name</li> <li>Writes numbers 1-5</li> <li>Copies letters</li> <li>Handedness is well established</li> <li>Dresses and undresses independently</li> </ul>
5 – 6 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cuts out simple shapes</li> <li>Copies triangle</li> <li>Colours within lines</li> <li>Uses a 3 fingered grasp of pencil and uses fingers to generate movement</li> <li>Pastes and glues appropriately</li> <li>Can draw basic pictures</li> </ul>

Age	Milestones – gross motor development
6 – 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crawls forwards on belly</li> <li>Assumes a seated position unaided</li> <li>Creeps on hands and knees</li> <li>Transitions into different positions: sitting, all fours, lying on tummy</li> <li>Pulls self to stand</li> <li>Walks while holding onto furniture</li> <li>Takes 2-3 steps without support</li> <li>Rolls a ball in imitation of an adult</li> </ul>
1 -2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sits, crawls, walks</li> <li>Still has wide gait but walking/running is less clumsy</li> <li>Pushes against a ball (does not actually kick it)</li> </ul>
2- 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walks smoothly and turns corners</li> <li>Begins running</li> <li>Is able to pull or carry a toy while walking</li> <li>Climbs onto/down from furniture without assistance</li> <li>Walks up and down steps with support</li> <li>Picks up toys from the floor without falling over</li> </ul>
3 – 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Imitates standing on one foot</li> <li>Imitates simple bilateral movements of limbs (e.g. arms up together)</li> <li>Climbs jungle gym and ladders</li> <li>Pedals a tricycle</li> <li>Walks up/down stairs alternating feet</li> <li>Jumps in place with two feet together</li> <li>Able to walk on tip toes</li> <li>Catches using body</li> </ul>

4 -5 years	Stands on one foot for up to 5 seconds Kicks a ball forwards Throws a ball overarm Catches a ball that has been bounced Runs around obstacles Able to walk on a line Able to hop on one foot Jumps over an object and lands with both feet together
5 – 6 years	Able to walk up stairs while holding an object Walks backward toe-heel Jumps forward 10 times without falling Skips forwards after demonstration Hangs from a bar for at least 5 seconds Steps forward with leg on same side as throwing arm when throwing a ball Catches a small ball using hands only

### Delays in Motor Development

If there are concerns in relation to a child’s motor development, they should be referred for an evaluation by a professional. Some potential signs which could indicate a motor delay are the following:

- Delayed rolling over, sitting, or walking
- Poor head and neck control
- Muscle stiffness or floppiness
- Swallowing difficulty
- Body posture that is limp or awkward
- Clumsiness
- Muscle spasms
- Difficulty to manipulate objects and use simple tools e.g. pencil, scissors

## 2.5 The role of play in development

### Outdoor Play and Motor Development

Children should have daily opportunities to play and move outdoors. Play in the outdoor environment supports children’s health and development. Motor development is closely linked to sensory development and the outdoor environment can also provide ample sensory opportunities, for example tactile (such as sand, water, mud), vestibular (such as tricycles, running, rolling, rotating), proprioceptive (such as climbing, digging, carrying) and olfactory (such as herb garden, flowers).

Play is a natural behaviour for children which is spontaneous and self motivated. Play is what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas, in their own way and for their own reasons’ (DCMS, 2004).

Play is widely acknowledged as central to children’s physical, psychological and social well-being and crucial to their healthy development and happiness. The United Nations Convention in 1989 included play as a right for all children and indicated that play and recreation activities can have a significant role in fulfilling the child’s right to ‘the highest attainable standard of health’ and to ‘preventive health care’.

Byres (1998) has stated that play is essential for brain development, particularly between the ages of 0 and 7, and, also suggests that the brain actually grows when playing. Therefore, if children do not play, their brains do not grow!

The 2007 Academy of Pediatrics report titled “The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds” was striking in its unequivocal recommendations. “Play is essential to development,” it said. “Play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. Play is important to healthy brain development. It is through play that children at a very early age engage and interact in the world around them. Play allows children to create and explore a world they can master, conquering their fears while practicing adult roles, sometimes in conjunction with other children or adult caregivers. As they master their world, play helps children develop new competencies that lead to enhanced confidence and the resiliency they will need to face future challenges.

Undirected play allows children to learn how to work in groups, to share, to negotiate, to resolve conflicts, and to learn self-advocacy skills.”

Play is extremely important to children, as it is essential to children’s:

- healthy development
- physical health
- mental health
- learning and education
- social well-being
- peer interaction and group work
- self regulation
- emotional resilience and stress response systems
- self confidence
- happiness

Evidence shows that play is influential in children’s health and future life chances. When children’s play opportunities are consistently restricted it is likely to have profound effects on their life experience in general and more specifically on their physical and mental health.

Health experts have recently linked certain growing problems experienced by children, such as obesity, attention deficits, depression and anxiety, to the lack of particular forms of play (Ginsburg et al., 2007, Gleave and Cole-Hamilton, 2012).

Depending on the types of play opportunity they are lacking, children could be affected in the following ways:

- poorer ability in motor tasks
- lower levels of physical activity
- poorer ability to deal with stressful or traumatic situations and events
- poorer ability to assess and manage risk

Children should have plenty of time and space to play. There are 6 stages of play during early childhood.

### **Unoccupied Play (Birth - 3 Months)**

At this stage baby is just making a lot of movements with their arms, legs, hands, feet, etc. They are learning about and discovering how their body moves.

### **Solitary Play (Birth - 2 Years)**

This is the stage when a child plays alone. They are not interested in playing with others quite yet.

### **Spectator/Onlooker Behavior (2 Years)**

During this stage a child begins to watch other children playing but does not play with them.

### **Parallel Play (2+ Years)**

When a child plays alongside or near others but does not play with them this stage is referred to as parallel play.

### **Associate Play (3-4 Years)**

When a child starts to interact with others during play, but there is not a large amount of interaction at this stage. A child might be doing an activity related to the kids around him, but might not actually be interacting with another child. For example, kids might all be playing on the same piece of playground equipment but all doing different things like climbing, swinging, etc.

### **Cooperative Play (4+ years)**

When a child plays together with others and has interest in both the activity and other children involved in playing they are participating in cooperative play.

## **2.6 Types of Play**

- 1. Large- motor play:** Children love to climb, run, slide, swing, jump, and engage in every type of movement possible. Such play develops coordination, balance, and a sense of one's body in the space around it.
- 2. Small - motor play:** Play with small toys and activities like stringing beads, playing with puzzles, and sorting objects into types develops dexterity.
- 3. Mastery play:** Children often repeat an action in play and persevere until they master it, such as making dozens of "birthday packages" to learn to tie bows, or playing on a balance beam to become a "circus performer."
- 4. Rules - based play:** Children enjoy the challenge of making up their own rules and the social negotiation involved in adapting the rules for each play situation.
- 5. Construction play:** Constructive play in many ways is goal and product-orientated. Children use materials to create something. Building houses, ships, forts, and other structures is a basic form of play that requires skill and imagination.
- 6. Make - believe play (also called fantasy/imaginative play):** This broad category incorporates many other play types and is rich with language, problem - solving, and imagination. It frequently begins with "Let's pretend" and goes on to include anything children might have experienced or imagined. In make - believe play, children choose an imaginary scenario in which they take on and act out roles and then determine a set of rules from these roles.

**7. Symbolic play:** Children take an object at hand and convert it into the toy or pro they need through a fluid process of fantasy or imagination.

**8. Language play:** Children develop mastery by playing with words, rhymes, verses, and songs they make up or change. They tell stories and dramatize them. They are fascinated by foreign languages, especially when they are presenting playfully in story, verse, or song.

**9. Playing with the arts:** Children integrate all forms of art in to their play, using whatever materials are at hand to draw, model, create music, perform puppet shows, and so on. They explore the arts and use them to express their feelings and ideas.

**10. Sensory play:** Most children enjoy playing with dirt, sand, mud, water, and other materials with different textures, sounds, and smells. Such play develops the senses.

**11. Rough - and - tumble - play:** Also known as play fighting, or horse play, is a physical form of play which often involves body contact between two or more children. This fundamental form of play is found in animals as well as human children. Animals know how to play roughly without injury by rounding their body gestures and not aiming for dominance. Children can be helped to do the same if their play becomes too aggressive.

**12. Risk - taking play:** Children extend their abilities through risky lay and learn to master challenging environments. They generally know how far they can go without actually hurting themselves. Regrettably, most current play spaces are designed to be as risk - free as possible, giving children little chance to assess risks and set their own boundaries.

*Recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics:*

- Allow for 1 hour a day of unstructured, free play
- Limit child’s media time to less than 1 to 2 hours a day
- No media usage for children under 2
- Establish “Screen free zones” by keeping TVs, computers and video games out of children’s bedrooms
- Limit “background media” use during playtime and family activities because it is distracting for children and adults
- Establish a plan for media use, e.g. when and where media is used and length of time child uses media

## 2.7 The development of social skills

Social skills are the skills we use every day to interact and communicate with others. They include verbal and non-verbal communication, such as speech, gesture, facial expression and body language. Social skills are vital in enabling an individual to have and maintain positive interactions with others. Many of these skills are crucial in making and sustaining friendships. Social interactions do not always run smoothly and an individual needs to be able to implement appropriate strategies, such as conflict resolution when difficulties in interactions arise.

Babies – up to 18 months		
Sense of self	Social skills	Emotional skills
Children become able to distinguish themselves from others. Children increasingly engage in goal-directed behaviour. Children become aware of their relationships with others. Children are becoming aware of their growing skills.	Children are born tuned in to social stimuli. Initially they show a preference for communication with their primary caregiver. Later, children become increasingly attuned to the wider social world around them and enjoy social interaction with more people.	Children display and appreciate primary emotions. Children use simple methods to comfort themselves. Children initially rely on caregivers for emotional support and regulation, becoming more independent as they grow and develop

<b>Toddlers – 18 months to 3 years</b>		
<b>Sense of self</b>	<b>Social skills</b>	<b>Emotional skills</b>
<p>Children are becoming aware of characteristics of themselves (for example, body parts).</p> <p>Children’s sense of self is concrete and based on things that they can see and do.</p> <p>Children can express and assert themselves.</p> <p>Children can anticipate behaviour of others based on their past experiences with them.</p>	<p>Children can identify others by name, especially close friends and relatives. Children show increased interest in interacting with peers and other adults. Children are learning appropriate ways to behave in different situations</p>	<p>Children display more complex emotions, and use emotions intentionally. Children show awareness of more complex emotions of others.</p> <p>Children are becoming more skilled at regulating their own emotions.</p>
<b>Preschoolers – up to 5 years old</b>		
<b>Sense of self</b>	<b>Social skills</b>	<b>Emotional skills</b>
<p>Children become aware of the groups that people belong to.</p> <p>Children’s sense of self includes more abstract aspects, such as likes and dislikes.</p> <p>Children can identify their feelings and needs.</p> <p>Children continue to develop their self-concept.</p>	<p>Children display more voluntary control over behaviour and emotions and engage in more complex play.</p> <p>Children begin to develop longer-lasting friendships.</p>	<p>Children are learning to express, label and regulate a wider range of emotions. Children increase their understanding of the feelings of others and use this when forming and developing friendships.</p>

Caregivers can promote social and emotional development in children of all ages and stages by:

- spending time with them
- being warm and responsive
- being emotionally and physically available to children most of the time
- acting as a safe, secure base (a comforting and familiar presence) from which children can explore their world and retreat to when needed
- arranging developmentally appropriate experiences, routines and interactions that promote social and emotional development
- having two-way conversations
- talking to children about what is happening now and what is going to happen next
- describing and labelling emotions and linking emotions to events and behaviours
- modelling effective social and emotional skills
- being predictable, genuine and engaging in meaningful interactions
- being aware of the child’s signals and preferences and following these
- seeking to understand the meaning of a child’s behaviour
- singing, dancing, playing games and having fun
- telling and reading stories about emotions and social situations.

## 2.8 Moral development

Morality is our ability to learn the difference between right or wrong and understand how to make the right choices.

Stages of morality

### 1. Infants

Infants cannot moralize. Their sense of right and wrong depends on their feelings and desires.

### 2. 2 to 3 years

At this age, toddlers realize that others have rights and needs as well. However, he/she is yet to grasp the difference between right and wrong. Depending on the actions conveyed by parents, the toddler understands obedience is the norm.

Toddler knows that it is wrong to take away a toy from a sibling only because he/she might land himself/herself into trouble.

He/she may not understand why hitting someone is wrong, he/she knows that he/she will be punished for doing that.

Toddlers tend to follow rules to avoid punishment.

### 3. 3 to 6 years

At that age many children start to show morally-based behaviors and beliefs. At this age, many young children also start to show empathy-based guilt when they break the rules.

Most young children can understand the difference between "good" and "bad" behavior, and this understanding provides the basis for more complicated moral thinking in the future.

This is the age children internalize family and school values. Rules and norms are essential for discipline in the family and in school. Children expect that older people will take charge.

Children recognize that actions have consequences – "If I do this, this will happen."

### 4. 6-10 years old

After the age of 6, children start questioning if the people who hold authoritative positions, such as teachers and parents, are infallible.

They develop a strong sense of what he/she should and should not do. They would want to participate in making rules. Children of this age develop a sense of fairness and understand the necessity of rules.

They understand children have rights as well and they filter rules according to what suits them.

### How To Teach Moral Values To Children

It is not easy to make children to understand and internalize the moral values you teach them. Here are some tips to do that:

Explain the morals that you think are of utmost importance.

Teach children how misbehavior affects others and how it might affect him too. For example: “If you are lying, one day no one will believe you.”

