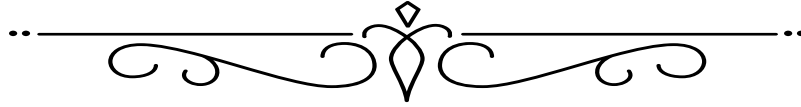



Peace Early Childhood Education


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Introduction

Importance of early learning

Research conducted about the human brain shows that the period from birth to the age of 8 is a critical phase for brain development and therefore the best time for learning. The influence of the external environment is crucial to brain development. If a safe and accepting environment with abundant sensory stimulation is available in early childhood, children will have positive brain development which is beneficial to their future learning.

According to the theory of multiple intelligences, there are many aspects of human intelligence and every individual has varied strengths. Pre-primary institutions should provide a diversified learning environment for children to develop their different potentials. Numerous studies on learning theory have shown that children learn gradually and construct knowledge with the assistance of adults. From the perspective of constructivist learning theory, children are active and self-motivated in their learning process. Teachers have to take up the roles of facilitator, motivator and supporter to help children learn and grow.

Core Value of Pre-primary Education

Child Centeredness

Understanding and respecting children is an important principle of Early Childhood Education.

Children's learning and development are mainly influenced by family, school and society.

Under the major premise of understanding and respecting children, appropriate co-ordination among the three parties will enable children to develop their potential and lead them to a healthy life. By developing good learning habits and interest in learning, children will be well prepared for lifelong learning.

Children as learners

Children are born to be learners and their development possesses specific patterns and characteristics

Children are at the core of the learning process. They are born to be learners and

with the ability to construct knowledge. Their development and learning are greatly influenced by the people and things they encounter at home, at school and in society.

Family Education

Parents are children's first teachers as well as school's crucial partners for nurturing children.

Families are the key setting in which children's characters are shaped. Children's development of personality, self-image, values and attitudes is greatly influenced by parents and other family members. Parents' knowledge of early childhood education, expectations and parenting style may influence children's functioning in ways to be reflected later in life. These include, for instance, their self-care ability, social attitude and learning process in schools, as well as their compatibility with the community.

Therefore, the family is an important pillar of children's development and family participation is essential for the success of early childhood education.

School Education

School is a miniature of society, and a bridge between family life and social life.

We (i) understand children's family backgrounds, and establish partnership with parents and other key family members;

(ii) understand the social environment and needs, and utilize community resources appropriately;

(iii) grasp the current trends of early childhood education in order to define their mission and plan the curriculum. Pre-primary institutions should also provide children with care and appropriate learning opportunities which cater for children's developmental needs according to their potential, in order to stimulate their interest in learning and foster a balanced development in ethical, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic aspects. By these means, children will be well-prepared for life and become proactive, self-motivated and responsible citizens as well as life-long learners.

Social Environment

Social needs affect pre-primary education policies, whereas social culture affects parents' requirements for pre-primary education.

We observe the social environment in order to help children develop their potential and prepare for future learning. Prior to the establishment of a pre-primary institution, the sponsoring body should understand holistically the needs of society in mapping out strategies that conform to Government policy while adhering to the child-centered principle. Children are the leaders of tomorrow. The challenge ahead for early childhood education is how to proactively meet the demand for talent in our future society.

In a co-operative and harmonious environment, society, family and school can work together to build a bright future for children.

Development of children

How do children develop?

Children's development is mainly influenced by three factors: genetics, environment and education. While only limited change can be made to the genetic factor, the other two require good collaboration among the family, school and the whole of society in order to enable children to grow healthily.

There are common principles in children's growth and development.

A child's development is a gradual process. The developmental patterns of most children are congruent with their age. However, as growth rates differ, children also have

different abilities and varying performance in different aspects. In addition, because of children's curiosity, self-motivation and ability to construct knowledge, their learning ability may, when given an appropriate environment in which to develop, even exceed the expectations of teachers.