Talk to children about hypothetical situations where they will have to assess their thoughts and make a choice. Let’s say, “Your friend is getting bullied, what would you do?”

Teach that good moral has good consequences.

Make sure that you keep your commitments and promises.

### **Be Clear About Morals**

Research shows kids begin to understand the 'moral of the story' around age 5 or 6. But, preschoolers are less able to grasp a life lesson from a story about someone else. The concept is too abstract.

So it's important to be very concrete about morals. Say specific things like, "We don't take other people's belongings because it's wrong to take things that don't belong to us. It hurts other people's feelings when we do that and our job is to be kind to people, not hurt them."

As your child's understanding of morals increases, begin to ask him to identify the life lessons in a story. Read books and watch stories with various moral lessons and check for your child's understanding of how he can generalize that lesson to his own life.

### **Offer Praise for Prosocial Behavior**

Be on the lookout for times when your child decides to share, console someone else, tell the truth, or help others. Praise your child for exhibiting those prosocial behaviors.

When you point out positive choices, your child will become more motivated to keep up the good work.

- Teach children about feelings
- Model Good Morals
- Schedule Activities That Teach Your Child Your Morals
- Hold Your Child Accountable for Breaking Moral Codes

Everyone makes mistakes, so it’s important to make sure your child knows that it’s OK. However, you can’t just let it go—hold your little one accountable.

Forcing him to apologize isn’t likely to be helpful. He may not actually feel sorry so telling him to apologize to his brother may just be lip service.

But, you can role model how to apologize. When you make a mistake, tell children that you’re sorry.

## **2.9 Reference**

Ainsworth, M., Blehar, M., Waters, E., & Wall, S. (1978). *Patterns of Attachment*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum

Bowlby J (1988). *A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development*. Tavistock professional book. London: Routledge

Holmes J (1993). John Bowlby and Attachment Theory. Makers of modern psychotherapy. London; New York: Routledge

Fraley, R.C. and Shaver, P.R. (2000) Adult Romantic Attachment: Theoretical Developments Emerging Controversies and Unanswered Questions. Review of General Psychology, 4,

Main, M., & Solomon, J. (1986). Discovery of an insecure-disorganized/disoriented attachment pattern. In T. B. Brazelton & M. W. Yogman (Eds.), Affective development in infancy.. Westport, CT, US: Ablex Publishing.

Fancher, RE & Rutherford, A. (2012) Pioneers of Psychology: A History. New York: W.W. Norton

Social skills courtesy of kids sense, accessed online

<https://childdevelopment.com.au/areas-of-concern/play-and-social-skills/social-skills/>

Gardner, H. (1978). Developmental Psychology, Little, Brown and Company

Piaget, J. (1936). Origins of intelligence in the child. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul

Santrock, JW. (2016) A Topical Approach to Lifespan Development (8th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill

Speech and Language Milestones Courtesy of <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/ue5083#ue5083-sec>

Byers, John. A. (1998). The biology of human play. Child Development 69

DCMS (2004) Getting Serious About Play – A review of children’s play. London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Ginsburg et al., (2007) The importance of play in promoting healthy child development and maintaining strong parent-child bonds, in Newsletter. American Academy of Pediatrics

Kenneth R. Ginsburg (2007) “The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds”, [Pediatrics January 2007, VOLUME 119 / ISSUE 1](#)

Josie Gleave and Issy Cole-Hamilton (2012) A literature review on the effects of a lack of play on children’s lives accessed online [www.playengland.org.uk](http://www.playengland.org.uk)

NPFA, CPC and PLAYLINK (2000) Best Play – What play provision can do for children. London: National Playing Fields Association.

Parten, M (1932). “Social participation among preschool children”. Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology

Full recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics:

<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/142/3/e20182058>

Moral development in children access on [https://www.momjunction.com/articles/stages-of-moral-development-in-children\\_0082017/#gref](https://www.momjunction.com/articles/stages-of-moral-development-in-children_0082017/#gref)

## 3 Pedagogical approaches based on Montessori system of education

### 3.1 Maria Montessori

The extensive methodological system that we now call Montessori Method or Montessori Pedagogy has been developed by Maria Montessori (1870–1952) during her lifetime. As the first woman in Italy, she graduated from a medical school and received a doctorate in psychiatry.

Initially, she was mainly involved in working with handicapped children, who under her leadership achieved incredible advances in learning. She later applied her knowledge to working with healthy children and opened a nursery in Rome for neglected children aged 2-6, who soon reached the centre of attention of both the public and the then pedagogical experts. People came from far away to look at "street children" that have achieved incredible results in this kindergarten while working and learning with amazing enthusiasm and concentration without being controlled or forced into learning.

In the following years, Maria Montessori established a number of schools and kindergartens not only in Italy but also in many countries around the world. She has also held lectures and lectures for teachers and for public all over the world and has been performing symposia in pedagogy. She has worked in the USA, the Netherlands, the UK and other European countries, but also in India, Pakistan, Ceilon and South America. Gradually, she began to deal with the first three years of human life and the infant age. She has also published a number of books "Mysterious Childhood", "Absorbing Mind" or "Discovering a Child".

In 1949 she was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

### 3.2 The Montessori principles and concepts

The Montessori education system is based on the child's needs, teaching him to develop his natural abilities, skills and sensory perception. The child naturally acquires new knowledge and skills.

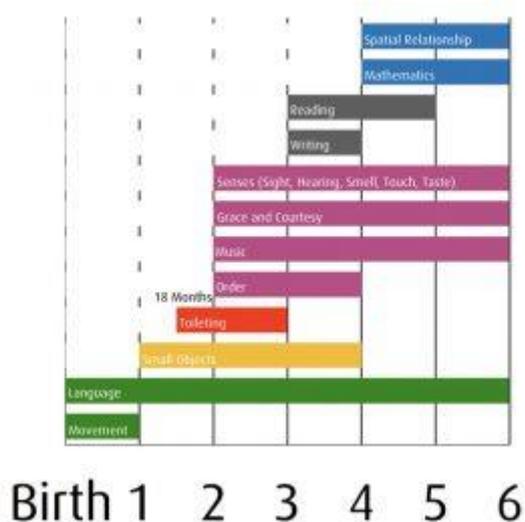
He learns to be independent, to concentrate and to love and respect himself and his surroundings. If one has peace and love within himself, he can spread it around himself. But no school or kindergarten can ensure that the Montessori method works without parents' cooperation. We can send the child to the best schools that will approach the child in the right way and try to support the best possible development of his / her skills and talents, however everything will be in vain if such an approach is contrary to the upbringing of the parents. After all, the best teachers of the child are his parents. Montessori often reminded people of the seriousness of the parents' mission and reminded the parents that they could positively influence the life and thus the life of our society with a loving and responsible approach to the child.

#### Sensitive phases

Dr. Montessori found that there are so-called sensitive phases in children, or a period of increased susceptibility for a particular skill. They are basically limited time periods when the child is best adapted to acquire a certain feature or skill. If suitable conditions are not created for the child to acquire the skill at this time, they must then spend much more energy on it in the future.

E.g. at a certain age, the child becomes interested in letters and reading. If he/she has the right conditions, he learns to read with enthusiasm and minimal effort. If this period has already passed and the sensitive phase has been missed, it will have to spend much more effort on reading lessons and probably it will also have much less fun acquiring it. Sensitive periods are not the same for all children. Each period can come at a

slightly different age for everyone, so it is important to treat children individually and observe what they seem to be interested in and offer them a proper activity. In doing so, a child can learn naturally by absorbing perceptions and stimuli from their surroundings.



### Attention Polarity

Maria Montessori also observed an incredible ability in children to focus on a job she called the attention polarity. If a child is interested in an activity, he/she is able to repeat this activity many times until he/she is satisfied. It is therefore necessary not to disturb the child and give him enough time to complete the work.

### From concrete to abstract

Dr. Montessori was aware of the fact that in children, abstract thinking is still evolving, and it is therefore necessary, especially in younger children, to build on the specific things they can grasp, touch, and then proceed to more and more abstract. At the same time, she tried to make the child engage as many senses as possible while learning that the child's physical development goes hand-in-hand with the psychic and adapted her teaching.

### A sense of order

Maria Montessori noticed that although children often seem outwardly "messy", in good observation we find that they have a deep sense of order in them. They like to find things in the same place. They get a greater sense of security when they know where to find what, what to follow. Children also need to know the rules, have their own space, their limits, and they are clearly defined in Montessori facilities. E.g. children use rugs when they work, coasters that clearly define their space on which they work with and which others can only intervene with after consultation with them.

### Freedom and responsibility

Maria Montessori found out how important freedom for children is within the boundaries and that even relatively young children are able to bear some responsibility. They often take care of themselves far more than we think, but they need time and space to learn. In this context, she also observed how important it is for children to work with mistakes and how it is necessary for children to feel no

*Tip from the Czech Republic:*

*When an activity is interrupted, the child can attach a name tag or a photo to his/her work and may return to it and finish it later.*

*Another tip from the Czech Republic:*

*If a child spills something out, it does not result in punishment - we lead it to clean up and so show the consequences of the action.*

punishment for mistakes or bad behavior, but a natural consequence of their actions.

### **Prepared environment and freedom of choice**

Great emphasis is placed on the prepared environment the child needs in order to choose an activity of their own interest.

The child chooses:

- what? what material they choose, what area they will be working on, what they want to learn and what they want to get more information about
- where? he chooses where to work in the classroom
- when? the child does not work on command or ring, but is motivated by his attention polarity; every child is "tuned" to a certain thing at another time. If we leave the child free to choose, he or she will choose the activities he / she will be able to do and will be successful in them, which is very important for the promotion of internal motivation.
- with whom? can work alone, in pairs, in a group.

If the child is indecisive, there is a teacher to help in the selection, or if the child is too one-sided, the teacher should appropriately bring the child to another type of work.

### **Working with aids through trial and error**

To teach the child, Montessori has created special aids that help the child to acquire a variety of knowledge and skills. The aids make it easier to understand new phenomena, but they also help the child to acquire the acquired knowledge and put it in memory better. What is important is that for almost all aids, there is a system of control to ensure that the child can check if they have worked properly and can learn from their mistakes.

### **Principle of age heterogeneity**

In Montessori facilities, children of different ages are together, which is important, as younger children can learn from the elderly, the elderly can test and consolidate their knowledge by explaining it to the younger, learning social skills and working together.

### **Logical context**

Maria Montessori was aware of the interconnection of all areas of life, how everything was related to everything, and that was also reflected in the way of teaching. Consequently, Montessori facilities work with projects in which things are linked to logical contexts. E.g. project "water" - it is connected with natural science (water cycle etc.) mathematics (water level is measured and calculated), the language (words connected with water), art education (paintings with water themes), music education (songs about water) etc. In pre-school children, "projects" are simple - it is important to be specific enough to let the children touch things and experience the activities.

### **Silence and peace, ellipse**

Montessori puts great emphasis on concentration, silence and tranquillity. Children should be quiet about their work, they should move slowly and talk quietly with each other. (Of course, Maria Montessori, too, was aware of the need for children to play and discharge, so she advised to include regular outdoor and various physical activity.) To calm and practice concentration, Maria Montessori invented walking on the line - an ellipse that at first sight may seem somewhat strange to some of us, but it is of great importance. Every day,

children meet on an ellipse. In silent music, he walks slowly down the line of the ellipse. With both hands, he holds a tiny object that can somehow be related to what they're dealing with.

Legs put in silence close behind each other from foot to foot. In fact, this light-weight exercise is very demanding on balance and concentration, especially for young children. Ellipsis is an exercise of patience, mental and physical balance, calmness, silence and concentration of attention that we lack so much in today's world. Children will tune in to the activity that will follow. Some children need to circle the ellipse several times until their needs are satisfied. Walking on an ellipse can be followed by a community circle, where children can verbalize their impressions or even address a certain issue.

### 3.3 Montessori teacher

Maria Montessori speaks in her books about the internal transformation of the teacher's personality and its thorough preparation. Montessori Pedagogy places great demands on teachers. The teacher should first work on himself before appearing before the children. He should learn to be a good observer, to act with calmness and mindfulness, getting rid of your own mental blocks and defects as everything can be transmitted to children. In a well-established Montessori facility, at first glance, the teacher does not do much, the children work quietly and alone, and he just watches them, but that is the great work of the teacher. The teacher should be able to help when he is asked for help or when he sees the need to help. But he should help by the principle of "help me to do it myself". So he should not do things for a child, but he should help the child to do it on his own.

The teacher also has to take care of the environment to be ready for the children, and to help the children choose the didactic material and show them how to work with it. He should still try to excite the kids for work. He needs to listen first and then ask. It is better if the child finds the answer to his / her questions with the teacher's help and the teacher does not force his / her point of view. At work, the teacher should disturb the child as little as possible. He needs to respect the personality of the children, but at the same time he has helped children comply with the established rules.

### 3.4 Learning areas

The Montessori pedagogy is divided into the following areas:

1. A **practical life** where the child learns to care for one's own person and his / her body and to care for the environment and society and to practice social relations. At the same time, other skills such as writing skills, mathematics basics, etc. are indirectly practiced and bonding hemispheres.
2. **Sensory Education** - Maria Montessori has developed a varied sensory material to help her practice the differentiation of colors, shapes, weight, comparison and sorting, involving all senses - touch, smell, vision, hearing and taste.
3. **Language** - here we include materials supporting speech development, reading instruction (Montessori uses the so-called genetic reading method, ie learning to read by letter and not by syllables) and writing.
4. **Mathematics** - a material that teaches perception of length, width and height, comparison of sizes and forms, and experimentation, and which helps the child gradually to abstraction, which is characteristic of mathematics. According to Montessori, the human spirit is a mathematical spirit.