Discrepancies are at times discerned among the requirements of society, the expectations of parents and the physical and mental development of children. If such discrepancies can be reduced to an acceptable level, education can function as a facilitating factor for development. Teachers' grasp of professional knowledge in the field of pre-primary education is necessary. In addition, a good mastery of basic knowledge of all areas of learning allows teachers to adapt to children's diverse learning needs and develop their multi-intelligence.

How do Children Learn?

Children are active learners who are curious and interested in exploration. Given proper resources and adults' assistance, children can construct knowledge on their own. A safe, comfortable, enjoyable and challenging environment is conducive to children's learning.

Children's learning is influenced by the factor of growth. They are not able to learn far beyond their ability. Children can learn well provided that the learning experience matches their development.

Children learn through their life experiences, sensory stimulation and interesting activities. Through play, they can learn in a self-motivated, committed, pleasurable, relaxing and effective manner.

Teachers need to be familiar with children's development and learning, in order to:
understand children's behavior;

have appropriate expectations and requirements towards children, which in turn helps them to formulate reasonable school rules and policies;
organize learning activities, taking into account the appropriate level of difficulty and meeting children's interests, needs and abilities;
understand children's individual differences, and both the generality and uniqueness of children's development, in order to cater for each individual's needs.

Developmental Objectives for Young Children

With regard to children's developmental needs, the objectives for the physical, cognitive and language, affective and social, and aesthetic development of children are described below

Physical Development

The following are the developmental objectives:

To develop children's sensory perception and abilities of concentration and observation.

To cultivate in children good habits, self-care ability and a healthy life-style.

To facilitate the development of children's gross and fine motor skills.

To enable children to understand the limits of their physical capability and develop awareness for self-protection.

Cognitive and Language Development

The relevant objectives of this domain include:

to arouse and fulfill the curiosity of children, and to cultivate in them an inquisitive and proactive attitude towards things and people around them.

to develop children's simple logical concepts in mathematical literacy, so as to help them in analysis, reasoning, judgment and problem-solving.

to develop children's abilities in language and thinking.

Affective and Social Development

The relevant developmental objectives of this domain include:

to encourage and help children understand their thinking and emotions, and express their feelings and needs through appropriate use of language and non-linguistic means.

to help children develop a positive self-concept and build up self-esteem, self-confidence, a sense of achievement and an optimistic attitude.

to enrich children's life experiences and strengthen their interpersonal and communication skills.

to assist children to attain a balance between their personal interests and those of the community, to learn to establish good interpersonal relationships through negotiation and co-operation, and to accept basic social values and behavioural norms.

to foster in children positive attitudes towards people and an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of individuals in the family, school, society and country.

to cultivate children's care for society, awareness with respect to environmental protection and respect for different cultures.

Aesthetic Development

Aesthetic sensitivity is cultivated through observation and feelings. Imagination is stimulated when one observes the environment with one's senses and compares the forms of different things.

Children express their inner thoughts, feelings, emotions and imagination through the language of different media. The objectives of arts education for early childhood include:

to allow children to explore different art media and symbols in an aesthetically rich and diversified environment.

to enrich children's sensory experiences and encourage them to express their thoughts and feelings.

to stimulate children's creative and imaginative powers, and encourage them to enjoy participating in creative works.

to enhance children's quality of life and foster their interests in life by guiding them to appreciate the surrounding environment.

Learning Areas

What to learn?

The objectives of children's development can be achieved through the following six learning areas:

1. Physical Fitness and Health
2. Language
3. Early Mathematics
4. Science and Technology
5. Self and Society
6. Arts

Physical Fitness and Health

1. Knowledge of Health

i. Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to –

develop a healthy life-style by cultivating good habits and awareness in matters of personal and public hygiene;

develop self-care ability;

develop interest in and the habit of participating in physical activities; and

Know how to protect them-selves by understanding basic health and safety issues

ii. Principles of Teaching

a. Teachers should pay attention to children’s health conditions when arranging teaching and learning activities. They should ensure that children are in good health, fit enough to do exercises, have no symptoms of infectious diseases and are suitable for participating in group activities.

b. Based on children’s developmental characteristics and needs, teachers should design suitable activities for children to learn how to look after themselves and to acquire knowledge of self-care, hygiene, table manners, safety, etc.

c. Teachers should set a good example by maintaining habits of good hygiene.

d. Teachers should help children develop habits of good eating and good hygiene through daily routines at snack time and in toileting. Good habits should be part of their everyday living.

e. Teachers should keep in touch with parents to learn about children’s habits at home and guide children with patience in accordance with their abilities.

f. Teachers should arouse children’s awareness in matters of health and safety, and strengthen their ability of self-protection through daily activities, so as to reduce or prevent child abuse or sexual abuse.