5. **Space Education** - includes all other disciplines such as science, biology, chemistry geography, history physics, homeland studies, its part there is also physical and artistic education and social topics. By its conception it points out the interconnection of all areas, how everything relates to everything and that everything is one universe. It helps the child to understand the order of the world, to find its place in it and to respect and respect its surroundings.

### 3.5 Conclusion

Montessori Pedagogy has been developing for a century and forms a comprehensive and sophisticated educational system that respects the developmental stages of the child and corresponds to the psychological theories of the child's developmental needs. It is the most widely used alternative educational program applied in both developed and developing countries. It has inspired other modern educational programs such as Step by Step.

Apart from the language learning area it is internationally compatible. The curriculum is adhered to within the framework of the curriculum, so children can continue without difficulty in "traditional" classroom schools. The program is also suitable for handicapped children.

## 4 Specific educational situations and approach to children with special needs

### 4.1 Adaptation to the day care

It is important that children and guardians get a good introduction at the new daycare as it can be the first time the guardians have to leave their child. Most of them have until now been only at home in a family and their world will now change.

The purpose of the introduction according to Malin Broberg (2017) is that:

- The child needs to get used to the new environment while interacting with its guardians
- The child and the guardians should be given an opportunity to get to know the staff
- The child must get used to be without its guardians for a longer period of time and then instead using the childcare professionals as “people of safety”

#### Introduction talk

It is good to start off by having a talk with just the guardians giving them an insight of how their child will spend its days at preschool. On this occasion the guardians are also given an opportunity to express how they wish for their child to be received both practically and emotionally. At the talk it is of importance to point out:

- When the child is used to sleep and if it uses a dummy, blue blanket or a teddy.
- What kind of eating habits the child has
- Who will leave and pick up the child
- How the daycare works during a day
- What is expected of the guardians
- What the guardian expects from the daycare
- A form can be used to fill in for example personal data
- Time to visit the daycare

#### *Tip from Sweden:*

*You can make the transition period easier for the child when they can bring their favourite toy to the day care.*

#### *Tip from the Czech Republic:*

*Collect information from the parents using an evidence sheet. There is obligatory information you have to collect such as names of the child, the parents and the people to pick the child up, health conditions and vaccination. However, it is good to know more about the child such as likes and dislikes regarding food, eating and sleeping habits etc.*

#### *Tip from Greece:*

*When collecting information about the child, don't forget about the GDPR regulations.*

When many children begin their introduction period at the same time, it is a good idea to have a meeting even before the introduction starts where the new guardians will get together. At such a meeting the guardians will receive information of how the daycare works and they will also look at the facilities, which will lead to an even safer start for the children. If the guardians feel safe and calm, it will “rub off” on their children and they will experience the daycare as something positive and fun. It also gives the guardians a

possibility to ask questions as well as getting to know the other guardians. Creating a network with the other guardians in their group often reinforces the whole group as they realize they are not alone with their questions and their anxiety.

### **Introduction period**

When the guardian and the child come at their first visit, it is important that the staff has time to receive the visitors. The guardian and the child must feel welcome. It is important that the guardian and the child is given time to look around. The staff should say hello to the child and then turn to the adult to show them to go.

When the guardian and the child are at ease the staff can begin to approach the child. It is essential to understand that for the child the bonds with its guardians are more important than those with the staff and it will always remain so. However the child will approach the staff more and more and eventually there will be bond between the child and the staff. The guardian will still always be the most important person to the child when the staff and the guardian are present. This means that as long as the guardian is present the staff will not be able to console the child as it will all the time look for the one highest in the attachment hierarchy (Broberg, 2017; Lökken, Haugen & Röthle, 2005).

The visits together with the guardian should be several days in a row and most importantly for the staff is to be at hand at all times interacting with the child and the guardian because during the introduction period the attachment to the pedagogues is an essential element (Broberg, Hagström & Broberg, 2012).

During the introduction period the guardians should function as a “safe haven”, where the children have their safe embrace to which they can return to when in need. The guardians are to be at hand during the days the children explore the new environment and start to get to know the new adults. The child will during this period go between different environments and activities and then take a breather at its guardian. The rambles will be longer and longer. They will begin to approach the staff mimicking the other children’s behavior and a secure group of children will be a great help. If there is no group of children the guardian will be the one showing the child the way.

Gradually the staff will take the role as the “safe haven” as their role in bonding with the child is strengthened. To start with the child often chooses one of the staff as its safe spot and later on increasing it to the other members of the staff. How long it takes for each child varies but it will eventually happen. During this period it is preferable if the staff consists of as few different people as possible.

### **The important relation to the guardians**

The relationship between the guardians and the staff is also built up during this period; they get to know each other which subsequently helps both parties to have a good communication about the child (Lökken, Haugen & Röthle, 2005). The safe relation between the adults is felt by the child, which leads to a more secure start at the daycare for the child.

At the visits the guardians get a good idea of how the staff at the daycare works and what happens during the week. This means that they will have a good understanding of what their child is able to learn during a day and hence also in a better position to question the daycare and what they are entitled to demand from it.

During the first days it is desirable if the staff encourages the guardians to be present and follow their child at the activities offered during the day. They help the child changing diapers and at meals, participate in play

and at for example assemblies. This means that the child under safe circumstances dares to explore its surroundings and try new things. It also sees that the guardians are on good terms with the staff which means that it dares to let go of the guardian more and more. During the following visits the staff helps the guardian to gradually become more and more passive letting the staff take over the supporting role being the child's secure embrace.

### Handing over at the daycare

It is important for all parties that the handing over is as good as possible every day. The best thing is if the guardian comes into the entrance hall and helps the child taking off the outdoor clothes and talks to the pedagogue about how the morning has been. This narrows the gap between the home and the daycare which are two essential parts of the child's world. It is also important for the guardian to be calm and including the child in the conversation to make the child understand what will happen.

For the child to feel secure at the handing over the guardian must be convinced that he/she is proceeding in the correct manner and rely on the child having a good day at the daycare. At those occasions when this is not the case the child will often become sad and won't leave the secure embrace. When going home the staff can talk about how the day has been and what they have done so that the guardian can talk to its child about the daycare.

### Guardian-Teacher communication

A few weeks after the introduction is finished and the guardians have started working it is good to have a new individual talk with the guardians. You then discuss how the child is doing and both parties have the possibility to address things they think are working or things they would like to change and improve. During the meeting the staff will often bring the routines for leaving and picking up for discussion, how the child's hours at the daycare work, as well routines for eating and sleeping. Issues like the need of diapers, clothes and any form of aid are discussed. The staff also talks about the child's well-being and its needs.

After about nine months it's time for a guardian-teacher conference. The purpose of these conferences is to give the staff's view on the child's progress and learning according to special development documents. The development documents will discuss the child's verbal, mathematical and motorical progress. The staff also bring up for discussion any concern they have for the child or if they need the guardians help concerning the child. The conference is a discussion where both the guardians and the staff can express themselves. During the discussion you set different objectives for the child which will then be followed up at the next conference.

#### *Tip from Spain:*

*When handing over the children, you can also use a diary in a form of a small book where the parents can write down information about the child (what happened at home) and the day care professionals can write down information about the day at the preschool (about the meals, achievements or problems).*

#### *Tip from Sweden:*

*When the guardian hands over the child at the daycare it is of importance not to say the child is handed over to the daycare but that it is handed over from the guardian to the staff at the daycare (Broberg, 2017).*

## 4.2 Working with emotions and self-esteem

### Approach and curiosity

When you meet a child for the first time it is your task to be curious. What kind of person is this? How does he/she want to be approached? What can be interesting for this individual? How can we work together?

When you meet someone with curiosity you open up all your senses and all impressions pour in. You are alert and ready to take in everything the other one has to give. The one being approached with curiosity finds it easier to open up and is more susceptible to other people's signals.

How children are approached is extremely important! It lays the foundation for all work going on during the day. That's what makes the difference between a child leaving a situation learning something or merely having participated. Approaching a child in a good manner is also what builds a secure group (Broberg, Hagström & Broberg, 2012). A group of children being used to an approach of openness, curiosity and respect will exhibit such traits. They will respect each other in the group and they will become open and curious towards their friends.

### Self-esteem

For children to not only feel physically but also psychologically well the staff should work a lot with self-esteem. The children believing in themselves and their ability are the base of well-being. The staff tries to emphasize that the children are good for what they are rather than for what they do (Familylab, 2018).

A child feeling welcomed and the pedagogue being happy for this particular child arriving is the first step, mentioning it by name is the second step. To meet someone and mentioning them by name is very important!

I am someone because I have a name and my name is who I am, how I act and whatever I do. There is nothing worse for a child than being invisible and that no one knows its name.

Of course the child's progress should be praised but there is a danger in getting stuck in the doing and forgetting the being. We grow up in a culture where the doing is important and what is being praised is what we achieve and accomplish. This creates a strain on the child and because they want to make the adults proud it will be self-evident that they must accomplish more in everything they do (Familylab, 2018).

To create a self-awareness in the doing it is important not to judge what the child does by praise but make them reflect on the feeling from doing it.

What the child does builds up its self-confidence but unfortunately self-confidence doesn't build up self-esteem. On the other hand self-esteem builds up self-confidence. The children being sure of who they are and them having a value of being themselves is important. They then dare to choose, stand up for themselves and set their own boundaries.

#### *Tip from Sweden:*

*A child being on the swing shouting "look at me" doesn't want to be judge on how high it swings but rather wants to be seen and to be able to share the wonderful feeling of swinging. The pedagogue can then say something like "how does it feel to be on the swing?" or "I see you, how does it feel inside you right now?"*

#### *Another tip from Sweden:*

*A child giving a pedagogue a gift perhaps doesn't want to get it praised but rather wants to express something like "I love you" or "How happy I am you being here! An answer from the pedagogue can be "I love you too, I'm so happy you have thought of me".*

To build self-esteem is about seeing the child right where it is (Juil, 2012). To always make the child feel welcomed and make it understand that their being is important to me and to the group. It is not their actions that makes them important but their being. It is not easy to build self-esteem as everything you do as a pedagogue must come from the heart and the children must believe and feel that it is true or else the self-esteem can collapse instead.

As mentioned earlier to see and mention the child by name is important, but it is also important to take them seriously. To treat them as fellow human beings and take what they say and wish seriously. This doesn't mean that they should get their own way but that the pedagogues respect what they say so much that they show that they are worth listening to. The children's thoughts and feelings are real and should be taken into consideration. The children's opinions are as important as anybody else's and should be valued as such. The children's ideas can be discussed and pondered on and maybe implemented. The pedagogues should really see the child as a whole individual who doesn't need to be corrected, but just needs to learn more and create new experiences..

### **Low self-esteem**

A child with low self-esteem will need to be acknowledged in everything, because the child doesn't think it has a worth entailing they constantly needs confirmation of their being. It is important as a pedagogue to see these children and give them confirmation, again not for what they do but for who they are. They often need a lot of physical closeness and they readily want to do the right thing. At any form of criticism these children will be offended and that's something we pedagogues must take into consideration. (Juil, 2012).

These children are the ones who need sound adults with sound values the most. These children may have difficulties with friends as they are easily offended and either turn it inwards or completely adapt to what the friends say and in doing so erase a part of themselves. These children also find it difficult to set boundaries, which makes them an easy target for exploitation because they so badly need to get a worth and to be loved. The pedagogues must help the children to set boundaries by talking about what is fair or what is not. They might also need help playing or support during the play to ensure it will go on.

### **Working with emotions**

To work with emotions so that the children understand and get words for what they feel is important, why they feel the way they do and what the friends do to arouse these feelings as they often experience many emotions but have a difficulty understanding them and put them into words. It is noticeable that children who understand the emotions can express them are better in controlling them and explain to their friends and in doing so end up in less conflicts.

A lot of this work is about talking to the children, listening to what they say, answering questions and evoking thoughts. It is also about trying to understand why the friend reacts the way he does and be able to talk to the friend about it. In order to help the child to find the right words it is important to be present where the child is. To be close trying to interpret what the children are saying to each other so that they can more easily understand each other. It is important to the children to have descriptive words, words that explain how I feel (Juil, 2005).

It is also crucial for the children that all emotions are allowed as it is the first step to later in life being able to handle what they feel rather than suppressing them. To put into words your own emotions enables me as a child to get my surroundings to understand how I feel and eventually also why. It also makes it easier for the children to play, because they understand each other better. If the children can explain how they feel and

the receiving child can understand how it feels the children will more easily create a consensus and the play can go on.

To work with self-esteem and emotions with children requires brave pedagogues. The pedagogues must dare to challenge themselves in their own emotions as they at the same time will be challenged by the children.

**Working with emotions the most important thing is that the pedagogues dare to be honest with themselves and dare questioning their own emotions both towards themselves but also the emotions they feel towards the children. The pedagogues' boundaries will be questioned but as long as they dare being honest in what they think they will be accepted. To be challenged by children is the best way of building self-esteem. As a matter a fact they love unconditionally, they question without ulterior motives and they always see you for who you are right now.**

### 4.3 Children in need of special care

Children in need of special care are everywhere in our everyday life, how they function in everyday life depends on how they are treated and what conditions are created for them. All children are individuals and need different support, some more than others, but the emphasis is on what works for one individual doesn't necessarily work for another. It is about approach, different aids or relations to other children. Children with the same diagnosis don't always need the same support. It is also important to remember that staff without special needs training are not allowed to diagnose but must take help from an expert if they think there is a need for a diagnosis. Special trained staff can also help out with what kind of support the child requires and how they should be treated.