II. Sensory Development

i. Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to –

a. identify the functions of the five senses, i.e. sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch, and know more about their body;

b. concentrate, observe and co-ordinate their sensory functions in enhancing their sensitivity to the environment; and

c. use their sensory ability to explore and appreciate the environment.

ii. Principles of Teaching

a. All activities involve the use of sensory functions. Teachers may help children understand their sensory functions through daily teaching arrangements. Teachers may also design special activities to help children experience the applications and know the importance of various sensory functions in everyday life.

b. Teachers should design activities which require the use of multiple sensory-perceptual abilities to help children learn to co-ordinate their sensory functions and use them appropriately.

c. Teachers should provide opportunities for children to experience nature and observe things around them, and give children sufficient stimulation in various situations to develop their sensory-perceptual ability.

III. Development of gross and fine motor skills

i. Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to –

identify the characteristics and functions of different parts of the body;
develop body co-ordination and sensory-perceptual abilities, as well as sensitivity to the environment;

develop good physique, sensory functions and physical competence;

develop will-power, confidence and courage; and

Arouse awareness for their self-protection and learn the relevant skills.

ii. Principles of Teaching

a. Teachers should develop children's fine motor skills in daily self-care routine.

b. Teachers should enable children to learn and master the skills and concepts of basic body actions, including balancing, moving and body control.

c. Teachers should adopt a variety of physical activities to help children learn the right postures, develop co-ordination, flexibility, sensitivity, strength, sense of rhythm, imagination and powers of imitation, co-ordinate their senses, and make good use of them to gain knowledge of space and direction.

d. Teachers should provide sufficient exercise time for children to develop their gross and fine motor skills.

e. Prolonged and intense exercise should be avoided to prevent exhaustion and avoid risk.

f. Flexibility should be exercised when designing the scope and content of activities, and factors such as time, season and venue (indoor and outdoor) should be duly considered. Space should be fully utilized to allow children to engage in physical activities with sufficient safety precautions.

g. Teachers should arrange gross and fine motor activities that also require the use of sensory functions to enable children to use their imagination and creativity in different activities with fun.

h. Teachers should pay attention to children's health. If children are found to be unfit for physical activities, they should be allowed to take a rest.

Language Development

Listening and Speaking

I. Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to –

- a. listen to and understand conversations and stories which enrich their everyday vocabulary;
- b. use the vocabulary and short phrases they have learnt in order to express their ideas and needs
- c. speak politely, clearly and fluently in dialogues with others;
- d. ask and answer questions, make simple inferences, solve problems and predict the outcomes of events; and
- e. share with others what they experience and encounter in everyday life.

II. Principles of Teaching

- a. Listening and speaking skills are prerequisites for verbal communication. Teachers should motivate children by using everyday experiences and objects that interest them, and encourage them to listen, describe, report, ask questions and express opinions.
- b. Teachers should initiate casual conversations with children at appropriate moments such as during morning assembly, play time and snack time, and allow children to engage in conversation with others.
- c. When talking to children, teachers should use words and phrases easily understood by children, and then gradually increase the choice of vocabulary as appropriate. They should also encourage children to accumulate and expand their vocabulary.
- d. Teachers should listen to children with patience, allow children sufficient time to think, and give feedback appropriately.
- e. Conversation should be carried out in a relaxed and pleasurable atmosphere. If children have any difficulty in expressing their ideas, teachers should give them guidance and encouragement to build up their confidence in speaking.
- f. Open-ended questions should be employed to stimulate children to develop their thinking ability.
- g. Children should be allowed to express different views and have different responses. Generally speaking, it is not necessary to insist on a consensus or definite answer.
- h. If teachers encounter errors in children's speech, they may demonstrate the right pronunciation or correct sentence structure in a friendly and natural manner during conversation with the children, to act as a model for their imitation.
- i. Listening to stories can develop children's abilities of concentration and im-

agination. During story-telling activities, children should be encouraged to raise questions and have discussion, so as to promote critical thinking skills. Children should also be encouraged to create stories verbally in order to develop creativity.

Reading:

I. Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to –

- a. master preliminary reading techniques;
- b. develop interest in reading and form reading habits;
- c. understand stories;
- d. recognize common words and those they encounter in different learning themes in curriculum planning; and
- e. learn through reading.

II. Principles of Teaching

- a. Teachers should organize reading activities through reading aloud, story-telling and play activities.
- b. Teachers should encourage children to read books and other printed text that interest them, such as posters, advertisements, magazines, pictures, etc.
- c. Teachers should provide children with quality books suitable for their age, ability and experienced.
- d. Books provided for children can be either purchased or produced by teachers themselves.
- e. Books should be selected according to the following criteria:
 - the story should be interesting with a healthy theme;
 - the plot should be simple with repetitive sentence structures;
 - Story should have simple and vivid characterization which helps children understand the story, stimulates their imagination and satisfies their curiosity;
 - the illustrations should be simple, colorful and attractive; and
 - The language and vocabulary should be relevant to children's everyday life and reflect their interests.

Writing:

I. Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to –

- a. communicate with others using paper and pencils/pens by expressing what they see, hear and feel in the form of pictures or words;
- b. master fine motor skills and form a right-handed or left-handed habit through

developing their sense of touch, eye-hand co-ordination, and knowledge of space and direction;

- c. enjoy reading aloud or sharing their scribbles or writings with others; and
- d. explore the use of different writing equipment.

II. Principles of Teaching

a. Teachers may make use of words in everyday life contexts to arouse children's interest in writing.

b. Teachers should cultivate children's interest and ability in expressing their ideas and experiences through pictures and words.

c. Teachers should not force children to write with pencils/pens if they are not ready. They can train their basic skills through a variety of play activities involving fine motor skills and eye-hand co-ordination. When children start to have writing practice, they should not be restricted to using lined paper or exercise books.

d. Teachers should guide children to pay attention to characters/words, especially their structure, that appear in their surrounding environment. They may design a variety of play activities that deal with the structure of characters/words, such as strokes or components, to promote children's writing skills.

e. Teachers should encourage children to build up their self-confidence by providing them with opportunities to share their writing with others.

Early Mathematics

I. Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to -

a. develop interest in mathematics and cognitive ability through a variety of activities including play and experiment with objects, as well as everyday life experiences;

b. apply simple preliminary mathematical concepts such as counting, ordering, sequencing, sorting, comparing, etc.;

c. learn to identify the properties of objects such as their colour, size, weight, shape, etc., and build up basic concepts of space and time through a wide range of activities; and

d. develop thinking and problem-solving abilities through activities and observation, analysis and discussion.

II. Principles of Teaching

a. Teaching must correspond to children's development and thinking ability. Teachers should help children understand simple and basic mathematical language and foster their sensitivity to numbers and space with the use of real objects.

b. Teachers should make use of every opportunity to introduce and consolidate mathematical concepts through play and learning activities. The introduction of mathematical concepts should be simple and tangible, concentrating on one attribute at a time and progressing gradually.

c. The activities should be interesting and should match children's interests. Teachers should carefully select activities which are suitable for children. To promote children's learning interest and self-confidence; teachers can make use of real objects and encourage children's active participation.

d. Thinking and language are closely related. The development of language and the formation of mathematical concepts are complementary to each other. Children should be encouraged to discuss the things they encounter in their everyday life. They should also be given opportunities to communicate among themselves and think from various perspectives.

e. Teachers should provide opportunities for children to explore and discover ideas on their own. One-way teaching and repetitive drilling should be avoided for fear that it might weaken children's interest in learning mathematics and provoke resistance to learning in general.