#### Structure

All children are affected by the way the day at the daycare is and children in need of special care are affected more. Their behavior can change depending on the staff's approach and the composition of the group of children. It can both prevent and create problems for the children. Things that have a negative effect is among others a lack of daily structure, staff who gives too many orders and admonitions affecting the child's self-image negatively, too many failures and negative experiences, worries and conflicts in the group as well as a lack of adults in the free play and activities (Lökken, Haugen & Røthle, 2006).

Whereas routines and structure give children a sense of security (Palla, 2011; Stockholms läns landsting, 2012). When everybody knows what will happen and how their day is going to look like it will be calmer and they can relax in what they are doing. If you prepare the set situations existing during a day and where you know certain children will find it difficult the staff can avoid many of these problems by just being aware of them. The staff must create an understanding of the children's preconditions so that the demands are adapted to the children's needs to prevent failures in the difficult situations and instead create a tranquility where the children can grow. The play is also important for the child's social development and the staff must participate in helping the child in playing. The staff must be present to help guiding and slow down when needed. Furthermore the staff must also be a pilot guiding the child in the right direction helping the ones making mistakes to find the right way again (Socialstyrelsen, 2010).

#### Children's differences

When working with children in need of special care your starting point is always what the child is able to - their strengths - and to develop these further. The idea is to always remember that the child will learn for

life, which means that the child should do everything it is capable of doing. They are to be given opportunities to develop further, conquering and learning to master different situations and in doing so learning self-control and controlling of their behaviour (Palla, 2011). They are to be given an opportunity to evolve their behaviour to be able to cope with everyday life.

**There are children with many different neuropsychological conditions such as for example ADHD and autism spectrum disorders. These children have, whether they have a diagnosis or not, different characteristics. All are individuals and therefore their behaviour vary and also their need of approach (Gerland & Aspflo, 2009).**

### **ADHD**

Children with ADHD are often characterized by attention deficit, impulsiveness and hyperactivity (Gerland & Aspflo, 2009). These are children with difficulty controlling the level of activeness. They can be overactive and then be completely inactive. The hyperactivity is often apparent as a difficulty in remaining in the play they are in and focusing on it, as they take in all impressions from outside instead. When playing with others a child needs to concentrate and to have an ability to understand the others. These children find it difficult to figure out what belongs to the play and to focus on the other children which often results in them disrupting the play

As the child has difficulty with attention and in understanding the context they don't understand what has happened and why, what went wrong and as a result are not able to solve the problem. Consequently we as a staff often experience that things just happen around these children.

As they find it difficult to see their part in what happens they can't understand that there will be consequences of their action. In a group of children there are often many impressions and the children with difficulty sorting out impressions don't see a context which makes their world hard to understand. With all the impressions it is difficult for them keep the attention on one thing which gives an impression of them being troubled. (Gerland & Aspflo, 2009).

### **Autism**

Children with autism spectrum disorder are characterized by their limitations in social interaction, limitations in communication, limitations in interests and behaviour (Gerland & Aspflo, 2009). Here we also find great variations and all children don't have as powerful symptoms or all of the symptoms.

The children have different ability to express themselves non-verbally. Eye-contact is difficult, they have a vague facial expression and their body language doesn't match what they want to express. All this makes it hard for both children and staff to read the children. It also makes it harder for the staff to "translate" what the children are trying to express to help them get a language the others can understand. Another consequence is a difficulty in establishing friendly relations as the other children don't understand what they mean.

The children also have difficulties with social and emotional reciprocity which leads to an inability to maintain an interaction with another person. They might have difficulty initiating the play but also maintaining the interaction during the play resulting in the play coming to a halt or not even begin. Another difficulty is an often delayed speech development or no speech at all also harming the interaction with others. The language is incredibly important to create a relation and keep a play alive. It builds bridges and resolves conflicts and the lack of a spoken language makes it very hard to be part of a community. It also

makes it difficult to form friendly relations with children their own age. It can be a problem as, according to Vygotsky, interaction is the basis of intellectual development and language and all psychological functions start with relations between people (Strandberg, 2006).

Many of the children within the autism spectrum often have one or several different limited interests which they are fixed upon. It may be an interest in a specific area or the need to do something special at certain occasions. This means that the child often has a need of routines executed in the same manner every time. They can also have certain repetitive physical movements executed in a specific way.

### **Create understanding**

Children with neuropsychological conditions need different support and help to understand and cope in their surrounding world. They demand more repetition and patience in order to have a chance of following the pedagogues thoughts as they have a hard time understanding their actions and being able to switch strategy (Gerland & Aspflo, 2009).

They also find it difficult to reflect as it demands keeping a long chain of thoughts in their mind which just isn't possible. It's hard for them to see inner pictures so we need to be explicit and use already made pictures for these children to understand, just words won't suffice (Hedevåg, 2016). Even when choosing these children have problems and may need the help of pictures.

As they are very impulsive and might have a problem with their working memory they need help to understand their choices and to stick to them. The children are in need of help to learn how to read other people's expressions and words. Not perceiving things in the same way as others they need an interpreter enabling them to be a part of the world around them. Changing activities is also difficult as they can get stuck or hyperfocus on something they are interested in. They can't see the need of leaving the play in order to let something else happen.

Many of the children have difficulties with their motor skill making them very easily tired if they are out moving about. Their fatigue can occur suddenly and when occurring it can be very intense. This can also occur if they have focused and worked over a long period with something. Their level of activity is not even as they find it hard to know when to switch off and on as they absorb all impressions until they just don't manage anymore. It makes it hard for the children to be active at certain occasions and passive at others. To not let the fatigue take over they sometimes do crazy things when they are to sit still in order to stop the body to go into a state of rest.

Many of the children have different difficulties of perception i.e. they have difficulties in sorting out and coordinating their sensory impressions. They are often more sensitive to different sensory impressions such as touch, light and sound making the surroundings for these children incredibly important in order to make them function adequately. This can possibly also make the food an issue as there can be too different textures and smells in the food.

### Working method

When working with children it's always easier to use their interests as a starting point, this is also true when it comes to children with different difficulties. When reinforced by play you are giving yourself a good starting position. The toys they use playing must have a clear purpose to make it easier for the child, for example blocks or a car. The child knows how to play with the toy and doesn't need to use strength and energy to understand but can concentrate on what it is doing. During the entire play you reinforce the child with words and many repetitions. Be sure to use the same word for the same thing as different concepts for the same thing can be difficult to understand (Gerland & Aspflo, 2009).

If the child has difficulty in engaging, activities where you have to move are good, preferably outdoors. The toys outdoors are often apparent such as swings and slides. They only have one purpose and also give an opportunity for conversations about different things the child is doing. In conversations with children it's important not to use too many questions but rather describe what is happening or what you see. Don't use the word "not" as it is very abstract, rather say what the child should do. Say "climb the steps to the slide" instead of "don't go up the slide".

When creating a new activity with more than one child think about the following:

- Is the activity structured or unstructured
- Does the activity contain few or many materials/toys
- Is the child required to share materials with others or is the materials easy to divide

- Are there few or many people involved
- Does the activity demand little or great knowledge of language
- Does the activity demand little or great initiative to communicate (Gerland & Aspflo, 2009).

### Acting out behaviour

In all groups of children there are children with acting out behaviours. It is important to realise that an acting out behaviour and a passive behaviour can be a reaction to the same thing. Different behaviours can manifest in the same child and the causes are often related to stress. The child can be overloaded with different sensory impressions. The child might be stressed because it doesn't know what is going to happen or because there have been too many misunderstandings when it has been unable to read the people in its surroundings.

To help the child it's good to be explicit in your message making it easier for the child to understand. Your bodily expressions must say the same thing as the words. A child being stressed won't understand you setting boundaries but needs to be calm to take in the instruction. When a child doesn't understand it will get stressed, so be patient and explain in different ways with different aids.

When the child has been acting out and you are in the middle of the situation it is important to remember:

- Don't talk, the child won't be able to take in instructions
- Don't grab the child, it might be sensitive to touch
- Give the child a way out enabling it to leave the situation without hurting anyone
- Protect the child from hurting itself or anyone else by being close to the child until it has calmed down

It is important to teach these children to read their own signals to see what is coming. They need to have a strategy how to calm down or how to get out of difficult situations. Different children have different solutions, for example to move to get the adrenaline out of the body, to withdraw to a quiet room or to talk to someone. What is important is that it's working for them and that it is something they can always do when feeling stressed (Gerland & Aspflo, 2009).

### Different aids

Different children need different aids for different things. Here are some frequent ones. They might need to be changed or clarified depending on the child's needs (Gerland & Aspflo, 2009).

- **Pictures and images** are good to clarify the language. They can be drawn, photographs or pictogrammes (Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten, 2018).
- **Schedule of the day** or for a shorter period of time makes it easier for the child when creating a whole of something divided. It also creates an understanding for what is going to happen and gives the day a framework.
- **A key ring with images** is good to carry around.
- **Social stories** is good to describe an episode which has occurred or will occur. It describes a desired behaviour, but can also describe an undesirable behaviour and how one could have done instead. Social stories are made together with the child and can be saved to be shown at several occasions. (Hedevåg, 2016; Stockholms läns landsting, 2012).
- **Drawing diary** for reflecting to make the child see what has happened during the day.

- **Sad-Happy face** for younger children letting them talk about how they experienced a happening or a situation.
- A gadget, preferably hard and nobby, which the child can bring to assembly or meals to not play with the “wrong” thing or to touch the friend.
- **Sound absorption** like sound absorbing tile on the walls, fabric in toy boxes, paws under chairs and tables. All this helps children with different hearing problems or sound sensitiveness (Socialstyrelsen, 2010).
- **Images in the entrance hall** on what clothes to wear during the day. If the images are too indistinct the staff can display real clothes.
- Highlight the child’s food and place in the entrance hall **with a special colour** to help the child know where the child’s things are. The colour can also be used in other places to mark where the child should be or sit.
- Fewer children in groups with children in need of special support helps as there are fewer people to relate to.

**It is important to remember that there may be different causes for a child’s behaviour. Example of this can be the environment at home or at daycare. They may live in a socially demanding situation or be busy in a part of their development. To be able to help and understand these children we need to look into the cause of the reaction or problem. We must see behind the angry or sad behaviour and be able to understand the reason behind it (Hedevåg, 2016).**

**We have to teach the children “for life”. The childcare professionals are not here to diagnose - they always have to seek the help of a special need professional.**

#### **4.4 Children with another mother language**

All children from all cultures have the same need of attachment and security to be able to play and learn. For children coming from war-torn countries the daycare is a safe haven which they can rely on being there every day, unchanged. A place where they can let go of their anxiety, be a child and being able to develop and learn.

##### **The important role of the daycare**

The staff at the daycare must realize that they are seen as a representative of their country. They show in some way how the people in the new country treat others and how you behave and act in different situations. That’s why the daycare plays an important part for the new family. This is important to remember when the new guardian meets the staff for the first time. That’s when a relation start to take shape and the guardians begin to feel secure. Many guardians have a need to feel secure with the staff and the daycare as they often come from unsecure conditions. They need to feel that their child is at a safe daycare and is being with secure staff. The trust for the staff is something which grows and it can take a different amount of time. However it is important for the children to feel secure as the sense the atmosphere between the guardians and the staff. It is also essential to communicate with the guardian or else it can be perceive as one is not taking the other adult seriously or showing a lack of interest. The most important thing is not that everything is right but the attempt (Bozarslan, 2001).

To be able to create a good relationship with the child it is important for them to see that it works with their guardians. To create a relation based on trust and good cooperation with the guardians you must start with

respect and understanding for each other and each other's experiences (Broberg, 2017). As staff you must realize the experiences the guardians and the children bring to the table might be very different from your own and therefore their actions may be different from yours. There will be different cultural clashes and it is important to talk about these. It may be about clothing, both indoors and outdoors, cleanliness, food, traditions, your own or the new country's. Important is to really listen and have an understanding. At the same time as having this understanding and respect for these differences you as staff must be explicit about conditions at the daycare (Bozarslan, 2001). Things that are obvious to you aren't to. To be able to communicate with the guardians you might need to use an interpreter who not only translate the language but also understands the culture around the family (Broberg, 2017)

The guardians might go through many complicated emotions about their child becoming a part of another culture. The children getting a new language, learning new traditions and having a new behaviour can be perceived as hard. If you deal with these changes and explain your point of view the transition is often easier and you give the guardian a chance to understand everything new happening (Broberg, 2017)

### **Approach and relations**

Staff working with children with another first language need to be open to differences and see them as an asset. To gloss over differences is counterproductive to a successful integration and it will be hard for the child to feel proud of its individuality and dare to show it openly. The staff needs to know how to approach different cultures and have the ability to understand how these affect the child's everyday life. To be curious of what's new and dare to utilize that which fits the daily work. It is important to see people as individuals and not as a part of a community. Each individual has its own background. Even if you are from the same country things like education, class, religious norms and values can vary a lot (Bozarslan, 2001).

To children coming from another cultural background into a new reality the relation to a certain member of the staff will be essential. It is necessary for the child to create a lasting relation to the staff to feel secure and to have opportunities to develop. A good and close relation, where the pedagogue is explicit and knows how to express emotions, creates a lasting value in the child's self image which will prevail even when the the pedagogue has left the child. It will also build up self-knowledge and maturity.

The pedagogue is also the one who will treat many of the child's unprocessed emotional separations. Many children have had to leave people or have been separated from them during long periods which will give emotional scars. To be able to handle new separations the old ones must be processed and it needs to be done when the child feels secure with someone.

These children might be overly clinging and it is important for the staff to be affirmative and confirm the child's feelings and not diverting them. The child needs to go through the emotions to be able to move on. The separation anxiety is seldom permanent but comes in waves. It is important when meeting these children not to pity them, or to play the parental part but instead treat them with respect and compassion. They don't need to be rescued but given time to heal (Bozarslan, 2001).