Science and Technology

I. Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to –

- a. develop curiosity about the environment;
- b. gain interest in exploring the physical world;
- c. master basic exploration techniques such as observation, questioning and making assumptions;
- d. maintain an objective and open attitude;
- e. develop problem-solving ability;
- f. care for animals and plants, and develop concern for environmental protection;
- g. understand the relationship between humans and nature, and explore the relationship between technology and living; and
- h. have initial understanding of technology.

II. Principles of Teaching

Teachers should encourage children to be conscious of their surroundings and learn through observation, analysis and inference.

When organizing science activities, teachers should note the following points:

The learning activities which they arrange should be easy to observe, with immediate results and conspicuous changes.

The procedures of the activities should be simple. Teachers should conduct trial experiments before asking children to do them, to ensure that the activities are feasible and safe, and can meet children’s developmental needs and achieve the learning objectives.

Teachers should encourage children to try things out and learn from mistakes. The aim is to help children develop an inquisitive attitude, and the process of observation is far more important than the outcome. Therefore, teachers should not stick to any “standard answer” or disclose the result too early.

Teachers should encourage children to observe attentively during the activities and to report their observations afterwards.

Children can share and discuss the outcome in groups or with the whole class. Meanwhile, the teacher can also help them make hypothesis, guess, ask questions and make records.

Teachers should discuss the applications of technology (such as radios, telephones, computers, etc.) with children by relating them to their everyday life, so that they develop a basic understanding of the benefits brought about by technology to society as well as relevant concerns about using it.

Time spent on using technological products (e.g. computers) as teaching aids should not be too long, so as not to hinder the overall teaching arrangements. Over-dependence on technology will deprive children of the opportunities to learn from reality.

Self and Society (EVS)

Social interaction is a source of learning. Children form their own values and ideas about social morality gradually, through internalizing the behaviors, habits, thinking and language they encounter.

I. Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to –

- a. know about themselves and appreciate their uniqueness, so as to enhance their self-concept;
- b. build up self-confidence and a sense of responsibility;
- c. understand and express their own needs and feelings;
- d. develop communication and interaction abilities and enjoy the pleasure of social life through cultivating proper attitudes towards people and the physical world;
- e. expand their social circle, understand themselves and the social environment, learn about the close relationship between themselves and society, and develop civic awareness; and
- f. develop national identity

II. Principles of Teaching

a. Children can understand their own abilities and strengths through various kinds of learning activities or free choice activities.

b. Teachers should provide children with opportunities to make decisions on their own, so as to enhance their critical thinking skills, and self confidence and independence.

c. Children are encouraged to participate actively in group and class activities; and they should be given sufficient time and opportunities to interact with people and the environment, and to experience the social norms.

d. Teachers should make good use of the natural environment and community resources to organize suitable activities which allow children to obtain first-hand experience and know more about society. This will also foster children's awareness with respect to environmental protection and appreciation of the cultural and historical features of the community.

Art

I. Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to –

a. enjoy the fun of different creative works through their senses and bodies;

b. enhance their expression and powers of communication through imagination and association;

c. express themselves through different media and materials;

d. appreciate the beauty of nature and works of art;

e. experience different cultures and develop diversified visions; and

f. develop creativity.

II. Principles of Teaching

a. In order to cultivate children's aesthetic sensitivity and appreciation capability, the teaching environment should have embraced a creative and artistic atmosphere. Children's artistic works can be used for classroom decoration.

b. Diversified activities which focus on the learning process rather than the acquisition of skills and knowledge are recommended, as children will find them enjoyable.

c. Teachers should encourage children to use different senses, especially their sense of touch, and their gross and fine motor skills to explore and try things out, so as to develop their creativity and enhance the fun of creative activities.

d. Teachers should guide children to take the initiative to learn, and give them sufficient time and freedom to choose different art activities to express their life experiences, thoughts and feelings.

e. More opportunities should be provided for children to appreciate diversified arts, so as to broaden their knowledge of art and cultivate their appreciation ability.

How to teach?

Teacher's role

- Pay attention to the children's physical and mental health and habits
- Enrich children's learning experiences
- Create a pleasurable learning atmosphere
- Promote the overall co-operation of staff in the institution
- Establish good relationships with children
- Set a good model for children

The Learning Environment

- i. Safety and health***
- ii. Arrangement of the environment***
- iii. Arrangement of furniture***
- iv. Decoration in the environment***

Arrangement of Activities

- i. Arrange balanced activities***
 - Indoor and outdoor activities;
 - Gross and fine motor activities;
 - "quiet" and "active" activities;
 - Individual, group and class activities; and
 - Activities initiated by children and organized by teachers
- ii. Provide opportunities for children to explore independently and develop social relationships***
- iii. Motivate children to learn and provide them with opportunities to explore and investigate***
- iv. Plan various activities to suit children's abilities and interests***
- v. Allocate enough time for exploratory activities***

Approaches to Learning and Teaching

Learning through play

No matter which learning and teaching strategy is adopted, play is an indispensa-

ble and important tool for facilitating children's learning. It helps children know their surroundings and experience the joy of co-operating and sharing with others. Through play, children can develop their physical, intellectual, social, creative and thinking abilities. Play is also considered to be the best activity for promoting children's physical and mental development.

Key Elements for Play

i. Toys

- The required skills must match the children's abilities: if a game is too difficult, children will stop trying, as they get frustrated with not knowing how to play the game. If a game is too easy, they will not find it challenging enough and become disengaged.

- The texture of materials (smooth, rough, hard, soft, etc.) should suit the requirements of different kinds of plays. Generally speaking, soft and smooth materials are more suitable for children.

- The number of toys should be appropriate. Children cannot handle too many toys at a time. They may easily get distracted with too many toys and this will result in a waste of resources and defeat the purpose. However, if the number of toys is not adequate, children's needs may not be satisfied.

- Toys should be arranged systematically and easily accessible to children in order to arouse their interest and motivation for learning. The orderly arrangement of toys can encourage children to form the habit of putting the toys back in order after playing.

- Toys must be safe. Small articles are dangerous, as children may put them into their mouths or noses; fragile items are easily broken and children may get hurt. Teachers should check all toys regularly and repair the damaged ones immediately to ensure safety.

ii. Playmates

- Teachers may organize the children to play in large groups, small groups or on their own.

iii. Environment

- Indoor and outdoor environment: enclosed or open space can be used to organize different kinds of activities.

- A spacious area is suitable for play requiring vigorous movement, whereas a limited space is appropriate for quiet play with little movement.

iv. Time arrangement

- Time for play should be appropriately structured: different kinds of play require different time and effort from children. Activities such as building blocks, family corner or role-play require a longer time to achieve their purposes. Children should be

given enough time to enjoy the fun of play and learn effectively.

- “Active” and “quiet” play should be well-balanced: teachers should consider striking a good balance between “active” and “quiet” play. For example, they should organize “quiet” play such as story-telling to calm children down after an exhausting game.

Role of Teachers during Play

i. Provider: Teachers should arrange the place, time and materials necessary for the play.

ii. Observer: Teachers should observe children’s performance at play objectively and understand the process of children’s play.

iii. Participant: Teachers should encourage children to act freely and should also understand their feelings from the children’s point of view. If teachers find that children do not take any initiative to participate in play, they should join in and offer support. In addition, teachers’ participation can arouse children’s interest in play and encourage them to participate more actively.

iv. Intervener: When providing materials and setting up the environment for play activities, teachers must consider the relationship between the level of difficulty of the activities and children’s current development and characteristics. To meet their individual needs, teachers may intervene in an indirect and interesting way, and finish the game without spoiling children’s confidence and interest.

v. Inspirer: Play is fun by nature. The fundamental principle of play is to stimulate thinking and enable children to express themselves freely. Teachers should seize every opportunity to encourage children’s creativity and imagination.

Assessment

Purposes of Assessment

I. enables teachers, when arranging the teaching and learning activities, to

- understand children’s learning progress as well as physical and mental development;

- identify children with special educational needs as early as possible and provide them with appropriate guidance and care;

- keep parents informed about their children’s life in the institutions and their learning progress, in order to strengthen home-school collaboration and ensure that children are provided with the most suitable education and review and revise learning and teaching strategies as appropriate, to meet children’s developmental needs.