### **The language**

The language is an entrance to integration. To many children who are new in the country and have foreign background the daycare is the first place where they meet their new language. A lot is required of the child to learn a new language. The process of learning a new language can be long and difficult. Sometimes the child entering a new language at the preschool turns silent. This period is then being used to absorb the new language, it is not unusual for the child to use "non-verbal" communication during this period, the staff at

the daycare needs to pick up these signals to be able to guide the child into the language (Skolverket, 2013). It is important when the staff understands what the child means to express in words what they are doing. Everything to give the child as much as possible of the new language. It is of great importance that the staff at all times express in words what they are doing and to use a varied and explicit language with entire sentences. The children must be surrounded by a rich language full of nuances. They need to hear many different concepts and conversations in different situations to be given opportunities to phrase their own ideas, wishes and needs (Broberg, 2016).

It will take a different amount of time for different children to learn a new language and the staff should encourage the child to both use its first language as well as the new one parallel to make the child become a bilingual or multilingual individual (Skolverket, 2013). It is important for the guardians to use the language they master the best when talking to the child. It is in their own language they most easily express emotions and thoughts. The best thing is if the first language is spoken at home in its most natural surroundings while the other language is spoken at the daycare. Both languages need to be used on a regular basis to keep them alive. The children hearing the language the guardians use with most nuances paves the way for a good development of the language. Multilingualism can vary over time i.e even if the child only speaks the language spoken at the daycare and the guardians speak the first language they will still understand their mother tongue. The guardian must not give up at a time like this but keep on talking as it will lead to good results in the future (Myndigheten för skolutveckling, 2008). The daycare should be a place where the new language will take root. The set routines at the daycare enables the child to learn new words and to understand contexts, it learns from other children and assimilates new words in different everyday situations.

The play is a way for the child into the new language. If the play is contextual and there is another child present speaking the language at hand or if an adult is there as lingual support the play can mean that the child has an opportunity to talk, ask questions and to listen to the language in many different contexts (Skolverket, 2013). It is to everybody that the adults at the daycare are verbal role models and to be a guide to the new language which is to be learnt. It is also important as an adult to be observant of how much the child really understands as a child can learn words in its context but later on have difficulty to really understand the depth of the language. Children with several languages might have a poorer vocabulary than the ones with only one language and it is vital that the pedagogues are good verbal role models and use the language throughout the entire day (Hansen Wagner, 2019).

*Tip from Sweden:*

*During the first days at the daycare it could be wise for the staff to learn some words or phrases in the child's first language to intertwine home and daycare for the children and making the transition easier. It is also good for the staff to know some basic words in the child's first language so that the child at the beginning can make itself understood at for example meals.*

## Keys

To be able to manage in the new community children with another cultural background need different "keys". These are according to Aycan Bozarslan the most important ones:

- Positive experiences of a good and close relation
- A well developed bilingualism
- Social competence
- Social orientation and cultural competence - the ability to move in different surroundings

- Empathy
- Democratic values etcetera (s.123)

Many of the above mentioned keys are important to all children but to be able to become a secure child feeling as a part of its reality children with another cultural background need a little bit more. (Bozarslan, 2001).

## 5 Guiding children towards hygiene habits

Children need to learn basic hygienic habits **from a very early childhood**. Determining the age of the child when it is advisable to start with these habits is not possible, it always depends on the individuality of the child. In general, however, the sooner the child acquires these habits, the better for his physical and mental development. Compliance with hygienic rules is the best way to stay **healthy**. Basic hygienic habits must be firmly anchored in the child's daily mode; the child learns by imitation, so the **right pattern of the adult** is also important.

The base of cleanliness and personal hygiene is the **washing of dirty hands**. The basic habit should also be washing hands before meals, then, of course, after meals. Teach the children not to touch things with dirty hands.

Other important habits are **washing your hands after using the toilet** and **washing hands after coming from outside**. It does not matter whether you played or just been on a walk.

It is typical for children that even though they have already learned these habits, they try to avoid them. That's why you have to be consistent and **keep checking on the child** and remind them of their duty. **Regularity and consistency** are definitely paid out.

### Toddler (age 0-2)

- differs with the age of the children, babies do not have to be bathed every day as they lie in a crib, in the arms, or on a mat, the toddlers are better to be bathed every day
- we care for the cleanliness of the genitals while we are changing the diapers
- brushing teeth is important, there are special silicone toothbrushes for babies while older children use normal brushes
- combing hair
- washing hands, washing the face after a meal
- potty training

### Children (3-6)

- washing hands and face
- combing hair
- brushing teeth
- blowing nose
- eating/dining

## 5.1 Tooth brushing

This activity is not very popular with young children. We clean the teeth of the little ones, if they want to clean them without help, we let them, but of course we have to count on the fact that the baby will only clean some of the teeth while others are left untouched. In this case, we help them finish the work.

If children protest, we look for effective motivation to help overcome this protest. We use a favourite pet or doll, we have a real brush, but we pretend to clean the teeth of the pet. Usually the child stops protesting and wants to clean own teeth. Sometimes a fairytale or saying can be a good motivator.

## 5.2 Self-care activity

Teach children good habits when **coughing** - covering the mouth with hands. Another thing is **blowing nose**, sometimes it is difficult for a child to do or even understand how to empty his nose. Initially the child should learn to use the handkerchief to wipe off the wet nose before getting ready for the habit of blowing the nose. **Combing** hair is often a fun activity for the child, and it's usually not a problem if the baby has short hair to teach him how to brush himself.

### Potty training

Teaching a child to use a potty is not an easy task at all. The precondition for the practice of using the potty is the **mental ability of the child**. As long as the child can not consciously restrain urge to urinate and is unaware of the possibility of controlling his body, it is useless to bother both himself and the child. Usually at the end of the first year of life, the toddler begins to exercise his need regularly, but not quite consciously. The most appropriate time for training is generally around one and a half to two years. It is also said that girls are more educated and go to the potty earlier than the boys, but each child is of course original. Potty training is a long-term process, it is necessary to respect the individuality of the child and to estimate the right moment.

*Tip from the Czech Republic*

- familiarizing with the potty will be easier if you let the child himself choose the potty that he likes most
- leave the potty at hand and get at least two, there it is not time to look for it in another room
- make it easy for the baby with a proper clothing that is easy and quickly to take off

## 5.3 Daily routine of the child

From the earliest age, you should create a regular daily routine for the child, which you always follow, because then you create a number of conditional reflexes (dynamic stereotypes and habits) that contribute to good education and development of the child. The child should have regular feeding, sleep and game times. You should express love to the child, also by frequent physical contact - cuddling, hugging, holding, and then later attention and praise. Even older children require hugging or caressing.

The child has to always feel secure, the right emotional background is important for his next life. Both parents have to devote themselves to the child so that they can feel his needs, which requires a lot of patience, tolerance and time.

Nowadays one of the parents usually provides the family from the economic point of view, while the other takes care for the child, so one parent has considerably less time for their offspring. Therefore, it is important for the family to have a regular regime that suits all family members. So you should set a period of regular sleep, feeding, playing, walking and physical activities, but also a certain amount of time to spend with both parents.

Of course, the arrangements depend on the family's habits. Not the number of hours spent with the child, but the quality of the time spent together is of importance. Often, one hour used effectively gives the child much more than a whole day. It is necessary to build on and support the child's existing skills and to gradually add others. Later, according to his interest in one or the other activity (modeling, playing a musical instrument, sports, drawing, singing, etc.), the family regime needs to be adjusted, especially if there are other children in the family.

The regular regime in the family is undoubtedly the basic educational measure. It needs to be gradually adjusted according to the age of the child, his / her individual peculiarities and also the season.

What should the child's daily regime contain?

- sufficient and regular sleep depending on age
- a balanced and varied diet served at the same time - 5 times a day
- sufficient stay in fresh air
- physical activity (adapted to the child's abilities) - do not compare your child with other children, support them in what they can, and thus consolidate their self-esteem
- support the child's interest in other activities - drawing, singing, playing a musical instrument
- fill the child's time so that you do not overload it
- teach him how to behave with other family members, other children and adults
- once the age of the child allows so, it should become a cooperating family member, the type and degree of cooperation being governed by its age and skills -it gives the child the feeling he is needed

## 6 Application of the healthy lifestyle principles according to the age of the child

The positive influence exerted by the acquisition of healthy lifestyles is unquestionable in human development and maintaining good health of children and adults.

The ECEC professional should therefore acquire the following skills:

- Plan educational activities related to the basic needs of minors, specifically with food, hygiene and rest and physical activity.
- Program intervention strategies in education that favor the development of the child's personal autonomy and skills related to healthy behaviours.
- Organize activities taking into account the adequacy of the available spaces, as well as the rhythm and routine of children, basic for a balanced work and favouring healthy habits.
- Carry out activities that favor the acquisition of these habits and routines.
- Start up actions following the security protocols established for the prevention and intervention in cases of illness or accident.
- Identify the characteristics and basic needs of children from 0 to 6 years old and the prevention of health risk in that attack.
- Evaluate the achievement of the objectives proposed in the intervention strategies.
- Collaborate with the family and other professionals by establishing communication channels that guarantee coverage of the basic needs of minors.

### 6.1 Food and nutrition

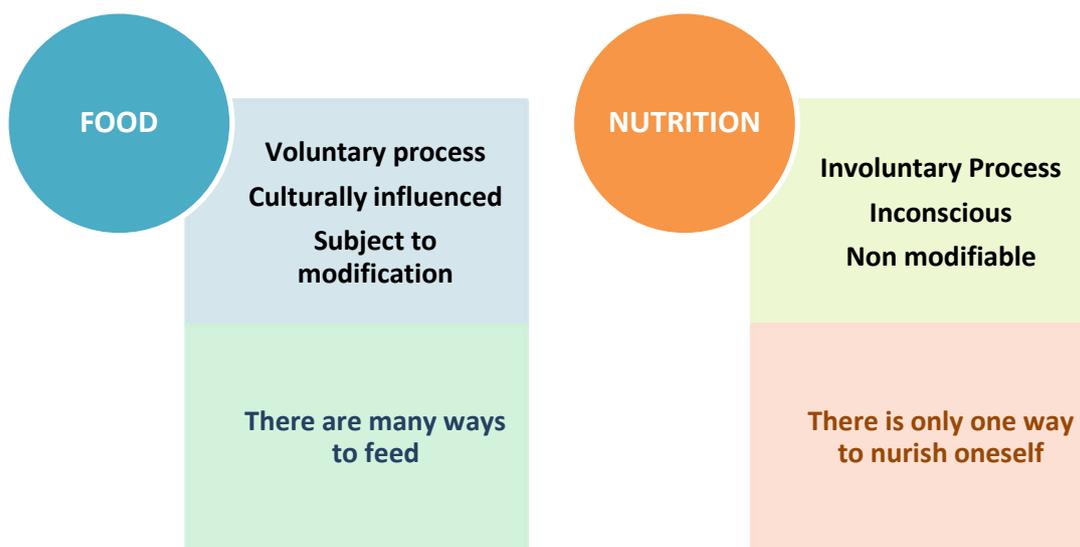
Several studies confirm that it is during school age when many of the health problems that appear in adulthood are gestated and that among the causes of these are the food and eating habits and behaviors that people acquire as children.

Good infant feeding habits are very important for the development of the child and must be cared for from the early stages of growth.

This task is a joint effort of the parents and educators of the early childhood education center.

**Food:** living beings require food. Food is the way to provide the human body with external substances that are essential for maintaining health and life, food. From food the body gets the energy it needs to counteract the physiological losses caused by the activity and maintain the development and growth of the person.

**Nutrition:** is the set of chemical, physiological, and biochemical phenomena, whose final result is the use of nutrients (simpler elements in which food is transformed once ingested) or through the transformation into simpler elements, leading to the production of energy and elimination of waste elements, either through their incorporation as structural elements of the body or as reserve elements.”



### Nutritional principles

Through the digestive and metabolic process, nutrients pass to the blood, and through the circulatory system, to all the cells of the body, where they take advantage of developing different types of functions:

- Energy function: the nutrients with energy function provide the precise energy for the maintenance of all the biochemical reactions inherent in life; they are substances rich in calories.
- Regulatory function: it is a function that involves the activation of biochemical reactions, allowing their maintenance and regulation, accelerating or slowing them down according to the needs.
- Plastic function: it consists in the contribution of the precise materials to form the new tissues and to repair the worn ones.

### Types of nutrients

The nutrients, depending on their characteristics can be grouped into two large blocks:

- Macronutrients or immediate principles: these are the nutrients that provide energy to the body. Among them are carbohydrates, proteins and fats.
- Micronutrients or trace elements: these are non-energetic nutrients, but basic for the proper development of the person, perform regulatory and plastic functions in the body. They include vitamins and mineral salts.

### Macronutrients or immediate principles

**Carbohydrates:** They are composed of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen. They constitute only 0.02% of the human organism, but a balanced diet requires that 55% of the caloric intake it receives comes from these nutrients, since they are essential as a source of energy.

**Fats** can be classified according to their origin. There is talk of animal origin (butter, bacon ...) and vegetable origin (avocado, nuts etc.).

**Proteins**, depending on their origin, can be of animal origin: it has greater nutritional power, because they contain all the essential amino acids. They are found in meat, milk and fish; and of vegetable origin: found in vegetables, cereals and their derivatives and nuts.

### Micronutrients or trace elements (oligo-elements)

**Vitamins:** they are inorganic substances that the body needs in very small quantities, but that it is not able to synthesize, so it is necessary to ingest them from outside. They do not provide energy or calories, but they are indispensable for the good health of the human being.

**Minerals:** mineral substances make up 5% of body weight; its percentage is small but essential for the proper functioning of the human body. They fulfill regulatory and plastic functions.

**Water:** water is a compound substance, essential for life.

### Balanced diet

The balanced diet is the combination of necessary foods that we must provide daily to the body in terms of calories, proteins, minerals and necessary vitamins. The children's diet must have a series of characteristics:



Norms for a balanced infant diet:

- Know the nutritional energy needs.
- Take food from each group.
- Distribute them properly at each meal.
- Food must be free of debris, skins, thorns, ...
- Develop correct eating habits.
- Do not use spices or spicy.
- Provide enough regulating (balancing) food.
- Make an adequate relationship between calories, proteins and fatty acids.

## Feeding in the first years of life

### Breastfeeding

According to the experts, the ideal diet for the newborn is breast milk, which provides all the nutrients the child needs, including water, and which makes it unnecessary to provide any other food. In the absence of breastfeeding, or as a complement to it, artificial milk is used.

Breast milk is made up of carbohydrates, proteins, fats, mineral salts and vitamins. Some specialists consider that its contribution is not enough in fluorine, iron and vitamin D; but in general it is considered to be the best food from birth to 6-12 months of the baby's life, and should be the only food until 4-6 months of age.

Advantages of breastfeeding: It is a food that provides the nutrients that the child needs, both in quantity and quality. Because of its special characteristics it works by preventing infectious diseases, since it provides the child with the defenses (antibodies) of the mother. Contains proteins specific to the human species, which do not produce allergies.

The type of fat that compose it favours the good development of the brain, and avoids the early deposit of cholesterol in the arterial walls.

Low appetite is lower in children fed with breast milk (cramps, allergies, vomiting etc.).

The tendency to overfeed and, therefore, to childhood obesity, is less, since the child stops sucking when she/he is satisfied.

Breastfeeding favors the closest contact between the mother and the baby, this being very important for the affective and psychic maturation in general of the baby.

### Commercial Milk Feeding

When breastfeeding is not possible, artificial milk is used.

Artificial milk is modified cow milk, suitable for the maturation of the baby's digestive system, which appropriately replaces the woman's milk.

This milk is less digestible for the baby, due to its greater amount of proteins, it does not provide necessary defences/antibodies for certain infections, and when preparing it, it is necessary to sterilize the water.

There are two varieties:

- Initiation milk: recommended to 4-6 months, significantly amending cow's milk.
- The continuation milk: from 4-6 months, in which the modification is smaller.

### Complementary Food

The World Health Organization recommends that infants start receiving complementary foods at 6 months of age in addition to breast milk, initially 2-3 times a day between 6-8 months, increasing to 3-4 times daily between 9-11 months and 12-24 months with additional nutritious snacks offered 1-2 times per day, as desired<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/complementary\\_feeding/en/](https://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/complementary_feeding/en/)

There are two kinds of complementary foods: specially prepared foods and usual family foods that are modified to make them easy to eat and provide enough nutrients.

Good complementary foods are:

- rich in energy, protein and micronutrients (particularly iron, zinc, calcium, vitamin A, vitamin C and folate)
- clean and safe:
- no pathogens (i.e. no disease-causing bacteria or other harmful organisms)
- no harmful chemicals or toxins
- no bones or hard bits that may choke a child
- not boiling hot
- not too peppery or salty
- easy for the child to eat
- liked by the child
- locally available and affordable
- easy to prepare.

Although the recommendations regarding the order of introduction of food to babies varies slightly from one country to the other, it can be stated that, in a way, the main rules of introduction are the following:

### **Cereal**

When the complementary food is introduced, cereal in different formats is a good option. It is convenient to probe the likes and necessities of each family and to plan several alternatives, giving priority to wholegrain flour.

Cereal may be introduced in powder, mixing them with milk, adding them to purees, as boiled rice, bread, pasta, arepas or corn cakes, quinoa oat, according to the age and the maturational time of the infant and the family customs. There are also other sources of complex carbohydrates that provide energy, like potatoes or sweet potatoes.

### **Fruits**

They are usually introduced first and after 5/6 months of life. It is recommended to start with the banana, pear, apple and orange.

### **Vegetables**

In general, around 5/6 month of life. It is recommended to start with the potato, carrot, pumpkin, zucchini, leek, beans and avoid at first some cabbage, cauliflower, spinach and beets.

Legumes can be added from 12 months. If they are mixed with rice or other cereals, they substitute meat, and they can be taken up to twice a week.

### **Meat**

It is recommended to start with the chicken, never before six months.

### **Fish**

Never before nine months due to its greater ability to cause allergy, and if the baby has a family history of food allergy, even after 1 year of life. From this age, fish can substitute some meat takes.

## Eggs

The cooked yolk will be introduced first about the ninth month; initially a quarter, the following week half, and a month later one full yolk, added to vegetables. After around eleven months, the full egg between can be taken.

## Yoghurts

The yogurt will be added to the baby's diet from the tenth month; it can be natural without sugar, or fruit, but taking into account that it is made with continuation milk.

<b>Types of foods in the baby's diet depending on their motor skills</b>			
<b>Age</b>	<b>Motor skills</b>	<b>Types of foods that can be consumed</b>	<b>Examples of food</b>
<b>0-6 months</b>	Suck and swallow	Liquids	Exclusive breast milk
<b>4-7 months</b>	First chewing reflex, greater suction force, reflex movements of the tongue	Purees (only if the infant needs complementary food)	Breast milk, more cooked meat puree, vegetables such as carrots, potatoes, zucchini or fruits such as bananas, cereal porridge with and without gluten
<b>7-12 months</b>	-Cooking food from the spoon with the lips, biting and chewing  -Lateral movements of the tongue and movements of the food towards the teeth  -Fine motor skills are developed that facilitate self-feeding	- Larger variety of foods, both crushed, and chopped foods and finger foods, combining new and familiar foods  -Give 3 meals / day with 2 appetizers at intervals	-Mother's milk, more minced meat, fruits and vegetables crushed  -Vegetables and chopped raw food (banana, melon, tomato), cereals (for example wheat) and bread
<b>12-24 months</b>	- Rotary movements and stability of the jaw	-Family meals	-Mother's milk, plus anything the family eats as long as the family's diet is healthy and balanced

## Disorders and difficulties

Before going deeply into the most common disorders and difficulties related to food, we differentiate two concepts:

- Hunger: biological factor, product of an unmet need for food, which causes dissatisfaction, discomfort, anxiety, pain ...
- Appetite: It is a psychosocial component and is characterized by the pleasure or desire to eat. In many cases, it depends on previous experiences and is activated by certain foods and at the way they are prepared. Appetite is an attitude towards food.

Appetite is especially important in the difficulties that the child may present in his/her eating behaviour, positive or negative reactions to certain foods, depending on food appearance: taste, sight, smell, touch, attitude to new foods, etc.

In a generic way, difficulties in connection with food and nutrition can be catalogued in:

- **Lack of appetite:** children like adults may feel no appetite for many reasons - fatigue, heat, unattractive food, diseases, but also by life experiences that may predispose them.
- **Excess of appetite:** The child from birth must be satisfied with the amount of food it takes; although generally since birth, the child knows how to control his needs, and stops eating when he/she is satisfied. But sometimes this is not so, and the child has an exaggerated appetite, is never satisfied, it is necessary to consider why and help him/her to set limits.
- **Selective attitude towards food:** the child rejects new textures, new foods, new tastes. It is a situation directly related to the lack of appetite and the alimentary habits established the beginning. Many of the serious problems related to food have their origin in this selective attitude towards food.
- **Intolerances and food allergies:** Intolerance and allergy are two concepts that are sometimes used as synonyms but which are two different things; they have in common the spontaneous and unpleasant reactions of our organism before the ingestion of some concrete foods.  
The allergy is a response of the immune system and appears as an immediate response (less than two hours after the food intake) and it normally affects the skin, causing itching, hives...but it also may manifest itself as a respiratory distress, vomits or even affect the whole body.  
The intolerance does not involve the immune system. It appears two hours or even days after the food intake, so they are difficult to detect. The symptomatology usually has a digestive nature, like abdominal pains, blood in the stools or frequent diarrhoeas.
- **Childhood obesity:** obesity is the excessive accumulation of body fat in the child. The cause is in the ingestion of an amount of energy greater than the necessary one; that excess accumulates in the form of fats that cause obesity.
- **Childhood Anorexia:** When talking about anorexia, it is common to think of a psychological disorder that arises in adolescence, but there is also a type of anorexia that affects childhood.
- **Bulimia:** It is an eating disorder also typical of adolescence and closely related to anorexia. It is a consequence of the lack of rules and structure of food habit in many cases.
- **Rumination:** is a rare eating disorder consisting of repeated regurgitation of food already ingested, voluntarily and pleasantly, from the stomach to the mouth. The food, partially digested, is returned to the mouth (without gagging or nausea ...).

## Recommendations

Initially, the child must have his/her meals outside the family's schedule, in order to devote the attention and care he/she requires.

The adult should stop giving food gradually, enhancing the child's collaboration and thus their autonomy. The adult should take with calm the moment of the meals (each child has his/her rhythm), but must know how to set limits, in order not to eternalize the moment.

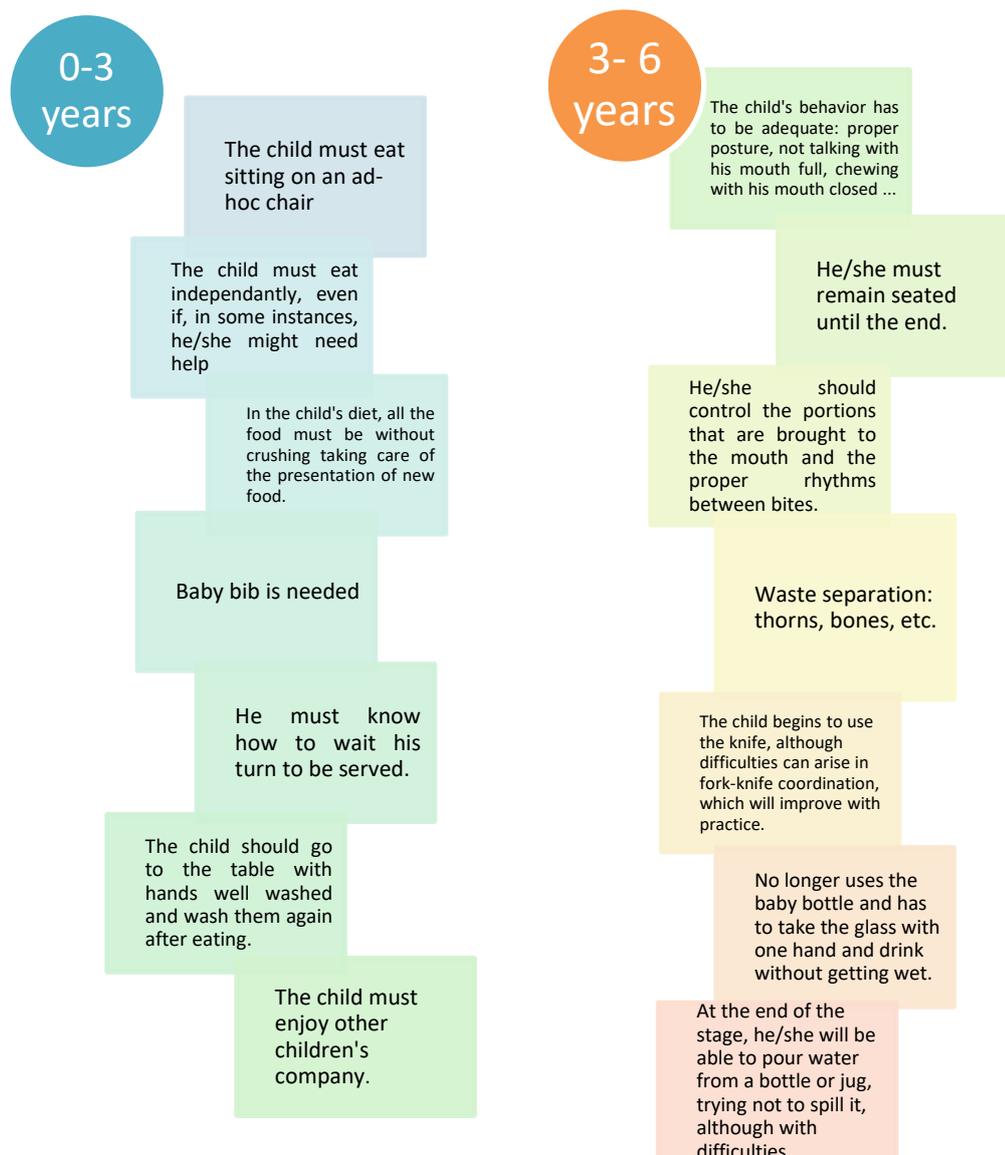
Healthy, nourishing and safe food must be offered to babies and they will decide how much they eat. Complementary food should provide enough energy, proteins and macronutrients, so that, together with maternal or artificial breastfeeding, it covers all the baby's needs at this stage.

WHO recommends to follow the principles of the perceptual feeding, without forcing babies to eat or amuse them. Babies' appetite is different in every child and circumstance. Therefore, rather than focusing on a concrete amount, it is important to focus on the variety, availability and setting future habits.

The physical affective environment is very important to develop abilities related to feeding and to encourage the self-regulation of hunger and satiety.

Forcing, pressing or rewarding are strategies that interfere with the children's perception of their own feeling of satiety and they may increase the risk of having overweight, food disorders and having a narrow range of food to eat in comparison with what it is expected from them.<sup>3</sup>

We must take into account the changes that occur in food at these ages:



<sup>3</sup> Birch LL, Doub AE. Learning to eat: birth to age 2 y. Am J Clin Nutr. 2014 Mar;99(3):723S-8S.