II. Enable institutions, when conducting overall curriculum planning, to

- understand the overall progress and effectiveness of curriculum

- implementation;

- support teachers in solving the problems and difficulties encountered in teaching; and

- Understand their human resource needs, so as to support their ongoing curriculum development.

III. enable children, when learning, to

- understand their learning performance and progress;

- know what to learn and what to do; and

- Cultivate interest in learning with the assistance and encouragement of teachers and parents.

IV. Enable parents, when collaborating with schools to nurture children, to

- understand their children's learning progress in school;

- enhance their understanding of the growth of their children;

- establish reasonable expectations towards their children; and

- understand the institutions' learning and teaching arrangements and co-operate with teachers, with a view to providing children with the best education.

How to assess?

- Assessment needs to address the curriculum objectives and children's developmental needs. Assessment should not be conducted solely for its own sake.

- Observation, recording and analysis should be adopted for assessing children's performance in an authentic learning environment, instead of giving oral tests or open-book tests.

- Continuous assessment throughout the whole school year is recommended.

- Teachers should show recognition and appreciation of children's achievements, as well as identify areas in which the potential of the children is yet to be developed, and render guidance and support accordingly.

- Teachers should inform parents of the assessment results in a systematic and positive manner, to enhance parents' understanding of their children.

What to assess?

Upon completion of the pre-primary curriculum, children should be able to:

Physical development

a. have good eating and personal and public hygiene habits, possess self-care ability, and maintain a routine and an orderly life;

b. demonstrate safety awareness and a sense of self-protection;

c. co-ordinate and manipulate the gross and fine motor skills;

d. observe and explore the surroundings using the sensory functions of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch;

Cognitive and Language Development

Cognitive

- a. show curiosity about the surrounding environment and things around them;
- b. develop interest and initiative in exploring the outside world;
- c. sort, compare, match and arrange things, and identify their shapes and positions;
- d. use simple mathematical concepts in everyday life, such as counting, measurement, time, space, etc.;
- e. make simple judgments, analysis and inferences using acquired concepts or experiences;
- f. understand things from different perspectives; try, explore and express their views, ask questions, and propose solutions to issues in everyday life;

Language

- a. listen attentively, understand the content of what they have heard, and express themselves in appropriate language;
- b. know how to use language to communicate with others and share life experiences and feelings;
- c. have a grasp of reading skills, enjoy reading, and understand simple books, general words and symbols;
- d. know how to use different writing media to express and record personal thoughts and life experiences in drawings or words;

Affective and social development

- a. take care of themselves, lead an orderly life, and conduct daily activities independently;
- b. express themselves properly and control their emotions;
- c. accept others, appreciate themselves and recognize their own value;
- d. take up responsibilities, have confidence in finishing activities or tasks, and be responsible for their own actions;
- e. understand their own role in the family, school and society; understand the rights and duties of an individual when he/she is in different groups; and understand the relationship between themselves and their country;

Aesthetic development

- a. demonstrate interest in arts activities such as music, dancing, drawing and drama, and use these different forms of art as the media of creation, communication and

expression;

- b. use different materials and techniques to conduct creative activities;
- c. acquire satisfaction and joy through observation and appreciation of their surroundings in the process of creation;
- d. appreciate works of art of different cultures and forms, and identify the basic elements of the works;
- e. know how to work with others to share resources and workload, to finish a creation and finally to celebrate success.

Records and Reports on the Progress of Children's Learning

Student Portfolios

Children's growth and development is a continuous process. At different stages, there are important milestones marking their development. Therefore, it is necessary for parents and teachers to record important information as evidence of children's growth. A portfolio is a systematic record of such important information, not an assessment tool. The portfolio may be passed to new teachers for their reference and follow-up action when the children are promoted to higher grades, or handed over to parents for retention when the children leave the kindergarten, so that it can serve as a reference for the primary school teachers if necessary

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