## 6.2 Practical application - food

The meal at school should be a pleasant and peaceful moment, organized in such a way that it is a time of pleasure, which encourages relationships among the children and between them and their educators.

From the 1st year of life onwards, foods that were not advised are gradually added. As we have seen in the previous module related to food, we progressively evolve from the very crushed food in the form of purees, creams, consommés, etc ... to little crushed food, as well as to the inclusion in the diet of soft foods that allow children to get to know and taste other flavors and textures (pasta, rice, fresh cheese, tortilla, etc.).

In the case of foods that are more difficult to chew, such as meat, it is recommended to begin with culinary preparations that facilitate it, for example, meatballs, stewed meat, etc. The different elaborate menus must be diversified and expanded, allowing the incorporation of a wide range of aromas, flavors and textures, avoiding the monotony and boredom.

Prepared food must be introduced such as stews, baked, roasted, stewed, grilled, boiled, steamed, fried ...

Keep in mind that in this age there is a stage of gradual transition from the feeding of the baby to that of an adult, from the point of view of variety and quality of food, so in some cases we must take it with a lot of patience.

Once the process of moving from crushed food to solid food has begun, the moment must be exploited to work on the autonomy, that is, to work on the handling of the different cutlery, helping the children in the control and use of these. Progressively and after a few months, they will be able to use the cutlery autonomously and practically without the help of the educator.

In the midst of many proposals that can be carried out is the so-called "Food Train", which consists of a weekly schedule of healthy breakfast, in which families are invited to prepare each day a different breakfast, which is balanced, avoiding the excessive consumption of industrial pastries and sugars.

In addition to the introduction of varied food, it is recommended to address the subject of feeding in the classroom in a playful manner. For example, that children learn different songs related to food, see the images of different fruits and describe their characteristics.

### 6.3 Physical activity

Physical activity is a very important part of school life, as long as it is coordinated with other sanitary and hygienic activities, and it is an ideal subject through which we can change undesirable habits and attitudes.

It allows to know our own body and its harmonic development at the individual and social level, facilitating the interpersonal relationships and the interaction with the environment.

Empowerment, because of the importance it has for improving the health conditions of children, presents one of the basic pillars of the curricular content of future professionals of Early Childhood Education.

Because physical activity is considered one of the basic needs, essential for the development of the child, it must be encouraged from birth as:



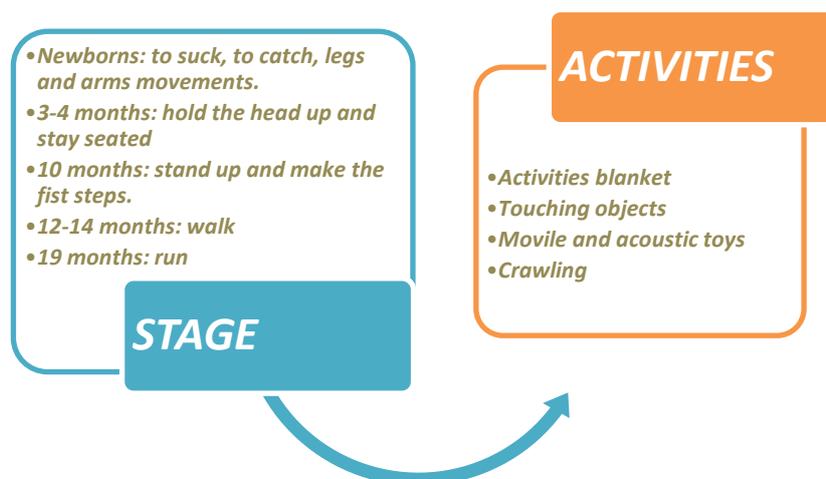
The promotion of physical activity is a key factor in combating those habits such as sedentary lifestyles that are detrimental to healthy development.

What are the benefits of movement and physical activity for the babies?

- Develops motor skills
- Improves cognitive development
- Contributes to a healthy weight
- Enhances bone and muscular development
- Supports learning of social skills

That is why, from the first years of life, we must promote those movements that the baby performs unconsciously, as reflex and automatic acts, and that later will become voluntary acts, serving them to promote their personal physical and psychological development.

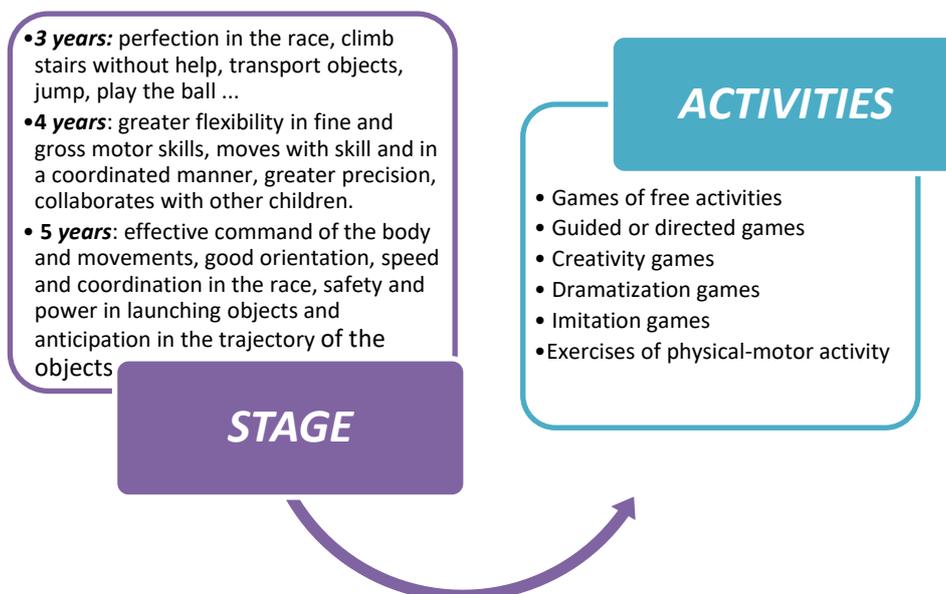
Example of these reflexive, automatic acts and the appropriate activities to favor them could be:



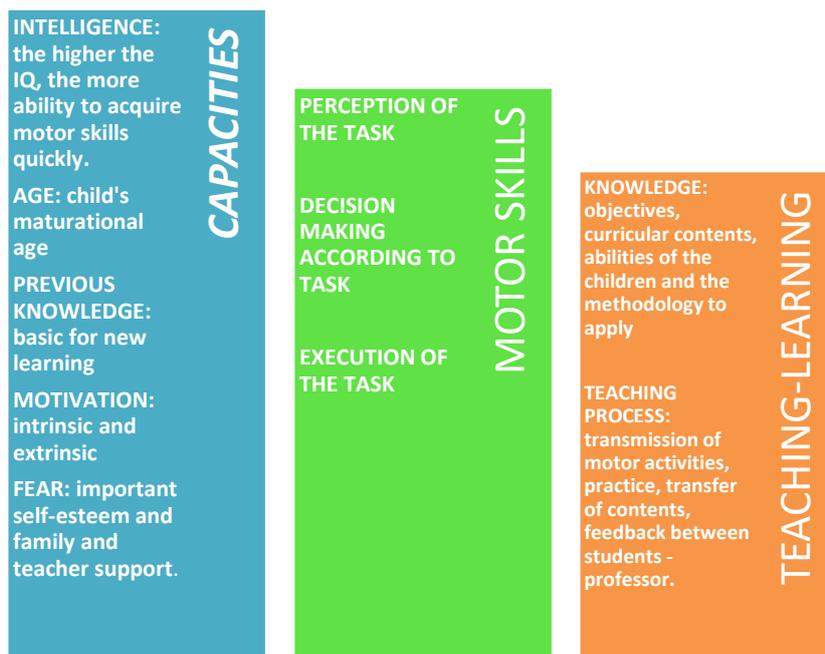
In later stages, the Early Childhood Education teacher plays even more if possible, a key position as a mediator in the learning of healthy lifestyle habits that favor motor competition and, therefore, more active children.

The work on motricity in the infantile stage, entails a series of peculiarities that the teacher of Infantile Education must know so that its intervention is the most successful possible.

In this sense, the professional must know the motor possibilities of the children that make up the classroom at the individual level, although in a generic way, we can identify some of the common motor characteristics, to the age group 3 - 6 years and that the professionals they should know.



In relation to the adequacy of the life cycle stage within the learning process inside a child motor development, given the above, and in summary, the most important factors that should be considered by the professional would be the following:



On the other hand, and focusing on the direct intervention of the professional in the classroom, there are a series of methodological models used in Early Childhood Education, aimed at acquiring skills and abilities of children at the motor level.

Among these models we will highlight the four most basic things to know and apply for professionals in this educational stage:

### Motor game

In this stage, the game supposes a pedagogical model that favors the development at cognitive, social, affective emotional and motor level.

The motor possibilities represented by the application of this model can be grouped into the following types:

- Psychomotor coordination games: games to work the gross psychomotricity (balance, displacements, jumps, turns, throws ...), fine psychomotor work (eye-hand and eye-foot coordination) and games of force, resistance or precision.
- Perceptive structuring games: games of body outline development, games of laterality, space-time perception, body rhythm, sense & motor and relaxation games.
- Games of corporal expression and dramatization : games of spontaneous representation, stories, narrations, theatres ...
- Pre-sports games
- Popular and traditional games
- Games in the aquatic environment

### Motor song

It provides movement possibilities under the conditions of the song. The teacher uses the lyrics and the rhythm of the songs depending on the motor actions you want to stimulate.

The motor song, therefore, favors the cognitive, social, affective-emotional and motor development.

## Motor story

Through motor play we can also develop motor skills, movement skills, expressiveness and personal autonomy, the child being the protagonist of his own learning.

## Motor circuits

It focuses on the development of the practical application of basic motor skills such as displacements, jumps, turns, throws and receptions, through organized and structured motor exercises.

The professional, as responsible for the routes, will first work independently each motor pattern, and then start the circuit in which they will include between two and five different motor patterns.

## Teacher's mission

As a manager of the motor skills in the classroom, the teacher's mission will be as follows:



### **ACTION PLANS**

Propose action plans which collect the objectives, contents, methodology to be applied and evaluation .



### **MOTRICITY CLASSROOM**

Organize and structure the classroom appropriately for the execution of the activity



### **WORK ATMOSPHERE**

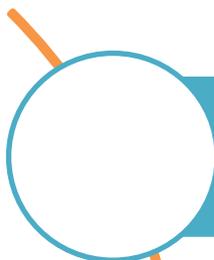
It will create a favorable space for interpersonal relationships, in which stimulation, motivation, support and guidance will be given.



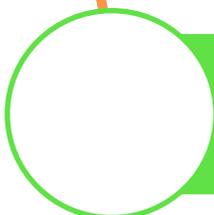
### **SOCIO-AFFECTIVE RELATIONS**

Pay special attention to successful interpersonal relationships through the application of reinforcement and conflict resolution techniques.

From the point of view of didactic methodology the basic considerations to be followed by the teaching staff will be the following:



**Control and correct handling of communication skills:** transmit information in a clear manner avoiding transmission errors, establish adequate visual contact, well define the rules and use the demonstration as a model to facilitate comprehension.



**Correct management of available materials, spaces and times.** It is also advisable that the teacher has the necessary adaptation capacity since many times we will not have all the necessary material for the development of an activity.



**Work with children attitudes and values of respect and companionship:** for the development of activities to be correct, you must work at all times these attitudes and for this it will be essential to establish an emotional teacher-a-child and the I work from the perspective of integration and cooperative, eliminating any indication of competitiveness or limitation of activity.

## 6.4 Practical application - physical activity

### What do we need to organize a physical education session?

The proposal we make is for sessions of experiential physical education. It should be developed in a specific and rigorous frame so the space must have conditions that favor the development of the psychomotor expression of children. Not everything is valid, it is necessary to take care of it and pay attention to the reason of each element.

The basic thing is that the room has good ventilation and lighting, floor and walls in good condition. If it is used for other purposes, the material must not interfere in the development of the sessions and therefore, it must be ordered in such a way that it does not alter the development of the session (cupboards, shelves, boxes...).

In addition, it must be able to offer two spaces, one dedicated to motor expressiveness and symbolic play, where children mobilize and experience their bodies from their spontaneity and originality. The other space is where children evolve towards operative thinking through the development of the story and graphic and/or plastic expressiveness.

### What material do we can use?

In order to carry out a session properly, the room must have specific and obligatory material:

- Rubber-foam modules of different sizes and geometric shapes (cylinders, cubes, parallelepipeds, triangles, semicircles), lined with colored fabrics and that are removable for optimal maintenance.
- Mattresses of different thicknesses and sizes.
- Jumping surface: it can be a table or any other solid and firm surface that allows jumping from the same at a certain height.
- Mirror: It is recommended, because the child can look at himself and thus recognize himself.
- Dramatization materials: Given their simplicity and low cost, they are highly recommended due to the play possibilities they offer, these materials could be: fabrics, costumes, curtains, masks, make-up paints, handkerchiefs, radio – cassette, music tapes and CDs, etc...
- Construction Material: Wooden pieces of different sizes and the same thickness, in a natural colour, for example: spades, earrings, strings, mirror, and balls of different weight.

You can always improve the material of the room by adding some options, the basic notions is that it should be an unstructured material that facilitates motor development and symbolic play.

### How to organize a physical education session

The structure of the session will consist of assembly, session development, relaxation, representation and farewell.

The physical education session always starts in the same way. The children sit in the circle and we receive them and tell them what they are going to do. Therefore, it is divided in the following way:

1. Greetings.
2. Description of the session: we explain how the session is going to develop, what we are going to do, what materials we are going to use, etc...
3. Development of the session (15 minutes): It is divided into two parts:

- a. Part 1: preparation or warm-up (5 minutes)
  - b. Part 2: essential part (10 minutes)
4. Relaxation (5 minutes). The moment of relaxation is the moment of return to calmness, in which children become aware of themselves and their bodies. The children in this moment relax and rest by means of various techniques that we will do. We pretend a global relaxation that implies the relaxation of all the parts of the body.
  5. Expression representation (10 minutes). Now is the moment in which the children are going to represent by means of a drawing what they liked the most (this part can be replaced by an assembly if they are very small).
  6. Farewell (5 minutes). As in the assembly, we will take the children and sit them in a circle, it is very important that we do it in the same space of the room, as in the assembly.

In addition to the comments, we will emphasize how well the activities have gone and we will invite them to embrace themselves so that they can also work on affectivity, and feel proud of what they have done.

Psychomotricity implies to children a safe fun because it is a technique that, through body intervention seeks to enhance, motor, cognitive and affective aspects. Through the psychomotricity it is intended that, while having fun, the children also develop and perfect all their basic and specific motor skills.

In addition, it helps to enhance socialization with children of the same age.

With the development of psychomotor skills, the movements of the child can be stimulated and reeducated as well as achieve the following objectives:

- Motivate the senses through the sensations and relationships between the body and the outside.
- Increase the perceptive capacity through the knowledge of the movements and the corporal response.
- Discover and express their abilities, through creative action and the expression of emotion.
- Enlarge and value their own identity and self-esteem within the group plurality.
- Create an awareness and respect for the presence and space of others.

It is essential in this stage to stimulate the exploratory behaviours that are investigated in the children. For this, educators should encourage activities with various groupings, organize more appropriate didactic resources for each session of psychomotricity, and according to the age of the children, distribute the space and time of the activities to be carried out. Always taking into account that each child needs to take their own pace, under no circumstances should be forced to act in a manner not commensurate with their possibilities.

In terms of material resources, it is advisable (even though there is a great variety and it will also depend on the educational center) to use the following: hoops, fabrics, handkerchiefs, balls, benches, mats, blankets, cardboard boxes, blocks foam rubber, etc.

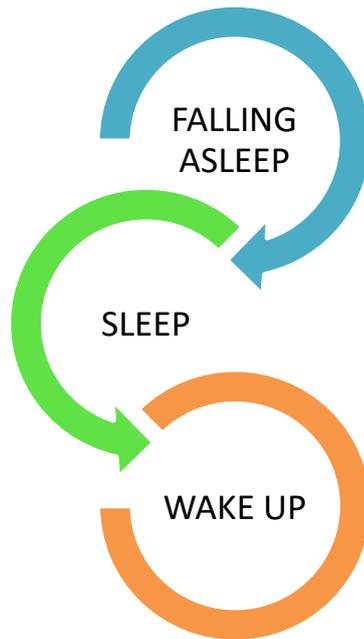
Sessions motor skills, it is convenient to perform in classrooms or spaces that have sufficient space for movement of children, and have a correct room temperature so as to facilitate play and movement, as well as light regulator to create environments according to the proposed activities, without obstacles that cause danger or prevent displacement, etc ...

## 6.5 Rest

Together with physical activity, another of the needs that are part of the basic needs of human beings is rest, which in addition to contributing to the recovery of energy, in the case of children, is essential for maturation and development of its functional system, contributing to the regulation of vital functions.

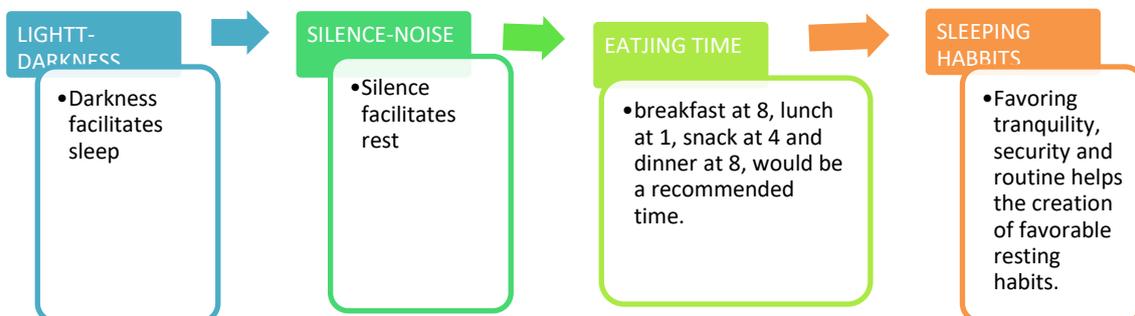
The newborn spends most of his time in this state, arriving or sleeping up to seventeen hours a day divided into three or four cycles marked by periods of food and hygiene.

Within the dream, the phases through which they cross are three:



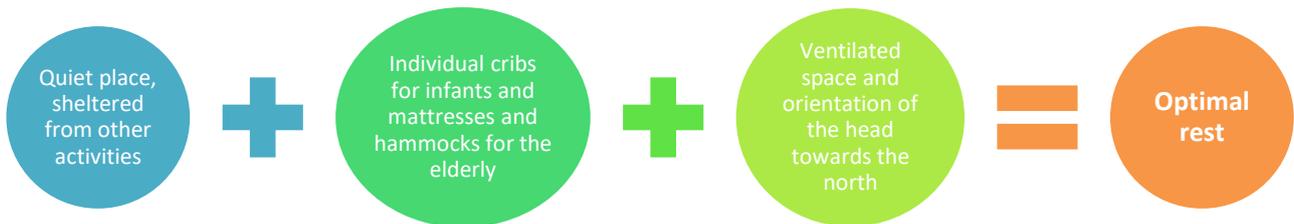
Adults must know the rhythms of children, as well as help them to satisfy this basic need that, it already arises naturally, is a habit that is learned and that it is very important to teach so that they know how to do it autonomously and as naturally as possible.

Within this help, adults who will accompany the child at the time of rest should take into account the existence of a number of external factors that contribute to regulating this time:



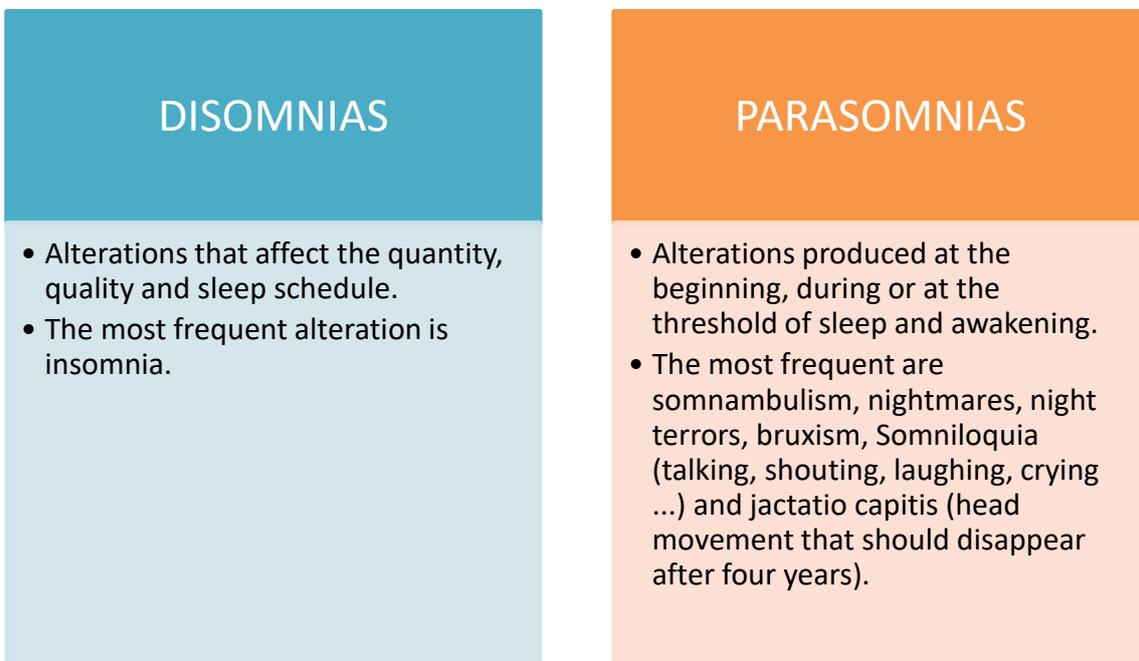
Knowing that, although there are similar sleep patterns in each of the stages of childhood, it is also important to take into account that each child has his own sleep-wake rhythm depending on the maturation of the nervous system and such factors as food, climatology or environment.

In this sense, the teaching staff must take into account the following aspects:



Sleep disturbances during the first six months of life are very frequent, taking into account that they have a biological rhythm totally different from that of adults and that they will have to regulate it progressively.

In this process of regulation, the most frequent alterations are usually the following:



## 6.6 Practical application - rest

All children need to dedicate time to activity and another to rest. The amount of time dedicated to rest serves to replenish the energy consumed during the time dedicated to the activity. Between both amounts of time there must be a reasonable balance. Establishing the balance between activity and sleep is, among others, one of the tasks inherent to Early Childhood Education. Activity and rest, therefore, are critical for the healthy development of the child.

It is important that several daily moments of rest are established in which each and every one of the needs of each child is met according to their different rhythms. Thus it is possible to create a climate of security, confidence and stability for the little ones. Therefore, it is important to educate children in the acquisition of rest and sleep habits that will allow them to lead a healthy life in the future.

It is important that the Early Childhood Centers have hammocks and cradles in their classrooms and / or spaces, and that they are separated from the play area and experimentation and manipulation so that

children who need it can rest better. It is also advisable that in these moments of rest, this is accompanied with relaxing music, lullabies, etc ... as well as sheets or soft tissue and soft toys that encourage relaxation.

Another time of rest that should be taken in the daily routine of school is the time of the nap after lunch.

## 6.7 References and reading suggestions

World Health Organization (2000). *Complementary Feeding. Family Foods for breastfed children*. Department of Nutrition for Health and Development. World Health Organization.

Health Service Executive (2014). *Active Play Every Day. An introduction of Active Play Guidelines for 0-3 year old children*. Ireland. Health Service Executive. This report is available on the Get Ireland Active website at <https://www.getirelandactive.ie/>

Gobierno de España. Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad. Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deportes (2013). *Actividad Física y Salud de 3 a 6 años. Guía para docentes de Educación Infantil*. Estrategia Promoción de la Salud y Prevención en el SNS. Gobierno de España. Online: [https://www.observatoriodelainfancia.es/ficherosoia/documentos/5126\\_d\\_Guia%20actividad%20fisica.pdf](https://www.observatoriodelainfancia.es/ficherosoia/documentos/5126_d_Guia%20actividad%20fisica.pdf)

Paniagua, G. y Palacios, J. (2005). *Educación Infantil. Respuesta educativa a la diversidad*. Alianza editorial.

Linares, A y Blasi, M. *Guía didáctica 0-2 años*. Editorial Onda.

Gassó A. *La abeja traviesa*. (2004). Editorial Casals.

Galán Cruz Marta (2011). *Alimentación en Educación Infantil*. Innovación y Experiencias Educativas. Nº 39, Febrero 2011. Online: [https://archivos.csif.es/archivos/andalucia/ensenanza/revistas/csicsif/revista/pdf/Numero\\_39/Marta\\_Galan\\_Cruz\\_2.pdf](https://archivos.csif.es/archivos/andalucia/ensenanza/revistas/csicsif/revista/pdf/Numero_39/Marta_Galan_Cruz_2.pdf)

*Alimentación y Nutrición Infantil: Concepto. Energía y Requerimientos Calóricos. Energía y Requerimientos Calóricos. Nutrientes. La Lactancia natural, artificial, mixta y complementaria. La alimentación de las personas de 0 a 3 años*. (2015). Oposinet. Online: <https://www.oposinet.com/temario-tecnico-educacion-infantil/temario-1-tecnico-de-educacion-infantil/tema-22-alimentacin-y-nutricin-infantil-concepto-energa-y-requerimientos-calricos-nutrientes-la-lactancia-natural-artificial-mixta-y-complementaria-la-alimenta/>

World Health Organization (2018). *Healthy Diet*. Online: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/healthy-diet>

Janssen, I & Leblanc A. (2015). Systematic Review of the Health Benefits of Physical Activity and Fitness in School-Aged Children and Youth. *School Nutrition And Activity Impacts on Well-Being*, 183-219

Fox, M (2012). *What is sedentarism?* J Acad Nutr Diet; 112(8):1124-8

Gallahue D.L. y Ozmun, J.C. (2006). *Understanding motor development: infants, children, adolescents, adults*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston (MA): McGraw-Hill.

Ballabriga A, Carrascosa A. (2001). *Alimentación Complementaria y Periodo del Destete*. Nutrición de la Infancia y Adolescencia 2<sup>a</sup> ed. Madrid: Ergon.

Sociedad Española de Nutrición Comunitaria (2002). *Guía Práctica sobre Hábitos de Alimentación y Salud*.  
Online: [http://www.pulevasalud.com/ps/Zips/9974/guia\\_practica\\_nutricion.pdf](http://www.pulevasalud.com/ps/Zips/9974/guia_practica_nutricion.pdf)

Pedróñ C. coord. (2009). *Alimentación y nutrición en pediatría. Aspectos básicos*. Madrid: Ediciones Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.

Serra L. dir, Aranceta J. coord. (2004). *Guía de alimentación saludable*. Madrid: Sociedad Española de Nutrición Comunitaria.